NEGOTIATING THE NORMS OF CONSUMPTION: AN EXPLORATION OF ORDINARY PRACTICES OF DISPOSING

A Ph.D. Dissertation

by
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To my sister and best friend Mehlika

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Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
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by

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ABSTRACT

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Recently, disposing has attracted lots of research attention. While some researchers frame disposing as a practice of ordering, identity management, and psychological relief, others associate it with overconsumption, waste of usable resources, and environmental hazard. Although disposing is related to such seemingly conflicting meanings and consumption practices, consumer researchers mostly bypass the broader structures, grand practices, and ideological and discursive meaning systems underlying disposing practices. Using ethnographic methods, this study explores disposing as a mundane practice, embedded in contexts with socio-cultural, economic, historical, and political dimensions. The research aims to reveal when and how consumers practice disposing by highlighting the normative and ideological structures that help constructing these practices. It also aims to shed light on how disposing might relate to other consumption practices.

The results depict disposing as embedded in four meta-practices at the intersection of various tensions and ideologies feeding these. Steeped in these grand discourses of consumption, disposing helps moralizing consumption and allows consumers to experience morality without standing against consumerism or adopting new lifestyles. Rather than just facilitating consumer resistance, disposing also helps consumers to compromise with the market. The results complicate the linear framing of consuming as acquiring-using-disposing by highlighting how disposing reflects on the object's consumption and is constructive of its value. The study also reveals new practices through which consumers negotiate disposing and highlight a new dimension of object attachment. The results have important implications for the disposition, moral consumption, and value research.

Keywords: Disposing, Moral Consumption, Value, Object Attachment.

ÖZET

TÜKETİMLE UZLAŞMA:
ELDEN ÇIKARTMA PRATİKLERİ ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

Türe, Meltem
Doktora, İşletme Bölümü
Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Güliz Ger

Temmuz 2013

Elden çıkartma pratikleri, giderek daha fazla ilgi çeken bir tüketim alanına dönüşmüştür. Bazı araştırmalar, elden çıkartma pratiklerini, temizlik, düzen, kimlik yönetimi ve psikolojik rahatlama davranışları ile ilişkilendirirken; diğer çalışmalar, elden çıkartma süreci ile aşırı tüketim, kaynak ziyanı ve çevresel kirlilik arasındaki ilişkiye dikkat çekerler. Elden çıkartmayı bu çelişkili anlam ve pratiklerle açıklayan literatür, bunların altında yatabilecek ideolojiler, anlam sistemleri ve meta pratikler konusunda ise büyük oranda sessizdir. Etnografik metodlar kullanılarak yapılan bu araştırmada, elden çıkartma, sosyo-kültürel, ekonomik, tarihsel ve politik boyutları olan gündelik bir tüketim pratiği olarak ele alınmıştır. Çalışmanın amacı tüketicilerin nasıl ve ne zaman eşyalarını elden çıkarttıklarını irdelemek ve bu pratikleri oluşturan normatif ve ideolojik yapıları açığa çıkartmaktır. Ayrıca, elden çıkartma sürecinin diğer tüketim süreçleriyle olan bağının da ortaya çıkartılması amaçlanmaktadır.

Çalışmanın sonuçları, elden çıkartma pratiklerini, çeşitli gerilim ve ideolojilerin odağında bulunan dört meta pratikle ilişkilendirmektedir. Bu pratikler ve söylemlerce şekillenen elden çıkartma süreci, bir çeşit ahlakileştirme pratiğine dönüşürken, tüketicilerin tüketim kültürüne direnmeden veya hayat tarzlarını değiştirmelerine gerek kalmadan etik davranmalarına olanak sağlamaktadır. Böylece, elden çıkartma süreci, tüketicilerin pazar kültürüne karşı durabilmeleri dışında, pazarla ve tüketimle uzlaşmalarını da sağlamaktadır. Çalışma, elden çıkartma sürecinin, eşyaların tüketimi ve değerlerinin oluşmasına yaptığı etkileri göstererek, alım-kullanma-elden çıkartma doğrusal üçlemesinde kurgulanan tüketim süreci algısını sorgulamaktadır. Ayrıca, tüketicilerin elden çıkartmadan kaçınmak için başvurdukları yöntemler ve sıradan eşyalara bağlılığı arttıran bazı süreçler de ortaya çıkartılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma, elden çıkartma, ahlaki tüketim ve değer araştırmalarına önemli katkılarda bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Elden Çıkartma, Ahlaki Tüketim, Değer, Eşya Bağımlılığı.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Disposing as an integral and pervasive element of consumption cycle (Wallendorf and Young, 1989:37) has started to gain more attention from academicians, policy-makers and politicians, civil organizations, activists, and consumers. As such, it has come to represent a wide range of, and mostly conflicting, meanings and practices. One main view frames disposing as a crucial practice in dealing with the consequences of materialistic tendencies associated with consumerism, while another approaches it as a consumption phase that can imperil the environment, tarnish functional objects' usability, and create waste.

Material objects can become a burden, both emotionally and cognitively, that prevents us from refreshing ourselves and moving forward. This view is steeped in a cultural orientation that singles out material objects as a source of discomfort and slavery and costructs disposing as a venue to refresh, to renew one's life, and to obtain psychological relief (Kates, 2001). Such orientation frames disposing as

opposed to accumulating and storing (Cherrier, 2009), as a practice through which consumers can stand against these prevalent norms of consumption in contemporary societies (Kozinets, 2002; Murray, 2002). Against such view, a significant body of research signifies disposition as the problematic phase of consumption, where waste is created, usable objects are thrown away, and environment is damaged (Harrell and McConocha, 1992; Alwitt and Berger 1993). This research orientation parallels the increasing attention paid to DIY and craft consumption, which nurture the idea that about-to-be disposed objects can be re-valuated.

Thus, disposing is simultaneously related to various, seemingly conflicting meanings and consumption practices that are informed from changes in the socio-cultural environment and prevalent ideologies. Yet, consumer researchers mostly bypass these broad structures, grand practices, and ideological and discursive meaning systems, just to explore disposing in the more private domain of individual consumers' and families' waste management, identity projects, or social and object relations. This absence revealed to me when I was reading an article about garage sales, which seemed to assume that garage sale was a universal consumption phenomenon. As I read more of the disposing literature, the question "Why don't we have garage sales in Turkey?" or, more broadly, the popularity of certain disposing conduits in some cultures and their absence from others became more intriguing to me. Intrigued by these questions and fascinated by seemingly opposite meanings attributed to disposing, I decided to conduct this research. In this study, I aim to explore disposing, as practiced and experienced in the mundane,

embedded in consumption contexts with socio-cultural, economic, historical, and political parameters. Specifically, I intend to understand when and how consumers practice disposing and reveal the normative and ideological structures that are at work behind these practices. I also want to shed light on how practices of disposing might reflect back on and relate to other consumption practices, and how consumers can negotiate disposing.

With these goals in mind, I conducted a five-year ethnographic study and collected data using in-depth interviews, essays, observations, and documents. In-depth interviews were conducted with 19 middle- and upper-middle class consumers, who talked about how they disposed of their ordinary possessions. I also had 62 undergrad students write essays about their experiences with disposing of their items. Moreover, I observed second-hand/flea markets, antique stores, streets, supermarkets, and other places, which could host disposing-related practices. I used documentary sources (Hodder, 2000) such as books, Internet blogs and forums, web pages, newspaper and magazine articles, and TV shows. I used different methods in analyzing the data. With grounded theory method, I was able to capture emergent themes and utilize new theories. Through narrative and discourse analysis, I re-interpreted the texts as embedded in the broader socio-cultural world of meanings (Thompson, 1997) and power relations. In addition to all these, I followed a hermeneutical and iterative process (Thompson, 1997) across and within data sources to form a comprehensive interpretation of the data set.

The results highlight an emergent model, which portrays disposing as a practice through which consumers navigate through consumerist ethos while complying with the ideals of moralism. Disposing becomes as a social practice, which helps consumers to negotiate their daily actions (e.g. keeping usable objects versus providing order in their household, enhancing their family's welfare versus helping a stranger in need, or getting rid of garbage quickly versus protecting environment), and, hence, resolve tensions created by their commitment to conflicting norms and ideologies. Four main ideological orientations—modernist ideals, countermodernist ideals, ideals of awareness and interconnectedness, and ideals of altruism, religion, and thrift—inform, construct, and legitimize disposing. Embedded in these discursive structures, I have also distinguished four meta-practices—utilizing, harmonizing, connecting, and atoning—that host and encourage specific disposing practices. Disposing, constructed through these grand discourses and meta-practices, helps consumers to moralize their consumption acts without necessarily resisting or leaving the market. To put it more clearly, I have found that consumers can act upon their critical views and discomfort over the negative aspects of consuming by using disposing process to take responsibility for their actions and relate with other people so that they can compromise with rather than resist to the market. The findings also explicate various ways through which an object's predicted or actual disposition reflects back and acts upon its consumption, complicating the rather linearly framed acquisition-usage-disposition cycle of consuming. Thus, a successful disposing episode is crucial for the realization and construction of the value consumers derive from their possessions.

In addition, the current research reveals the practices through which consumers can negotiate disposing and suggests that disposition process can trigger attachment to ordinary possessions. Consequently, this study contributes to the research on moral consumption and consumer resistance, value, sustainability, and object attachment.

The remaining parts of the paper provide a detailed explanation of the research process as well as its results and significant implications. In the next chapter, I will provide a review of the literature and introduce the existing theories and frameworks used in studying disposing. Chapter Three outlines, in detail, the methodological approach used in this study while Chapter Four explicates the findings in three parts. In Chapter Five, I will discuss the implications of the study and provide directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

DISPOSING IN CONSUMER RESEARCH

It has long been suggested that, compared to acquisition and usage, disposing have received relatively less attention from marketers and consumer researchers until recently (Parsons and Maclaran, 2009). However, claiming that disposition studies have emerged only lately would be unfair as there have been an increasing concern for consumers' divestment practices starting from the 70s (Harrell and McConocha, 1992). While scanning the literature with the hope of tracking down these studies, I saw that disposition (also called disposal, divestment or dispossession) appeared as a research topic in a wide range of journals changing from Marketing, Economics, and Psychology to Material Culture, Anthropology, and even Geography. Although most of these studies fall out of the scope of this thesis, which aims to shed more light on disposing as an area in consumer behavior, such diversity shows that disposing is important and connected to different areas of consumption. My prolonged engagement with this diverse literature also revealed that frameworks researchers use to explore disposing,

contexts in which it is explored, and the research focus and goals have transformed a great deal.

Previous studies have explored disposing behavior in various contexts: identity construction and maintenance (Belk, 1988; Price et al., 2000); adoption of new life styles (Cherrier and Murray, 2007; Cherrier, 2009); dealing with transitions (Young, 1991; Ozanne, 1992; Price et al., 2000; Norris, 2004); coping with ageing or closeness to death (Kates, 2001; Marcoux, 2001); managing waste/excess and maintaining one's household (Gregson and Crewe, 2003; Gregson et al., 2007); and maintaining one's social relations (Besnier, 2004; Norris, 2004). This recently proliferating literature can be categorized in four main research streams.

Most of the early studies frame disposition as the problematic phase of consumption, as a wasteful and unsustainable practice that requires strategic waste management. This research stream depicts disposing as a cognitive decision making process, where consumers try to get rid of the unwanted, the old or the unused (Jacoby et al., 1977; Burke et al., 1978; DeBell and Dardis, 1979; Hanson, 1980; Harrell and McConocha, 1992; Coulter and Ligas 2003). Complementary to such cognitive-rational approach, another line of research focuses on the emotional process of "dispossessing" (Wallendorf and Young, 1989; Roster, 2001). These studies show that, emotional, psychological, and physical separation from their possessions, consumers deal with transitions; (re)construct and transfer their individual/family identities; and manage their social relations. The literature also

implies that disposing can be a creative and productive practice. From this perspective, conduits and practices of divestment can revaluate objects by putting them back into exchange and/or by connecting them to specific value regimes (Gregson, 2007; Gregson et al., 2007; Albinsson and Perera, 2009; Cherrier, 2009). Finally, some studies highlight disposing as a normative practice through which the social is maintained and replenished (Gregson and Crewe, 2003; Norris, 2004; Gregson et al., 2007).

Before proceeding further, I would like to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary disposition. Involuntary disposition usually occurs during uncontrollable and/or life-changing events like natural disasters or migration. As physical detachment usually precedes emotional detachment and consumers have little freedom or time to choose which objects to keep/dispose, involuntary disposition can create a feeling of "loss of possessions" (Belk, 1988; Delorme et al., 2004). Thus, it can trigger subsequent shopping episodes to return to normalcy (Delorme et al., 2004; Sneath et al., 2009) and sacrilize the remaining objects as extraordinary and meaningful (Delorme et. al., 2004). However, involuntary disposition usually falls short in explaining how and why people willingly dispose of their possessions and the implications of these processes.

In this thesis, I focus on practices of voluntary disposing. Below, I will provide a detailed analysis of the relevant literature and reveal the gaps, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Literature Summary and Theoretical Gaps

Research Stream	Research Goals	Contributions	Gaps/limitations
Disposing as decision-making	* to reveal disposing paths * to predict disposing decisions and advise policy-makers	* typologies of disposing * antecedents of disposing * disposing as a segmentation variable (different consumer groups)	* socio-cultural structures influencing disposing paths and timing * incommensurability of disposing paths across contexts * emotional aspects of disposing
Disposing as identity work	* to clarify disposing-identity relation * to reveal divestment rituals	* disposing as a process of identity construction, maintenance & transfer * disposing of special possessions * ritual aspects of disposing	* focus on non-ordinary contexts (transitions, mortality, change of life style, special possessions, etc.) * emphasis on objects rather than conduits / practices * disposing as isolated from other consumption processes
Disposing as converting & creating	* to reveal productive / creative disposing practices * to explore the sacred in disposing	* disposing as gifting / sacrificing * disposing as a marketing activity * disposing as a transcendental experience	* context-dependency of meanings & practices of thrift, sacred, etc. * macro structures that legitimize valuation paths * rigid sacred / profane distinction * disposing as isolated from other consumption processes
Disposing as social & normative	* to reveal social norms & the reproduction of the social	* disposing to abide by or challenge social norms * disposing as a sacrifice to create social hierarchy	* macro-level norms & ideologies that influence disposing process * negotiation of commitment to different ideologies / norms

2.1. Disposing as a Decision-Making Process

Recognizing the rising problem of overconsumption and waste management, most of the early studies approach disposing as a process where consumers need to decide how to get rid of the items they do not use or want anymore (Jacoby et al., 1977; Burke et al., 1978; DeBell and Dardis, 1979; Hanson, 1980; Harrell and McConocha, 1992; Coulter and Ligas, 2003). These studies aim to come up with typologies that predict consumers' decisions and behavioral tendencies in disposing of their possessions. In doing so, they try to reveal who might create more waste and in what ways so that they can recommend ways to prevent waste creation by reducing or making use of disposed objects.

Jacoby et al. (1977), for example, have come up with a taxonomy that traces how objects from specific object categories are disposed of. They identify three main ways—keeping, permanently disposing, and temporarily disposing—through which an object can be divested. Consumers can keep an object by storing it or using it for its original or new purposes, temporarily divest it by renting or loaning, and permanently dispose of it in numerous ways: by selling, trashing, giving it away, or trading it. The study focuses on six commodity categories—stereo amplifier, wrist watch, toothbrush, phonograph record, bicycle, and refrigerator—and finds that while some of the paths are rarely used for disposing of any of these objects, some paths are commonly used across all categories. They find, for example, that toothbrushes are never sold but mostly thrown away. However, the research falls short in explaining the mechanisms that send the used toothbrush to

the trash bin and not to the commodity market. Their rather descriptive approach, however, has inspired other researchers to uncover various antecedents and typologies of disposing.

Perhaps, one of the most comprehensive of these studies is the paradigm of the disposition process proposed by Hanson (1980). In his typology, Hanson frames disposing as a linear decision making process that starts with the "recognition of the disposition problem" and ends with the evaluation of "post disposition outcomes". Different from the decision-making processes in object acquisitions, where alternative products are assessed, in disposition decision-making, only one object is evaluated in relation to different disposing paths. Hanson includes personal and object-related factors in his framework by describing the former as internal and situational stimuli while portraying the latter as external factors that are constitutive of the decision to dispose. So, his typology includes physical and social surroundings, and temporal orientations as well as individuals' demography, attitudes, norms, beliefs, perceptions, ethnic/(sub)cultural background, family structure, and intra-familial relations. This typology recognizes that the cost and value of the object, its age, size, and convertibility for other uses/functions can be effective in its disposal. However, Hanson classifies these factors as intrinsic to the object, failing to recognize their social and cultural nature. Although Hanson's study leaves much to be discovered, it is one of the first studies to portray disposing as a process influenced by various factors and to highlight its relation to pollution and environmental problems.

Another study by DeBell and Dardis (1979) focuses on how object-related variables might influence whether an object is disposed of or not. The authors identify two main factors—fashion and performance—and group products as those that are discarded due to performance related obsolescence and as those disposed of due to fashion/technology related obsolescence. Their theory implies that some products are divested before they break down since their perceived functionality is constituted by their perceived ability to perform in ways that are considered as trendy. Most other research, however, focuses on personal factors to understand what influences consumers' disposition decisions. Harrell and McConocha (1992) propose a typology that elucidates a range of disposition paths in relation to consumer characteristics. Their study uncovers individual consumers' motivations to choose a specific disposition path over the others. For example, the authors find that consumers tend to keep objects that they perceive as an investment from which they want to obtain maximum return. Conversely, passing objects onto others reflects consumers' desire to help others and not waste the object. However, their survey methodology fails to uncover any rationale for throwing an object away while it could still be of use, subtly reconstructing trashing as an irrational behavior. Similarly, Burke et al. (1978), who focus on psychographic variables to explain consumers' disposition behavior, suggest that throwing away is mostly practiced by younger people, who have yet to develop attachments to material objects or consider other people's needs.

Albeit uncovering different factors that might shape consumers' decision-making, these studies approach disposing as a practice of waste creation or as a

useful segmentation variable. As such, rather than understanding consumer experiences with disposing or highlighting the processes through which they separate from and let go of their possessions, this literature talks more to the policy-makers, who want to control and decrease the creation of waste, and businesses and charity organizations which try to increase the demand for their products/ideas/causes.

2.1.1 Disposing as Waste Creation and Management

Building on the concern that we have become a throwaway society, some studies highlight disposing as the main consumption process that enhances waste-production and environmental pollution. In these studies, disposing process is framed as an act of "getting rid of" unwanted objects, for which the individual consumers are the main actants under the influence of object specific and situational factors (Zikmund and Stanton, 1971; Jacoby et al., 1977; Hanson, 1980; Harrell and McConocha, 1992). In their paper about solid waste disposal, for example, Zikmund and Stanton (1971) describe consumers as the producers and the first link of formal waste production process. Similarly, Pollock (1987) warns us about consumers' thoughtless disposition acts, which create waste problems for local administrations to deal with.

Operating with a moral undertone, these studies explore the possibility of "educating consumers to dispose of products...in ways which satisfy the conservation ethic rather than simply by throwing or discarding said items" (Jacoby

et al., 1977: 28). As such, they attach ethical connotations to each disposing path. Jacoby et al. (1977), for example, are dismayed by the high rate of consumers who choose to throw away or replace their possessions while the said objects are still working. They underline the existence of alternatives that could lengthen the life of the object and prevent its divestment such as repainting household appliances to fit in the new household décor, having broken down objects repaired or finding ways to re-use an object in ways different from its original function. Not surprisingly, this line of research underlines recycling as a promising solution to decrease waste, framing consumers as producers of waste and suggesting reinforcement of their position in the recycling chain to turn them into producers of usable materials and objects (Zikmund and Stanton, 1971; Alwitt and Berger, 1993). These studies introduce the notion of backward channels, where consumers will be the first—rather than the last—link in the recycling chain that would send the waste back to the production system. Alwitt and Berger (1993) focus on recycling at a more micro level to find that recycling behavior is contingent upon the degree to which consumers perceive environmental problems as relevant and important, and recognize them as their own responsibility. Other research on sustainability implies that commitment to recycling behavior relates to altruistic intentions (Schwartz, 1977). That is, consumers, who feel that being sensitive towards environmental issues is their moral duty, more regularly recycle their waste—even in the absence of any personal gains or punishments (Hopper and Nielsen, 1991). On the other hand, consumers, who have other priorities or feel less morally obliged, are influenced by factors such as the time required for recycling or convenience of

reaching recycling sites in deciding whether to recycle or not (Vining and Ebreo, 1990). Barr (2003) also finds that existence of means and access to infrastructure are significant antecedents of active participation to recycling.

To sum, rather than considering it as a consumption phenomenon, this literature approaches disposing as an issue for businesses and policy makers, and is concerned with developing recommendations for these parties. Adopting a business orientation, Jacoby et al. (1977) suggest businesses to focus on motivations underlying consumers' seemingly wasteful disposing decisions so that they could increase the demand for their products. Similarly, Zikmund and Stanton (1971) claim that the problem of waste and recycling can actually be framed as a marketing activity and suggest developing systems where consumers, producers, and policy-makers can work together to reduce waste and increase recycling. Harrell and McConocha (1992) form a more direct link between individuals' disposing behavior and societal welfare, by defending the encouragement of the paths that would delay the arrival of objects at landfills. They call for policy makers and local administrators to closely observe and understand consumers' attitudes and behaviors so that they can develop strategies "to modify patterns of waste and product disposal to achieve societal goals" (Harrell and McConocha, 1992: 416). That is, the studies that focus on disposing as a matter of creation and management of waste depict consumers as rational decision-makers whose beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors can be modified with the right stimuli. Building on this logic, a significant number of studies use disposing behavior as a way to categorize and group consumers.

2.1.2 Disposing as a Tool for Segmenting Consumers

Some researchers have tried to create consumer groups based on the specific ways through which consumers dispose of their possessions (Burke et al., 1978; Smith, 1980; Harrell and McConocha, 1992; Alwitt and Berger, 1993; Coulter and Ligas, 2003; Jeong and Liu, 2010). These studies look into effects of consumers' psychological, psychographic, social, and demographic characteristics on their tendency to dispose as well as the choice of the disposition path.

One of the most significant parameters in grouping consumers is the distinction between consumers' tendency to dispose versus their desire to keep. While the former group is called purgers, the literature refers to the latter as packrats (Coulter and Ligas, 2003). Packrats have difficulty in disposing of their things and tend to hold on to them while purgers continuously monitor their possessions to willingly get rid of the things they assess as useless (Coulter and Ligas, 2003: 38). Some researchers highlight demographic factors as significant in distinguishing between these two groups. Burke et al. (1978), for example, imply that while young people tend to throw their items away, old people prefer keeping or transforming these objects rather than permanently getting rid of them. Other studies, however, suggest that these two consumer groups differ in their core values, meanings they attribute to material objects, their temporal orientation, and their attitudes toward waste (Harrell and McConocha, 1992; Coulter and Ligas, 2003; Phillips and Sego, 2011). For example, being practical and innovative leads packrats to keep, while purgers get rid of items for the sake of being organized and

efficient. When they dispose, packrats prefer donating or passing their possessions on to others to retain some meanings. Since packrats accumulate objects, they are usually regarded as disorganized hoarders (Coulter and Ligas, 2003) who waste otherwise utilizable resources (Harrell and McConocha, 1992). Purgers, on the other hand, care for convenience and efficiency, and usually throw their objects away, resorting to selling and donating only if minimum effort is required. They are portrayed as young, single, future-oriented individuals whose desire to organize can lead to irresponsible disposing behavior (Hanson, 1980; Harrell and McConocha, 1992; Coulter and Ligas, 2003). Although packrat/purger distinction is still widely used to interpret disposing practices of different consumer groups, Phillips and Sego (2011) have recently pointed out that this dichotomy should actually be regarded as the two poles of a continuum. They claim that keeper and discarder identities are not fixed, but they can change through time and consumers' conscious choice.

Another line of research segments consumers using their tendency to give and engage in charitable behavior. Research on blood and organ donation can be considered in this group. Although donating body parts is quite different from donating or passing on to one's possessions, I regard these studies within the boundaries of the literature on "giving". If possessions are also a part of the extended self (Belk, 1988), then implications of these studies should go beyond explaining organ donation to contribute to our understanding of what motivates people to give others something of themselves. Actually, focusing on blood donation, Burnett (1981) finds that consumers who have low self-esteem and high

level of education, and are conservative and committed to religious beliefs are more prone to giving. Specifically, the author profiles the frequent blood donors as educated males with low self-esteem and conservative/religious values. Other studies also attest that demographic factors like age, gender, and education and attitudinal variables like religious beliefs, family values or perceived importance of charitable feelings can be used as segmentation variables to predict consumers' willingness and tendency to donate (Pessemier et al., 1977). In addition to personal variables, interpersonal factors can be influential for giving behavior. Consumers who want to gain social acceptance, enhance feelings of superiority and pride or feel empathy and guilt towards the recipients are more likely to give (Smith, 1980; Lee and Strahilevitz, 2004). Similarly, people who have insecure relationship style are found to donate more to people they feel close to than strangers (Jeong and Liu, 2010). The perspective used in these studies treats the tendency to give as intrinsic to individual consumers, putting aside the macro factors that construct the meanings attributed to "giving" or form the practices associated with it. An obvious example would be the country-based legislations that regulate giving in different ways, ranging from describing the scope and duties of charity institutions to drawing the boundaries of organ donations.

Thus, the studies illustrated above operate on the assumption that disposing is a decision-making process, in which individuals, as rational and dominantly active agents under the influence of social and contextual factors, contemplate whether and how to dispose of an object and assess the consequences of this decision. This line of research contributes to the lietarture by uncovering the antecedents of

disposing, creating typologies (Hanson, 1980; Harrell and McConocha, 1992; Coulter and Ligas, 2003), and distinguishing consumer segments according to their disposing practices (Burke et al., 1978; Alwitt and Berger, 1993). These studies aim to help policy-makers to come up with efficient policies that prevent environmental pollution and wasting (Zikmund and Stanton, 1971). They support recycling, production of disposable goods, and establishment of redistribution channels as they view the consumer as the producer of waste rather than just the final user of commodities.

To sum, this literature approaches disposing as a practice with potentially negative consequences that should caution policy-makers, businesses, and civil institutions rather than regarding it as a fruitful area of research to understand contemporary consumers. In these studies, consumers, framed as rational decision-making units, become the main agents in disposing of an object. This neglects other agents (the object, infrastructure, legal and technological environment, etc.) that can be equally important in constituting, enabling, and constraining the disposing process. More importantly and more relevant to the objectives of my research, these studies fail to acknowledge that what they regard as universal concepts—such as a personality trait—are also socially constructed and context-dependent (Berger and Luckmann, 1991; Thompson, 2004). For example, since "waste" means different things to different people living in different cultures, "practices of wasting" should also mean and include different things. Similarly, the way consumers interpret and strategically make use of the seemingly homogeneous situational factors will vary. Fashion might be an important constitutional element

for disposing process but there can be various readings of fashion among consumers. In this study, I aim to highlight how socio-cultural world that consumers live in might create various paths for the object and inform how consumers dispose of their possessions. I also suggest that consumers can be constrained and/or liberated by specific constellations of different (human and non-human) elements when disposing of their possessions.

2.2 Disposing as Identity Work

In response to waste management and decision-making perspectives used in the studies elucidated above, a group of consumer researchers started exploring disposing as a process, where consumers try to separate from their possession. These studies have re-framed disposing as a process of "dispossession"—a process of letting go of (negatively or positively) meaningful objects (Wallendorf and Young, 1989; Roster, 2001), and highlighted previously unidentified processes through which consumers construct, maintain, and adopt their identities.

Actually, researchers have long been fascinated with consumption as identity work. Treating possessions as a part of the self (Belk, 1988; Klein et al., 1995), previous research have focused on processes of acquisition and usage to understand the significance of their possessions for consumers' identity projects. Conversely, a decent amount of research has been dedicated to understand how consumers' identity projects relate to the way they dispose of their possessions. These

researches have shown that acquiring and using certain objects is not the only way consumers build, maintain, and transform their identities (Belk, 1988; Arnould and Thompson, 2007) but dispossessing is also crucial for these processes (Young, 1991; Ozanne, 1992; Price et al., 2000; Marcoux, 2001; Curasi et al., 2004; Lastovicka and Fernández, 2005).

In exploring the relationship between disposing and identity, researchers have primarily focused on dispossession during specific life stages like oldness or periods of transitions when perceived changes of or threats to one's identity are prevalent. By disposing of the objects that have come to embody negative meanings, consumers retain and groom desirable identities by distancing themselves from unwanted object associations (Thomsen and Sorensen, 2006). Consumers can also adjust to the ever-changing present and adopt new identities by distancing themselves from the objects that no longer fit these new identities or environments (McAlexander, 1991; Albinsson and Perrera, 2009; Cherrier, 2009b). So, dispossession occurs more when consumers experience identity changes that render an object irrelevant to their new identities or when the object's meanings change and it becomes detached from the self (Belk 1988, 1991; Young, 1991; Kleine et al., 1995; Roster, 2001; Lastovicka and Fernández, 2005; Phillips and Sego, 2011). Consumers dispose of the objects they evaluate as "not-me" or "undesired-past-me" with little hesitance (Lastovicka and Fernández, 2005) while they hold on to possessions they regard as inseparable from their individual or family identities. For example, Belk et al. (1989) have highlighted the existence of sacred possessions that consumers feel extremely attached to and for which there is

a “never sell” rule. Thus, beyond transitional times and identity changes, consumer researchers pursue the idea that objects, to which we have low attachment, have little relevance to our identities (Kleine et al., 1995) and pay specific attention to dispossession of cherished or important objects. These studies assume that all or some part of the (past, present, and future) self is transferred to a possession consumers cherish so that disposing of that object should help replenish, maintain, preserve, or abandon some aspects of the identity (Kates, 2001; Marcoux, 2001; Roster, 2001; Norris, 2004; Lastovicka and Fernández, 2005). Disposing of valued objects helps consumers to retain control over the future selves while preserving and carrying forward their individual and family identities anchored in the past (Price et al., 2000; Kates, 2001; Marcoux, 2001; Curasi et al., 2004; Bradford, 2010).

These studies also distinguish between the emotional and physical detachment from an object, where the former includes cognitive, psychological, and emotional preparations required to let go of an object. In this manner, this literature highlights the ritualistic aspects of disposing and identifies various divestment rituals that are used to manipulate the object’s meanings to facilitate its dispossession (McCracken, 1986; Lastovicka and Fernández, 2005). Based on the idea that meaningful possessions can carry multiple meanings (both public and private), Lastovicka and Fernández (2005) identify various rituals through which consumers can groom their possessions for their disposal. For example, iconic transfer helps consumers to retain and instill the positive meanings embedded in the disposed object into another possession so that the former can be divested

without emotional (and psychological) detachment. Another method is using a transitional place to keep the object for a while—both as a form of trial disposition and to erase the object's meanings and to move it from "me" to "not me" status (McCracken, 1986; Roster, 2001). In addition, cleansing rituals can be applied to erase private meanings or traces of the self from a possession while imbuing them with new public meanings (e.g. making it look like a commodity before re-selling it). Finally, divestment rituals such as story-telling allow consumers to share their private meanings with others with the hope of transferring them to the object's next owner. These meaning manipulation rituals help consumers to let go of their possessions more easily and without losing a part of their self. Focusing on symbolic meanings and indexical associations of possessions, current frameworks on divestment rituals overlook that material manipulations (beyond cleaning or ironing) might also be required to dispose of an object in an appropriate and satisfactory way.

Apart from the studies that explore disposition-identity relations during special occasions or for special objects—which constitute the majority in dispossession literature—few studies have recently turned our attention back to ordinary objects. As Miller's (1998) excellent work illustrates, ordinary (also called mundane) consumption practices can be crucial for forming and maintaining desirable identities. Research shows that ordinary practices of disposing can have important implications for the preservation and maintenance of the self. Gregson et al.'s (2007) study highlights everyday divestment practices as an important part of consumption cycle, where consumers enact on their identities. Exploring the

relation between motherhood and disposing, Phillips and Sego (2011) find that conflicting cultural expectations about motherhood resurface when disposing of an object, urging women to employ their own interpretation of motherhood identity. Cappellini's (2009) study on food leftovers shows that family identity can be reinforced and maintained through decisions on how to consume and dispose of everyday food leftovers. Yet, there is more to discover about how ordinary practices of disposing can relate to consumer identities beyond motherhood or disposal of specific objects.

In the current research, I focus on practices consumers undertake to dispose of their ordinary possessions to reveal the consequences of these practices for consumers and their self. Below, I provide a more detailed review of the literature to explicate how disposing (of both ordinary and special possessions) can support consumers in their multi-temporal identity work by helping them to: transform their identities, negotiate various identity roles, and retain their identities by creating memories.

2.2.1 Disposing to Adjust to Transitions and Transform the Self

Although possessions constitute an important extension of us and their involuntary or premature loss may hurt the unity and continuity of our identities, their dispossession also provides opportunity for the renewal and transformation of the self (Mehta and Belk, 1991). The literature extensively explores rites of

passage, transitions, and other life-changing events such as divorce (McAlexander, 1991; Young, 1991), death (Kates, 2001), moving, or natural disasters (Belk, 1992; Marcoux, 2001; Delorme et al., 2004) as contexts of disposing. These studies find that during liminal times, consumers experience identity shifts that urge them to part with some of their possessions, retain some other, and acquire new ones if necessary (Turner and Turner, 1978; McAlexander, 1991; Delorme et al., 2004). That is to say, perceived threats or changes related to one's identity transform the relation between consumers and their possessions, requiring them to dispose of some objects to adjust to the new identity or preserve the existing one (Roster, 2001).

Significant life transitions like geographic moves, migration, or divorce usually require cleansing the existing self of unwanted weights (Mehta and Belk, 1991). Immigrants, for example, dispose of the material objects that come from their former life to get rid of undesirable identity associations embodied in them and to prepare for the new objects that could enhance their acculturation and adaptation to their new life (Heinze, 1992; Üstüner and Holt, 2007). In their investigation of clothing exchanges, Albinsson and Perera (2009) find that by donating or bartering their clothes, consumers can make small adjustments to their identities after break-ups, change of occupation, or geographic moves. Dispossession can also become unavoidable and extremely useful for people going through divorce, especially when separation from one's family is perceived as necessary to obtain upward mobility and improve one's social network (McAlexander, 1991). Consumers who are going through a divorce try to break

free from their husband/wife identity by disposing of the possessions they obtained during their marriage (McAlexander, 1991; Lastovicka and Fernández, 2005). Usually, the initiators of the divorce start dispossession process in an attempt to leave their former lives behind and adjust to being single again. The range and amount of dispossession could be extreme, especially when divorcees see their possessions as harmful for the new life they are trying to establish. These consumers use dispossession to get rid of the objects that now become a part of an "undesirable past self" (Lastovicka and Fernández, 2005). At the same time, by passing most of their assets and important objects to their ex-spouses, divorcees try to get rid of the guilt of breaking their family apart (McAlexander, 1991).

These studies emphasize that, for successful identity transformation, it is crucial to dispose of the right possessions. However, they are silent on whether the specific conduits of disposing also influence identity construction process. There are a few exceptions. Research on voluntary simplicity and consumer emancipation provides some clues on the topic. This line of research examines dispossession practices of consumers, who experience a change in their value systems and are trying to adopt new lifestyles (Cherrier and Murray, 2007; Gregson, 2007). By disposing of their possessions, these consumers negotiate their growing concerns about over-consumption, hoarding, and accumulation of goods (Cherrier, 2005, 2009; Gregson et al., 2007). Unlike the studies mentioned above, this research stream does not focus on dispossession of objects with special meanings but is interested in consumers' relations with the commodity world in general. The consumer groups explored in these studies view objects, beyond their indexical

associations or private meanings, as symbols of a capitalist system and norms of the marketplace from which they are trying to escape. Thus, these studies portray dispossession as a consumption act through which consumers can resist to normative ideologies of consumerism and take a stand against the market.

Kozinets (2002) describes Burning Man festival as such a contemporary expression of consumer resistance. During the festival, individuals shed their consumer identity by destroying their possessions and negotiate the market logic by engaging in community-building activities such as gifting and sacrificing. Disposing, in this manner, helps consumers distance themselves from the market—even if temporarily. Literature on voluntary simplicity and downsizing indicates that the process of adapting to these lifestyles requires consumers to lead a less materialistic life, de-emphasize materialistic values, and find non-materialist ways of acquiring happiness (Elgin, 1981; Etzioni, 1998; Jackson, 2005). These lifestyles are promoted in popular culture and celebrate spirituality, community-life, balance as well as pragmatic concerns like saving time or living in order (Cherrier and Murray, 2007). Thus, they problematize acquiring and accumulating material objects. Reflexive downshifters use disposing to align their lifestyles with their newly acquired immaterialist values (Schor, 1998) by disassociating themselves from the material possessions that do not fit into these new value regimes (Cherrier, 2009b). In their study of downshifters, Cherrier and Murray (2007) draw strong connections between identity construction and dispossession. They illustrate a four-stage identity construction process: sensitization, separation, socialization, and striving. This process ends up successfully as long as consumers become aware

of the disturbances in their usual way of living and take corrective actions to reach for a more fulfilling identity.

In this manner, letting go of possessions is vital to adopt a new, enlightened self. Albinsson and Perera (2009) highlight links between consumers' self-concept/identity and five modes of disposing (ridding, recycling, donating, exchanging, and sharing). Consumers who want to adopt and communicate a "green consumer" identity are likely to prefer recycling or exchange to ridding. Similarly, Cherrier's (2009) study on sacralization of consumption elucidates the ways through which consumers downshift and transform their lives. She finds that, feeling constrained by the demands of consumer culture and under the pressure of the societal and religious forces, consumers sacrifice their material possessions to emancipate from the market and to transform their consumption from profane into sacred. The specific ways of disposing facilitates this process by extending the object's life and helping consumers connect to other people, their inner-selves, and the universe. Consumers can leave their possessions in a place charged with positive emotions and away from the marketplace in order to clear these objects of any remaining personal or negative meanings and to prevent their re-commoditization. In these studies, consumers are described as individuals who are disturbed by consumption and want to regulate their participation to consumer culture.

Thus, this literature frames disposing as a strategy for consumer resistance, as a venue for emancipation. However, it does not explain the relation between

identity and disposing for consumers, who do not necessarily go through changes and transitions, or want to emancipate from the market. In this research, I aim to explore how consumers, without necessarily going through such changes, can use disposing process to negotiate identity tensions created by various and usually conflicting norms and ideologies.

2.2.2 Disposing to Retain the Self and Fulfill Identity Roles

Although dispossession facilitates transformation of the self in face of change, it can also help retain and preserve one's identity against potential threats. By strategically disposing of specific possessions at specific times, to specific people, and in specific ways, individual or family identities can be preserved and transferred (Price et al., 2000; Marcoux, 2001; Curasi et al., 2004). These findings are based on the view that objects, especially cherished ones, bequested upon appropriate guardians will carry some part of their previous owners and, therefore, will invoke their soul (Mauss, 1990; Belk, 1991).

Consumer behaviorists have found that mortality salience, or awareness of one's own inevitable demise, makes people feel loss of control (Greenberg et al., 1997), which usually induces excessive spending and increasing commitment to materialistic values (Mandel and Heine, 1999; Kasser and Sheldon, 2000; Arndt et al., 2004). However, research also shows that transition to old age or fatal illnesses, when the perceived closeness to death is high and prevalent in one's life, can

actually curb materialistic tendencies and decrease the significance of material possessions (Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988; Pavia, 1993). That is, consumers become more open to let go of their material objects in return for remembrance, closure, and building connections with others. Pavia (1993) observes that people with AIDS tend to dispossess their material belongings more frequently and attributes this tendency to two changes: people's self-perception changes in ways that make them believe that they do not need material objects to define themselves or, facing their own death, they come to realize that material possessions are actually of no significance. The study hints that dispossession is in fact an act of negotiation of the loss of consumers' control over their health, actions, job, or privacy—their very own self. Other studies, which focus on the relatives, spouses and friends of people with AIDS, reveal that disposing (i.e. the process of receiving and gifting the possessions of the deceased) can help consumers to deal with their beloved's slow consumption to the illness, help them grieve, and accept their death (Stevenson and Kates, 1999; Kates, 2001).

Conversely, perceived closeness to death can highlight some possessions and their transfer to appropriate guardians as crucial for the retention of the self even after death. Disposing can transform possessions into gifts, which can retain and carry a part of consumers' self (Mauss, 1990; Stevenson and Kates, 1999). This "last gift" helps fatally ill consumers, who have been struggling with a stigmatized disease, to construct for themselves a desirable family through which they can anchor and singularize their memories to last long after their death (Stevenson and Kates, 1999; Kates, 2001). In his study of elderly consumers, who have to empty

their homes to move into care facilities, Marcoux (2001) suggests that divesting their homes and gifting their possessions to desirable heirs allow elderly consumers to beat the death by turning themselves into ancestors. Similarly, Price et al. (2000) portray strategic disposition of cherished possessions as an important process for older consumers' reminiscence and life review. By gifting and bequeathing their cherished, irreplaceable possessions to appropriate heirs, consumers can transfer personal meanings and indexical associations embodied in these objects; reinforce intergenerational connections that can extend their existence to the future; and achieve some form of symbolic immortality (Price et al., 2000; Marcoux, 2001; Curasi et al., 2004). Such strategic disposal of cherished objects helps consumers to decrease uncertainty, to exert some control over descendants' life, and to prolong the life of these objects by finding good homes for them. Thus, disposing of special possessions creates value by linking different generations of the family as long as appropriate recipients are found. In the absence of such heirs in the family, consumers can resort to other conduits (like garage sales) to find guardians who can appreciate the value of these objects (Price et al., 2000).

In using disposing to maintain and transfer the self, consumers use "control tactics" to ensure the safe transfer of the object as well as the meanings embodied in them. (Price et al., 2000; Marcoux, 2001; Roster, 2001; Curasi et al., 2004; Albinsson and Perera, 2009). Storytelling and ritualistic use and display are practices that contextualize heirloom objects and imbue them with desirable meanings and uses, associating them with specific memories, spaces, practices, and histories. These practices ensure that the object moves through the path from "me"

to “we” while creating a shared self between the disposer and the recipient (Lastovicka and Fernández, 2005). In addition, consumers can use traditional gifting contexts like marriage, graduation or childbirth to dispose of their cherished objects and heirlooms in order to ensure value transfer (Price et al., 2000).

Focusing on special possessions and symbolic aspects of such objects, these studies show how consumers use disposing process to preserve and re-inscribe the meanings embedded in their possessions in order to extend their identities towards the future. A small amount of research focuses on disposal of ordinary objects, through which consumers fulfill and manage their identity roles. Thomsen and Sorensen (2006) find that newly-become mothers can resort to disposing of the objects, which, they feel, reflect badly on their motherhood role. The previous research also finds that disposing can be a site of tensions when consumers need to juggle various identities simultaneously (Black and Cherrier, 2010; Phillips and Sego, 2011). Exploring mothers’ divestment practices, Phillips and Sego (2011) suggest that mothers try to balance disposing in the “right” amount: they try to show attachment to their children’s possessions as a display of affection while divesting enough to keep their households organized and clean.

To sum, the line of research that explores identity-disposing relation frames disposing as a site where individual and/or family identities are preserved, transformed, and transferred. Despite the valuable insights they provide, the studies elucidated in this section mostly focus on the rather extraordinary contexts: consumers, who try to adjust to change and adopt new identities, or disposal of

special possessions. Thus, they tell little about the implications of ordinary disposing practices for the self. This literature also highlights disposing as a process of the object's private and symbolic (rather than physical) detachment from the self, overlooking the broader mechanisms that inform an object's symbolic and physical move through specific disposing paths or how using these paths reflect back on consumers and objects.

2.3 Disposing as a Creative and Transformative Process

It has now long been acknowledged that processes of disposing consist of mechanisms which move objects along, bestow them with a new life, and occasionally associate them with new value regimes (Gregson and Crewe, 2003; Gregson et al., 2007; Cherrier, 2009b). It is a process through which objects are transformed into something else—be it garbage, rubbish, gift, sacrifice, asset or donation. Disposing, then, does not only work to reproduce the social order by removing the dirt and the polluted away from us (Douglas, 1966). It is also a consumption practice through which "dirty" goods can be re-evaluated, they obtain a second chance to be discovered, re-framed, and revaluated by the specific ways they are disposed or not disposed of (Gregson and Crewe, 2003; Hawkins, 2006; Gregson et al., 2007). That is, disposing opens up objects to and, consequently, associate consumers with new consumption processes.

In his famous book, Rubbish Theory, Thompson (1979) defines rubbish as a phase of flexibility. From this stage, objects can rejuvenate and be reborn as objects

of value (Thompson, 2003). His framework accepts that disposing can transform an object into rubbish, while, at the same time, providing new interpretations, frameworks of meaning, and value systems for it. Building on his work, Parsons (2008) identifies many value-enhancing practices associated with disposing (such as finding, displaying, and re-using) that revaluate and move objects out of rubbish category. However, objects do not transform only when they become rubbish. Different conduits through which an object moves will have different implications for its next life. They each imply different stages of re-alienation, de-constitution, and de-mattering of the object both structurally and symbolically (Lucas, 2002:19). For example, extending Thompson's view, Munro (1995) highlights disposing as a materialization of thrift practices through a network of conduits that re-use and transform the disposed objects. Thus, disposing includes practices of creating, discovering, crafting, transforming, and preserving as much as practices of destroying, transferring, distancing or wasting. The literature reveals three main ways through which disposition process could transform objects (and consumers): reusing, re-commoditizing, and sacralizing.

2.3.1 Re-using

Disposing process can work to reveal the potentialities of about-to-be-disposed objects (i.e. what they could become). During disposing, consumers assess their objects from a number of perspectives: their aesthetic appeal and material condition; functionality and performance; and social acceptability and fit

within the current life. While these assessments can send the object to a disposing conduit, some can have them to retreat to the back of the closets, drawers, attics or basements where they, as Thompson (1979) would suggest, "…just continue to exist in a timeless and valueless limbo, where, at some later date…they have the chance of being discovered" (1979: 9) and re-used.

Re-use activities are actually related to gleaning or "an active raking through of objects…to re-appropriate and re-use them" (Parsons, 2008: 392) and can include various transformative practices that can rejuvenate an old or unused object. These activities range from thrift practices like finding new uses for objects to more creative ones like altering, re-crafting, and repairing them (Gregson et al., 2009; Parsons, 2008). Simple practices of re-using (e.g. using a shirt as a rag) and what Gregson et al. (2009) calls "quick fixes" (i.e. quick and simple repairs for broken/old objects) are more about preventing waste, using objects more, and being thrifty than manifesting skills and competence. Thus, while they can prolong an object's life by lengthening its usage, they do little to enhance its value. More crafty and creative re-use practices, on the other hand, can work to give the object new looks or new uses, and include renovating, creatively using the object in a composition where it is viewed and assessed innovatively, and total physical renovation (Parsons, 2008). Based on the idea that value is not an intrinsic property of objects but arises from the way we regard, use, and place them, these practices work to revaluate an object and suspend its disposal.

Overall, practices of re-use are inherently transformative processes that usually (re)associate objects with regimes of art, craft, or thrift (Gregson and Crewe, 2003; Parsons, 2008; Cappellini, 2009). These regimes of valuation usually work to prolong the object's life and enhance its status by reinstating its use and/or aesthetic value. In this process, consumers who can undertake such re-use practices also manifest their competence and difference. As such, re-use practices are usually described as opposed to the market logic, as practices through which consumers can challenge and break free from the homogenizing and mindless consumption practices that are encouraged in contemporary societies.

Practices of re-using described above provide significant insights on how possessions can be retained in productive and creative ways. However, this literature elucidates re-using practices in relation to idiosyncratic features like disdain towards divestment; convenience of re-using an object; the desire to construct and manifest a creative identity; or existence of consumer skills and competences. In doing this, it does not take into account how re-use practices can be related to the way consumers use and adopt other consumption and disposition practices. For example, it cannot explain why a consumer, who is competent enough to re-use and transform things, can still use other conduits to dispose of perfectly transformable objects. Similarly, this view falls short in describing how macro structures can portray and promote certain re-use techniques or artwork as legitimized paths for (not)disposing of specific objects. Exploring these practices in relation to broader structures of consuming and disposing, as a part of socio-

cultural world, could prove to be more fruitful in revealing the conditions that nurture the emergence and popularity of these practices.

To sum, practices of re-use are "integrative" in the sense that they work to ensure that the object stays in consumer's possession as long as possible (Gregson et al., 2009). That is, practices of re-use enhance the value of the object that is considered for divestment, effectively strengthening their bonds with the consumers. Other practices of disposing can revaluate an object while enhancing its divestment.

2.3.2 Re-commoditizing

Researchers find that consumers can transform their old/used possessions into commodities by moving them through specific conduits of disposing like online websites (Denegri-Knott and Molesworth, 2010), garage sales (Herrmann, 1997; Lastovicka and Fernández, 2005), or swap meets (Belk et al., 1988; Sherry, 1990). Re-commoditizing can work to turn disposed objects into a mediator between "me" and "we"—a symbol of the link between consumers and strangers with whom they share a common identity (Lastovicka and Fernández, 2005). That is, an appropriate market exchange does more than disposing of objects in profitable ways, it turns the disposed object into a tool for community building and disposing into community work (Herrmann, 1997).

Another view depicts disposing as a marketing activity, where the rules of market exchange apply. Recently, in their extensive exploration of the eBay as a

popular disposing conduit, Denegri-Knott and Molesworth (2009, 2010) highlight how consumers, who adopt the role of a marketer, work systematically to turn their possessions into stocks or assets. By investing time, money, and effort, consumers groom and package the object they want to divest and design plans to market it by taking its photos, writing stories about it, applying effective pricing strategies, and offering promotions in order to increase its attractiveness for the potential buyers. All these help consumers to build "promiscuous relationship" with their possessions, weakening its link between their owners while enhancing their value as commodities and placing them in the marketplace. The disposed objects, then, become stocks and provide monetary value to the consumers, who themselves turn into marketers (Denegri-Knott and Molesworth, 2009, 2010).

The literature on re-selling provides important insights in how old, unused, unwanted, or old-fashioned objects can contribute to building of communities or facilitate the construction and maintenance of new markets. However, they do not shed light on why certain objects are kept out of the paths that could re-commoditize them or how the way consumers re-commoditize their possessions can differ (e.g. lack of existence of garage sales in Turkey compared to the US context).

2.3.3 Sacralizing

Disposition can also create value by connecting objects and disposers to the sacred, through gift-like exchanges and sacrifices. The literature on disposing

usually relates practices of gift giving and sacrifice to conduits such as passing along and donating, which distance objects and consumers from the profane marketplace. Ordinary possessions that are moved through such conduits turn into gifts and sacrifices, by which consumers enhance interpersonal connections and social welfare; build and maintain communities; emancipate from the constraining market forces; and stand against norms of accumulation and materialism (Herrmann, 1996; Kozinets, 2002; Cherrier, 2009b).

Gifting, in disposition literature, is mostly depicted as a constructive practice where disposed objects become tools for consumers' relational bonding and liberation from the norms of consumerism (Stevenson and Kates, 1999; Price et al., 2000; Kozinets, 2002; Cherrier, 2009b). In her foreword to Mauss's famous book *The Gift,* Mary Douglas highlights gifts as inherently social constructs. As a form of social exchange, they create solidarity of goodwill and social indebtedness between consumers (Belk and Coon, 1993) by tying them together in a cycle of reciprocation that "articulates dominant institutions" (Mauss, 1990: ix). Disposed objects, when offered to others with care and good intentions, can turn into gifts and become a part of the giver's extended self, representing the link between the giver and the recipient (Sherry et al., 1993; Belk and Coon, 1993). By passing on the possessions of their deceased beloved ones, consumers transform these objects into "last gifts"—sacred objects that embody and retain a part of the deceased (Stevenson and Kates, 1999). Disposing conduits that are driven by market logic can also transform the object into a gift (Herrmann 1997), especially if the monetary value achieved in return is symbolic rather than profit-oriented.

The same literature relates sacrifice (of material objects) to consumers' self-transformation and depicts it as a venue for them to adopt new lifestyles and move towards the sacred (Kozinets, 2002; Cherrier, 2009b). Hubert and Mauss (1981) assign the word sacrifice to an offering, whose partial or complete destruction releases a type of spiritual/religious energy. People sacrifice to fend off evil spirits, to show gratitude for good fortune, or to curry the favor of a deity who has the power to give something better in return (Mauss, 1990). Ordinary possessions can become sacrifices when destroyed or disposed through conduits where there is no direct reciprocity (Mauss, 1990; Cherrier, 2009b). Consumers can sacrifice their possessions without asking anything in return by disposing of them through charities or leaving them in public places for strangers to find (Cherrier, 2009b). When disposed of this way, an object facilitates the perceived self-transformation, re-connects consumers with divine forces and each other, emancipates them from the constraining norms of consumerism (Cherrier, 2009b) and facilitates self-transformation (Kozinets, 2002).From this perspective, the disposed object becomes a medium through which consumers undergo a transcendental experience.

To sum, a significant line of research has recently started to depict disposing as a collection of creative/transformative practices through which objects are revaluated and consumers are constructed as competent and thrifty artisans, skillful marketers, or enlightened individuals. However, they say little on how these transformation processes are shaped by other processes of consuming and disposing as well as the broader socio-cultural structures consumers live in.

Moreover, in these studies, the sacred/profane distinction is assumed to be quite well defined and disposing is described as a boundary-crossing practice for the "enlightened consumers". Similarly, the meaning of sacred is closely linked to anti-consumption activities and a stand against contemporary consuming. As such, they fall short in explaning how disposing can help consumers experience the sacred without leaving the profane, without changing their life-style or limitating their consumption.

2.4 Disposing as a Social and Normative Process

Consumer researchers who explore cherished objects, possession attachment, and hoarding behavior have suggested that consumers can resist to letting go of their possessions to maintain their social relations and identities embodied in them (Kleine et al., 1995; Kleine and Baker, 2004; Maycroft, 2009; Cherrier and Ponnor, 2010). That being said, other researchers find that disposing, as it "moves objects along" (Gregson et al., 2007) and extends their social life (Appadurai, 1986), can reproduce socially established meanings and practices (Norris, 2004; Gregson et al., 2007). That is, consumers preserve and maintain the social order and hierarchy by removing or distancing things that create disorder or chaos in the system (Douglas, 1966). Green et al. (2001), for example, suggest that upper-class consumers resort to car boot sales to dispose of their possessions in frugal ways so they could maintain their social position and experience status quo during nation-wide economic crises.

Perhaps one of the famous examples comes from Mauss's (1990) observations on potlatch, where the chiefs sacrifice their material wealth to protect his group's and his own place in the social hierarchy. In conspicuously destroying or giving his wealth away, the chief not only shows his generosity but also replenishes his power in the society by preventing others from being able to reciprocate his sacrifice. Exploring divestment of female clothing in India, Norris (2004) notes that women strategically refrain from giving their cherished old clothes to women of low social status (e.g. their paid help) to avoid forming associations that might risk their social position. Interestingly, these objects can be bartered for more durable and expensive pots or burned for their silver threads. Norris suggests that sacrificing the clothes' emotional value for monetary value and new objects is crucial for replenishing one's social network.

Disposing can also be a medium for socializing with others and fostering a sense of "we" with one's community (Ozanne, 1992). Evans (2012) notes that wasting and sacrificing food (through trashing) can be crucial to construct and maintain social and familial relations. For example, in a fragmented society where people have no choice other than disposing of their items to strangers, consumers turn to garage sales to facilitate interpersonal connections and bond with the buyers or sellers (Herrmann, 1996; Lastovicka and Fernández, 2005). In his study of Nuku'alofa market of Tonga, Besnier (2004) emphasizes the importance of these markets in defining and experiencing a modern society. The social integrity of fragmented Tongan society is maintained by the circulation of objects within these markets through the sellers' object exchanges with their diasporic relatives.

In divesting and displacing things, consumers enact and reproduce the social order and the normative, in addition to manifesting and replenishing their commitment to it (Munro, 1995; Gregson et al., 2007). Consumers' commitment and belongingness to their communities (and their norms and rules) manifest itself through their selection of the specific conduits they use to dispose of objects (Cappellini, 2009). Sustainability research, which focuses on consumers' general attitude towards environmental issues rather than disposing per se and deals with uncovering the factors that facilitate adoption of sustainable consumption activities, finds that recycling is a normative practice (Schwartz, 1977; Barr, 2003). In particular, consumers can engage in waste management practices that are publicly visible such as kerbside recycling due to social pressure (Oskamp et al., 1991). Recycling, in this case, becomes an important measure of social normality (Barr, 2003: 238). Conversely, as explained above, consumers who want to negate such norms and break free from the restrictive forces of social normality also prefer specific conduits to dispose of their possessions (Kozinets, 2002; Cherrier, 2009b).

The studies elucidated above attest that disposing is a venue for consumers to accept and manifest or reject and break free from the norms of society. They, however, do not explain if and how consumers can use disposing practices to negotiate and juggle their commitment to these norms or to re-construct the social.

2.5 Research Goals and Questions

The aim of this study is to provide an understanding of disposing as embedded in a network of other consumption practices by exploring consumers' practices and experiences in disposing their items. As explained above, recent research has recognized that disposing is, above all, rooted in the more mundane sphere of consumption and associated it with other domestic practices such as dwelling, ordering or categorizing (Gregson and Crewe, 2003). These studies find that seemingly ordinary practices of disposing actually have important implications for consumers' identity projects as well as the ordering and preservation of the social. Building on these studies, I intend to explore disposing as a network of ordinary practices that are embedded in a socio-cultural, economic, historical, and political context. I approach disposing practices as having social, material, temporal, and spatial dimensions (Miller, 2005; Warde, 2005). Moreover, I perceive disposing as a reflexive and moral process during which consumer think about concepts like exchange, value, consumerism, wasting, use, and need (Gregson and Crewe, 2003)—probably more visibly and harder than they do during acquiring and using.

Adopting such a perspective, I aim to understand when and how consumers dispose of their possessions. Especially, I intend to reveal the broader elements of the socio-cultural, political, technological, moral, economic, and material world that might be constitutive of consumers' experiences with disposing. I also believe that the relation between disposing and other consumption practices requires more

attention, and aim to uncover how practices of disposing might reflect back on and relate to other consumption practices. With these goals in mind, I pursue answers to the following questions:

- How (if) is disposing related to macro-level discursive and ideological mechanisms? What are the discourses and ideologies that are constitutive of different disposing practices?
- How and when do consumers dispose of their possessions?
- How (if) do consumers negotiate disposing?
- How do disposing practices relate to other consumption practices?

In seeking my answers, I draw from a range of data sources. I use different analytical tools to interpret and integrate the data set into a meaningful and coherent story of disposing as experienced by the informants. The following section will describe these data collection and analyses methods in more detail.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this study, I used ethnographic methodology to explore and reveal the processes through which consumers dispose of their ordinary possessions. The fieldwork took place between Spring 2008 and early 2013. My aim was to examine ordinary practices of disposing as embedded in a specific socio-cultural context to understand how and when consumers dispose of their possessions as well as the meanings and ideals associated with these practices. I also intended to learn how consumers negotiate disposing and how practices of disposing might reflect back on and relate to other consumption practices.

I interpret disposing practices informants engage in not as mere idiosyncratic instances but as parts of a broader set of socially, culturally, and historically constituted systems of meanings (Arnold and Fischer, 1994; Thompson, 1997). In

this manner, cultural, religious, political, and economic myths and discourses utilized by different agents (e.g. media, government, and civil organizations); consumers' narratives and interpretations of these discourses; objects that are disposed; paths and facilities of disposing (like recycling facilities or tools to transform materials); places through/into which items are disposed of; and temporal elements (e.g. amount of time required to dispose of an item) were all in the range of this study.

Ethnographic methodology, which is very helpful for understanding cultural and social processes (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994), is quite suitable to capture how these elements come to constitute various disposing practices. Moreover, this methodology is useful in reaching an emic understanding (Maxwell, 1996) and thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the phenomenon under study. More importantly, extensive fieldwork recommended by qualitative research allows exploration of disposing as a process rather than an act or a moment in time (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Lastly, emergent and flexible design of qualitative research decreases the possibility of missing unexpected or newly emergent phenomena. Constant comparison of data and theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) allows for capturing alternative explanations and grounds these abstractions on to concrete data obtained from the experiences of the participants as well as the researcher during fieldwork.

3.1 Data Collection

A credible ethnographic study captures the critical behavioral processes and is representative of the respondents (Mariampolski, 2006). To ensure such trustworthiness, I have triangulated across data sources and types (Denzin, 1978) and collected data using in-depth interviews, participant and non-participant observations, reflective essays, and documents from the media (see Table 2). This triangulation across diverse data sources allowed me to capture the private and idiosyncratic instances in consumers' lives, where disposing might be a key practice. More importantly, I was able to trace social, cultural, economic, and historical conditions that underpin the disposing practices mentioned by the informants (Thompson, 1997) and pinpoint cultural meanings and orientations underlying them (Kozinets, 2002). These data sources also worked in various ways to improve the current research as Table 2 summarizes.

I used theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) in choosing across data sources and participants. I started collecting data to explore my initial research questions and based on the literature I reviewed. The data collection process transformed and improved as my initial analyses highlighted important areas and exciting consumer experiences. For example, as an informant talked about *zekat* (alms), I started exploring and sampling related to this theme. In this process, my continuous engagement with the literature helped me to sample more theoretically than randomly. I stopped data collection when I reached saturation (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) and could not learn anything new from the new data.

Table 2: Types of Data Sources Used

Type	Description	Source	Purpose of Use
Interview	- 19 in-depth interviews - 50-170 minutes (nearly 908 pages of transcripts)	Middle-class consumers (age: 29-58, 15 F / 4 M)	- meanings, norms & ideologies - location and description of disposing practices - other consumption processes - disposed objects and how they are disposed - negotiations
Reflexive Essay	- 62 essays - 0.5-3 pages long	Undergraduate students (early 20s)	- norms & ideologies - location and description of disposing practices - negotiations
Document	- Consumer blogs (e.g. eksisozluk.com) - websites (e.g. dehabiodizel.com.tr) - TV news/shows & online/ printed articles (e.g. ATV, Hürriyet) - books & magazines (e.g. Yaratıcı Fikirler) - visual documents	Consumers, government agents, media & cultural agents, civil organizations	- boundaries of macro factors - discourses, practices & norms - good/bad disposal - policies of disposing - history & interactions of agents
Observation & Introspection notes	- 76 page-long notes - Disposal sites/agents (e.g. streets, flea markets, collectors)	Consumers, the environment & the researcher	- new disposal conduits/agents - data comparison - enriching data collection & analyses - disposing in everyday life - deviance from norms

3.1.1 Interviews

I conducted in-depth interviews with 19 middle- and upper-middle class consumers living in Ankara. The sample included four males and 15 females heterogeneous in age, education, marital status, and household composition (see Table 3, where informant names are pseudonyms to provide confidentiality).

Table 3: Respondent Profiles

Name	Gender /Age	Education/Work	Household Composition
Ahu	F/30	College/Full-time	Married, no kids
Berrin	F/41	College/Full-time	Married, 2 kids
Buket	F/34	PhD/Full-time	Newly-wed, no kids
Cenk	M/32	PhD/Full-time	Married, 2 kids
Feray	F/30	College/Full-time	Married, 1 kid
Ferda	F/29	PhD/Full-time	Married, no kids
Filiz	F/51	Primary school/housewife	Married, 3 kids
Giray	M/35	College/Full-time	Single, living with parents
Hale	F/40	College/Full-time	Single, living with parents
Jale	F/42	College/Full-time	Divorced, no kids
Melek	F/29	College/Full-time	Newly-wed, no kids
Melis	F/33	College/Full-time	Single, living with parents
Mesut	M/37	Junior college/Full-time	Married, 1 kid
Miray	F/47	Open university/Full-time	Married, 2 kids
Neslihan	F/45	Open university/Full-time	Single, living with parents
Sanem	F/29	PhD/Full-time	Newly-wed, no kids
Sevim	F/58	High school/housewife	Divorced, 2 kids
Talat	M/43	College/Full-time	Married, no kids
Yeliz	F/41	College/Full-time	Married, 1 kid

Interviews lasted between 50 and 170 minutes and took place in informants' homes or offices. I tape-recorded all the interviews and had them transcribed as

soon as possible, obtaining nearly 908 double-spaced transcript pages. The gender bias of the sampling was mitigated by the richness of data a female-dominated sample provides, since literature presents women as the main disposition agents in the households (Herrmann, 1996; Phillips and Sego, 2011).

The in-depth interviews were semi-structured so that I could explore the important aspects of disposing as highlighted in the literature without "destroying the elements of freedom and variability within the interview" (McCracken, 1988: 25). So, I had a guideline that included the list of the questions I wanted to ask during the interview (see Appendix A for the interview guideline). I came up with this guideline after my literature review and in line with my own research goals and questions. Thus, to some extent, this guideline reflected my own interpretation of disposing and beliefs/assumptions about what it included and what was interesting about it—which transformed as I spent more time in the field. However, the semi-structured nature of the interview process helped me to go beyond my own stand as the researcher to explore new facets of disposing. I encouraged informants to talk about their own experiences, beliefs, knowledge as well as the topics that interested them. For example, when one informant started talking extensively about trashing her objects, I followed her lead and focused on that practice but inquired after other practices even if she did not mention them. That is, I followed the natural flow of the interview and asked probing questions to understand informants' experiences at a deeper level on the topics they brought up. Concurrently, I followed the guideline and invited informants to talk about the topics they ignored or forgot to mention.

Interviews started with general warming up questions about informants' lives. This gave me a basic understanding of their past, current situation, family and social life, aspirations, values, beliefs, and dreams, which underlie the meanings they attached to different conduits of disposing. I asked informants to talk about how they generally dispose of their ordinary possessions. Specifically, I encouraged them to describe what made an object disposable, when and how they assess their possessions' value and disposability, the ways through which they usually dispose of their items, and what factors (e.g. consumption processes, others' comments) they considered during this process. These inquiries provided insights about how informants' perceptions about an object were formed and transformed. I employed another line of inquiry to understand how and when each disposition conduit was used. Additional attention was paid to cases where informants interacted with others while disposing of their possessions and how such encounters could be constitutive of different disposition processes. Since satisfaction is accepted as an emotional measure of perceived success and value delivery (Day and Crask, 2000), informants were asked to report disposing experiences they were satisfied and dissatisfied with. Informants also described cases when they were hesitant to dispose of their ordinary possessions.

I also used a word association technique when I wanted to learn about personal meanings informants attributed to specific notions (Branthwaite and Lunn, 1985). I specifically asked informants questions like "What do you see in your mind when I say garbage?" or "What type of a person comes to your mind when I say thrifty/wasteful?". This way, I tried to capture informants' beliefs and

assumptions as well as their feelings and thoughts about important issues related to disposing, without them reflecting on or appropriating their answers. Another technique I used to stimulate informants' elaborations is asking about a specific event or experience about disposing—or the critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954). For this, during interviews I asked questions like "Have you ever said I would never pass this object on? When?" or "Have you ever felt that an object of yours turned into rubbish/garbage during disposing?". This line of inquiry created opportunity to probe informants about the topics that could be critical for my research goals. More importantly, it helped me to map out how a concept might combine various discourses, practices, and ideals in consumers' minds. For example, I found that "garbage" is simultaneously constructed by an object's material aspects, moral ideals promoted in society, consumers' religious commitments and risk perceptions, and lack of appropriate disposing conduits.

In addition to these in-depth interviews, I occasionally engaged in talks and chats with other people. Sometimes, I met strangers during my fieldwork, who did not have time for an extended interview but were willing to share their insights about a specific practice or experience on which I wanted to obtain more insights. I met one such guy in an antique dealer, where he extensively talked about his plans on selling a valuable family piece but he refrained from it as he was fed up with the retailers being "unfair". Another one was complaining about lack of convenient donation conduits around her (like Salvation Army containers). Most of the time, I was not able to record these chats but took extensive notes on the content of the talk and my own reflections about it as soon as I could.

3.1.2 Reflective Student Essays

Another data set was obtained from undergraduate students of a private university in Ankara. As such, it represents the values, beliefs, and practices of a consumer group, who are yet to become caretakers of families and whose fashion/technology oriented consumption tendencies are important identity markers. The sample consisted of 62 essays (half page to three pages long), written by a group of students from the Graphic Design, Communication, and Management departments, with a younger population (early 20s) and more balanced gender distribution (41% males, 59% females) than the interview set. Participation was voluntary in return for bonus points. Based on the literature that defines disposition as a reflective practice (Gregson et al., 2007), students were asked to contemplate the ways they dispose of their possessions. The essays included students' elucidations on how they assessed an object to see if it could /should be disposed of, when and how they decided to dispose of it, in what ways, and what influenced their decisions and how. The students also wrote about disposing experiences they were satisfied and happy with as well as those they regretted.

3.1.3 Online and Print Documents

Another data source was documentary sources (Hodder, 2000). Briefly, it involves the use and the interpretation of mute evidence, text- and non-text based documents, to produce a descriptive and analytical account of a research

phenomenon. Specifically, I sampled from Internet blogs and forums, web pages, newspaper and magazine articles, books, and TV shows. The sampling process started with a rather broad reading of seemingly relevant documents and became more purposeful as I obtained deeper insights from the field. This procedure is suggested in the literature as a way to deal with extant number and type of documents (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000). I sought two main goals in purposefully sampling these documents. First, I wanted to obtain a broader understanding of the elements in the socio-cultural, economic, legal, and political environment that might undertext consumers' narratives regarding their experiences with disposing or make specific conduits available for their personal use. I also collected documents with the objective of revealing public meanings attached to disposing and specific disposing conduits as well as to contextualize emergent themes of the study (e.g. religious orientations). Since consumers derive from "cultural codes" or socially and historically formed meanings and frameworks in constituting their stories (Arnold and Fischer, 1994; Thompson et al., 1994; Thompson, 1997), documents, albeit created by individuals or institutional agents, actually testify for the cultural perspective and ideologies prevalent in the research context. So, this investigation provided me with the background knowledge and helped me to "review cultural categories" (McCracken, 1988: 32) through which personalized meanings and practices (mine and informants') are constructed.

The second use of documents was to trace and contextualize specific things mentioned by informants. For example, quite a few participants talked or wrote about *Derya Baykal,* a famous ex-actress who has a daily TV show as well as a

website and various books on Do-it-yourself (DIY). Baykal is recognized for her resourcefulness in many areas such as health and housekeeping. However, according to some of the participants, she gets the credit for her "eccentric" methods in renewing and re-using objects in creative projects. After an informant mentioned her, I started watching her shows, visited her website, and purchased her books. These sources helped me understand the mechanisms underlying some re-use and transformation practices as well as to reveal the contemporary re-interpretation of thrift, craft and creative consumption.

My documentary sample includes various print ads, newspaper/magazine articles (those of pop culture and those produced by legal-political agents, producers/firms or civil organizations), news and shows on TV, and Internet blogs/websites that documents consumer dialogues. Specifically, I sampled among national, popular TV channels (e.g., *ATV, Show TV, Kanal D, TRT1, Star TV*) and popular newspapers (e.g., *Hürriyet, Sabah, Posta, Milliyet, Cumhuriyet*). Since my informants were middle and upper middle class urban consumers, who mostly define themselves as modern, secular and educated individuals, I wanted to trace the media that were frequently accessed by them. ın addition, I followed the news and announcements made by the government and municipalities on recycling legislations, new waste management systems, renovation campaigns and self-improvement courses, and ads issued by businesses on household waste or 2nd hand item collection / exchange. Moreover, I read books and magazines written on how to renovate, transform or reuse items. I also scanned Internet blogs which came from my search on Google with key words "*eski eşya*" (old objects), "*geri*

dönüşüm" (recycling), "*elden çıkartma*" (disposing, divesting), and "*eşya yenileme*" (rejuvenation, revaluation), and websites dedicated to 2nd hand item exchange to see what type of items were exchanged or sold and how. I made particular use of consumer blogs (e.g. eksisozluk.com, wwww.kadinlarkulubu. com), websites of businesses and government agents (e.g. www.ankara.bel.tr, www.dehabiodizel.com.tr), and online shopping sites (e.g. www.gittigidiyor.com). These sources helped me to better understand how various agents (e.g. government, media, businesses/entrepreneurs, or civil organizations) and macro-level factors (e.g. existence/lack of infrastructures for recycling/charity, beliefs and discourses on ideologies such as religion, risk or modernity, and new legislations) beyond consumers' private actions inform, encourage, discourage or transform disposing practices.

3.1.4 Systematic Observation and Self-Inquiry

A sound ethnographic research makes use of rich and frequent observations as well as prolonged participatory encounters (Goulding, 2002). So, in order to obtain an "*emic"* understanding of the phenomenon at hand, I engaged in prolonged observation as suggested in the literature (Arnould and Wallendorf, 1994). The fieldwork was spread over a long period, from Spring 2008 through early 2013, with differing intensity. During this period, I used both participant and non-participant observations to explore various elements (i.e. places/sites, people, material objects, placings, etc.) important for my research objectives. Non-

participant observations included me visiting sites or observing people without actually interacting and interfering with them directly (Berg, 2004). This technique did not actually provide me with an insider's view or in-depth understanding of consumers' experiences but revealed the existence of some publicly visible practices (e.g. trashing, separating, recycling, selling, selecting, etc.) and how they were carried out. It also allowed me to witness interactions not only among consumers but also between consumers and non-human agents (e.g. bins, recycling containers, others objects, etc.). My participant observation method included disposing-related activities I engaged in with participants during the fieldwork as well as the ones I inevitably undertook in my everyday life.

As a part of my observation agenda, I visited places and sites that people could use to divest things. For example, I approached streets as sites of disposal and watched apartment buildings—interiors and especially balconies—situated in the (upper)-middle and sometimes lower class neighborhoods in Ankara and Antalya. I focused on if/how the spaces in and out of the households were used as places of divestment, what was thrown or deserted on the streets, how and where they were placed, and how (if any) people reacted to these items (e.g. how collectors chose from them or how passers-by regarded these items). Moreover, I observed some retail spaces in Ankara and Antalya (i.e. mostly supermarkets and shopping malls), with a focus on how they promoted or prevented certain divestment practices (e.g. if/where they put recycling bins and where, if, they provided any assistance for disposing of items sold there). In addition to these, I observed 2nd hand and flea markets such as *İtfaiye Meydanı*—a flea market in the

central Ankara where second-hand objects are sold and exchanged—and the authentic bazaar in Kale where antiques and used/old objects are exchanged. I also visited shops that marketed used and/or antique objects in downtown Ankara. During one of my visits to İstanbul, I also had the opportunity to chat with a guy, who claimed to be one of the main vintage goods suppliers to nostalgic TV shows such as *80ler* (The 80s) or *Öyle Bir Geçer Zaman Ki* (Time Goes by So Fast), and observed his store. I also observed various *EvKur* stores (small stores that sell new and used household furniture, appliances, and electronics) in Ankara and Antalya. These retailer-sites were helpful for distinguishing different categories of the "old" and for understanding what types of objects were re-commoditized and how they were presented and re-valued in the market.

I also occasionally participated in what I was observing to different degrees. First, I engaged in some disposing-related activities with some participants. For example, I helped three female informants to clean, order, and organize their houses during which we selected and disposed of their possessions. More specifically, I not only observed how these participants sorted things to decide what to keep and what to send, but I also participated in this process by highlighting certain objects as potentially disposable and providing recommendations on specific disposing conduits when asked. Similarly, I helped one male informant in marketing his cell phone on an online re-selling site. We took photos, selected the best shots, searched prices of other brands to find a good price, and wrote a brief narrative explaining the phone's history and features. Lastly, due to the nature of the consumption phenomenon I was exploring, I was a complete participant (Gold,

1958) in some activities and practices. That is, the fieldwork occasionally extended to my everyday life, with my researcher identity permeating my private practices. For example, I frequently found myself questioning my motives in trashing an object or assessing why I was disposing of something and its timing. My reflections on my own and my family's or friends' practices included observing and questioning when an object was disposed of, how and what type of tensions occured during the process, and how we legitimized and rationalized our disposing practices.

I documented all these observations and reflections through field-notes and photographs that I took. In addition to the planned and systematic note keeping, recording of field-notes was sometimes spontaneous. In the first case, I was usually going to an interview or visiting a research-site and, thus, had the necessary equipments with me (e.g. notebook or recording device). However, I also took notes of the things that I encountered unintentionally. For example, when walking on the street, I sometimes encountered collectors or other people sorting through garbage bins or people throwing their possessions away. I spontaneously took down my observations and interactions with these people whenever I had the chance to talk to them. In any case, my field notes included information on the date, place, names, description (e.g. news on TV or chat with a friend), and content of the observation, and quotations if there were any. I also kept some "analytical notes," which included my own reflections (thoughts, beliefs, questions) and opinions on relations between different observations and my abstractions (Emerson et al., 1995). For the duration of the fieldwork, I occasionally went back to my field

notes to make comparisons with other data as well as to reflect on the changes that occurred in my frame of reference in interpreting the data, which is an expected consequence of hermeneutic understanding (Thompson, 1997).

3.2 Data Analysis

Ethnographic research has a relatively emergent design but to ensure theoretical sensitivity and strength of the findings (Glaser, 1992; Locke, 1996; Goulding, 2005), data collection and analysis should continuously inform each other (Emerson et al., 1995). As such, I started data analysis during data collection, right after conducting and transcribing the first few interviews. This way, I tried to "line up what I take as theoretically possible or probable with what I am finding in the field." (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 253). In order to listen to my data and capture the emergent themes while managing a variety of textual and visual data, I triangulated across data analysis methods.

In analyzing the data, I followed the grounded theory guidelines and coded each transcript to allow emergence of new theories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This way, I was able to attain an emic understanding of disposing and recognize "the breakdowns" (Agar, 1986)—that is, surprising and unexpected discoveries—at the early stages of the study. I coded all interviews after they were transcribed to form initial categories and emergent themes, which were rather loose and unstructured at first. I first read and coded the transcripts individually, and then compared them

with each other. This way, the codes started to group and form bigger themes. Occasionally, I modified the codes as additional analyses revealed relations between initial categories, allowing further abstraction of the data (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This abstraction urged me to move on to axial and selective coding, which disclosed the relations between different categories, and hence, supported me in building the core and sub-categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

In addition to coding procedures, I treated transcripts and essays as collections of stories told by the informants, and re-analyzed them using a narrative analysis approach (Riesmann, 1993). When analyzing the informant narratives, I specifically focused on what was there in the previous research but is excluded by the informants, what is kept mentioned as appropriate/inappropriate ways of disposing of an object, the role informants portray for themselves and the others, the metaphors / analogies /symbols they use, and how they rationalize the disposing decisions they made. This narrative analysis approach helped me to re-interpret the texts as embedded in the broader socio-cultural world of meanings (Thompson, 1997). I treated each interview as a case in itself and tried to obtain a deep understanding of informant's experiences on the topic. I, then, applied cross-case analysis (Patton, 1990) and compared the findings across different informants. Essays were coded, categorized, and grouped in similar ways. I read essays one-by-one, regarded them together, and then re-analyzed them with the interviews, comparing and contrasting the codes, emergent themes, and my own notes.

I followed a similar procedure of coding in analyzing other documents I collected from different data sources. In addition, I used discourse analysis for these documents. My aim was to include in my analysis the voice of the parties whose actions might be critical in formation and transformation of discourses and practices related to disposing. I also wanted to reveal the broader socio-cultural background that nurtures and/or constraints disposing in any way. In this process, I made use of the visual documents in the form of print ads or photos that I took during my fieldwork. Being more open to interpretation and speculation, analyses of photos helped me stay in dialogue with the field by raising questions for me to follow throughout the study and by allowing "reevaluation of details and overtones" (Collier and Collier, 1986:108). In order to abide by my research goals and prevent under-analysis of the photos, I kept in mind the categories and themes that emerged from the field when analyzing these visual documents (Ball and Smith, 1992).

In addition to all these, I made use of a hermeneutical and iterative process (Thompson, 1997) across and within data sources. I compared and contrasted each data set among each other. Then, I compared and analyzed them together with other data sources to expose convergent and divergent themes, and to form a comprehensive interpretation of the whole data set. This iterative reading and re-reading continued until codes and themes were organized in meaningful ways. I made use of the comparisons to carry the research findings into a more abstract level by integrating the data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

In addition to different analytical tools applied, the quality of this ethnographic research also increased through my prolonged engagement with the research field for nearly five years. Such prolonged engagement, according to Arnould and Wallendorf (1994), is one of the basic aspects of quality in ethnography. During this time, I had the opportunity to reflect on my own beliefs, assumption, and ways of disposing. Similarly, I was able engage in longitudinal observations of different aspects of the topic, which helped me to question and improve my interpretations and analyses. For example, I was able to observe the emergence and proliferation of recycling practices through the work of various agents and distinguished different processes for different recyclable materials. I witnessed how used batteries were promoted as a prevalent menace for the environment and public health through various informative ads in papers and on TV. They, then, turned into manageable and recyclable waste through the proliferation of used battery collection containers distributed to nearly every supermarket. Eventually, they retreated to being invisible consequences of our household consumption as these containers, intended for revaluation of used batteries, started to fill with organic waste and cigarette butts, and were moved to the back of the malls where they became out-of-sight and reach. The story of the transformation of waste cooking oil into recyclable material was quite different from that of used batteries. With the help of persistent efforts from the government and businesses, who have more use for waste cooking oil than batteries, the oil still flourishes as a recyclable material while recycling of batteries turns out to be a recycling trend that has passed its peak until a comeback. Had I not engaged in

such long-term contact with the field, I could not have distinguished various and distinct practices, discourses, and meanings attached to the recyclability of batteries and cooking oil. Thus, prolonged engagement and observations not only increased the amount of my data but they enhanced my analytical processes by challenging me to reinterpret my data and adjust my findings. The remaining of this paper provides a detailed explanation of the findings and implications obtained through this extensive fieldwork.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

My analyses reveal a multi-layered model, consisting of ideologies and meta-practices that nurture, favor, legitimize or censure various disposing conduits and processes. The findings reveal an interactive relation—most of the time disguised and surfaced as tensions and conflicst—between consumerism and moralism that feeds disposing process. On one hand, informants are eager to engage in practices promoted in consumerist ethos (e.g. accumulating, acquiring, replacing, etc.). That is, contrary to implications of significant amount of research conducted in Western societies on de-consumption, voluntary simplicity (Etzioni, 1998; Cherrier, 2009; Cherrier and Murray, 2009) or slow consumption (Cooper, 2005), participants are unwilling to refrain from consuming nor do they want to decrease the amount or frequency of their consumption. Figure 1 organizes and visualizes these findings.

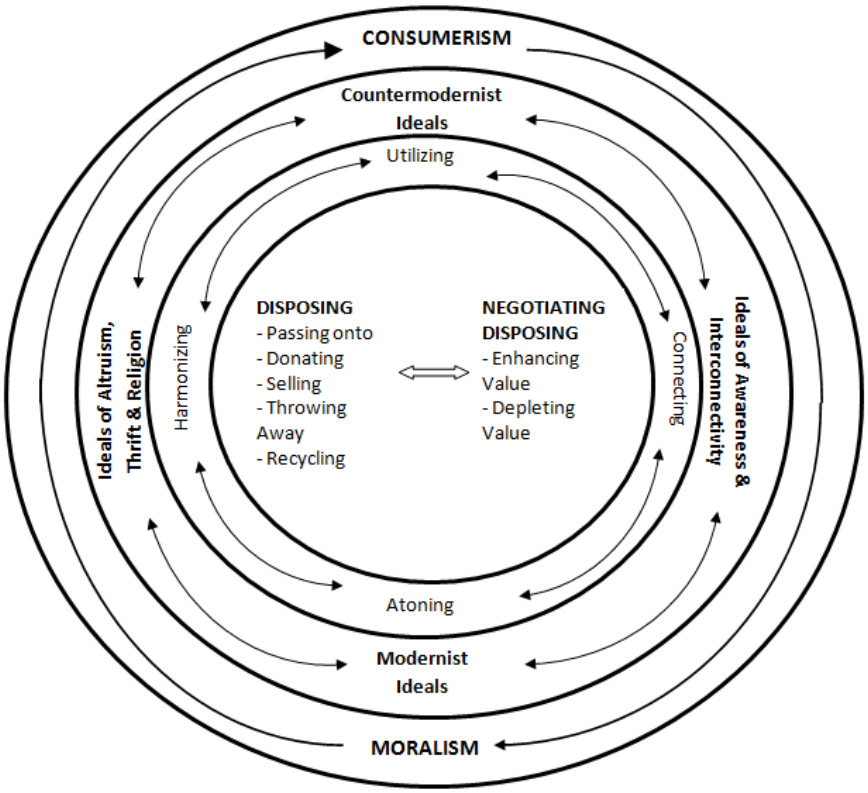

Figure 1: An Emergent Model of Disposing

While nearly all informants express a wish to get new things, to upgrade their existing items, and to keep up with fashion and the latest trends, they also operate under varying degrees of moralism. That is, they perceive everyday life and decisions as imbued with a moral dimension (Lovett and Jordan, 2005: 167). In assessing the morality of their actions, informants use what they consider to be the authentic values of the traditional Turkish society. Such "structural nostalgia" (Herzfeld, 1991 as cited in Wilk, 2001) constructs values like not creating waste, behaving in moderation, and being sensitive and conscientious towards the unlucky or disadvantaged people in society as moral ideals to be cherished and lived by.

Most informants perceive these ethical codes in conflict with basic principles and materialistic tendencies of contemporary consumer culture. Disposing, informed by a broader set of meanings and embedded in a set of meta-practices, provides a resolution for these conflicts. Conversely, the interplay between consumerism amd moralism orients and underlies informants' experiences with and practices of disposing. In this manner, the model above actually highlights how morality and consumerism can feed each other, and challenges the ever-popular moralism/consumerism dichotomy.

The findings signify disposing as a critical practice for consuming—especially, for consuming morally. Hale explains how she observes that the society is becoming increasingly consumerist and highlights the importance of disposing practice as a way out:

> You know, we didn't use to live like this before. We were not this open to change. We only had one divan in our home. Not like our couches and armchairs as now. It was enough for us…We did not use to buy clothes non-stop, only in bairams. We couldn't get whatever we wanted, not like now...We used to share, pass our things on to others. Now, we try to do the same thing. We try to find those who are really in need. We want our things to go to these people.
> (Hale, 42, F, interview)

> *Biz böyle yaşamazdık biliyorsun. Bu kadar değişime açık değildik. Evde bir tane divanımız olurdu şimdiki gibi kanepeler, takımlar yoktu. Bize yeterdi o kadar… Durmadan kıyafet almazdık işte bayramdan bayrama ancak. İstediğimiz her şeyi alamazdık şimdiki gibi…Paylaşırdık eşyalarımızı, başkalarına verirdik. Şimdi de aynısını yapmaya çalışıyoruz. İhtiyacı olan insanları bulmaya çalışıyoruz. Eşyalarımız bu insanlara gitsin istiyoruz.*

Like Hale, most participants report conflicting feelings about their contemporary consumption practices. While Hale appreciates having more

consumption choice and easier access to a variety of goods, she is also rather critical of the consequences of such abundance and fickleness. The transformations that have normalized change and its manifestation through consumption have also highlighted disposing of the acquired objects as a critical practice to hold on to the traditional values of the Turkish society. Although Hale has succumbed to the temptations of modern consumerism, she tries to comply with "the old ways" when disposing her possessions. This helps her to sanctify and moralize her consumption and commit to what she perceives as the traditional values of Turkish society while enjoying the abundance of offerings in the market.

I have found that in disposing their possessions, participants draw from, re-appropriate, and merge various discursive ideals to create a "bricolage" of meanings and practices (Fırat and Venkatesh, 1995; Cherrier and Murray, 2007). I have identified four main ideals, which orient consumers' disposing practices and undertone their narratives and experiences regarding disposing: modernist ideals, countermodernist ideals, ideals of awareness and interconnectedness, and ideals of altruism, religion, and thrift. Constructed through these grand discourses, disposing process inevitably takes on a moral character with material and symbolic dimensions. I will talk about these ideals and how they might inform consumers' practices of disposing in the next section. Embedded in these ideals, there are also meta-practices that host practices of disposing. I have distinguished four of them: utilizing, harmonizing, connecting, and atoning. These practices reveal disposing as positioned in an assembly of other consumption practices. I will talk about them in the main part of the findings section. Finally, in the innermost circle lie the specific

paths through which consumers dispose of or try not to dispose of their possessions. The last part of the findings elucidates the practices through which consumers negotiate disposing and try to derive more value from their possessions. Here, I would like to briefly describe the conduits through which informants dispose of their possessions.

4.1 Conduits of Disposing

Data analysis shows that, in addition to dealing with excess (Gregson et al., 2007) and separation from objects (Roster, 2001), disposition is also about revaluating objects and enhancing the value obtained from them. The objects informants consider for disposal still encapsulate some value, the transfer of which can facilitate their relations with others as well as the perceived value of the object. Disposition is about managing the flow of "transferable value" and dealing with objects for which value transfer is challenging. The path of the object is shaped by interplay of its perceived value, availability of partners to transfer this value, and the predicted value of this transfer as well as consumers' skills and capabilities.

One of the most common ways through which informants transfer value is passing the object on to others to prevent waste and improve others' welfare:

> Giving my possessions to someone who could not have it otherwise…It feels like I use them to the fullest.
> (Cevdet, M, early 20s, essay)
>
> *Eşyalarımı normalde onlara sahip olamayacak kişilere vermek…O zaman sanki o eşyayı tam anlamıyla kullanmışım gibi hissediyorum.*

For Cevdet, passing an object on to someone in need of it boosts perceived use and moral value obtained from it. It even reflects back on the object's consumption as he envisions its significance for the potential recipients. Informants usually dispose of clothes, accessories like bags or jewelry, or even furniture and electronics by giving them to recipients who could use them properly. In addition to family members, most informants have default recipient such as cleaning ladies (women who help with the house chores by cleaning, cooking, and even doing laundry and ironing) or building attendees *(kapıcı)* to pass their objects. These agents are not only convenient but informants also have on-going relations with them, which they maintain by moving certain objects to them. I will talk about these agents more in the later sections.

Consumers can also prefer less direct methods to pass along their objects by donating them to charities. These official institutions share the burden of physical distribution of the disposed object and help consumers find suitable recipients who are in need. However, most informants are suspicious about the credibility and trustworthiness of these indirect channels. As such, they usually try to find small local charities such as local clinics or municipality-based organizations rather than using the nation-wide, more institutional ones. They also use referencing systems, that is, they try to find someone they know and trust who works in such institutions to make sure that their donations are actually delivered to people in need. Passing on to and donating move disposed possessions (and consequently the disposers) into rather sacred realms of gifts and sacrifices when informants act with altruistic

intentions to enhance others' welfare and nurture relationships while reflecting on the recipient's needs and the consequences of the disposition process.

Re-selling also emerges as a preferable disposition conduit especially for expensive or frequently replaced possessions like automobile, jewelry, or electronics. If an object's perceived value is significantly affected from the changes in the technology, fashion, and trends, participants try to quickly dispose of it while its transferable value is still high. Informants legitimize early disposition of these objects by transforming them into stocks (Denegri-Knott and Molesworth, 2009) and transferring their value to those who are willing to provide monetary value in return:

> A one-month old phone. You sell it and upgrade to a better model…like exchanging it for a better one…Selling your possessions requires skills. Being able to market something of yours, it's nice.
> (Mesut, M, 37, interview)

> *Bir aylık telefon. Satarsın ve bir üst modele terfi edersin…telefonu daha iyi bir model için değiştirmek gibi sanki…Satmak beceri ister. Sahip olduğun bir eşyayı pazarlayabilmek çok güzel bir şey.*

Mesut's arguments imply that selling enhances objects' "liquidity" (Bardhi et al., 2012): consumers use possessions for functionality and easily depart from them to maintain their commitment to specific value regimes (e.g. fashion). Since selling requires planning and strategizing (Lastovicka and Fernández, 2005; Denegri-Knott and Molesworth, 2009), re-commoditization constructs informants as skillful bargainers, who can liquidate their possessions to compensate for participating in consumption culture. Thus, other than providing monetary value, re-commoditization helps informants to negotiate two "meta practices of

consumption": waste creation and object accumulation (Gregson et al., 2007). In the current data set, automobile, house, jewelry, book, cell phone and furniture objects emerge as objects whose disposal is usually encouraged by consumers' desire to earn monetary return. As the monetary value of the object increases (e.g. house, car, electronics, etc.) or its intimacy with participants decreases (i.e. how private it is), participants become more interested in utilizing the object for money.

On the other hand, my inquiries about selling clothes, accessories, shoes, kitchenware or utensils were usually followed by shocked looks, weird episodes of silence, or vehement refusals from the informants. I speculate that being members of (upper) middle-class, most informants find it inappropriate and inconvenient to sell these types of possessions, whose market value is low and/or circulation can be socially risky. Instead, such objects are either passed on and donated or thrown away—trashed or deserted on the streets or near the garbage bin—if they are considered too worn or private. So, garbage bin emerges as an important conduit to deal with objects that have low or no transferable value:

> If I cannot or don't want to translate it, like underwear. That's rubbish. It goes to the bin.
> (Melek, F, 29, interview)
>
> *Eğer o eşyayı bir şeye dönüştüremiyorsam ya da dönüştürmek istemiyorsam, iç çamaşırı gibi mesela, o çöp olur. Direkt çöpe gider.*

Melek refers to objects like underwear or socks that gain low transferable value after being used for a while. Disposal of such objects—even between close family members—could be offensive and frowned upon in society. Also, with the proliferation of goods in the marketplace and consumers' increasing access to it, it

is hard for informants to find appropriate transfer partners to pass along or sell them: *"who would want them old and used when their 1st hand is so affordable?," "it would be unhygienic," or "people could resent being offered such private things".* Similarly, objects in poor material condition are generally disposed of through the garbage bin as *"the right thing to do"*. Thus, the garbage bin not only provides a convenient conduit to dispose the excess and rubbish (Gregson et al., 2007) but also creates moral value by helping consumers do the right thing and comply with the social norms in safely moving the objects, whose disposition can otherwise create shame, hurt, or offense.

Contrary to the literature that highlights recycling as an important and widely-used disposing conduit (Schultz et al., 1995; Tucker, 1999a, 1999b), it came up relatively infrequently during interviews or in student essays. Most informants, albeit being aware of its positive implications for the environment and accepting its necessity, undermine their responsibility in choosing and employing recycling to dispose of their possessions. For these informants, lack of local recycling facilities or recycling programs supported by municipalities; non-existence of recycling agents that collect recyclables from informants' homes and neighborhoods; and insufficient education on what to recycle and how are legitimate reasons for not participating in recycling activities regularly. Those informants whose neighborhood is governed by local authorities that commit to recycling programs report that they separate their garbage to send glass, paper, plastic, etc. materials to recycling. I also observed existence of idiosyncratic and object-specific recycling activities. Mesut (M/37), for example, explains his

sensitivity in disposing of used batteries. He describes these objects as highly toxic and dangerous. Yet, rather than using small recycling bins that municipalities put in supermarkets, shopping malls, and other public places for collecting used batteries, he prefers to bury them into the ground which, he feels, purifies and transforms poisonous batteries into harmless garbage. Another way to partly substitute recycling is deserting objects on the streets near the garbage bin where informal garbage collectors can select and take them to recycling facilities:

> I do not recycle. I can throw unused objects into garbage…They (collectors) come every night, it's their job. How are they going to make a living if we recycle or donate everything?
> (Nevra, F, early 20s, essay)
>
> *Geri dönüşüme katılmıyorum. Eşyalarımı çöpe atabiliyorum…Onlar (toplayıcılar) her gece geliyor çöpler için. Bu onların işi. Eğer her şeyi geri dönüşüme gönderirsek ya da bağışlarsak bu insanlar nasıl geçinecek?*

For Nevra, the garbage bin is not always an inherently wasteful disposition conduit (Gregson et al., 2007) but also a venue for indirect recycling. Thus, she occasionally forgoes donation or recycling paths to throw her possessions into the garbage bin, predicting that they will be picked up by the collectors.

I will talk about these disposing conduits as well as the agents, meanings, and practices related to them below. In the remainder of this chapter, I will first explicate the grand discourses and meta-practices of disposing, and then, talk about the practices through which consumers negotiate disposing.

4.2 Cultural Ideals Underlying Practices of Disposing

In their explorations of natural health marketplace as a micro-culture, Thompson and Troester (2002) identify what they call "postmodern cultural orientations". These discursive formations inflict their participants' narratives and experiences regarding the natural health market. They contextualize and nurture it as a value system in a fragmented contemporary world. In this research, I adopt a similar perspective. My analyses of the whole data set—interviews, essays, observations, and documents—reveal four distinctive discourses that constitute the undertone for the data at hand. Constrained by the desire to adopt consumerist practices while moralizing their practices, participants adopt specific ideologies to describe and reflect on their experiences. These cultural orientations also constitute the background for the documents I have collected and analyzed throughout the fieldwork. Below, I explain these discourses and the way they can infiltrate disposing practices.

4.2.1 Modernist Ideals

The ideals of constant progress, efficiency, and control of the environment constitute the backbone of modernity (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992). To achieve efficiency and progress, modernity celebrates control and order in all areas of life. Modern systems favor standardization, rationality, and homogeneity over diversity, heterogeneity, and authenticity (Ekelund and Jönsson, 2011). Thus, establishment

of modern institutions can be interpreted as an attempt to systematically bring order to the world and establish control over the uncontrollable such as the nature. The micro-inflections of this perspective are apparent in data when participants talk about their anxiety and discomfort over losing control—over their life, consumption, and household—which have important implications for the way they dispose of their objects. Consider Buket and how she maintains efficiency by constantly ordering her things:

> I categorize things, put them into groups. Especially after big events like graduating or completing my thesis. I realize there is always a mess or excess and I sort and group things to have order. Those which I cannot categorize, they go. I dispose of them.
> (Buket, 34, F, interview)
>
> *Her şeyi kategorilere ayırırım, gruplandırırım. Özellikle, hani böyle büyük şeylerden, olaylardan sonra mezuniyet gibi ya da tezimi tamamlayınca. Bakarım dağınıklık var, fazlalık var hemen eşyaları ayırırım gruplara. Kategorize edemediklerim ise gider. Elden çıkartırım onları.*

Buket's obsession with maintaining order carries traces of how modernity exerts control over social life by grouping things into categories so that the social order can be reproduced by moving away the things that are out-of-category lest they create "pollution" (Douglas, 1966). Disposing, in this manner, becomes crucial in preserving order and maintaining control and efficiency.

The modernist ideal of progress, which requires moving forward and changing, is also reflected in participants' eagerness to keep up by obtaining and consuming new things as well as in their guarded stance against "the old". To better understand this phenomenon, one needs to look at Turkish consumers' experiences with modernization throughout history. From as early as 18th century

Ottoman Empire, each and every aspect of everyday life in Turkey has been subjected to periodic modernization movements. Especially, after the foundation of the Republic and with the intention of moving the country away from its pre-Republican past, efforts to modernize the country have accelerated in intensity. The newly formed country turned its face towards the West as a model to establish a new urban Turkish collective consciousness that encouraged continuous progress and development (Kozan, 1994; Bozdoğan and Kasaba, 1997). The negative meanings of the past were underlined with the "rapid modernization" policies implemented to "catch up" with the West (Keyman, 2007). These have made change a necessary and inevitable part of the social and personal development in Turkey. Turkish people started to practice these ideals in and through the marketplace after the 1980s, when ANAP (Motherland Party), a political party guided by the ideals of *çağdaşlaşma* (contemporarization), won the elections in Turkey and adopted neo-liberal policies. Global forces flooded Turkish marketplace, which had been closed to foreign goods and businesses, and further encouraged ideals of progress and continuous transformation at the individual and collective levels. As a result, the distinction between the notions of "the old" and "the new," a powerful duality that governs everyday life in Turkey, became more pronounced while Turkish consumers were encouraged to seek new material objects and discard the old ones. Consider how Yeliz experiences modernity:

> Modernity sometimes brings degeneration and de-valuate past relations...But, it also brings technology, progress, health…I experience it, buy 3D TVS, laptops, and replace my cell phones to catch up. So, modern is also good as long as you don't forget who you are, your past.
> (Yeliz, 41, F, interview)

Modernlik dejenerasyon demek, eski ilişkilerin yok olması, değersizleşmesi…Ama aynı zamanda modern hayat teknoloji, ilerleme, sağlık getiriyor…Ben modernliği yaşıyorum, 3 boyutlu televizyonum, laptopum, cep telefonlarım var. Değiştiriyorum yenisi çıkınca. Modernlik kim olduğunu, geçmişini unutmadığın sürece iyi bir şey.

Yeliz is aware of the effect of modernization on her history, traditions, and social relations. But, for her, modernity also means ability to change, to keep up, to have a better and convenient life. Thus, she also willingly submits to some of its ideals by participating into consumer culture, which, consequently, induces a need for disposing.

Such productive and progressive perspective on modernity also reverberates through the government's encouragement to utilize objects and increase efficiency and productivity of consumption. The municipalities and other local authorities provide free public arts and crafts courses, where women learn to sew, knit, paint glasses and fabrics, design jewelry, cook, do make-up and hair, and even work with wood. Recent increase in TV shows on home improvements, craft, and handwork on national TV channels also parallels the efforts to enhance Turkish consumers'—especially women's—productivity and contribution to the national welfare. These developments have increased the popularity of disposing conduits that help consumers to "make use of things".

Embracing modernity does not mean that Turkish consumers have actually forgot about their past. In fact, some studies show that, despite systematic modernization programs and consequent changes in society; traditions, family, religion, and ethnic background are still important constitutive elements of most

Turkish consumers' lives (Robins, 1996; Keyman, 2007). This partly explains the prevalence of religious and moral ideologies underlying participants' narratives. At the same time, it accounts for simultaneous rootedness of informants' experiences and practices of disposing in countermodernist ideals.

4.2.2 Countermodernist Ideals

An important cultural orientation underlying informants' articulations of their disposing practices is countermodernist ideals—especially those that provide a rather critical stance against modernity and consumerism promoted by it. Informants occasionally relate their apprehension about the impact of modernity on their lives and society in general. One of the most common critiques among participants is that modernity enhances mindless consumerism and nurtures what Fromm (2005) calls a "having mode of existence". In this perspective, consumers are considered as easily manipulated subjects who are actually enslaved by their possessions. They operate under a felt desire to possess and strive to acquire and accumulate more and more material objects (Cherrier and Murray, 2007; Cherrier, 2009). Having mode of existence is reinforced through consumption, and the marketplace becomes the main source of identity for consumers who, blindly and usually without questioning, seek for the market offerings. Some researchers observe that objects are acquired more for the anticipation of their disposal than for keeping and using them until their functionality fades (Fromm, 2005; Cherrier, 2009). Having mode is also related to the exclusion of others for the sake of

obtaining and preserving the private ownership rights for material possessions. Fromm criticizes modern day construction of having mode of existence by pointing out that "having" strives upon the illusion of permanency while owning or controlling something should actually be regarded as "a transitory moment in the process of living" (Fromm, 2005: 63)—a moment inevitably followed by disposition. Berrin's reflections on her previous consumption illustrate how consumers can operate under a having mode of existence by unknowingly accumulating objects:

> Last night, I was going through my daughter's closet. I realized that we bought too many things. It's really unnecessary, excessive. My daughter, for example, has too much, much more than a child should have. We bought this and that, more and more. I think we consume a lot, much more than necessary. And I get upset. We end up with many things we do not use. (Berrin, 41, F, interview)
>
> *Geçen gece kızımın dolabını düzeltiyordum. Farkettim ki çok fazla şey almışız. Gerçekten çok gereksiz yere ve fazla. Kızımın, mesela, bir çocuğun olması gerekenden çok şeyi var. Onu al bunu al derken yani. Bence çok harcıyoruz, düşünmeden gereğinden çok fazla alıyoruz. Üzülüyorum yani. Kullanmadığımız bir sürü şeyimiz var.*

Although appreciating the benefits of modern consumptionscape and opportunities brought forth by it, most participants are simultaneously concerned with the consequences of recently blooming consumer culture. Berrin's narrative highlights a dimension of consumerism that feeds on un-reflexivity of contemporary consumers to orient them towards excessive acquisition. Berrin's thoughtless consumption reappears as excess and haunts her during her dwellings at her home (Gregson, 2007). Within such surplus, there also exist things that she and her family have never used, which increases her guilt and irritation over her

previous consumption. On the one hand, this situation problematizes disposing process for participants, who end up with relatively new and perfectly usable objects that overflow their closets and drawers. On the other hand, it works to construct disposing as an opportunity for consumers to repent their irresponsible consumption practices by pulling them into a state of enlightenment and reflection (Gregson et al., 2007; Cherrier, 2009).

Countermodernist discourses sometimes promote postmodern perspectives (Thompson and Troester, 2002) just like when participants refer to the increasing alienation among individuals, suspicion toward strangers, dissolution of social solidarity, and blurring of boundaries and traditional categories. Consider Filiz's analyses after a seemingly poor recipient threw her donation into the garbage bin:

> We used to know these things, about everyone and their situation. Now you cannot know…There was this woman who came to my door. We thought she was poor, with her clothes and all…So, it means you cannot really believe those who say they are poor. Perhaps the real poor cannot go to anyone's door to ask for help…
> (Filiz, F, 51, interview).

> *Eskiden bilirdik yani kimin nesi var, durumu ne. Şimdi bilemiyorsun…Geçenlerde kapıma bir kadın geldi mesela. Fakir olduğunu düşündüm, kıyafeti falan…Ama demek ki güvenmeyeceksin her fakirim diye kapıya gelene. Yani gerçekten fakir olan demek ki gelemiyor, yardım isteyemiyor.*

Filiz yearns for the kind of interpersonal relations that she feels constitutes the core of the authentic Turkish society. She occasionally talks about how they used to invite strangers in her home to offer them a warm meal, cooperate with their neighbors in good and bad times, and help the poor in their neighborhood. Now, she is suspicious towards other people, especially strangers, and feels she has

very few people to turn to during hard times. Many participants, with their perfect society shattered in the present, use disposing to temporarily emulate the feelings of helpfulness, trust, true altruism, and solidarity even though they are occasionally let down by these new social circumstances.

Other informants' accounts illustrate yet another aspect of countermodernist ideology that also informs the way consumers dispose of their objects: blurring of social boundaries. Talat is apprehensive about judging people using their jobs or position in the social hierarchy as criteria to decide if they would be suitable recipients for his disposed objects:

> Meltem: Do you have people to whom you regularly give your items? Some people have cleaning ladies or "kapıcı" (building attendees)…
> Talat: No. I don't think so. Our kapıcı is richer than us so I no longer give him much. He has a house in Mamak, and I heard he has a small farm and a car. So, he has everything. I guess everyone is rich now, there is no kapıcı as before.
> Meltem: What about charities?
> Talat**:** Ooh, them. we don't trust any of them. I mean I don't. You know with things like Deniz Feneri incident. Since everything is abused in this country for money, I don't believe in them. I prefer to find them myself or ask around if they know anyone in need.
> (Talat, 43, M, interview)

> *Meltem: Eşyalarını düzenli olarak verdiğin kişiler var mı? Bazıları kapıcıya ya da temizlikçilerine veriyor mesela.*
> *Talat: Yok hayır, sanmıyorum. Valla kapıcımız bizden daha zengin. O yüzden vermiyorum artık ona pek bir şey. Mamak'ta evi varmış. Tarlası da var dediler ve arabası. Her şeyi var yani. Eskisi gibi değil kapıcılar öyle, herkes zengin.*
> *Meltem: Peki hayır kurumları?*
> *Talat: Ohoo onlar, onlara hiç güvenmiyoruz. Yani ben güvenmiyorum. Biliyorsun Deniz Feneri ile olan olaydan sonra. Bu ülkede her şey para için sömürüldüğü için artık kimseye inanmıyorum. O yüzden kendim buluyorum ya da etrafa soruyorum ihtiyacı olan var mı diye.*

Both Talat's and Filiz's narratives highlight the existence of increasing distrust towards others and difficulty of assessing people using traditional markers of social class. These symptoms have been regarded as consequences of rapid social change and alienating forces associated with late modernity (Giddens, 1991; Thompson and Troester, 2002). According to this view, boundaries of traditional categories have blurred, which makes it difficult to assess people in terms of traditional markers like occupation, education or family background. Talat, who tries to use occupation as a differentiating factor for predicting others' affluence and consumption practices, is having difficult time understanding how a *kapıcı* can have a house and a car—a pair of consumption objects that have become symbols of middle-class affluence after some political party leaders used "two keys for each household" promise in their election campaign. The promise, of course, failed, but it strengthened the sentiment that owning certain objects contrasts with being a member of lower class or being poor.

Talat's statements exemplify yet another subtext underlying participants' reflections on their disposing practices: unreliability of modern institutions. One symptom of modernity is the establishment of various institutions that organize social relations, regulate everyday life, and control nature across time and space (Giddens, 1991; Thompson and Troester, 2002). These institutions become authorities and sources of specialist advice. Countermodernity argues that consumers question the legitimacy and adequacy of these institutions by comparing, selecting among, and appropriating their authority. For example, many participants are doubtful about the actual motivations and authenticity of charity

organizations, especially after the foreign branch managers of a famous one were convicted for fraud and wrongful use of the donation money. The media paid great attention to the issue and Turkish government was blamed for not being sensitive enough. Not relying authorities to control for or prevent fraud, most participants take over the responsibility of finding a reliable channel to move their possessions. This sometimes means adopting new practices while, at other times, personal relations and traditional networks such as family or neighbors are used as reference of credibility.

To sum, occasionally blindsided and confused by the changing structure of Turkish society, most informants adjust the way they dispose of their possessions—even at the expense of deserting their habits or family practices—in order to stabilize and protect their relative position in society. Although disposing is sometimes negatively affected by macro changes, it can also become a venue for consumers to negotiate and settle these affairs.

4.2.3 Ideals of Awareness and Interconnectivity

Data also reveal that disposing processes are steeped in the rather contemporary ideals that celebrate individuals' awareness of themselves and others while also promoting the idea that everything is connected. In his famous social analyses, Giddens (1991) suggests that, in contemporary societies, traditional institutions such as kinship or religion have come to hold a much less significant role in ordering the social life. In their place, Giddens argues, reflexivity has

become the main mechanism to regulate individuals' day-to-day actions and interpersonal relations. That is, since the traditional mechanisms through which consumers commit to certain decisions and legitimize their actions have fallen apart, inquiries of the self have become the primary concern for contemporary consumers. So, consumers are now preoccupied with questions such as "who am I?," "who should I become?," "what do I do?" or "how should I act?" on an everyday basis. The disposition literature attests to this view by highlighting practices of disposing as extremely reflexive about the norms of society and one's own actions (Cherrier and Murray, 2007; Gregson et al., 2007; Cherrier, 2009b). Existence of such reflexive awareness permeates participants' articulations about disposing processes:

> I was ordering the closets and then there was all these clothes piling up. And I was like what are all these, what have I been thinking?. So, I guess we buy and buy, we don't realize the consequences of our actions before seeing the evidence there in our face.
> (Bahar, early 20s, F, essay)

> *Dolapları düzenliyordum, baktım kıyafetler birikmiş hep üst üste. Ya dedim, bütün bunlar ne, ne düşünüyordum acaba?. Yani alıyoruz, alıyoruz ama aldığımızın sonucunu böyle görmeyince ne yaptığımızı bilmiyoruz aslında. Sonunu düşünmüyoruz.*

Bahar's quote above, for example, undertones the importance of being aware of one's consumption in a timely manner. Disposing in her case becomes a venue to step back from her everyday consuming and meditate on the consequences of her consuming.

Informants' accounts also build upon a heightened sensitivity to others and an awareness of the consequences of their actions. Especially, an attitude toward

risk that the literature describes as systematic risk awareness (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992; Bauman, 1997; Thompson and Troester, 2002) prevails in the data. This macro discourse is especially important for this research, as out of the three broad consumption phases, disposing is primarily blamed for creating high risk of pollution and environmental hazard (Beck, 1992). That is, disposing is the consumption phase most policymakers and activists want to control and limit. Participants, especially students in their essays, mention an increasing awareness of risk—realization of negative consequences of others' and their own actions on nature and the environment. It helps participants to construct some objects as non-utilizable and keep them out of circulation:

> I am usually against selling. Why? Because nothing that can be dangerous to others' health should be sold. They should be trashed after being used thoroughly. You should not pass it on to others either. Or a non-stick pan, when it gets old it is even unhealthy for our own consumption. They say it gives you cancer. Even if you can sell it, you can endanger the recipient's health. Everything that can be hurtful to others or create illnesses should be trashed.
> (Mesut, 37, M, interview)
>
> *Ben satmaya karşıyım aslında. Neden? Çünkü başkasına zararlı olabilecek şeyler satılmamalı yani. İyice kullanıldıktan sonra çöpe atılmalılar. Başkasına da verilmemesi gerekir bunların. Mesela teflon tava eskiyince kullanılması sakıncalı. Kanser yapar diyorlar. Satabilsen bile yani başkasının sağlına zarar vereceksin. Sağlığa zararlı olabilecek, hastalık yapacak her şey atılmalı.*

Mesut's risk awareness is informed by the views and relentless attention of the media and other government agents, who highlight individual consumption as potentially risky for the environment. The acts of these agents also work to modify the way Turkish consumers use and dispose of specific objects such as cooking oil, batteries, or other recyclable materials.

As participants gain some awareness of themselves and the environment (or even recognize the importance of being aware), their perceived connectedness with the world increases. Such ideals of interconnectedness are not only steeped in the rather post-modern view of feeling integrated with the universe (Thompson and Troester, 2002) but they also emerge in the data set as ingenuous constructs of traditional Turkish society. Participants describe social solidarity, trust among individuals, and cooperation and interdependency as indispensable features of Turkish society before the rise of consumerism. Also informed by countermodernist ideals and together with a reflexive awareness, informants describe disposing as a social practice, which builds on and enacts the idea of being connected to other people and things. These imagined bonds are strengthened by the practices of governmental and cultural agents, who try to highlight the connections between seemingly non-connected entities (e.g. trashing newspapers-decreasing amount of trees) and invite consumers "to think before act".

4.2.4 Ideals of Altruism, Thrift, and Religion

One of the most prevalent and significant subtexts of participants' narratives comes from the desire "to do the right thing" as informed by the ethical doctrines dictated in altruism, thrift, and religion (i.e. Islam). These three orientations can overlap as well as conflict with each other in informing consumers' disposing practices. For example, while ideals promoted by altruism can construct donating

an object the right thing to do, principles of thrift can legitimize holding on to it to increase its use value and avoid paying for a replacement. Similarly, Islamist principles usually support and promote altruistic ideals and define the boundaries of being thrifty. However, since commitment to altruism or thrift is not necessarily rooted in consumers' desire to be religious or abide by Islam, I would like to cover them as separate, albeit connected, orientations.

In relating the processes through which they decide to let go of their possessions and select an appropriate venue for this, all of the informants emphasize a wish to help those who might be in need. Usually, altruistic actions and motivations, such as thinking of others' welfare even at the expense of one's own, are major sources of legitimacy and morality for disposing:

> Meltem: So, how do you feel when you realize that you could actually use an object you just disposed of?
> Hale: Ahh, it happens to me a lot. You keep and keep it and then decide to give it to someone who can actually use it. Then and only then you can realize it could actually be used in some way. I guess I start to feel irritated when this happens. But, then, I start thinking about the people who got it, those who needed it. I could replace the object or buy another one, and would most probably forget about it in a few days. But, for that person, that object is actually important. They could not have it otherwise and my disposing helped them. Thinking this, I become happy and wish that they used it in good luck. (Hale, F, 40, interview)

> *Meltem: Elden çıkarttığın bir şeyi aslında kullanabileceğini fark edince ne hissediyorsun?*
> *Hale: Ah evet bana çok olur o. Elinde tutarsın, tutarsın sonra elden çıkartıp kullanacak birine vereyim dersin. Sonra bir bakarsın aslında işine yarayabilirmiş. Yani sanırım böyle olunca biraz kızıyorum. Ama sonra bakıyorum o eşyayı alanı düşünüyorum, nasıl ihtiyacı olduğunu. Yani ben yenisini alırım o eşyanın ya da başka şey alabilirim. Bir kaç gün sonra unuturum o eşyayı verdiğimi falan. Ama o insan için önemli yani. Başka türlü alamaz ki belki. Benim elden çıkartmam ona yardım ediyor. Bunu düşününce boşver diyorum, mutlu oluyorum. İyi günlerde kullansınlar inşallah diyorum.*

As Hale articulates, poor disposing decisions can be purified through the realization of its altruistic consequences. Participants also describe disposing as a consumption process through which they can enhance others' welfare without expecting anything in return. Thus, altruistic ideals can stimulate, re-construct, and legitimize disposing.

Another important discourse participants widely make use of is thrift. Thrift has been considered as the main way to achieve economic success at individual and national levels (Tucker, 1991b). It has originally been explored within the boundaries of efficient household management (Tucker, 1991b), and has been associated with activities such as taking good care of goods, saving time and energy, and working properly (Lehtonen and Pantzar, 2002: 224). In fact, taking good care of goods and not wasting them appear frequently in participants' articulations of their own disposing practices:

> Melis: Disposing things like TV when they still work. No, I don't think we do that in Turkey. You don't get rid of a perfectly working TV just to replace it. You can use a TV for 10-20 years and it will still work unless it has a technical problem. So, you don't change it unless it breaks down.
> Meltem: What if you want to watch 3D movies or have a thinner TV because you don't have enough place at home?
> Melis: Even then, if you replace it you can take it to another room or house or perhaps store it, thinking that someday you can use it. But you don't just get rid of the old TV. Who would do that when it is still working? Perhaps the top 5% of the society, the very rich ones. But, others don't. It's a luxury. You had paid for it, it is working. It would be wasting.
> (Melis, 33, F, interview)

> *Melis: Çalışan televizyonu elden çıkartmak gibi şeyleri biz yapmıyoruz Türkiye'de. Çalışan televizyonu yenisini almak için vermezsin. Bir televizyon 10 yıl 20 yıl çalışır ve teknik sorunu yoksa çalışmaya devam eder. Yani bozulmazsa elden çıkartmazsın televizyonu.*
> *Meltem: Peki 3D film izlemek istiyorsan ya da yerin olmadığından daha ince bir televizyon almak istiyorsan?*

Melis: O zaman da, yenisini alsan da, eskisini başka odaya koyarsın ya da bir yere saklarsın nasıl olsa kullanılır diye. Ama öyle hemen elden çıkartmazsın ki eski televizyonu. Kim yapar bunu, belki toplumun % 5'lik üst kesimi ama başkası yapmaz. Lüks olur o. Para vermişssin, çalışıyor televizyon. Günah olur, ısraf olur elden çıkartmak.

Melis interprets disposing of some objects within the domain of thrift, listing high acquisition price and functionality as the main criteria to assess moral appropriateness of a disposing decision. Her narrative emphasizes immorality of disposing of a perfectly working device, rather than purchasing a new one when the old is still working. Her views also abide by the principles of Islam, in which the idea of thrift is more about "not wasting" than the ascetic principle of "not spending" as mostly promoted in the Protestant ethics (Weber, 1930). In Islam, consumption is good and acceptable when it is done properly and in moderation. Those who define themselves as conservative Islamists can even engage in conspicuous consumption practices to achieve the ideals (such as aesthetics) which they think are celebrated in the Koran (Sandıkçı and Ger, 2007, 2010).

Yet another aspect of thrift reveals itself as consumers negotiate disposing of specific objects, as they try to prevent their discard:

I think we need to revaluate things as much as possible, not waste them. Like, an old sweater, I usually check its thread to see if it's good. If so, I de-knit it and get the wool to knit something else. This way, I make use of it instead of discarding it and, also, I create something new.
(Miray, 47, F, interview)

Bence eşyaları elimizden geldiğince değerlendirmeli, israf etmemeliyiz. Mesela eski bir kazak. Ben önce bakarım yünü, ipliği iyi mi. İyiyse sökerim onu ve ipi başka bir şey örmek için kullanırım. Böylece o eşyayı değerlendiririm. Hem de yeni bir şey yaratmış olurum.

Miray's enthusiasm to make-use of things actually represents a recent interpretation of thrift. With an increasing concern for consumerism and its negative consequences on the environment as well as the agenda to promote consumers as creative and productive agents, an ideology, which celebrates recycling, re-use, and rejuvenation of used, old, rubbish-like objects, has permeated into practices of thrift. Within this perspective, consumers manifest their creativity while refraining from wasting utilizable materials. Beyond the hedonic pleasure of discovering, creating, and manifesting this creativity (Bardhi, 2003; Bardhi and Arnould, 2005), for participants, reuse and transformation practices are also inherently moral and religiously founded.

Islamist principles, which most participants interpret as refraining from wasting, being considerate towards and aware of others, and refraining from and repenting for self-indulgence, undertone various disposing processes. One of the most prevalent infections of Islam on participants' experiences of disposing is the idea that extravagant consumption practices (even if they cannot be completely avoided) should be repented and compensated for. Koran orders that thoughtless and sinful acts call for penitence and compensation. According to a hadith as related by Tirmizî—one of the most significant scholars of Islamist laws—the prophet Mohammed recommends that "*if you do a good deed right after you commit a sin, your sin will be forgiven and you will be rewarded greatly" ("Bir kötülük yaparsan arkasından hemen bir iyilik yap ki o kötülüğü silip süpürsün. Allah sana daha çok sevap yazsın"*). Such view of repentance underlies a significant number of disposing practices mentioned by the informants. Data

involves stories of consumers who sacrifice some portion of their material wealth to atone for their consuming, to show their gratefulness, and to purify new acquisitions by fending away evil forces that consumption might invoke:

> We are lucky you know. We can buy things and use them and dispose of them just like that. But, there are people who cannot do that. When I have three different coats, they are hungry and cold outside. When I think about it, I just go to my closet and dispose of most of my things, donate them.
> (Mert, early 20s, M, essay)
>
> *Biz çok şanslıyız aslında. İstediğimizi alıp, kullanabiliyor ve isteyince elden çıkartabiliyoruz. Ama bunu yapamayan insanlar var. benim üç tane paltom varken, sokakta aç ve soğukta yatan insanlar var. Böyle düşününce dolabımı açıyorum ve eşyalarımın çoğunu dağıtıyorum, veriyorum.*

The notion of *zekat*, which aims to facilitate equal distribution of wealth among Muslims, is quite important in Islam. All Muslims are required to distribute some portion of their material wealth among poor people to enhance their welfare and show their gratitude for what they have. Mert's disposing illustrates such notion of *zekat*, which also helps him to deal with his guilt for being lucky and having more than most people.

In addition to censuring wasting and demanding equality, Islam condemns stinginess and greed. Koran underlines the importance of balancing one's spending and saving, and states "*they neither waste nor become stingy as they spend*" ("*Onlar harcadıkları zaman israf da cimrilik de etmezler"* in *Furkan 67)*. This verse encourages consumption in moderation and in ways to meet the needs of one's self, their family, and others in need without going extremes. This view also relates to another religious principle: being mindful of the people in one's community. Most participants, as they reflect on their own consumption during

disposing process, feel guilty and ashamed for ignoring the pains and sufferings of other people when they consume. Like Mert, they turn to disposing to re-establish the balance by elevating others' welfare. Reinterpreting a hadits that says "*those who sleep with their bellies full when their neighbor is hungry are not from us (Muslim)*" *("Komşusu açken tok yatan bizden değildir"*), some participants confess to their failure to care for those who are powerless and suffering*:*

> There are really poor people out there. We don't see them in our daily life. We go out, have dinner at a restaurant, buy things that we like without thinking about the money. But, life is not like that for everyone. I think it is our duty to help those who cannot meet their own needs. I donate money, clothes, other stuff. It's the least I can do.
> (Eylem, early 20s, F, essay)
>
> *Gerçekten çok fakir insanlar var. Biz onları görmüyoruz, günlük yaşantımızda fark etmiyoruz. Gezip tozuyoruz, dışarıda yemek yiyoruz, parasını düşünmeden alışveriş yapıyoruz. Ama herkes için hayat böyle değil. Kendi ihtiyaçlarını karşılayamayanlara yardım etmek bizim görevimiz. Ben para yardımı yapıyorum, kıyafetlerimi diğer eşyalarımı bağışlıyorum. En azından böyle bir şey yapıyorum.*

Born and raised in an affluent family, Eylem admits that the poor are usually invisible to people like her. Becoming aware of their existence as well as her responsibility to help them, she constructs donating as the main way to fulfill her moral duty towards these less advantaged people and deal with the guilt of having an advantaged life.

Informed by these ideals and articulated through these grand discourses, consumers' experiences of disposing go beyond the process of getting rid of or letting go of one's possessions. Rather, disposing turns out to be a critical consumption practice to enable, re-construct, and moralize one's consuming. In the

next section, I elucidate disposing as integrated in four meta-practices that consumers engage in as a part of their everyday consuming.

4.3 Meta Practices that Derive and Construct Disposing Practices

In this part, I will depict disposing as accommodated in four different grand practices. Informed by the cultural orientations elucidated above, participants engage in disposing practices as they try to utilize, harmonize, connect, and atone. Actually, these meta-practices are both the motivations for and ends to consumers' disposing practices. Moreover, the boundaries of these practices are permeable: participants who operate within one practice sometimes inevitably step into the territory of the other. For example, consumers who dispose of an object to atone usually also want to utilize it.

In utilizing, consumers are mainly concerned with making use of things, money, time, and spaces. Disposing, in this context, becomes a process of "not wasting," not only by moving objects along (Gregson et al., 2007) but also by moving them in ways to create monetary value, by emptying and re-organizing spaces, and by being quick and efficient in disposing. Participants also dispose of their objects as a part of their quest to harmonize with their environment, changes, and life in general. This includes divestments that take place as they organize, categorize, and reorder the world around them as well as in refreshing themselves and their environment or re-adjusting to changes. Consumers can also dispose as

they try to establish, replenish, maintain, and transform their connections with other people. Disposing helps them in forming bonds with certain people in certain ways. Finally, I find disposing as a practice of atoning for what consumers perceive as ignorance, thoughtlessness, and extravagance. Specifically, it helps obtaining balance in one's consumption and in society, and repenting and compensating for consuming. Disposing, embedded in these contexts, arises as essentially moral practice with material and symbolic dimensions and as rooted in and integrative of various consumption domains.

4.3.1 Utilizing

Informed by the modernist ideals of efficiency, productivity, and control, and ever conscious of the ideals of religion and thrift, most informants identify disposing process with utilization of something. Most participants are especially sensitive to utilizing their disposed possessions. This view of utilizing through disposing is actually steeped in the ideal that accumulation of objects—an important norm of consumerism (Cherrier, 2009b)—is both unproductive and immoral:

> Keeping something without using it, I don't understand it in this economic situation. We may not be seeing this in our own life but some people really live in difficult conditions…So, accumulating objects, keeping them stored just because we think perhaps they may be of use some day it feels wrong. (Yeliz, 41, F, interview)
>
> *Kullanmadığın halde bir şeyi elinde tutmayı anlamıyorum ben bu ekonomik koşullarda. Biz bunu göremiyor olabiliriz ama çok zor koşullarda yaşayan*

insanlar var…Yani eşyaları toplamak, depolamak sırf bir gün belki ihtiyaç olur diye, yanlış geliyor bana.

For participants like Yeliz, disposing is a way to negotiate bad economic conditions, poverty, and poor social welfare through utilization and circulation of inactive material wealth. These consumers deem holding on to objects without any specific memories as unacceptable. Some informants go as far to classify it as a pathological behavior, as a symptom of a psychological disorder *"since healthy and normal people do not tend to keep their items around for long"* as an informant, Suna (F, essay), states. While throwing away is considered as extravagant and wasteful, inability to depart from possessions is an indication for being stingy and obsessed with material items, both of which are frowned upon in Turkish society. Thus, the relation participants establish between utilizing and disposing is not only rational but also a moral one. Appropriate disposing is usually about finding a balance between keeping and letting go, with each resulting in a different type of utilization.

In the context of disposing, utilizing can mean various things: utilizing objects, spaces, time or money. To utilize an object, consumers might need to negotiate the object's present or future utility as well as its usability for their own or others' needs. The object can also be utilized by transferring it to where it is needed the most, by keeping it stored for the future or by reusing it in another consumption sphere. The decision to keep an object for its future utility might clash with consumers' desire to utilize household spaces or to make use of its market value. Thus, the process disposing as utilization is usually filled with tensions and

dilemmas for consumers. Resolving these tensions without wasting requires consumers to know about the object and disposing conduits it could move through (Gregson et al., 2007) as well as to reflect on their own consumption and others' life.

4.3.1.1 Utilizing Objects

This section elucidates how consumers use practices of disposing to utilize their possessions (i.e. to make use of them, to prevent their perceived waste) while relinquishing their ownership of the said items. I have observed that objects that are considered for disposal can also be utilized while consumers still hold on to these objects. I will talk about these practices in another chapter, where I focus on how consumers negotiate disposition of their possessions.

The data show that, in addition to dealing with excess (Gregson et al., 2007) and separation from objects (Roster, 2001), disposing is also about reutilization of one's possessions. Usually, objects that are about to be disposed of still encapsulate some kind of utility value, the transfer of which can prevent perceived waste and/or facilitate mutually beneficial relations between consumers:

> I try to revaluate them, make them useful. You know, I think of the ways they can be useful. Should I use them more or perhaps pass them onto others? I might sell them if they are sellable…
> (Miray, 47, F, interview)
>
> *Ben eşyalarımı değerlendirmeye, kullanmaya çalışıyorum. Nasıl kullanılabilirler diye düşünüyorum. Biraz daha mı kullansam yoksa birine mi versem? Satılabilir durumdaysa satabiliyorum da…*

For Miray, disposing is full of opportunities to make use of an object in different ways. While predictions about disposing of an object might encourage consumers to adjust its consumption, conduits of disposing can also be used as mechanisms through which participants control where the object will go so that it could be revaluated. Perceptions about an object's utilization are formed by consumers' assessments of its material, functional, and symbolic features as well as their evaluation of the appropriateness of disposing conduits for it. On one hand, participants do not want to keep those objects that they perceive as untrendy, unattractive or unfit. On the other hand, these objects still function in some way, which makes their disposal risky and immoral (i.e. wasteful). Participants try to solve this conflict by directing these possessions towards specific conduits while keeping them away from others (such as the garbage bin) for fear of being wasteful, inappropriate or immoral. Some practices and conduits, in this manner, emerge as naturally better for utilizing objects. Most participants feel that their possessions' perceived use-value, even if they have not used them much, actually enhances when they could be of use for someone else. Thus, they try to dispose of their possessions through the channels where they could still be utilized and improve others' welfare like donating or passing on to. The problem, however, is finding the right person who is actually "in need" of the object. Participants have to decide whether to give priority to the needs of the people they know or to help strangers who are poor and needy in general. In any case, disposing one's possessions through donating or passing on to people in need of the object are

usually regarded as the main way to utilize objects while re-constructing participants' own consumption as appropriate and non-wasteful.

Participants are quite judgmental about people who do not care whether an object is utilized or not through its disposal. Consider how Ferda, who also comes from an affluent family, distinguishes "the rich and spoiled ones" by observing the way they dispose of their possessions:

> We, me and my friends, used to go skiing when we were 17 or 18. Of course, our parents used to buy everything we owned. We had not yet started earning money. So, I had this friend, she was, hmmm, interesting (laughs). Once she was skiing and her bonnet fell on to the snow. Normally, you would take it back right? No! We called after her to take her hat but she just skied away. She did not even look back, let alone bend down to get it. She just did not care. I guess it was because she did not understand the value of money or meaning of waste. She could not assess the value of that hat, leaving it, a perfectly usable hat, down on the snow without any remorse.
> (Ferda, 29, F, interview)

> *Biz, arkadaşarımla ben, kayağa giderdik. Böyle 17-18 yaşlarındayken. Tabi ailemiz alıyor herşeyimizi biz daha para filan kazanmıyoruz. Işte benim bir arkadaşım vardı. Kız işte böyle, hmm, ilginçti yani (gülüyor). Bir gün kayıyoruz işte kızın beresi düştü yere, karlara. Normalde alırsın değil mi onu yerden? Yok! Arkasından bağırıyoruz işte beren düştü al diye. Arkasına bile bakmadı, eğilip almayı bırak. Herhalde umursamadı. Sanırım yani paranın değerini anlamıyordu ya da ziyanın ne olduğunu. Değerini bilmiyordu şapkanın yani o yepyeni şapkayı bıraktı orada hiç pişmanlık duymadan.*

Ferda's story about her friend's "wasted" hat, hints that participants' narratives and practices of disposing that promote utilization of objects are not only steeped in modernistic view of efficiency, control, and productivity but they also feed from moral and religious doctrines that condemn wastefulness and unreflexivity. Such moral connotations frequently emerge in the data, marking some conduits of disposing as more ethical and effective in making use of an object

while constructing others as improvident and destructive. For Ferda, her friend's spontaneous disposal of her perfectly usable (and probably brand-new hat) is unacceptable as she had neither assessed the disposability of the hat properly nor reflected on how to dispose of it so that its lingering utility value would not have been wasted. Disposing, when not executed with such awareness and thoughtful consideration, usually fails to utilize the object. Attesting to this logic, participants occasionally mention throwing away as thoughtless and destructive of an object's utility:

> Meltem: What about people who throw things away? Who throws things away and when?
> Yeliz: I don't understand people who just throw things away. I mean things that are still usable. Don't they ever think that someone might use it? Just because you don't want or need it anymore does not mean that it is trash. I guess they are either people with enormous earnings but without actual labor or sacrifice. You know they have money but have not actually worked for it. Or they are really insatiable and greedy. They just move from one thing to another without actually consuming any of them. I cannot understand these people. Their behavior just does not make sense!
> (Yeliz, 41, F, interview)

> *Meltem: Peki eşyalarını atan insanlar? Kim eşyalarını atar, ne zaman atarlar?*
> *Yeliz: Ben eşyalarını atan insanları anlamıyorum ya. Yani kullanılabilen eşyaları. Hiç mi düşünmezler birinin kullanabileceğini? Sen istemiyorsun, kullanmıyorsun diye çöp mü demek o? Sanırım bu insanlar ya çok para kazanan insanlar ama emek harcamadan, fedakarlık etmeden. Hani paraları var ama onun için çalışmamışlar. Ya da açgözlü doyumsuz insanlar. Daha bir eşyayı tam kullanmadan diğerine geçiyorlar. Benim mantığım almıyor!*

Albeit recognizing that throwing away can be an acceptable practice for disposing objects with no perceived use-value, Yeliz is severe upon people who cannot make such distinction and use garbage bin as a convenient and habitual way of practicing disposing. For participants like Yeliz, the way people dispose is

actually a reflection of a broader set of characteristics they possess. In addition to lacking some basic moral virtues—like being hardworking, thoughtful, caring, generous, and humble—they also lack rational thinking as they fail to recognize the utility value an object possess. Some informants even establish a connection between the disposer's tendency to use disposing for re-utilizing objects and their family upbringing and cultural capital:

> I have this motto to make use of things as much as possible. I apply this when I use an object as well as when I dispose of it. It is a family thing. That's what my parents do and what I have been taught…So, those who dispose an object without a care for making use of it…I think they are ill-bred, lack manners.
> (Melih, early 20s, M, essay)
>
> *Benim her şeyi olabildiğince çok kullanmak gibi bir ilkem vardır. Bir eşyayı kullanırken de elden çıkartırken de bu ilkeyi uygularım. Aileden gelen bir şey bu. Ailem böyle yapardı ve bana bunu öğrettiler…Yani bir eşyayı değerlendirmeye çalışmadan elden çıkartanlar…bence yetişme tarzları kötü ve görgüsüzler.*

Melih constructs "utilizing things" as a core family principle and applies it in designing and legitimizing certain practices in disposing of his objects. From this perspective, disposing is another venue to ensure the intergenerational transfer of a family's core values, practices, and traditions. Melih connects himself to his family as an appropriate heir while simultaneously distinguishing his kinship from those "who lacks manners". I will talk about how disposing can be used to create links in detail in "Connecting" section. What I would like to emphasized here is that notions like utilizing things and being productive, which are usually considered as ideals of modernity that feed individualism, can also work to establish and maintain social order and traditional community values. Ironically, I find that throwing away

or trashing can also be a way to preserve social order and moral values, especially when the disposed object is assessed as non-utilizable.

4.3.1.1.1 Non-utilizable Objects

As I have quoted above, participants frequently feel that throwing things away is a destructive practice that ends an object's life and prevents its reutilization. This finding also attests to the previous research, which associates throwing away and trashing with value destruction, wasting, and un-sustainability (Phillips and Sego, 2011; Evans, 2012). Despite these, sometimes throwing away can be the only practice through which participants are willing to dispose of an object, especially if this object is perceived as non-utilizable. I find two types of non-utilizable objects: those whose material features are so degraded that they cannot be used anymore and those whose disposal can create social and health risks. Most of the time, garbage bin becomes the only medium to deal with these objects:

> Yes, I throw objects away when I feel they could not be utilized anymore. For example, a torn shirt. I can sew it but sometimes it just does not work. So, I either use it as a rag or just trash it…Also shoes… I usually have old ones repaired but those that I cannot, you know, if I have been wearing them for a long time…they usually tear on the side or the heel or the lining might becoming off. So, I cannot offer them to anyone. I trash them.
> (Miray, 47, F, interview)

> *Evet, ben artık kullanılamayacaklarını hissettiğim eşyaları atıyorum. Mesela yırtık bir tişört. Normalde dikebilirim ama bazen işe yaramaz. Ben de ya toz bezi gibi kullanırım ya da çöpe atarım…Ayakkabılar da…Genelde eski olanları tamir ettiririm ama yapılamayacakları, bilirsin, çok uzun zaman kullanmışsam…yanlarında yırtılır, açılırlar ya da astarı çıkabilir. O yüzden kimseye de veremezsin. Ben çöpe atıyorum.*

Miray, who is usually very skillful and resourceful in repairs and crafts, occasionally has to deal with objects that she cannot revitalize. With their material form tarnished and their functionality mostly depleted, these objects are officially off the market for nearly all participants—except for those who can revaluate rubbish-like objects (Thompson, 1979; Parsons, 2008) by using them in their art or craft projects. For most participants, trying to transform such objects would require too much energy, time, and sometimes money that it would be unproductive. As offering these tattered objects to other people would be offensive, trashing them is perceived as not only the rational but also the right thing to do. That is, stripped of their usability and material decency, objects transform into rubbish, effectively ending their contract with their current owners (Hetheringthon, 2004).

At this point, I would like to underline that although material inferiority emerges as a legitimate reason for trashing, the answer to the question "what is the extent of material deformation that can transform an object into garbage?" seems to fluctuate greatly across objects, usage context, and consumers' social status. At the beginning of this research, during my initial visits to *İtfaiye Meydanı*, I was shocked and quite sad to see pairs of worn-out shoes on sale. There was a market for shoes that I would trash in a heartbeat without considering to offer them to anyone let alone sell them even for token-like prices. It was similar for clothes and accessories like hats. As I observed and talked to people, reflected on my own practices, and my time in the field extended beyond the encounters with others in the flea market to include other online and physical second-hand stores, consumer blogs and the media, I came to realize that "functionality" or "utilizability" makes

sense in a context. While a banana peel is of use for a villager who needs it to feed the animals, it becomes garbage and is immediately sent to the bin in the city where it has no use. Going back to my *İtfaiye Meydanı* example, I speculate that for a person, who has been wearing hand-me-downs and worn-out shoes all her life, selling as well as paying for such shoes would make sense.

Recognizing such diversity in defining the valuable, some informants partly relinquish their authority in categorizing objects as rubbish by putting them on the street or places near the garbage bin:

> If it cannot be used by anyone, passing it on to someone would be offensive then I would rather throw it away than hurting and embarrassing the person by offering it. I usually put it near the garbage in a bag so that people can look inside and, you know, there are people checking the garbage bin. So, they can look in it and if they need it, they can take it. But, I cannot directly give them to anyone.
> (Neslihan, 45, F, interview)

> *Eğer kullanılamayacak gibiyse, birine teklif etmek kırıcı olur. O yüzden o eşyayı atmayı tercih ederim birini kırıp utandırmaktansa. Genelde bir poşete koyup çöpün yanına bırakıyorum ki isteyen içine bakıp alabilsin. Çöplere bakan karıştıranlar var biliyorsun. İşte bakıp alabilirler içinden eğer ihtiyaçları varsa. Ama ben direkt olarak teklif etmem yani.*

Neslihan, who usually gives her possessions to people in need, sometimes has to dispose of objects she cannot offer to anyone. At the same time, she is hesitant to engage in a practice—putting them directly into the garbage bin—which might terminate their life. She negotiates this by using the space surrounding the garbage bin as a transitional space (Lastovicka and Fernández, 2005), where objects that border on rubbish could be discovered and reutilized. The bag she

wraps objects in before putting them there prevents their contamination from the garbage while also inviting other people to a treasure hunt.

Objects with a good material form can also obtain non-utilizability if they feel too private or unhygienic to be passed on to others. Participants are resistant to donate or pass on to "private" objects like underwear, socks, or make-up items after they have been used for a while. The transfer of such objects—even between close family members—is usually considered as unhygienic, offensive, and frowned upon in society. In addition to health concerns and fear of social stigmata, specific market structures also encourage participants to keep these objects out of specific disposing conduits. With liberation of the markets, a specific type of commodity can be found in various sizes, colors, prices, and brands. Aware of such proliferation, participants legitimize sending a pair of socks to the garbage bin or refusing to pass a relatively new underwear set on to other people by pointing out "*who would want them old and used when their 1st hand is so affordable?"*. That is, availability of affordable new substitutes in the market can direct an object towards the garbage bin. Some participants might even destroy these objects to ensure that they are accepted by and moved through the bin:

> Melek: I don't like, I cannot donate or pass my underwear on to anyone. I prefer trashing them.
> Meltem: Do you put them directly into the garbage?
> Melek: Yes, definitely. If they become too small or old for me to wear, whatever the reason is. I trash them. In fact, I even cut them off before putting them into the bin.
> Meltem: How do you cut them? Does it bother you to trash them as they are?
> Melek: Hmmm, I don't know…Now that you ask me, perhaps. Hmmm, I guess yes. I cut them so I must be bothered…Ok, now there are people going through the garbage right? And there are garbage men and cats and dogs

digging through. So, I would be embarrassed if I passed by the bin and saw my underwear lying on the sidewalk (laughs)
Meltem: But no one would know they were yours…
Melek: Yes, but I would know. They were my private items and now they are exposed. So, I guess I cut them to distort their shape, so they could no longer be recognized for what they were before.
(Melek, 29, F, interview)

Melek: Ben hoşlanmam öyle şeyden. İç çamaşırımı kimseye veremem, teklif edemem. Çöpe atarım.
Meltem: Direkt olarak mı atıyorsun çöpe?
Melek: Evet tabi. Mesela küçük gelmiştir artık ya da çok eskimiştir. Neden ne olursa olsun atıyorum yani. Aslında bak atmadan kesiyorum bile.
Meltem: Nasıl kesiyorsun? Öyle atmak rahatsız mı ediyor seni?
Melek: Hmmm bilmem…Şimdi sen sorunca düşünüyorum da herhalde. Yani, hmm, sanırım. Kesiyorum demek ki rahatsız oluyorum bir şekilde…Tamam yani şimdi insanlar var değil mi çöpleri karıştıran? İşte çöpcü var, kediler köpekler deşiyor. Yani şimdi çöpün yanından geçerken benim çamaşırımı görsem böyle sokağa yayılmış, kaldırımda utanırım yani (gülüyor).
Meltem: Ama kimse bilmez senin çamaşırın olduğunu…
Melek: Ama ben bilirim. Yani bir zamanlar benimdi özelimdi şimdi herkes görüyor. Sanırım şekilleri bozulsun, daha önce ne oldukları anlaşılmasın diye kesiyorum.

As a private clothing item, underwear can be extremely contaminated with their owners' self. Moreover, all participants consider these objects as too unhygienic to be shared with anyone else. Thus, it is understandable that the only possible path for Melek's underwear is the garbage bin, where it will enmesh with other rubbish and be gone forever. However, Melek still feels "haunted" by her underwear unless she applies what Hetherington (2004) would call a second burial ritual that effectively concludes the disposing process. Going beyond trashing, Melek cuts off her underwear, consequently destroying its remaining utility and material form. While Neslihan carefully uses garbage as a transitional space to protect any potential utility the disposed object might have, Melek's additional divestment ritual destroys such potential for the sake of preventing a potentially

embarrassing exposure of her underwear to imagined third parties. The existence of other participants, who also cut off their underwear to distort their shape before trashing them, hints that garbage bin cannot always end the ownership for objects, which consumers perceive to be extremely private extensions of their self. Disposing for these objects enacts the tension between the social risk of their exposure to others and consumers' desire to prevent waste and protect disposed objects' utility. The former usually outweighs the latter.

To sum, objects that are deemed as non-utilizable through disposing are intentionally taken out of circulation through the garbage bin. In this manner, the garbage bin not only provides a convenient conduit to dispose of the excess and rubbish (Gregson et al., 2007) but it also creates moral value by helping consumers do the right thing and comply with social norms in safely moving those objects, whose disposal can otherwise create shame, health risks, or offense.

4.3.1.1.2 Utilizing "Waste"

It has long been accepted that waste is a socially and culturally constructed state rather than an intrinsic feature of objects (Douglas, 1966). It is a flexible category, which objects move in and out throughout their lives (Thompson, 1979; Hawkins, 2006). Although waste has been conceptualized as an important category for the advancement of an object's life story as well as for the constitution and maintenance of social order and systems, most research explores how consumers

can delay their possessions' move into this category (Lucas, 2002; Gregson and Crewe, 2003; Hawkins, 2006; Parsons, 2008). My findings extend this research by showing how objects that have moved into this category can be utilized in various ways through disposing.

During my field study, I have observed that Turkish consumers mostly use recycling to utilize what they consider as waste or garbage (e.g. bottles, product container/packages, batteries, old newspapers) while trying to move their old possessions (e.g. old electronics or clothes) through more traditional disposing conduits (e.g. donating, selling, throwing away). That is, while there are established systems and more favorable conduits to revaluate most of their possessions (e.g. in-family circulation, donating to cleaninglady, re-use), recycling emerges as a viable option for participants to move what they usually consider as non-utilizable.

If recycling is defined as the systematic selection, separation, and collection of officially defined recyclable materials to send them back into the systems of production, two main factors—awareness and infrastructure—become crucial for practicing it. Awareness includes being knowledgeable about what items could be recycled and how, but more importantly, it entails a realization of how our actions may damage the world and an understanding of why we need recycling. However, awareness is not enough for dissemination of recycling as a viable disposing practice without sufficient material and legal infrastructure (i.e. providing recycling bins, garbage bags, and the service for collecting them). Although informants acknowledge that recycling helps utilizing waste, for most of them, it is as a

modern practice not accessible to everyone. Consider Jale's experiences with recycling:

> Meltem: So, do you separate plastics like yogurt containers as well?
> Jale: No, I put them into the garbage bin. I wish it would be possible to recycle them. I mean, in our apartment, we have a caretaker. He collects our garbage and there is no recycle bins in the neighborhood. Our municipality does not support recycling, no bags or recycling bins, you know. So, it all goes to the bin…I mean there are people out there who collect garbage but I guess they are not official. And we do not really take them to recycling ourselves.
> (Jale, 42, F, interview)

> *Meltem: Yani yoğurt kabı gibi plastikleri de ayrıştırıyor musun?*
> *Jale: Yok onları çöpe atıyorum. Aslında keşke onları da geri dönüşüme gönderebilsem. Yani apartmanımızda kapıcımız var bizim. O topluyor çöplerimizi ve geri dönüşüm kutusu yok mahallemizde. Belediyemiz katılmıyor geri dönüşüme. Hani torba filan vermiyorlar, kutu koymuyorlar işte. O yüzden hepsi çöpe gidiyor…Yani aslında çöpleri toplayan insanlar var ama sanırım onlar resmi değil. Biz de açıkcası kendimiz götürmüyoruz geri dönüşüme.*

Most participants, like Jale, are aware that recycling can help reutilization of what they usually throw away but few of them are actually committed to recycling. This is partly due to insufficiency of infrastructure and partly due to inadequate legal repercussions of not recycling. This hints that recycling, for Turkish consumers, is still more of an issue of public policy and politics than a disposing practice, which is the responsibility of individual consumers. Yet, with recent proliferation of certified facilities and relevant legislations, it has become a more prevalent conduit for disposing in Turkey.

In the last decade, Turkish government has issued a series of legislations about recycling of materials used in the packaging of commodities to meet the

standards of the European Commission. The legislation dictates that businesses should not only decrease their waste but they should also collect and help recycling of 40% of the packaging waste they annually produce. It also requires licensed organizations or the municipalities to handle the collection and recycling of packaging waste. For this purpose, businesses have constituted associations and subcontracted newly emerged licensed companies, which now collect waste and transfer them to recycling facilities. In addition, Turkey has been actively committed to Kyoto Protocol since 2009. Kyoto Protocol can be thought as a response to growing concerns about the climate change and global warming due to high emission of harmful gases. The protocol specifically encourages countries with high contribution to harmful gas emission to control their waste creation by *"limitation and/or reduction of methane emissions through recovery and use in waste management, as well as in the production, transport and distribution of energy" (Kyoto Protocol, Article 4, 1.a.viii)*.

In line with the demands of Kyoto Protocol, Turkish government has launched a series of projects to explore effective ways of collecting, grouping, and reusing waste, with the assistance and support of *TÜBİTAK* (Turkish Scientific and Technical Research Institute) and local municipalities. The main idea is to make use of reusable waste in production while directing the non-usable into RDF (refuse derived fuel) facilities to turn them into energy source for cement industry. Recycling facilities have opened up throughout Turkey—especially in İstanbul, the biggest metropolitan of Turkey, where nearly 14.000 tons solid household waste is produced daily (Kara et al., 2009). In a country with high unemployment and

poverty rates, and low sensitivity to waste separation, these regulations have encouraged emergence of new agents of recycling. As recyclable and non-recyclable waste are thrown away together, subcontractors and municipalities employ street collectors to go through garbage and select paper, glass, plastic, and metal waste from house waste. The collected recyclable waste is stored in general and local warehouses to be taken to recycling facilities. It is estimated that more than 200.000 people are working as collectors in the streets, earning up to 3.000 TL per month (Can, 2011). Although rather unofficial, these people, who were considered as thugs and decay of society only a decade ago, now constitute a sector by organizing efficiently throughout the country with certain groups monopolizing certain neighborhoods.

In addition to collecting waste, the government and local authorities as well as the media support recycling by broadcasting its desirable results. According to an article that appeared in Milliyet Ankara, municipalities now produce energy by recycling household waste (Demirtaş, 2008). The article reports that a big recycling facility has been built on *Mamak Çöplüğü* (the biggest waste yard in Ankara), where the garbage collected from each household in the city—nearly 4000 tons per day—is brought to be processed. In the facility, recyclable materials like aluminum, glass, paper, plastic, and metal are recycled to produce electricity to supply for 32.000 households.

Businesses and civil organizations can also encourage recycling by increasing "demand for recyclable materials" (Pollock, 1987) and by highlighting it

as a solution for prevailing social problems. As a part of social awareness movement, Sabancı University, Unilever Türkiye, and Boyner Mağazacılık have come up with a project to enhance revaluation of packaging waste in the workshops operated by women (Büyükköşdere, 2009). The waste, now turned into accessories such as handbags, is re-commoditized in Boyner stores and provides income for women whose labor is otherwise unrewarded. In other words, the project kills two birds with one stone: it increases recycling of waste and provides employment for women. Similarly, in 2008, *MNG Kargo*, a national carrier and shipping company, launched a campaign called "*Kargo poşetleri kutuya, çocuklar okula*" (it means every cargo bag collected will be used to send children to school). The company partnered with other businesses and civil organizations, sending them recycling boxes where they can collect cargo bags. The aim was to collect at least 5 million bags, recycle them into garbage bags, and use the revenue to build two schools every month in undeveloped parts of the country (Zaim, 2008). Five years later, my follow-up inquiries revealed that the company was able to collect 1000 tons of bags, built only one school in Bitlis and is currently preparing to build another one in Van.

Another way to encourage recycling is constructing it as a creative process. Last year, TRT, the national TV channel of the state, broadcasted news about a woman who has a workshop, where she recycles garbage and waste that she collects from the streets in her creations. The woman explains existence of the workshop as a part of her personal journey "from consuming to producing". Interestingly, some participants reflect a similar perspective:

> The papers, I change them into something else. I do not throw them away. Instead, I transform them into creative things like small trinkets. Then, I give them as gifts to my friends. This way I save money and create emotionally laden, valuable gifts.
> (Gülperi, early 20s, F, essay)
>
> *Kağıtlar mesela, ben onları başka şeye dönüştürürüm. Atmam yani. Onun yerine onları yaratıcı şeylere dönüştürüyorum, mesela küçük biblolar, süsler. Sonra onları arkadaşlarıma hediye ediyorum. Böylece hem tasarruf etmiş oluyorum hem de duygu yüklü değerli hediyeler yaratmış oluyorum.*

I will talk about creative-transformative practices that prevent disposing of certain objects in another chapter. Actually, what Gülperi does here is not preventing disposal but enhancing it using a recycling logic. She recycles paper waste through a creative/productive process, and then, disposes of it in a gifting context. She not only reduces waste but also enacts and manifests her creativity without accumulating objects as most re-use practices do. Moreover, the once useless material obtains even more value as a creative gift.

Through the work of various agents, objects that were previously categorized as garbage can be utilized through disposal. Mediators between consumers and official recycling structures become crucial for this process to work. As recycling becomes an accessible and legitimate way of disposing, consumers are challenged to take responsibility for re-categorizing, sorting, and utilizing their garbage.

4.3.1.1.3 Changing the Content of "Utilizable"

Encouraging recycling behavior requires transformation of consumers' attitudes and beliefs about utilizability of objects. As I was collecting and analyzing

data for this thesis, I was able to observe how some objects or materials, which had previously been categorized as waste, garbage or useless, obtained utilizability. Such transformation usually follows from the changes in the socio-cultural or technological environment, as various parties (governmental and municipalities, civil institutions and universities, individual consumers, media, etc.) deliberately or unknowingly work together. A good example is recycling of waste cooking oil, which is quite a new practice for Turkish consumers.

In 2008, Turkish government issued regulations for waste oil control in the *Resmi Gazete* (Official Gazette), directed at enhancing the re-utilization and recycling of household oil waste to produce biodiesel fuel. This legal document describes and identifies various oil waste types and highlights ways to prevent each from contaminating the environment. It also constructs various parties as active agents in production, collection, and recycling of waste oil, while drawing boundaries of responsibility for each party. The government, represented by the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning, is responsible for regulating and controlling oil waste management, and giving licenses to suitable facilities for collecting, storing, and recycling waste oil. Consumers, on the other hand, are given the responsibility of not re-using their waste oil or letting it contact with water resources and the earth. In this manner, consumers are asked to refrain from certain practices in disposing of oil waste (e.g. binning, pouring left-out oil down the drain or using it as fuel and burning it in stoves). The government implicates municipalities as the main party responsible for increasing consumers' awareness and providing necessary means for collecting and transporting waste oil from

households. Some municipalities have complied with this and started regulating the recycling of household waste oil in their own districts. The Municipality of Nilüfer in Bursa, for example, has distributed containers to the household to collect their waste cooking oil. It has also designed a website that explains in detail how and why cooking oil waste can be dangerous for the environment and public health. Visitors of the website are first informed about the risks of waste cooking oil and, then, they are briefed on how to neutralize these threats by frying their food in right ways and disposing of the burned oil appropriately.

In line with the government's actions, non-governmental agents and civil organizations—such as TEMA (Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats) or business associations like BYSD (Vegetable Oils and Fats Industrialists Association)—have also issued different press releases and appeared in media to support the new legislation. BYSD even took the license of a machine called BAYTOM (Waste Vegetable Oil Collection Machine) and is currently trying to disseminate its usage throughout Turkey by distributing it to hotels, supermarkets, schools, hospitals, and restaurants. BAYTOM works like an ATM machine: consumers bring their waste oil and poor it into the machine, which gives out a small reward (coins or new cooking oil) in return.

These developments have been accompanied by an increasing attention from the national media and emergence of new businesses. The media helps legitimization of used cooking oil as recyclable material through discursive

"selection, valuation, and realization" (Humphreys, 2010) as illustrated in the following excerpt taken from an article in Sabah (a popular national newspaper):

> The Director of Konak Municipality Environmental Protection and Control states that waste cooking oil are now collected by two licensed companies…The Director highlights that they put oil collection containers in every mukhtar's office and wants housewives to be sensitive. He reminds that: "Household waste oils constitute a real health and environmental hazard. One liter of waste oil contaminates 1 million cubic meters of water. Moreover, over-used cooking oil can cause terminal illnesses and contaminates drinking water when poured down the drain…Thanks to recycling, waste cooking oil can be used to produce biodizel, oil paint, and industrial soap". The Director warns consumers about unlicensed collectors and asks them to use official ones to recycle the cooking oil.
> (Sabah, June 18, 2011)

> *Konak Belediyesi Çevre Koruma ve Kontrol Müdürü lisanslı iki şirketin bitkisel atık yağ toplama yetkisine sahip olduğunu kaydetti… muhtarlık ofislerine atık yağ toplama varilleri yerleştirildiğini belirten Çevre Müdürü, ev hanımlarını bu konuda duyarlı olmaya davet etti. Bir litre atık yağın bir milyon metreküp suyu kirlettiğini hatırlatan Çevre Müdürü sözlerine şöyle devam etti: "Bitkisel atık yağlar, insan sağılını ve çevreyi önemli ölçüde tehdit etmektedir. Çok kullanılan kızartmalık atık yağlar kanserojen etki yaratmakta ve kontrolsüz bir biçimde ortama atıldığında hem kanalizasyon sistemine büyük zarar vermekte hem de yeraltı sularına karışarak içme sularını kirletmektedir… Geri kazanım sayesinde atık yağlar biodizel, yağlıboya ve sanayi sabunu yapımında kullanılabiliyor". Çevre Müdürü, korsan yağ toplayıcılarına da dikkat çekerek, atık yağların, toplama lisanslı geri kazanım tesisleri ile geçici depolama izni almış toplayıcılar tarafından toplanabileceğini söyledi.*

Just by writing about it, the media objectifies the issue of re-utilization of waste cooking oil as a real, genuine problem for contemporary Turkish society. The content of the article mimics the discursive language used by the government and civil organizations. Moreover, the moral undertone of the narrative aims at normalizing recycling of waste oil in households.

The media also encourages emergence of new businesses. Consider following print advertisement that has frequently appeared in high-selling national newspapers (Figure 2).

(Posta, January 2010) (ilgazetesi.com.tr, April 2013)

Figure 2: Ads for Recycling of Waste Cooking Oil

In addition to having the same tone, content, and moral connotations as legal documents and media articles, the ad also uses symbolic language (the chips, pan, sink) to contextualize waste oil as a byproduct of household cooking. Portraying the kitchen sink together with the sea in the background, the ad also highlights how seemingly individualistic and simple consumption practices are actually connected to the environment and public welfare through infrastructure and urban waste management systems. Recent ads of the same company (picture on the right) move recycling of waste oil towards the market business realms by highlighting

promotions offered for those who bring their waste cooking oil to their facilities. In addition to its benefits for social welfare, recycling is depicted as a practice through which consumers can trade their unclean and used oil for some new, usable sunflower oil (a type of oil widely used for frying in Turkey).

Finally, I would like to mention that none of these developments could be successful in recycling waste cooking oil in practice if not for the mechanisms that connect individual households to recycling systems. Although Jale is aware of re-utilizability of her waste cooking oil as well as other materials, she cannot practice its recycling:

> Glass, paper, I know they recycle these. But we don't have it in Ankara…I know about the cooking oil. The oil for frying, I heard there is an organization collecting it but I have never seen them. Actually, I collect waste oil and would like to give it to them but I cannot reach them.
> (Jale, 42, F, interview)

> *Cam, kağıt, biliyorum bunları geri dönüştürüyorlar. Ama Ankara'da yok bu…Yemek yağını da biliyorum. Hani kızartma için kullandığımız yağı toplayan şirketler varmış. Ben görmedim ama varmış. Aslında ben evde topluyorum yağları ve vermek isterim gerçekten. Ama ulaşamıyorum o şirketlere.*

Jale's narrative partly supports the suggestion that "the most important determinant of recycling behavior is access to a structured, institutionalized program that makes recycling easy and convenient" (Derksen and Gartrell, 1993: 439). Recycling programs can succeed in creating awareness and changing consumers' attitudes, but might fail at the practical level when not supported by accessible, sufficient, and prevalent local support systems.

4.3.1.2 Utilizing Spaces

If "social order is partly maintained by the predictable and regular distribution of objects in space" (Edensor, 2005: 311), disposing can help maintain and reconstruct this order by reorganizing and utilizing spaces. Consider how Hale uses regular disposing of her possessions to organize her house the way it should be organized:

> At some point, everything piles up. Our house is full of closets and wardrobes everywhere. We should be able to fit in, you know. But, we cannot because of all the clothes and other stuff that we don't use but cannot get rid of. So, I dispose of them and open up space. Also, this way, others can make use of these things that we cannot.
> (Hale, 40, F, interview)

> *Bir noktada her şey birikiyor. Evimiz dolaplarla, çekmecelerle dolu. Yani aslında sığabilmemiz gerekiyor ama sığamıyoruz. Alıp da kullanmadığımız kıyeftler diğer eşyalar yüzünden sığamıyoruz. Ben elden çıkartıyorum, yer açılıyor böylece. Hem de benim kullanmadıklarımı başkaları kullanabiliyor.*

Hale is disturbed by the fact that spatial organization of her house cannot accommodate (Gregson and Crewe, 2003) her life and consumption style. Her narrative illustrates how lack of space can stimulate disposing even at the expense of ridding still usable objects. To balance and prevent waste, participants dispose of these objects through the conduits that could utilize them. Clearing off one's house from unnecessary objects—especially the evidence of their inappropriate consumption—not only allows consumers to comfortably dwell in their home but also opens up vast spaces that can be filled with their future consumption. Melis portrays spatial constraints as the mediator between her disposing and consuming:

Melis: During the change of season especially, it is problematic since we don't have much space. So, we need to circulate things in the house and dispose them. Others don't do that I guess.
Meltem: Others?
Melis: The ones with a big house. I heard that they just move the object from the back to the front of the closets. But we cannot do this…And since you need to buy new things every year. The other ones, the old ones become excess. They stand out because you have no place to accommodate all. If you have a place you can store it. If not, you need to let it go.
Meltem: How do you dispose of them?
Melis: I give them to someone, who can use it. Sometimes I trash them if they are too old, I mean, I put them near the garbage bin.
(Melis, 33, F, interview)

Melis: Özellikle mevsim değişikliklerinde problem oluyor yerimiz olmadığı için. O yüzden biz de ya evin içinde dolaştırıyoruz ya da elden çıkartıyoruz eşyaları. Başkaları böyle yapmıyormuş duyduğum kadarıyla.
Meltem: Başkaları?
Melis: Yani büyük evi olanlar. Onlar sadece dolabın arkasından önüne alıyorlarmış kıyafetlerini filan. Ama biz böyle yapamıyoruz...E her sene de yeni bir şeyler alındığı için öbürleri, eski olanlar fazlalık oluyor. Yerin olmayınca batıyor gözüne. Eğer yerin olsa orada tutarsın. Yoksa elden çıkartman lazım.
Meltem: Nasıl elden çıkartıyorsun?
Melis: Birilerine veriyorum. Kullanabilecek birilerine. Bazen, eğer çok eskilerse yani, çöpün yanına koyuyoruz.

Melis's narrative reveals a common dilemma consumers face when they cannot accommodate their new acquisitions and old possessions at the same time, at the same place. Spatial constraints can legitimize disposal of objects that could otherwise be kept in store for their future utilization. So, consumers' relation with their living spaces can interfere with the relation they have with their possessions:

As a person, who moves around a lot, I can say that it has become easier to let go of my objects...Especially, if you move into smaller houses each time and cannot find a place to even sit or stand…After a while you just start eliminating things and disposing of things that does not work for you, just like throwing things out of the boat that is sinking.
(by hickiran karasinek ve uyuyan karinca, eksisozluk.com, June 12, 2008)

> *Çok dolaşan biri olarak diyebilirim ki eşyalarımı elden çıkartmak daha kolaylaştı…Özellikle her seferinde daha da küçük bir yere taşınıyorsanız ve duracak ya da oturacak yeri bile zor buluyorsanız…Bir süre sonra sadece elden çıkartmayı düşünmeye başlıyorsunuz. İşinize yaramayan şeyleri eliyorsunuz. Tıpkı batan bir gemiden eşyalarınızı denize atmak gibi.*

The author, who responds to a thread on difficulty of letting go of objects, explains how lack of space have permanently transformed the way he perceives of and relates to his possessions. Effects of his frequent moves and mandatory dealings with limited spaces reflect back on his connection with his possessions, where he uses them for functional purposes and easily disposes of those with less usability (Bardhi et al., 2012). Beyond ordinary possessions, space can even influence the relation between consumers and their favorite objects:

> My 6-year old Tommy Hilfiger jeans were my favorite, the first expensive pair that I had bought. I got great complements with it on so I had a hard time letting it go. But, everyone was telling me it was ripped and torn like a beggar's pants. It just occupied space in my wardrobe, I had no space for other stuff. I kept it for a while but eventually threw it. It was worn-out. (Caner, early 20s, M, essay)

> *6 yıllık Tommy Hilfiger kotum en sevdiğim kotumdu, aldığım ilk pahalı kot. O üzerimdeyken çok iltifat almıştım o yüzden elden çıkartmam çok zor oldu. Ama herkes bana kotun yırtıldığını dilenci pantolonu gibi olduğunu söylüyordu. Dolabımda da yer işgal ettiğinden başka şeyler için yer kalmıyordu. Biraz elimde tuttum ama en sonunda attım çünkü çok eskiydi.*

Caner's desire to utilize his closet space for more trendy objects, which would be approved by his family and friends, clashed with the value he attributed to his favorite jeans. Eventually social pressures coupled with the imagined potentiality of the space in hosting new objects won over his liking of the jeans and highlighted disposing as an inevitable end to their relation.

Another finding suggests that the desire to utilize household spaces can lead consumers to dismiss specific conduits of disposing. Sanem's insistence to use all her kitchen drawers for keeping her utensils and cleaning stuff illustrates this:

> Sanem: When we first moved into our new home, our kitchen was Italian design. There was this deep drawer with plastic containers in it. I was like "Wow, they put a storage space in the drawer!" so I started using it to keep plastic bags, cleaning supplies, things like that. I really liked it. Then, I learned that the drawer was actually for collecting and storing your household recyclables (laughs). It was what they do in Italy!
> Meltem: So, are you using the drawer for that now?
> Sanem: No (laughs). I like the way I use that drawer. And I hate keeping garbage inside, even those recyclable materials I don't like to keep them in. So, I just keep glass bottles in a bag in the balcony but I don't recycle anything else. I think we don't have much recyclable garbage anyway. (Sanem, 29, F, interview)

> *Sanem: Şimdi biz evimize ilk taşındığımızda mutfağımız İtalyan stiliydi. Çok derin büyük bir çekmece vardı mutfakta böyle içinde plastik bölmeler vardı. Ben önce şey dedim "Vay mutfak dolabına depo koymuşlar!". İçine işte çöp torbaları, temizlik malzemeleri filan koydum ben. Çok hoşuma gitmişti gerçekten. Sonra bir de öğrendim ki o çekmece aslında geri dönüşüm şeylerini toplamak içinmiş evde (gülüyor). İtalya'da böyle yapıyorlarmış.*
> *Meltem: Şimdi onun için mi kullanıyorsun çekmeceyi?*
> *Sanem: Yok (gülüyor). Benim kullandığım şekli daha hoşuma gidiyor. Bir de evde çöp bulundurmayı hiç sevmiyorum. Yani geri dönüşüm şeyi bile olsa istemiyorum. Sadece şişeler oluyor çok, onları balkonda bir poşette topluyorum. Ama başka geri dönüşüm yapmıyorum yani. Çok da yok bence geri dönüşüme verebileceğimiz şey.*

Sanem's lack of knowledge about the original function of a kitchen space—the drawer with an unusual design—led her to invent her own use for it. In its current usage as a storage space for her cleaning supplies and bags, the drawer is actually utilized more effectively within the broader system of Sanem's ordering of her kitchen and household. Considering that most participants legitimize their non-participation to recycling by lack of infrastructure and structural/spatial constraints, Sanem's house offers her an invaluable opportunity to effectively apply recycling.

Yet, she holds on to the drawer's current use to the extent of vacating her balcony as a quasi-storage for her glass recyclables and foregoing recycling for other materials. This hints that the desire to utilize one's spaces in desirable ways can sometimes triumph over the felt responsibility or morality of utilizing objects.

The ways a space is utilized can also contaminate consumers' perception about the classification and usability of objects associated with it. A few years back, a colleague of mine was complaining about disappearance of some class-related papers from her office. Apparently, she had put them in a box near her office door but could not find the box when she came back the next day. Nothing else was missing from her office: another pile of papers from the same class that she put into the box below her desk was untouched. After her inquiries, she learned that the janitors who came to clean her office took the box to paper recycling as they thought she was throwing them away by putting them near her door. With its transitional functionality, the door is a border that separates her office—a private space—from the corridor outside—a public space. By separating her box from the other one and putting it near the office door, my friend had increased the ambiguity of the box's functionality. The janitor, who was not able to distinguish whether the box contained important papers or was a recycling tool that contained the junk my friend wanted get rid of, probably referred to the other box under her table (her active work space) to deduce the box near the door was disposable.

4.3.1.3 Utilizing Money

Although consumers usually want to use their possessions as much as possible, disposing can be preferable if the object starts creating monetary burden or its maintenance requires too much effort. Most participants, for example, start comparing the benefits of keeping an object with the benefits of disposing of it when it starts breaking down:

> Feray: If something breaks down then I start thinking about disposing of it. I had this iron, which started not to get warm so I took it to the repair shop. The price the guy asked for was so high that it was not worth having it fixed. Buying a new one would be more practical. So, I gave it to the janitor telling him that it is broken. I mean, he can fix it and use it.
> Meltem: Do you usually get rid of an object when it breaks down?
> Feray: No. I usually have it fixed for once or twice. After that it usually becomes too much to maintain it, you know, fixing it or cleaning it...Then I decide that its time is up.
> (Feray, 30, F, interview)

> *Feray: Bir şey bozulunca onu elden çıkartmayı düşünmeye başlıyorum. Isıtmamaya başlayan bir ütüm vardı mesela. Tamire götürdüm. Adamın söylediği fiyat o kadar fazlaydı ki tamire değmezdi. Yenisini almak daha pratikti yani. Ben de ütüyü işteki odacımıza verdim. Tabi bozuk olduğunu söyleyerek. Artık isterse tamir ettirip kullansın.*
> *Meltem: Hep bir eşyan bozulunca elden mi çıkartırsın?*
> *Feray: Hayır. Önce bir iki kere tamir ettirmeyi denerim. Ondan sonra artık elde tutması yük olur. Bilirsin tamiri temizliği…O zaman elden çıkartma zamanı geldiğine kanaat getiririm.*

Most of the time, breakdowns and functional failures are significant signs that the object might be becoming disposable. After such events, consumers become more strict and diligent in their monitoring of the object: too many failures on the object's part terminate its contract with consumers. On other accounts, the decision to dispose of a failing object might be more abrupt. Although Feray was

not thinking of discarding her iron, the high cost of its repair left her with no choice. This disposal story makes more sense when considered together with a macro contextual change: proliferation of consumption markets in Turkey. The neo-liberal policies that were in effect during 1980s opened up the Turkish marketplace to global forces, supporting the flow of commodities into the markets and transforming consumption practices to circulate them (Özman and Coşar, 2007). Turkish consumers, who had been encouraged to be thrifty and to make do with a limited range and number of material possessions, were bombarded with a proliferation of affordable commodities. The feeling that there is always a substitute for or something better than what one has makes it easier for consumers to let go of an object. Melek's story about changing consumption of shoes illustrates this:

> My late father used to repair shoes. At that time, there was demand for these things. You only had a few pairs of shoes, you could not buy more. So, if your shoe had a torn on the side or hole at the bottom, you would take them to the repair shop. Now, we throw it away. Why would you spend money on repairing when you can buy a new pair for an affordable price?
> (Melek,29, F, interview)
>
> *Rahmetli babam ayakkabı tamircisiydi. O zamanlar bu iş için talep vardı. Bir iki tane ayakkabın olurdu, fazlasını alamazdın. O zaman da ayakkabının yanı yırtılsa ya da altı delinse, mesela, tamire götürürdün. Şimdi atıyoruz. Yani yenisini uygun fiyata alabilecekken niye tamire para harcayasın?*

Despite her youth, Melek nicely explains how proliferation of the marketplace has contributed to the reconstruction of beliefs, attitudes, and practices of consuming in Turkish society. This account also partly explains Feray's decision to dispose of her iron when it first broke down. With the increased accessibility and variety of choices for affordable prices, the market now provides consumers with a

series of usually conflicting value perspectives to contemplate (Thompson and Troester, 2002). From this perspective, Feray's decision cannot be explained as "using small mal-functions and repairs as an excuse to replace the object with a new one" (Jacoby et al., 1977: 26). Rather her decision stems from interplay of her values and identity aspirations (thrifty, trendy, modern, etc.), unavailability of affordable service providers (expensive repair), access to and availability of commodities (irons in various brands and prices), and existence of appropriate and convenient disposing conduits (the janitor can potentially utilize the broken iron).

Sometimes, consumers prefer donating, which is usually considered as an altruistic way of disposing, for monetary return it provides. Emergence of new businesses can stimulate donations by offering monetary benefits to the donors. Treehouse is a small store that sells high quality and environmentally friendly goods for children. According to an article published in a national newspaper, *Posta*, the store supports circulation of used objects among Turkish consumers (Doğu, 2008). To encourage Turkish consumers, who are quite skeptical about charity institutions and prefer using their personal connections to pass on to such objects, the store offers price discounts in return for unused clothes and toys. Items that are collected are, then, sent to children in need. Establishment of these new conduits helps decreasing tensions that emerge during disposing process. Customers of Treehouse, for example, utilize their unused possessions by passing them on to people in need conveniently and, in return, they obtain monetary returns and an opportunity to become more sustainable.

In addition to preventing monetary costs and waste of efforts, consumers can use disposing process to obtain money from their unused, old, or unwanted possessions. To utilize the object, in this case, means to make use of its potential to enhance one's finances, which dramatically relates to the object's value in the marketplace. Re-commoditization works if there is a market (i.e. demand) for the unused object. The participants have stated different motivations for selling their possessions: compensating for the separation from the object or effort/time invested in disposing process, financing replacement costs, reimbursing acquisition cost or the object still being in pristine condition. On top of these personal causes, changes in the macro environment can motivate consumers to sell their possessions to prevent waste of monetary sources. Talat, for example, decided to sell his car when the government decreased the taxes:

> Talat**:** My car was second-hand. Last year I wanted to sell it but the price they gave was low. So, I couldn't. Then they issued this tax reduction legislation. So, I sold it…The tax reduction was like a push, an excuse. I guess I was encouraged.
> Meltem**:** Would you have sold your car had there been no tax reduction?
> Talat: I guess, I would sell it anyway but I needed a push. The tax reduction did that for me. I guess it accelerated the process.
> (Talat, 43, M, interview)

> *Talat: Arabam ikinci eldi. Geçen yıl satmaya karar verdim ama verdikleri fiyat çok düşüktü. Satamadım. Sonra bu ÖTV indirimi çıktı. Ben de sattım arabayı…Vergi indirimi aslında bir nevi bahanesi oldu. Galiba cesaret verdi bana.*
> *Meltem: Vergi indirimi olmasa da satar mıydın arabanı?*
> *Talat: Sanırım. Yani her halükarda satardım ama birinin iteklemesi gerekiyordu. Vergi indirimi bahanesi oldu. Hızlandırdı yani süreci.*

Although Talat was thinking about disposing of his car because of the monetary burden of its frequent repairs, he was discouraged by its low market

value. Tax reduction, which allowed him to save money, sped up his re-commoditization of the old car. On other cases, discrepancies between consumers' and the market's valuation of the same object can deter disposing process. Jale, who feels like she is being cheated, cannot dispose of her old computer:

> I wanted sell my PC since I am using my laptop now. So, I asked around, to a few retailers and people from my office. But , they gave me such a low price like 100 TL. The computer is in good shape, it is fast, and I used it clean. I don't know I want to sell it but the price is too low. So, now, I kind of lost my enthusiasm.
> (Jale, 42, F, interview)
>
> *Artık laptop kullandığımdan PC'mi satmak istedim. Soruşturdum biraz işte bir kaç satıcıya ve işyerindekilere sordum. Ama çok az fiyat verdiler. Yani 100 TL gibi bir fiyat verdiler. Bilgisayar hala iyi durumda. Hızlı filan iyi kullandım onu ben. Yani bilmiyorum. Satmak istiyorum ama fiyat çok az. O yüzden motivasyonumu kaybettim gibi oldu.*

For Jale, who assesses her PC based on her own usage processes as well as its performance and aesthetic features, its market value shaped by the demand and existence of new computers with new technology is incompatible with her own evaluations. Since she feels that the sellers do not offer her a fair price, re-commoditizing her PC feels like waste of her well-deserved money. Since, like Talat, Jale does not consider another conduit to dispose of her computer, she postpones disposing of it.

There are also participants who have been doubtful about selling their possessions for perceived lack of necessary resources or interpersonal skills in bargaining. With proliferation of online sales, however, these consumers have become prominent sellers of their used objects. To understand the mechanisms behind this, emergence and dissemination of the Internet in Turkish households

should be considered. The Internet, which has a 20-year history in Turkey, was not commonly used in the households until late 90s. With the establishment of online sales websites (e.g. gittigidiyor.com, sahibinden.com, arakibulaki.com) after 2000, Turkish consumers started using the Internet to dispose of their objects. Murat describes these websites and the marketplace, in his essay, as contexts for market research where consumers can learn about 1st hand prices and other consumers' and market agents' evaluation criteria to come up with a good estimate price.

Some websites even encourage re-commoditization by offering consumers rewards and promotions for using their channels to dispose of their objects. An online sales website called "arakibulaki.com" announced a few years back that it was going to reward the first 14 people with the highest number of advertisements to sell their items. Their ad (Figure 3) displays an old fashioned PC as "before" and a new laptop as "after". The ad encourages diposing by highlighting the rewards and opportunities of "getting rid of" the old stuff.

Figure 3: The Online Ad Promoting Arakibulaki.com

These websites also direct consumers on how to re-commoditize. Nevaria.com, for example, regulates sellers' liberties—deciding on the beginning price, minimum offer to increase the bid, instant purchase price, and the minimum price—and helps them in "marketing and promoting" their objects (e.g. through display and priority listing features). The website of gittigidiyor.com, the most famous and probably the oldest online website, has a list for objects that cannot be sold through the website as well as for the objects whose trade may be problematic such as used clothes, medical equipments, unlicensed PC games, pets, and spying equipments. On one hand, these restrictions reflect the general socio-cultural risk perceptions related to hygiene (for clothes) and safety (for medical equipments) that do not prohibit but might discourage exchange of these objects. On the other hand, it reflects the existence of a constraining legal background—especially for licensed goods and spying equipments.

As the proliferation of these websites have turned re-selling into an acceptable disposing conduit for consumers across all social classes, different types of consumer-sellers have emerged. For some participants, re-selling is a process that requires careful planning and strategizing, through which they are transformed into marketers and their old possessions into assets (Lastovicka and Fernández, 2005; Denegri-Knott and Molesworth, 2009). These consumers use re-commoditization to liquidate their possessions and compensate for participating in consumption culture. Sinan writes that he re-sells "*to transform my possessions into money. This way, I can replace the old object with new ones in a profitable*

way". Similarly, Mesut, describes in detail how he turns into a marketer whenever he chooses re-commoditization to dispose of his possessions:

> You need to take pictures of the good and put attractive headlines. I let potentials customers choose the carrier and send them small gifts as promotion. It is also important to create an emotional connection with the customers. I share my memories with the object or explain the usage process for this. Of course, the price should be carefully adjusted: high enough to compensate for your labor and low enough to not be exploitative.
> (Mesut,37, M, interview)
>
> *Ürünün resmini çekmeli ve çekici başlıklar koymalısın. Ben potansiyel müşterilerin kargo şirketini seçmesine izin veriyor ve küçük hediyeler gönderiyorum. Müşterilerle duygusal bağ kurmak da önemli. Ben eşyayla olan anılarımı paylaşıyorum ya da kullanım sürecini anlatıyorum. Tabi fiyat iyi bir şekilde ayarlanmalı: emeklerini karşılayacak kadar çok ama sömürü olmayacak kadar düşük olmalı.*

As he prepares his objects for the commodity market, Mesut turns into a marketer and even adopts the business jargon (e.g. goods-*ürün*, customer-*müşteri*). His usual marketing strategy involves planning promotions, distribution, packaging, pricing, and advertising tactics for his possessions.

There are also participants for whom re-commoditization—in addition to liquidating objects in return for a good profit—is also a practice of thrift. Consider Şebnem, who writes that she sells her possessions "*to avoid waste in this general economic situation of the country*". Şebnem disposes of her possession through selling partly to preserve her lifestyle during economic difficulties in her country (Green et al., 2001). Similarly, Alihan relates that, despite designing promotions like paying for the carrier or putting small gifts to increase demand for his possessions, he uses re-commoditization to prevent waste and revaluate his objects rather than just for making profits.

4.3.1.4 Utilizing Time

Occasionally, time becomes the main concern for participants, who do not want to invest much time in disposing of their possessions. My findings show that, in addition to a conduit's capability to utilize an object (Gregson et al., 2007), the time and effort it takes for such utilization is also significant in selecting among conduits. A student, Gizem, writes that she occasionally re-commoditizes her unused possessions but only after carefully pondering how much time and effort would go into the selling process compared to potential monetary gains. If she feels that the money she makes cannot compensate the time she spends, then she directs the object towards other channels, especially donation so that "*it could go to someone who could not afford it otherwise*".

In fact, the priority given to time—or modern convenience (Warde et al., 1998)—in disposing of an object usually clashes with a prevalent desire to dispose of it through conduits that could utilize it. Most participants negotiate this tension by passing the object on to family members or other actors whom they can easily access. Cleaning ladies and *kapıcıs*, who are already a part of consumers' household practices, can become conduits that are both convenient (they are easily accessible, fast) and morally appropriate (they usually have lower welfare) to move an object.

Another popular and convenient disposing practice is throwing away the object, which could include trashing it as well as deserting it on the street where it

could still be picked up. This attests to Gregson et al.'s (2007) suggestion that conduits that move the object towards the waste stream are easy and convenient. However, my findings reveal a moral tone that underlies participants' decisions to throw away their possessions. Consumers legitimize deserting or throwing away an object with the rationale of "not wasting time" and refer to re-valuation agents such as collectors, who can divert the object away from the waste stream:

> A big carpet, a couch…How could you carry them? How do you sell them? They were big, they needed to leave the house fast. So, I left them on the street. There are collectors there, a sector. Every night, they collect plastic bottles, cans, glass…they sell it to recycling places. So, I leave such things on the street. I don't need to bother with thinking how not to waste such things. They (collectors) do it for me…
> (Cenk, 32, M, interview)
>
> *Büyük bir kanepe ya da halı…Nasıl taşırsın bunları? Nasıl satarsın? Çok büyüklerdi ve evden hemen gitsinler istiyordum. O yüzden sokağa bıraktım. Toplayıcılar var, bir sektör olmuşlar. Her gece gelip plastik şişe, teneke kutu, cam hepsini topluyorlar… Geri dönüşüm yerlerine satıyorlarmış. O yüzden ben öyle şeyleri sokağa bırakıyorum. Aman ziyan mı oldu diye düşünmeme gerek yok. Onlar (toplayıcılar) benim için yapıyorlar zaten…*

Like Cherrier's (2009b) consumers, who leave their possessions in public places as a gift to strangers, Cenk views the street as a conduit through which he can utilize his possessions. However, convenience rather than spiritual enlightenment influences his selection of the street as a suitable conduit. Cenk is aware that the collectors do not revive all types of objects. He does not throw his clothes away (unless they are in a very bad condition) but tries to pass along or donate them when he can find people in his social network so that *"they would be of use"*. However, for objects whose disposal is time consuming and difficult, the street or garbage bin can be the main conduits to utilize them.

4.3.1.5 General Implications

Processes of utilizing that I have explicated above are built upon the ideals of modernity as efficiency and progress; thrift as not wasting; awareness of one's self and the material world; and counter-modernist critiques of consumerism—all as reinterpreted and enmeshed by the participants. I have found that utilizing through disposing can mean various things: utilizing objects, spaces, time or money. These meanings can occasionally create conflicts and tensions, which participants solve by highlighting some discourses over the others. For example, in deserting his furniture on the street based on their imagined re-discovery by the collectors instead of actually finding someone who needs them, Cenk underlines modernist ideals of importance of time and significance of modern institutions in maintaining systems over other discourses. This way, he can moralize and legitimize this practice.

In addition, out of the four grand practices that I have identified, utilizing is perhaps the one that permeates the boundaries of others the most since participants' perception and experiences of morality occasionally overlap with notions of "not wasting" and "making use of " things. To put it better, whether the disposed object is properly utilized in the end of a specific disposing process is usually a measure of its performance. The findings, in this manner, underline the importance of knowledge on the object as well as the conduits, which can utilize them as Gregson et al. (2007) suggest. I expand their finding by underscoring the importance of updating such knowledge, reflecting on the match between the conduits and

consumers' general values, beliefs, and lifestyles, and knowing about other people's life and consumption.

Finally, my findings imply that facilitating sustainable practices such as recycling requires collaboration from a number of parties—consumers, formal and informal business structures, government and local authorities, civil institutions, and the media. An agenda to enhance recycling can be achieved only when these actors work to create demand (Pollock, 1987) or a market for recyclable materials.

4.3.2 Harmonizing

The data show that disposing helps consumers to harmonize with the ever-changing world: to keep up with the trends, to become fashionable, to rejuvenate, and to adjust. Consumers surround themselves with material objects so that they can construct the worlds as they desire and imagine (McCracken, 1986). Objects that do not fit in this world disrupt the perceived harmony and are usually categorized as excess, mess or unnecessary. By disposing such objects, consumers organize and maintain their object relations, and, consequently, create ordered, refreshed spaces and adjust to perceived changes in their lives:

> Disposing might seem irresponsible or problematic to some people but in today's world, you cannot keep up with daily life unless you dispose. While disposing, you also learn about new things, trends, fashion, your items." (Cemal, early 20s, M, essay).
>
> *Elden çıkartmak bazıları için problemli ya da sorumsuz bir davranış olabilir. Ama bugünün dünyasında günlük yaşama ayak uydurmak için elden*

çıkartmak zorundasınız. Elden çıkartırken aynı zamanda yeni şeyler, trendler, moda ve eşyalarınız hakkında yeni şeyler de öğreniyorsunuz.

Cemal thinks that disposing is an informative and enlightening process that is necessary for his integration to the contemporary social, cultural, and material world. He also highlights disposing as a reflexive practice, which requires consumers to adopt a critical eye and operate on a certain level of awareness of themselves and the outside world.

My analyses have revealed three main ways through which disposing can help consumers to harmonize: in ordering the material and spatial environment they live in, in adjusting to the perceived changes in the said environment and in themselves, and in their quest to aestheticize and refresh their lives.

4.3.2.1 Ordering

An important context, in which disposing is practiced, is when consumers clean, order, and organize as a part of their everyday dwelling and accommodating things (Gregson and Crewe, 2003; Gregson, 2007). Whether as a part of categorizing and dismissing things or relocating and organizing spaces (Maycroft, 2009), disposing can help consumers to get rid of the disorder and re-establish control over their environment. My analyses show that consumers' beliefs, attitudes, and practices regarding ordering and cleaning—especially of their households—constitute an important background for their disposing:

> I usually dispose when I am suitable for a grand cleaning. I can do that when it is convenient for me since I work. I clean and organize thoroughly, re-arrange the drawers, categorize and sort my cloths. During this time, I separate those I want to dispose of and put the rest back into the closet. (Melis, 33, F, interview)
>
> *Ben genelde eşyalarımı büyük temizlik zamanında elden çıkartıyorum. Çalıştığım için bana uyan zamanlarda yapabiliyorum ancak. Güzelce temizlik yapıyorum, etrafı topluyorum, çekmeceleri düzenliyorum, kıyafetlerimi gruplayıp organize ediyorum. Bu süreçte elden çıkartmak istediklerimi ayırıyor kalanları da dolaplara geri koyuyorum.*

For Melis, the timing of disposing of her clothes is inevitably embedded in other practices of ordering and cleaning. That is, rather than viewing disposing as an isolated practice, she engages in it as a part of a series of practices that help her to organize her living environment. This builds on Gregson's (2007) suggestion that divestment is a part of dwelling and being at home, a fundamental practice for us to accommodate ourselves, others, and material objects in our living spaces safely and in desirable ways. In addition to this, I find the relation between ordering and disposing to be mutually reinforcing. While contexts of ordering (e.g. household cleaning, daily sweeping, etc) can reveal objects that have become disposable, disposing helps consumers to deal with disorder and to organize:

> So, when it feels crowded I dispose of things. I don't want to keep them, they feel unnecessary, excess...For example, you get up in the mornings and want to dress up and all, right? To choose what to wear, you make a mess. If you have less stuff then it means you will have less mess. It will be more comfortable with room to breathe. Everywhere will look more organized. (Feray, 30, F, interview)
>
> *Bana kalabalık geldiğinde elden çıkartıyorum. Fazlalık, ekstra gibi gelince eşyalar elimde tutmak istemiyorum…Mesela sabah kalkıyorsunuz ve giyinmek istiyorsunuz değil mi? Ne giyeyim diye seçerken dağınıklık oluyor. Daha az eşyan varsa eğer, dağınıklık da daha az olur. Daha rahat, komforlu olur. Nefes alacak yer kalır. Her şey daha düzenli görünür.*

Feray's daily activities like dressing up or even opening the closet doors can make her become aware of the excess. In this context, Feray describes excess as things that create mess in her home. The difficulty or discomfort in undertaking mundane actions shows her that she might need to dispose of some items. Berrin, however, feels that the things she cannot categorize or those that might disrupt her own categories should go:

> I have a system, I try to group everything. Clothes, for example: tops on one side, shorts on other, pants on another...But, sometimes I just cannot restore the order and it bothers me greatly. The excess, it bother me. I feel they need to go, that they should not be there.
> (Berrin, 41, F, interview)
>
> *Benim bir sistemim var, her şeyi gruplamaya çalışırım. Kıyafetler mesela: üstler bir yerde, şortlar bir yerde, pantolonlar başka bir yerde…Ama bazen düzeni sağlayamıyorum ve bu beni çok rahatsız ediyor. Fazlalık, beni çok rahatsız ediyor. Gitmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum, orada olmaması gerektiğini.*

The excess creates disturbance in Berrin's system, which she neutralizes by disposing of it. The modernist ideals of obtaining control, order, and efficiency in one's life is prevalent in both Berrin's and Feray's narratives. They can easily dispose of things that prevent them from exerting control over their environments, disturb their status quo, and decrease the efficiency of their household management.

Although most participants dispose of an object when they realize it creates a mess or no longer fits the order in the household, they are usually unwilling to put in the extra time for sorting and assessing their possessions as in Melis's case. As such, processes of routine ordering, which partly include deciding whether an

object has been used in ways or with the frequency that it should be used, usually overlap with processes of disposing:

> Like when I order the kitchen, while loading the dishwasher or putting the dishes away, I check out the stuff. If there is a scratch at the bottom of the pan or a knick at the side of the glass, it appears to you then. So, I usually keep an eye on them while cleaning the kitchen. Because you know it is dangerous for health to keep using these things. But, I don't specifically set out to do this. I mean, I don't say "Ok, it's the time for me to sort through the kitchen stuff" and set out to see what needs to go.
> (Ahu, 30, F, interview)
>
> *Mesela mutfağımı düzenlerken, bulaşık makinesini yerleştirirken ya da tabakları kaldırırken bakıyorum şöye, kontrol ediyorum. Bir çizik varsa mesela tavanın dibinde ya da bardağın kenarında bir çatlak o zaman görüyorsunuz. Ben de genelde mutfağı temizlerken dikkat ediyorum böyle şeylere. Çünkü biliyorsunuz sağlığa zararlı böyle şeyleri tutmak. Ama özellikle bunlara bakayım diye vakit ayırmıyorum. Yani "tamam şimdi mutfaktaki eşyaları kontrol etme zamanı" gibi bir şey düşünüp de özellikle ne gidecek diye bakmıyorum.*

Ahu's enthusiasm to get rid of defective kitchen utensils reflects her awareness that these objects could be dangerous for health. This feeds from a pervasive risk-awareness, systematically produced and promoted in the postmodern world (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992)—as illustrated in frequent appearance of medical professionals on TV to warn consumers against using scratched non-stick pans or cracked wood plates. Yet, Ahu emphasizes that, rather than spending extra time to sort through her utensils, she disposes of most of her kitchenware as she cooks, cleans, and organizes in her kitchen. These regular practices create a "gap of accommodation" where the lives of people and things collide with each other, opening the latter to the scrutiny of the former (Gregson, 2007). It is during these regular practices of dwelling that Ahu actually gazes at and obtains awareness of her objects, which she otherwise uses without any reflections. Such awareness

triggered by informants' contact with their possessions during cleaning are common in the data:

> Stuff might surface as unused or old during cleaning. I can come across an unused brush or old hairclips. I usually just trash them or sometimes put them in a bag and collect them to give to our *kapıcı*.
> (Buket, 34, F, interview)

> *Kullanılmayan ya da eski şeyler temizlik sırasında ortaya çıkabilir. Kullanılmayan bir fırça ya da eski tokaya rastlayabilirim. Genellikle böyle şeyleri atarım ben ya da bir torbaya koyup biriktiririm kapıcımıza vermek için.*

Objects Buket had previously removed from her daily life by stuffing them into the back of drawers come back while she cleans her room. What we see in Buket's case is an illustration of places how such as drawers or closets that are used as conduits of pseudo-disposal or as a part of divestment rituals (McCracken, 1986) can bring these objects back (Gregson et al., 2007) during routine household maintenance practices. From this perspective, practices of ordering can be seen as the last phase of a long-lasting divestment ritual, which ends as consumers encounter their forgotten possessions only to re-categorize them as rubbish, junk or just disposable. Buket's case also questions the suggestion that the desire of young, single individuals to organize usually leads to irresponsible disposing behavior (Hanson, 1980; Harrell and McConocha, 1992; Coulter and Ligas, 2003) as she usually takes care to pass these objects on to people who might use them.

Some participants, especially males, delegate the task of disposing by constructing ordering and cleaning as a dominantly feminine practice:

> Well, it is really all in the hands of my mother. She is the one who cleans and organize our house, I just select some of my clothes when she tells me to and

> hand them over to her. I think she gives some of them to our cleaning lady and donate the others. I don't know.
> (Ali, early 20s, M, essay)
>
> *Yani aslında anneme bağlı bu işler. Çünkü evde temizliği ve düzenlemeyi yapan o. Ben sadece bana söyleyince kıyafetlerimi filan seçiyorum ve ona veriyorum. Sanırım o da ya temizlikçimize veriyor ya da başkalarına bağışlıyor. Tam bilmiyorum.*

Contrary to most informants, who enthusiastically talk about how and when people should dispose of their items, Ali just wants to be involved in selecting his objects for disposal. For him, "when" and "how" are responsibility of his mother, who handles all the ordering in the household. There are also older participants who adopt a similar perspective:

> Disposing clothes, it usually happens during cleaning…My wife initiates that. Of course, she asks me whether I want to keep something or not. But, I never initiate it because it is very difficult. Lots of things to do like take everything out of the closet, sort through, and decide whether to keep or discard. No, it takes lots of time. I cannot, I only have the weekends so I don't want to be bothered with it. Also, I don't like it. It's my wife's area. (Talat, 43, M, interview)
>
> *Kıyafetleri elden çıkartmak genelde temizlik zamanında yapılır…Karım başlatır bizde o işleri. Tabi bana sorar neyi verip neyi tutacağımı ama ben hiç girmem o işlere çünkü çok zor. Bir sürü iş var, her şeyi dolaplardan çıkart, seç, gideceğe ve kalacağa karar ver. Yok çok zor, zaman alıyor. Ben yapamam sadece hafta sonlarım var benim onunla uğraşamam. Sevmiyorum da. Karımın alanı o.*

In explaining how he disposes (or not disposes) of his clothes, Talat draws from the strict boundaries he imagines to exist between feminine and masculine areas of responsibility in the household (e.g. cleaner/organizer vs breadwinner). Such distinction approves of his absence in specific practices of ordering and

cleaning in the house, while legitimizing his withdrawal from determining "how," "to whom/where," and even "when" to dispose of his own clothes.

Although examples above underscore a mutually supportive relation between disposing and ordering, sometimes participants use the prediction of an upcoming grand cleaning as an excuse to postpone disposing of specific objects:

> Giray: I have these leather bags, the ones that men carry, you know. They are kind of special, they witnessed a part of my life. So, I keep them in a closet.
> Meltem: What are you planning to do with them? Are you going to pass them along?
> Giray: No. They wouldn't mean anything to anyone else. So, they are going to go. Some day, most probably during a big cleaning or ordering. Like when you move or when you experience a big change like getting married, those times you cannot care about things that much. All you say is "damn, I have to get rid of all these". There is no place for sentimentality. They will go then. (Giray, 35, M, interview)
>
> *Giray: Çantalarım var benim, deri. Bu erkeklerin kullandığından. Özeller benim için. Hayatımın bir dönemine tanıklık ettiler. O yüzden onları dolapta saklıyorum.*
> *Meltem: Ne yapmayı planlıyorsun onlarla? Birine verecek misin?*
> *Giray: Yok canım. Başkasına bir anlam ifade etmez onlar. Gidecekler yani, bir gün. Büyük ihtimalle genel temizlik zamanında. Hani taşınırken ya da büyük bir değişiklik olunca, evlenmek gibi, gözünüz hiç bir şeyi görmez ya. Sadece dersiniz "Ya of kurtulmam lazım bunlardan". O zaman duygusallığa yer yoktur. İşte öyle bir zamanda gidecekler.*

Giray has cherished possessions that he cannot currently let go. In his interview, he describes his insistence to keep them as irrational since he has no plans of ever using them or passing them on to someone else. Yet, he uses ordering as a form of avoidance strategy (Phillips and Sego, 2011) and legitimizes his attachment by anticipating a grand cleaning occasion as an expiry date for these objects.

In general, times of general ordering and cleaning constitute a fruitful disposition context. Embedded in daily household work, disposing of unused and old items becomes a part of good housing practice. As such, it usually works to lift off great burden from consumers' shoulder by cleaning up spaces and re-establishing perceptions of order, cleanliness, and neatness.

4.3.2.2 Refreshing and Aestheticizing

Although participants like shopping and having new things, and they occasionally accumulate objects with the hope of using them sometime in the future, at some point, they feel oppressed and confined by the very same objects that surround them. Disposing, in this manner, becomes a way out, a venue to get rid of the burden of "having too much":

> Filiz: The more you have, the more you need to do to maintain them. It is a burden. Perhaps it's because I am getting old but it just bothers me. I mean I feel oppressed. Sometimes I feel suffocated at home. I say "Oh, why do I have too many things?". And I get tired of trying to organize, putting this here, that there…I get fed up, exhausted.
> Meltem: How do you deal with this feeling?
> Filiz: Do you ask if I get rid of them? Hmm. Sometimes I do. I had some things passed on to the needy. Sometimes I realize I need them after disposing of them. But, I don't regret it, I will do it again if I get bored or confined (laughs).
> (Filiz, 51, F,interview)

> *Filiz: Ne kadar çok eşyan olursa onlara bakmak için o kadar çaba harcaman gerekiyor. Yük oluyor. Belki artık yaşlandığım içindir ama beni rahatsız ediyor. Yani bunalıyorum. Evde sıkıntı geliyor. Diyorum "Ay neden bu kadar çok eşyam var?". Onu oraya bunu buraya alayım derken yoruluyorum…Bıkıyorum yani yorgunluk geliyor…*
> *Meltem: Nasıl başa çıkıyorsunuz bu hisle?*

Filiz: Atıyor muyum diye mi soruyorsun? Hmm. Bazen. Bazen ihtiyacı olana verdiğim oldu. Bazen de verdikten sonra ihtiyacım olduğunu fark ediyorum. Ama pişman olmuyorum. Yine olsa, bunalsam ya da sıkılsam, yine yaparım (gülüyor).

On one hand, accumulation of objects halters Filiz's effective household management by making it difficult for her to organize and clean. Beyond this, however, it disturbs her mental and psychological welfare by turning her house into an oppressive and cramped up space. Yet, rather than changing her lifestyle or even decreasing her consumption as the literature suggests (Cherrier, 2009; Cherrier and Murray, 2009), she turns to disposing as a way to occasionally (if not permanently) simplify her life—sometimes at the expense of becoming non-thrifty by disposing of something of use.

For participants, who feel confined by their possessions easily and frequently, disposing is a regular mechanism of purification. Consider Melis, who likes to rid her house of "*idle and useless excess*" whenever she can:

> I cannot function well when there are lots of objects uselessly lying around. I like disposing. For example, my sister cannot get rid of her bags. She haven't used some of them in years and some only a few times a year but they stay in the closet. If she could just allow me, I would clear her closet.
> (Melis, 33, F, interview)

> *Ben etrafta çok fazla ve gereksiz eşya olduğunda yapamıyorum. Elden çıkartmayı seviyorum. Mesela kardeşim çantalarından vazgeçemez. Bazılarını yıllardır kullanmadı biliyorum. Bazılarını da yılda bir iki kere kullanır. Ama dolapta durur onlar. Bir izin verse aslında bana, o dolabı çok güzel temizlerim ben.*

Melis can be classified as a purger, someone with low anxiety over letting go of an object and who frequently assesses their possessions to dispose of the

unused/unnecessary ones (Hanson, 1980; Harrell and McConocha, 1992; Couter and Ligas, 2003; Phillips and Sego, 2011). Melis can even trash an object for the sake of getting rid of it fast without checking if there are other conduits to utilize it. Frequent and sometimes rather careless disposing helps consumers like her to manage their material wealth lest it starts imprisoning them. However, not everyone who uses disposing to purify and cleanse their living environments are trashers. Hale, who is actually quite possessive of her material possessions, has developed a strategy to deal with the abundance of objects surrounding her:

> Hale: I read this article I think it was published in Cumhuriyet. It says, we need to get rid of everything we have not been using for more than 2 years. This way, we could feel happier, more open to change. It advises us to be more progressive and more effective. That is, we need to see that something we don't use has no benefit to us, it just sits in the closet, wasting space. I started applying this principle.
> Meltem: What did you use to do before?
> Hale: Before, I guess you could say I wasn't able to easily part with my things. I thought perhaps I could use them one day. After reading it, I was taken with that two-year rule. I mean, we have closets everywhere in the house but, yet, we cannot fit in because of all the unused clothes and other stuff. I mean, if I cannot use it someone else should right? And really, you feel relaxed, happier. Also, as the article says you want to buy new things. You can go back to shopping with a clear mind and conscience because you will really need the things that you buy.
> (Hale, 40, F, interview)

> *Hale: Bir makale okumuştum, sanırım Cumhuriyet'teydi. İki yıldan fazla kullanmadığınız eşyayı elden çıkartın diyordu. Bu şekilde daha mutlu, değişime daha açık olabilirsiniz diyordu. Yani daha ilerici ve etkili olmamızı söylüyordu. Yani kullanmadığımız bir şeyin bize bir yararı olmadığını anlamamız gerekir. Sadece dolapta yer kaplıyor o. Ben bu ilkeyi uygulamaya başladım.*
> *Meltem: Daha önce ne yapıyordun?*
> *Hale: Sanırım eşyalarından kolay ayrılan bir insan olmadığımı söyleyebilirsin. Hep belki bir gün kullanırım diye düşünürdüm. Ama o makaleyi okuduktan sonra iki yıl kuralı çok aklıma yattı. Yani evde bir sürü dolap var ama yine sığamıyoruz kullanılmayan kıyafet ve eşyalardan dolayı. Halbuki ben değilse başkası kullanır değil mi? Ve gerçekten çok mutlu, rahatlamış hissediyorsun. Hem makalede de dedikleri gibi yeni şeyler almak*

istiyorsun. Bu şekilde, temiz bir akıl ve vicdanla alışveriş yapabilirsin çünkü aldığın şeye gerçekten ihtiyacın oluyor.

As an independent, progressive, and secular woman—as she defines herself to be—Hale's narrative enmeshes a range of cultural orientations. Her rapid embrace of the two-year rule is supported by progressive and change-oriented modernity movements that have been shaping everyday life of Turkish society. For her, the fact that the article was published in *Cumhuriyet*—a national newspaper that widely targets the secular, modern, and educated urbanites—works as an evidence of its rightfulness and legitimacy. At the same time, she is bothered with her lack of efficiency in making use of her objects as well as with her over-participation to consumer culture. In addition, she is concerned about wasting things, which she resolves by passing her mostly unused and new possessions on to people in need. Her quest for refreshment and cleansing, however, creates a vicious cycle. Disposing materially, spatially, morally, and psychologically prepares her for a new shopping spree, during which she can acquire more freely because *"she really needs that black shirt as she has just disposed of it back at home*".

Like Hale, other participant narratives also involve references to a book, article or news, which justifies, rationalizes, and supportes the need for refreshing. In his essay, Bahadır quotes Joseph Newton who introduced the concept of "The Principles of Emptiness" where he approaches disposing as a way of practicing Zen. Newton claims that letting go of the material wealth and emptying one's life help cleansing the soul and the mind from negative emotions and thoughts (e.g. guilt, envy, hate, resentment or sadness). Bahadır believes that he "complies with

his own cycle of life" and creates emptiness that could pull in goodwill and productive energy by disposing of his unused items. Contemporary consumers are encouraged to refresh their selves by occasionally cleansing themselves of their possessions and acquiring new ones (Turner and Turner, 1978) as illustrated in the following excerpt from *eksisozluk.com:*

> Junk of the past…It is the burden of holding on to clothes, appliances or other objects that have not been used for a few years. The difficulty of things that are hard to get rid of whether it is because they embody memories or the thought that you may need them one day. Eventually, you obtain enough willpower to get rid of them all, then you can take a deep breath and relax.
> (by anshar, from eksisozluk.com on June 17, 2003).
>
> *Nuhnebilik ıvırı zıvırı…Eski giyecekleri bir hatta iki yıl geçmesine rağmen kullanılmamış gerecleri evde tutmanın gereksiz yüküdür. Anısı vardı, belki bir gün gerekir ya lazım olursa şeklindeki düşüncelerin etkisiyle atılması zor olan zımbırtıların yaşattığı zorluktur. Sonunda bir güç gelir hepsini def edersiniz başınızdan rahat bir nefes alırsınız.*

Such discourses shared in the popular media frame disposing as a form of therapy (Luomala, 2001) through which consumers enhance their well-being, feel good about themselves, and take control of their lives. Albeit not advising consumers on how to dispose of their possessions, these narratives stimulate disposing by promoting the idea that accumulation is unproductive and burdensome.

Disposing also helps some participants to aestheticize themselves and their surroundings by distancing them from boring, ugly or old-fashioned objects:

> You get bored of wearing the same things. You want to get rid of it. You want better, beautiful things, upgrade...Then, you dispose of your objects even when they are not that old. This way you can also pass them on to others while they are still usable.
> (Jale, 42, F, interview)

Aynı şeyleri giymekten sıkılıyorsun ve elden çıkartmak istiyorsun. Daha iyi, daha güzel şeyler, üst modeller istiyorsun…O zaman çok eski olmasa da eşyanı elden çıkartıyorsun. Bu şekilde hala kullanılabilecekken onları başkasına verebiliyorsun.

For Jale, the process of disposing is a way to upgrade and get rid of objects that do not appeal to her anymore. Conscious of her rather premature disposing, she uses specific conduits—cleaning lady, *kapıcı*, charities—to move these objects to other people to prolong their lives. Using disposing to aestheticize the self is most common among younger participants, who are also concerned about not only when but also how to dispose:

> Especially clothes, you buy them when they are expensive but their style gets old that do not fit me anymore. I give them to others. Knowing that the stuff I don't use make some changes in their lives makes me happy and disposing easier.
> (Okan, early 20s, M, essay)

> *Özellikle kıyafetlerde, gerçekten pahalıyken alıyorsun. Ama modası geçiyor, stilleri eskiyor ve bana uymuyor artık. Ben de onları başkasına veriyorum. Kullanmadığım şeylerin başkasının hayatında bir değişiklik yarattığını bilmek beni mutlu ediyor ve vermemi kolaylaştırıyor.*
> Okan's essay uncovers numerous forces that inform his decision on when and how to dispose of his clothes. On one hand, he is trying to maintain his aesthetic sensibilities and communicate a certain style by continuously working on his clothing with the help of the marketplace. Disposing of the pieces that might endanger his style is an important part of this aestheticization process. On the other hand, this practice usually requires him to dispose of materially new objects for which he had paid high amounts of money. Most participants resolve this tension by passing these objects to the poor so that they can reconstruct such seemingly extravagant actions as practices that can enhance the welfare of the disadvantaged.

Other findings show that, in addition to the regular ordering of the house, disposing is also a main process in creating idealized and modern spaces for consumers. Mostly, furniture, household, office appliances, and other decorative items are disposed of as a part of this process. The quest of aestheticizing life spaces is also supported by a number of market and non-market agents. Turkish government, for example, launched a project in 2009 to encourage and financially support consumers who want to renovate their home. The timing of the campaign coincided with the recent global economic crisis, during which the government introduced various financial support packages to reinforce consumption and increase circulation of money and objects in the markets. For the duration of the project, the government partnered with various retailers and producers of furniture, household equipments, and construction materials as well as banks and public organizations to encourage consumers to undertake serious debts in return for obtaining "a better life":

> You want to renovate your home…The cupboards in your kitchen are old, your bathroom is old fashioned, the paint on your walls is peeling or faded or the hardwood on your floor is not as good as when you first moved. Or perhaps you feel you need a new air conditioner for your living room…Now you can do all these with the help of distinguished retailers, TOBB, and Halkbank.
> (www.eviniyenileturkiye.com)

> *Evinizi yenilemek istiyorsunuz…Mutfağınızdaki dolaplarınız eskimiş, banyonuzun modası geçmiş, duvarların boyası dökülüyor veya solmuş ya da yerdeki parkeleriniz ilk taşındığınız günkü kadar iyi değil. Ya da belki oturma odanızda yeni bir klimaya ihtiyacınız var…Şimdi bunların hepsini seçkin mağazalar, TOBB ve Halkbank'ın yardımıyla yapabilirsiniz.*

Various bodies have criticized these projects, claiming that the government actually helps businesses in duping consumers for the sake of sustaining their control over the economy. Yet, considering most participants' enthusiasm in renewing and aestheticizing their life, these projects become important in both legitimizing this progressive perspective and providing substantial support in its application. They also provide clues on what type of items should be disposed of and when, and more importantly, portray a definition of a decent life and appropriate housing practices—including monitoring, selecting, and disposing of objects—to reach this life.

4.3.2.3 Adjusting

Our possessions constitute a personal archive through which we can reflect on and track the changes our lives have gone through (Belk, 1991). Just as Saltuk writes, disposing is a way to adjust one's self to the changes experienced throughout the life:

> We need to adapt to changes…throughout years we meet new people with different values and tastes and are influenced from them…to get involved in their groups we might need to dispose certain items. We also need to keep up with changes. Sometimes the gasoline prices might be high and we dispose our car early because in the long term it would be non-wasteful…
> (Saltuk, early 20s, M, essay)

> *Değişikliklere uyum sağlamamız gerekli…Yıllar boyu farklı zevkleri ve değerleri olan yeni insanlarla tanışıyor ve onlardan etkileniyoruz…Onların arasına dahil olmak için bazı eşyaları elden çıkartmamız gerekebilir. Aynı zamanda değişikliklere da ayak uydurmamız lazım. Bazen benzin fiyatları artabilir ve arabamızı erken elden çıkartabiliriz çünkü uzun dönemde bu daha karlı ve tutumlu bir davranış olur.*

Saltuk recognizes that change may come from various sources: it may stem from a desire for self-development, from personal aspirations like being a part of a reference group or from the need to socialize and enhance one's compatibility with desirable others. In addition to such micro factors, one might need to change his consumption practices, attitudes or plans to keep up with shifts in the macro environment—like selling one's car due to a rise in the gasoline prices. Whether deliberate and desirable or uncontrollable and/or involuntary, changes in one's self or in the environment transform the dynamics of the relation between consumers and the material world surrounding them (Belk, 1988).

Before moving on to the participants' specific experiences, I feel I need to again underline how the ideologies of modernity that have been inflicted upon Turkish society's collective consciousness (Kozan, 1994; Bozdoğan and Kasaba, 1997) constitute a background that nurtures consumers' relative enthusiasm to change. Thus, any interpretation of participants' experiences of change should go beyond the disposing literature that views them as idiosyncratic instances of personal development (McAlexander, 1991; Marcoux, 2001) to include the socio-cultural mechanisms that permeate these experiences. Consider the following excerpt from *eskisozluk*, where human beings are highlighted as future-oriented:

> The fear of being alienated from one's own history...Most of the time it is unnecessary as human are actually oriented towards future. Besides, material objects could be very troublesome. It is best to get rid of most of them.
> (by fitzmaurice tisdall farell, from eksisozluk.com on December 10, 2006)

Kendi tarihinden atılmak korkusu..Çoğu zaman yersizdir, zira insan geleceğe dönük bir varlıktır aslında. Ayrıca eşya çok rahatsız edici bir şeydir genelde, bence atalım çoğunu kurtulalım.

The entry criticizes those who avoid separating from their possessions for fear of losing or forgetting their past. For the author, the problem is not whether there is such a link between one's possessions and their life history. Rather s/he questions whether the past is actually necessary when you are already facing forward. Leaving aside a more philosophical or sociological debate, I interpret such entries—which I actually come across a lot when collecting data—as a reflection of the prevailing tolerance of change among Turkish consumers as Defne summarizes:

> Everything changes. It affects our lifestyles too. We want and desire new things even when what we have could work for us. We live in a technological world…interact and see different people using different things. Disposing is necessary to keep up with this world.
> (Defne, early 20s, F, essay)

> *Her şey değişiyor. Bu bizim hayat tarzımızı da etkiliyor. Elimizdekiler bizim işimize yarasa da yeni şeyler istiyor ve arzuluyoruz. Teknolojik bir dünyada yaşıyoruz… değişik eşyalar kullanan değişik insanlarla etkileşim kuruyoruz. Elden çıkartmak bu dünyaya uyum için gerekli.*

Contrary to previous studies that highlight how consumers try to fight back change and hold on to nostalgic consumption to experience the past (McCracken, 1988), participants like Defne are quite welcoming of change. Rather than using disposing to obtain stability and continuity in life (Price et al., 2000; Marcoux, 2001), participants view it as a process of accommodating change.

In line with the literature, I have found that major or abrupt changes in participants' life are followed by disposing episodes that help them to accept and adjust to these changes (Roster, 2001). Death requires the ones left-behind to re-consider their relations with the deceased and to construct memories by disposing of the deceased's items in specific ways (Kates, 2001). Moving to a new house, graduating or death of someone close are changes that usually require disposing of extensive amounts of items—even those that do not originally belong to the disposer. During moving, for example, participants sever their ties with their old home while deciding on what to take their new house to make it into a home. Beyond sorting and organizing their material wealth, however, the shifts in the disposing process itself also manifest how consumers change to adjust to their new surroundings. Consider Ahu, for whom moving out of her parents' house into her own home after getting married is a turning point in her life:

> At my parents' house, it (disposing) was not my responsibility. I only had my room to take care. I would select the things I wanted to send away and mother would deal with how to dispose of them. Now, I have my own home and I need to do everything. I sort my things and my husband's, also the things in the house I assess them. My husband is not into that (laughs). And, then, I need to decide how to dispose of them. I usually sell the electronics and pass on the clothes.
> (Ahu, 30, F, interview)

> *Ailemin evinde bu (elden çıkartmak) benim görevim değildi. Sadece kendi odamla ilgilenirdim. Göndermek istediğim eşyaları seçerdim ve annem elden çıkartma işini hallederdi. Şimdi kendi evimde ben yapıyorum her şeyi. Kendimin ve eşimin eşyalarını ayırıyorum, evdeki diğer eşyaları da ben değerlendiriyorum. Eşim hiç o işlerle ilgilenmez (gülüyor). Ve sonra onları nasıl elden çıkartacağıma da karar vermem gerekiyor. Genelde elektronikleri satıp, kıyafetleri veriyorum.*

Ahu's narrative emphasizes how establishing her own home is not just about deciding what to dispose but also about taking responsibility for a variety of disposing practices, which she had previously delegated to her mother. For her, taking over these decisions marks her transition from being a daughter to being a wife and homemaker. It is not just the intensity or the type of items disposed that help consumers to negotiate transitions but consumers also accept and live through the change by restructuring their own disposing practices.

Experience of change is not always based on a linear, continuous perception of time. Participants frequently mention routine disposing practices they undertake to adjust cyclical changes throughout their lives:

> As winter turns to summer and summer turns to winter, we always take out everything in the closets and try them on to see if they still fit, if they have been used, if they will be used…There are things you cannot let go, you separate them. Then, there are things you are finished with, you just let them go, pass them to other people so that they can use it.
> (Cavit, early 20s, M, essay)

> *Kıştan yaza girerken, yazdan çıkarken falan bütün eşyalar yerlere dökülür ondan sonra tek tek bakılır. Bu oluyor mu olmuyor mu denenir...Kıyamadığınız şeyleri mutlaka denersiniz. Ama gözden çıkarmış olduğunuz şeyler vardır. Ya tamam bitti artık dediğiniz şeyler vardır. Onu direkt verirsiniz başkaları kullansın diye.*

Cavit relates that the recurring change in nature is always accompanied by a shift in his relations to his possessions. For him, seasonal change is also a time to assess how his material wealth has transformed and aged through the year and whether it could survive the next year. Preparing for the new season, then, means negotiating cyclical and linear time orientations. Sometimes this also reflects in consumers' failure to dispose of an object with the hope of becoming as before:

> I have this suit, skirt and jacket. I can no longer fit in it but I cannot dispose of it either. It has been in my closet for nearly 10 years. I don't know, I guess I imagine I could become as thin as before. Hoping (laughs).
> (Filiz, 51, F, interview)
>
> *Takımım var bir tane, etek-ceket. Artık içine giremiyorum ama elden de çıkartamıyorum. Neredeyse 10 yıldır dolapta duruyor. Bilmiyorum herhalde eskisi gibi zayıf olabilecekmişim gibi geliyor. Umut ediyorum işte (gülüyor).*

Filiz holds on to her suit, as she cannot accept the changes her body have gone through throughout the years. The suit, although no longer fitting to her current body, is a perfect match for the self-image she idealizes. As such, holding onto it keeps her hope of going back alive.

Another finding hints that participants are actually eager to dispose of "the unfit," whose definition shifts as their life, body, mind, and their social network transform. I have observed many instances where participants would sort through their old photos to destroy the ones that could reflect negatively on who they are now. The unfit is also re-defined as consumers interact with various market agents and the media. Yeliz has replaced her son's bedroom set for it is unbecoming of her teenage son:

> My son's bedroom needed to change. He is grown up now. He needed a new set like the ones I had seen in the shops and in the magazines. They have nice designs that are suitable for a teenage boy. I had read that these are important for their development. With his old set, he would have been embarrassed in front of his friends.
> (Yeliz, 41, F, interview)
>
> *Oğlumun yatak odasını değiştirmek gerekti. Artık büyüdü o. Yeni bir takıma ihtiyacı vardı dükkanlarda ve dergilerde gördüklerim gibi. O takımların güzel dizaynları var ve oğlan çocuğu için daha uygun. Ayrıca bir yerde bunun gelişimleri için önemli olduğunu okumuştum. Eski takımıyla arkadaşlarına mahcup olurdu.*

Yeliz's eagerness to dispose of his son's furniture is encouraged by the work of retailers and design magazines, which provide connects decorating a room with becoming a teenager. Yeliz defends her decision to dispose of the old set by referring to the specialists' opinions on child development as well as her own reflections about her sons' social network.

Actually, it is usually the households with small children, who grow up and change at a fast phase, that the unfit changes most quickly and severely. In these households, participants more frequently and routinely monitor and assess objects—especially child-related ones—to move them along (Gregson, 2007; Phillips and Sego, 2011). Cenk, who has a five-year old daughter, explains how he deals with her daughter growing out of her items:

> She grows up too fast. I buy a few t-shirts she can wear them for three or four months then they become too small. Then you end up with almost new shirts that your child cannot use. What are you going to do? I have an uncle, he has a daughter who is small so I give my daughter's stuff to him. My aunt has a 9-year old daughter so she passes her stuff to me. I mean they are also new…I bought a dress last year, I know that she can wear it only this year. She also has a very expensive pair of shoes. But her feet have sized up in two months and she has never been able to use it. Luckily, I was able to pass them to my uncle.
> (Cenk, 32, M, interview)

> *Çok hızlı büyüyor. Bir kaç tişört alıyorum sadece üç dört ay giyiyor sonra hemen küçülüyorlar. Elinde yepyeni ama çocuğunun kullanamayacağı tişörtlerle kalıyorsun. Ne yapacaksın? Benim bir amcam var, küçük bir kızı olan. Ben kızımın eşyalarını ona veriyorum. Teyzemin kızı var 9 yaşında, o eşyalarını bana veriyor. Onlar da yeni yani…Geçen yıl bir elbise aldım, biliyorum ki sadece bu yıl giyebilecek. Yine çok pahalı bir ayakkabısı vardı. Ama ayağı iki ayda büyümüş ve hiç kullanamadı onu. Neyse ki amcama verebildim.*

Cenk and his family has a very well-working system to circulate their children's items. He passes his own to his uncle who has a younger daughter while he receives those of her aunt's older daughter. This seemingly fair movement of clothes and other items through familial conduits decreases his frustration over having to dispose of and possibly wasting relatively new and quite expensive objects. For example, he stores his daughter's high chair since he does not know anyone with a kid small enough to use it and he feels he should not use just any conduit to dispose of such an expensive item.

For consumers, who frequently experience such dilemmas and who are not as lucky as Cenk with their family relations, new businesses emerge to enhance circulation of children's possessions. *Sihirli Eller* (Magical Hands) is a second-hand store that was established by three entrepreneur-housewives. The store collects used items that belong to children—toys, clothes, furniture, books and accessories—and sells them. Using their website, the owners encourage consumers to dispose of these items instead of keeping them stored by highlighting how they can both earn money and help less fortunate parents in getting necessities for their kids at affordable prices (www.sihirlielleriz.biz). Another interesting development is establishment of a toy library in Antalya. According to an article in *Posta*, the library is a first in Turkey and works with donated toys. Children over three years old can apply with their parents to get library cards so that they can borrow toys and take them home for 15 days. Albeit supporting sustainable consumption practices and enhancing the welfare of disadvantaged consumer segments, existence of such organizations simultaneously encourages consumers to consume

more by facilitating, moralizing, and legitimizing otherwise bothersome disposing processes.

4.3.2.4 General Implications

Strasser (2000) stresses that as domestic arrangements and the labor or practices necessary to manage them change and evolve, the definition of disorder and categorization of rubbish or excess also shift. My findings expand this view by showing that the changes in the macro environment also reverberates through household practices and perceptions of the old, unfit, excess or disorder. Twenty years ago, repairing, cleaning, and polishing your objects to lengthen their lives might be an appropriate practice of managing your household. Today, however, consumers might consider replacing things with new ones before they threaten their health and social position and using the old ones for creating something new (as I will explain in the next chapter in detail) as the epitome of good housekeeping.

Underlying these shifts is the reinterpretation of the ever-prevalent progressive ideologies as well as the recently popular concept of risk awareness and quest for spiritual relaxation by "getting rid of the burden". The practices of harmonizing, then, are not just a part of consumers' dwellings while trying to accommodate things, events, and other people in their households (Gregson and Crewe, 2003; Gregson, 2007), but it is also about their general dwelling in the

world and efforts to accommodate such socio-cultural and ever-changing world in their own lives.

4.3.3 Connecting

Disturbed by increasing alienation and loss of what they believe to be the traditional interpersonal relations, most participants strategically use disposing to manage their connections with multiple parties—including family, friends, hired help, acquaintances, and even strangers. That is, by using other people as conduits of disposing and transforming their objects as gifts to respond to their needs, participants establish, maintain, and strengthen long-lasting connections to others (Mauss, 1990; Belk and Coon, 1993; Belk, 1996). Conversely, leaving certain people outside of the circulation of their object, consumers can keep their distance from certain parties or destroy an existing relation.

4.3.3.1 Maintaining, Enhancing, and Negotiating the Family

The findings reveal that participants use disposing to strengthen familial bonds as well as to maintain and negotiate family dynamics. Despite all the suggestions that relatively stable and priori sources of identity (like family) have become less and less relevant for one's self (Baudrillard, 1983; Giddens, 1991; Arnould and Price, 2000), this finding attests to previous studies which find that family is still an important refuge for contemporary consumers (Miller, 1998;

Finch and Mason, 2000; Curasi et al., 2004). Within the boundaries of disposition literature, studies find that by passing their cherished possessions on to eligible members in their families, individuals can define their kinship ties, construct themselves as ancestors, and obtain symbolic immortality (Price et al., 2000; Marcoux, 2001). Similarly, disposing of heirlooms and other inalienable wealth is found to be critical in preserving and transferring the family or kinship identity across time and space as well as in constructing a history that distinguishes one's kinship within the social hierarchy (Weiner, 1992; Curasi et al., 2004). My findings, on the other hand, move beyond disposal of cherished objects and extend the literature by highlighting that processes through which ordinary objects are disposed of are also important for management, preservation, and negotiation of familial relations.

4.3.3.1.1 Making and Maintaining the Family

I have found that consumers can experience and maintain the family by using kinship relations as conduits of disposing and by using disposing practices for bonding with other family members. Although participants care for other people's welfare and occasionally pass on to or donate their possessions to help them, all of them are first and foremost concerned about their family. They can even let go of "finding the person most in need" for the sake of their family's needs:

> To tell you the truth, I do not always look for appropriate recipients for what I dispose of. My brother's kids are nearly the same age with my children. So, I usually pass their shoes or clothes to my brother…My bags, the leather ones, I pass them to my aunt. Did she need them urgently? No, she took them to have diversity not because she specifically needed them. But, she really uses them and she now has different bags to use whenever she wants diversity. So, it's good.
> (Miray, 47, F, interview)
>
> *Doğruyu söylemek gerekirse, ben elden çıkarttığım her şey için hep en uygun kişiyi aramıyorum. Kardeşimin çocukları benimkilerle neredeyse aynı yaşta. Onların kıyafetidir, ayakkabısıdır genelde kardeşime veriyorum…Çantalarımı, deri olanları, teyzeme veriyorum. Çok mu ihtiyacı var onun? Hayır ama farklılık, çeşit olsun diye alıyor özellikle ihtiyacı olduğu için değil. Ama hakikaten de kullanıyor ve artık farklı çantaları var değişiklik istediğinde kullanabilsin diye. Bu da iyi yani.*

Although Miray wants her possessions to be of use to other people, she sometimes moves them through her family connections without actually contemplating whether they need it or not. The bags she mentions are high quality and can be used by her aunt. Moreover, by giving them to her aunt, she is able to enhance her consumption experiences. Such concerns for her family legitimize her choice of not directing the bags to conduits, which could have actually utilized them better.

This concern is sometimes tainted with a slight guilt for affluent consumers when they feel that their family members have poor life standards in comparison to themselves. In any case, prioritizing the family during disposing is steeped in a felt responsibility towards one's own kin as well as the wish to enhance family welfare—an ideal supported by and celebrated in Turkish culture and Islam. Hale, an upper-middle class urbanite, also feels responsible for her aunt:

I send my stuff to my aunt who still lives in our hometown. She has two children studying in the college and her husband is a civil servant. So, the life is difficult for them. They are my priority to move along my possessions. I donate and give things to other people too but the newest and the best pieces are always reserved for them.
(Hale, 40, F, interview)

Eşyalarımı hala memlekette yaşayan teyzeme gönderiyorum. Iki tane çocuğu var üniversitede ve eşi de memur. Hayat çok zor onlar için. Eşyalarımı elden çıkartırken önceliğim onlar yani. Başkasına verip bağış da ediyorum eşyalarımı ama en iyisini, güzelini her zaman onlara ayırırım.

Although, Hale uses a range of conduits to dispose of her possessions, she first considers her aunt in deciding where to send an object. In order to do this, she uses her knowledge about: her aunt's position in life, their tastes/needs, the condition and history of the object (to assess whether it is the best or not), and availability of other potential candidates. This story hints that in-family interaction and information flow are crucial for circulating objects within the family:

Talat: DVD, VCD, laptops, old TVs, other electronics…they usually circulate within the family depending on who needs what.
Meltem: Do you ask your family first before disposing or…?
Talat: Well, we usually know these things. I mean within family, everyone knows about everyone else a little bit. We are kind of close. Thus, we can guess who might need something and ask that person first. Especially for electronics and expensive stuff… For example, one of my cousins recently moved to İstanbul to work. He got a house and all. Now, we think about him, what we can do for him. So, if we have something that he might use we send it to him.
(Talat, 43, M, interview)

Talat: DVD, VCD, Laptop, eski TVler, diğer elektronikler…bunlar genelde kimin ihtiyacı olduğuna bağlı olarak aile içinde dolanır.
Meltem: Elden çıkartmadan önce ailenize mi sorarsınız yoksa…?
Talat: Yani genelde biliriz zaten bu tip şeyleri. Yani aile içinde herkes herkes hakkında biraz bilgi sahibidir. Özellikle elektronik ve pahalı şeyler için…Mesela bir kuzenim daha yeni İstanbul'a taşındı iş için. Ev filan aldı. Şimdi hep onu düşünüyoruz, ne yapabileceğimizi. Yani elimizde onun kullanabileceği bir şey varsa ona yolluyoruz.

For Talat, his extended family is the main conduit through which he can move along and/or circulate his old electronics and other expensive items. That is partly because his family members are communicative and open with each other so that everyone knows about the others' lives. This attests to Gregson et al.'s (2007) suggestion that knowledge about the disposed object as well as the potential conduits it can be moved along is crucial for its re-utilization. However, for participants like Talat and Hale, whose main object is to enhance the welfare of their families, the object's re-utilization is not an end but a desirable by-product of the process. In circulating objects within the family, participants usually engage in a practice that I call "reserved disposing"—or accumulating and storing possessions with the anticipation of their usage by a family member. Ece, for example, forgoes disposing and accumulates some objects with the hope that her sister can use them in the future:

> I do not dispose as fast as before now. I keep the clothes, sunglasses, cell-phones, and watches that I like but want to dispose. I have a little sister and she is growing up. This way, she can use them when she grows up.
> (Ece, early 20s, F, essay)
>
> *Eskisi kadar çabuk elden çıkartmıyorum eşyalarımı. Sevdiğim ama elden çıkartmak istediğim kıyafetleri, güneş gözlüklerini, cep telefonlarını ve saatleri elimde tutuyorum. Küçük bir kız kardeşim var, büyüyor. Bu şekilde, büyüyünce eşyaları o kullanabilir.*

With her little sister growing up, Ece has adjusted the phase of her disposing in order to enrich her sister's future consumption. For this, she is even accumulating some of her possessions—a practice associated with norms of consumerism (Fromm, 2005; Cherrier and Murray, 2007; Gregson et al., 2007; Cherrier, 2009b) that she used to avoid. In designating her sister as a recipient for

the chosen possessions of hers, Ece is also educating her sister: imposing on her specific consumption styles and tastes while creating stronger links between her and her sister. Gülperi, on the other hand, uses disposing to train her little cousins to stand against materialism and decreasing importance of family bonds:

> I pass my unused possessions on to my cousins…this way, we create a spiritual, emotional thing together. In a world that celebrates materialism over meanings and emotions, I hope that I set an example for them. (Gülperi, early 20s, F, essay)
>
> *Kullanılmayan eşyalarımı kuzenime veriyorum…bu şekilde, ruhani ve duygusal bir şey yaratmış oluyoruz. Materyalist değerlerin duygu ve anlamlara tercih edildiği bir dünyada onlara doğru bir örnek oluşturduğumu düşünüyorum.*

Gülperi's narrative reveals her concerns about increasing alienation in society and substitution of material objects for emotional and meaningful connections between people. When she cannot (and/or don't want to) forego consuming altogether, she uses disposing process to move along material wealth—the main cause of alienation—and connect with and preserve her family.

The wish to maintain family ties can even urge consumers to dispose of cherished family possessions. Heirloom transfer process can create intra-family conflicts among multiple heirs, competing over the same heirlooms or avoiding the certain ones (Price et al., 2000; Curasi et al., 2004). Some participants try to prevent potential conflicts by disposing of their heirlooms outside the family:

> It could be better to sell expensive heirlooms like antiques or jewelry beforehand. Then, I would divide the money equally among my children. This way, they would not fight over these objects. I think it is better to do that then leaving them as inheritance.
> (Ezgi, early 20s, F, essay)

Bence antika ve mücevher gibi pahalı aile yadigarlarını satmak daha iyi bir fikir olabilir. O zaman parayı eşit bir şekilde çocuklarım arasında bölüştürürüm. Bu şekilde, o eşyalar için kavga etmezler. Bence böyle yapmak o eşyaları miras olarak bırakmaktan daha iyidir.

Going against the prevalent tendency among participants to hold on to family heirlooms, Ezgi recommends re-commoditizing expensive heirlooms lest they create conflicts among the descendants of the family. Although we can argue that Ezgi is probably still too young to understand the meaning of heirlooms, she never claims that heirloom objects have low value for her. On the contrary, she is bothered by the idea that the desire for material objects can prioritize family bonds. Ezgi feels that it is through disposing of some of her heirlooms—sending them back to the commodity market and liquidating their value—rather than by holding on to them that she can keep her family together.

For some participants, the process through which objects are disposed of constitutes the actual opportunity to maintain one's position in the family and to bond with other family members. Consider how Filiz uses disposing process to substantiate her identity as a mother and to exert some control over her married children:

> We have this local clinic, where they also donate to poor people. So, we all collect our possessions and, three-four times a year, we donate to this clinic…The kids are all married now, but they also bring everything they want to dispose here. I go through them, wash, and iron if necessary. Sometimes, I keep some things when I feel they are too valuable to dispose or we can use them in the country house we plan to buy for the family in the future. Then we call the clinic and they come and get it. This way, I know that our donations really reach to the poor.
> (Filiz, 51, F, interview)

Mahallede yerel bir kliniğimiz var, fakirlere yardım ediyorlar. Biz de bütün eşyalarımızı senede üç dört kere toparlayıp bu kliniğe veriyoruz…Çocukların hepsi evli şimdi, ama hala elden çıkartmak istedikleri şeyleri bana getirirler. Ben onları seçiyorum, yıkıyorum, gerekirse ütülüyorum. Bazen çok değerli ya da iyi durumda olduğunu ya da aile için almak istediğimiz köy evinde kullanabileceğimizi düşündüğüm şeyleri tutuyorum. Sonra kliniği arıyoruz ve gelip alıyorlar. Bu şekilde, bağışımızın gerçekten ihtiyaç sahiplerine gittiğini biliyoruz…

All three of Filiz's children are married and have their own home. However, my interviews with Filiz's daughter and daughter-in-law show that, for her children, Filiz is still the main medium through which they can dispose of their possessions appropriately. Filiz's authority as a mother, rather than being limited to her own household (Gregson, 2007; Cappellini, 2009; Phillips and Sego, 2011), extends to her childrens' homes as she sorts, re-assesses, and orders their possessions for disposal. She even occasionally vetoes their decision to dispose of something. She exerts further control over her family by planning how (and if) their objects will be moved and by choosing the local clinic as the only credible conduit the family can use.

Rather than maintaining the intra-family hierarchy, some participants use disposing process to catch up with their families. Consider how Neslihan turns this process into a regular meeting with her two sisters as they help each other in disposing:

> My younger sister easily throws everything away. My elder sister, on the other hand, she likes keeping things. She always accumulates. I am more in between. I keep things for a while and then dispose of them. Together we manage it better. We just took a few bags full of our things to a friend's sister last week…I guess you could say we have three houses. Last week, we were at my younger sister's house. We cleaned it up and selected things to dispose of. Next week, we plan to visit my elder sister, I believe she will have

accumulated lots of things. She cannot let anything go, we will go through her stuff …I like these times, we have fun, laugh, and argue a lot (laughs). Sometimes I take something they do not use to show off, to say "you couldn't use it but look I can", you know to tease them (laughs).
(Neslihan , 45, F, interview)

Küçük kardeşim her şeyi atar. Büyük kardeşim ise tam tersi tutmayı sever. Her şeyi biriktirir. Ben ikisinin arasındayım. Eşyaları biraz elimde tutar sonra gönderirim. Birlikte olunca daha iyi idare ediyoruz yani. Daha geçen hafta koca bir torba dolusu eşyayı bir arkadaşımızın kardeşine götürdük…Yani aslında üç evimiz olduğunu söyleyebilirsin. Geçen hafta küçük kız kardeşimin evindeydik temizlik yapıp elden çıkacakları seçmek için. Gelecek hafta büyük kız kardeşime gitmeyi düşünüyoruz. Sanırım bayağı eşyası birikmiştir. Hiç bir şeyi veremediğinden biz seçeceğiz…Bu zamanları seviyorum. Birlikte eğleniyor, gülüyor ve kavga ediyoruz (gülüyor). Bazen kullanmadıkları bir şeyi götürüyorum "bakın siz kullanamadınız ama ben kullanabiliyorum" der gibi. Bilirsin kızdırmak için (gülüyor).

Neslihan and her sisters have dissimilar attitudes towards disposing, which are problematic for them individually. Turning disposing into a collective practice helps Neslihan and her sisters to combine these complimentary attitudes and become more effective in disposing process. What one sister cannot let go, the others encourage its disposal and what another throws away, the others can keep in the family by making use of it. However, beyond enhancing the productivity and morality of each other's disposing, the sisters also have fun and create a sisterly bond during this process.

The accounts above depict disposing as a consumption process through which consumers maintain and connect with their families. Not putting one's self and family in a difficult and uncomfortable position can become the main priority for consumers to prevent unnecessary or wasteful disposals. Needs of the family can be used as a reference to decide what to dispose of and when, and assess

whether specific disposing processes are thrifty or wasteful. My findings also suggest that disposing is a domain for intra-familial tensions and negotiation of divergences in the family.

4.3.3.1.2 Negotiating Domestic Dynamics

The data highlight disposing as a process, during which consumers negotiate in-family dynamics and navigate through their family values. Usually, households host family members whose attitudes towards disposing differ greatly from each other. Participants, especially younger ones, occasionally describe disposing as a process where they need to negotiate with a family member who is very dominant and influential:

> My mom is obsessed with order and cleanliness, she likes trashing things. Well, if it is up to me, I would keep everything. I mean they will be useful to me one day anyway, right?...So, an unused object can stay in our home at most for 2 years.
> (Emir, early 20s, M, essay)

> *Annem temizlik ve düzen hastasıdır. Her şeyi atmayı çok sever. Bana kalsa, ben her şeyi tutarım. Yani nasılsa bana bir gün yararlı olacaklarını düşünürüm, değil mi?...Sonuçta kullanılmayan bir eşya evimizde ne fazla 2 yıl kalır.*

Apparently, Emir and her mother have different perspectives on (dis)order and cleanliness. Moreover, they use different temporal orientations (present vs future/past) when assessing an object's utility and value. Since it is her mother, who actually runs the household, Emir has to compromise: he goes through his possessions to select disposable ones when her mother asks him to, but he can keep

them at home for 2 years and dispose of them when they are not used during this period. Sometimes, this process ends with the submission of the less powerful party, especially if they predict existence of severe penalty for their disobedience:

> I had these game cards that came from the chip bags…My mother said they were creating disorder and I was too old for them. I thought about selling them to other kids but I knew my parents would be very angry with me since it would be like cheating the kids. The fear of my parents kept me from selling the cards but I knew I had to let go of them at some point. So, I distributed them among other children.
> (Salih, early 20s, M, essay)

> *Cips paketlerinden çıkan oyun kartlarım vardı…Annem dağınıklık yaptıklarını ve onlar için çok yaşlı olduğumu söyledi. Diğer çocuklara satmayı düşündüm ama annemlerin çok kızacaklarını biliyordum. Yani kandırmak gibi olurdu çocukları. Ailemden duyduğum korku beni kartlarımı satmaktan alıkoydu ama onları elden çıkartmam gerektiğini de biliyordum. Ben de onları çocuklar arasında dağıttım.*

Her mother's insistence persuaded Saltuk to dispose of the prized cards he had been diligently collecting. Moreover, the fear of being reprimanded and punished by his parents prevented him from using the conduits that his parents would have categorized as immoral. This fear moved the cards through a path with more altruistic connotations: gifting them to other kids.

Rather than submitting or compromising, some participants develop strategies to divert and challenge other family members' disposing practices. Consider Hale, who waits until her parents go on a vacation to dispose of their possessions:

> My mother just cannot dispose. She always resists letting go of an object by saying that it can be used one day. Plastic containers, nails, old clothes, they keep piling up. So, I do this when she is away. She and my father go to our summer house every year and I use this opportunity to go through the closets, drawers…It's good because there is no turning back. When they come back

> and look for something I just say "I threw it away" and she cannot do anything.
> (Hale, 40, F, interview)
>
> *Annem hiç elden çıkartamıyor. Hep belki bir gün işe yarar diye direniyor vermeye. Plastik şişeler, civiler, eski kıyafetler hep birikiyor böyle. Ben de onlar yokken yapıyorum. Annemle babam her sene yazlık eve giderler. Ben de bunu fırsat bilip dolapları, çekmeceleri düzenlerim…İyi oluyor böyle çünkü geri dönüşü yok. Eve gelip bir şey aradığında diyorum ki "Ben onu attım". Hiç bir şey yapamıyor.*

Contrary to Emir, Hale complains about accumulation of objects in the household because of her mother's inability to let go. Over the years, she has developed a strategy: she waits until the house is hers and, then, takes over the disposing. She specifically uses disposal conduits that can permanently move objects (e.g. garbage bin, recycling, charity) to prevent their "re-appearance" (Hetherington, 2004; Gregson et al., 2007). Some participants are pressured by their families and friends to dispose of certain things:

> I had a safety blanket when I was 5. I was still using it when I was 20 because it made me feel safe. But, mother wanted me to dispose of it. She started telling everyone about it when I refused to let it go. So, everyone around me started pressuring me about it. I was angry at them for this. Eventually I made a deal with my mother. I stopped using it and she accepted keeping it for me in a safe place so I can occasionally use it.
> (Cansu, early 20s, F, essay)
>
> *Ben beş yaşlarındayken bir battaniyem vardı. Beni güvende hissettirdiği için 20 yaşına geldiğimde de kullanıyordum onu. Ama annem artık elden çıkartmam gerektiğini söyledi. Ben vermeyi reddedince de herkese o battaniyeden söz etmeye başladı. Böylece çevremdeki herkes bana baskı uyguladı battaniye için. Çok kızdım onlara. En sonunda annemle bir anlaşma yaptık. Ben battaniyeyi kullanmayı bıraktım, o da arada kullanabileyim diye benim için onu güvenli bir yerde saklamayı kabul etti.*

Cansu's mother was concerned that her daughter, at the ripe age of 20, still needed her safety blanket. When her demands went unanswered, her mother

resorted to using peer pressure and social stigmata, which eventually persuaded Cansu to compromise. Although Cansu refused to let go of the blanket completely, she agreed to keep it in storage, which can be considered as a kind of divestment ritual that cleanses the blanket from its meanings and weakens Cansu's attachment to it (McCracken, 1986; Roster, 2001). In the end, both sides got what they wanted. In other cases, dominant members of the family can try to pass down and impose specific disposing practices to younger generations:

> We, as a family, do not dispose a lot. We use our possessions as much as possible. I believe this is largely due to my grandmother's oppressive attitude…When we dispose of an object we usually try to pass them on to people in need. It's also in our culture, you know, in our traditions.
> (Sevtap, early 20s, F, essay)
>
> *Biz eşyalarını pek elden çıkaran bir aile değiliz. Olabildiğince uzun süre kullanıyoruz bunda da anneannemin baskıcı tutumunun etkili olduğunu düşünüyorum…Elden çıkarttığımız eşyaları da ihtiyacı olan insanlara vermeye dikkat ediyoruz. Bu bizim kültürümüzde de var aslında, geleneklerimizde.*

For Sevtap, her grandmother's negative attitude against disposing is not only the main reason for her family's tendency to hold on to their possessions but it is also a family trait, an important constitutive element of the "we". The influence of her grandmother's values extends to her selection of disposing conduits. However, Sevtap negotiates this by passing her possessions on to people in need when disposing, and, hence, substituting the dominant propensity of her family for thrifting with other ethical principles—lengthening objects' life and helping others. This way, she both legitimizes her divestments within what she believes to be the core principles of traditional Turkish society and constructs them as acceptable in her grandmother's value system.

Sometimes, participants use disposing process to retaliate for a previous disagreement with a family member:

> I collect but my wife just discards. But, I do not let her dispose of everything. Like, we have this furniture set, coach and armchairs, in the living room. She wanted to replace them but I opposed saying that she should have been more foresighted when we bought it. I mean she wanted to buy them, she chose them. They were orange and, at that time, no one had coaches in that color. It was a brave move. So she specifically wanted them, you know, with her being an architect and all…Now, she is trying to replace them but no, they are still new.
> (Talat, 43, M, interview)
>
> *Ben toplayıcı, biriktirici, eşim atıcı. Ama onun herşeyi atmasına izin vermiyorum. Mesela oturma odasında bir setimiz var, koltuklar ve kanepe. Koltuk takımını değiştirmek istedi ama ben izin vermedim elden çıkartmaya, seçerken daha dikkatli olsaydı o zaman. Çünkü kendisi beğenerek almıştı o zaman da. Çok cesaret isteyen bir iş yapmıştık. Turuncu almıştık. Kimse de yoktu o zaman. Özellikle kendisi istemişti, yani mimar benim eşim…Şimdi de diyor değiştirsek mi falan ben izin vermiyorum, çok yeniler daha.*

Talat's resentment for and disagreement with a previous shopping episode resurfaces during the negotiated disposal of the said object. Talat, who had then delegated his rights over house decoration to his wife, now uses disposing process as a venue to exert his willpower. Dictating if and when his wife can dispose of the coaches in their house helps Talat to re-establish his control over the household as well as to penalize his wife for her thoughtless shopping—perhaps with the hope of teaching her to make better consumption decisions from now on.

Previous research shows that mothers can train their children about the value and importance of specific disposing practices, molding them to have disposing habits similar to their own (Phillips and Sego, 2011). The findings presented above, on the other hand, point to a more complex interaction between different members

of the family during disposing, which is full of negotiations, compromises, and diversion tactics rather than being just an educative master-apprentice relation.

4.3.3.2 Constructing and Retaining Relations

I have also found that disposing facilitates social bonds and helps consumers to connect with others from whom they are usually disconnected. Underlying this desire and practices around it lie what Inglehart (1977) calls "post-materialist values"—a strong wish to become a part of a greater community and to make a change in the political and social world. Berrin, for example, complains about ever-changing interpersonal relations in Turkish society as they impose on her disposing practices:

> The relations between neighbors or kinship relations…They all changed now. I observe how they have changed. The relations we had 20-25 years ago, they do not exist now, not around me at least. It was so different then, we used to help each other, eat together, we knew about each other's lives. Now, we cannot enter our neighbor's house without permission, I mean, without calling and letting them know beforehand…and the society is so different from before. Now, we cannot trust other people. We used to be able to invite people in for dinner now we are even afraid to help them (Berrin, 41, F, interview)
>
> *Komşular arasındaki ilişkiler ya da akrabalık ilişkileri…Hepsi değişti şimdi. Nasıl değiştiklerini görüyorum. Bundan 20-25 yıl önceki ilişkiler yok artık, benim çevremde en azından. O zamanlar her şey çok farklıydı. Birbirimize yardım ederdik, birlikte yemekler yerdik, birbirimizin hayatını bilirdik. Şimdi komşumuzun evine izinsiz giremiyoruz, yani önceden arayıp haber vermeden…toplum da çok değişti. Artık kimseye güvenemiyorsunuz. Eskiden insanları evimize yemeğe davet ederdik şimdi yardım etmeye bile korkuyoruz.*

Berrin grieves over the long-gone close relationships people used to have with each other. Born and raised in a small city, Berrin actually describes the life in traditional local neighborhoods or *"mahalle"*. In Ottoman Empire, *mahalle* constituted the main residential structure in cities and used to be established by people who knew each other through kinship or congregational connections (Aytaç, 2007). In fact, what *mahalle* hosted was more of an extended family than a group of strangers sharing similar social status or incomes as echoed in Ortaylı's (2001) observation that kids belonged to and were raised by the whole neighborhood rather than just their immediate family. Even after the foundation of Turkish Republic, the *mahalle* culture continued to stimulate strong interpersonal relations and community consciousness among Turkish people. These structures started to transform especially after 1980s, with the introduction of neo-liberal politics that opened up the Turkish marketplace to the global forces and supported human mobility. With increasing flow of people from rural to urban areas, mushrooming of squatter neighborhoods as well as gated communities, and changing policies on city planning and architecture, it became more and more difficult to preserve traditional *mahalle.* The intimate relations one had with their neighbors and other people, as Berrin reminisced, also started to disappear, leaving Turkish consumers to find other ways to fill the gap.

I have found that disposing has become a practice through which consumers can rebuild and retain connections with each other. As charity and donations can be forms of interpersonal relations (Jeong and Liu, 2010), it is usually by passing on to and donating their possessions to the poor that participants feel more connected

with others. Consider Mert, who describes disposing of his coat as a spiritual experience that connected him to a total stranger:

> I had a coat that I hadn't been using. I saw this homeless man on the street and I gave it to him. I will never forget how his eyes lit up or how he looked when he thanked me for it. I mean, I wasn't even using the coat but it meant a lot to him. I felt satisfied, happy, connected.
> (Mert, early 20s, M, essay)
>
> *Kullanmadığım bir paltom vardı. Yolda gördüğüm evsiz bir adama vermiştim. O adamın gözlerindeki ışıltıyı ve bana teşekkür ederkenki halini unutamam. Benim yüzüne bile bakmadığım palto onun için çok şey demekti. O anda mutlu, doymuş ve bütünleşmiş hissettim.*

Mert's disposal transforms the unused coat into a gift that enhances another person's life. Gifts embody their givers and establish organic relations between consumers through norms of reciprocity and obligation (Sahlins, 1972; Mauss, 1990; Bell, 1991; Belk and Coon, 1993; Belk, 1996). As the man acknowledges and reciprocates his gift by showing his happiness and thanking him, a connection—albeit fleeting— is built between them, elevating Mert's spirits and making him feel like a part of something bigger. Mustafa, on the other hand, seeks more permanent relations:

> I prefer to give my stuff to people in need. There is a café I always stop by. I started to get to know these people and I know they need the objects I dispose. So I happily pass my possessions on to them, make them happy. They smile and welcome me there, and it's enough for me.
> (Mustafa, early 20s, M, essay)
>
> *Eşyalarımı ihtiyacı olanlara vermeyi tercih ediyorum. Hep uğradığım bir kafe var. oradaki insanları tanımaya başladıkça verdiğim eşyalara ihtiyaçları olduğunu gördüm. Şimdi büyük mutlulukla onlara veriyorum eşyalarımı. Mutlu oluyorlar, beni gülümseyerek karşılıyorlar ve bu benim için yeterli.*

Having realized that some of the people in the café he frequents might make use of his unused possessions, Caner occasionally uses these people as a conduit for disposing to build and maintain a connection to them. His relation with the people in the café transcends customer-business relation for a more personal one as they genuinely smile at him and welcome him whenever he visits there. So, using some disposing conduits more regularly and frequently helps maintenance of long-lasting relations. Filiz has constructed such a relation with the doctors in her local clinic:

> We discovered this local clinic accidentally. My husband went to get his prescription filled and saw some people, poor people, waiting there. The doctors told him that they accept donations to pass them on to the poor people who go there throughout Ankara. We now always donate to this clinic…The doctors, God bless them, spend time with us. Whenever we go there, they welcome us, treat us with sincerity.
> (Filiz, F, 51, interview)
>
> *Bu dispanseri tesadüfen bulduk aslında. Eşim ilaç yazdırmak için gitmişti ve fakir insanların sırada beklediğini görmüş. Doktorlar bağışları alıp Ankara'daki fakirlere dağıttıklarını söylemiş. Şimdi hep bu kliniğe bağışlıyoruz eşyalarımızı...Doktorlar, Allah razı olsun, bize vakit ayırıyorlar. Ne zaman gitsek bizimle ilgileniyorlar, hoşgeldin diyorlar.*

Filiz, who has difficulty in finding genuinely poor people, have transferred valuable attributes she associates with "doctors*"* (i.e. helpfulness, reliability) into re-categorizing the local clinic as a trustworthy disposing conduit. Possessions that move through the clinic become material manifestations of the moral and religious values she upholds. More importantly, by disposing of her possessions, she enhances her interactions with doctors, who are now more cordial, sincere, and helpful towards her.

Agents like cleaning ladies, *kapıcı,* or janitors commonly emerge in the data as conduits through which participants build and manage their relations. In addition to constituting convenient and trustworthy conduits of disposing, these agents, whose life, needs, and consumption habits or capabilities are known to participants, make it easier to decide which objects to pass on to. Moreover, it is easier for participants, who are in constant contact with these people, to control whether and how the disposed objects are used or moved. Nearly all informants have cleaning ladies, who after a few years, become a part of the household—albeit not a family member on equal level but a person for whom they feel responsible. Through occasional gifts, taking care of their children's clothing or education costs, and more importantly, by including them into object circulation in their households, participants maintain and manage their relations with their cleaning ladies:

> I pass most of my objects on to her. She has kids and they really need it, you know. And after all these years, she is like one of us, from family. So, I try to help her as much as possible. In return, she is so good, taking care of the house and, even, the kids since I work hard. Moreover, she has connections to the village. I know people living there really need these things. So, toys, clothes, other stuff I give these to her so that she can take them to the village, where they live in bad conditions.
> (Berrin, 41, F, interview)

> *Bir çok eşyamızı bakıcımıza veriyorum. Çocukları var ve gerçekten ihtiyaçları var. Onca yıldan sonra bizden biri gibi, aileden biri. O yüzden ona mümkün olduğunca yardım etmeye çalışıyorum. O da bunlar karşılığında çok iyi bakıyor bize, eve hatta çocuklara çünkü ben çalışıyorum. Ayrıca köyle bağlantısı var onun. Orada gerçekten ihtiyacı olan insanları tanıyor. Oyuncak, kıyafet, diğer şeyaları ona veriyorum ki köye, ihtiyacı olanlara ulaştırsın.*

Berrin constructs her cleaning lady as a honorary family member by continuously including her into circulation of objects within and out of the

household. In enhancing her welfare, Berrin also increases the loyalty and dependence of her cleaning lady. Disposing, in this manner, is also a strategy for Berrin to ensure her family is cared for and nursed especially when she is not around. In addition, the cleaning lady is a bridge between Berrin and genuinely poor people, moving and distributing her objects in the village. Another significant party whose connections turn them into desirable disposing conduits is *kapıcı*. In addition to occasionally being at the receiving end of participants' disposing, *kapıcıs* are also resourceful people who know a lot of about their neighborhoods and have links to the countryside as most of them also have rural backgrounds. Participants frequently mention how they seek the help of *kapıcı* in disposing of big things (like beds, couches or other furniture) or finding someone who can utilize the object. More importantly, they make sure that a disposed object does not appear again in participants' life (e.g. in the form of a fine from the municipality for putting things on the street). Thus, by balancing the type and frequency of items they pass on to, participants manage their on-going relations with people they know, whose social position is supposedly below them.

The practices of disposing as narrated above mostly operate on and re-produce asymmetric relations between involved parties. Ever conscious of this, some participants find it difficult to have direct confrontations with the recipients of their possessions. Consider Buket, who feels embarrassed to offer her things to her neighbor, who is quite poor:

> They live on the first floor, occasionally take care of the building, and are quite poor. My shirts, dresses, pants, she has a daughter who can use those. But, I cannot offer them myself, I feel embarrassed to ask. My mom has a

more comfortable and casual relation with them so I pack and give my stuff to her and she gives them. Sometimes, she throws the bag down the balcony and I feel so sad, guilty, I ask her not to do this but she says it makes them happy and that they would not get offended. And you know, they actually do. I see the daughter wearing my things and I feel happy.
(Buket, 34, F, interview)

İlk katta yaşıyorlar, hatta bazen apartmanın işlerini yapıyorlar. Bayağı fakirler yani. Tişörtlerim, elbiselerim, pantolonlarım, bunları kullanabilecek bir kızları var. Ama ben utanıyorum yani kendim teklif edemiyorum. Annemin onlarla daha rahat, gayriresmi bir ilişkisi var. Bben de ona torbalayıp veriyorum onlara versin diye. Hatta bazen balkondan aşağıya atıyor torbayla çok utanıyorum, üzülüyorum. Anne diyorum yapma. Ama o mutlu olduklarını söylüyor, alınmazlar diyor. Ve hakikaten alınmıyorlar. Kızlarını verdiğim şeyleri giyerken görünce çok mutlu oluyorum.

Buket is worried that offering her neighbor an old or used object would be like highlighting the differences between their status, putting them in an inferior position. However, the neighbor is an invaluable conduit: poor, easily accessible whenever needed, has a daughter who can use Buket's possessions, and have an ongoing relation with Buket's family. Thus, Buket has her mother, who is more accepting of social inequality and less inhibited by fear of offending them, to mediate between her and the neighbor in order to continue using them as a conduit of disposing. Sanem, on the other hand, is very disturbed by this power imbalance and uses charity organizations to dispose of her possessions:

Yes, I sometimes pass things to my cleaning lady. When she comes to clean, I put my unused stuff out, usually she asks me about them and I tell her to choose whatever she wants. But, other than that I cannot really offer my things to anyone. Even with relatively new objects, I cannot ask anyone if they want it. I don't like that power imbalance. I let charities handle it.
(Sanem, 29, F, interview)

Evet, bazen temizlikçime veriyorum. Temizliğe geldiğinde kullanmadığım eşyaları ortaya çıkartıyorum. O da genelde bana soruyor ve istediğini almasını söylüyorum. Ama bunun dışında ben pek eşyalarımı teklif edemiyorum başkasına. Yeni eşyalar bile olsa, soramıyorum kimseye isterler

mi diye. O güç şeysi, dengesizliği hoşuma gitmiyor. Kurumlara bırakıyorum o işi.

For Sanem, direct confrontations with the poor underline her advantageous position over them. To reinstate balance and bypass the anxiety and reciprocity expectations of such exchanges (Marcoux, 2009; Sherry et al., 1993), she usually channels her possessions towards charities, which act as a buffer between her and the people in need. Passing through such indirect channels, these objects can become "modern gifts" (Godbout and Caille´, 1998), moving between strangers and distributing value across different social classes.

In addition to bringing balance to society and enhancing other people's life, participants are quite concerned with building and managing connections with those outside of their immediate family. Using them as a disposing conduit helps participants to create and maintain their relations with these people while enhancing their welfare and utilizing their disposed objects. However, this finding also echoes previous research on the dark side of gift-giving (Mauss, 1990; Sherry et al., 1993; Godelier, 1999): the disposer usually claims power and superior position over the recipients, who become indebted and humbled by the gift they receive. So, as they connect with those whose social status is different from them, participants also reproduce the very same social order that has put these people into disadvantage.

4.3.3.3 Distancing and Terminating

The findings attest that consumers can strategically dispose of their possessions to terminate their relations and distance themselves from unwanted connections. I find that some participants use disposing to forget, let go, or ignore other people to whom they are no longer connected by getting rid of the material embodiments of their relation. In addition to terminating one's existing relations, disposing can also work to prevent formation of new ones. Some participants even go to extremes like destroying the objects while disposing them so that they will not have any connections to other people. Mostly, participants are very particular about the people to whom they pass their possessions. Keeping certain people out of the circulation loop helps them to distance themselves from these people. In these cases, I find disposing as a way of constructing and maintaining the social hierarchy by preserving the distance between the members of society.

Some participants use disposing to redefine their social relations, to take some time off and distance themselves when necessary. Consider how Miray dealt with her anger towards her brother-in-laws' wives by getting rid of the things she received from them:

> Miray: When my husband's mother was ill, there were some problems between my husband and his brothers. They were, well, some nasty things happened. I mean she was really very ill, terminally ill but they, especially their wives, were so indifferent. So, I just did not want to see anything that reminded me of them. I disposed of them, mostly threw them away.
> Meltem: Were you not afraid of regretting it, I mean, in case you recovered your relation with them?
> Miray: No, I don't think so. I mean at that time they deserved it. I was hurt, you know. They did not act like a child should act towards their mother. So, I

don’t regret it. Actually, a few years later they contact us to reconcile. We see each other now but not like before. We keep it at a certain distance.
(Miray, 47, F, interview)

Miray: Eşimin annesi hastayken erkek kardeşleriyle bazı problemler oldu. Onlar, yani işte, hoş olmayan şeyler yaşandı. Yani kayınvalidem çok hastaydı, ölümcül hasta. Ama onlar, özellikle eşleri pek umursamadılar. Ben de bana onları hatırlatan şeyleri görmek istemedim. Hepsini elden çıkarttım, attım genelde.
Meltem: Peki hiç pişman olurum diye düşündün mü yani ilişkiniz düzelse?
Miray: Yok sanmıyorum. Yani o zamanlar hak etmişlerdi onu. Çok kırılmıştım biliyor musun? Yani bir evladın annesine karşı hareket etmemesi gereken şekilde davrandılar. O yüzden pişman değilim. Aslında bir kaç sene önce gelip barışmak istediler. Şimdi görüşüyoruz ama eskisi gibi değil. Belli bir mesafe var aramızda yani.

The difficult times Miray and her family had gone through provided an opportunity for her to re-assess her in-family relations. Frustrated with her husband’s brothers, she used disposing as a penalty for their inappropriate behavior and a manifestation of her hurt. Miray is not afraid of the irreversibility of her decision to dispose as, for her, the chapter of their relation embodied in the disposed objects is now over. Their current relation is a new one, redefined by her as a more distanced and civil one, and, as such, can be only symbolized through new objects.

Other participants also dispose of their possessions as a means to settle their social relations so that they can move on to new ones. In his explorations of consumers during divorce, McAlexander (1991) finds that those who initiate the divorce are more eager to dispose of their material belongings that they associate with their marriage. On the other hand, spouses who are reluctant to get a divorce and separate from their partners tend to hold on to these objects so that they could

preserve some aspect of their marital identity. My findings attest to that. Consider Selim, who eventually decided to let go of a gift he had received from his ex-girlfriend:

> It was a small key chain that my girlfriend had given me for my birthday. It was a good brand and expensive. It had sentimental value. If I had kept it, it could have brought back the memories that should be forgotten. And since she was my ex-girlfriend now, there was no point of holding onto it, you know, the relation had already passed its expiry date.
> (Selim, early 20s, M, essay)
>
> *Küçük bir anahtarlıktı. Kız arkadaşım doğum günüm için vermişti. İyi bir markaydı ve pahalıydı. Duygusal değeri vardı. Elimde tutsam bana unutulması gereken anıları hatırlatacaktı. Tabi eski kız arkadaşım olduğu için artık elimde tutmamın bir anlamı yoktu. O ilişki çoktan son kullanma tarihini doldurmuştu.*

For Selim, letting go of the key chain, who has a high market value, is an important final step in accepting his separation from her ex-girlfriend. Disposing, from this perspective, is a way of terminating one's relations and preventing restoration of these broken connections—especially when consumers assess them as inappropriate.

Consumers can use disposing to isolate themselves from other people when they are generally disappointed in their social relations. Sevgi destroys her possessions before putting them in or near the garbage bin to prevent other people from using them when she feels that people are dishonest and deceptive:

> Sevgi: A few days back, I was putting my old desk lamp on the street. I cut its cord and took out the top part so it would no longer work. I sometimes cut my clothes before throwing them into the garbage.
> Meltem: When do you usually do this? I mean, some people leave them near the garbage so that other people can take them and use them.
> Sevgi: Not always. I collect my old clothes and give them to my neighbor who takes them to her hometown to give to the poor...But people can be so

> cruel and mean. And, believe me, they are never as poor or as deprived as they make you believe. So, I guess when I remember this I just don't want my possessions to be used by them. I want them far away from me.
> (Sevgi, 58, F, interview)

> *Sevgi: Bir kaç gün önce eski masa lambamı sokağa bırakıyordum. Kablosunu kesip üstünü çıkarttım ki kullanılamasın. Bazen de kıyafetlerimi çöpe atmadan önce keserim.*
> *Meltem: Ne zaman yapıyorsun böyle şeyleri? Yani, bazı insanlar eşyalarını çöpün yanına bırakırlar ki başkası kullanabilsin.*
> *Sevgi: Her zaman yapmıyorum. Kıyafetlerimi toplayıp komşuma veriyorum. Memleketine götürüp fakirlere versin diye…Ama insanlar çok acımasız ve kötü olabiliyor. İnanın bana hiç bir zaman gösterdikleri kadar fakir ve yoksul değiller. Ben de bunları hatırlayınca sanırım eşyalarımı onlar kullansın istemiyorum. Benden uzak olsunlar istiyorum.*

Sevgi is occasionally frustrated with other people, whom she believes are deceptive and untrustworthy. In order to punish such faulty behavior, she destroys and takes away the remaining utility of her objects during disposing. This practice also helps her to occasionally distance herself from other people who disappoint her. Some participants, however, adopt certain disposing practices to obtain a more permanent isolation or distancing from others as Taner does:

> People who have ill-intentions towards others and who are deceptive, I do not engage in any type of exchange with them. I do not pass my possessions to them nor do I accept anything from them. In general, if I do not have or want to have any relations with someone in my daily life, I do not use them to dispose of my possessions.
> (Taner, early 20s, M, essay)

> *Başkasına karşı kötü niyetli olanlar ve dürüst olmayanlar, bunlarla hiç bir alışverişe girmem. Omlara eşya vermem, almak da istemem. Genellikle böyle ilgim olmasını istemediğim insanlara elen çıkarttığım eşyalarımı da vermiyorum.*

Taner carefully chooses recipients for his possessions among people whom he would also like to have a connection in general. As such, he is carefully keeping

people, whose behavior or personality conflict with his personal values and views, out of the circulation of his possessions. In fact, my analyses show that consumers can contribute to construction and preservation of social order as through such inclusions and exclusions during disposing. Ece writes how she excludes specific people from accessing her branded clothes:

> If they are of good brands, I try to give them to people who will really appreciate them…perhaps to friends or family. Cannot give them to our housekeeper. I mean, when can she wear them or to where?
> (Ece, F, early 20s, essay)
>
> *İyi marka olanları onları gerçekten kullanabilecek kişilere vermek istiyorum…belki ailem ya da arkadaşlarıma. Yani temizlikçime veremem ki. O böyle şeyleri nerede giyebilir ya da ne zaman?*

On one hand, Ece seems to be concerned about increasing others' welfare. On the other hand, she wants to preserve the value of her possessions by ensuring that they are appropriately used in their next life. Doing this, however, requires controlling who relates to her possessions by using her beliefs and assumptions about the appropriate usage contexts for the object and others' consumption styles or practices. Thus, just like the stories elucidated in the previous section, Ece enacts and reconstructs a social order that highlights and preserves her distinction from others. That is, while disposing of their possessions in ways that preserve and transfer their value, participants try to protect social boundaries (Norris, 2004), connect with those they select, and distance from those whom they disapprove of.

4.3.3.4 General Implications

The findings elucidated above attest that contemporary consumers still want to feel connected to other people and experience being parts of a caring, sharing community (Cova, 1997; Arvidsson, 2011). Influenced by the countermodernist critiques against weakening of traditional ties, the postmodern views that promote being connected to others, and the religious ideals that highlight people as responsible for each other, participants use disposing processes to bind with other people.

The findings underline disposing as a process of maintaining the family as well as negotiating in-family relations. Previous research focuses on transfer of special possessions (Curasi et al., 2004; Epp and Price, 2008, 2010; Price et al., 2000) as a way to retain the family. My findings extend this result by drawing attention to the significance of ordinary possession transfers—as a manifestation of participants' care for their family's needs—and the process of selecting, sorting, and eliminating these objects for creation and maintenance of kinship relations. Participants also use disposing strategically to distribute their material possessions to those with whom they want to construct long-lasting relations (such as cleaning ladies or *kapıcı).* Conversely, they can keep certain people from accessing their possessions to maintain their distance and protect their social position.

These findings reveal a dark side of disposing, which operates on and reproduces asymmetric relations between involved parties. This echoes previous

research on the dark side of gift-giving (Mauss, 1990; Sherry et al., 1993; Godelier, 1999): the disposer usually claims power and superior position over the recipients, who become indebted and humbled by the gift they receive. While some participants relish this power imbalance, some others are disturbed by it. Charity organizations, in this manner, emerge as facilitators of altruistic gift-giving processes (Sherry 1983) by clearing any possibility for public recognition or power imbalance.

4.3.4 Atoning

Reflexive awareness of one's day-to-day existence has become the trademark of late (or post) modernity (Giddens, 1991). Contemporary consumers are claimed to be reflexive, constantly negotiating the boundaries of their identities and monitoring their actions to assess and adjust them (Giddens, 1991; Beck et al., 2003; Askegaard et al., 2009). Yet most informants complain about lack of such self-awareness during most of their consumption practices:

> You buy and buy. But, do you actually need all these among all the poverty and poor people? You just do not realize it until you actually need to dispose of them. You end up with all these objects, paid-for but seldom used, stuffed in your closet while there are people out there who cannot even find a loaf bread to eat.
> (Selin, early 20s, F, essay)

> *Alıyorsun, alıyorsun ama gerçekten bütün bu yoksulluk ve fakir insanlar arasında bu eşyalara ihtiyacın var mı? Elden çıkartmana gerek olana kadar fark etmiyorsun bunu. Sonunda para verilmiş ama nadiren kullanılan, dolabın dibine tıkılmış bütün bu eşyalarla kalıyorsun. Dışarıda yiyecek ekmek bile bulamayan onca insan varken.*

Selin's narrative summarizes how consumers can come to practice disposing as a way of acknowledging and—if necessary—atoning for their consuming. Gregson et al. (2007) suggest that a consumer's investments, tendencies, and attitudes during consumption reflects on what s/he is disposes of and how. This view parallels my finding that whatever consumption practices one engages in without actually considering the consequences reappear during disposing to haunt them. The belief that one can atone through disposing is informed by different macro discourses, specifically, the emphasis on the importance of reflexivity on one's actions and the countermodernist discourses on alienation of the individual from their own actions and the dangers of mindless commitment to consumerism. More significantly, it builds upon a moral undertone that usually merges with Islamist principles, beliefs, and myths that condemns wasting, greed, and excessiveness. Selin's essay, for example, reflects her remorse and guilt over her negligence of other people—their existence, welfare, needs, and relative position in society. While such deprived and disadvantaged other is curiously removed from her acquisition and even usage practices, they come back when she realizes she needs to let go of these objects. Thus, actual or imagined others seep into the process of constructing and evaluating one's consumption, usually through disposing.

I find that consumers frequently turn to disposing process to celebrate their successful and appropriate consumption practices while atoning for the improper ones. Consider Yeliz, who uses her interactions with the recipients of her possessions to reflect back and reconstruct her past consuming:

> I use my possessions neatly and pass them on…They thank me…I feel happy, satisfied…If they don't like it, get upset then that object becomes naught for me. I feel that I was not diligent enough with it. Thank God, it never happened!
> (Yeliz, 41, F, interview)
>
> *Eşyalarımı temiz kullanırım ve başkalarına öyle veririm…Bana teşekkür ediyorlar…Mutlu oluyorum, doyuma ulaşıyorum…Ama beğenmezlerse, bozulurlarsa o zaman o eşya benim için sıfır oluyor. Demek ki diyorum yeterince iyi kullanamamışım. Allah'a şükür daha böyle bir şey hiç olmadı.*

Throughout her interview, Yeliz talks about her diligent consumption practices to construct herself as a modern, efficient, and moral person, and proudly explains how she was able to transfer this trait to her son. Her success in disposing of her possessions is an evidence that by the time she is done with them, her objects are still usable and capable of meeting others' needs. Yeliz interprets any possible rejection of her donations as a reflection of her inadequate consumption practices and insensitivity to others' needs. For participants like her, the inability to dispose of an object in the specific manner intended holds a mirror to their past consumption, reconstructs it as improper and destructive while turning the disposed object into rubbish.

Nearly all informants stated their concerns about being a part of a consumption society and increasing importance given to material possessions. Their narratives on disposing are occasionally accompanied with their contemplations on buying more than needed, the obsession of having the new and upgraded, the speed of getting bored of items, and how they are disturbed by early disposals, un-utilized objects, and the general imbalance in society. Triggered by such consumption practices, disposing usually becomes the venue to atone for

these controllable and uncontrollable evils. My analyses reveal two main ways consumers use disposing to atone: balancing and legitimizing, and compensating.

4.3.4. 1 Balancing and Legitimizing

Participants occasionally use disposing to deal with perceived social injustice as well as to legitimize their own consumption. In this quest, they frequently refer to Allah, religion, Islam, morality, fairness, and sensitivity towards others. Hasan, for example, writes in his essay that passing an object on to others without asking anything in return "*brings peace and happiness*" to him. Others talk about their sensitivity towards the poor and the felt responsibility for bringing justice to the world. Beyond such general inequality, disposing can also be used to re-balance the account for a seemingly wasteful or inappropriate consumption practice.

4.3.4.1.1 Dealing with the Imbalance in Society and Social Injustice

All informants are grateful for the proliferation of Turkish marketplace. They like having increasing accessibility to a variety of commodities, scanning through numerous brands when buying milk from the market or frequently replacing their electronics as the new designs and technologies appear. At the same time, however, they feel extremely conscious of the existence of disadvantaged others. Participants feel empathetic towards these less fortunate people while also feeling guilty over their own ability to consume. Guilt coupled with sympathy for the disadvantaged

promotes monetary donations (Lee and Strahilevitz, 2004). I have found that guilt together with the internalized fear of social stigmata of wasting urges participants to let go of their objects:

> When I realize that someone needs something that I have but do not use, I feel bad. It urges me to dispose of it. Also in our religion, it is important to help the poor and not waste.
> (Orhan, early 20s, M, essay)
>
> *Birinin benim kullanmadığım bir eşyama ihtiyacı olduğunu fark ettiğim zaman kötü hissediyorum. O eşyayı elden çıkartma ihtiyacı hissediyorum. Dinimizde de fakire yardım ve ziyan etmemek önemli zaten.*

As Orhan writes, awareness of a deprived other, who needs it, can contaminate a possession for its owner especially if it has not been used adequately. In addition to his guilt, Orhan feels he fails as a Muslim in abiding by the laws of Islam. References to Islam are prevalent in the data, surprisingly more frequent among the students:

> Our religion says that we cannot sleep well if our neighbor is hungry. So, I always try to donate or pass on to my items to people in need. Making them happy relaxes me.
> (Gözde, early 20s, F, essay)
>
> *Dinimiz komşun açsa rahat uyuyamazsın diyor. O yüzden ben hep bağış yapmaya ya da eşyalarımı ihtiyaç sahiplerine vermeye çalışıyorum. Onları mutlu etmek beni rahatlatıyor.*

Gözde actually quotes a hadith, which originally says "those who can sleep with their bellies full while their neighbor is hungry cannot be from us". Such religious doctrines highlight consumers' responsibility for others' welfare and require them to always be aware of other people. Thus, they inevitably create tensions for individual consumers living in Turkey—a developing country

characterized by fast urbanization, weakening ties between members of society, and high rate of consumerism. Disposing process offers a solution for this tension, as it helps consumers to use their possessions to fight back imbalance and enhance others' welfare:

> My family, my religion and the society we live in all state that we should help people, give them things they need. If you give something to another person who is in more need of it than you, the God will give you more. (Bade, early 20s, F, essay)
>
> *Ailem, dinim, içinde yaşadığımız toplum hepsi insanlara yardım etmemizi, ihtiyaçlarını karşılamamız gerektiğini söylüyor. Eğer ihtiyacı olan birine bir eşyanı verirsen, Allah sana daha çok verir.*

Bade is also highly aware that she is required to care for and help deprived others. Like many other participants, she tries to regain a balance by disposing of her possessions to help people in need and to give back some of what she has taken. Informants who are dealing with these emotions usually spend a long time trying to locate unfortunate people as the potential recipients of their possessions. Neslihan, for example, explains why she spends time and energy in making sure right people receives her disposed objects:

> I always think that I could have been in their place, living in those squatter neighborhoods. I could have been the mother whose child was crying for something. I mean I try to put myself in their shoes, be empathetic…I mean we need to help. Really, there is a great financial crisis. We need to do something about it either in the form of financial or emotional support. But always with diligence, without offending or breaking hearts. An object waiting in the closet is meaningless. So, I guess these thoughts affect me. So, when I do this successfully, I mean give my things to people in need, I feel I am doing what I need to do. I feel satisfied and elevated. I say "yes, I did what I needed to do". I wish I could do more.
> (Neslihan, 45, F, interview)
>
> *Ben hep onu düşünürüm yani orada ben de olabilirdim o gecekonduda yaşayan ben de olabilirdim. Ya da ne bileyim işte çocuğu bir şey isteyip*

ağlayan anne ben de olabilirdim. Yani ben hep karşımdakinin yerine koyuyorum kendimi… Yardım etmemiz gerekir. Yani gerçekten ekonomik bir sıkıntı var ve biz o ortamda bir şeyler yapmalıyız. Gerek maddi gerekse manevi anlamda ama kırmadan üzmeden ama bunu yapmalıyız diye düşünüyorum. Yani orada dolabı beklemesinin bir anlamı yok..Biraz o yön beni çok etkiliyor. O yüzden yapmam gerekeni yapıyorum gibi hissediyorum. Yani bunu yaptığım gibi deminki sorunuz gibi kendimi doymuş hissediyorum ruhsal anlamda. "Hah" diyorum "tamam bana yakışanı yaptım". Keşke daha çok da yapabilsem.

Neslihan's empathy towards others stirs negative emotions such as guilt, fear, and insecurity about the future, which she tries to negotiate by behaving morally when disposing of her possessions. She diligently works to reach people who are genuinely poor and in need, and offers her possessions as a gift without embarrassing or offending them. Such disposing process not only provides Neslihan with spiritual elation but it also allows her to maintain her regular consumption practices. More importantly, she feels that she contributes to the re-building of the disturbed balance in society by distributing her unused items among people in need.

Some participants may even forego their habitual way of disposing to make sure they decrease social and financial inequality. Consider how Hale, who would never consider selling her clothes or accessories, has decided to commoditize some pieces in her necklace collection:

> I have been collecting them since college…I really like them but my friend has this stall in the bazaar. She asked me if I would like to sell some of them and share the profit. I would not normally…but, I mean, if she could ask me that, she must really need the money right? So, I thought I should just give some of them to her and she can keep the money for herself. I will choose a few necklaces and give them to her.
> (Hale, 40, F, interview)

Üniversiteden beri topluyordum, koleksiyon gibi…Seviyorum onları ama bir arkadaşımın pazarda bir tezgahı var. Kolyelerimi satmak isteyip istemeyeceğimi sordu ve parasını paylaşmayı teklif etti. Satmayı düşünmem tabi ki ama…yani şimdi bana onu sorabildiyse gerçekten ihtiyacı var demektir değil mi? Dedim ki ya vereyim birazını satsın parasını alsın. Şimdi kolyelerden bir kısmını secip ona vereceğim.

The necklaces Hale considers for disposal are pieces of her collection, which makes their transfer risky for their survival and the unity of her necklace set (Belk et al., 1991). However, after realizing that her friend is experiencing difficulties, Hale's collection becomes contaminated with the knowledge that her necklaces can actually help her friend. By passing her necklaces on to her friend, Hale can enhance her friend's life and restore their value.

To sum, although all informants are active and willing participants of consumer culture, they are also concerned with social inequality and imbalance among individual consumers. Disturbed by such imbalance but unwilling to change their own consumption, most informants use disposing as a venue to restore the balance by distributing their possessions among the poor and deprived others, while re-constructing their consumption processes as an answer to a social crisis.

4.3.4.1.2 Dealing with the Imbalance in Consumption

Consumers also atone for their excessive or unnecessary purchases by disposing of their possessions—usually to poor people with altruistic intentions—as a form of *zekat* (i.e. as alms or as forfeit for misbehavior). Most participants consider engaging in excessive or thoughtless consumption as "sinful" or

"wasteful" albeit not refraining from doing so. Disposing, as a follow-up to such consumption, becomes crucial for compensation and atonement. Melek's narrative below illustrates how she tries to rebuild the balance after consuming more than acceptable for her:

> I shop, yes, God is my witness, I shop a lot (laughs). Every month, I buy something new. But, I also know that I need to give its "zekat". So, whenever something new enters my home, something should go out so that I can use the new one with clean conscience. It helps circulation of objects. There is also this religious side to these things, of course.
> (Melek, 29, F, interview)

> *Alıyorum evet. Allah şahit almadan duramam hiç (gülüyor). Her ay mutlaka yeni bir şey alırım. Ama biliyorum ki bunların zekatını da vermek lazım. O yüzden eve giren her yeni şey için bir şey çıkmalıdır. Böylece yenisini gönül rahatlığıyla kullanırım. Dönüşümü sağlıyor bu. Tabi bunun aslında dini bir şeysi, boyutu da var.*

Melek tries to cleanse her new acquisitions by sacrificing an old possession. Sacrifice helps releasing of a kind of spiritual/religious energy (Hubert and Mauss, 1981), which can fend off evil spirits, call for good fortune, and curry the favor of a deity who has the power to give something better in return (Mauss, 1990). For participants like Melek, such sacrifices are necessary for their participation in consumer culture (Belk et al., 2003; Cherrier, 2009) with a clear conscience. İhsan explains this process like an exchange he engages in with the universe:

> If I buy something, I give something. I think of it like exchanging, I am offering something in return. I give people in need so I feel happy.
> (İhsan, early 20s, M, essay)

> *Bir şey alırsam yerine bir şey veririm. Bunu bir çeşit değiş-tokuş, karşılığında bir şey vermek gibi düşünürüm. İhtiyacı olan insanlara verdiğim için de mutlu oluyorum.*

By offering a possession of his in return for a new one he has just obtained, İhsan settles the score and starts using the new object without worry. Gül, on the other hand, believes that sacrificing the old is necessary for obtaining the new:

> Whenever I buy something new, especially clothes, I dispose of something old or unused from my closet. My mom always says "if you do not let go of the old, the new will not come to you". So, we donate. Also, I like helping other people, making their life easy. (Gül, early 20s, F, essay)
>
> *Yeni bir şey aldığım zaman, özellikle kıyafet, dolabımda eski ve kullanmadığım bir şeyi elden çıkartırım. Annem her zaman "eğer eskiyi vermezsen yerine yenisi gelmez" der. Bü yüzden biz de bağış yapıyoruz. Hem diğer insanlara yardım etmeyi ve hayatlarını kolaylaştırmayı seviyorum.*

Gül's disposing is a type of cleansing that opens up her life for new things. However, she is sensitive about how to dispose of the old: the type of disposing which can summon good things in her life is the one that increases others' welfare. Some other participants use disposing to "spread the joy" after a shopping spree:

> When I feel happy or get happy news, I always buy something. But, I know there are people who are not as lucky as me. So, I feel I need to share with them this good fortune. I donate and give my items away.
> (Koray, early 20s, M, essay)
>
> *Mutlu hissettiğim zaman ya da mutlu bir haber aldığımda hep bir şeyler alırım. Ama biliyorum ki benim kadar şanslı olmayan insanlar da var. Sanırım onlarla bu talihimi paylaşma ihtiyacı hissediyorum. Eşyalarımı veriyorum ya da bağışlıyorum.*

For Koray, happiness is a trigger for consuming more in a society with high inequality among social classes. Unwilling to regulate his consumption or hold himself back, Koray disposes of her possessions to share his possessions and increase other people's happiness.

Participants' responses show that participation to consumer culture can be balanced by "helping others," "doing the right thing" and "making use of the item by preventing their waste". Also , it is important to match items with people who need them and can use them properly:

> I am a part of consumer society but I also use my consumption to provide benefit for poor people…I sent my old books to the East. Some people just trash their items but I pass them onto poor people. It is the right thing to do. (Cavit, early 20s, M, essay)

> *Tüketim toplumunun bir parçasıyım ama tüketimimi yoksul insanlara yararlı olacak şekilde kullanıyorum…Kitaplarımı doğuya gönderiyorum. Bazı insanlar eşyalarını çöpe atıyor ama ben ihtiyacı olanlara veriyorum. Doğru olan şey bu.*

Cavit legitimizes his active contribution to consumption culture through his rigorous and thoughtful disposing practices. For him, standing against careless consumerism does not require adopting a simpler life or sacrificing his material wealth (Kozinets, 2002; Cherrier, 2009b) but by doing the right when disposing of his possessions.

The sacrifices mentioned above are not just "sacrifices infused with ethics" (Gregson et al., 2007) whose main aim is extending the object's social life (Appadurai, 1986; Kopytoff, 1986). Rather, they are meant as *zekat* to clean the person and the object from impurity (Hubert and Mauss, 1964). That is, prolonging the life of the disposed object is not an end but rather a consequence of these sacrifices, which are primarily used to reinstate the moral and religious identity threatened by the consumer culture.

4.3.4.2 Compensating

Most participants are concerned with compensating for their faulty or guilty consumption, which they usually achieve by utilizing their objects through disposing. In practicing compensating, consumers operate on a pronouncly moral undertone rather than a modernistic ideal to increase the efficiency and productivity. One of the most common uses of disposing in this context is when participants feel that they have inadequately or inaccurately used an object. Caner was feeling guilty over a pair of pants that he accidentally bleached:

> I liked them but they were ruined. Looking at it, I was feeling so bad, like I could not even take of a pair of jeans. I did not want to throw them away, there were perfectly usable just bleached. So, I gave them to the poor man in our neighborhood. I think, he can take care of it better.
> (Caner, early 20s, M, essay)
>
> *Seviyordum o pantolonu ama mahvolmuştu. Ona bakınca çok kötü hissediyordum sanki bir kota sahip çıkamamışım gibi. Ama atmak da istemiyordum çünkü kullanılabilir durumdaydı sadece çamaşır suyu olmuştu. Ben de mahalledeki fakir bir adama verdim onu. Sanırım benden daha iyi bakabilir diye düşündüm.*

Looking at his bleached jeans, Caner was continuously reminded of his inability to diligently use his jeans. Passing it to the poor man not only helped Caner to get rid of an unusable object and the guilt associated with it, but it also transfered the responsibility of the jeans to another party.

Participants also try to atone for letting go of an object prematurely or for what they perceive as insufficient reasons by disposing of it in certain ways.

During a chat I had with a friend, she started talking about how she liked to get rid of the objects in her house whenever she was bored of them or started to find them unappealing. She had recently sorted out her kitchen cupboards and disposed of some glasses during this process. Although she was mindful that such disposing was premature and even unnecessary, she had reconciled with it by putting the glasses through the recycling system to, in her own words, "*at least compensate for my vice this way*". Using specific conduits to moralize otherwise inappropriate disposing processes is common among participants. Çağla, for example, seeks penitence for agreeing to dispose of some of her objects under the influence of her friends:

> People want change in their lives…I am also like this, influenced by others and the marketplace. When my friends tell me that something I have is old-fashioned or unfitting to me, I want to dispose of it…I am grateful for everything that I own in this life but there are lots of people in need and poverty rates are increasing. They need every bit of help they can get. So, I try to pass them on to these people…we have responsibilities in our community, you know.
> (Çağla, early 20s, F, essay)

> *İnsanlar değişimi seviyor hayatlarında…Ben de öyleyim, arkadaşlarım ve pazardan etkileniyorum. Arkadaşlarım bir eşyamın eski ya da artık bana yakışmadığını söyleyince o eşyayı elden çıkartmak istiyorum...Hayatta sahip olduğum her şey için minnettarım ama ihtiyaç sahibi çok insan var ve fakirlik artıyor. Alabilecekleri her yardıma ihtiyaçları var. Ben de eşyalarımı bu insanlara veriyorum...Yaşadığımız topluma karşı sorumluluğumuz var biliyorsunuz.*

Çağla's narrative builds around the conditions of modern living, which she experiences as she welcomes change and lives through it by consuming in specific ways, while also reflecting the way she interprets her culture and religious duties. She wants to be approved by her friends and keep up with the contemporary times

while committing to traditional communal values and ethical principles. Turning poor people into conduits for moving along her possessions helps her to compensate for her indulgence in disposing of them early. Similarly, consider how Buket compensates for disposing of a pair of boots:

> I disposed of them because of I felt they no longer looked beautiful on me although I could have still worn them. I disposed of a functional object for emotional reasons…So, it felt wasteful, you know. In order to neutralize this feeling, I always pass my objects on to someone else. This way, I feel as if it is still being used, alive. Like I haven't wasted them.
> (Buket, 34, F, interview)
>
> *Çizmemi elden çıkarttım çünkü artık üstümde güzel durmadığını hissettim. Aslında giyilebilirlerdi hala. Yani hala fonksiyonel olan bir eşyayı duygusal nedenlerden ötürü elden çıkartmış oldum…O yüzden sanki ziyan etmişim gibi geldi. Bu duyguyu yok etmek için ben hep eşyamı başkasına veririm. Bu şekilde sanki hala işe yarıyormuş gibi oluyor hala yaşıyormuş gibi. Yani ziyan etmemişim gibi oluyor.*

Buket distinguishes between rightful disposing of an object (due to non-functionality) and improper disposing of it (due to boredom, appearance, etc.). In order to deal with undesirable emotions created in the latter case, Buket tries to prolong the object's life by making sure to match it with someone who can use it.

Consumers can also compensate for a previous purchase by disposing of these acquisitions in what they believe to be morally appropriate and ethically responsible ways. While excessive items create disorder and feelings of stress and annoyance (Gregson, 2007), they alsocreate guilt by constantly reminding informants of their poor consumption practices—especially when these excessive items have rarely, if ever, been used. Having already paid for these excessive items, disposing seems to be the only way for consumers to make up for their

inappropriate consumption while simultaneously providing the order in the household. Neslihan, for example, confesses that she usually spends more time and money on shopping than she should, as a result of which she ends up with objects she cannot use:

> I buy lots of clothes during the sales as well…like I go through all the racks. Last week, I bought three dresses but when I come home and put one on, it did not fit. But, that was OK, I took them to my sisters and gave it to my younger one. She liked it and asked how I find these things. So, yeah, I have two sisters and also nieces so I always give them things when I go overboard. (Neslihan, 45, F, interview)
>
> *İndirim zamanında da çok fazla kıyafet alıyorum…böyle bütün raflara, askılara bakıyorum. Geçen hafta üç tane elbise aldım. Eve geldim bir giydim üstüme olmadı biri. Ama önemli değil çünkü kardeşlerime götürdüm, küçük olana verdim. Çok hoşuna gitti ve böyle şeyleri nasıl bulduğumu sordu. Yani evet iki kızkardeşim ve yeğenlerim var. Aşırıya kaçtığımda onlara verebiliyorum eşyalarımı.*

Although Neslihan complains about the rising over consumption in Turkish society, she likes shopping and more than occasionally buys objects without actually considering if she needs them or whether she will be able to use them. By categorizing her consuming as a psychological and rather uncontrollable behavior, Neslihan tries to negotiate her responsibility but this does not help her to deal with the material consequences of her actions (in the form of object accumulation). She tries to compensate for her over-consumption by using her familial connections to pass these objects along—through a disposing process that constructs her as an expert shopper and her otherwise excess acquisitions as thoughtful gifts for her beloved ones. For participants like Neslihan, permanent existence of recipients for their disposed possessions work as a green light to consume in ways that might have risky consequences (e.g. accumulation of objects, unfitting purchases).

Consumers can also design specific disposing processes to deal with more peculiar consumption episodes. For Okan, re-commoditizing is a way to atone for and reimburse a rare extravagant previous acquisition:

> I had paid a lot for my cell phone. It was really expensive and, to tell you the truth, wastefully so. It was unnecessary for me to buy it then. So, I did a small market research, to estimate a good price and sold it. This way, I was able to compensate for my mistake. I did something good.
> (Okan, early 20s, M, essay)
>
> *Cep telefonum için çok para ödemiştim. Doğruyu söylemek gerekirse gerçekten israf olacak şekilde pahalıydı. O zaman onu almam da aslında biraz gereksiz olmuştu benim için. Ben de küçük bir pazar araştırması yaptım iyi bir fiyat belirlemek için ve sattım onu. Böylece hatamı telafi etmiş oldum. İyi bir şey yaptım.*

For Okan, who does not consider himself as a wasteful person, disposing provides an opportunity to confess his indiscretion and seek for a resolution. He compensates for his extravagance by putting his efforts into its disposal, to estimate the phone's current value and convert it into an asset (Denegri-Knott and Molesworth, 2009). Such thoughtful and reflexive disposing of his cell phone also provides moral value for Okan, who feels that he did something right by acknowledging and making up for his mistake.

In cases where consumers reluctantly come to possess an object, that object's predicted disposing can become the main compensation for consumers' lack of control or reluctance over their own consumption. Consider the following excerpt from *eksisozluk*, in which the author explains how consumers make peace with undesirable consumption episodes by imagining its upcoming disposal:

> Things we settle for…These are the ones we are able to dispose without any difficulty. These objects are born-losers, they are the substitutes for the

> objects we want at some point in our lives but could not have for one reason or another. Or, perhaps we just accepted them because we weren't able to get a better one. We buy these things with the knowledge that we are going to dispose of them as soon as we get the things that we actually want.
> (by lllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllllll, from eksisozluk.com on June 12, 2008)

> *Razı olduklarımız…Eski eşyaların sadece bu kategoriye girenleri herhangi bir zorluk duymadan kolaylıkla atılabilir. Çünkü bunlar yaşamımızın herhangi bir anında istediğimizi veya daha iyisini çeşitli sebeplerle elde edemediğimiz için muadil kategorisine düşmüş ve aslında baştan kaybetmişlerdir. Bunları edinirken de, o istediğimizi veya o daha iyi olanı elde ettiğimizde edindiğimizi hemen atacağımızı biliriz.*

The author highlights a distinct category of possessions: things consumers settle for although they do not actually like or mean to have them. Always in the shadow of the objects that consumers desire but could not have, these objects can survive as consumers use their imagined disposal as a consolation for their undesirable consumption. Jale, who is usually very particular about what she wants during shopping, experienced a similar thing when she agreed to buy a furniture set that did not actually match her tastes:

> Meltem: How did you decide to dispose of it?
> Jale: The furniture set, that I have passed onto our building attendee, was not my style at all. I had to buy it, it was affordable. But, I thought I could change it in 4-5 years, right? So, when it started to really bother me, I decided it is the time to change it. The *kapıcı* will use it or he surely knows someone who can use it so, I am comfortable
> (Jale, 42, F, interview)

> *Meltem: Elden çıkartmaya nasıl karar verdin?*
> *Jale: Apartman görevlimize verdiğim mobilya setim aslında benim tarzım değildi. Ama almak zorundaydım ve o uygun fiyatlıydı. Dört beş yıl içinde değiştirebileceğimi düşündüm, anladın mı? O yüzden beni gerçekten rahatsız etmeye başlayınca değiştirme vaktinin geldiğine karar verdim. Kapıcı kullanır ya da kullanabilecek birine verir o yüzden rahatım yani.*

For objects, whose acquisition is involuntary or problematic for consumers, thoughts of disposing of them can precede the thoughts about their performance or usage. This is a rather twisted version of Fromm's (2005) "having mode of existence" that I talked about above, where consumers acquire objects in anticipation of disposing of them soon. The finding supports and extends this view by highlighting how an imagined disposing process can actually help consumers deal with undesirable consumption objects or experiences.

4.3.4.3 General Implications

Living in a country with income inequality and a high rate of poverty, middle and upper-middle class consumers occasionally find things to repent. My findings reveal that reflexivity, countermodernist arguments against alienation and consumerism, and, more importantly, ideals of Islam constitute a discursive subtext that constructs disposing as a venue for atonement.

Contrary to the research which suggests that consumers dispose to break free from the constraining norms of religion (Cherrier, 2009a, b), my findings show that contemporary consumers can use disposing to construct themselves as religious and ethical subjects without breaking free from such norms or deserting consumption. For consumers participating the current study, one way to do this is using a basic practice of Islam—*zekat*—together with the general notion of sacrifice to purify their consumption. During disposing, previous purchases or existing material wealth become "contract sacrifice" through which consumers

exchange gifts with the God and fight away evil spirits (Mauss, 1990). This way, consumers can re-establish the purity of their acquisitions; prevent being haunted by an inappropriate or wasteful disposing episode; and reduce the guilt of having good fortune in a country with unemployment and poverty problems by distributing a portion of their wealth among the unfortunate.

Thus, the data shows that seemingly constraining traditions and ideals like ethics or religion are still important identity markers for contemporary consumers. Moreover, rather than just confining consumers, these ideologies can actually help them accommodate contradictory practices in their lives by cleansing and sacralizing some of these practices.

4.4 Negotiating Disposing: Practices of Dealing with Difficulty in Disposing

Disposition process can also inspire consumers to find other ways of mobilizing an object without actually disposing of it, while enhancing and protecting its perceived value. Moreover, participants can also deal with an object's non-transferable value, which usually originates from the object's perceived low value, perceived inappropriateness of its transfer, or lack of appropriate recipients, by adjusting their consumption to negotiate disposing. Informed by the ideals of thrift and non-wasting, creativity and aesthetics, and critics about unproductive consumerism, consumers might postpone or turn away from disposing to develop strategies to hold on to their ordinary possessions—even for a little more.

4.4.1 Facilitating Disposing: Strategies of Depleting the Object's Value

The data reveals the existence of three strategies that participants use to prepare their possessions for their predicted disposal. In the first two strategies—which I call brutal use and gradual garbaging—consumers adjust the object's consumption to *"use the object till the end"* before throwing it away without feeling guilty or wasteful as its value depletes enough to be regarded as garbage. As the object is used up and the use-value consumers derive from it boosts, consumers are highlighted as non-wasteful and thrifty. The last strategy, on the other hand, relates to a more symbolic consumption of the object. By increasing the encounters they have with the object, consumers re-construct it as excess that creates disorder and legitimize disposing it.

4.4.1.1 Brutal Use

Brutal use refers to the non-diligent and even careless consumption practices that help consuming up the object at a fast phase. This strategy is especially helpful when the predicted disposition looms over objects for which consumers cannot find a desirable recipient. Consider Ferda's car, which she had to dispose of before moving to another city:

> It was already second-hand. They (dealers/other buyers) would not pay much…But, it was a car, you know, still working. So, I felt I needed to, you know…to use it however I liked, kill it so I would deserve the new one. Thus, I would park it carelessly, eat and drink in it, not clean it much…Then, I was able to sell it, I don't know for how much but I just took it to the dealer and got what they offered…
> (Ferda, F, 29, interview)

Zaten ikinci eldi. Arabaya fazla para vermiyorlardı…Ama, bir araba sonuçta yani hala çalışıyordu. O yüzden ben de ne bileyim şey hissettim…istediğim gibi kullanayım, öldüreyim ki yenisini alabileyim istedim. İşte kötü yerlere park ettim içinde yiyip içtim, temizliğini yaptırmadım…Sonunda satabildim gerçi. Çok bir paraya değil ama. Götürdüm satıcıya, ne verirlerse aldım.

When Ferda realized she would need to dispose of her car, none of the conduits that were open for it appealed to her. As her car had low past and current market value, she felt that re-commoditization (seemingly the best practice for selling a car) would not bring enough monetary value in return for the car's lingering use-value. Throwing away or just passing on the still-working car seemed wasteful to her. Pondering her options, Ferda decided to adjust her consumption to materially degrade her car and facilitate its impending disposal. After brutally using her car for a while, Ferda was able to sell it happily for whatever price was offered. In addition to moving her car through a desirable conduit, brutal use practices have also constructed Ferda as a thrifty (if not diligent) consumer who does not let go of her possessions in wasteful ways or before their time.

Student essays also involve stories of careless use of books, most of which are study books for college entrance exams. Normally, participants re-commoditize such books or pass them down to other students, which require diligent usage (e.g. making sure the binding is intact and not drawing or leaving marks on the book) lest offering them causes offense. Occasionally, these books turn out to be non-disposable: their market demand or price may be too low or there might be no appropriate recipients. Rather than donating them to a charity, which creates inconvenience, or putting them through mechanisms like free cycling, which might

send them to undeserving hands, some participants brutally use these books to direct them towards the garbage bin while boosting the use-value they derive. Such brutal use strategies include marking the answers on the book (for convenience and saving time), making creative drawings on them (to enhance fun and manifest creativity), carrying the book everywhere without much care for its safety (for easy access), and even using the book to sit on or as a coaster when studying (to increase functionality).

Although brutal use is a kind of "sabotage," which legitimizes disposing of an object by deteriorating its materiality (Gregson et al., 2009), it also moralizes disposing by preventing the object's lingering non-utilizable value from looming over consumers. It should be noted that brutal use is not an option for participants who take pride in their diligent use of objects. Yeliz, for example, also has books and encyclopedia for which there is low demand due to increasing use of the Internet as source of information. Instead of brutally using these books to transform them into garbage, she stores them with the hope of finding appropriate recipients who can appreciate them since they are still in pristine condition as Yeliz states.

4.4.1.2 Gradual Garbaging

In addition to brutal use, prospects of disposing an object can lead to a more permanent regulation of consumption: gradual garbaging. Gradual garbaging is slow and systematic consumption of objects until they can be disposed in desirable

ways. Different from most reuse strategies, in gradual garbaging, consumers use objects in the same ways but move them across hierarchically ranked consumption spheres, as Giray does with his clothes:

> We use things as much as possible not waste…I give clothes to my father and local charities. But, giving is meaningful if the receiver is using them…So, I have these categories: business, casual, summerhouse clothes, and clothes worn during repairs, painting...The clothes I cannot give to my father or donate…go one step down until they cannot be used anymore.
> (Giray, M, 35, interview)
>
> *Biz eşyaları ziyan etmeyiz, olabildiğince çok kullanırız…Ben kıyafetlerimi babama ve mahallenin bağış kurumlarına veriyorum. Ama vermek, alan kişi eşyayı kullanırsa anlamlı…Benim katergorilerim var: iş kıyafeti, günlük kıyafet, yaz kıyafeti ve tamir, boya gibi işlerde giydiğim kıyafetler…Babama ya da kuruma veremediğim kıyafetler hep bir basamak aşağıya gider. Ta ki kullanılamayacak hale gelene kadar.*

In light of his family's teachings and his own moral principles, Giray derives value from his ordinary possessions through optimal use. Usually, he circulates them between his relatives or charities to prolong their life. In the absence of such recipients, who could utilize his clothes the way he likes, he uses them to the fullest by gradually garbaging them.

Informants also negotiate disposing by gradually garbaging objects whose movement could be socially risky or inappropriate:

> After a few seasons, swimsuits get old. They are private, I cannot give them to anyone right? Can still wear them though…at beaches where there are tourists that you will never see again or at the pool in winter when it is not crowded.
> (Melis, F, 33, interview)
>
> *Mayolar bir kaç sezon giyilince eskiyor. Ama özel eşyalar, kimseye verilemez yani değil mi? Ama ben onları giyiyorum…mesela bir daha hiç görmeyeceğim turistlerin olduğu sahillerde ya da kışın tenha havuzlara giderken.*

Most participants agree that private objects such as swimsuits or underwear embody low transferable value: offering them to others could be offensive and unhygienic while none of the informants even considers selling them. However, trashing them when they are usable would be wasteful. Melis solves this conflict by ordering her consumption to negotiate when she disposes of her swimsuits. She explains in her interview how she starts wearing her new swimsuits at relatively trendy pools and beaches, but they end up being worn at isolated beaches before they are thrown away with a clear conscience. Gradual garbaging also constructs consumers as thrifty but requires them to have hierarchically ranked consumption contexts through which they move the object before disposing of it.

4.4.1.3 Increasing the Object's Visibility

This strategy includes putting the objects in places, where they can have frequent encounters with consumers, so that their accommodation becomes problematic. Different from the first two consumption practices mentioned above, this strategy can be considered as a type of divestment ritual that aims to manipulate the object's meanings to facilitate its disposal. Consider Buket who keeps the objects she plans to dispose in visible places:

> My boots, they were usable but old-fashioned. I guess I got bored of them and decided to dispose of them… So, I put them into the bathroom so that I could see them when I entered there. I guess it kind of reminded me that I was going to dispose of them. And, I think I got used to the idea of disposing them. In the end, mom gave it to our kapıcı.
> (Buket, 34, F, interview)

> *Bir botum vardı, kullanılabilir ama eski moda. Sanırım sıkılmıştım onu giymekten ve elden çıkartmak istedim…Onları banyoya koydum ki girip çıktıkça oraya, göreyim. Hani bana elden çıkartacağımı hatırlatsın gibi. Tabi bu fikre alışmak için de işe yaradı. Sonunda annen onu kapıcıya verdi.*

Although Buket had already given up her old-fashioned boots, she was feeling guilty over their disposal as they were still usable. In her case, the bathroom—a place she visited everyday to groom herself—was a transitional space through which her boots were taken out of the regular consumption sphere and gradually became more disposable. Gazing at them everyday not only kept reminding her that the boots were to be disposed of but it also made her wary of them, effectively decreasing their perceived value.

I claim above that objects that create visible chaos and disorder in the house are more easily disposed of. The literature also suggests that being "underfoot" and getting in the way trigger disposal (Phillips and Sego, 2011: 440). Some participants use this as a strategy to legitimize disposing of certain objects:

> I have that dress I do not wear it, but keep it in the closet with other clothes. I see it whenever I open the closet. It gets old in my mind, like I consume it by looking at it, seeing it there unused, in purgatory…it's not alive but I feel "poor thing it needs to be worn, used". I will give it to someone.
> (Buse, early 20s, F, essay)

> *Giymek istemediğim ama diğer kıyafetlerimle birlikte dolapta tuttuğum bir elbisem var. Ne zaman dolabı açsam onu görüyorum. Sanki kafamda eskiyor gibi. Hani orada öyle, arafta gibi görünce bakarak tüketiyorum gibi…canlı değil ama üzülüyorum "yazık kullanılması gerek" diyorum. Birine vereceğim inşallah.*

Since Buse is not using her dress, it would make sense for her to put it away for a while—both to prevent it from taking up closet space and to check if she will

need it in the future. Instead, she deliberately keeps them together with other clothes that she uses. Whenever Buse looks at her dress, she sees how she does not use it compared to a shirt or a skirt hanging next to it. Moreover, frequent encounters with the dress remind her that objects also have a specific lifetime and she is wasting the dress's by keeping it there idle while passing it on to someone else can rescue it from this limbo. Buse's case hints that, high visibility of an object can create an emotional state of unrest, guilt, and mental exhaustion by reminding consumers of their failed consumption. In time, as consumers get tired of thinking about them and their potential owners, these objects devalue more and more without actual physical consumption. Although they are destroyed for personal use, they can, then, be disposed of without guilt. This finding suggests that increasing the visibility of an object, instead of storing it away, is another type of divestment ritual. As such, it provides an alternative to the considerable amount research in the literature, which implies that decreasing the visibility and significance of an object in one's everyday life is a way of letting it go (Roster, 2001).

The practices mentioned above facilitate disposing process by helping consumers use up the object (either symbolically or materially) before they can be disposed of without waste or guilt (Hetheringthon, 2004). This way, they associate consumers and their possessions with frugality and thrifty consumption practices. Moreover, they prevent participants from hurting others' welfare and pride through an inappropriate object transfer.

4.4.2 Preventing Disposing

While some participants work hard to make their possessions more disposable, some others try to hold on to these ordinary objects as much as possible. Consider how Selcan negotiate disposing process:

> In my family, we make use of everything. Since we use them until the end, we cannot pass our possessions on to anyone else. We either trash or use them in different ways…I am very creative, I can always re-use things, like turn them into art. In this way, I don't dispose of things.
> (Selcan, early 20s, F, essay)
>
> *Ailemde her şey kullanılır. Sonuna kadar kullandığımız için kimseye veremiyoruz. Ya atıyoruz ya da başka şekilde kullanıyoruz…Çok yaratıcıyım başka şekillerde kullanır, sanat eseri yaparım eşyalardan. Bu şekilde elimden çıkmaz eşyalar.*

Constructing thrift as a family practice, Selcan relates various ways through which she holds on to her possessions. In addition to prolonging their usage, some of these practices enhance objects' value by imbuing them with her creativity.

Stories of non-disposable ordinary objects are also prevalent in the data. I found that, for such objects, preservation of their value gains priority over enhancing it. Most of the time, consumers try to re-locate these objects to be able to keep them—usually with little to no intention of (re)using them or enhancing their value.

4.4.2.1 Strategies of Enhancing the Object's Value

Among participants are those who praise themselves for recognizing the potential value in objects that are deemed useless or rubbish. Mostly being graphic design students and/or skilled in crafts or arts, these participants use their competence to resist disposing of some objects by transforming them and using them in new ways. This attests to the literature which suggests that consumers can revaluate old, useless objects or even rubbish by giving them new uses (Gregson and Crewe, 2003), altering their material form (Soiffer and Hermann, 1987; Parsons, 2008) or displaying them in creative ways (Parsons, 2008) and/or strategically important places such as the mantelpiece or museums (Hetherington, 2004; Hurdley, 2006). Informed by ideals of thrift and productivity, these practices move objects into other consumption spheres and new value regimes (Parsons, 2008; Gregson et al., 2009), which effectively delays their disposal.

Although in some cases, re-using an object requires little skill (like converting an old cloth into dust-cloth), transformations that enhance an object's value the most are those for which consumers use labor and elaborate skills that are not available to most consumers. It is through investment of such extensive bodily, cognitive, and emotional labor—or "non-monetary sacrifice" (Wang et al., 2004)—that objects, which would otherwise be disposed of, re-gain value. Miray explains that when she evaluates an item as disposable, she first thinks how (and if) she can change it:

> If I am bored (with the item), I find ways to re-use it. Or if it stays idle in the closet…if I have time, I re-do it…we sit with my mother and plan. She is the creator in our family but I learn too, she gave me her design books. Mom gives me ideas and last time we sewed a blouse from scarves…and there is this TV show, they show how to transform items. I sometimes take my items to my teacher at the course (furnishing and sewing course) to see what we can do with them.
> (Miray, 47, F, interview)
>
> *Sıkılırsam eğer değerlendirmenin başka yolunu buluyorum. Ya da dolapta atıl bekliyorsa…eğer vaktim varsa yeniden yapıyorum…annemle oturup plan yapıyoruz. O ailedeki yaratıcı insandır. Ama ben de öğreniyorum, bana model kitaplarını verdi mesela. Annemden fikir alıyorum. Mesela atıl duran yazmalardan bluz yapmıştık…Bir de TV'de bir program var eşyaları nasıl başka şeye dönüştürebileceğinizi gösteriyorlar. Bazen böyle şeyleri kurstaki hocamıza götürüyorum. Beraber bakıyoruz ne yapabiliriz diye.*

Miray has been taught to be thrifty and creative by her family, and she chooses to transform her items in various ways—even if she needs to destroy them to create the new ones. For this, she uses her own skills, her mother's expertise as the master in her family, her mentor and friends in the class, and TV shows as resources. In addition to demonstrating her creativity and personal achievement (Jacoby et al., 1977), these transformations allow her to revaluate her items, bond with her mother and friends, and construct herself as a suitable candidate for her mother's place in the family one day. Thus, transforming disposable items enhance value-creation not only by promoting their aesthetic and utility value but also by manifesting a distinction between those who can and cannot transform such items.

In her exploration of transformation and re-use of food left-over, Cappellini (2009) concludes that these practices are actually sacrifices which allow consumers to save for a more extraordinary consumption events. In my data, however, rather than any specific savings, most of the participants engage in these practices for

emotional gains that come from being able to control the fate of the object and to use it in a way other than its original purpose (Medley et al., 2006). To this end, they could even turn to the marketplace and consume more. That is, I find that these activities to be stimulated by various promotions and consumption activities, advising consumers to save, create, and transform in right ways, with right techniques, and under the guidance of right people (Lehtonen and Pantzar, 2002). Consider the following excerpt from *eksisozluk:*

> It is sometimes difficult to dispose of things if you have emotional ties or when you think that "Damn I had paid a lot for this, how can I throw it away?"…If you can become like Berna Laçin or Demet Akbağ from the TV show "Home Sweet Home," you can come up with (watch this part) a bookcase, a CD holder, a newspaper stand from an old wardrobe. All you need is screwdriver set.
> (by saryade, from eksisozluk.com on December 10, 2006)
>
> *İnsan kimi zaman duygusal sebeplerle kimi zaman ise yerine yenisini aldığında " ulan dünya kadar para vermiştim, nasıl atayım şimdi bunu" düşünüşüyle zorlanır eski eşyaları atmaya…Evim güzel evim programındaki bir Berna Laçin, bir Demet Akbağ moduna girebilirseniz eski bir gardroptan (bu kısma dikkat) bir yatak odası kitaplığı, bir kocaman kitaplık, bir cdlik, bir gazetelik çıkarmak işten bile değil. Gereken şey sadece bir vida takma çıkartma takımı…*

The author refers to a once popular TV show broadcasted in a national channel and the famous actresses who were running the show. Fascinated by the transformations an old wardrobe can go through, the author highlights transforming as an alternative to disposing of objects for which there is some form of an attachment.

Turkish media and government also support transforming otherwise disposable objects. They even target kids to change their attitudes about trashing

and re-using. Recently, in a very popular animation show called "Pepee" (TRT, episode aired on 24.07.2012), kids were advised to re-use and transform things through a song that explained how to turn toilet paper roll into a toy puppet. The song finished with the lyrics "don't throw away anything but use them, you will see what they can become".

There is also a recent tendency to use waste materials in *art-works*. The terms "recycled art," "ecological art" or "junk art" are used to define artistic pieces which use waste or rubbish as raw materials. A famous artc critique Lucy Lippard suggests that ecological art is more about disposing of waste than creating art, with raw materials being produced by the artist themselves. Consider how Murat approaches his old objects as raw materials first:

> I spend my time creating, you know, alternatives for my projects…I used my old t-shirts to create a different poster design…I consider them (items to be disposed) as a costume or accessory first. Everything can be a material for something…I name an item disposed after using it in my productions. (Murat, early 20s, M, essay)
>
> *Benim işim yaratmak, yani, projelerim için alternatifler yaratıyorum…Eski tişörtlerimi değişk bir poster dizaynı yaratmak için kullandım…Ben bu eşyaları önce bir kostüm ya da aksesuar gibi görüyorum. Her şey başka bir şey için bir materyal olabilir…Bir eşyayı ürettiğim bir şeyde kullandıktan sonra elden çıkmış sayarım.*

At the root of Murat's transformations lie his belief in continuous recycling of resources and his quest for raw materials for his art productions. Applying his skills as a creative resource and his school projects as his context, Murat re-designs his items into art-like pieces, providing them with even a higher status and use-value while constructing himself as a creative, skillful person. The type of object

converted and the range of conversion are contingent upon participants' skills as well as the socio-cultural context. Consider Mutlu, who writes how he holds back some of his old or unused possessions for his art while disposing of the rest:

> Old jeans, shirts, they become raw materials for my art…You need to have the eye to know which items can be used like that and which should be passed on.
> (Mutlu, M, early 20s, essay)
>
> *Eski kotlar, tişörtler hepsi sanatım için hammade olabilir…Tabi hangi eşyanın bu şekilde kullanılıp hangisinin verilmesi gerektiğini bilebilmeniz gerekli.*

Although Mutlu generally likes to donate, he refrains from disposing objects that align with his artistic style and design tastes, and strike him as potential raw materials for his current or future art projects. In becoming a part of an artistic process, these objects obtain aesthetic and use-value. Mutlu writes how his sense of competence as an artist increases and how he feels happy to contribute to reduction of waste every time he revives a seemingly worthless object through his art.

In addition to being the manifestation of one's creativity, art has become a new circuit of value (Hawkins, 2006) to move disposable objects through and prolong their lives (Gregson and Crewe, 2003; Gregson et al., 2009). It helps re-aestheticization of waste and turns what is considered old and uncool into trendy, desirable objects. Yusuf Kayı, a young fashion designer, is using old and unused objects as the raw material for some of his creations:

> Here, I glued the old plastic bags on the leather to obtain a nice shine…A curtain you don't use at home. But, you can change it, transform it to create a new dress. You should not dispose of some fabrics but revaluate them. (Pazar Akşam, February 22, 2009)

Burada eski plastik çantaları bu deriye yapıştırarak güzel bir parlaklık elde ettim…Evde kullanmadığınız bir perde mesela. Ama onu değiştirebilir, yeni bir elbiseye dönüştürebilirsiniz. Bazı kumaşları atmak yerine değerlendirmeniz gerekir.

As an expert, the young designer demonstrates his own work to show that an object that we consider as garbage or keep idle in a closet can actually have a much more glamorous life. Despite such discursive formation of transformation and re-use as creative, productive, and thrifty, for some participants, these practices demand too much of scarce resources (e.g. time, skills, etc.) and prevent obtaining new objects. As some informants complain, transforming can be inconvenient and prevent them from "changing"—from going through their own transformation. These participants do not possess the competence necessary to undertake such transformations and can even frame these practices as a form of unproductive accumulation rather than a creative or productive act:

I can never do that. I don't have the skills nor the patience or the time…I guess those people are, maybe, more creative to be able to re-use things. And, maybe they are more economical...But, it does not always work for the good, you know. I mean, if everyone is economical, the whole economy might collapse…They say we need to shop to enhance the economic growth and support the businesses. Now, if you re-use and keep and hold back things than it is bad for the economy. Perhaps, this is a paradox…
(Jale,42, F, interview)

Ben asla yapamam. Ne becerim ne sabrım ne de vaktim var…Galiba eşyaları yeniden kullanmayı yapabilenler daha yaratıcı insanlar. Kim bilir, belki daha ekonomiktirler…Ama bu her zaman doğru şekilde çalışmıyor da. Yani herkes ekonomik olmayı düşünürse bütün ekonomi çökebilir… Ekonominin canlanması ve işleri desteklemek için alışveriş yapın diyorlar. O zaman her şeyi yeniden kullanır ya da elden çıkartırsan, vermezsen bu ekonomi için kötü olur. Sanırım bu bir paradoks.

Jale admits to not having skills or the patience to transform her old possessions. However, she underlines another, darker side to thrift by pointing out the effects of individuals' thrifting practices on the whole economic system. What she lacks as creativity, she compensates by disposing so that she can consume and contribute to her country's economic proliferation.

The previous research has found that practices like repairing, re-using, and transforming lengthen an object's life and, as such, work to distance it from the conduits of disposing (Gregson and Crewe, 2003; Gregson et al., 2009). I have found that, while disposing creates value by transferring an object's value and establishing desirable relations around it, transforming through aesthetic manipulation and creative re-contextualization like art enhance value (Appadurai, 1986: 28) by moving the object into new realms—usually into the realm of production (in creating something new). The conversion process also manifests a distinction between who can and cannot undertake such revaluations, elevating the inner satisfaction of highly competent consumers.

4.4.2.2 Protecting the Value by Keeping the Object

Most participants find it difficult to dispose of objects with what they consider ambiguous (even if transferable) value. An object usually gains ambiguous value when consumers start to make conflicting value assessments about it or predict discrepancy between others' and their own evaluation of it. Objects with

ambiguous value hold few value-enhancing disposition opportunities and are otherwise kept back from disposition.

Keeping such objects back from disposition not only ensures access to their use-value but also helps negotiation of conflicting value perceptions about them. Having been exposed to her parents' mocking about its color and model, Buket's coat now embodies ambiguous value for her:

> I like that coat, it is functional. But, wearing it is uncomfortable with my parents saying these things…At the mall, this saleslady came to me and said she liked it. I was like struck by lightning. She would like and use it like me so I told her to take it…She didn't, I was so sad. I missed the perfect opportunity to dispose of it.
> (Buket, F, 34, interview)

> *O paltoyu seviyorum, fonksiyonel yani. Ama annemler öyle şeyler söyleyince artık giymek biraz sorunlu oldu, yani rahatsız oldum…Bir gün alışveriş merkezinde bir tezgahtar geldi yanıma, "Ne güzel paltonuz" dedi. Ben de atladım hemen, sever kullanır diye almasını söyledim, size vereyim dedim…Almadı, ay bir üzüldüm. Yani mükemmel bir fırsattı elden çıkartmak için onu ama olmadı.*

Buket's coat, albeit useful and likable, symbolizes the clash of her taste with her parents, whose opinion she treasures in forming her value assessments. As the coat's lingering use-value is tainted with its depreciated aesthetic and emotional value, rather than using gradual garbaging or brutal use strategies, Buket wants to revaluate her coat by transferring it to someone who shares her positive value assessments. Having missed the rather spontaneous chance to transfer her coat to the saleslady, she holds on to her coat lest its lingering value is wasted through an inappropriate transfer. Ambiguous value, then, makes it difficult to move the object and circulate value.

Some participants hold on to their possessions to avoid other consumers' scrutiny for fear that disposing process will expose their possessions to value estimates that are unfair to or incompatible with their own. Consider Talat, who finally replaced his cell phones due to his friends' mocking:

> My old phones only call and text. It is enough for me, you know. But, cell phones have everything now, camera, mp3 player, navigator... So, I cannot pass them along or convert them into money. Who would pay for them? Cannot throw them away either, they work. I might take them to that recycling facility where they raise money for charities.
> (Talat, M, 43, interview)

> *Eski telefonlarım sadece arıyor ve mesaj atıyor. Yani bana yeterli bu. Ama şimdi her şey var bu telefonlarda. Kamera, mp3 çalar, şu navigasyon uygulaması…O yüzden bu telefonları elden çıkartmazsın ya da paraya çevrilmez bunlar. Kim para verir ki bunlara? Ama atamıyorum da, çalışıyor telefonlar. Bir kurum var geri dönüşümden gelen paraları yardım için dağıtıyor. Belki onlara götürürüm.*

Despite his friends, for Talat, his phones are actually functional and still embody some use-value, which he is willing to sacrifice for charity in return for moral and relational value. His longitudinal consumption and delayed replacement—albeit increasing the use-value he obtained—have turned the phones out-of-date and decreased their transferable value. So, he cannot move them through his usual conduits. Moreover, disposing process can highlight Talat's inability to engage in "timely and appropriate disposing" (Gregson et al, 2007) and expose his unwillingness to keep up with trends valued in his social network. Any movement of Talat's phones will require some kind of value assessment. Even if he sends them to recycling, his phones will be scrutinized for their recyclability. By keeping such objects out of disposition exchanges, participants shield their own

value assessments and conceal their possessions' ultimate "worthlessness" in others' eyes.

Resistance to disposing usually occurs when consumers have a place to keep these objects. Summerhouses, storages, attics, basements, even offices and parents' houses can be used to create extra space and justify holding onto these objects. More often than not, keeping an object conflicts with consumers' desire to maintain order and utilizing objects and spaces. Moreover, these objects, when visible, remind consumers of their rather wasteful accumulation while disposing would enhance these objects' current usability. To deal with this feeling, consumers try to relocate the object in ways to decrease their encounters:

> Giray: So, I have this old radio at home, nothing special but it works. Well, I don't use it we have computers and CD-players and all. But, I cannot throw it away or pass it on to anyone. So, it stays there, in a closet.
> Meltem: What are your plans about it? Are you going to dispose of it?
> Giray: No, it has a place at home. It does not bother me. Frankly, if it were lying around, I guess I would try to dispose of it. But, it has a place there where I cannot see without opening the closet door.
> (Giray, 35, M, interview)

> *Giray: Evde eski bir radyom var. Özel bir şey değil ama çalışıyor yani. Şimdi bilgisayar, CD player filan varken kullanılmıyor tabi. Ama atamam, başkasına da verememe yani. Işte dolapta duruyor öyle.*
> *Meltem: Ne yapmayı düşünüyorsun onunla? Elden çıkartacak mısın?*
> *Giray: Yok ya, yeri var evde. Beni rahatsız etmiyor yani. Açıkçası etrafta gözüme çarpsa elimden çıkartmayı düşünebilirim. Ama orada yeri var, dolabı açmadan gözüm görmüyor ki.*

Giray's radio is working but out-of-date, and, as such, he feels he cannot dispose of it in desirable ways. However, his distancing strategy is not a prelude to divest the radio. On the contrary, Giray's account suggests that unused ordinary possessions with ambiguous value can resist disposing, when they can be

accommodated in places that prevent their visibility and frequent encounters with consumers.

The literature provides two main explanations for resistance to disposition: attachment to objects with special meanings like heirlooms (Grayson and Shulman, 2000; Curasi et al., 2004) and tendency to keep as a personality trait (Coulter and Ligas, 2003; Phillips and Sego, 2011). The findings above highlight a third alternative: value perceptions constructed during actual or imagined disposing process (not just acquisition and use) can also make it difficult to dispose of ordinary objects, encouraging attachment to them. That is, in addition to special memories or liking an object (Kleine et al., 1995), perceived non-existence of transferable value or unavailability of desirable conduits of disposing could strengthen object attachment. Consumers protect their own value assessments and deal with an object's ambiguous or seemingly non-transferable value by keeping it back from disposing cycles.

4.4. 3 General Implications

Existence of value depletion strategies like brutal use and strategies to prevent disposing of an object implies that an object's value does not always diminish by "…just using it or letting it sit and become old" (Engeström and Blackler, 2005: 323). The very same ideologies that trigger and shape disposing processes can ensemble and work in different ways to prevent an object's

immediate divestment. Consumers might need to strategically manipulate their consumption to prevent wasting any lingering value and to deal with the anxiety and guilt of disposing. As consumers divert their possessions from undesirable disposing conduits and move them into new contexts of consumption and production, they construct themselves as thrifty and non-wasteful, deriving further moral, spiritual, aesthetic, and use-value. Keeping, on the other hand, helps preservation of value and prevention of value-loss by holding the object in a temporary status quo. In either case, an object's imagined disposal becomes constitutive of the value obtained from it.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The model proposed in this research frames disposing as embedded in a four-layered system of meanings and consumption practices. In doing so, it situates disposing within the macro structures of social life by revealing the socio-cultural, political, economic, and, to some extent, historical factors shaping its "when" and "how". While the model moves the "how" of disposing beyond just "the portfolio of disposing conduits" by showing how these conduits come to be (or not to be), it extends the "when" of disposing beyond "just before acquisition" or "at the end of the object's life" by explicating various meta-practices that host a range of disposing processes through the object's life.

The results of this study depicts disposing as a site of tensions or, rather, as a venue for consumers to navigate through the tensions created by their wish to comply with the ethos of consumerism while being moral in ways as interpreted

and promoted by the forces of an imagined traditional Turkish culture. In this model, disposing moves beyond being a process of consuming—the end of consumption, the last stage in objects' life (Jacoby et al., 1977; Hanson, 1980), or a process of physical and psychological separation from possessions (Roster, 2001; Gregson et al., 2007). Informed by the cultural ideals and grand discourses, it emerges as a social practice of moralizing, of seeking penitence, of re-ordering the world, of creating links, and of enhancing value. Disposing, then, is not just a part of consumers' dwelling in their homes to accommodate things and people (Gregson and Crewe, 2003; Gregson, 2007) but it is also about consumers' general dwelling in the world, a practice to accommodate a socio-culturally constructed and ever-changing world in their own lives. Moreover, the results show that disposing is not just about figuring out how to let go or get rid of an object conveniently and in ways to prolong its life (Hanson, 1980; Gregson et al., 2007; Cherrier, 2009b) but it is also crucial to enable, re-construct, revaluate, and moralize one's consuming.

Having said these, we can go back to the initial spark that motivated this study: how can this research explain lack of garage sales in Turkish consumers' portfolio of disposing conduits? Several elements in the model might be interacting to prevent translation of this conduit into the current research context. First, participants regard re-selling as acceptable for a limited range of objects and otherwise associate it with greed and cheapness or neediness of the disposer. Moreover, informed by a high awareness of risks and consequences of their actions, consumers report that re-commoditizing things like underwear, kitchen utensils, or shoes would be unhygienic and potentially dangerous to health, while

selling clothes is socially risky as it might signal others that the disposer is in financial trouble. As such, public-display of re-selling most objects—an inevitable aspect of garage sales—is usually unacceptable for Turkish consumers.

Lastovicka and Fernández (2005) define garage sales as the main conduit for American consumers who, due to lack of interpersonal connections, have to dispose of their possessions to strangers. The results of this study, however, suggest that such personal channels are still prevalent and important for Turkish consumers' lives. As such, by circulating objects within the family and through personal relations (*kapıcı,* cleaning lady, personal references in local charities), Turkish consumers can exchange monetary value they could obtain from selling their objects in return for moral and linking value. Beyond these, most informants are bothered by the idea of obtaining monetary return from objects that could/should serve more altruistic or moral ends. Thus, most of the items that grace a regular garage sale are primarily directed to other conduits. That is, perceivably superior and socially acceptable conduits substitute garage sales in Turkey.

But, why do most informants prefer other (and less conspicuous) ways when they want to re-sell their objects? Online selling, a widely preferred method among informants, not only helps liquidation of possessions conveniently (Denegri-Knott and Molesworth, 2009) but it also stimulates consumers' acceptance and adaptation of the marketer/seller role by decreasing their face-to-face interactions within the marketplace. That being said, claiming that Turkish consumers do not engage in face-to-face selling to divest their possessions would be ignorant of the recent

proliferation of second-hand stores for cell phones and other personal electronics or the still lingering existence of *eskici*—a traditional agent of disposing, who would walk around with a hand cart to barter with housewives. Consumers, especially, women used to be eager to dispose of their unused pots, carpets, utensils, and other objects in return for small things like new pots, basin, or clothespin. However, the style of exchange (i.e. traditional bartering) and relative smallness of the return construct *eskici* as more of a conduit for thrift than market exchange or venue of re-commoditization. So, compared to garage sales, *eskici* is more acceptable and suitable to the traditions and ideals promoted in Turkish consumptionscape.

Absence of garage sales also becomes more meaningful when its structure is compared and contrasted with the grand structures (e.g. housing) and meta-practices (e.g. ordering, utilizing) in Turkey. Conducting a garage sale requires a certain level of object accumulation, which is usually problematic in Turkish households. First, apartments and gated communities constitute the main housing structure for middle and upper-middle class (and recently even lower class) consumers in Turkey. In these buildings, which lack private basements or attics, consumers rarely have enough storage space to collect and accumulate things. As such, old or unused objects are usually disposed of during regular practices of ordering and cleaning. Moreover, legal regulations and recycling systems allow for the fast movement of objects out of the households. Unlike most European and American neighborhoods, Turkish legal system is flexible on the use of streets as a conduit of disposing. Most of the time, consumers can leave their unwanted objects (even big ones like a couch) on the street near the garbage bin without fear of

getting a fine from the municipality. More importantly, deserting an object on the street invite informal agents of recycling like collectors or *eskicis* to assess and revaluate the object. Knowing that these agents exist to dispose of and utilize their thrown away possessions encourage consumers to get rid of rather than accumulate objects. As a consequence, re-selling takes place as an object-specific process unlike the wholesaling nature of garage sales. So, beyond being regarded as a personal choice or a simple cultural nuance, the absence of garage sales should be explained in relation to macro structures and cultural orientations shaping everyday life in Turkey as well as the existence of substitute conduits. Disposing, as displayed in the model and informed by the tensions between consuming and moralizing, discourses and ideals providing its meanings, and grand practices that order the social life, cannot accommodate garage sales, which neither fit in these systems of meanings/practices nor provide a solution for the tensions felt by these consumers.

The remainder of this chapter elucidates the implications of these findings in three sections. In the first section, I will explicate implications of this study for research on disposing and its relation to consumption. In the second part, I will talk about implications of the results for moral consumption while questioning the prevalence of consumer resistance and providing an alternative view. Third, I will talk about the relation between consumer value and disposing. Finally, I will discuss the managerial implications and future study directions.

5.1 Implications for Disposing Research

An important implication of the current study is that disposing, rather than being the end of consumption or the last stage in objects' life (Jacoby et al., 1977; Hanson, 1980), actually have a more complex, constructive, and interactive relation with other consumption processes. The findings presented above highlight the ways disposing might help construct, legitimize, moralize, and/or adjust previous and subsequent consumption practices. The previous research shows that disposing process can finance future acquisitions or increase affordability of desirable consumption experiences (Green et al., 2001; Cappellini, 2009). Similarly, timing of disposing can coincide with the timing and financing of new acquisitions (DeBell and Dardis, 1979). Although my findings include evidence testifying these results (i.e. disposing facilitates acquisitions by providing monetary value or moving the excess to accommodate new purchases), I have also found other ways through which disposing can relate to other consumption practices.

One of the most important implications of the study is that disposing is not just a moral practice, but it is also a moralizing practice. That is, disposing provides a type of "transferable morality": consumers can use their moral behavior during disposal to legitimize and moralize other consumption practices. For instance, disposing of an object as a sacrifice can purify and legitimize new acquisitions or cleanse a previous consumption episode. This expends Cappellini's (2009) finding that by being thrifty in ordinary consumption practices like disposal and re-use of food, consumers can afford extravagant consumption experiences. The current

study actually shows how consumers use ordinary consumption to afford, rationalize, and legitimize other ordinary consumption episodes. Thus, disposal of an object in specific ways can be necessary for another object to start its life. Conversely, an excessive or timeless consumption episode might reverberate through and facilitate disposing of one's possessions. Similarly, discrepancies between the predicted and actual disposing episodes can lead consumers to reflect on and/or adjust their behavior at subsequent consumption episodes. Consumers, when recipients fails to respond to their donations in desirable ways, question their own consumption of the object, sometimes re-constructing it as wasteful and effectively decreasing the value they have obtained from it. Actually, predicted disposing of an object can also lead to substantial re-adjustments in its consumption. Adjustments to "fully consume" the object reflects back and facilitates the object's disposal while practices directed at enhancing its value prevent its disposal. Interestingly, disposing also allows consumers to influence others' consumption processes. Consumers, who pass their objects on to their relatives and family members, enhance their relations' consumption by increasing their choice while, at the same time, imposing certain tastes and consumption styles on them. Illustrated by these results, there is a complicated interplay between disposing and other consumption processes. That is, an object's disposal is constructive of its consumption processes.

This study also implies that predicted disposing can create inability to dispose of an object, turning disposing process into a reason rather than a consequence of object attachment. Previous research usually relates the inability of

or resistance to dispose to attachment to special possessions (Kleine and Baker, 2004), personal tendency for hoarding (Cherrier and Ponnor, 2010) or a general apprehensiveness about disposition (Phillips and Sego, 2011). The results explicated above, however, suggest that consumers hold onto ordinary objects that they cannot move through intended disposition conduits. Disposing process, whether consumers try to donate it, pass it on to others, leave it on the street, or sell it, increases the visibility of the object in social life. Gregson (2007) claims that such juxtapositions between things and people, which become inevitable during disposition process, open up objects to consumers' scrutiny. This idea reflects in participants' difficulty to dispose of objects with ambiguous or non-transferable value. Consumers occasionally avoid disposing of such objects in order not to expose them to others' value assessments, which could reflect poorly on their own assessments and consumption processes.

The results of this study imply that disposing helps construction of a reflexive and moral consumer subject. This actually attests to recent research which suggests that disposing process calls for an awakening to the normative background of everyday life (Cherrier and Murray, 2007; Gregson et al., 2007; Cherrier, 2009a,b; Phillips and Sego, 2011), revealing to consumers their own consumption practices, values, beliefs, knowledge, and position in society. The current research expands this knowledge by uncovering the parameters of such reflections. Participants in this study demonstrate a felt responsibility towards the object and towards others living in poorer conditions, want to get maximum benefit from an object while keeping-up and maintaining order, occasionally engage in conspicuous

consumption without becoming immoral, and legitimize their consumption and value estimates. These aspirations require commitment to different and usually conflicting value regimes (e.g. altruism vs. frugality), complicating the process of selecting an appropriate disposition conduit. Consumers try to resolve these conflicts by reflecting and acting not only on their own competences and consumption; the object's potential uses; and appropriateness of disposition media (Gregson et al., 2007); but also on their social network, needs, and social positions of themselves and others in a very specific present. So, this research highlights consumer reflexivity as embedded in the macro structures of society and sheds light on its socio-cultural dimensions.

In this manner, the results also reveal a darker side of disposing: how it contributes to the reproduction of social hierarchy. On one hand, awareness and reflexivity experienced during disposing help facilitating social relations between consumers (Marcoux, 2001; Hetherington, 2004) and enhances production of value or "ethics" (Arvidsson, 2001) by creating meaningful relations around disposed objects. On the other hand, in line with the literature on the dark side of gifting (Mauss, 1990; Sherry et al., 1993; Godelier, 1999; Marcoux, 2009), the disposer awaits reciprocity, which usually puts the recipient in a position of debt and inferiority. Moreover, a successful disposition episode legitimizes, honors, and/or compensates for the disposer's consumption. That is, the disposed object's new life should align with and accentuate the ideals and value perceptions of the disposer by allowing the object's proper utilization. Consumers try to achieve this by referring to their own knowledge and assumptions about the "others" and disposal paths to

control the disposing process. Such process, however, usually enacts and highlights the differences between exchange partners since controlling the next owner of their disposed objects and being able to decide who is worthy replenish consumers' power and position in the society. Thus, in their quest to lengthen their objects' lives, connect with others, and create "we," consumers also promote "me vs. others" and contribute to the re-production of a social order that accentuates and nurtures their own position in the society. These results expand the view that social order is established through a distinction between valuable and valueless (Thompson, 2003) by showing that disposing reproduces the social in determining who receives each. Moreover, the research hints that the agenda to enhance others' welfare could actually work to provide (im)mobility to certain people.

The findings encourage researchers to question their assumptions regarding various disposition conduits. The previous research describes practices that extend objects' life—like careful use, re-use, and repair—as value-enhancing disposing (Cooper, 2005; Cappellini, 2009; Gregson et al., 2009), while associating throwing away and trashing with value destruction, wasting, and un-sustainability (Phillips and Sego, 2011; Evans, 2012). The current study suggests that consumers, albeit extensively using it to conveniently get rid of objects, can also throw an object away to prevent it from "reflecting negatively on them" (Gregson et al., 2007: 196), to avoid causing offense through its disposal, or even to connect with and help imagined others like collectors. That is, seemingly destructive practices can actually create more value than trying to move an object through seemingly more thrifty or altruistic disposition conduits. Similarly, this study challenges the view

that consumers want to prevent their possessions from becoming rubbish (Gregson et al., 2007) by highlighting two practices—gradual garbaging and brutal use—that they strategically apply to transform objects into rubbish while optimizing the use-value they obtain from them. Finally, the results both attest to and challenge Gregson et al.'s (2007) finding that consumer knowledge about disposing conduits is important for successfully moving an object through them. Although my findings, at times, attest to this suggestion, the data also include cases where consumers willingly relinquish their control and power over the fate of the object without much guilt or difficulty. This implies that not everyone is willing to expand their knowledge over disposing conduits especially if they have someone to delegate this responsibility.

5.2 Implications for Moral Consumption: Consumer Resistance or Consumer Compromise

This study also responds to Wilk's (2001) call for more research on moralism of consumption by explicating disposing as a process through which consumers negotiate and moralize their consuming. By integrating consumers to broader meaning systems and highlighting the consequences and importance of their actions for others (Graeber, 2011), disposing creates a moral subject. Consumers experience morality not only by consuming in moderation or disposing in ways that prolong their possessions' life (Gregson and Crewe, 2003; Soderman and Carter, 2008) but also by disposing to prevent waste and/or contribute to production realm;

help others and enhance their consumption; address social problems; and re-connect to God and replenish their commitment to religious/spiritual values. More importantly, they do so without necessarily adopting new lifestyles or experiencing a self-transformation as previous research suggests (Kozinets, 2002; Cherrier, 2009b). As such, this research hints that contemporary consumers can actually be quite moral but, perhaps, they experience and manifest this morality through ways that have yet to raise more research attention like disposing.

According to Bauman, morality is "assuming responsibility for the other…an engagement with the fate of the other and commitment to his/her welfare" (1996: 33). Based on this view, Bauman claims that the contemporary post-modern world has been increasingly immoralized since consumers use "the other" as a venue for judgment of taste and aesthetics but ignore its existence in other consumption domains and refrain from seeing them as their social responsibility. Yet, consumers, whose stories I have explicated in this research, are extremely concerned about "the others". The results of this study show that disposing process, where consumers reflect on their own consuming as embedded in the social, invokes the soul of "the other". That is, the other, who might be missing from other consumption processes, comes back during disposing to remind consumers that they are actually connected to other people. The ghost of the other can evoke guilt, shame, and fear as well as compassion and affection in consumers who feel that they ignore pains and suffering of other people in submitting to the ethos of consumerism. Disposing, then, becomes a social practice through which consumers can repent and re-establish the balance in their consuming by calling for the others

and elevating their welfare. Ironically, though, an appropriate and successful disposing episode can also create room for seemingly immoral/unethical consuming episodes.

Contemporary consumer researchers usually consider consumers' critical stance against the negative aspects of consumer culture as a sign of resistance or manifestation of their anti-consumerist tendencies (Kozinets, 2002; Thompson, 2004; Cherrier, 2009b). Consumers can engage in resistance through a range of activities changing from avoiding to active boycotting (Fournier, 1998). Some researchers even suggest that actions that are manifested publicly and preferably together with other people such as boycotting or creating anti-brand acts are more successful acts of resistance than others (Ritson and Dobscha, 1999). Another group of research frames consumer resistance as identity work (Cherrier 2009a, 2009b), classifying such acts as a form of manifestation of the consumer's unique identity (Kozinets and Handelman, 1998). This literature depicts consumer culture as a dominant system, whose rules and mechanisms are out of the control of consumers, who try to break free from such domination by rebelling against the market systems. This approach, however, is not helpful in explaining the findings in this study: how consumers, who willingly embrace most aspects of consumer culture, can deal with and subvert its perceivably negative dimensions and consequences.

The results of this study show that consumers can be critical against some aspects of consumer culture and practices promoted in the marketplace, and act on

these negative aspects without necessarily resisting to or boycotting the market. Rather than completely accepting the market conditions or rejecting the principles of consumerism, consumers can experience episodes of "fleeting criticism"—especially during disposing when they try to assess their consumption and determine an object's fate. This actually complies with Kozinets's (2002) idea that consumers cannot evade the market altogether but can convert its logic through more temporary, personal, and local consumption acts. Creative, performative, chaotic, and inspiring and/or ritualistic events like gifting rituals, inalienable and cherished possessions, hyper-communities and festivals (Weiner, 1992; Baudrillard, 1993); turning to "alternative" forms of consumption by using second-hand goods (Gregson and Crewe, 2003); adopting downshifting and adopting country simplicity (Etzioni, 1998; Cherrier, 2009, Cherrier and Murray, 2009); or engaging in a more caring, affectionate or slower relation with objects (Manzini, 1993; Cooper, 2005) can provide means for active resistance. Campbell (2005) also frames the rising popularity of craft consumption among middle and upper-middle class consumers as venue to aestheticize and moralize the world by accentuating values and traditions over tasteless materialism and mindless accumulation. Imaginative projects, aspirations, and dreams also help consumers to temporarily extract themselves from the restraining core of consumer society (Jenkins et al., 2011).

Instead of such extraordinary consumption events/practices or fleeting episodes of consumption, the current study reveals an everyday practice—disposing—as way to "allow the everyday routine of consumer society to continue"

(Jenkins et al., 2011: 277). Rather than classifying this as a petite and unripe or a fleeting (Kozinets, 2002) form of resistance to market forces, I interpret these disposing practices as a form of compromise on a daily basis—a way to live in consumer society without escaping from its reality or deserting the values and traditions that seemingly contradict with it. In the end, this compromise can actually work to mitigate consumers' need for resistance by constructing the usually condemned practices like accumulating, continuous acquisitions, and early disposal as consumption acts that can sacralize one's consumption and improve the welfare of the disadvantaged groups in society.

Overall, reflected in participants' frequent references to religion and moral doctrines as documented above is a challenge for the researchers who claim that consumers in contemporary world are alienated from ethical principles that once organized their daily life and informed their decisions (Giddens, 1991; Bauman, 1996). It seems that religious and traditional values as well as universal codes of ethics continue to seep into consumers' everyday practices and experiences. In this manner, this study actually hints that consumers experience morality not just within consuming, let alone as a segregated or compartmentalized part of consuming. The complex and interactive relation of disposing with other consumption practices not only challenges the rather linear framing of consuming process as acquisition-usage-disposition but it also problematizes the seemingly dualistic relation between consuming and morality. The findings I have presented above essentially illustrate how consumers both construct and complicate such morality/consuming dichotomy as they engage in and negotiate various practices as a part of their everday life.

5.3 Implications for the Value Literature

This study provides new insights into the nature of value and disposition by underlining the importance of an object's movement in the creation and maintenance of value. A key implication of the study is that, whether actual or imagined, disposing—when an object's life story (i.e. traces of its acquisition and consumption, owners) and potentialities (e.g. availability and type of conduits, potential owners/uses) reflect back on consumers in a specific present—can be as important as acquisition and usage for constructing and realizing its value. An object's value emerges as a dynamic construct, shaped by consumers' commitments to different value regimes and beyond the dyadic relation it has with its owner (Fournier, 1998) through inclusion of imagined or actual value partners and their value estimates. That is, value, rather than being produced by an abstract system of needs (Baudrillard, 2000), embodies assessment of relations, norms, needs, and practices constructed in a specific context in the present. Specifically, transferability of value (not just its type or amount) prevails as an important construct for shaping consumers' social and material relations.

The results imply that consumer value is enhanced not only by disowning certain items (Boztepe, 2006) but also through the reflexive ways they disown them. In line with Arvidsson's (2011) suggestion that what creates value in a social production context is the ability to build significant, affective and meaningful relationships (i.e. ethics), disposing is used by the informants to create and nurture a caring community. By passing specific items onto appropriate receivers,

consumers are able to form links (Cova, 1997) with people from whom they distance themselves during other consumption practices. Value is also created with destruction of relationships that are no longer meaningful or affectionate for the consumers. Disposing also helps consumers in re-valuating their past consumption practices and legitimizing future ones by giving new meanings to otherwise meaningless, inappropriate, and wasteful acts of consuming. For example, distribution of objects obtained through an excessive shopping episode can stimulate value by stimulating the family-bonds. Similarly, rather being wasteful and value-destructive, an early disposal episode in certain ways can actually create moral value by turning the object into a sacrifice and manifesting the disposer's altruistic intentions. That is, objects, which are not valued-in-use and considered as waste (Ballantyne and Varey, 2006: 345), can be revaluated and obtain a new life if they are valued during disposing. So, rather than being a site of residual value left in the object (Parasuraman and Grewal, 2000), disposing can actually create and enhance value through the appropriate movement of the object. More importantly, consumers use particular manners of disposing to deflect alienating and wasteful consequences of their consumerist practices, and, hence, to maintain consuming without guilt or anxiety.

So, although early consumer researchers regard it as a wasteful or value-destructive practice (Jacoby et al., 1977; DeBell and Dardis, 1979; Hanson, 1980; Harrell and McConocha, 1992), my results show that disposing process constitutes a region of flexibility for objects to move between different value regimes, but without necessarily turning into excess (Gregson et al., 2007) or rubbish

(Thompson, 1979). The same object can move through different conduits depending on the type and perceived transferability of an object's value and consumers' competence, aspirations, normative consumption practices, and commitment to different cultural ideals. Disposing can move objects into the rather sacred domain of gifts and sacrifices as consumers pass them on to others, donate or even throw them away and send them back to the marketplace to enhance subsequent consumption. Not only actual but also predicted disposing can enhance value obtained from an object by helping consumers to adjust their consumption through various value-manipulating strategies like material conversion, gradual garbaging, or brutal use, which work to move an object towards the realms of thrift, craft, and art. Actually, existence of these practices through which consumers negotiate disposing and manipulate their consumption confirms that material objects we use are not just tools we can pick up and discard at our convenience (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981: 16). Their value, revealed and highlighted during their disposal, reflects back on us to decrease or enhance the value we derive from them.

5.4 General Implications and Future Research Directions

The current research provides a framework to understand and assess disposing practices as a part of macro structures, grand practices, and discourses and ideologies prevalent in the socio-cultural world. In doing so, it invites marketers, who want to use disposability or disposing process as a value dimension

for their products, and policy makers, who want to encourage citizens to commit to certain practices, to be knowledgeable about and consider these variables in creating assumptions about disposing. For example, considering the possible effects of these factors can be more fruitful in explaining why consumers insistently trash some objects that could actually be sent to charities, recycling or returned to the businesses than blaming infrastructural insufficiencies or lack of consumer knowledge/competence. By focusing on broader meanings and mechanisms underlying disposing conduits, future research could reveal other conduits of disposal and enhance their understanding of specific disposal practices.

This study also has important implications for researchers, policymakers, and marketers who are interested in sustainability. First, the results challenge the prevalent meanings of sustainability and practices associated with it. For most informants, sustainability overlaps with not wasting an object's usable value rather than not polluting the environment or using fewer resources. Thus, throwing away an object on the streets, which sends it to collectors or to people in need, can be much more sustainable than sending it to recycling, which is not only inconvenient but also destructive of the object's remaining value. Policy-makers who want to stimulate recycling should focus on its specific consequences for consumer value rather than emphasizing its consequences for the production process or the general environment. In this manner, promoting recycling as a process that transforms and transfers a disposed object's value into something else would be more stimulating than highlighting its implications for a green life or thrifty use of resources and raw materials. In addition, existence of different actors that subvert and enrich the

meanings and practices associated with sustainability should be considered. In this research, collectors emerge as important informal agents of revaluation and recycling. Policy-makers can collaborate with and organize these agents, who have direct contacts with consumers and more visibility in public sphere, to more effectively promote and implement sustainability projects and to stimulate recycling. In this manner, consumer researchers should direct their efforts to explore disposing processes to reveal agents that could bridge between consumers and policy makers.

This study also reveals that existence of substitute paths can hinder consumers' adoption of other paths or implementation of certain policies. Most informants in this study are resistant to direct recycling activities, claiming that there are other conduits through which they can make use of the object and enhance value. Some consider trashing an object as contributing its circulation while enhancing the welfare of the others. Other people turn to in-family links and social network to move their objects rather than sending them to charities. Policy makers or marketers who want to promote specific disposal conduits over others should consider these competing conduits and highlight the difference of the path they promote in relation to consumers' interests. So, rather than advertising charities as serving to more altruistic or ethical purposes, which is a weak argument as most consumers view enhancing their family's welfare as also moral, creating more personal experiences for consumers with charities could be more useful. That is, if consumers yearn for in-family connections and interpersonal relations and

want acknowledgement from others, direct marketing (i.e. building intimate links with donors through volunteers) could work better for the charities.

The results also reveal a new dimension of object attachment: inability to dispose of ordinary objects can be triggered during actual or predicted disposing process. Consumers, albeit willingly dispose of these objects, can refrain from doing so for fear of wasting the object's value or opening it up to undesirable value assessments. Future research could focus on explicating other dimensions of such attachment. Also, by focusing on disposing, rather than acquisition or usage of objects, new forms of attachment can be found. The study also points to the importance of consumer compromise rather than resistance in subverting marketplace meanings and consumerist practices. Future research could explore other contexts where consumers compromise with the market. Similarly, this research mostly focuses on disposing as a practice of moralizing other consumption processes. Future research could focus on the other direction: how consumers use specific consumption processes to moralize disposing. Such research could also have important implications for sustainability and disposing literature.

This research also has implications for marketers. First, results show that disposing process can have consequences for the perceived value obtained from an object. Difficulty or inability to dispose of a product can negatively reflect back on its consumption, effectively creating unwanted associations about the brand. To prevent this, marketers could stimulate the process through which their products are divested. For example, car dealers enhance the circulation of second-hand cars

and some furniture or electronics companies conduct “bring the old one, get the new one for less” campaigns. Such campaigns, however, usually create the feeling that consumers should commit to marketers’ will and accept the conditions and value they offer. Most informants, for example, feel that they are cheated in re-selling their cars to dealers but they feel that other ways of disposing would be so difficult and take more time. To prevent such anxieties and negative feelings, marketers can assist consumers in disposing of their products by designing more organic and interactive disposing opportunities. They can create consumer blogs that facilitate and organize consumer-to-consumer and consumer-to-marketer disposals. This way, they can increase their products’ perceived value by including convenient and value-enhancing disposal as a feature of their brand, and spontaneously stimulate consumers’ adoption of new models of their brands. Lastly, marketers can adopt and promote a green company image by offering better repairing services. The results imply that consumers are more irritated with breakdowns when the repair costs close to buying a new product. This irritation usually reflects negatively on brand’s image and retention. By offering repair services with more moderate pricing, companies can adopt consumers’ perspective in being green or sustainable, and promote the idea of thrift and non-wastefulness rather than effective use of resources or environmental friendliness as a feature of green businesses. I believe that decreased sales of new products will be compensated with the strong brand image and loyal consumer base companies obtain.

To conclude, this research have explored disposing as a part of socio-cultural, political, legal, and economic life—as embedded in macro-structures and discourses constituting the social. In doing so, it has not only shed light on an important and relatively understudied consumption process—disposing—but also made important contributions to the literature on moral consumption and consumer resistance, value, sustainability, and object attachment.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Demographics

-Isim, cinsiyet, yaş, yasadigi yer
-Medeni durum/çocuk
-Eğitim düzeyi/iş (serbest derse açıklasın)
-Anne-baba işi, eğitimi

General

- Kullanmadığınız eşyaları ne yapıyorsunuz?
- En son evinizden çıkan bir eşya oldu mu? Neyi, nasıl elden çıkarttınız?
  - Elden çıkartmaya nasıl ve ne zaman karar verdiniz?
  - Bu süreç boyunca neler hissettiniz?
- Eşyanızı elden çıkartırken hangi aşamalardan geçtiniz?
- Eşyanızdan ayrılırken göz önünde bulundurduğunuz faktörler ne oldu? (Eşyanın cinsi, fiyatı, kişisel önemi, verilen kişiyle aradaki ilişki, çevre sağlığını/temizliğini, başkalarına yardım, örf/adetler, sosyal çevrenin görüşleri gibi konularda probe et)
- Ne zaman eşyalarınızı elden çıkartmak üzere gözden geçirme ihtiyacı hissediyorsunuz?
- Ne zaman size ait bir eşyayı elden çıkartma ihtiyacı hissediyorsunuz?
- Evde eşyaları gözden geçirme işi nasıl yürüyor? Kişisel ve ortak eşyaların nasıl elden çıkarılacağına nasıl karar veriyorsunuz?
- Eşyalarımı elden çıkarma alışkanlıklarım ya da bunlarla ilgili düşünce ve duygularım değişti dediğiniz bir nokta oldu mu hayatınızda? Anlatır mısınız?

- Şu eşyamı asla şu şekilde elden çıkartmam dediğiniz oldu mu? Hangi eşya için hangi şekilde elden çıkartmam dediniz anlatır mısınız?
- *(Yurtdışında bulundunuz mu hiç? Bulunduysanız oradaki insanlar eşyalarını nasıl elden çıkartıyorlar hiç gözlemlediniz mi?)*

Keeping/Passing-on

- Sizin için kişisel değeri olan bir eşyanız var mı? Nedir, nasıl böyle değerli oldu?
  - Bu eşyayı birine vermeyi ya da bağışlamayı düşünüyor musunuz? Kime, nasıl bir ortamda vermeyi düşünüyorsunuz? Bu eşyamı asla ona vermem dediğiniz biri var mı?
  - Satmayı düşünüyor musunuz, ne zaman satmayı düşünüyorsunuz? Kime veya nereye satmayı düşünüyorsunuz?
  - Saklamayı düşünüyorsanız nerede ve ne kadar süre ile saklamayı düşünüyorsunuz?
- Aile yadigarı olarak gördüğünüz bir eşyanız var mı?
  - Birine vermeyi ya da bağışlamayı düşünüyor musunuz? Kime, nasıl bir ortamda vermeyi düşünüyorsunuz? Bu eşyamı asla ona vermem dediğiniz biri var mı?
  - Satmayı düşünüyor musunuz, ne zaman satmayı düşünüyorsunuz? Kime veya nereye satmayı düşünüyorsunuz?
  - Saklamayı düşünüyorsanız nerede ve ne kadar süre ile saklamayı düşünüyorsunuz?
- Bunlar dışında atmayıp sakladığınız eşyalar var mı? Anlatır mısınız?
- Kullanmadığnız eşyalarınızı nerelerde saklarsınız?
- Sizce eşyalarını atmayıp saklayanlar nasıl insanlardır?

Giving/Charity

- Hiç, bir eşyanızı birine verdiniz mi?
  - Hangi eşyanızı, kime, nasıl verdiniz? Verirken yaptığınız özel bir şeyler oldu mu (hikaye anlatmak gibi)?
  - Eşyanızı vereceğiniz kişiyi nasıl belirlediniz? Eşyanızı bu kişiye vermek size neler hissettirdi?
  - Yine bir eşyanızı başkasına vermeyi düşünüyor musunuz?
- Hiç, bir başkasından satın almak dışında eşya aldınız mı?
  - Ne aldınız ve kimden aldınız?
  - Bu kişiden eşya almak size neler hissettirdi?
  - Başkasından eşya almayı yine düşünüyor musunuz?
- Asla başkasından almam ya da başkasına vermem dediğiniz bir eşyanız var mı? Nedir? Açıklar mısınız?
- Asla bir eşyasını almam/vermem dediğiniz birileri var mı? Kimler? Neden?
- Eşyalarınızı kime vereceğinize nasıl karar veriyorsunuz? Alıcı adaylarının belli bir sıralaması var mı kafanızda? Hangi eşya için önce kimi düşünürsünüz mesela?

- Hiç, bir eşyanızı bağışladınız mı? Hangi eşyanızı nereye bağışladınız?
  - Eşyanızı bağışlamaya nasıl karar verdiniz? Neler hissettiniz?
  - Yine eşya bağışlamayı düşünüyor musunuz?
- Eşyalarınızı bağışlayabileceğiniz kuruluşları biliyor musunuz? Nerelerden duydunuz bu yerleri?
- Eşyalarını bağışlayan insanlar nasıl insanlardır?

Waste/Garbage/Environmentalism

- Hiç bir eşyanızı attınız mı? Neden atmaya karar verdiniz ve nereye attınız?
  - Eşyanızı atmadan önce başka şekilde elden çıkartmayı ya da saklamayı düşündünüz mü? Eğer sakladıysanız ne kadar süre ve nerede sakladınız?
  - Eşyanızı atmak size neler hissettirdi?
- Eşyanızı atarken dikkat ettiğiniz şeyler oldu mu? (Çevre kirliliği, tutumluluk gibi)
- Sizce eşyalarını hep atan insanlar nasıl insanlardır?
- Sizce hiç bir şeyini atmayan insanlar nasıl insanlardır?
- Hiç geri dönüşüme katıldınız mı? Ne gibi eşyaları geri dönüşüme gönderdiniz şimdiye kadar? Geri dönüşüm aktivitelerine katılmak size neler hissettiriyor?
- Çöp nedir sizce? Hiç çöpe dönüştü dediğiniz bir eşyanız oldu mu? Bu eşyanızı ne yaptınız?

Thrifting/Transforming

- Hiç kullanmadığınız bir eşyayı başka bir şekilde değerlendirdiğiniz oldu mu?
  - Eşya neydi ve nasıl değerlendirdiniz? Neler hissettiniz?
  - Bu eşyayı nasıl değerlendirebileceğinizi nereden öğrendiniz? (Aile, arkadaş, Tv programları, belediye kursları gibi..)
- Asla atmam bir şekilde kullanırım dediğiniz eşyanız oldu mu hiç? Neydi, ne yaptınız eşya ile?
- Evinizde yeniden kullanabileceğiniz ve kullanamayacağınız eşyaları nasıl ayırt ediyorsunuz?
- Hiç bir eşyanız için ‘değerlendiremedim ya da ziyan oldu’ dediğiniz bir durum oldu mu? Ne zaman, ne için böyle hissettiniz?
- Sizce ne çeşit eşyalar başka şekillerde değerlendirilerek yeniden kullanılabilir?
- Tutumluluk nedir sizce? Nasıl tutumlu olunur?

Selling/Second Hand

- Hiç bir eşyanızı sattınız mı? Satmaya nasıl karar verdiniz?
  - Sattığınız eşya neydi, ne zaman ve nasıl sattınız? Eşyanızı satmadan önce herhangi birşey yaptınız mı? (Temizlemek, bazı parçalarını saklamak vs...)

- Eşyanızın fiyatını nasıl belirlediniz? Hangi faktörleri göz önünde bulundurdunuz? (Piyasa araştırması, eşyanın manevi değeri gibi)

- Eşyanızı satmak size neler hissettirdi?

- Eşyalarınızı kime/nereye satacağınıza nasıl karar veriyorsunuz? Bu yerlerin/kişilerin belli bir sıralaması var mı sizin için? Şu eşya şurada satılır gibi?
- Sizce eşyalarını satanlar nasıl kişilerdir?
- İkinci el deyince aklınıza ne geliyor? Neylerin ikinci eli olur/olmaz sizce? (Gıda, altın, araba vs)
- Antika deyince neler aklına geliyor? Antikanın ikinci elden farkı ne?
- Vintage terimini duydunuz mu hiç? Ne geliyor aklınıza vintage deyince? Antika ve ikinci elden farkı var mı vintage'ın?
- Hiç ikinci el eşya satın aldınız mı?

- Kimden/Nereden aldınız? (Bit pazarı, dükkan, internet, arkadaş ya da akraba...)

- Nasıl oradan almaya karar verdiniz? Nelere dikkat ettiniz?(Fiyat, satan kişi gibi)

- Alırken ve sonrasında nasıl hissettiniz?

- Yine ikinci el eşya almayı düşünüyor musunuz?

- Hiç ikinci el eşya almam diyen birini tanıyor musunuz? Nereden tanıyorsunuz? Nasıl biri anlatır mısınız?
- Eskise de/kullanılmasa da hiç satmam dediğiniz eşyalar var mı? Neler? Satmak yerine ne yapacaksınız bu eşyaları?
- Asla ikinci elini almam dediğiniz bir şey var mı? Açıklar mısınız?
- Hep ikinci elini alırım dediğiniz ürün var mı? Açıklar mısınız?
- İkinci eli ve birinci eli fark etmez dediğiniz ürün var mı? Açıklar mısınız?
- Sizce bir eşyayı 2.el dükkandan almakla bir kişiden almak arasında fark var mı?
- Hiç 2.el pazarlara gittiniz mi? Ne tür bir pazardı/dükkandı?

- Ne zaman ve ne için gitmiştiniz? Alışveriş yaptınız mı?

- İkinci el pazarındaki ortamını nasıl buldunuz?

- Alışveriş yapan insanlar, satıcılar ve alışveriş deneyimi nasıldı? Diğer mağazalardaki alışveriş deneyiminden farklı birşeyler hissettiniz mi?

- İkinci el dükkanlarda eşya almanın/satmanın hangi yönleri size çekici/itici geldi?

- Bit pazarı deyince aklınıza ne geliyor? Bit pazarıyla diğer ikinci el eşya satan yerler arasında fark var mı sizce?
- Hiç bit pazarından alışveriş yaptınız mı? Ne zaman ne aldınız/sattınız? Ortam nasıldı?
- *(Yurtdışında bulundunuz mu hiç?Bulunduysanız orada ikinci el pazarlara giitiniz mi? Anlatır mısınız? Türkiye ile farkı var mıydı bu pazarların ya da ikinci el eşyaların, açıklar mısınız?)*

Gifting

- En son kime hangi hediyeyi aldığınızı hatırlıyor musunuz? Hediyenizi neye göre seçtiniz? Nereden aldınız hediyeyi?
- Hiç 2. el pazarlardan birine hediye aldınız mı? Kime, ne aldınız? 2.el pazarından hediye almaya nasıl karar verdiniz? Hediyeyi verdiğiniz kişi neler hissetti?
- En son kimden hediye aldınız? Ne aldınız? Neler hissettiniz?
- Hiç birinden 2.el hediye aldınız mı? Kim, ne aldı? Size ikinci el pazarından hediye alınması size neler hissettirdi? Hediye alan kişi hakkında neler düşündünüz?
- Sizce 1.el dükkanlardan alınan hediye ile 2.el dükkanlardan alınan hediye arasında fark var mı? Açıklar mısınız?
- Hiç size gelen bir hediyeyi elden çıkarttınız mı? Niçin ve nasıl elden çıkarttınız?
- Sizce hediyelerin nasıl elden çıkartılması uygun olmaz?
- Sizce bir gelen bir hediye ne zaman elden çıkartılabilir?

Cleaning Ladies & Domestic Service

- Evinizde işlere yardim eden bir çalışanınız var mı? Biraz bahseder misiniz çalışanınızdan? Nasıl işe aldiniz bu kişiyi? (Nasıl tanışılmış, kim bulmuş, vs)
- Ne gibi işlerde yardimci oluyor bu kişi? İlişkiniz nasıl bu kişiyle?
- Çalışmasının karşılığını nasıl alıyor yardımcınız? Para dışında başka şeyler veriyor musunuz (mesela eski eşya, herhangi bir konuda maddi manevi yardım gibi)?
    - Eğer eşya veriyorsanız ne gibi eşyaları veriyorsunuz? Hangi eşyayı yardımcınıza vereceğinize nasıl karar veriyorsunuz?
    - Hiç yardımcıma vermem dediğiniz bir eşyanız var mı? Bu eşyanız ne ve ne yapmayı düşünüyorsunuz bu eşyayı?