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“CRISIS? WHICH CRISIS?”
SOCIETY IN A STATE OF EMERGENCY: FACES OF A CRISIS IN
ISTANBUL

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SUPERVISOR: PROF. DR. ASKER KARTARI

MASTER’S THESIS

ISTANBUL, MARCH, 2018

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ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This work entitled "CRISIS? WHICH CRISIS?" SOCIETY IN A STATE OF EMERGENCY: FACES OF A CRISIS IN ISTANBUL and prepared by JULIA HELMERT has been judged to be successful at the defense exam held on 2 May 2018 and accepted by our jury as a GRADUATE THESIS.

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02.05.2018

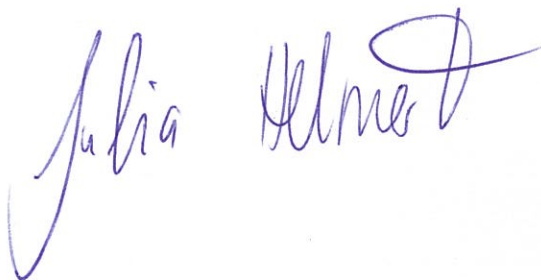
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julia Helmert". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large loop at the end of the last name.

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ABSTRACT

HELMERT, JULIA. "*CRISIS? WHICH CRISIS?*" *SOCIETY IN A STATE OF EMERGENCY: FACES OF A CRISIS IN ISTANBUL*, MASTER'S THESIS, Istanbul, 2018.

This thesis is the analyses of an explorative field study on the socio-cultural perception of crises in Istanbul, realized from 2016 to 2017. The aim of this study is to examine how people with different (cultural) backgrounds that live in the same city deal with crises and upheavals and which coping mechanisms they develop. The main method to achieve this goal are qualitative, episodic interviews. Due to the difficulty of framing and defining crises, this study is using a working definition of the term. In this sense, a crisis is an unexpected event where the lack of security and hopelessness multiply to a state of fear and paralysis. The main findings of this research are that the perception of a crisis depends on the experience and the personal state of being of a person. Furthermore, it is partly related to the social and cultural background of this person. A Social Crisis can become a Personal Crisis, for example when a person does not feel in charge of his or her own life. This can, for instance, be the case when someone has to flee from a war-prone country and gets labeled as a „refugee“. The main coping mechanisms are feeling in power of one's own life and knowing of the privilege to leave to a safe place at anytime. Furthermore, the absence of feeling free and secure can lead to resignation on one hand and to superseding, acting like nothing happened, on the other hand. Another coping mechanism on a communitarian level are (social) art projects.

Keywords: Crisis, Social Crisis, Personal Crisis, Resignation, Superseding, Privilege, Security, Freedom.

ÖZET

HELMERT, JULIA. „KRİZ ? HANGİ KRİZ ?“ ACİL DURUMDA TOPLUM: İSTANBUL'DAN KRİZ GÖRÜNÜMLERİ, YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ, İstanbul, 2018.

Bu tez, İstanbul'da 2016 ile 2017 yılları arasında yaşanan krizlerin sosyo-kültürel algılanış biçimlerine dair bir saha araştırmasının analizidir. Çalışmanın amacı, aynı şehirde yaşayan ancak farklı (kültürel) arkaplanlardan gelen insanların krizler ve toplumsal çalkantıları nasıl karşıladıkları ve bunlarla başetmek için ne tür mekanizmalar geliştirdiklerini sorgulamaktır. Bu amaca varmak için kullanılan başlıca yöntem, dönemsel niteliksel görüşmelerdir. Krizleri tanımlama ve sınırlamanın güçlüğü nedeni ile bu çalışmada kavramın geçici bir tanımı kullanılacaktır. Bu çerçevede “kriz” kavramı, güvensizlik ve umutsuzluk yaratan beklenmedik bir olayın, giderek korku ve paralize olma hâline evrildiği bir durumu betimler. Bu araştırmanın temel bulgusu, kriz algısının kişinin geçmiş deneyimleri ve içinde bulunduğu duruma bağımlı olduğudur. Bunun ötesinde, kısmen kişinin sosyal ve kültürel arkaplanına da bağlı olduğudur. Kişi kendisini, kendi hayatından sorumlu hissetmiyor ise, sosyal bir kriz, kişisel bir krize de dönüşebilir: Örneğin kişi, savaş hâlindeki bir ülkeden kaçıp, "sığınmacı" olmuş ise. Krizle başetmenin en temel mekanizması, kişinin kendisini hayatını eline alacak kadar güçlü hissetmesi, ve kendini işler sarpa sardığında güvenli bir yere atacak kadar ayrıcalıklı olduğuna güvenmesidir. Bunun ötesinde, kendini güvende ve özgür hissetmemek, bir yandan teslimiyetçiliğe, öte yandan durumu yoksaymaya yolaçabilir. Bir diğer toplu başetme mekanizması ise (toplumsal) sanat projeleridir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Kriz, Sosyal Kriz, Kişisel Kriz, Boyun Eğme, Ayağını Kaydırmak, İmtiyaz, Güvenlik, Özgürlük.

INTRODUCTION

The present time is shaped by a profound uncertainty. Values, norms and traditional knowledge systems have been shaken within the last years. Geopolitical crises increase the sensation of uncontrollable change. The feeling of uncertainty and uncontrollability are indicators of a crisis that effect people in many different ways. In the following thesis, I will refer this sensation to a socio-cultural research in Istanbul during the time of the attempted military coup and terrorist attacks in 2015 and 2017.

Living in Istanbul for more than a year, I felt how people are affected by the occurring political changes, terror attacks and the attempted military coup, while still remembering the energy of the occupied Gezi Park. I felt how the atmosphere in the city changed, mostly to deep melancholy, where I expected cohesion and zest. I talked to many people like German expats that have lived in Istanbul for a long time, but also to people that had to flee their war-prone home countries, mostly Syria, and look for a better life in Turkey. I also talked to Turkish people about the changes, about their feelings, about crisis and what to do about it. I realised different ways of approaching the events and even though the people I am talking to are living in the same city, their access to crisis is very different. This is where I decided to dive deeper into the topic of crises, from a socio-cultural point of view and its meaning to people with different backgrounds.

The goal of the following thesis is to answer the question:

In which ways do people (in Istanbul) deal with crisis and insecurities?¹

In the *first chapter* “*Research Interest and Disambiguation*”, I will give a brief explanation of how my research interest for the topic of “crises” in a socio-cultural way developed. Moreover, I will approach the concepts of “crisis” and the meaning of these concepts for the following thesis by describing the influence and the usage of the word for social and cultural sciences.

The *second chapter* “*The Research*” is about the access to the field for my explorative research in Istanbul and the research methods that are individually presented and justified

¹The research question changed towards less complexity during the process of research. The earlier question was: “*How can the power of change in times of a crisis be used to overcome insecurity and empower social cohesion?*”

as a tool for the question of how people in Istanbul deal with crises. Furthermore, the sample that I chose out of different people living in Istanbul for different motives, and the interview guideline, are presented in this chapter. The guideline was developed as a support for my episodic interviews. It was adjusted to the circumstances during the interviews and concerning the ongoing events and furthermore, by virtue of the security situation in Istanbul. Moreover, I reflect my own position as a researcher in the field, regarding my objectiveness towards my interviewees and the situation in Istanbul, as I am enrolled into the same reality of life as my interviewees.

In the *third chapter "Data Evaluation"* I put my findings from my evaluation with codings and text analyses from my interviews and field reports into words. I categorize the material concerning the elements of crises, like *Security, Freedom, Resignation, Superseding* and *Taking Action* that I filter out of my categorized research material. I split the chapter into subchapters, which are referring to the codes that were generated during the evaluation process.

The *fourth chapter "Analyses"* puts the findings of the evaluation into a greater context together with the concepts of social and individual crisis and analyses regarding awareness and privilege and differences between the groups of my sample. In this chapter, I also present the coping mechanisms of crisis on a social and individual level that I generated from my interview material.

The *fifth chapter "Conclusion and Outlook"* gives a resume about the principal findings of this thesis. I will answer the research question "*In which ways do people (in Istanbul) deal with crisis and insecurities?*" based on my analyses.

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH INTEREST AND DISAMBIGUATION

When I started investigating the topic of “crises”, I tried to understand the term, but got disillusioned while looking for a definition. It seems like it is used in several contexts but without a consistent formula. Economic crisis, Democratic Crisis, Refugee Crisis, Climatic Crisis, Cultural Crisis: The term “crisis” is omnipresent in the international media and is being used by journalists and scientists around the world. In times of globalization, crises seem to sneak into the societies, multiplying with other crises and create a multiple crisis (Brand, 2009). However, what does the word “crisis” mean and does it mean the same for everyone? And: Is there a starting point to solve a crisis?

I conclude that coping with current crises and upheavals becomes more difficult regarding their simultaneous occurrence and interdependency. These crises are many times accompanied by national and international social conflicts and must be solved under conditions of growing socio-cultural plurality and socio-economic inequality due to diverting social interests.

Moreover, many critical developments occur ambivalent. On one hand they are causing social friction, on the other hand they are initiating change and break deadlocked structures which caused instability and conflicts in the past. In this sense, crises and upheavals are opening new paths and possibilities of development (Brand 2009). According to that, I want to find out how the individual affection and interpretation of a crisis can be used to overcome a situation of uncertainty and insecurity, even if there is no general recipe to solve a crisis.

One thing seems to be sure: A crisis indicates a change. This energy could be used to open new opportunities, like examples of Berlin with its “wind of change” in the 1990^s (Schwedler, 2002) or, more recently, Athens show.²

² In the 1990s, the “wind of change” that came along with a spirit of optimism and progress on one hand and insecurities on the other hand, led to a new approach to the urban planning culture in Berlin which

I am asking myself if these cities that already passed through times of crisis can serve as an example for Istanbul, which is going through times of a crisis while I am living there from September 2015 to October 2016. I am asking myself if the people in Istanbul manage to use the changes that a crisis is offering in a way that supports the society and brings people back together or if the crisis leads to even more collapse.

Istanbul, the 14 million mega-metropolis, attracts millions of people from all over Turkey and all over the world by its unique and charming mixture of tradition and modernity, where the smell of history is as easy to encounter as the taste of food from all over the world and people that come to the city with the most different motives. Exactly in this city, approx. 200 people were killed and several more wounded in the night of the 15th July of 2016³ when an attempted military coup shocked all of Turkey. The country had already been marked by terrorist attacks when the attempted coup tore the society even more apart. What looked like a united and enthusiastic red-flagged festival of people celebrating their democracy on television, generated a deep cleavage between political camps and society (Vu, 2016, p.1).

The society of Istanbul, already in a state of insecurity, seems to hang even more in the balance. A mood of uncertainty and insecurity can be felt while crossing streets and places that are usually crowded and full of life.

The cultural life seems to be paused, as for example many artists refuse to give concerts or exhibitions in a country that is now in a constant state of emergency. The suffering presents itself not only in a socio-cultural, but also in a socio-economical way. Many tourists and expats refuse to come, the tourism-based economy is suffering (Bearne, 2017, p.1).

While observing the life around me and the people in the “state of emergency”, my feelings are ambivalent. Sometimes I feel like people are scared of what will happen next, refuse to go out and feel unsecure. In other occasions I feel like nothing has happened at all and everything seems to be the same as always. I am wondering on what the reactions

came along with the realisation that, in times of a change. Hence, new ways of inclusion of the public were established and spaces for public discussion were opened (Schwedler: 2002).

³ Different media sources talk about a range from 100 – 300 dead people in Istanbul and Ankara.

depend. Is it a culturally modified reaction that is shared by the people living in Istanbul or are the reactions individual and dependent on the subjective experiences of the people?

Altogether, Turkey is facing a period of changes, which has intensified since the 2015 terrorist attacks, the growing number of arriving refugees and finally with the attempted military coup and the state of emergency since 2016.

During my time in Istanbul, I ask myself how the people in Istanbul face the daily insecurities and deal with them, not on a political, but on an individual and social level. In which way do the changes influence their daily life, their daily routine, their struggles and moments of happiness and how do they cope with the “new” situation? Do they see a potential in the changes and actually act or do they just try to sit the crisis out and follow their routine as if nothing happened?

I decided to investigate into these questions, using the tools of qualitative research, in particular episodic interviews and participant observation.

Before getting deeper into the research, I will give a brief introduction into the topic of “crisis” out of a socio-cultural view, to give background information and a better understanding of the investigation topic.

1.1 „CRISIS“– WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In the following chapter I give an idea about the concept of “crisis” and the way it is used in this article.

“Crisis”, a term that seems to combine hopelessness with the oncoming downfall, has become a popular concept: The crisis is omnipresent, in daily media as well as in cultural science. Political and military disputes that are conjured up as a society doom by the media, like the deficient education system or the climatic changes, are only a part of the spectrum which the word “crisis” has been actively assigning meaning to.

But the more the word “crisis” is being used linguistically, the more difficult it seems to define what the real essence of the meaning of the word “crisis” is.

A general definition of the word “crisis” is given in the Oxford dictionary, where it is explained as:

A time when a difficult or important decision must be made” and “The turning point of a disease when an important change takes place, indicating either recovery or death. (Oxforddictionaries.com, 2016)

Habermas used to call a crisis an “evolutionary dead end”⁴ (Habermas, 2006), which initiates something new and is even used as a tool by people in power to establish new structures and open new ways (Habermas, 2006, p.112).

While the concept of “crisis” did not get a lot of attention in the anthropological research of the 20th century, the “Manchester School” around David Bidney and Max Gluckmann (1940s) tried to systematize the term focussing on the creative potential of appropriation to nature and environment as well as the integrative meaning of culture when it comes to (re)new social and aesthetic regulations (Beck/ Knecht, 2012, p.60).

Bidney distinguishes between *natural crisis*, interruptions of the cultural integration, which have their origin in events that cannot be controlled by human, and *cultural crisis*, which:

(...) properly speaking, is the direct result of some disfunction inherent in the very form and dynamics of a given form of culture. (Bidney, 1946, p.537).

Cultural Crises, in this sense, can tear people apart and split a society rather than bring people together, like *natural crises* tend to do (Bidney, 1946, p.537). Bidney also distinguishes between *Practical* and *Theoretical Crisis*. While Practical Crisis refers to a change in the conditions and an incompatibility of new conditions with old institutions and systems, the *Theoretical Crisis* refers to non-matching ideals or notions due to new conditions (Bidney, 1946, p.538).

Bidney represents the idea of a distinction between “native” and “modern” societies and sees a crisis as a characteristic of “modern societies” where “Cultural Crises” are more likely than “natural crisis” and the “Creative self-destruction” a normal consequence of the “technological progress” of a “modern society” (Beck/Knecht, 2012, p.61).

This view of opposing “modern” and “traditional” societies is a typical thought of the 1940s where Bidneys article was published and based on a “fundamental othering” (Beck/

⁴ Original German: “evolutionäre Sackgasse” (Habermas 2009).

Knecht, 2012, p.61). Nowadays these concepts that are based on the thoughts that some “traditional systems” like family and religion seem to be resistant against change, have to be reflected in a critical way. Bidney’s hypothesis that changes in modern societies are often initiated through crises, and definitely lead to “development” (Beck/Knecht, 2012, p.62) cannot be taken as fact nowadays, as even the concept of “development” is questionable and highly connected to a western point of view.

“Crisis” as a topic for research usually appeared as a bi-product when researches and researchers saw themselves confronted with critical situations where they “used” the crisis as an instrument for reflection of socio-cultural behaviour and as a tool to make the condensing of cultural dynamics visible (Beck/ Knecht, 2012, p.64). In this sense, crises have been seen as a counterpart to the everyday world where creative potential and the power to act of individuals and groups gain a new importance.

It is important to remark that this early approach of the *Manchester School* to the topic of crisis (in the 1940s-1960s) is a structural functionalism one. To limit a crisis by trying to put it into a scheme seems to be tempting for using it as a tool for interpretation, but to search something like a logical sequence of events and a purposive character in crises would be misleading (Meyer et al. 2013). According to this, Schenk (2013) states that:

Crisis-prone situations are seen as something chaotic by the public, but linguistically always communicated according to the same pattern. ⁵

He continues that:

Behind this is the wish to structure the complex overwhelming abundance of events and give them an order.⁶ (Schenk, 2013, in: Meyer et al. 2013).

To sum it up, every attempt to define the word “crisis” seems to limit the size of the concept, as it is impossible to pinpoint the starting point and the end of a crisis, as well as its dimensions and individual notions. A crisis for one person does not have to be a crisis for another one. A motivating and inescapable catalyst for change for one group can be a

⁵ Original German: „Krisenhafte Situationen werden von der Öffentlichkeit zwar als chaotisch wahrgenommen, sprachlich aber nach immer gleichen Mustern kommuniziert.“ (Schenk 2013, in Meyer et al. 2013).

⁶ Original German: „Dahinter steht der Wunsch, die komplexe und oft überfordernde Fülle an Ereignissen ordnend zu fassen.“ (Schenk 2013, in Meyer et al. 2013).

stultifying for the other. In this sense, the concept of crisis that is being used in this thesis is an “open” one which leaves space for different situations and will be declared in the following research by the interviewees themselves, who explained what “crisis” means to them and how they use the word within the interviews.

To better understand the current situation in Turkey, it is important to take a closer look at the so-called “refugee crisis” that is affecting Turkey and hence the life in Istanbul. Furthermore, it is affecting Turkey’s relation to Germany. In the following, I will give a brief excursus to the refugee crisis and its effects on Turkey.

1.2 EXCURSUS

One of the “crises” that appear in daily media at least since the “Summer of Migration”⁷ in 2015 (Kasperek/Speer, 2015, p.1) is the so-called “refugee crisis”. This term mainly deals with people that see themselves forced to flee from their countries because of war, hunger and fear of their lives. Many of these people try to reach safe places, especially Europe, often under life-threatening conditions. Many of them reach Europe, their migration turns out to be successful and they can start their new lives abroad. But many of them don’t make it and even when they reach the country in which they are hoping to find a better life, it is not a hundred percent sure that they will find what they are looking for (UNHRC, 2016). Turkey is currently hosting the largest community of displaced Syrians with a number of approx. 3 million registered Syrian Refugees in July 2017 (UNHCR, 2017). This is not only challenging for the people arriving in Turkey, but also for those living in Turkey.

During my time in Istanbul I talked to many Syrians who had to flee their country and see Istanbul either as a transit-station where they are waiting for a chance to move further, mainly to Europe, or are in the process of settling down in Istanbul in order to build a new life there. Their challenges, as well as their views on what’s happening in Turkey, seem to differ in many points from what I hear from Expats and Turkish people. That’s why I decide to give a special emphasis on their challenges with the current “crisis” and changes

⁷Original German: „Sommer der Migration“ (Kasperek/Speer 2015)

that are happening in Istanbul and the world, but affecting them in a special way. Out of this reason, I interviewed two displaced Syrian people in Istanbul for my research.



CHAPTER 2

THE RESEARCH

I choose an exploratory research design. Exploratory research means that the aim of the study is not the verification of hypotheses, but to find causes and cohesion (Breidenstein et al., 2015). I choose this approach to my research because I want to keep myself as unbiased as possible to remain open during the research process. Furthermore, the objective of this research is not the establishment of general and new theories, but the understanding of individual causes and their importance for the questions of the society in order to improve the situation of all people during times of insecurity. This is the reason for a qualitative and open research design.

As I already found out, “crisis” is not an easily definable term. The idea of limiting my research design by framing it (for example with a standardised interview guideline) seems to be controversial, which is why I decide to be open for changes during the research process. This also means that my research focus might change during the research process.

2.1 ACCESS TO THE FIELD

While living in Istanbul from September 2015 until October 2016, I was directly confronted with the changes that happened in the city during that time. From the beginning, I was fascinated by the speed the city itself and the people in it seem to move. I met many different people and used to talk to them about their lives in Istanbul, their motives to come to the city, what they like about living in Istanbul and also about their struggles. In March 2016 I became a member of the “Mosaic Oriental Choir”⁸, which fuses songs in Turkish, Arabic, Farsi, Armenian, Greek and other languages under the conduction of a Syrian musician. In this frame, I had my first talks about the topic of “crisis and changes”. I got to know how people that have moved to Istanbul from abroad, e.g. from Turkey, Syria, Russia and Germany, deal with these upheavals and also how

⁸ See: <https://de-de.facebook.com/Istanbul.Mosaic.Oriental.Choir/>

projects like the choir are helping to improve the situation. From January until July 2016, Istanbul experienced five terror attacks and one attended military coup. I did not only experience this myself, I also experienced how other people reacted to it. I wondered how a lot of people just keep calm, while others act like nothing has happened and even others feel the urgent need to leave Turkey as they find that it is not liveable anymore. I wonder how everything seems to be “the same” and how some people try to take action while others resign. The access to the field develops naturally and it is a consequence of the events happening around me. Through the observation of daily life, I develop the idea of researching the topic of “crisis”, the individual coping mechanisms and projects that develop out of the crisis.

I met my interviewees mostly through my activities in Istanbul and knew them before asking them for an interview. I was not seen just as a researcher in the eyes of my interviewees and the disturbing factor of social desirability⁹ was reduced by a basis of trust. On the other hand it is harder for me as a researcher to remain as objective as possible and not to build an emotional connection to the interviewees, which could influence the research results.

I meet more people through the so-called “snowball-sampling” which is defined as:

A technique for finding research subjects. One subject gives the researcher the name of another subject, who in turn provides the name of a third, and so on. (Vogt, 1999, p.72).

As easy and naturally the access to the research develops, the more complicated it gets when it comes to build a sample. In the following I describe how the sample was build and why I chose to interview certain people.

⁹ „Social desirability“ means that it comes to distortions of the research situation, because the research subjects adjust their behaviour and their statements to what they consider as being “normal” or general consent (Bortz/Döring 1995: 212-213).

2.2 SAMPLE

As the research question of this thesis is:

In which ways do people (in Istanbul) deal with crisis and insecurities?

the aim of this study is to learn about different perspectives on the terms of “crisis” and “insecurity” and to find ways to cope with these conditions. In the following I will explain how the sample is built and why the specific variables for the interviewees are chosen.

In order to answer the research question in the most satisfying way, the sample is formed by different groups with different motives to live in Istanbul. This happens because Istanbul is not only home to Turkish people but also to people with different cultural and national backgrounds. It is considered as useful to include these people in the sample as their noting of “crisis” and “insecurities” might differ from those who were born in Istanbul.

Istanbul is, as one of the biggest cities in the world, often described as the meeting point of tradition and modernity, the city of contrasts, where the unique history meets the modern art scene and many artists and musicians find their inspiration (Moser, Weithmann, 2010).

The motives to come to live in Istanbul are as various as the nationalities and cultural backgrounds of these people. There are students with a university corporation to study in Istanbul that decide to stay. Others come for business reasons through their company. Others simply like the city. There are also people that are forced to leave their home country, as it is currently the case for many Syrian people.

Due to these facts, the first variable for this sample is *cultural and national background*. This variable is split into three subvariables that will be explained in the following.

The first subvariable within the variable *Cultural and National Background* are *People from Istanbul*. As people from Istanbul are considered those who have lived in Istanbul for a long time (at least ten years) or were born in Istanbul. Within this group of *People from Istanbul*, it is distinguished between those who consider themselves as “Turks” and those who consider themselves as “Kurds”. This distinction takes place as many Kurdish people do not consider themselves as Turks, but as Kurds living in Turkey.

The second group within the variable *Cultural and National Background* are *Expats*. The group of *Expats* is divided into people that came to Istanbul out of *personal reasons*, like work, marriage, studying or because they like the city and decided to stay. Additionally, since 2011, Istanbul has experienced several waves of influx from immigrants that flee their home country and have come to Turkey because of *safety reasons*. These refugees¹⁰, mainly Syrians, often consider their time in Turkey as a step to Europe and are living in a waiting position since they want to move on (Şimşek, 2016).

I give an introduction of all my interviewees in the attachment (see Attachment “B. The interviewees”).

For being able to compare the answers between the groups stated above, there are two more variables to limit the sample. This two variables are obligatory for all interviewees. In the following it is declared why.

The second variable is *Age*. The interviewees in this sample should be young adults between 21 and 35 years. This generation has been chosen because a crisis always means to live under life-changing conditions and is also highly connected with uncertainties and insecurities. Young people, who probably just graduated from university or entered the labour market, are in a life-planning phase which is per se more uncertain and insecure than other phases in life which some authors even call the “Quarterlife Crisis” (Adam, 2003, p.89). If a crisis (the term as used in this article) happens in the first years of responsibility and independence for the own life, it can be an even stronger break for the people living it. Moreover, the chances that grow out of these crisis can be bigger as young people probably don’t fear changes as much as they not likely have an own family to care for (Özdemir et al., 2014). Due to this, it is believed that a crisis affects people in this generation in a different way than people in other life phases that are probably more settled.

The third variable to limit the sample is *Education*. A crisis can mean an interruption in a person’s life and in a person’s CV., e.g. by being forced to move to another country for safety reasons, changes in the education system, etc. Hence, a crisis can delay a

¹⁰ The acknowledgement as “refugee” in Turkey is different as in other parts of the world, as Europe for example. The Turkish government uses to call them “guests”. For these guests a “Temporary protection” is guaranteed which means that they can legally stay in Turkey and cannot be forced to return to their home country as long as it is not considered as “safe”. The status as “guests” does also not allow them to work legally in Turkey without challenging great barriers (Şimşek 2016).

professional career and make it harder to access the labour market, for example because of Visa-issues and language barriers (OECD, 2015, p.8).

As it would expand the framework of this thesis to hire professional translators for the interviews, another limitation of the sample is “language”. As the interviews will be held by me as a researcher, the interviewees should be able to talk English or German on a professional level to avoid misunderstandings due to language problems.

Knowing about who was interviewed, it is now important to know how the interviews were held. In the next step, I will specify which methods I used to interview the people of my sample and which further tools I used to answer my research question.

2.2 RESEARCH METHODS

My research is orientated at the characteristics of a *Sociocultural Perspective* with different *Anthropological Analytic Tools*. According to Sanderson (2010), a *Sociocultural Perspective* is:

A perspective describing people’s behaviour and mental processes as shaped in part by their social and/or cultural context, including race, gender and nationality (Sanderson, 2010).

Furthermore the Sociocultural Perspective allows to connect the circumstances, states of minds, and awareness of individuals and their behaviour and coping-ability due to these factors (Sanderson, 2010, p.110).

The qualitative interview and the analyses of the data is one of the main methods for a *Sociocultural Research*. In the following I will explain what kind of interviews I conduct and which other methods I use to complete and supplement my research.

2.2.1 The Episodic Interview

The episodic interview leaves space for contextual representations of the interviewee through narration while alternately asking for specific, argumentative questions, with the goal to gather semantic knowledge. The story-telling prompt and the concrete questions have the goal to combine argumentative-theoretical description and contextual-

interpretative presentation. In this way, the advantages of a narrative and guide-based interview are combined (Flick, 2016, p. 158-167).

I decide to make this kind of interviews because of my *Exploratory Research Design*. As I choose to not set up a hypothesis beforehand and to not review theories, but to gain impressions and information unprejudiced, the episodic interview seems to be the perfect method to gain information as well as to gain knowledge about personal impressions, ideas and circumstances of the interviewees. It allows me to get an impression of the unlimited dimensions of “crisis” from each interviewee.

The episodic interview was structured into three parts. The first part can be described as a more narrative part where the questions are held as open as possible to not influence the interviewee in any way. In this part the interviewee is held to narrate about his or her own experiences and thoughts with impulses in the form of open, non-specific questions. The second part of the interview is similar to the first part, even though the impulse questions change their direction and become more specific regarding Istanbul. Only the last part can be described as a problem-centred interview where the subject of research is declared beforehand in a more detailed way and the interviewees are asked to answer in a more focused way, regarding their experiences and opinions towards the research question (Lamnek, 2005, p. 357-364).

2.2.2 Mental/Cognitive Map

Mental or cognitive maps are a method to show how a person is related to a space, what this person considers as important in this place and how he or she interprets this space. Subjective perceptions and ideal images of urban space can be communicated through this method (Wildner/Röhm, 2009, p.5). According to this, cognitive maps are ways of representing individual views of reality.

I choose this method in the second part of my interviews. In this part, I am asking specific questions about the life in Istanbul and the relation of the interviewee to the city. I chose this method here for two reasons: At first, I am using it as an icebreaker. After the first part of the interview, I am asking questions that the interviewee should answer with the first thing that comes into his or her mind. In the second part, I am trying to get deeper to the emotional connection of the interviewee with the place they live in. Also the second

part should be more narrative and I consider the method of mental mapping as a very good starting point to come into narration, as I found out in earlier researches. Apart from this, I consider it as a good starting point to talk about positive associations with the city. Later on, I go deeper into the material and ask about more difficult topics like the attended military coup. Secondly, I am hoping to understand what their general perception of Istanbul is, by knowing where and how they feel good and safe, as a contrast to crises and insecurities. Because of this, the interviewees are invited to start the second part of the interview with the following:

But to start this section, please draw your favourite place in Istanbul and while you are drawing, you can tell me why you choose this place, what you relate with it, how your experiences were there and how you feel when you are there.

I already gained experiences with this method during the research that I made in 2015 when I interviewed underage refugees in Germany. During this time, I realised how it can help to relax the atmosphere during an interview process, especially when it comes to topics that provoke discomfort.

During the interviews with the Mental Map, I also helped myself with another classical anthropological research method, the Participant Observation.

2.2.3 The Participant Observation

The *Participant Observation* is one of the main methods of anthropological research. Breidenstein et al. are comparing the process of observing with the “Smelling, Seeing, Hearing and Feeling of social practice”¹¹ (Breidenstein et al., 2015, p. 71).

I am using this method to further my insight of the situation and observe the changes happening in Turkey after the terror attacks and the attempted coup. The goal of a participant observation is to make repeated and intense observations to look at a social situation out of different angles and perspectives (Breidenstein et al., 2015, p.71-75). This means in my case mainly that I observe the people on the street, in so-called “Perception Walks”. I am walking through places that I know and actually cross almost every day, like *Taksim-Square* or the *Galata-Bridge*, but this time I am doing “systematic observations” (Wildner/ Röhm, 2009), which means that I am trying to register the urban space

¹¹ Original German: „Riechen, Sehen, Hören und Ertasten sozialer Praxis.“ (Breidenstein et al. 2015:71).

according to tracks of the latest events. For example, I register the closing of cafés or the absence of foreign looking people and, after the attempted Military Coup, the celebrations all over the streets. Apart from the obvious, I also try to register the small things that might give reference points that I can later use for my interviews. I try e.g. to register if the speed of the city changed and if the mood of the people seems to change. I note everything in my field book right after the walks and make sure to remember that these observations are highly subjective and associative.

In the following, I will focus on the open Interview guideline that I formulated as an aid to stimulate my interviewees and give them thematic anchors, but not to limit them.

2.4 INTERVIEW GUIDELINE

The interview guide was used more like a memory aid than as a structured guideline for this non-standardised interview.

The guidelines for the different groups of the sample (see “Sample”) differ a little in the last part where I asked about the specific experiences and life in Istanbul, regarding “crisis” and “insecurities”. As the persons of the groups haven’t lived in Istanbul for the same amount of time and probably have different cultural and national background, they have already experienced different forms of “crises” before their time in Istanbul which need to be considered.

The three parts of the interview guideline are *Personal ideas about the concepts of “crisis”, “insecurities”, “fear” and “borders”*, as a first part. The second part of the interview consists of questions about *Istanbul as a place to live* and the last part is about *Specific questions regarding the latest events in Istanbul and the coping with the crisis*. Before these question blocks start, a few demographic questions regarding the age, the education, the place of birth and the time living in Istanbul are being asked. These questions also include the questions about what the person did before their stay in Istanbul (if he/ she was not born there) and about religiosity.

I chose the episodic interview design to combine the advantages of a narrative interview and a problem-centred interview, where I build a trustworthy relationship and a nice atmosphere through unbiased and natural questions in the first parts and go deeper into probably more problematic and problem-centred questions in the second part.

The whole interview-guideline can be found in the attachment (see Attachment “A. The Interview guideline”).

2.5 REFLEXION OF MY POSITION IN THE FIELD

When a research is as practical as mine and the relation to the research objects is given beforehand, it is particularly important to reflect my own situation as a researcher in the field. During the research process, I try to keep my position as a researcher in mind as to not influence my environment with my presence, always knowing that this kind of “participating objectivation” (Bourdieu, 2002, p.45) is only possible in parts because I am shaped by my own cultural and social background. According to Flick (2016), the subjectivity of the researchers, as well as the subjectivity of the object of investigation is an important part of the research process. Flick states that according to the reflections of actions and observations in the field as well as impressions, irritations, influences and emotions, important data can be generated and added to the interpretation (Flick, 2016, p.281-285.). Because of this, it is important to note subjective impressions in protocols.

At least since the Writing Culture debate in the 1980s, the understanding of a neutral observation and writing position has been critically deconstructed. It is assumed that a representation of pure data and objective truth in ethnology is not possible and research results must always be understood as a part of a subjective construct of reality of the researchers (Geertz, 1973, Clifford/ Marcus, 1986).

To reach a satisfying point of objectivity and at the same time use my own impressions for later interpretation, I write protocols after every interview and also after every participant observation. I try to mark my own thoughts and feelings clearly in these protocols, so I can relate to them later, like the following:

After my interview with Mariam (name changed due to anonymity reasons), I don't feel euphoric about my work, as I expected it. I talked to her a lot about her situations here, what is important for her and about her cultural projects. She was not open today and did not really go into the interview. I feel like I had to pull the answers out of her, which is not what I expected. Of course it could be that she was just in a bad mood, but it could also be that she did not feel comfortable talking with me about these topics. I will work on my guideline again and try to figure out why

she did not speak too openly as I expected, to improve for the other interviews (Field Protocol, 17.09.2016).

These protocols help me to reflect my feelings and through this my objectivity during the process of researching.

After introducing the research ambitions, the aim and the methods, I will next expound my data evaluation and the findings of my research and relate them to the research question.



CHAPTER 3

DATA EVALUATION

To answer the question „*In which ways do people (in Istanbul) deal with crisis and insecurities?*”,

the interviews are examined by the following questions:

1. What does *crisis* mean for the person and how/when does he/ she experience it?
2. What does *security* mean for the interviewee and when does the person not feel safe?
3. How does the person assess their current living situation regarding (in-)security and crisis?
4. Does the interviewee see the need to take *action* to improve their current situation?
 - 4.1. On an individual basis
 - 4.2. On a social level
5. What does the person do if he/she takes action?
6. How can these information be used to help coping with a *crisis*?

To analyse the interviews I use, in a first step, the analysing- program *MAXQDA*, which helps giving an overview about the material by making it easy to organize and to code it. With the help of codes that I mainly generated from my interview guideline and subcodes, which I generated from the material, I got a first impression of the answers and the topics that seem to be most important for the interviewees. Here it is important for me to look at every interview individually and to see on what each interviewee puts an emphasis. In a following step, I am comparing the interviews with the help of my code system and try to find similarities and differences. I also take a deeper look into the sample groups that I choose beforehand (*People from Istanbul, Expats (personal reasons), Expats (safety reasons)*) and try to find similarities within and between the groups.

In the following I want to present the outcome of my interviews regarding the questions mentioned above and analyse them according to their concept of crisis. I will try to give

explanations on an individual and social level, and later relating the outcome of the interviews with possible ways to cope the situation on a social level.

To start, I will give a working definition of “Crisis” that I generated from my interviews. Based on this working definition, I will analyse my material regarding the research question.

3.1 CRISIS- WHICH CRISIS?

In the first chapter (1. “Crisis”- but what does it mean?), it got clear that crisis cannot be limited by a definition, as a beginning and end is not clearly remarkable. What is sure is that in times of a crisis some events happen that fluctuate the actual state of being and initiate the need for a change. Crisis-prone situations are seen as something chaotic (Schenk, 2013) and are highly individual. Anyway, they affect the situation in which a person feels comfortable and secure.

To understand the concepts of crisis of my interviewees, I ask them to tell me what crisis means to them in general. In my ongoing interview, I ask them to describe how they experienced the military coup in July 2016 and the terror attacks in this year. I want to know how they perceived the situations and how they felt. I also want to know how their feeling was during the Gezi Park protests and what changed since then. With this information, I am hoping to understand what kind of influence the named events have on their daily life and how they deal with the changes, to later use this information for possible ways to cope with it.

For my interviewees, a crisis starts as an unexpected situation that is out of the “normal” habit (Cansu, 2016, p. 2; Mariam, 2016, p. 3; Nina, 2016, p.6-7). In a crisis, the people I ask do not feel secure (Ahmet 2016: 3; Daniel, 2017, p.6; Nina, 2016, p.6-7). They also explain the situation with the metaphor of a circle where one problem appears and causes another one (Hülya, 2016, p. 3). Different situations happen at the same time and for a long time, make people tired (Lorena/Cem, 2016, p.5) and leave them without any hope (Ahmet, 2016, p.3, Daniel, 2017, p.6, Lorena/Cem, 2016, p.5, Nina, 2016, p.6-7). It seems like the crisis cannot be solved and even gets worse (Hakim, 2016, p.2) and this condition solidifies a fear and the feeling of not being able to cope the situation (Daniel, 2016, p.6).

This leads to a feeling of powerlessness and helplessness (Mariam, 2016, p.3, Nina, 2016, p. 6-7). For my interviewees, a crisis often begins by losing something that cannot be replaced or the feeling that it cannot be replaced (Lorena/Cem, 2016, p.5-6). A crisis can also be used or provoked by those in power to control or destroy the minds of people (Adam, 2016, p.4). As hopeless as a crisis seems to be, it can also be a chance for something new. First confronted with the situation, one tends to feel helpless and does not know what to do, but then new ways of coping are opening and the chance for something new appear. (Nina, 2016, p.6-7).

By using this definition, given by my interviewees, it seems obvious that the attempted military coup, the terror attacks, the political changes and the “refugee crisis” are leading the society my interviewees live in into a crisis. I ask them, if they feel like there is a crisis right now. Six of the people I ask (Ahmet, Lorena and Cem, Mariam, Adam and Nina) say directly that they feel like there is a crisis in the society and the place that they live in. But there are also other voices. Hülya states that she does not feel like there is a crisis.

[...] It is like normal here, I think (laughs). [...] The things that happen with politics and people, in Turkey it is like this. For people it's normal. (Hülya, 2016, p.3).

Hakim says that this crisis is a hidden one:

I think that there is crisis, but we are not feeling it. People don't know what is going on, they just live their life, going to school. There is a hidden crisis. (Hakim, 2016, p.2)

and he continues:

Because people are living their life normally. If you are interesting and read the news, you see that there is an economic crisis, for example. But if you just wake up, you go to work, you go to bed, you don't see that there is crisis. There is no like (.) resistance or anything. (Hakim, 2016, p.2).

A hidden crisis, that sneaks into the society and is either not noticed or repressed by those experiencing it, could be a possible answer to the question why many people living in Turkey do not take action to improve the current situation.

I realise that especially people who directly say that they are experiencing a crisis right now, are those who have already gone through changes and (personal) crisis before.

Ahmet grew up in a very religious family and went to a religious school. After this, he was not able to choose any university and was only able to matriculate for theology. He felt a lot of social pressure, which grew bigger after his father died and he became the

“head of the family” by the age of 14. Only in his early 20s, he decided to emancipate himself from this pressure and to do what he wants to do: Become a film director. Since then, he is still struggling with his identity, with what people expect from him and what he wants to do:

In my life, like in my experience, fear is the biggest thing maybe. Because we were grown up with fear. Like I felt fear inside every time. Like everybody has, you know, shaped with fear, in my – in our lives. Like I was really religious, I was grown up in a religious family, but they were also really educated. But you know, if you are putting rules, if you are shaping every time, you have to be scared from something. Like, for example, you say “This is a sin”, you saw it. But you can’t feel it, you don’t know anything about it. You can’t read this one, you can’t touch, you can’t hear. You just have to fear, because you don’t know what it is. You have to fear it and when this fear is growing all the time, you just live with this fear. Like this fear is being the main thing for you, kind of. And I can’t describe this fear for you now, maybe. Because it is kind of a sin for me, like, if you are, if you say a sin, this is fear for me. (Ahmet, 2016, p.3).

For him, it is especially important that his freedom is not cut, that he can do whatever he wants to do and live the life that he desires. He probably feels restrictions different than persons that never had to cope a situation where they did not feel free and secure, like Hülya who says that for her, there is no crisis. Also Adam and Mariam say directly that there is a crisis. Their view on critical situations and crises is shaped by their experiences in Syria. So says Mariam that she does not rely on the government or any state institution for her safety.

You know. Especially what happened to me in Syria, I don’t believe that safety comes from government or (--). I could be in the most safe place but without getting the feeling of really safety. Now I feel safety to be surrounded from people who love me and with people, with friends. If I have any problem, they can save me. (Mariam, 2016, p.2).

It seems like she found her own way to cope with a crisis, according to her experiences, which also means that her trust in state institutions is not there anymore.

It seems like *awareness* and *experience* play a big role when it comes to when a person experiences a crisis and also when this person sees a crisis in a society.

For Ahmet, as well as for Mariam and Adam, it is clear that they and the society are in a crisis. They experienced critical situations before and have mechanisms to realise and to cope with them. Hülya, e.g. did not experience a crisis on a level they did before and therefore is not aware of changes that can lead to a crisis. In addition, my other interviewees do not necessarily feel themselves in a crisis. Daniel says that he sees the

changes and how people are struggling and suffering, but at the same time he tries to be happy and does not let the crisis get too deep into his life (Daniel, 2016, p.5-10).

In the following analyses, I will have a deeper look on the circumstances my interviewees live in, what makes them perceive their situations like they do and how they act. I will analyse in which situations they feel good and in which they feel limited, how their reaction to these limitations is and what they do to solve it. I will furthermore have a look into the concepts of *Personal* and *Social Crisis*, in connection to the current situations of my interviewees. I will extract how the personal experience influences their view on the society and helps them to develop coping mechanisms.

In a first step, I will have a look on the topic of “security”, as a counterpart to “crisis”.

3.2 SECURITY

To find out what a person understands of “crisis” and how it is affecting their life, it seems to be imperative to know when a person feels comfortable and safe and what influences this feeling. For this reason, the first question I ask in my interviews is “What means safety/security for you?”

While analysing the interviews, I realise that the concepts of security differ between the interviewees, but that there are similarities. These similarities do not necessarily occur within the groups of my sample and seem to be based on the personal experience of the interviewees.

Five of my nine interviewees connect security in some way with *freedom* (Ahmet, Hakim, Cansu, Nina and Adam). Cansu says e.g. that security for her means:

To be able what I would like to do, without any restrictions. Not only for my body but also for my thoughts. And if I feel free to do that, also what I want, then I would feel safe. (Cansu, 2016, p.1).

Also Ahmet says that he feels secure when he feels free, but adds:

But like feeling free is different. I don't know, it depends in which way. If I can't do anything I want, but I can live my lifestyle, it's okay for me. And if I don't feel nervous, if I don't fear anyone outside or inside. (Ahmet, 2016, p.1-2).

Ahmet seems to be settled with the fact that he cannot reach the “total freedom” but he can arrange living without it as long as he feels secure. Nina answers to the security-

question by naming situations when she does not feel secure. She names repressions that occur and limit people – and herself. In particular, she names the ban of the “Gay Pride”, a parade for the pride and rights of LGBTQI-people in Istanbul that she describes as:

[...] the highlight of the year where we, for two hours, were just free, because for these two hours it was like: “No one can do anything to us, we just want to be and we just want to be happy.”¹² (Nina, 2016, p.3).

For her, the feelings of security and freedom are highly dependent, as she describes freedom as:

[...] a feeling of serenity and “No one can do anything to me” or “nothing can happen to me.”” (Nina, 2016, p. 3).¹³

Another similarity between four of the interviewees is the reference to *family and friends* and their well-being when it comes to security. Hülya says that security means for her:

[...] living out of the dangerous process, living with my family and friends and you don’t hope for more good things, you know? (Hülya, 2016, p.1).

Hülya does not refer the feeling of security to a specific situation. Mariam, on the other hand, makes clear that her situation in Syria influenced her thoughts on security and safety sustainably:

I could be in the most safe place but without getting the feeling of really safety. Now I feel safety to be surrounded from people who love me and with people and with people, with friends. (Mariam, 2016, p.2).

She points out that her perception of safety changed, due to her experiences in Syria.

Adams perception of security, on the contrary, seems to be much more idealistic than Mariams, when he states that security for him is:

[...] when you live in a country and the country is safe by everything. You have a good belief, you have a good settlement, you have all your rights, you have your freedom to say what you want, without disturbing the people. (Adam, 2016, p.2).

¹² Original German: „[...] das Highlight des Jahres, wo wir halt einfach nur zwei Stunden so frei waren, also es war wirklich für mich Freiheit, weil es echt so zwei Stunden war „Niemand kann uns was tun, wir wollen einfach nur sein und glücklich.““ (Interview Nina 2016: 3).

¹³ Original German: „[...] so ein Gefühl von Gelassenheit und so ein Gefühl von „Man kann mir nichts tun“ oder „Mir kann nichts passieren.““ (Interview Nina 2016: 3).

To the question, if he feels safe now, he answers: “Here? No, never.” (Adam 2016, p.2).

Another factor that seems to be important for the feeling of security is the *personal well-being* and *stability*. For Lorena, feeling safe means “feeling self-confident with myself” (Lorena, 2016, p.2). Daniel is way clearer, when he explains what security means for him:

Security means for me personally that I have a home. In which “home” for me is a more or less flexible term, hence everything that makes me calm down, what gives me the feeling of having a roof above my head under which I can sleep and which is untouched, which is safe. (Daniel, 2017, p.2).¹⁴

Daniel goes on telling that it is possible for him to have a structure and stability, which he finds right now in his neighbourhood and keeps going on that he wants to be able to decide where he actually lives and how he lives his life.

To sum up, the ideas of security are personal concepts that are based on the own experience and socialisation. Seemingly, they are not influenced by variables like *nationality* or *reason to live in Istanbul* but more by the situation the person lives in and what he or she idealises. Even though seven of the nine people I interviewed (Hülya, Hakim, Lorena, Cem, Nina, Daniel and Mariam) say that it is important for them to have some kind of *stability* which is either related to *family and friends* or by having a *home*.

Also the connection of security and *freedom* is important for five of the interviewees. For two (Hülya and Nina) it is also important to live out of danger and know that nothing can happen. I realise that only Lorena and Cem bring with *self-confidence* a link to security that only depends on themselves and not on the external circumstances.

In a next step I ask my interviewees if they feel safe right now in Istanbul. Surprisingly, five of the interviewees say that they feel safe right now (Hakim, Cansu, Lorena, Daniel and Mariam). Two say that they do not feel totally safe (Hülya, Cem) and three say that they don’t feel safe at all (Ahmet, Adam, Nina). Hence, the feeling of insecurity, keeping the terror attacks and the attempted military coup in mind, is not very strong. If the interviewees do not feel afraid of terror attacks and of political events, what scares them

¹⁴ Original German: „Sicherheit heißt für mich persönlich, dass ich ein zu Hause habe. Wobei „zu Hause“ für mich ein recht flexibler Begriff ist, also alles was mich zur Ruhe kommen lässt, was mir das Gefühl gibt, dass ich ein Dach über dem Kopf hab, unter dem ich schlafen kann und dass das unangetastet ist, dass das sicher ist.“ (Interview Daniel 2017: 2).

instead? In the following, I will try to find this out and see how the concepts of security, freedom, fear and borders relate with “crisis”.

3.3 “MY FREEDOM FINISHES WHEN THE FREEDOM OF ANOTHER PERSON STARTS”¹⁵

Security means freedom for many of my interviewees. But what means freedom for them?

Freedom means if everybody is living their lifestyle and nobody cares about anyone, like nobody cares about any lifestyle, that is kind of freedom for me. (Ahmet, 2016, p.2),

says Ahmet and is almost alone with this opinion. For eight of my ten interviewees freedom is to be able to live your lifestyle but it has also to do with respect for other people.

Actually, everyone you can think the freedom means “Do whatever you want”. But I am not so sure if this is exactly the freedom. Because (.) I know for sure that your freedom finishes in a point. And so you must know where your freedom finishes, because there is a point where you touch the freedom of someone else [...] (Lorena, 2016, p.2).

This opinion is shared by almost all of my interviewees, except by Ahmet and Cansu.

It seems like freedom, which is strongly connected to security for most of my interviewees, means to be able to do what you want but also to respect the borders of another person. Lorena concludes:

I think freedom is to do what your educated self needs to do, you know? (Lorena, 2016, p.2).

It is remarkable to notice that Cansu and Ahmet who explicit named freedom and no restrictions as important for their feeling of security and well-being, do not say that their personal freedom should respect the borders of other persons. Their concept of freedom seems to be more individualistic.

This might also be why they answer to the question “*How would a world without borders look like?*” in a very positive way. Restrictions in form of borders seem to be a limitation that cannot work for them, as Cansu states:

¹⁵ Adam, 2016, p. 3

I think it would be great. More natural and great. Like people don't have to fight for things that are stupid, people don't have to be like "This is mine, this is yours" 'all the time and people don't have to die for something like "their country" which is ridiculous, I think. (Cansu, 2016, p. 3).

The general perception of a world without borders is split between my interviewees. Six think that a world without borders would be better (Ahmet, Cansu, Mariam, Lorena, Cem, Nina) and four that the world needs borders as some kind of regulation, so it does not end up in a mess (Hakim, Hülya, Adam and Daniel). Especially Adam's answer surprises me in this context. He says:

(...) The worst thing in this world is the human. So I think without borders it would be even worse. (Adam, 2016, p. 5).

Again, my sample is fragmented. The concept of borders does as well not refer to variables like *nationality* or *cultural background*, at least not in the sample that I chose. It seems to be strongly connected with the experience that a person made and whether the person reflects on his or her own experience what he or she takes out of this reflection. This thought will be taken to the next step, where I will talk about an attitude of superseding and resignation that I realised in many people I talked to in my time in Istanbul and also in my interviewees.

3.4 "I THINK FOR ME IT'S THE SAME AS BEFORE"¹⁶ – SUPERSEDING

When I ask Hakim if the mood in the city changed after the coup and the attacks he answers:

"Yes, of course I think it changed.", and when I ask how it changed, he answers:

Well, I think the security changed. But again, for everyone it is different, I think for me it is the same as before. And also for many people it is not the first time that this is happening, you know? There was a military coup before in the '80s already. And they know, or they have the feeling that life will go on, so they cannot change anything. (Hakim, 2016, p. 6).

¹⁶ Hakim, 2016, p. 6

I realise this attitude in the whole interview with Hakim as I have the feeling that he does not understand why I am asking these questions and also does not cooperate when I am asking about the coup night.

I: Okay. So, the next question is: How did you experience the coup night?

H: I want to pass this question.

I: Why?

H: I just don't answer this question. Because I hate politics. And I don't want to talk about the people, if it's good or bad, I just don't want. I don't believe in this shit actually.

I: Because it makes you angry?

H: Not because it makes me angry, it actually, it's about ideology. And I think politics and religion (.), I don't want to talk about it.

I: Okay, it's all right, then I skip this question. Ehm (.) okay let me check. So, do you think about leaving the country now or living for some time abroad?

H: Yes, I do. I think about leaving the country, but it's not about what is happening now with terror attacks and war and everything. More that it was always my desire. (Hakim, 2016, p. 6).

Before the mood of the interview totally skips, I decide to not ask him about topics concerning the terror attacks, the coup or changes that happened since then in Istanbul. Nina gives a possible explanation to this, when she says that:

It is a white privilege, you can say: "No, it will be fine. I will continue earning my money, I will continue my career, everything is okay, I am not directly affected."¹⁷ (Nina, 2016, p. 6).

It seems like one way to "cope" a crisis is to just continue the way it is and trying to repress concerning thoughts and sit out the situation until it is solved by itself. But this "solution" seems just to work for people that have a "white privilege" as Nina likes to call it.

Another way of dealing with the crisis that has the same *effects* as superseding, people do not act and do not try to better their situation, but a different origin, is *resignation*. I learn

¹⁷ Original German: „Das ist halt eben ein weißes Privileg, du kannst eben sagen „Nee, das wird schon. Ich verdien mal weiter mein Geld, mache mal weiter meine Karriere, ist schon alles okay, weil es trifft mich ja nicht direkt.“ (Interview Nina 2016: 6).

that some of the people I interview gave up trying to change for different reasons, which I will describe in the following chapter.

3.5 “WHAT CAN I DO? IF I CRY, IT WILL BE THE SAME, IF I LAUGH, IT WILL BE THE SAME”¹⁸-RESIGNITION

I realise a profound pessimism in the answers of most of my interviewees when it comes to being optimistic about the future of the society. Adam seems to be disappointed of the world and does not trust in anyone to better the situation. When I ask him about the coup night, he says:

[...] there were so many Syrian people who felt afraid and said “The new government will kick our ass” and for me, honestly, I was laughing. Not laughing about the people, I was sad for all the people that were dying and in my mind I pray to this country to “Stay safe”. Because I like it and I like the people here. But about all the situation, I was laughing. Because “What can I do?” If I cry, it will be the same, if I laugh, it will be the same. And if I am sitting and thinking “What will happen, what will be with the government”? What can I do? So I was relaxing, you know. It’s already bad. (Adam, 2016, p. 6).

This perception of not being able to do anything, is shared by other interviewees. Ahmet says referring to the refugee-crisis in Turkey:

[...] we tried to find some stuff for them, some houses or some flats for them and (.) in the end we gave up. Because we couldn’t make it. It’s really too much and you can’t do anything, kind of. And you feel bad after that and I don’t know. (Ahmet 2016, p. 15).

It seems like resignation and the feeling of not being able to help is even concerning those, who are actually trying to help, like Nina, who is working in a project to help women who suffered violence. To the question, what outcome the project she works in has, she says:

If they would help, we would not be in this situation. (Nina, 2016, p. 14).

And also Hülya explains that she feels unable to act:

[...] I think actually, when I can’t change the thoughts of the Turkish people, I have to leave from here. They are such a big group. And I am alone. So what can I do? (Hülya, 2016, p. 5).

¹⁸ Adam, 2016, p. 6.

I am wondering where this paralysis comes from and what gives my interviewees and other people I talk to the feeling that they are not able to improve their current situation and the situation of other people. I am wondering if it is a lack of motivation and the thought that this phase will pass or if my interviewees fear the consequences of acting and of gathering together. Maybe they just did not find the right way to be active and this feeling of limitation raises the wish to move to another country, where they expect to be able to live the way they want and to express themselves the way they want.

Especially when people are feeling hopeless and paralysed, it is important to have places to escape these feeling, to have places that make them feel secure and comfortable. In the next step, I will focus on these kind of places that can be a opposite to hopelessness and powerlessness that come along with a crisis.

3.6 “TO KNOW THAT THERE IS A PLACE LIKE THIS”¹⁹ – PLACES OF SECURITY

As an icebreaker question, to understand their connection to the place they live in (Istanbul) and to know how and where they feel secure, I ask my interviewees to draw their favourite place in Istanbul and to tell me about it.

All of my interviewees choose and describe places that they consider as the opposite to “insecurity”.

Cansu draws herself in a *Dolmuş* at the Golden Horn, coming home from a night out with friends in Taksim. She likes that place because she usually had a great time with friends when she crosses that bridge. She says that it is really fun for her and that she is usually drunk. She laughs when she talks about it (Interview Cansu, 2016, p.3). It seems like those nights are an escape for her, moments where she feels free. Ahmet draws his “dreamy place to be”, an imaginary place. A little garden behind his house, where he would like to surround himself with people he feels good with. He says that he really

¹⁹ Original German: „Einfach zu wissen, dass es so einen Platz gibt.“ (Nina, 2016, p. 8)

needs calm and green places and wants to wake up like this. On the other hand, he says that it depends on his mood where he feels good.

I can make really crazy parties sometimes, hang out sometimes. (Ahmet, 2016, p. 9).

His imaginary and idealistic “favourite place” seems to be a refugio, where he feels safe and free.

I realise that for all of my interviewees, being at their favourite place means calming down, getting some distance from the daily life, feeling safe and free and happy. All of my interviewees smile when they think and talk about their favourite places. Most of them have more than one place in mind and think about it a before answering. The meaning of a favourite place is feeling safe and free for all of my interviewees, what does not mean that they reach this condition in the same places. Hülya describes *Kadıköy* as her favourite place because:

Because you are in the crowded place [...]. You have green, you can watch the people and see the deepest of the blue of the sea everywhere. It is kind of peaceful. You can sit in the park and look at the people and see that they are not so stressed when they are there. (Hülya, 2016, p. 4).

I find the strongest association to the favourite place in Nina’s answer. She begins immediately to draw when I ask her to and tells me about a hidden beach on *Büyükkada* (an island in front of Istanbul). She says that knowing that there is a place like this is one of the reasons why she is still in Istanbul. She describes how the city of Istanbul is not visible from this spot and she feels like she is somewhere else, but not in Istanbul.

And there are these huge red cliffs and white, clean stones and yes, the deep blue ocean. And sometimes a dolphin jumps besides you, exactly. (Nina, 2016, p. 8).

The need to escape from the city seems to be very present for Nina, I see her all euphoric while talking about that hidden place.

I realise that having a place to escape the current situation is an important issue for all of my interviewees and for Nina even one of the reasons that she is still in Istanbul. The opportunity to escape, refill the energy and then come back to the “normal” seems to be one way to cope the crisis.

To which level escaping like this is possible, depends on how much a person incorporated the crisis. This on the other hand, depends highly on the situation and the privileges of

the people. Within my interviewees, some are able to decide how much the crisis affects them on a personal level and others are so much affected that they incorporate the crisis, like Adam when he says “My name is refugee” (Adam, 2016, p. 3). These mechanisms will be examined in the analyses.

In the following, I will have a look on how people try to help themselves and others while experiencing a crisis by taking action, principally via projects

3.7 TAKING ACTION

I want to know if my interviewees see the need to take action to better their own situation and the situation of the society they live in. I want to know what they do and if they know people and projects that try to work on the crisis. I am especially interested in cultural projects and social movements as a strategy to help coping crisis. For this, I am also asking how my interviewees experienced the Gezi-Park protests and how they assess the differences to the situation nowadays. The answers of my interviewees are very divers referring these questions. When I ask Ahmet if he knows projects that are using art as a way to cope with crisis and to help bringing people together, he states that:

I don't remember actually. And I am not so interested, because (.) I don't believe so much in social movements actually. I believe in people and in persons. Because I was in a lot of social movements and they just used me. Like, you know in this things. Like also in Gezi- Park. They just want to use you. That's the thing. They are social movements but they are using you and they don't care. What you are going to do, like what is your, I don't know. What is your thing. So I think that art can change the person, but probably not the society. Like and then it will be propaganda or something. (Ahmet, 2016, p. 5).

Ahmet seems to be disillusioned by social movements and believes that they are instrumentalising people for their will and hence are using the same oppressive mechanisms as the system they are protesting against. Ahmet does not want to confirm to a group of people that has expectations on him and could shape his identity that he just built for himself. So when I ask him if he thinks that there is a connection between the Gezi-Protests and the Coup night, he says:

Yah, I can't say it's the same, but I saw the same mentality there. I went to Gezi Park and also I went to this night, the celebrating of the defeating of the coup. And in Gezi Park everyone was

swearing Tayyip, I am talking about everyone in the street and what the fuck, what is this? You should talk about the system. And it was the same mentality there, like I was afraid about this also. It's the same mentality, they also say "You have to be like us". If you are not, we are gonna fuck you. It's the same mentality there. And I don't know, maybe anytime I didn't feel very secure about the mentality. (Ahmet, 2016, p. 13).

Hülya's perception of the Gezi-Protests in comparison to Ahmet's is totally different, as she does not focus on the power relations, but on the purpose of the protest:

Totally different. Because in Gezi-Park the people would not just do what the president told them to do. And also the atmosphere was very different, because the people in Gezi-Park were separated into two parts but this time everybody is connected to each other. (Hülya, 2016, p. 6).

Hülya analyses the connection between the two events on a different level than Ahmet, who is more interested in power relations and concerned about the ways that people in power can use him. Daniel probably connects the two ways to see the differences between the Gezi-Protests and the attempted military coup, as he states:

[...] Gezi was a bit similar because there was a great energy, but this [energy] was led by a different side, but also not used to solve things out. There was this moment in the beginning in Gezi-Park, where all the people were united as one, where they were standing side by side on the street and stood up for something that no one could have ever imagined. Unfortunately, the Gezi-Park movement was used to diabolize Erdogan and to make him responsible for everything that goes wrong, which is polarizing into "black and white" again, which does not make it better. (Daniel, 2017, p. 12-13)²⁰.

So even the motives for protesting were as different as they could be, some of my interviewees see similarities in the energy of the different protests. Crisis initiates a change and creates an energy. Some people try to use this energy. One of them is Lorena. She is making solidarity-parties for refugee-families that live in her neighbourhood, to help them to get the essential needs like a stove, a fridge, mattresses and food. I ask her how she experiences her help and if she knows many people that try help in a way.

²⁰ Original German: „[...] Dass *Gezi* schon etwas ähnlich war, weil da war auch eine große Energie, eine große Kraft da, aber die wurde damals von der anderen Seite geleitet, aber genau so wenig genutzt, um Dinge zu lösen. Also es gab einen Anfangsmoment im *Gezi-Park*, wo alle Menschen eins waren und wo die Leute nebeneinander auf der Straße standen und für etwas eingestanden sind, was niemand für möglich gehalten hätte. Leider wurde das aber von der *Gezi-Park*-Bewegung auch ausgenutzt, um halt Erdogan zu verteufeln und für alles verantwortlich zu machen, was scheiße läuft und was halt auch wieder eine schwarz-weiß Malerei ist und was halt “ (Daniel 2017, p. 12-13).

“No, not so many. Because the people here are not so active, you know. They just have to work, work, work.” (Lorena, 2016, p. 10) and she continues:

“We were talking about this with some friends of mine and most of them left. They just realised that they cannot change anything. So better go. Because a movement like this, it’s a young movement. It must be supported. But the politicians are not there to enforce a young movement full of energy and somehow is fighting against them.” (Lorena, 2016, p.10).

A statement that I also hear from other interviewees, like Ahmet:

If you want to know my opinion: I don’t want to do anything about anything. Really, I have tried all my life to change something with this communities. Like everybody says “You have to change, you have to be good, you have to show yourself” and then they fuck my life. I don’t believe to change anyone. I just want to make movies and (.) I just want to make my ideas and maybe my filming can change somebody, like (.) somebody can feel something there. But I just realized that there is nothing to do, I should be myself. (Ahmet, 2016, p. 14)

The feeling of powerlessness seems to be present in my interviewees, even when they are taking action. Nina, who is very active in the women rights movement in Istanbul and works in women houses for women that experienced violence, says that:

If they [the projects] would help, we would not be in this situation. (Nina, 2016, p. 13)²¹.

This passiveness and powerlessness is not an unwillingness to change, it is more a feeling that without changing the causes, it does not make sense to change the effects.

Mariam is an example for taking action and believing that everyone and every small event can change something:

No, I believe that everyone can make a difference. Even if it’s just a small, small thing. But I can’t watch, I mean, I can’t change the whole thing, but I can make difference in the (--). Eh, I can’t end the crisis, but I can change the (.) effect the reasons of it, to make it easier. (Mariam, 2016, p. 3).

Mariam herself is collecting presents for children and making events with them, where she and voluntaries play music and do games with Syrian refugee children that live in slum areas of Istanbul. She says that many people want to help, but when a crisis appears, it needs time to realise and people need time to understand. She describes it as a shock and said that this also happened with her in Syria until she realised that this is real and

²¹ Original German: „Wenn die [die Projekte] helfen würden, wären wir jetzt nicht in dieser Situation.“ (Nina, 2016, p. 13).

actually happening (Mariam, 2016, p.3). Mariam says that especially in Istanbul, where the rhythm is very fast, people often do not have the energy to help. She holds the opinion that there should be more organisation for people that want to help and a network should be build, which would also be more motivating for every individual. However, this needs, according to her, time (Mariam, 2016, p. 4). She also initiated and conducts the *Istanbul Mosaic Oriental Choir*. The choir brings musicians and people from different countries and backgrounds together to sing together in several (oriental) languages. When Mariam talks about the choir, she is all excited and her mood totally changes.

For me, this choir is really like my children. Because first time I started with an event on Facebook, like “Hey, musicians in Istanbul, come let’s try this and you know how we work.” It’s from zero and we don’t get any help and it’s really a miracle how it’s working and how we continue and gather all these people and it’s not easy. And also it takes so much energy from my mind and (.). But still it also motivates me, I am okay with that and I don’t complain because I am happy with that. I believe so much in this choir. In the project itself. It brings people together. People who has the same interests with this atmosphere. And everyone is the same. And everyone is happy. And I feel really happy to see all these people, you know. Everyone comes from different cultures. And even Syrians also. They have different (.) environment, different families, different mentality, but they are all happy and singing and believing in it. (Mariam, 2016, p. 4).

Mariam’s enthusiasm when it comes to the choir is obvious and it seems that she found a way to cope the crisis not only for herself, but also for other people. Like my other interviewees, she is also disillusioned by the system and does not believe that she can change it, but she believes that even small steps change something and better the situation on a smaller level from the inside. Where does Mariam’s enthusiasm come from and why it is not shared by everyone? She gives an explanation herself:

[...] But you know, especially here in Istanbul life is crazy and the rhythm is really fast, so ehm, everyone, even people that love to help or do something, for Istanbul, even if someone wants to donate cloths, okay. They don’t have the energy to go to the place and give. They prefer if someone comes to their house and takes the cloths and they always do this. They write me and they are like: Do you have volunteers, can someone come to take cloths? Okay, they want to donate, but they don’t want to pay so much effort. I think everyone that wants to help, needs to be more organized or, ehm. If we organize this, if we work not individually, if many people work together, it can give more motivation to people, to help more. I am talking, of course, all about the Syrian crisis, because this is what I am (--). There is, of course, a lot of other things, but I can’t do everything. (Mariam, 2016, p. 4).

According to her, people need organisation and gathering to be motivated to better the situation they live in and to help others. She concludes that many people see the need to take action but do not actually take it.

The feeling of not being able to change the causes paralyses some of my interviewees from getting active and trying to change. Some already tried to engage themselves and put a lot of effort into something that did not have sustainable effects.

After presenting the first results of my coding process, I will go deeper into the material and analyse it towards *Social and Personal Crisis*, to know when a crisis becomes a personal issue and how it affects the way of dealing with a crisis. Moreover, I will have a closer look at *Awareness and Privileges* which play an important role when it comes to the question how affected different people are from a crisis. I will find out whether there are *Differences* in the dealing with a crisis between the different groups of my sample. To then finally come to the *Coping Mechanisms* that I extracted as a final result to the research question “In which ways do people (in Istanbul) deal with a crisis and insecurities?”.

To sum the principal findings so far up and to keep in mind the important points before diving deeper into analyses, I will give a brief *Preliminary Conclusion*.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSES

4.1 PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

As shown in the evaluation above, the perception of the current living situation in Istanbul is very different, depending on the specific circumstances of my interviewees. As some lost all their hope in being able to change anything and rather refer to themselves and try to get happy for themselves, like Ahmet, others argue that actually not much changed for them, like Hakim²² and that they are continuing their life as before. Others realise that the society they live in is going through a time in which many (negative) changes occur, like Nina. She takes action, tries to help people, but at the same time does not think that she can better the situation. For her, as well as for Lorena, Cem and Daniel, the system has to change. Hülya and Cansu, consider to leave Turkey because they don't feel that they are able to live their freedom the way they want to and don't feel like they can change it²³. Mariam already passed through times in Syria where she got disillusioned and felt like she had to leave. Anyway, she found the motivation to work on her own situation and to help others. But her access to change has changed. She now does not believe in changing the system, but to better the situation within it. Waiting for the crisis to pass seems not to be an option for her anymore.

In a next step, I will correlate these findings with the concept of Social and personal Crisis by Henrik Vigh (2008). In this way, I want to understand better why certain interviewees react in certain ways, as I found out that their reactions and actions do not necessarily depend on their (cultural) background, but on their experiences and coping abilities with former (personal and/or social) crises.

²² „[...] for me it is the same as before. And also for many people it is not the first time that this is happening, you know? [...] And they know, or they have the feeling that life will go on, so they cannot change anything.”

²³ „Ah, leaving. Yes, but the reason is not only related to the president. Another reason is that people have only one window and look only into one direction. They don't criticize. And like, especially in the developed countries, you can criticize the politics and maybe even sometimes religion. But in Turkey you cannot do it.” (Hülya, 2016, p. 6).

4.2 SOCIAL AND PERSONAL CRISIS – SEEING CRISIS AS A CONTEXT

Henrik Vigh explained in 2008 in “Anthropological Perspectives on Continuous Conflict and Decline” that crises are usually seen as “a momentary malformation in the flow of things”, an unusual phenomenon that uses to pass. Anyway, for some people a crisis can become chronic. Vigh states that:

We need to depart from our regular understanding of crisis and trauma as momentary and particularized phenomena and move toward an understanding of critical states as pervasive contexts rather than singular events. (Vigh, 2008).

Vigh talks of crisis considering two dimensions. The first one is the *Social Crisis*. When crisis is seen in a context, political, economic and social processes form the social dimension. This social dimension becomes something like a background to all events and mechanisms happening. The second dimension, the *Personal Dimension* is more a “State of being” (Vigh, 2008, p. 12) which is formed by uncertainty and hopelessness. Vigh calls the Personal Crisis “the rainy season”, which can start as a momentum, but develops to a persistent circumstance (Vigh, 2008, p.12). Both dimensions are highly connected and dependent from each other. What this means in the cases of my interviewees, will be analysed in the following.

As already stated, my interviewees have a very different approach to the crisis and the coping of it. My previous representations show that especially the experience of the interviewees has an impact on their way of dealing with crisis and not so much their cultural background.

However, if we look at the interviewed persons, we find out that some of them see themselves in a *Social Crisis*, even though they are all living in the same society. But what about the *Personal Crisis*? For whom of my interviewees is the *Personal Crisis* an issue and how is it correlated with the *Social Crisis*?

It seems to be logical to think that a *Personal Crisis* grows out of a *Social Crisis*, which influences the personal well-being. For some of my interviewees a Personal Crisis really seemed to grow out of a Social Crisis, which influences the “state of being”. Adam had to flee Syria because he worked for a radio station that published contents, which were not regime-conform. He hoped to find a better life in Turkey and loves the people in

Istanbul, but says that at the same time he does not feel safe in Turkey, because it is hard for him to get documents and a residency:

[...] It is very hard for us. So everything that is happening now, they say: “Okay, you have documents? No, you need to make Ikamet. But to get the residence permit is not easy. [...] It’s really hard. They say: “Go to the bank and put 5000 Lira and bring the check and we will give you an appointment.” So I go to the bank, I say “I have money, I want to put it” and they say “We cannot open a bank account, you don’t have Ikamet”. Oh my god. How can you do this, you know? This thing makes you really feel helpless, you know. I feel like “What can I do?” I don’t have my papers here. Really hard for me. I am a refugee, but the government never helps. By anything. It’s not just that they don’t help me. They take money from me. I should be pay for everything. If you want to rent a house from Turkish people, you know, when you are a stranger, you pay more. Okay and my name is refugee. Without papers. That’s not right. It’s not easy to live here. And also it’s so hard to find a work, if you don’t have a word. And we don’t have a right to get paid. (Adam, 2016, p. 3).

Adams crisis that began in Syria seems to go on in Turkey. He does not feel safe and he does not feel totally free. He imagines life in different places; he names London for example, as more free and a “beautiful place”. For Adam, the crisis seems to have become something chronic, as Vigh describes it and the lines between *Social* and *Personal Crisis* vanished. With the statement “My name is refugee”, he describes how the crisis got on a personal level for him and how he feels powerless. His “State of Being” became “refugee”.

Mariam as well does not “rely on the system” anymore, as she says. Her safety are friends, and also the meaning of “home” changed for her.

The situation of home and the meaning of home is changed now. Before we were more like “Yeah, home, Syria”. Now I feel that home is where I am. Where I am safe and where I am doing things and having my life, this is my home. (Mariam, 2016, p. 8).

Mariam works on the perception of the crisis that she is passing through and does not let the *Social Crisis* become a *Personal Crisis*. Still, Adam and Mariam show how the circumstances someone lives in, can affect the personal “State of Being” and how a crisis can become chronic, even when a drastic change, like in Adam’s case the migration to Turkey, takes place.

An example how the *Personal Crisis* can affect the *Social Crisis*, or better the social trust and ability to be an active member of the society, is Ahmet’s story. As mentioned before,

Ahmet emancipated himself from the social pressure of the religious environment he grew up in, in his early twenties. He started to question everything and everyone and is very thoughtful about power and what this power does to people:

[...] spontaneously I have been in the celebrating of the football game here and they were like “let’s beat Fener Bahnce” and that’s the thing. They are not happy to be good. They are happy to be better than the other ones. And they smashed them, they destroyed them. And that’s the thing, they felt the power. And I am really afraid of the power. And they will say it, you will see, “We save you”, like the other people. They will say “We fought with the army and you have to obey now” (.) “You can’t drink alcohol, you can’t go to the clubs, blabla” and “I am religious and you have to be religious”. They are going to say that because they have the power. They think that they are going to shape us. I mean, I am afraid of this (--). (Ahmet, 2016, p. 10).

Ahmet experienced his personal change and emancipation first, independently of the upcoming political changes and attacks. He began to question the concepts of the society he lives in and continues this behaviour in the times of the coup. As a religious person who studied theology, he felt marginalized by secular people and now he feels the same, just this time by different people, as he explains:

Like ten years ago I was feeling really insecure, but also now I am feeling really insecure. Because like ten years ago my lifestyle was really different, like I was really religious, I was going to theology and stuff, but the mentality was different here. Like I couldn’t go to any university. Even I was really successful in the (.) what’s the name (.) the exam, but I couldn’t go anywhere, just theology and I hated it. I was feeling really insecure. But now my lifestyle is really different, Like the opposite almost, but I feel really insecure now also. In another way. (Ahmet, 2016, p.11).

Ahmet’s “State of being” is feeling personally insecure, which is influenced by the social circumstances he lives in, but also by a lack of trust towards the society and change that grew out of his past. *Personal* and *Social Crisis* are again dependent on each other, but with a different emphasis.

Some of my interviewees are also able to actively decide whether they want to let a crisis become a permanent “State of Being” or if they want to separate the *Social* from the *Personal Crisis* as good as possible. One of these persons is Daniel.

[...] and for me, 2016 was a really exhausting year, but it has also been a great year and I rarely had the feeling that things are developing so good and fast into one direction that I have been really content with it. Where I simply said: “Yes, was exhausting, but can go on like this, without any problems” and this is of course a little contrasting to what is happening around, what is of course

my own attitude or work. I see things different for myself. I say, okay, I live in a country right now, which is going straight forward to a big crisis and eh, in general there are several crises in the world which are influencing my life, but my personal life is actually (.) there is no crisis.²⁴ (Daniel, 2017, p. 4).

Not letting a *Social Crisis* become a *Personal Crisis* seems to be a way to continue a fulfilling life, even with a *Social Crisis* happening. To be able to separate Personal and Social Crisis, it seems to be essential to *reflect* the situation one is living in. Furthermore it is important to know where the lines between *Personal* and *Social Crisis* are, which means to know when a factor from outside begins to influence the personal space. Daniel himself explains that his status as an expat is a privileged one, which is why he is still able to “choose” a life that is pleasant for him:

[...] definitely a certain lifestyle is being deuced and presented as a scapegoat, which is why a certain lifestyle is seen as offending by the public. [...] To me personally it didn't happen until now, I just know it from friends, but it's definitely something that changed and I recognize it as an energy. I realise it because my friends do not want to talk about politics anymore, many are leaving the country and have the feeling that they can't express their lives as they want to. And I have the luck to be a foreigner and to live in an environment that is not so much influenced by this. That means that I can still live my freedom like this.²⁵ (Daniel, 2017, p. 3-4).

Being able to choose whether letting a crisis affect the personal life seems to be an ability and a privilege at the same time. This requires on one hand to reflect and be aware of the own situation and the external circumstances and on the other hand a person must be able

²⁴ Original German: „[...] und für mich war 2016 auch ein sehr anstrengendes Jahr, aber es war auch ein großartiges Jahr und ich glaube ich habe selten das Gefühl gehabt, dass sich Dinge für mich so gut und rasant in eine Richtung entwickelt haben, dass ich wirklich damit zufrieden bin. Wo ich einfach gesagt habe „Ja, war anstrengend, aber kann ohne Probleme so weiter gehen“ und das ist natürlich ein bisschen gegensätzlich zu dem, was außen rum passiert, was dann natürlich aber auch meine persönliche Einstellung oder Arbeit ist. Ich sehe das für mich anders. Ich sage, okay, ich lebe gerade in einem Land, das auf eine richtig große Krise zusteuert und ähm, allgemein gibt es auf der Welt auch diverse Krisen, die mein Leben beeinflussen, aber mein Leben persönlich ist eigentlich (.) da gibt es keine Krise.“ (Daniel, 2017, p. 4).

²⁵ Original German: „[...] definitiv [wird] ein bestimmter Lebensstil verteufelt oder als Sündenbock gesehen, wodurch man dann allgemein in der Öffentlichkeit mit einer bestimmten Lebensweise aneckt. [...] Also mir ist das so persönlich nicht direkt passiert, ich kenne das nur von Freunden, aber es ist definitiv etwas, was sich geändert hat und was eine Spannung erzeugt. (.) Ich nehme es als Spannung wahr. Ich nehm's halt dadurch wahr, dass meine Freunde halt teilweise nicht mehr über Politik reden wollen, dass viele das Land verlassen und dass Leute einfach das Gefühl haben, dass sie das Leben so, wie sie es ausdrücken möchten, so nicht mehr können. Und ich habe sozusagen Glück, dass ich Ausländer bin und ich ein Lebensumfeld habe, das davon nicht so stark betroffen ist. Das heißt ich kann nach wie vor meine Freiheit so leben.“ (Daniel, 2017, p. 3.4).

to choose whether or not letting the external circumstances effect the own life. As Daniel states himself, he, as an expat from Germany, has a privileged state, whereas Mariam and Adam are in a very different position. As Adam explained before, regulations and obstacles regarding his refugee state, make it hard for him to feel free, as he feels powerless and surrendered towards the Turkish bureaucracy which decides about his status and his rights (to work, e.g.).

In the next chapter, I will have a deeper look on the topic of privilege and awareness of the own situation regarding crisis. I want to find out how the privilege influences the developed coping mechanisms of a crisis and if my interviewees are aware of having this privilege. Furthermore, I want to know if they reflect their privileges and how they feel about it.

4.3 AWARENESS AND PRIVILEGE

Earlier I asked the question if everyone is able to have a “secret escape”, a place where he or she can escape the “everyday life” and get new energies. I found out that there are little escapes for all of my interviewees, but some of them are more able to integrate these escapes into their life and use them as a tool to not let the crisis get to deep into their daily life. Others simply cannot leave the crisis out because their situation does not allow a separation of *Social* and *Personal* Crisis, as I explained it for the case of Adam.

The topic of awareness and privilege is one that my interviewees come up with and which was not a specific part of my interview guideline, what is why I do not talk with all of my interviewees about it. Some of them talk about privilege in the context of other questions, like Lorena, when we talk about borders and the ability to go abroad:

So if you have one passport, you are more powerful than another, of course. You have somehow more rights. You have more opportunities, but (.) you didn't do anything to deserve a powerful passport. I mean, it's not your personal choice. Or something that you deserve. I mean, I did something better than my husband? No. So why do I deserve this passport? Just that I was born there. And not here. It's not like “Okay, I deserve it, because blabla.” It's not like a graduation. (Lorena/Cem, 2016, p. 8).

Lorena is aware of her privilege and does not think that it is fair to be able to go almost anywhere she wants, because she is a holder of an EU passport. For Nina, it is the same when we talk about the opportunity of leaving Turkey.

It is also a feeling of insecurity, I have to be ready to leave anytime. [...] And this is why we were talking with friends “Where could we go?” but for me it is not Germany, actually I don’t want to go to Europe, but if there is not any other way, then I am privileged and I could leave anytime, but it feels shitty at the same time. To leave many friends of mine that are not holding a European passport behind.²⁶ (Nina, 2016, p. 11).

Nina cannot imagine going back to Germany and does not see her privilege as “fair”, but she knows that the opportunity of going back to Germany always exists. This fact gives her a certain security that allows her to carry on her life in Turkey, to try to help people and feel less limited. Daniel shares the same feeling, as he says that right now he does not consider leaving Turkey because it became his home and the situation has to get worse before he thinks about leaving. He also has the security that the opportunity of going back to Germany always exists:

[...] And right now a lot of shit happened here in the last six months. There will happen a lot more but it is still my home and going back is actually (.), this is not going back. It is going somewhere else. And as I said, I already experienced a lot and a lot more has to happen that I really leave. (Daniel, 2017, p. 15).

This security is a special privilege that only three of my interviewees hold: Daniel, Nina and Lorena, the *Expats that came for Personal Reasons*. They decided to live in Turkey and they are still living there because they want to. This includes the fact that they can leave to a country that is considered as “safe” anytime they want, without visa restrictions. It seems like this privilege is one of the main reasons to be able to separate a *Personal* from a *Social* crisis because it allows a person to keep the *power* of his or her own life. I found out that how people deal with a crisis mainly depends on their personal experiences. Moreover, it also depends on external facts, like the legal status and nationality. Especially my interviewees from Germany hold the privilege to leave Turkey whenever they want and escape the crisis.

²⁶ Original German: „Es ist halt auch ein Gefühl von Unsicherheit, ich muss halt jederzeit bereit sein zu gehen. [...] Und deshalb haben wir jetzt schon so mit Freunden angefangen zu überlegen, ja, wo könnten wir denn jetzt mal hin und aber für mich ist es nicht Deutschland, eigentlich will ich gar nicht nach Europa, aber wenn es halt überhaupt nicht anders geht, bin ich halt privilegiert und ich könnte halt in jedem Moment gehen, aber es fühle sich halt auch scheiße an. Viele Freunde von mir, die halt keinen europäischen Pass haben dann hier zu lassen einfach.“ (Nina, 2016, p. 11).

In the next chapter, I will have a deeper look at the different groups of my sample and try to find comparableness and differences to know if the groups I chose make a difference when it comes to ways of dealing with a crisis.

4.4 DIFFERENCES

To remember: for the purpose of improved clarity and comparability, I divided my interviewees into the following groups, according to the purpose of their stay in Istanbul: The first group are *People from Istanbul*. In this group are Ahmet, Cansu, Cem, Hakim and Hülya. These interviewees are born in the city or live there for at least 10 years. The second group are *Expats*. Here I am separating between people that came to Istanbul for *personal reasons*, like Daniel, Lorena and Nina and those who came for *safety reasons*, like Adam and Mariam who had to flee Syria (for a detailed introduction of my interviewees, see Attachment “B. The Interviewees”).

During my research process I realise that these dimensions have only a small influence on the reaction towards crisis of my interviewees. Nevertheless, there are some remarkable facts that I will state in the following.

The biggest difference between my groups is probably the “privilege” or “white privilege” as Nina (2016:6) calls it. This privilege means above all that a person has the feeling to be in power of her or his own life. Daniel, Lorena and Nina describe how the knowledge of being able to leave Turkey whenever they want, makes it easier for them to find a way to cope with the crisis, even when it does not feel good for them to have this privilege in contrast to their friends from Turkey and other countries like e.g. Syria (see chapter “4.3 Awareness and Privilege”). With the statement “My name is refugee” (Adam 2016: 3), Adam expresses not only how his identity changed, but also that he has the feeling of not being in charge of his own life anymore. It is not only that he is not able to go anywhere he wants and to leave anytime he wants, he also feels disadvantaged and discriminated in many ways, as he describes that without an “Ikamet” (the Turkish Residence permit for foreigners) he has no rights, but it is very difficult to get the residence permit in his position, due to bureaucratic obstacles.

My interviewees that talk about privilege and see themselves in a privileged position (Nina, Daniel, Lorena) seem to have the power of not letting the crisis become chronic

and sneak too deep into their lives. Even they do not see it as fair, they have the power to leave whenever they want and they also have the power to decide until what point they want to let the crisis come into their live.

And now the question is: Okay, how much of these crises I let into my life? Or do I try to not let the crisis become personal and to make myself feel good and show that to the outside? And this is, as I said before, an interaction. That I have in my life and in my environment a big amount of personal freedom and in which ways am I able to carry this to other contexts where my personal freedom is maybe limited? This is an interaction for me.²⁷ (Daniel, 2017, p. 4).

Having the feeling of being in power of your own life seems to be one of the most important mechanisms to prevent an individual from letting a crisis become chronic. Adams crisis became chronic, as “My name is refugee” is his new state of being. He thinks that he cannot change this situation and “accepts” his “new name” that the system gave him.

In addition, my Turkish interviewees feel discriminated by the system, as they are also not able to go anywhere, anytime they want, but none of them says that their state of being, their identity changed, as Adam does.

I realise another difference in many of my Turkish interviewees and also within talks of my Turkish friends while my stay in Istanbul: Many of them have the feeling that are not able to change anything. This attitude of resignation and superseding (see chapter 3.4 and 3.5) is a difference to my Expat interviewees. I realise that many Turkish people say that “things like this” happened before and it is not the first time. They say that life will go on and things will get back to normal again, it is just about waiting.

I think for me it is the same as before. And also for many people it is not the first time that this is happening, you know? There was a military coup before in the ‘80s already. And they know, or they have the feeling that life will go on, so they cannot change anything. (Hakim, 2016, p. 6).

²⁷ Original German: „Jetzt ist die Frage: Okay, wie viel von den Krisen außerhalb lasse ich wirklich in mein Leben rein? Oder versuche ich eher, dass ich persönlich keine Krise habe und dass es mir gut geht nach außen zu tragen? Und dass ist, wie ich vorhin gesagt habe, eine Interaktion. Dass ich in meinem Leben und meinem Umfeld hier ein großes Maß an persönlicher Freiheit habe und inwieweit kann ich das nach außen tragen und vielleicht auch in einen Bereich tragen, in dem persönliche Freiheit vielleicht gerade eingeschränkt wird? Das ist für mich eine Interaktion.“ (Daniel, 2017, p. 4).

Hakims answer shows that the experience in the case of the Turkish society created a paralysis which ends in the feeling of not being able to change anything or to help improving the situation which is shared by many Turkish people.

An accordance that I find within all of the expats is the definition of “home”. They describe “home” as a flexible term and do not refer it to their place of birth (anymore). Home, for them, became a place where they feel good.

[...] home for me is a flexible term. Everything that makes me calm down, that gives me the feeling of having a roof over my head under which I can sleep and which is untouched and safe. This is for me (.) a feeling of home and safety. (Daniel, 2017, p. 2).²⁸

Also Mariam describes how the meaning of home changed for her:

The situation of home and the meaning of home is changed now. Before we were more like “Yeah, home, Syria”. Now I feel that home is where I am. Where I am safe and where I am doing things and having my life, this is my home. (Mariam, 2017, p. 8).

This accordance represents that my expats who came to Turkey for different reasons and with different privileges experience the same change in the meaning of home and safety. My interviewees from Istanbul do not talk about the meaning of home for themselves, because it is not relevant or their current situation.

While analysing my interview material towards comparability, I realise that especially personal experience shape the coping abilities and the ways of dealing with crises. Nevertheless, there are some (external) factors that are specific for the different sample groups and influence the coping possibilities of a crisis. One of them is the privilege to leave Turkey anytime they want, which is a privilege of my *Expats that came out of Personal reasons* and gives them a security that the other groups do not have. Another one is the collective memory of further comparable situations in past times that leads to *Resignation and Superseding* and is mainly visible in the *Interviewees from Turkey* and the *Expats that came out of Safety reasons*. Also the current state of being is influenced by hard facts due to nationality, like Adams incorporation of his current situation as a refugee and the paralysis that comes along with it.

²⁸Original German: „[...]Wobei „zu Hause“ für mich ein recht flexibler Begriff ist, also alles was mich zur Ruhe kommen lässt, was mir das Gefühl gibt, dass ich ein Dach über dem Kopf hab, unter dem ich schlafen kann und dass das unangetastet ist, dass das sicher ist. Das ist für mich (.) ein Gefühl von zu Hause und auch eine Sicherheit.“ (Daniel, 2017, p. 2).

After analysing my material towards the dealing with crises in different ways and out of different perspectives, I will now present the *Coping Mechanisms* that I extracted from my work during a second and deeper analysis of my research material.

4.5 COPING MECHANISMS

The analyses above show how different my interviewees access and deal with crises and insecurities, due to their personal experience, their coping abilities and their current “state of being”. As these coping-abilities are related to earlier situations of insecurity and crises, the persons I talk to bring different strategies and forms of dealing with the current situation they live through in Turkey.

Especially Adam and Mariam, who fled from war-prone Syria, already suffered from situations of insecurity and instability and decided to leave to find a new home in Istanbul. Their analyses of the events and happenings in Turkey is much more pragmatic and less emotional as for example the reactions of my German expat interviewees. Nina is very touched and reacts emotional about the situation in Turkey. She tells me that she feels a constant fear and is always expecting something to happen, like another coup:

I am actually always ready to hide somewhere or that the worst case happens which you can imagine, which is that your friends group gets hit by a bomb and ehm, yes so I am always ready, every time I hear an alarm or see the police or a helicopter flies over my head or there is a confusion somewhere, I feel instantly afraid that there is another military coup-scenario or something like this. (Nina, 2016, p. 4).

Whereas Adam says that he is never feeling safe, but accepted that fact and actually laughed when he heard about the military coup because he felt like he cannot change anything, so he decided just to relax (Adam, 2016, p. 6).

These examples show how the experience influences the behaviour and the feelings regarding the concepts of home, security and crises. In the following, I will sum up the different mechanisms and reactions of my interviewees regarding crises and insecurities, based on their former experience.

While analysing the coping mechanisms of the interviewees, I realise that there are mechanisms that work on a *personal/ individual level* and some that work on a *communitarian level*, when people are gathering to support each other or teamwork on solutions for themselves and for others.

It is important to note that the presented mechanisms are only ways to deal with crises, named by my interviewees and not solutions to solve crises and other problems.

1) The first mechanism that helps my interviewees to deal with crises on a *personal level* and to make them feel better and able to reload their energies is having an *environment/ a place that makes them feel safe*. Some of my interviewees relate this to a specific place, like Nina, when she draws a hidden beach on *Büyükkada* and says that having a place like this is one of the reasons while she is still in Istanbul (Nina, 2016, p.8). Others tell me directly that security, which is an opposite of crisis, means to be with family and friends and to know that the people they care about are safe (Hülya, 2016, p. 1; Hakim, 2016, p. 1). A very strong counterpart to crisis is also having a *“home”*. “Home” is not necessarily connected to the place of birth and socialisation of the interviewees. My expat interviewees explain how the meaning of home changed for them. They connect home to a place where they feel good and safe (Mariam, 2016, p. 8), where they find a certain stability and a place where they can calm down from their every-day life issues (Interv Daniel, 2017, p. 2).

Hence having a place of *stability, security* and the *feeling of having a home*, as opposites of crises and insecurities, are factors that make it easier for my interviewees to deal with personal and social crises and also bring the self-confidence to stand against struggles (Lorena/ Cem, 2016, p. 2).

2) Secondly it seems important to talk about the “state of being” and especially *having the power to decide about the own life* when it comes to crises on a *personal level*. Being in charge of your own life is essential for not letting a crisis become chronicle. When Adam says, “My name is refugee”, he expresses that he feels dependent from state institutions and the decisions of other people. Having the power of your own life is in cases like Adams a key fact of not letting a crises becoming chronicle. By auto describing himself as a refugee, Adam gives the responsibility of certain decisions into the hands of others (people and institutions) and gets paralyzed. As a result he stops trying to change his situation.

Hence, not letting a *crisis become personal* and in a next step *chronicle*, is a mechanism which prevents people from feeling powerless and seguing their life even though their circumstances are crisis-like.

3) The example of Adam shows that not everyone is able to decide if or when a crisis gets chronic. Other interviewees have more power to decide about their life circumstances. *The expats that came for personal reasons* have the power over their life because they know that they can leave any time they want. Having this privilege makes them independent but also needs *reflection and awareness* of the own situation, as Daniel says. He says that for him, it can go on like this without any problem and admits that a lot depends on his privilege of being a foreigner, but also on his:

[...] personal attitude or work [is]. [...] I say, okay, I am living right now in a country which is heading right into a big crisis and ehm, in general there are various crises in this world, which are influencing my life, but in my personal life (.) there is actually no crisis. The question is: Okay, how much of this crises from outside I let into my life? Or do I try that I don't have a personal crisis and that I am fine and carry this to the outside? (Daniel, 2017, p. 4).²⁹

Daniel is able to separate influences from the outside from touching his personal life, which is only possible because he is in a privileged position and his safety is not dependent on state institutions. The security of knowing that there is always a safe place to escape to when the situation gets worse, helps the *Expats that came out of personal reasons* to cope with the crises and gives them an advantage compared to the other groups of interviewees that are suffering from Visa restrictions.

The *reflection* of their own situation, which means to know that they have this advantage, gives them often the feeling of not being fair because they did not earn this privilege (Lorena/ Cem, 2016, p. 8). The reflection of this situation creates *Awareness* and for Daniel also a responsibility towards those who are not having this privilege. Thus, running away and leaving friends and social contacts behind is only the last exit (Nina 2016, p. 11; Daniel, 2017, p. 3).

4) *Leaving the country* is not a way to cope the crisis, but a way to escape it, especially for my Turkish interviewees. All of them say that they want to leave Turkey at some point,

²⁹Original German: „[...] was dann natürlich aber auch meine persönliche Einstellung oder Arbeit ist. Ich sehe das für mich anders. Ich sage, okay, ich lebe gerade in einem Land, das auf eine richtig große Krise zusteuert und ähm, allgemein gibt es auf der Welt auch diverse Krisen, die mein Leben beeinflussen, aber mein Leben persönlich ist eigentlich (.) da gibt es keine Krise. Jetzt ist die Frage: Okay, wie viel von den Krisen außerhalb lasse ich wirklich in mein Leben rein? Oder versuche ich eher, dass ich persönlich keine Krise habe und dass es mir gut geht nach außen zu tragen?“ (Daniel, 2017, p. 4).

mainly to find better living conditions and feeling freer. They do not think that a change in Turkey is possible for them, as Hülya states:

When I can't change the thoughts of the Turkish people, I have to leave from here. They are such a big group. And I am alone. So what can I do? (Hülya, 2016, p. 5).

And continues:

Another reason is that people have only one window and look only into one direction. They don't criticize. And like, especially in the developed countries, you can criticize the politics and maybe even sometimes religion. But in Turkey you cannot do it. You can, but you can go to the jail for it. Especially for women. We have some rights, but they are just on the paper.

You cannot see them in practise. And that's the biggest problem. And also education is a very big problem. And also the income gaps are too high. So yah, we have too much problems and so many reasons to leave. (Hülya, 2016, p. 6).

Hülyas reasons to leave the country are multiple. She wants to leave because the situation in Turkey is not pleasant for her and she does not feel free to live her rights. Hakim, on the other hand, says that his motivation has nothing to do with the terror attacks and the situation in Turkey, but that he always wanted to see something else (Hakim, 2016, p. 6). He is also one of the persons I talk to, who shows an attitude of *superseding* when I ask him if the atmosphere and the feeling in the city changed after the coup and the terror attacks. For him, the feeling is the same as before (Hakim, 2016, p. 6).

5) *Superseding*, which means in this case to act like nothing changed to suppress the confrontation with occurring grievances, is a mechanism to deal with crises, even though it is not a mechanism to solve the crisis. It is more a "mode of waiting" until the crisis passes. This way of dealing with a crisis can be found in both on an *individual/ personal level* as also on a *communitarian level*, when influenced by mass media.

6) One mechanism that is able to make it easier for people to deal with crises on a *communitarian level* are *social (art) projects*. The persons I ask that are somehow involved with art projects all answer that they help them to cope with crises. One of them is Ahmet:

When you are interested with art, like any kind of art, you will like it, because it is part of your soul and you are getting more. Your feelings and you can feel the other people then, that's the thing. You don't feel the other people and if you feel the other people, then it's gonna be the solution. And this should be the main goal of the art. (Ahmet, 2016, p. 5).

For Ahmet, art is a tool to understand people and their feelings, a way to connect people and help them to enforce each other.

Like I was born here, you were born in Germany and you know, we are making art and I don't know, European people want to see that, because it is interesting for them. And you are making art, like any kind of art and it's interesting for us. Because we have different memories and everybody is connected and everything is connected. Like culture, art and you can't say like this, like this. Memory, culture, art, everything is connected. (Ahmet, 2016, p. 4).

Mariam goes one step further when she explains what art projects mean to her:

It is therapy, it is kind of a (.). First it makes the minds relaxed and frees the spirit to, eh. It just let people forget their sorrow and do the art thing or draw or play and so it takes everything inside, they go out and give truly happiness. (Mariam, 2016, p. 4).

For her, art projects can have the same effects as a therapy. They make people forget their daily struggles and offer them a space to escape and feel happy. When she talks about the *Istanbul Mosaic Oriental Choir* she explains how it is exhausting for her but at the same time helps her and other people to better their life a bit:

It brings people together. People who has the same interests with this atmosphere. And everyone is the same. And everyone is happy. And I feel really happy to see all these people, you know. Everyone comes from different cultures. And even Syrians also. They have different (.) environment, different families, different mentality, but they are all happy and singing and believing in it. (Mariam, 2016, p. 4).

Mariam explains how art can bring people together on a level where people are “the same” as she says. For her, every little step counts and everyone can make a difference just by trying to change a small thing. She says that she is not able to change the crisis, but the effects of it. Giving up or superseding is no way for her to cope the crisis and she believes that her actions make some people a bit happier and by this she also feels better (Mariam 2016: 3). Helping others with art projects helps Mariam to cope the crisis for herself and for others. When I ask why she thinks that not more people are involving into projects like the choir, she explains that they are not organised and also don't want to pay so much effort to help, as their life is already “crazy” (Mariam, 2016, p. 3). A better organisation would help to mobilize more people to help and to experience the same sensation of helping yourself by helping others.

Lorena is another person who is helping other people, to make the situation for them easier. She is helping a Syrian refugee family living next door to her in *Balat* (a neighbourhood in Istanbul) with donations from her friends. She is doing solidarity parties for them and helps them to buy the necessary. For her, the reason why many Turkish people do not want to help refugees is their (rising) nationalism. While Turkey was a very plural country (she names Christian, Muslims, Greek, Alevi, Russian, Armenian), she claims that they were all made “Turkish”. Not being Turkish means being a danger, says Lorena, which is why many Turkish people do not like Syrian refugees and do not want to help (Lorena/ Cem, 2016, p. 9).

Also Nina is involving herself in social projects and volunteers for a women centre. Helping for her, is a method to improve the effect and not the cause. When I ask her if she thinks that projects like those she is involved in are effectively helping to cope the crisis, she answers:

If they would help, we would not be in this situation. (Nina, 2016, p. 13).

She continues saying that the system has to change and the government has to work on it. Lorena is adding another point, when she says that many people that engaged themselves in movements and projects to help people solving the crisis actually went abroad because they realise that nothing will change:

They just realised that they cannot change anything. So better go. Because a movement like this, it's a young movement. It must be supported. But the politicians are not there to enforce a young movement full of energy (Lorena/ Cem, 2016, p. 10).

The disappointment of not being able to change anything or of trying to help without feeling that the cause is changing, paralyses people to involve in projects. Some even feel like it is better to leave the country and to use their energy in another context.

To sum up, my interviewees developed several mechanisms to deal with crisis prone situations. The mechanisms are either on a *personal/individual level* or on a *communitarian level* and depend on the life circumstances and the experience of the interviewee.

On a *personal level*, it helps people to deal with a crisis when they have a *safe place* which gives them *stability and security*. This place is usually described as „home“ and most of my interviewees do not necessarily relate this home to their place of birth but more to a feeling of secureness. Secondly, people that are not feeling like they are in charge of their

own life, are paralyzed to change. *Being in power of your own life* is a privilege that especially the *Expats that came out of personal reasons* have. Having this privilege requires *Awareness and Reflection*, but allows to live an almost „normal“ life in a crisis-prone situation. The privilege to leave anytime without visa restrictions is only a „last escape“ for my interviewees. Escaping, or *Leaving the country* is, on the other hand, a desired way to escape the crisis for many of my Turkish interviewees. They hope to „solve“ the crisis by leaving, so it is not affecting their life anymore. Also *Superseding* is a way to deal with a crisis. Here, the people act as if everything is normal. This can happen on an *individual/ personal level*, when they convince themselves that everything is going as always, or on a *communitarian level* when they are being convinced by other instances, like the mass-media that everything is „normal“.

A mechanism to deal with crises on a *communitarian level* are *social (art) projects*, like the *Istanbul Mosaic Oriental Choir*. Projects like these can help to bring people together, make them have a good time and forget their daily struggles for a while. Projects can also directly help people that are effected by the crisis. My interviewees are convinced that social projects, especially art projects help people in crisis-prone situations. Nevertheless, many people are lacking motivation to involve themselves in projects. Sometimes they have the feeling that they cannot change anything anyway. Sometimes they are lacking organisation and feel like their daily life leaves no spaces for engagement.

The presenting mechanisms to deal with a crisis build the final point of my thesis „Crisis – which Crisis?“ and answer the research question „In which ways do people (in Istanbul) deal with crises and insecurities?“.

To conclude my thesis, I reflect my whole research and sum all the findings up that led me to answer the research question, in a final step.

CONCLUSION

The idea of this socio-cultural work was not to give an answer of how a crisis can be solved. It was more to find out how people with different socio-cultural backgrounds that live in the same city under comparable circumstances experience crises, why they react in certain ways and which coping mechanisms they develop to deal with the situation.

For this motive, I chose the research question:

In which ways do people (in Istanbul) deal with crises and insecurities?

The idea of investing into the topic of the perception of crises in Istanbul developed while I was living in the city from 2015 to 2016 and experienced how people react to the terror attacks, the attempted military coup of July 2016 and the changes that came along with these events. I used qualitative research methods, like the *Participant Observation*, *Episodic Interviews* and the *Mental/ Cognitive Map* to answer the research question.

I chose a sample of ten interviewees that live at least five years in Istanbul, so they have a notion about the changes the city is continuously going through, like the Gezi Park Protests in 2013. Furthermore my interviewees came for different motives to Istanbul. Some were born in the city, some came to Istanbul for professional reasons and others for reasons of security, for example fleeing a war prone country like Syria.

The title „Crisis? Which crisis?“ refers to the the difficulty of defining and framing the term „crisis“. In former researches the term usually appeared as a bi-product, where mostly working definitions are used. These definitions have in common that they describe „crises“ as unexpected events that disturb the existing order and often come along with insecurities.

Moreover I chose the title to point out how wide the concept of crisis is and in how many contexts it is used, recently for example a lot concerning the „refugee crisis“.

Along these explanations that refer to the theoretical frame of this thesis, I also chose the title in reference to one of my principal findings of the research. I asked my interviewees what a crisis means to them and if they feel themselves in a crisis right now. Especially my Turkish interviewees answer that they don't feel like there is a crisis, even though they recognize the latest events like the military coup and the terror attacks. I found out that *Superseding*, acting like nothing happened, is a way to deal with a crisis. It is an

attitude that particularly people used who did not experience critical situations themselves and who are not directly affected by the crisis, but who live in a society that already went through crisis, evince. Hence, “Crisis? Which Crisis?” refers to this attitude of superseding.

Being able to push the thoughts of a crisis away is a privilege that other of my interviewees, like those who fled war prone Syria, do not have. As „refugees“ they are directly affected by the crisis, e.g. when it comes to their residential status. The situation of ongoing insecurity made one of my Syrian interviewees saying „My name is refugee“, which reflects how a *Social Crisis* turned into a *Personal Crisis*. To the question of how this interviewee experienced the coup-night he answered

What can I do? If I cry it will be the same, if I laugh it will be the same“ (Adam, 2016),

which shows his *Resignation* and demotivation to get active and try to change.

One of the biggest *Privileges* the German expats I interviewed have is that they are able to not let a *Social Crisis* become *Personal Crisis*. When the situation gets worse, they are able to *leave Turkey* at any time they want, which gives them the *Freedom* to decide about their own destiny and about their personal state of being.

The concept of *Social and Personal Crisis* is from Henrik Vigh (2008). He calls the *Personal Crisis* the “rainy season” and says about the *Social Crisis*

This social dimension becomes something like a background to all events and mechanisms happening (Vigh, 2008, p. 12).

I found out that especially the “*state of being*” and the *experience* shape the abilities of a person to cope with a crisis and to develop coping mechanisms.

The working definition of crisis that I used was given by the interviewees themselves, as I did not want to influence them and my perception as a researcher by using a clear definition of the word “crisis“. I realised that the general concept of crisis is similar for all of my interviewees, although their access and perception of crisis-prone situations is different.

For the people I interviewed a crisis is an unexpected situation that is far away from what they consider as “normal”. Furthermore it is an *opposite of security*. They feel secure when they feel free; hence a limitation of freedom can lead them into a crisis. The so-called “*state of being*”, the personal well-being is another important point for not feeling

themselves in a crisis. My interviewees say that they need *stability* and some kind of “home” to feel safe and to prevent them from falling into a critical position. A crisis leaves them without any hope as they feel like they can’t solve the situation. As hopelessness as a crisis seems to be, it always offers the *chance for something new*.

While analysing my interviews, using the methods of *Coding* and *Text Analyses*, I realise that the differences between the groups of my sample: *People from Turkey, Expats that came out of Personal reasons* and *Expats that came for Security reasons*, are relevant when it comes to their legal status and the big privilege of not having visa restrictions and being able to leave to a safe country any time they want. The rest mostly depends on the personal experience which is only partially influenced by the social and cultural background.

The research question changed from “*How can the power of change in times of a crisis be used to overcome insecurity and empower social cohesion?*” to “*How deal people (in Istanbul) deal with crisis and insecurities?*”. I changed the question after the first interviews due to less complexity and the focus slightly changed. Moreover, I realised that this question was not relevant for all of my interviewees in the same way, as some of them have a long journey of engaging themselves socially in projects and others are not even feeling themselves in a crisis or feel the need of a change. I realised during the interviews how different the perception of the changes is and decided to open my question regarding these first findings.

Through interpreting different codes, I generated from my interview material, I ended up creating a list of mechanisms of dealing with a crisis that are used by the interviewees either on a personal or on a social/ communitarian level.

The first coping mechanism is having a *place of security*, a retreat that makes them feel safe and gives them the feeling of home. This mechanism reflects the *need for stability and security* as a counterpart of crisis.

The second mechanism I discover from my data is *having the power to decide about the own life*. This mechanism refers to *freedom* as an opposite to crisis and also to the statement “My name is refugee” of Adam, which shows that he does not feel himself in power of his life. Not having the decision-making power for a long time can lead a crisis

to become *chronicle*. This feeling of powerlessness can lead people to *resignation*, a state where they gave up trying to better their situation.

Another important point when it comes to dealing with crises is *reflection and awareness*, especially for my German expat interviewees. They have the privilege of not having visa issues and of being able to leave Turkey whenever they want. This gives them an advantage over the other interviewees, but also a responsibility. Realising and reflecting their privilege makes it easier to deal with the crisis, as it gives them security and freedom, but also a guilty conscience towards their friends from Turkey.

Superseding or acting as if nothing happened, is an attitude I realise especially in my interviewees from Turkey. They say that things are the same as before and that it is not the first time that an event like this happens. This is a mechanism that only people who are not directly affected by the crisis are showing.

Leaving the country is more a method to escape the crisis and not really a mechanism to deal with the crisis. Anyway, all of the interviewees from Turkey are considering leaving Turkey because they are hopeless that anything will change soon and that they will be able to change their situation in a way that they satisfies them.

The last mechanism I found is *taking action*. Some of my interviewees, like Ahmet from Turkey and Nina from Germany are disillusioned and feel powerless because their attempts to help are unlikely to have sustainable effects. The motive of their demotivation is that they do not feel capable of changing the causes of the crisis, which would be the only way of „really“ making a difference for them.

Mariam from Syria, on the other hand, initiated a choir that brings people with different backgrounds together to make oriental music. For Mariam, it is like a therapy for herself and for the people joining the project. According to her experience in Syria, she realised that waiting for the crisis to pass is not a way for her. She tries to better the situation within the system. Adam also got disillusioned and accepted the fact that he will never feel safe again. Still he is trying to engage himself into projects to make his situation more livable.

These cases show how important the experiences are when it comes to dealing with crisis-prone situations. It seems like people who already lived in critical situations like Mariam and Adam from Syria, have different accesses to the topic than my German interviewees

or also my Turkish interviewees. Adam and Mariam know how it is to live in total insecurity and without freedom. It seems like they are insensitive to the crisis in Turkey and feel like they cannot do anything. On the other hand they arrange themselves better with this situation and know that they can still do something to make the situation easier, even though they are not able to change principles. Nina, Daniel and Lorena never lived in a war-prone country and especially Nina shows a deeply shocked attitude and tells that after the coup she is afraid that something like this could happen again any time. Together with Lorena and Daniel she holds the advantage to leave any time to a safe country, like Germany, without Visa restrictions. Knowing about this privilege makes it easier for them to deal with the situation in Turkey. My Turkish interviewees did not make experiences like the coup before, but as it was not the first to stroke Turkey, the collective memory of those who lived during this time, probably influenced their perceptions of the happenings. Hakim calls it a "hidden crisis" that sneaks into the society and is either not noticed or repressed by those experiencing it.

One big difference within the groups of my interviewees is the privilege of being able to prevent a *Social Crisis* from becoming a *Personal Crisis*. This privilege is held by the interviewees that came to Turkey for personal reasons and hold a passport that allows them to leave to a safe place whenever they want.

At the end, I want to expound my personal perception of crisis after this long process of researching and writing my thesis.

Before investigating into the topic of crises, I used the word „crisis“ like everyone for moments of disappointment, when I did not feel good. I also used it in wider contexts, like „Global Crisis“, never really thinking about what exactly „crisis“ means.

After my investigation, I know a lot more what crisis means. Even though, I am not able to define it. I found out that there is no definition for crisis, at least not in the socio-cultural field, where definitions would frame and limit the dimensions of the term. What a „crisis“ is and when it begins, is a highly subjective feeling, that can be instrumentalised by politics and mass media.

I also found out that my naive view that crises lead to zest and cohesion is not true. In many cases life goes on as usual and people arrange with crisis-prone situations on their own. I learned that coping mechanisms are developed through the experience that people

in crisis prone situations made and I believe that the knowledge of these experiences can help other people in similar situations, if it is shared.



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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW GUIDELINE

Demographic questions:

- To begin I would like you to tell you age and where you were born.
- My second question is how long you live in Istanbul and what you are doing here and what you did before coming here.
- Furthermore I would like to know if you are religious or not.
➔ You do not need to tell your name, as this interview is anonymous. Your name will not appear anywhere.

1. Personal ideas about the concepts of “crisis”, “insecurities”, “fear” and “borders”

My research is about the life of different people under conditions of insecurities and crisis. For now, I will not tell you more as I want you to answer the following questions with the first things that come into your mind. This part will contain six questions.

1. What means safety/ security for you?
 - 1.1. Do you feel safe right now?
2. What is freedom for you?
 - 2.1. Do you feel free right now?
3. What is fear for you?
 - 3.1. What scares you?
 - 3.2. Do you feel fear right now?
4. What means democracy for you?
5. What means the word “crisis” for you?
 - 5.1. Are you in a crisis right now?
6. How would a world without borders look like?

That was the first part of the interview. I am sure that you might have questions, but please wait to ask them until we arrive at the third part of the interview. If you have any questions regarding the understanding of the interview, you can ask of course.

2. Istanbul as a place to live

The next set of questions will be about your life in Istanbul and your relation to the city. Again, I want to answer the questions with the first things that come into your mind.

But to start this section, please draw your favourite place in Istanbul and while you are drawing, you can tell me why you choose this place, what you relate with it, how your experiences were there and how you feel when you are there.

Now we will start with the next set of questions that will contain three questions.

1. If you would have to describe Istanbul with one word, which word would it be?
2. If Istanbul would have a colour, which colour would it have?
3. If I would have asked these questions five year ago, would your answer have been the same?

3. Specific questions regarding the latest events in Istanbul and the coping of the crisis

Now I am coming to the last part of the interview which will deal with more specific questions regarding the current situation in Istanbul. What you think about it, what has changed and how you and the people around you deal with these changes. But before we start, I would like to open my research question for you:

*“How can the power of change in times of a crisis be used to overcome insecurity and empower social cohesion?”*³⁰

[The last set of question will differ a bit as the interviewees did not live the same amount of time in Istanbul and may have a different relation to the city and a different status in the city (employee, unemployed, motivation of living in Istanbul, etc.)]

[Questions for all groups]

1. How did you experience the night of the Coup? Please tell me about it.
→ *How did you feel and why?*
2. How did you experience the time right after the Coup? Please tell me about it.
3. Do you think/ feel that the atmosphere in the city changed since the latest events (coup and terror attacks)?

³⁰The research question changed towards less complexity during the process of research. It is believed that this fact did not influence the interviews. New research question:

“In which ways do people (in Istanbul) deal with crisis and insecurities?”

4. Do you think that there is a general feeling of insecurity in the city? If yes, what are the indicators?
5. Do you see any connection to the Gezi-Park Protests, regarding the question of security, feeling and atmosphere? What are the similarities/ differences?
6. Do you think that your future in Istanbul will be different now? Did your plans change?

Any kind of crisis always includes a change. Even the word “crisis” is mainly connoted in a negative way, this power of a change could also be used as a chance.

7. How do you think possible ways to cope the crisis could look?
8. Can you think of specific problems that grew out of the crisis? (□ nationalism e.g.)
9. Who do you think is most affected of the crisis and how could them be helped?
10. Can you think of ways how a crisis could be used as a chance?

10.1. How could people be able to see the potentials of a crisis?

11. Do you know (cultural) projects or persons that deal with the crisis in any way and try to improve the situation of the affected people? Tell me about it.

12. Do you know people/ projects that took the crisis as a chance and grew out of it?

That was is from my side. Do you want to add something or do you have any advices that could help me? Thank you.

As mentioned before, some questions differ between the groups of the sample. In the following these different questions will be shown.

[Questions exclusive for *People from Istanbul*]

1. When you look back ten years ago, then five years ago to the time of the Gezi-Park Protests and to now, did you ever feel insecure?

1.1. How about your friends and family?

□ □ *Deeper questions of why, how was the feeling and how did the person deal with that, if necessary.*

2. Do you consider moving somewhere else? In another city or another country? If yes where and why?

[Questions exclusive for *Expats- personal reasons to stay in Istanbul*]

1. Were you concerned about your own safety and the security in the city when you first came to Istanbul?
 - 1.1. Are you concerned about it now?
 - 1.2. How about your friends and family? (in Istanbul and back home)
2. When you look back to the time of the Gezi-Park Protests and to now, did you feel unsecure during that time? What were the differences comparing to now?
➔ *Deeper questions of why, how was the feeling and how did the person deal with that, if necessary.*
3. Do you consider going (earlier) back to your country of origin now?
4. How do your friends and family back home think about the situation and what impact has their opinion on your decision?
5. Do you think the situation for foreigners in Istanbul will change now?

[Questions exclusive for *Expats- safety reasons to stay in Istanbul*]

- Same questions as “*Expats- personal reasons to stay in Istanbul*” until question 3.
 3. Do you consider leaving Turkey now and going to another country? If yes where?
 - 3.1. Do you/ did you see Istanbul as your final destination?
 4. Does the current situation in Istanbul remind you of the conflicts on your country of origin?

APPENDIX B. THE INTERVIEWEES

As mentioned in the “Sample” I chose to interview different people to find an answer to the question how do people that currently live in Istanbul (and lived there for the past years), do cope with the changes happening in the city in the last year and since the Gezi-Park-Protests.

Under the variable “People from Istanbul”, what I consider people with a Turkish nationality that live in Istanbul for at least ten years, I interview three people, who will be presented in the following.

Ahmet (28)

The first person to be interviewed is *Ahmet (28)*³¹. Ahmet lives in Istanbul since 12 years and is originally from Balıkesir. He came to Istanbul to go to university. He comes from a very religious family and started to study theology at *Istanbul University*. After a few years of studying theology he started to question the concepts of religions and today he considers himself as not religious.

I don't believe in anything and (.) yah, I don't believe in believing something, kind of. (Ahmet, 2016).

He went to a different, smaller university then and graduated in Public Relations. He is now working as a film director and in different jobs like marketing.

I meet Ahmet in the beginning of my stay in Istanbul in several cultural events and talk with him about his projects in Istanbul and also about the difficulties he is facing. Ahmet thinks a lot about the society he lives in and how he as an individual fits into this society and into Istanbul:

For me now, it's kind of like a big prison. Maybe it's just because of me, but I just don't feel free and I am afraid. It's not like I am just afraid, I am still enjoying my life, it's just that I am afraid of my future and then I am feeling not secure and I am feeling like in a prison. (Ahmet, 2016, p. 8).

The talks with Ahmet inspired me to investigate more into the topic of crisis and the perception of it, which is why I choose to have my first interview with him.

³¹ All the names are changed due to anonymity reasons.

The interview with Ahmet takes place in a café in Eminönü, Istanbul on the 06.09.2016. It is very pleasant to interview Ahmet, as he quickly enters into the story-telling and I don't have to "push" him to tell me things. He is very open and doesn't seem to be shy to talk about anything, which I also refer to the fact that I knew him before. I realise after the interview that interviewing such a talkative person can also be tricky, as the person can easily deviate from the subject of investigation and chat about subjects that are important for him/ her, but not purposeful for my research. Especially in this interview, I sometimes did not seize the right moment to direct Ahmet back into the direction of my subject of investigation.

Hülya (23)

I have my second interview in this section of "People from Istanbul" with *Hülya*. Hülya was born in Istanbul and grew up in the outskirts of the city. She just graduated from University in "International Trade and Finance" and works for an organisation that organizes student exchanges for Turkish students. I meet Hülya through a university program and she tells me about her Erasmus year in Germany and how it was for her to come back to Istanbul. She tells me about the difficulties she faces in Istanbul that she only realises since she is back. At the same time I get to know her as a very family-related Muslim woman for whom the most important thing is to be surrounded by family and friends:

(.) living out of the dangerous process, living with my family and friends and you don't hope for more good things, you know? (.) I think safety is like this. (Interview Hülya, 2016, p. 1).

I decide to interview Hülya as she seems to be very grounded and connected with Istanbul and also helps her family financially. At the same time she has the big dream of making a Master Degree abroad and feel more free:

Because [in Istanbul] you don't feel so free to say everything. Everyone talking. This one says that, this one says that, your political opinions, if you have a boyfriend, everything. I feel like I have to be like they expect. If not, I cannot trust. (Interview Hülya, 2016, p. 2).

The interview with Hülya takes place in her family's apartment at the 24.09.2016. Hülya is answering my questions very precisely without telling me more than the question is asking. Sometimes I feel like I have to dig a bit deeper and ask her more, which works

sometimes better and sometimes worse. All in all I have the feeling that Hülya wants to be very correct in my interview and with me, which maybe limits her in her answers.

Hakim (23)

I meet Hakim at the *Istanbul Mosaic Oriental Choir*, where he was a member, but then quits the choir for personal reasons. He is a university student of economics in Istanbul and was born in Istanbul. He lives with his family. The Istanbul Mosaic Oriental Choir is formed by Singers with different nationalities, but mainly Syrians. Usually new members find out about the choir from friends or because they have some connection to the Syrian community in Istanbul. Hakim contacts the conductor himself, after he researched about choirs and finds the concept of the choir interesting. He has no connection to the Syrian community in Istanbul before and tells me about his thoughts and how his perception of the so-called “refugee-crisis” changes.

I think they are our brothers and sisters. They have the same religion, they have a similar culture. But some people are angry at them because they think that they come and get jobs from the Turkish people. [...] Some people think it's not fair. But I don't know. I think we should help them, you know? (Interview Hakim, 2016, p. 5).

The Interview with Hakim takes place in a café in Beyoglu in Istanbul on the 02.09.2016. The interview with Hakim is one of the most difficult ones for me. He is blocking some of my questions, even though he is friendly. For example, he does not want to talk about any questions that are related to politics. I explain to him that my issues are his feelings and the effects of the political decisions and events on a social and individual level, but he still doesn't want to talk about it. So I resign and skip a few questions, which in the end makes me feel unsatisfied.

Cansu (31)

Cansu is a friend of a friend of mine that indicated her for an interview for me. I meet her one time with this friend to get to know her and then we meet for a dinner and have the interview together. When I talk to my Turkish friend about my thesis-project, he directly indicated Cansu for me. She is from Diyarbakir, from a Kurdish family and studied medicine. She came to Istanbul for working and for living, as she says.

[...] I feel okay here. I feel relaxed when I come back to Istanbul. And I feel like in the right place. So I feel like home. (Interview Cansu, 2016, p. 4)

Back home in Diyarbakir, the situation of her family is not easy, as some of her relatives lost their jobs, mainly after the coup in July 2016. Cansu seems to me like a very open spirit that is mainly looking for her own happiness, so she really likes travelling and takes every possibility to do so. She also tells me that, due to her job, she meets a lot of different people and gets a lot of different perspectives on all kinds of topics, which also influences her own ideas and is a reason why I choose her for my interviews.

[...] I can observe many kinds of people because of my job. I can say that more conservative people feel more secure because the circumstances go more conservative. And let's say things are getting more stable for some people, at least they feel this, and for some people it is getting more complicated. (Cansu, 2016, p. 6).

I meet Cansu for the interview at the Cevahir Mall in Istanbul on the 26.09.2016. The interview with Cansu is very friendly and the atmosphere is nice. She answers all my questions and sometimes switches to the mode of story-telling, which is interesting for me, so I let her talk. Even Cansu seems to be self-confident, she often replies that she is not an expert in this field and doesn't know if she can answer it. I tell her that there is no wrong answer and she should just tell what she thinks, which works in most of the cases.

Cem (33)

The form of Cem's interview is different than the other interviews. I interview him together with his wife (Lorena). The Turkish/ German couple lives together in Istanbul since 2015. They meet in Istanbul where Lorena lives and works since five years. Cem also came five years ago from *Van* to Istanbul. He says that he is coming and going but considers Istanbul as his base. His family is Kurdish and still lives in Van. Cem is working in different jobs in Istanbul and would like to travel and explore more which he says he can't.

[...] free means (.) what we are doing now, we want it or not? We don't want. What we want, to be free, we'd like to travel for example. If you cannot do it, you are not free. We would like to go, I don't want to go to work now. But I must. It means that I am not free. (Lorena/ Cem, 2016, p. 3).

While I am planning to interview Lorena, the idea of interviewing Cem together with her develops spontaneously, as he is there when we start the interview and seems to be interested.

The interview with Cem and Lorena takes place in their house in Balat, Istanbul on the 02.09.2016. Cem is very talkative and I have to pay attention that he does not lead the interview into his own direction, which is mainly anti-capitalistic and seems to be his explanation for almost all kinds of crises.

In the next step, I will present the *Expats* that I interviewed. This group is divided into people that came to Istanbul for *Personal reasons* and people that came for *Safety reasons*.

Lorena (32)

Lorena is married to Cem since almost a year. She originally comes from South Germany and lives in Istanbul for five years. She came as a tourist and then stayed as a language student and didn't want to leave after. She had different jobs and currently works as a language teacher. I meet her at an event and talk to her about a solidarity party that she organises or a refugee family that lives in her neighbourhood. She tells me about her voluntary work for this family, how she met them and what she does for them and why. She is interested in the topic of my thesis and we agree on having an interview together, which was joined by her husband, as mentioned above. We continue having the interview in English even after her husband left for work. It feels more natural for us, as we started already in English. Lorena is an easy interview-partner and I almost don't have to focus on my guideline, as she comes up with many topics on her own. I experience the interview situation easier after her husband went to work and I can focus on her alone.

Nina (31)

I meet Nina a few times in the Yoga-Community in Istanbul before talking to her for the first time. She came to Istanbul after she graduated from Social Work in Freiburg and actually just wanted to stay until her money finishes, but then stayed in Istanbul. She says that she always wanted to live somewhere else and Turkey was close for her, as she grew up with Turkish and Kurdish friends and worked with Kurdish refugees in Germany.

[...] Somehow I always, since my childhood, had friends from Turkey, Turkish and Kurdish friends, always and I also worked for a refugee-organisation and for example gave a German

course with many Kurdish people from the Southeast or from Istanbul and this is why I was so curious and then came here in 2009, after my studies [...] (Nina, 2016, p. 1)³²

Nina is working for a women organisation in Istanbul and through her work gains different perspectives and views and an insight into the life of different people, especially women and their sufferings in Istanbul. I have the interview with Nina in a Café in Kadiköy, Istanbul on the 27th of September 2016. I held the interview with Nina in German and translate the passages that I use for the analyses of this thesis. I first thought that the interview situation with Nina will be a bit rushed, as she had an appointment. I am even more surprised that the interview with her is the longest I have. She is a storyteller, which makes it easy for me, as she comes up with most of the topics herself and it is very interesting to listen to her. At the same time I have to pay a lot attention, as she is talking very fast and I have to concentrate a lot.

Daniel (32)

I meet Daniel through Nina, whom I ask for Expats that live in Istanbul at least for five years. She names him and I find out that I already met him before. After a short informal interview, he agrees on having an interview with me. Daniel came five years ago with his ex-girlfriend to Istanbul and just wanted to stay a few months. He then kept staying and now considers Istanbul as his home, which is why leaving, even though the circumstances change, is not an option for him.

[...] I know that I am at home here. And right now it is not so awesome, a lot of shit happened in the last six months. There will happen a lot still, but it is still my home and going back is actually (.), it is not going back. It is more going somewhere else. (Daniel, 2017, p. 15).³³

My interview with Daniel is a lot later than the other interviews. It takes place on the 17th of March 2017 in his apartment in Aynali Cesme in Istanbul. It is so much later because I

³² Original German: „[...] Ich hatte irgendwie auch schon immer, seit meiner Kindheit, Freunde aus der Türkei, also sowohl Türken, Kurden, also immer und ich habe auch während meines Studiums in einer Flüchtlingsorganisation gearbeitet und da zum Beispiel in einem Deutschkurs mit ganz vielen Kurden aus dem Südosten oder auch aus Istanbul gearbeitet und deshalb hatte ich so eine Neugierde und dann nach dem Studium bin ich eben 2009 hier her gekommen [...]“ (Tanja, 2016, p. 1)

³³ Original German: „[...] Ich weiß ich bin hier zu Hause. Und es ist halt gerade nicht geil, es ist schon eine Menge Scheiß passiert im letzten halben Jahr. Da wird auch noch viel passieren, aber es ist nach wie vor mein zu Hause und zurückgehen ist eigentlich (.), das ist nicht zurück. Sondern halt woanders hingehen.“ (Daniel, 2017, p. 15).

am back in Istanbul for a short time in March 2017 and it is the time right before the Referendum.³⁴ I consider it as interesting and important to have an interview now, as again the situation changed. Furthermore by this time, I already worked on my interview-material and feel a lot safer as an interviewer and know where to focus on. I held the interview with Daniel in German.

The interview with Daniel is very easy-going and the atmosphere is probably one of the most pleasant ones. He has a very nice and calm way of talking, which is not too fast and very easy to follow. Also the fact that we talk in German relaxes my mind lets me focus a lot easier. Daniel takes his time for thinking and always answer my questions exactly, without drifting into different directions, which also makes it a lot easier for me.

In the following I will present the interviewees that I choose to interview for the section *Expats-Safety reasons*.

Mariam (32)

Mariam conducts the *Istanbul Mosaic Oriental Choir* and is one of the people that first comes into my mind when I was thinking about people to interview for my research. She came to Istanbul from Syria, with a two years layover in Lebanon, as a music teacher. Since then she is working as a freelance music teacher and initiates different cultural projects, like fests for at the end of Ramadan, where she collects donated presents to hand them to Syrian children in need.

[...] I mean, I am trying to, eh, I care about children. So I love to give some happiness to them, in some way, with love. And to help people as much as I can. It will not finish the problems, for sure. But it will make some people a bit more happy or happier. (Interview Mariam, 2016, p. 3).

I decide to interview Mariam because she is involved in the Turkish and the Syrian expat community and has a lot of contacts through her voluntary work. The interview takes place in Mariams Apartment in Yesilpinar in Istanbul on the 17th of September 2016.

I had big expectations on this interview with Mariam and caught myself being a bit disappointed, as she is very kind, but does not seem so motivated for this interview. Her

³⁴ See: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-38883556>

answers are short and many times I have to dig until I find out what I am looking for. I feel a bit frustrated and released when the interview is finished.

Adam (29)

Adam works as a sound engineer for an Arabic speaking radio station in Istanbul. He already lives outside of Syria for 10 years, because he was under the risk to get imprisoned for his journalistic and political activism in Syria. His way took him from Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Dubai and Lebanon to Istanbul, four and a half years ago. Adam is a friend of Mariam which I meet a few times at the choir rehearsals and also at the concerts we have, where he uses to help Mariam in organisational issues. Moreover Mariam indicates him to for an interview with me. Adam's motivation to live outside of Syria is not only because of the war, as he tells me. In my talks with him, I find out that his "crises" are mostly individual ones that limit his freedom.

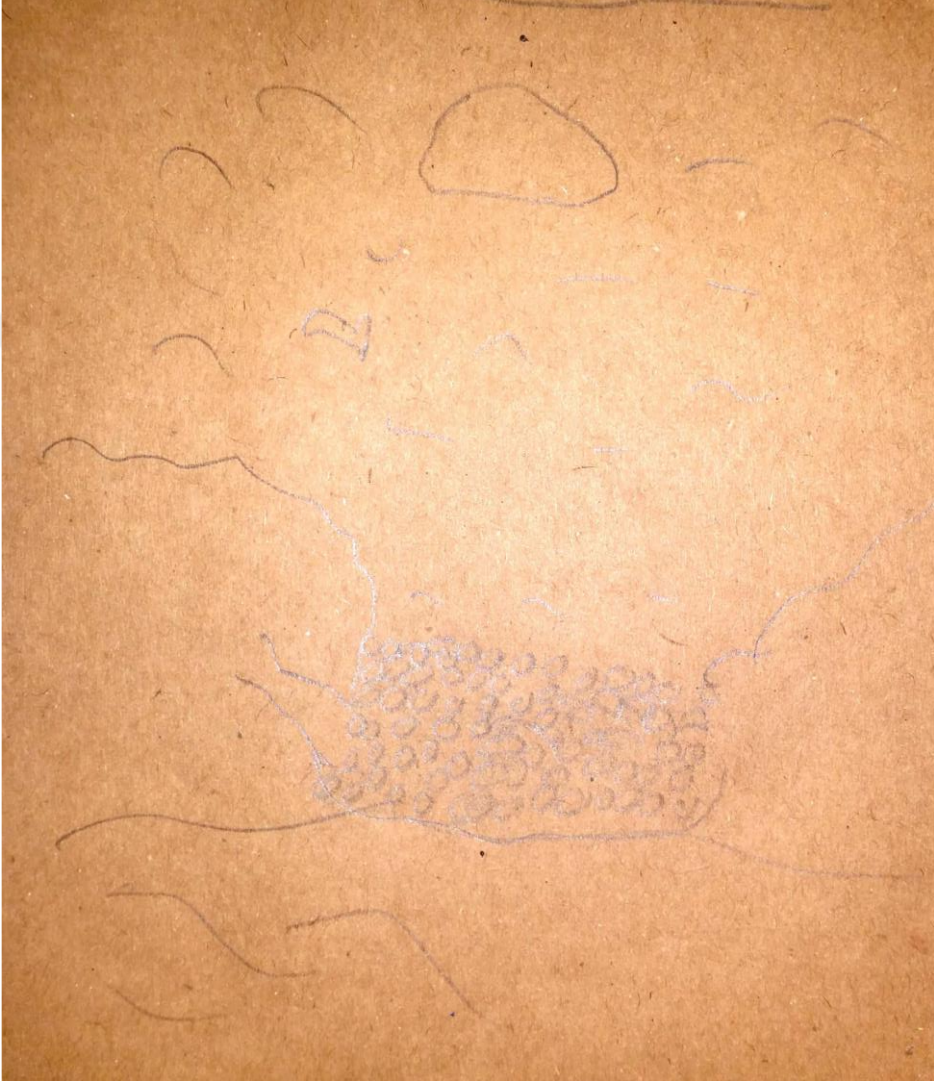
In my opinion there is a big difference of people who came because of the war and the normal people, they already don't want to live there in Syria and the Syrian regime. For me, I am from the second people. Already when there is no war, I don't want to live in Syria. I hate to live there. (Adam, 2016, p. 2).

My interview with Adam takes place in a Café in the Galata-district of Istanbul on the 15th of September 2016. The interview with Adam is very easy-going and he seems to be happy about the opportunity to talk with me about his ideas and concepts of insecurity and crisis. For me it seems like this is not the first time that he thinks and talks about it and that these topics are concerning his everyday life.

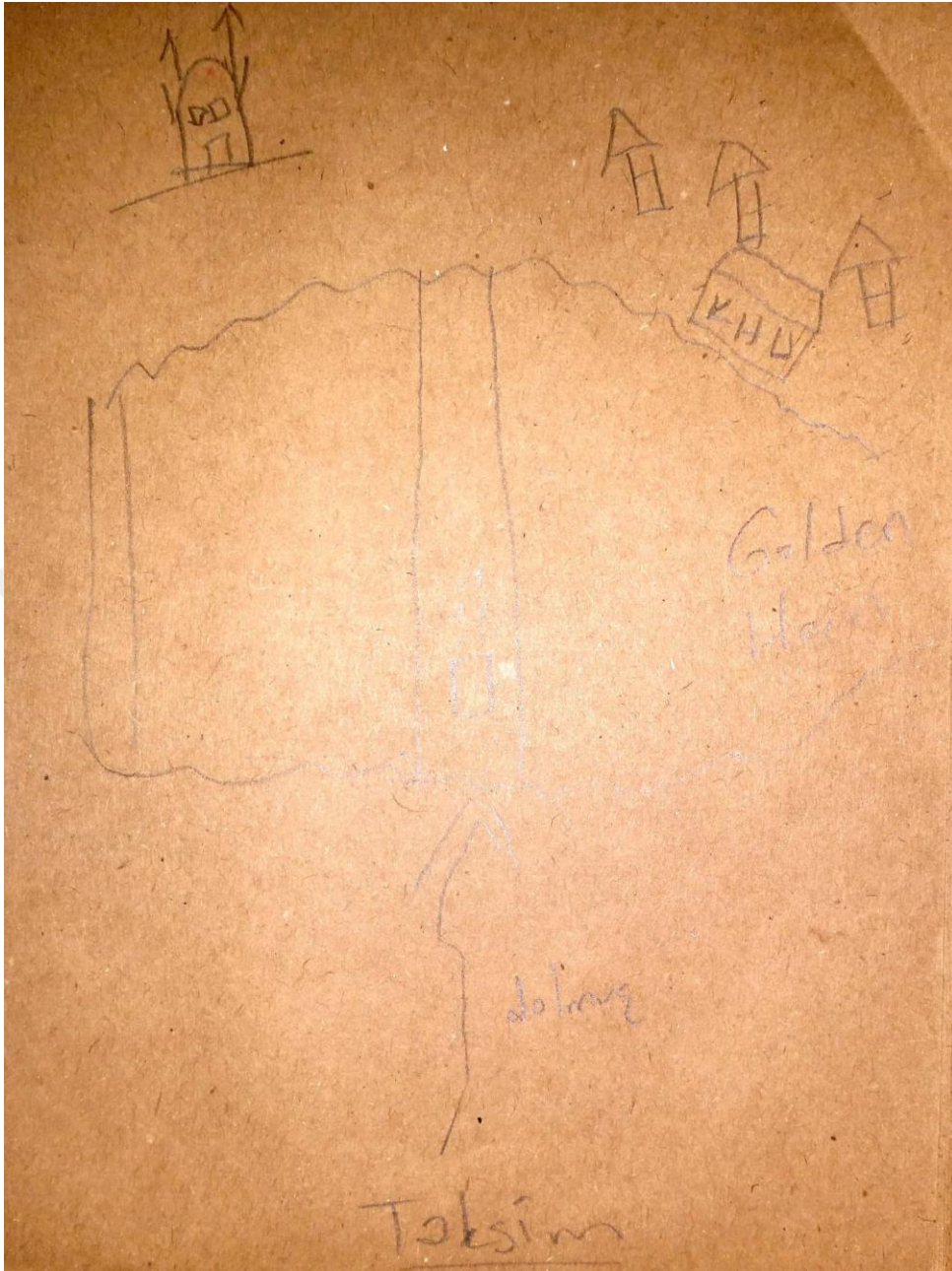
In the following, I will try to answer the six questions mentioned above by analysing my interview material with the of the codes and subcodes I generated out of the guideline and the interviews.

APPENDIX C. THE MENTAL MAPS

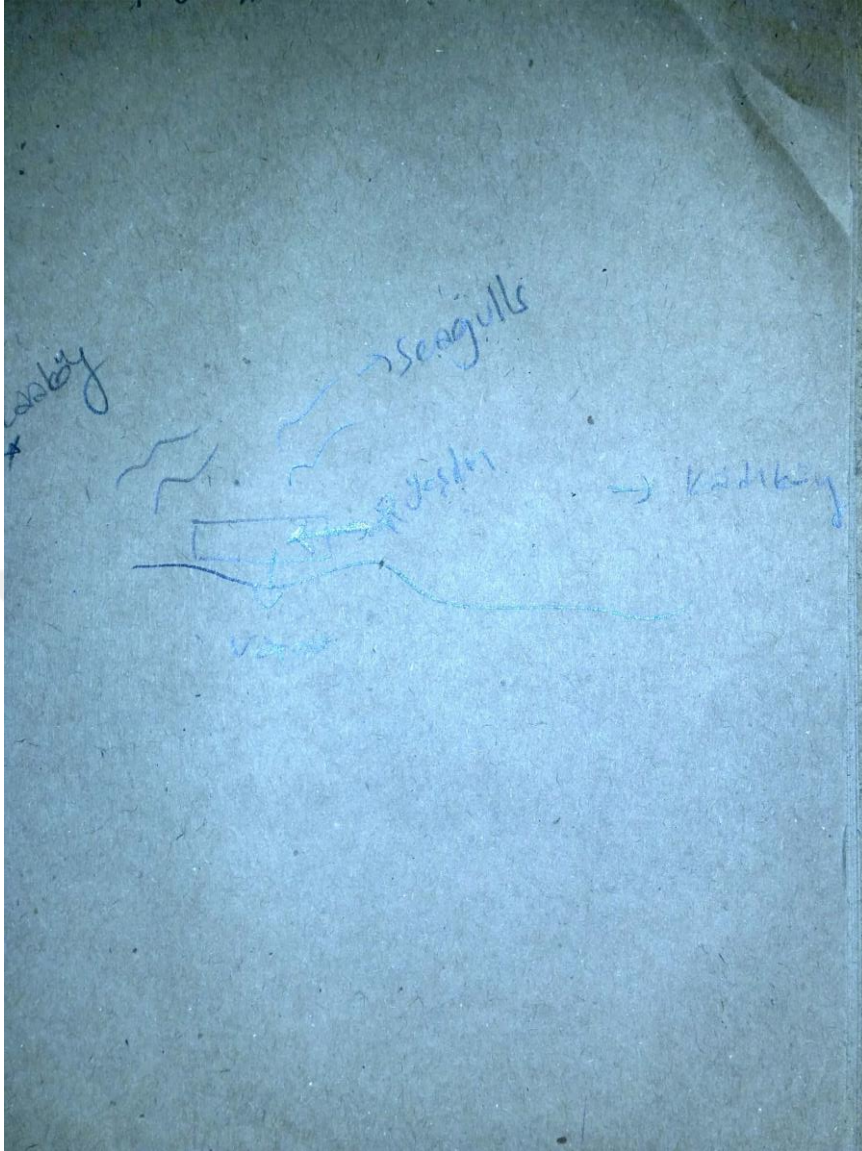
Nina: Büyük Ada



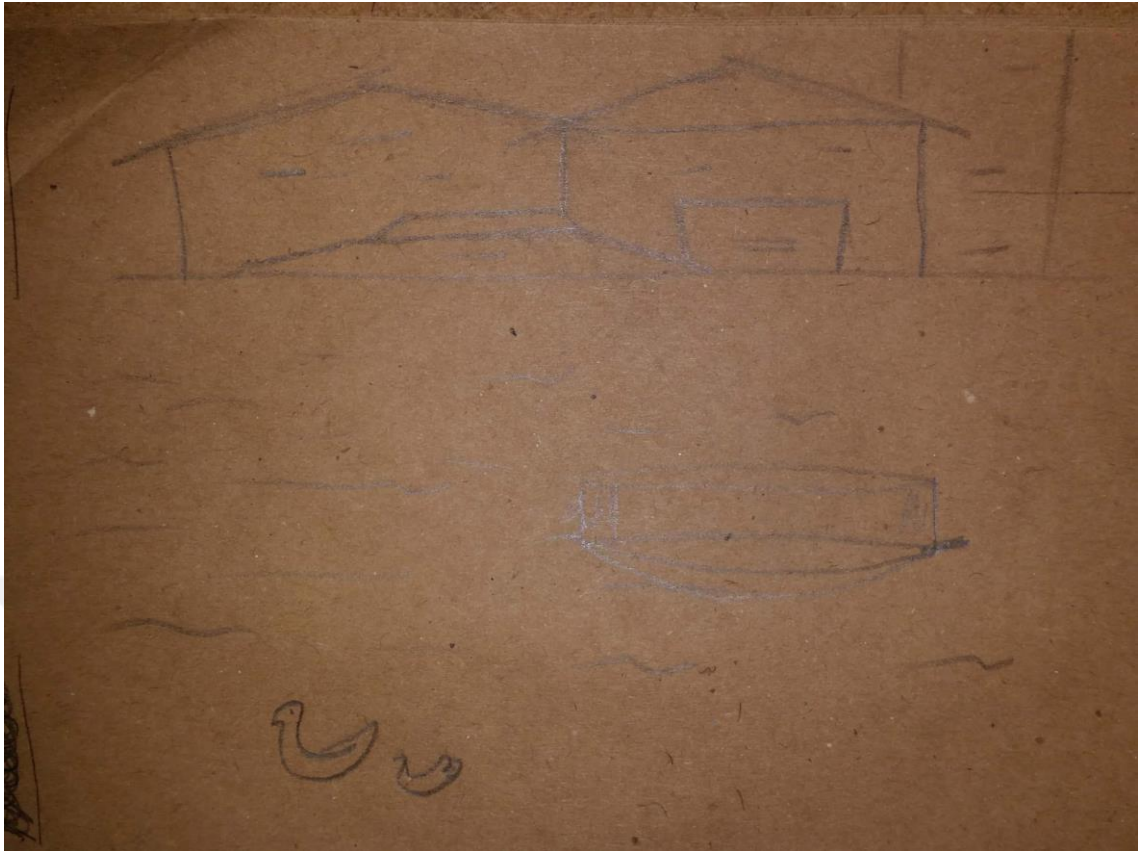
Cansu: Golden Horn



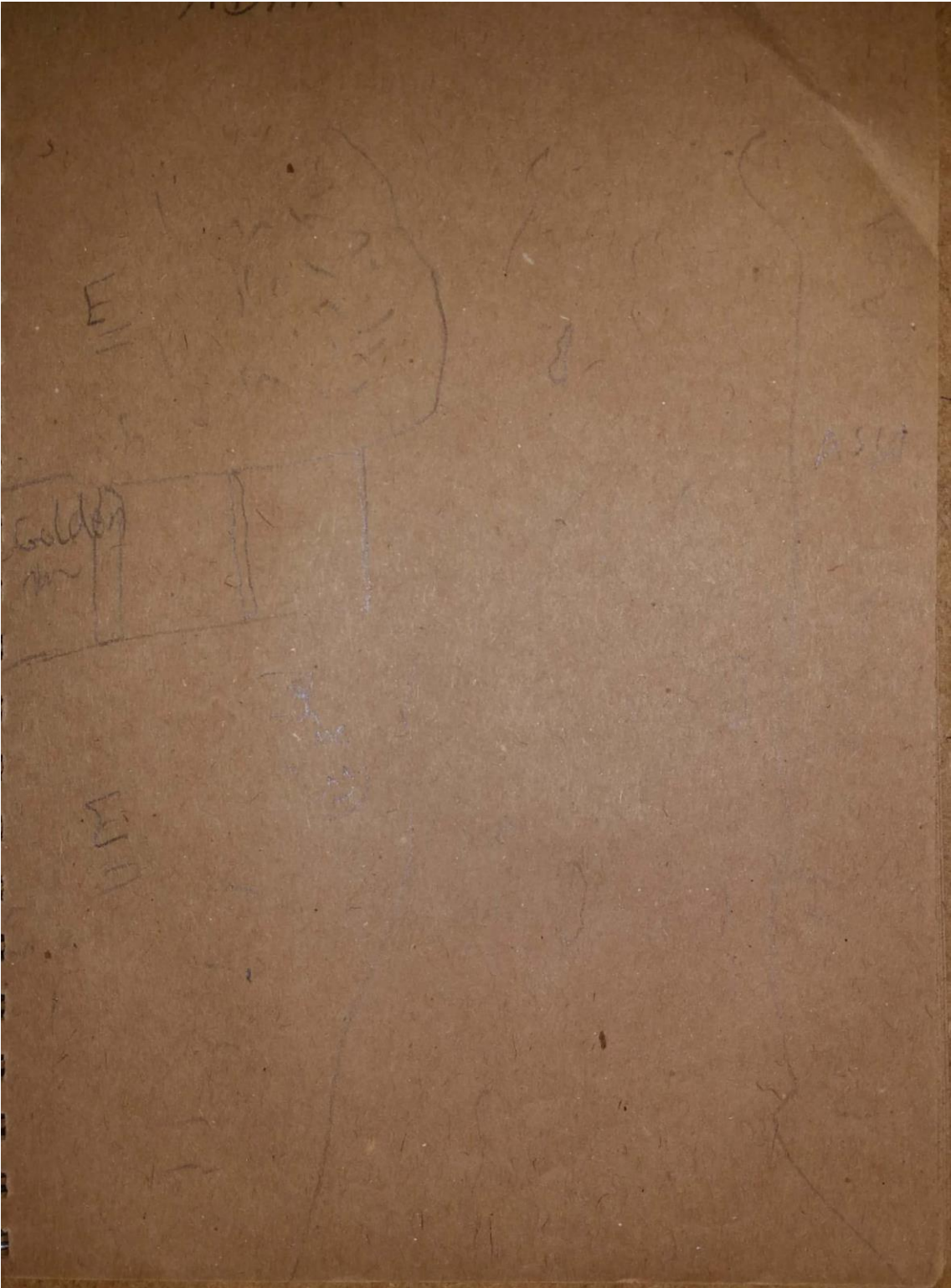
Hülya: Kadıköy



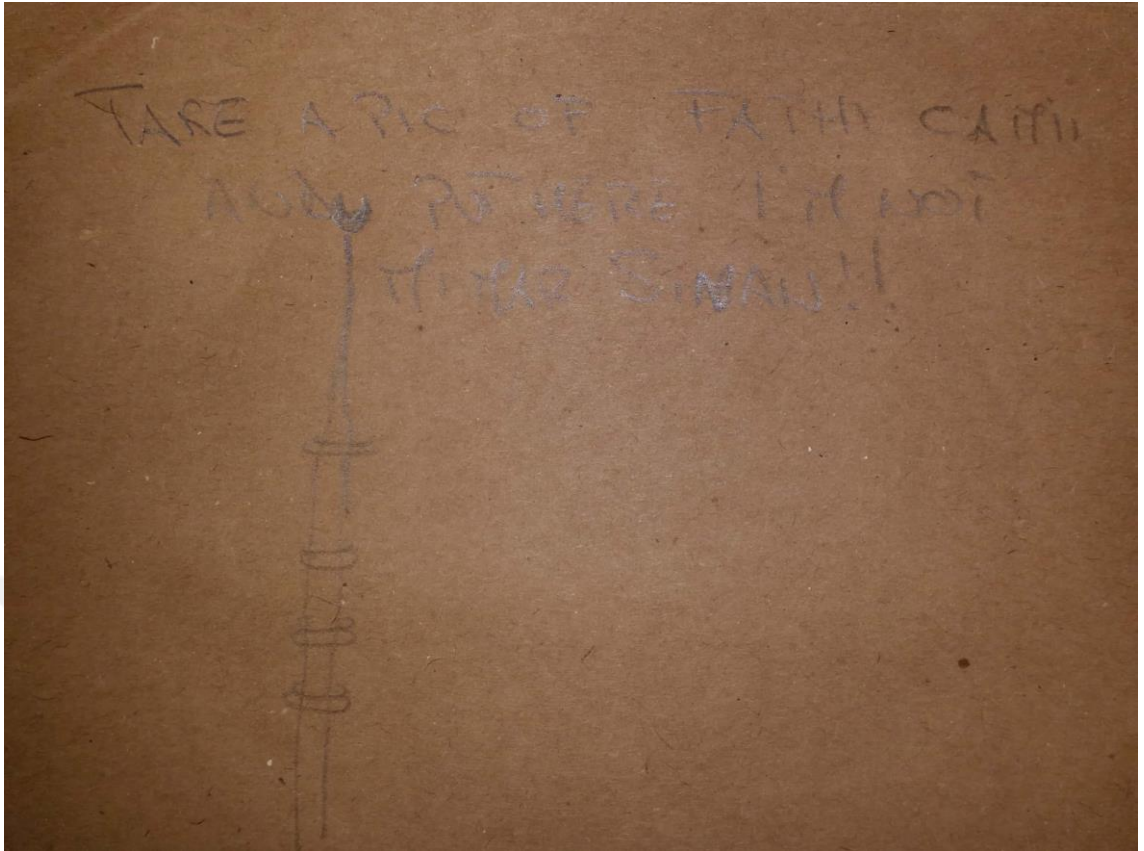
Mariam: Balat Park



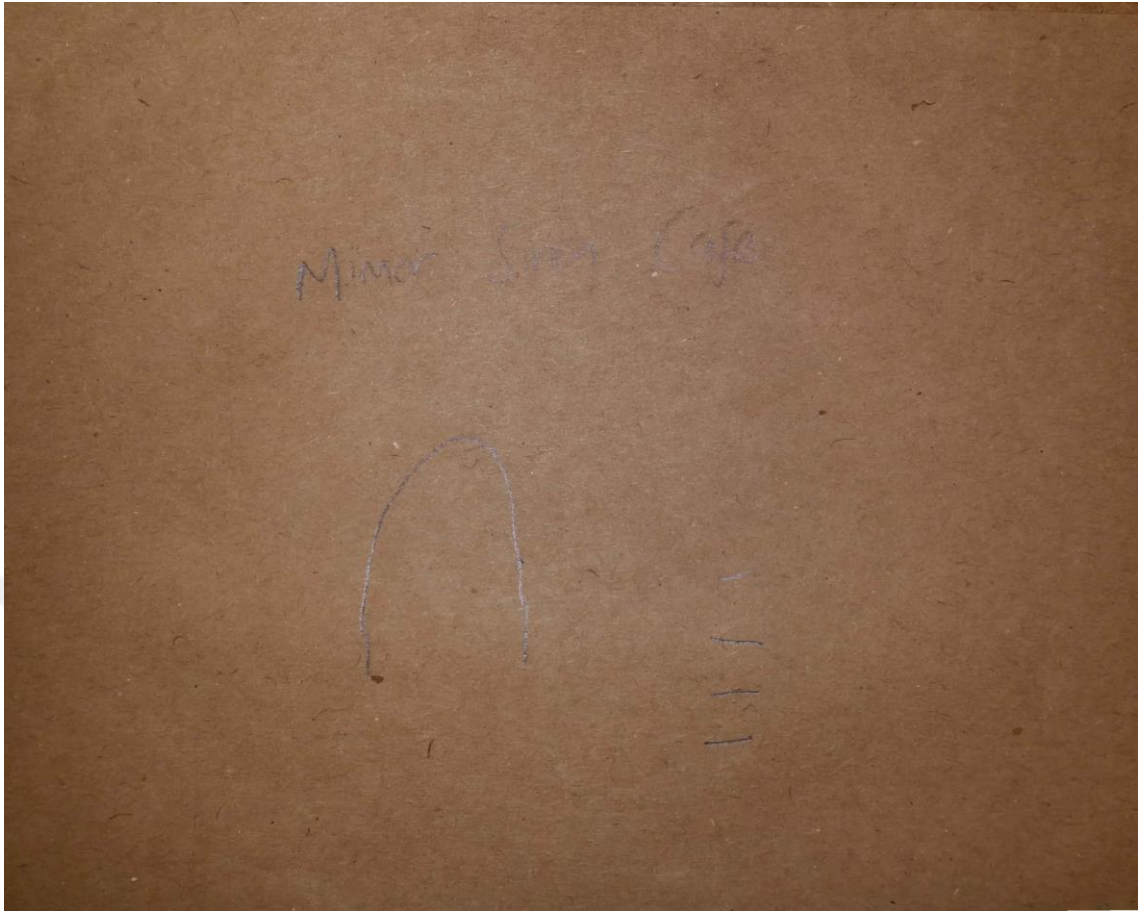
Adam: Golden Horn



Lorena: Fatih Camii



Hakim: Mimar Sinan Café



Daniel: Little Coffeeplace in Kadiköy

