

**Globalizing Istanbul: Gender and the Local/Global Production of Islamism**  
[Draft]

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The greater the ephemerality, the more pressing the need to discover or manufacture some kind of eternal truth that might lie therein. The religious revival that has become much stronger since the late sixties, the search for authenticity and authority in politics ... are all cases in point. (Harvey, 1990: 292)

This paper begins from the question of how and to what extent Islamism, or movements for the moral, social and political Islamicization of society, can be understood as products of globalization. Globalization refers to the intensification of multiple flows – including capital, labor, goods and culture – while an analysis of Islamism focuses our attention on processes of identity formation and political mobilization. In order to explore the interrelations between Islamism, as a cultural and political movement, and processes of globalization, this paper seeks to provide one cut at an answer to the question: If indeed globalization is associated with the “historical-geographic condition” of postmodernity (Jameson, 1984; Harvey, 1990; Anderson, 1998), how does Islamism function as a mode of identification and politicization adopted by the “*scattered self* of postmodern society,” (Casey, 2002: 684, emphasis in original)? Why have we seen an upsurge in religious activity, and particularly in politicized religious movements such as Islamism, at a time also characterized by what has been understood to be a postmodern culture of depthlessness, relativism and fragmentation? What is it within the chaotic package of postmodernity or globalization that enables or sparks religious revivalism?

This question has been asked and answered in various ways before. Based largely on the work of Giddens, Beck, Harvey and Jameson, the “postmodern” or “late modern” perspective evaluated in this paper suggests that global integration into the consumer society of late capitalism has led to the reconstitution of subject-positions in the context of choice, risk and reflexivity. The rise of Islamist politics has been viewed as part of the

global phenomenon of “identity politics” and the reassertion of communal or place-based identities under conditions of globalization and postmodernity (Castells, 1997; Sahin and Aksoy, 1993; Gulalp, 1997). The subject, alienated under conditions of modernity, is fragmented under conditions of postmodernity, and religious identity not only represents one of the available sites for identity formation, but also becomes a salve for postmodern anxiety.

At the same time as this research aims to evaluate some of the above claims in the context of Islamism in Turkey, this study also shifts the terms of the discussion and reworks these questions with an emphasis on globalization as a set of uneven processes that not only produce inequality but are themselves defined by difference. Who is the “global subject” assumed to be by theorists of this contemporary world of global flows? Do shantytown dwellers on the outskirts of a Middle Eastern metropolis, do urban poor, do *women* engage with either globalization or Islamism in ways that are recognizable from the descriptions of Castells, Bauman, Giddens and others? Too often, despite the emphasis on fragmentation that accompanies notions of increasing global interdependence, there is an assumption of sameness and commensurable incorporation that haunts the literature on globalization and identity. This paper seeks to present an analysis of Islamism that differentiates between groups that are empowered or disempowered to various degrees in the urban/global environment of Istanbul, Turkey.

This paper aims to reconcile findings from fieldwork conducted in Istanbul in 1998-1999 with recent literature on postmodernity and Islamist politics in Turkey. It is an attempt to unravel a puzzle: how is it that, while studies of Islamist politics in Turkey have emphasized the role of a new globalized Islamist elite in the adjudication of taste,

consumerism and Islamic lifestyle, my own survey research paints a very different picture. This survey research concerns the basis of electoral support for the Islamist party in the 1999 national and municipal elections. While it may seem that these two sets of observations are incommensurable because the survey research is based on an analysis of the Islamist vote while the literature to which I aim to speak addresses “Islamism” as a political and cultural identity more broadly, I pose this as a fruitful tension rather than a fault line. It would be rash to assert that all women who adopt the new, urban Islamist dress (*tesettür*) in the city are supporters of the Islamist party, but it is nonetheless the case that *tesettür* has been associated with politicized Islam in Turkey (Göle, 1997, 2000; Olson, 1984). The vote, while not an perfect measure of Islamism more broadly, provides a very good stand-in and is closely related to any of the other indicators that I might have chosen to be the dependent variable, such as Muslim identity, religious practice or the desired role of religion in politics. The vote provides a better indicator than these other variables because it is more discriminating and perhaps more conservative; Muslim identity and high levels of religious practice are far more wide spread than Islamism, and answers to the question “what role do you think religion should play in politics” are both closely correlated with the Islamist vote and more ambiguous due to the use of a subjectively influenced ordinal scale (from one, meaning no role, to five, meaning a very big role). Furthermore, as Salwa Ismail has argued, while Islamist politics has failed to overturn more secular state structures following the success of the Iranian revolution or to rewrite the map of the Middle East (see *The Failure of Political Islam*, Roy, 1994), Islamism today is strongly asserting itself as a political force in the arenas of morality, lifestyle and the provision of social services (Ismail, 2001).

Indeed, Islamism appears to be receding from the national political arena since its highpoint in 1996-1997, when the country was briefly led by Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan of the Islamist party, which had received the plurality of votes at the national level in the 1995 elections. In 1999, the Islamist party slipped to third place and entered Parliament as an opposition party, but maintained its electoral mandate in the municipal polities of Istanbul and Ankara. What we might term “consumer Islam” is one element of this reconfigured Islamist front, but should not be taken as apolitical or counter to political Islam. On the contrary, Islamist fashion is an important facet of political Islam as it moves across and remakes public and private divides in Turkish society.

This study evaluates the thesis that *Islamism, as a cultural and political movement, arises as a response to the postmodern culture of multinational consumer capitalism and reflects processes of reflexive identity formation under conditions of radical uncertainty and globalization.* In the first section, Islamism, as a kind of “identity politics,” is interwoven with theoretical perspectives on global flows, postmodern culture, identity and religion. The following section raises critical questions regarding the extent and implication of these social and political dynamics, questions that offer powerful entrees to an understanding of Islamism in Istanbul. Next, the particularity of globalization processes and Islamist mobilizations in the context of Turkey and Istanbul provides both a staging ground and a counter point to the survey study, which is presented in the following section. The final section both interprets these findings and raises questions about the situated nature of globalism as an experience and even as an identity.

### *Globalization, urbanization and (post)modern Islamism*

The idea that individuals must situate themselves within ever-more complex, multiple and fragmented social systems echoes across time and space. As notions of encounter, self-reflexivity and the availability of multiple subject positions reverberate across modern and postmodern accounts, across theories of urbanism and globalism, it is important not to exaggerate the newness of these ideas, but rather to make meaningful linkages across scales that help to illuminate the situated experiences of subjects.

Islamism, as an identity and a politics, has frequently been cited as an urban movement built from the grassroots support of rural-urban migrants who are seen as reasserting traditional religious identities in reaction to the flux and crisis of the urban (or global) encounter (Ibrahim, 1980; Dessouki, 1982; Donnan and Werbner, 1991; Denoeux, 1993; Margulies and Yildizoglu, 1997). This thesis, especially in its “globalization” form, is based on a series of analytical moves: first, globalization is associated with a “postmodern” culture within which identities are constituted through self-reflexivity in the context of multiplicity, fragmentation and choice; second, it is assumed that despite the fragmentation and unevenness associated with processes of globalization, the experiences and processes of identity-formation through which particularist identities are formulated are meaningfully experienced by participants in Islamist cultural or political movements. This section presents and critiques the foundations of these two claims in order to open these propositions up for evaluation through a case study of Islamism in Istanbul.

By linking postmodernity to material-historical changes in the late twentieth century, Marxist theorists such as Fredric Jameson, Perry Anderson and David Harvey

have argued that, if modernism is the culture of urban industrial capitalism, postmodernism may be thought of as “the cultural dominant of the logic of late capitalism” (Jameson, 1984: 81). While Jameson, following Mandel’s periodization of “late capitalism” would have postmodernism arising in the post World War II era (a dubious proposition considering the aesthetic “high modernism” of the 1950s and 60s), David Harvey dates the advent of postmodernity towards the beginning of the 1970s, specifically with the recession of 1973 and the transition from Fordist to post-Fordist regimes (Harvey, 1990). According to Harvey, processes of “time-space compression” link post-Fordism, as a response to capital’s crisis of accumulation, to the culture of postmodernism. People, capital, goods and images overflow spatial boundaries with ever-decreasing friction, and the acceleration of life in a disposable society leads to a volatile and destructive culture marked by the “annihilation of space through time” (Harvey, 1990: 299).

Religious movements today are often interpreted as a response to the agony of ephemerality and an expression of authoritarian longing (Bauman, 1998). The most thorough exploration of the psychological implications of postmodernity can be found in the work of Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck and Scott Lash, though none of them consider the contemporary world to be “postmodern” per se. Instead, these authors refer to the same period that some have labeled postmodern as “high modernity” (Giddens, 1990, 1991), or “reflexive modernity” (Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994). Both Beck and Giddens view the contemporary period as marked by reflexivity (that is, self-confrontation) and a new kind of awareness of “risk” (Beck, 1992, 1994; Giddens, 1991). As Beck puts it, the major difference between our times and those of Simmel, Durkheim

and Weber is that “today people are not being ‘released’ from feudal and religious-transcendental certainties into the world of industrial society, but rather from industrial society into the turbulence of the global risk society,” (Beck, 1994: 7). The reflexivity of modern life, in which institutions are “self-critical” and “self-confrontational” (Beck, 1994: 5), leads to new dynamics of identity formation.

Giddens takes a Simmelian view that, although most situations of modern life are “manifestly incompatible with religion” (Giddens, 1990: 109), religion does not lose its purchase due to its monopoly on existential questions. Taking this observation one step further, in his discussion of authority and uncertainty in *Modernity and Self-identity*, Giddens suggests, “For reasons that are to do precisely with the connections between modernity and doubt, religion not only refuses to disappear but undergoes a resurgence,” (Giddens, 1991: 195). This (re)turn to religious authority is not pre-modern but modern in nature, since even forms of traditional authority have become no more than one option amongst a multitude of competing “authorities” (Giddens, 1991). Finally, he argues that new forms of religion and spirituality in the late-modern period are part of a broader “return of the repressed” as moral questions disallowed by modern institutions return to the public sphere (Giddens, 1991: 207).

While I have traced these ideas in relation to the work of theorists who reject notions of disjuncture and choose not to term the conditions under which religious revivalism has arisen “postmodern” in nature, similar conceptualizations are found in the work of those who do consider religious resurgence, including Islamism, to be postmodern manifestations. Haldun Gulalp, for example, emphasizes that Islamism is a

form of identity politics, and “Identity politics arises out of postmodernism,” (Gulalp, 1997: 428). Bauman makes a similar argument when he claims that:

Fundamentalism is a radical remedy against that bane of postmodern/market-led consumer society, the risk-contaminated freedom (a remedy that heals the infection by amputating the infected organ -- abolishing freedom as such, in so far as there is no freedom free of risks). (Bauman, 1998: 74)

Bauman goes on to suggest that fundamentalism (a term he uses to subsume religious movements of all denomination) represents an “alternative rationality” to that offered by modernity. In this sense, fundamentalism is not postmodern in its own operation, but represents a reaction to the postmodern condition. As Akbar Ahmed puts it, fundamentalism is “in dialogue with the times” (Ahmed, 1992: 13).

There is a fair bit of slippage between ideas of the human condition under modern and postmodern cultural regimes. Much of what Bauman refers to as the postmodern condition -- incurable uncertainty, the proliferation of choices, individualism -- reflects the same crisis observed by Weber, Durkheim and Simmel around the turn of the century. Bauman’s argument that “fundamentalism is a thoroughly contemporary, postmodern phenomenon” that does not reject modernity but attempts to move beyond it rests on ideas about alienation and anxiety that were as much a concern in the mid- eighteenth century as today. If Islamist politics represent a response to anxiety, as other religio-political movements are assumed to do (Castells, 1997; Giddens, 1991; Harvey, 1990), everything old is indeed new again, for we have only to recall Simmel’s analysis of modern, urban life to remember that the Age of Anxiety has quite a long history.

Undoubtedly, the parallels between the problems of change and flux in the modern and so-called postmodern period lend support to Giddens’ and Beck’s

understanding of the current period as one of the “modernization of modernity” or “high modernity” rather than an encounter with entirely new challenges and opportunities. However, while in many ways the “risk society” of the contemporary period echoes the anxiety and *anomie* highlighted by theorists of modernity, the postmodern or “high modern” perspective recognizes that the reevaluation of identity spurred by the mushrooming of choices and contact with others does not necessarily lead subjects to create new cosmopolitan identities, as Simmel envisioned. On the contrary, processes of globalization are paired with processes of fragmentation, and the reassertion of local/traditional identities is theorized as part of rather than counterfactual to the postmodern condition.

*Globalization beyond the core, urbanization beyond the flaneur*

Two questions are of particular relevance for understanding Islamist politics in Turkey through the lens of globalization. First, how and to what extent does the unevenness associated with globalization affect our analysis of postmodernism as a cultural condition? The issue of whether the unevenness of globalization processes undermines claims to postmodernism as culture has been well put by Perry Anderson in the context of his discussion of Jameson’s thesis:

In conditions where the minimum conditions of modernity -- literacy, industry, mobility -- are still basically absent or only patchily present, how can postmodernity have any meaning ... The real question is whether this unevenness is too great to sustain any common cultural logic ... (Anderson, 1998: 120-121)

Anderson suggests that the answer may lie in the rise of television at the global scale. He argues that television is disproportionately powerful in the “third world,” and that this

expansion of the “industry of images” preordains the eventual global dominance of the postmodern (Anderson, 1998: 123). One must, however, avoid an over simplified, reductionist understanding that would have technology, or the television, author postmodern culture. As a potential conduit for any number of different world-views or aesthetics, that television plays to short attention spans and short-term desires for consumer luxuries is perhaps better viewed as a symptom of “postmodernization” than its cause.

A more direct tack is one that incorporates the spatial and social unevenness of globalization into a framework that recognizes the multiplicity of both “the modern” and “the postmodern.” As Pierre Hamel et al. put it, “While the buzzword is globalization, uneven development trails globalization like its shadow,” (Hamel et al., 2001: 3). Actually existing globalization takes different forms and gives rise to different conditions across space as well as across class, gender and other dimensions of difference. The local/global construction of processes of globalization and the conditions under which culture and identity are negotiated thus become empirical questions for close ethnographic study, rather than universal states or, as in Anderson’s formulation, linear progressions through which societies must necessarily pass. It is a mistake to see globalization or “the postmodern” as marking an era, separated by some sort of disjuncture from the modern, just as it would be unjustifiable to claim that “tradition” disappeared with the delineation of the modern.

The second critical question addressed here interrogates how people who are differently positioned, materially and symbolically, interact with notions of what constitutes “the global.” Here one may draw on critiques of ideas of “urbanism” that

likewise posited a universal urban subject, engaged in encounters in the city that were thought to produce experiences of alienation, disequilibria and the multiplication of choices (Simmel, 1969). In particular, this study explores the meaning of globalization for two overlapping groups that operate on the margins of the metropolis: rural-urban migrants and women in Istanbul.

As Janet Abu-Lughod pointed out thirty years ago, social heterogeneity may indeed be a characteristic of a city, but not one that rural-urban migrants to a “third world” metropolis (in her study, Cairo) are likely to experience. Abu-Lughod found that migrants tended to live in clustered and insular communities, where they created social institutions that protected them against the shock and *anomie* of the city (Abu-Lughod, 1961). More recently, Victoria Lawson and Rachel Silvey have argued that migrants, rather than being manipulated by fixed processes of urbanization or economic change, act as “interpretive subjects of their own mobility” (Silvey and Lawson, 1999: 126). Such an approach looks at how migrants actively interpret and shape their own experiences of migration, and thus opens up questions of difference that are equally as relevant for the study of how migrants interpret, experience and are affected by globalization processes.

The urban experience described by Simmel and picked up by Giddens assumes a “sameness of experience” in which the subject is universal, presumed to be white, male, heterosexual, and otherwise not marginal, oppressed, or transgressive (Ryan, 1994). In positioning one urban experience, one urban subject, one kind of urbanism as the universal meaning of urbanism, these accounts deny differences in social status, mobility and sexuality. As feminists have pointed out, notions of urban anonymity are gendered: “the stranger” is male, and observing him is the male gaze, the *flaneur* (Massey, 1991;

Ryan, 1994). Ryan suggests that an alternative framework must “reject any notion of a unity of experience and start from the standpoint of difference,” (Ryan, 1994: 56). Thus, not only must the experiences and interpretations of urbanism be gendered, but also integration into local or global networks and flows must be seen as reflecting, producing and reproducing inequalities in power and access the many dimensions of difference, gender and migrant status among them, that structure social relations locally and globally.

### *The globalization of Turkey and Istanbul*

The political and economic globalization of Turkey can be traced to changes that began after the military government of 1980-1983 instituted a new constitution and returned the state to civilian control. Disrupting Turkish democracy for the third time in as many decades, the generals who seized power through the 1980 coup d’etat were motivated by what they saw as the need for authoritarian control both to restore order to an increasingly violent and polarized polity and to implement the IMF reforms required by the new Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) of 1979, reforms that amounted to the reorientation of the Turkish economy from an import substitution, statist regime to an export-oriented and increasingly privatized economy.<sup>1</sup> With the aim of enacting these changes, the new constitution implemented an illiberal democratic regime in which political activism was quashed, union activity was sharply curtailed and universities lost their autonomy from the state (Toprak, 1995; Köker, 1997).

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that this transformation was and is incomplete, and that Turkey continues to resist some aspects of IMF-driven restructuring, especially in regard to the privatization of state industries.

At the same time, the liberalization of the economy and increasing efforts towards state decentralization that have marked the post-1980 period have also resulted in a perceptible loosening of the state's control of public life (Heper, 1980). Postmodernism in Turkey has indeed come by way of the television. In 1982, equipped Turkish homes received one television channel, the state run TRT, which broadcast in black and white and was run from Ankara as "the voice of the state" (Sahin and Aksoy, 1993: 32). When Turkey began to open its economy after 1983, the state became unable to maintain control of media flows; by 1992, there were six state channels competing, in color, with six private channels broadcast from abroad, and finally the constitutional prohibition on private radio and television networks was abolished in 1993. The resulting surge of local and national private radio and television stations across the country has had a marked effect on civil society, giving rise to a multitude of forums for debate and discussion (Şahin and Aksoy, 1993; Göle, 1995; Özduben, 1997). The result has been transformative for Turkish society, not only or primarily due to the availability of foreign broadcasts – in fact, TRT aired many Brazilian soap operas and American sitcoms already (Oncu, 1995) – but because of the rise of Turkish programming, including talk shows and advice programs that cater to a newly confessional culture, a new popular culture marked by empathy and talk (Oncu, 1995; Sahin and Aksoy, 1993). Haluk Sahin and Asu Aksoy suggest that the new media, "by bringing the Kurdish problem, Kemalism, secularism, religious sects, gender roles, sex , etc. into the realm of public discussion," have played a central role in what they call "the relativization of Turkish culture" (Sahin and Aksoy, 1993: 35).

Accounts of the effects of the new media on Turkish society have emphasized that these media have not only brought foreign cultures into Turkish living rooms but, perhaps more significantly, have enabled Turkish people to encounter and interact with domestic regional, ethnic, cultural and religious differences. Such encounters have not, however, only been “virtual”; they have also been urban, especially in the context of Istanbul, a city in the throws of both internationalization and ongoing internal transformation wrought by rural to urban migration:

In the 1980s, when inhabitants of Istanbul were introduced to McDonald hamburgers, Toblerone, chocolate and Italian pizzas, they also got to know *hamsili* kebab, the taste of Kayseri *manti*, red cabbage, and the distinct flavors of Urfa, Antep and Bursa kebaps. (Oncu, 1993:75; quoted in Robins and Aksoy, 1995)

Istanbul is marked both by international brands, flavors and tastes and by the cultural and ethnic differences embodied in migrants from the Turkish cities of Kayseri, Urfa, Antep and Bursa and made available for public consumption through the businesses that upwardly mobile migrants began to establish not only in the urban periphery, but in the central business areas of the city.

What Çağlar Keyder calls “really existing globalization” in Istanbul is informal and uneven in nature, consisting mainly of illegal flows associated with money laundering and the drug trade, and the “suitcase trade” that has made Istanbul a market place for Russian, Eastern European and Central Asian merchants (Keyder, 1999). With merchants leaving Turkey with suitcases full of unrecorded and untaxed textiles and leather goods, the demand for these products has further spawned the growth of flexible and informal production strategies with important implications for the gendered labor

markets as women become part-time, informal homeworkers for national and international textile manufacturers (Cagatay and Berik, 1994; Cinar, 1994; Eraydin and Erendil, 1999). Differences in income, consumption patterns and lifestyles, and the uneven geography of globalization, both formal and informal, have transformed the city in a haphazard fashion that has created what Keyder calls a “divided city,” a city that manifests the global and the local in disparate ways in the *gecekondul* (squatter) areas of migrants and the new, gated subdivisions of the rich.

The rise of “municipal Islamism” (Akinci, 1999) in Istanbul has taken place in a context of increasing intercultural contact, both in the urban environment and in the virtual space created by the new media. Furthermore, Islamist politics has engaged in contests over the form of globalization in Istanbul. Municipal policy in the 1980s was dominated by the “global city” project of the center-right administration, which aimed to transform Istanbul from a national primate city to a newly imagined global metropolis (see Keyder, 1999). Urban renewal projects cleared nineteenth century inner city neighborhoods to accommodate a new international business district, new thoroughfares through the city, boulevards along the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus, and the definition of tourist areas in the center city. In the 1990s, backlash against these policies made clear that the architects of the global city project could not gain reelection in a city dominated by migrant voters who not only did not benefit from these investments, but desperately needed city funds to be redirected towards infrastructure and services for the urban periphery. It was in this context that the Islamist party, then called Refah Partisi, won the municipal elections of 1994 (and was reelected as the Fazilet Partisi in 1999) on a platform of moral regeneration and populist policies.

Islamist politics in Turkey have been increasingly associated with municipal government, leading one observer to comment: “Islamism, with all its economic, political and ideological stands, is now an urban-metropolitan phenomenon in Turkey” (Ilyasoğlu, 1998: 241). Despite slipping from first (in 1995) to third place in the national elections of April 1999, the Islamist party continued its success at the local and urban levels, once again winning control of Istanbul and Ankara’s city governments. The urban success of Turkey’s Islamist party has been attributed to its power within civil society: the party’s grassroots approach, its high level of organization, and the fact that the party targeted migrant populations by focusing on social services and social justice in their campaign and distributing goods and services within these communities (Köker, 1995; Ayata, 1996; Ilyasoğlu, 1998; Akinci, 1999). At the same time, young professionals of the new middle class and students, many of whom may have migrant parents and are themselves upwardly mobile, have brought Islamist associational life to university campuses, hospitals and other institutional settings.

Observers of Islamism in Turkey have argued that Islamist politics has given rise to a “counter-elite” in Istanbul and has come to represent an alternative path to upward mobility (Saktanber, 1994; Göle, 1996, 2000; White, 1999; Ismail, 2001). Islamists have positioned themselves as a counterculture that is nonetheless participatory towards the established system; Islamists not only have their own political party, but also occupy influential positions in other rightist political parties, and have established their own labor confederation and businessman’s association (White, 1999). Islamist newspapers, journals, radio and television stations convey Islamist messages at the same time as they provide job opportunities for men and women in the movement. Calling themselves

“conscious” (*suurlu*) Muslims, Islamists have created an alternative moral and social order populated by a middle class, intelligentsia, and politicians who ascribe to an Islamist lifestyle. As Ayse Saktanber points out, Bourdieu’s (1984) notion of “taste” works in conjunction with Islamic faith in the efforts of “conscious Muslims” to distinguish their lifestyles through the choices that they make (Saktanber, 1994). Defining themselves in opposition to the secular establishment that has historically excluded symbols of Islamic faith from the public domain, Islamists perform their “otherness” in Turkish society through dress, hairstyle and the carving out of non-secular spaces.

Focusing on the Islamist counterculture highlights the role that consumption plays in the distinction of lifestyles. As Mary Beth Mills argues in her discussion of migrant Thai women, consumption practices are part of the social transformation associated with modernity (Mills, 1997). Mills shows how, in the Thai context, “fantasies of identity” are built upon the commodity culture, wherein the image of the modern woman, as a symbol of Thai progress and modernity, is bound up with urbanism, beauty and fashion: “The *than samay* [modern] woman’s beauty is linked to her active, mobile participation in urban society” (Mills, 1997: 43). The same can be said of the image of the modern woman in Turkey, where the Kemalist project of modernization and Westernization was from its inception accompanied by the propagation of an ideal image of the unveiled, modern, working woman (Göle, 1996; Arat, 1998). As Saktanber points out, “Fashion, beauty, slimming, decorating and cooking are categories that are never absent” from women’s magazines that promote the image of the “modern” woman in Turkey (Saktanber, 1994). On the flip side is the image of the “other” against whom this modern

woman is defined: the secluded, inert, veiled and ignorant Muslim woman who was supposed to be relegated to the Ottoman past (Arat, 1998).

Stepping outside this modern woman/Muslim woman dichotomy, some young women have adopted a new style of covering that enables them to position themselves as both modern and Muslim (Arat, 1998). The typical profile, presented by scholarly and journalistic accounts alike, of this new Islamist woman is that she is either a migrant to the city or the daughter of migrant parents, that she is likely to be a first generation student, and that she is a distinctly urban individual (Göle, 1996). This new Islamist woman is both negotiating urban space and actively engaging with national and global media, goods, and discourses. The new form of Islamist dress that marks these urban/global Islamists is called the *tesettur*, and consists of a pale colored, loose fitting long raincoat worn in all weather to cover the curves of the body. *Tesettur* also requires a large headscarf, quite unlike the *basortusu* (headcovering) worn by peasant women. While the *basortusu* is relatively small, sometimes lets hair escape, and is worn mainly as traditional rather than religious garb, the *tesettur* scarf covers the shoulders, neck and chest and symbolizes support for Islamism in the public sphere. *Tesettur* scarves, beautifully patterned and usually silk, are part of what Jenny White (1999) calls an “Islamic chic” that is modest and showy at the same time. *Tesettur* has also become globalized, with Turkish designers and manufacturers opening branches of their stores throughout the Middle East and in European and American cities, and establishing an internet presence as well. In this way, a particularly Turkish notion of Islamist fashion has become globalized as a form of consumerism associated with urban Islamist identities and “the road to success” (White, 1999: 80).

*The survey: Whither postmodern Islamism?*

It is this analysis of the globalization or postmodernization of Islamism to which I would like to make my survey research speak. The dialogue is, however, a difficult one to establish. Returning to the question of how globalization is differently experienced and accessed by variously positioned groups, my statistical analysis of the factors associated with the Islamist vote (which itself is used as an indicator of Islamism, the broader cultural and political movement) provides evidence of the unevenness and contingency of globalization and its outcomes. While it is difficult to specify the experience of “globalization” or “postmodernity,” such things as urban mobility, diverse encounters, engagement with media, or perceptions of personal transformation can serve as imperfect indicators of individual engagement with the flows and processes associated with identity-formation under conditions of globalization (or, for that matter urbanization – the distinction frequently collapses). If voters for the Islamist party are “postmodern subjects” one would expect them to be engaged with various kinds of encounter, such as those that arise from urban life and are dependent upon some degree of urban mobility, or from engagement with media, such as television, newspapers and film. This study does not fully evaluate these claims, limited as it is in scope to lower and lower-middle class districts (as indicated by land value). However, confining these observations to this population, evidence does suggest that the globalization thesis, as it is presented here, does not entirely bear out – and where it breaks down most markedly is for women.

These observations are the result of a statistical analysis of the results of a survey of 735 Istanbul residents conducted door-to-door in four districts of Istanbul: Fatih,

Üsküdar<sup>2</sup>, Ümraniye and Gaziosmanpaşa with the help of a local research firm. The four study sites were identified based on migration rates (Fatih and Üsküdar low, Ümraniye and Gaziosmanpaşa high), low land-value, relatively high support for the Islamist party, and geographic location on the European (Fatih and Gaziosmanpaşa) or Asian (Üsküdar and Ümraniye) side of the city. By choosing districts with low land values, I aimed to control for class to the degree that my respondents were likely to fall within lower to lower-middle class brackets. Fatih and Üsküdar are well-known, working-class, central-city districts where important mosques are situated. Ümraniye has been a popular site for research on migrant settlements (White, 1994; Erder, 1996). Gaziosmanpaşa, known for its populations of Kurds and Alevi migrants, is also a prime example of rural-urban migrant settlement. Within the four districts, neighborhoods were chosen randomly and sampled using Proportional to Population Size (PPS) sampling techniques. The survey took thirty-five minutes to administer and consisted of forty-two questions. Many of the questions included in the survey were designed to test hypotheses not addressed in this paper. Questions relevant to this study include those concerning voting choices and engagement with aspects of urbanism and globalism such as might take place through urban mobility or access to media. Respondents were asked to name the party for which they voted in the national, municipal and district elections; the results presented here are consistent across all three of these votes. I have chosen to use the city vote throughout in light of this study's particular focus on the construction of Islamism in Istanbul. Of the 735 respondents, 452 both voted and answered the question of for whom they voted in

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<sup>2</sup> Fourteen of Üsküdar's 54 neighborhoods had high land values, and were therefore excluded from the analysis. These neighborhoods account for 8% of the population of Üsküdar. This exclusion reduced the heterogeneity of land values within the district and brought it in line with the others. Land values are from Ministry of the Interior and Ministry of Finance, 1998.

the municipal elections. Analysis of the non-voters and non-responders reveals some patterns, such as younger respondents being less likely to have voted, but non-responders do not appear to be more or less likely to have been Islamist supporters (see Secor, 2000, for more detail).

First, to briefly summarize the overall results of the survey, for both men and women levels of religious practice were significantly associated with voting for the Islamist party; those who reported higher levels of religious practice were more likely to have voted for the Islamist party (Table 1). Furthermore, for both men and women, migrant status (that is, having been born outside of the city) was significantly associated with their choice to vote for the Islamist party (Fazilet Partisi, FP (Table 2). Neither of these results is particularly surprising. The association between the Islamist vote and migrant status confirms what others have observed regarding how the party has positioned itself in the urban political arena (Bora, 1999; Keyder, 1999; Margulies and Yildizoglu, 1997), and further substantiates observations regarding Turkey and other Muslim contexts, where the rise of Islamism has often been attributed to the political mobilization of urban migrants (Ibrahim, 1980; Dessouki, 1982; Denoeux, 1993; Margulies and Yildizoglu, 1997).

Furthermore, women subjects' sense of themselves as "urban" or "rural" proved to be associated with their voting choices; 88% of those women who considered themselves "completely urban" voted for secular parties (Table 3). This relationship between rural/urban self-identity and the Islamist vote was not found for men.

Interestingly, for both men and women migrants, the number of years they had lived in the city showed no significant difference across the binomial FP vote (Table 4). Taken

together, these two findings -- that while migrant status was associated with the FP vote the number of years a subject had lived in the city was not, and that for women but not for men urban/rural identity proved to be a significant factor in the Islamist vote – indicate that Islamist politics in Istanbul and the role of migrant identity in its construction are variable and contingent relationships that depend not on supposedly objective measures of “urbanization” but rather on self-identification, and that these processes of identity formation have different meanings for men and for women. Finally, this study showed no socioeconomic variables to be significant in explaining the male vote for the Islamist party, although education proved to be a particularly significant factor for women (discussed below).

The frequency with which subjects travel to other districts of the city is a window into how they experience the urban environment, how they negotiate urban space, and how they position themselves in relation to others in the urban environment. Although mobility in the city is not significantly related to their support for the Islamist party for men in the sampled population, there is indeed a significant relationship between mobility and FP support among the women (Table 5). However, the relationship is the reverse of what one might expect from the globalization thesis: Rather than being more mobile in the city, women who voted from Fazilet were generally less mobile; 27% of female FP supporters but only 16% of the supporters of other parties report never leaving their district of origin. Among FP voters, only 2%, compared to 10% of voters for other parties, report leaving their district every day.

At first glance, one might suspect that this relationship between mobility and FP support among women stands in for differences in occupation among women;

after all, those who never leave their districts could be housewives, and those who leave every day are likely to be working. However, there is no significant association between employment and FP support for women; not only does occupation bear no significant relation to FP support, but neither does whether or not women subjects contributed to the household budget within the past month. The implications of the relationship between lower rates of mobility and FP support remains, however, subject to interpretation: Are women who support Islamist politics doing so because they have experienced less urban integration, or do Islamist women refrain from traveling about the city as a result of their moral commitments? More evidence is needed.

Both men and women who voted for the Islamist party were more likely than other voters to report reading religiously oriented or nationalist newspapers and watching Islamist television channels as their primary news sources. Gender differences in media engagement related to the Islamist vote emerge around the question of television viewing choices. Women FP supporters (though not men) were less likely than supporters of other parties to report watching foreign films on television (only 15 percent of them do, compared to 30 percent of those who voted for other parties), and significantly more likely to claim that they never watch any movies at all (21 percent of FP voters, compared to 5 percent of other voters) (Table 6). Film watching, like women's travel in the city, may be both an issue of exposure to diversity and integration into wider "imagined communities" beyond one's family or neighborhood, but at the same time may be a moral issue. Nonetheless, the relatively high probability of Islamist women's absence from the wider urban environment or from certain sorts of media points towards gender differences not only in "urbanism" as a way of life, a culture or an identity, but

also in the ways subjects interact and engage with trends associated with cultural globalization or postmodernism.

Finally, while Islamist support among men is related to nothing so much as their religious practice and their Muslim identification, for women Islamist support is also tied up with educational achievement (Table 7). In this study, the higher the degree of education that women have achieved, the lower their probability of voting for the Islamist party – that is, except at that university level, where no conclusions can be drawn because there were only four women respondents who reported their vote and had a university degree (one of them voted for the FP). That women’s support for Islamist politics is so strongly associated with educational levels, but for men this is not at all the case, highlights men’s and women’s different positions in relation to both access to information (especially in light of women’s overall lower levels of education) and the construction of Islamist politics.

In light of the lack of significance, for men, of any of these potential indicators of globalism, this study is inconclusive on the topic of whether men choose to support Islamist politics as a reaction to globalization. However, as the relationships between mobility, media, education and Islamist politics crystallize for women, the image of the “new Islamist woman” seems to recede. It is this conundrum that is at the heart of this paper: how is it that scholars of Turkish Islamism have come to hold up the Islamist woman as situated within a postmodern landscape of a new global Islamism when it appears that here, in these four districts at the heart of urban Islamist support in Istanbul, women who vote for the Islamist party appear to be more homebound and less educated? Where has that *tesettür* wearing, urban-identified educated Islamist woman gone?

*Whose globalism is it, anyhow?*

Theorists of the postmodern condition have grappled with the resurgence of religious identities and politics over the past three decades. Islamism, as a cultural and political upsurge, has frequently been interpreted in this context. In an age of rapid change, of incessant confrontation with others through global media flows, of self-reflexive identities cobbled together in an atmosphere of uncertainty and choice, Islamism is thought to represent both a retrenchment and an alternative. In Turkey, where global economic and cultural flows have intensified simultaneously with the rise of Islamist politics and the coalescence of new Islamist counter-public spheres, Islamism has increasingly come to be represented as a lifestyle, marked by distinct patterns of consumption and upward mobility in the urban environment.

What, then, can be made of my research and its findings that, in four districts of Istanbul, men's support for Islamist politics is correlated with nothing but their degrees of religiosity and their self-identification as Muslims, while women's support is associated with lower levels of urban mobility, media engagement and education? First, it is important to reiterate that while women Islamist supporters in the sampled population may indeed be less engaged with urban or global encounters, this could equally well represent a choice made in the context of Islamism. In other words, Islamist women may have chosen to remove themselves from educational institutions, urban spaces and contact with certain media. However, whether women's removal from these arenas is circumstantial, purposeful or even forced, these findings point towards a less urban, globalized or consumer-oriented Islamism than the "postmodern Islamism" embodied by the *tesettür*-clad women of Istanbul's urban landscape.

There are, in effect, two sets of phenomena described here. First, in my study of lower to lower-middle class urbanites I found that Islamist women are more likely than others to be disengaged from aspects of urbanism or globalization that are associated with postmodern identity formation. But at the same time, it is evident and much heralded that Islamism has suffused Istanbul's public sphere, and that it has asserted itself as an alternative consumer culture and even an alternative globalism. My study reflects the grassroots of Islamist political support, not the leadership, not the makers of Islamism, the new Islamist elite, so the seeming discontinuity between these studies may well reflect both class difference and the disproportionate impact on intellectuals and on "the urban" that what may be a small minority – the Islamist elite – have had.

It is not enough, by way of explanation or analysis, to point out these effects of differences in class status and visibility. Certainly, by focusing on lower to lower-middle class districts of Istanbul, this study may have (must have?) underrepresented upwardly mobile, Islamist women. However, even allowing that this is probably the case, such women's absence from these major migrant communities is notable. After all, the experience of migration and encounter with the urban environment is often assumed to motivate women's engagement with Islamism in the city, so one might reasonably expect to find some trace of these educated, globalized Islamist women in these areas.

This study reveals the multipositionality of Islamist subjects in Istanbul. Not only do women engage with Islamism on different grounds than do men, but there is great diversity within the categories of "Islamist" and "woman" as well. The findings presented here reveal a different (and, I argue, more prevalent) form of Islamism among women than has previously been emphasized in studies of women in Islamist politics in Istanbul,

a form marked by discontinuity rather than integration. This is not to say that a global, even postmodern, Islamism has not taken hold in Istanbul; observably, it has. The globalized Islamist fashion industry and the Islamicization of certain urban spaces through women's dress are indisputable. However, the unevenness of processes of globalization and the multiplicity of "the urban" belie the assumption that Islamism in Istanbul can be characterized by these particular manifestations. The high incidence of illiteracy and rural identities among women supporters of the Islamist party in my survey research points towards a diversity of Islamist engagements in the city. Indeed, coexisting with the highly visible upwardly mobile Islamism of the new "counter-elite" are the urban poor, the grassroots supporters of Islamist politics, for whom political Islam may represent something quite different – social services, perhaps even a kind of traditionalism, a mark of continuity with their rural pasts rather than disjuncture.

Is Islamism in Istanbul arising as a response to the postmodern culture, reflecting processes of reflexive identity formation under conditions of globalization? For some men and women, maybe. But for others, both globalization and Islamism have different meanings. By juxtaposing my own research in four districts of Istanbul with recent analyses of Islamism as a postmodern identity, I have sought to uncover the ways in which globalization is unevenly and differentially accessed and experienced. Whose globalism, whose postmodernity, whose Islamism is it, anyway?

## Tables

Table 1: Binomial vote for FP in city elections by frequency of religious practice

	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Holidays only</i>	<i>Holidays and Fridays</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Total*</i>
FP	13	5	51	106	175
% in vote	7%	3%	29%	61%	
% in practice	15%	14%	37%	57%	39%
Other	74	31	86	80	271
% in vote	27%	11%	32%	30%	
% in practice	85%	86%	63%	43%	61%
Total	87	36	137	186	446
	20%	8%	31%	42%	

\*The likelihood ratio for this table is significant at the level of  $p=.000$ . Significant adjusted residuals are found for all cells but those in the column, "Holidays and Fridays."

Table 2: Binomial FP vote, city elections, by migrant status and gender

		<i>Migrant</i>	<i>Non-migrant, migrant parent</i>	<i>Non-migrant, Istanbul parents</i>	<i>Total</i>
Women*	FP	59	22	2	83
	% in vote	71%	27%	2%	
	% in migrant	37%	41%	11%	36%
	Other	99	32	16	147
	% in vote	67%	35%	11%	
	% in migrant	63%	22%	89%	64%
Men**	Total	158	54	18	230
		69%	24%	8%	
	FP	75	17	3	95
	% in vote	79%	18%	3%	
	% in migrant	48%	33%	20%	43%
	Other	82	34	12	128
% in vote	64%	27%	9%		
% in migrant	52%	68%	80%	57%	
Total		157	51	15	223
		70%	23%	7%	

\*The likelihood ratio for this table (Women) is significant,  $p=.040$ . Significant adjusted residuals are found for "Non-migrant, Istanbul parents."

\*\*The likelihood ratio for this table (Men) is significant,  $p=.031$ . Significant adjusted residuals are found for "migrant."

Table 3: Binomial vote for FP in city elections by how rural or urban respondent feels and gender

		<i>FP</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Women*	Completely rural	4	14	18
	% in identity	22%	78%	
	% in vote	7%	8%	8%
	More rural	14	14	28
	% in identity	50%	50%	
	% in vote	25%	8%	12%
	Half and half	18	56	74
	% in identity	24%	76%	
	% in vote	32%	33%	33%
	More urban	12	19	31
	% in identity	39%	61%	
	% in vote	21%	11%	14%
	Completely urban	9	65	74
	% in identity	12%	88%	
% in vote	16%	39%	33%	
Total	57	168	225	
	25%	75%		
Men**	Completely rural	7	18	25
	% in identity	28%	72%	
	% in vote	12%	12%	12%
	More rural	9	24	33
	% in identity	27%	73%	
	% in vote	15%	15%	15%
	Half and half	18	40	58
	% in identity	31%	69%	
	% in vote	31%	26%	27%
	More urban	11	25	36
	% in identity	31%	69%	
	% in vote	19%	16%	17%
	Completely urban	14	49	63
	% in identity	22%	79%	
% in vote	24%	31%	29%	
Total	59	156	215	
	27%	73%		

\*The likelihood ratio for this table (Women) is significant,  $p=.001$ . Significant adjusted residuals are found for “More rural” and “Completely urban.”

\*\*The likelihood ratio for this table (Men) is not significant,  $p=.837$ .

Table 4: Mann-Whitney non-parametric ranked means test: Years in Istanbul and binomial FP vote, migrants only

<i>Ranks</i>			
	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
FP	133	148.11	19698.50
Other	171	155.92	26661.50
Total	304		
<i>Test Statistics</i>			
Mann-Whitney U	10787.500	Z	-0.769
Wilcoxon W	19698.500	Asymp. significance (2-tailed)	0.442
<i>Means</i>			
	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error
FP	19.74	11.50	0.997
Other	20.97	11.71	0.537

Table 5: Binomial vote for FP in city elections by frequency of travel to other districts and gender

		<i>FP</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Women*	Never	22	23	45
	% in travel	49%	51%	
	% in vote	27%	16%	20%
	Special occasions	37	66	103
	% in travel	36%	64%	
	% in vote	45%	45%	45%
	1-2 times/week	13	33	46
	% in travel	28%	72%	
	% in vote	16%	23%	20%
	3-4 times/week	9	10	19
	% in travel	47%	53%	
	% in vote	11%	7%	8%
	Every day	2	14	16
	% in travel	13%	88%	
% in vote	2%	10%	7%	
Total	83	146	229	
		36%	64%	
Men**	Never	5	14	19
	% in travel	26%	74%	
	% in vote	5%	11%	9%
	Special occasions	41	39	80
	% in travel	51%	49%	
	% in vote	43%	31%	36%
	1-2 times/week	18	34	52
	% in travel	35%	65%	
	% in vote	19%	27%	23%
	3-4 times/week	12	13	25
	% in travel	48%	52%	
	% in vote	13%	10%	11%
	Every day	19	28	47
	% in travel	40%	60%	
% in vote	20%	22%	21%	
Total	95	128	223	
		43%	57%	

\*The likelihood ratio for this table (Women) is significant,  $p=.042$ . Significant adjusted residuals are found for “Never” and “Every day.”

\*\*The likelihood ratio for this table (Men) is not significant,  $p=.173$ .

Table 6: Binomial vote for FP in city elections by type of films watched on television and gender

		<i>FP</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Women*	Local films	37	52	89
	% in films	42%	58%	
	% in vote	46%	36%	39%
	Foreign films	12	44	56
	% in films	21%	79%	
	% in vote	15%	30%	25%
	Both	15	43	58
	% in films	26%	74%	
	% in vote	19%	30%	26%
	None	17	7	24
	% in films	71%	29%	
	% in vote	21%	5%	11%
	Total	81	146	227
	36%	64%		
Men**	Local films	16	32	48
	% in films	33	67	
	% in vote	17	26	22
	Foreign films	28	37	65
	% in films	43	56	
	% in vote	30	30	30
	Both	29	42	71
	% in films	41	59	
	% in vote	30	34	33
	None	20	13	33
	% in films	61	39	
	% in vote	22	11	15
	Total	93	124	217
	43	57		

\*The likelihood ratio for this table (Women) is significant,  $p=.000$ . Significant adjusted residuals are found for "Foreign films" and "None."

\*\*The likelihood ratio for this table (Men) is not significant,  $p=.105$ .

Table 7: Binomial vote for FP in city elections by highest level of education achieved and gender

		<i>FP</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Total</i>
Women*	Illiterate	14	9	23
	% in education	61%	39%	
	% in vote	17%	6%	10%
	Primary or less	56	90	146
	% in education	38%	62%	
	% in vote	68%	61%	64%
	Middle school	6	17	23
	% in education	26%	74%	
	% in vote	7%	12%	10%
	High school	6	27	33
	% in education	18%	82%	
	% in vote	7%	18%	14%
	University	1	4	5
	% in education	20%	89%	
% in vote	1%	3%	2%	
Total	83	147	230	
		36%	64%	
Men**	Illiterate	2	2	4
	% in education	50%	50%	
	% in vote	2%	2%	2%
	Primary or less	48	66	114
	% in education	42%	58%	
	% in vote	51%	52%	51%
	Middle school	17	25	42
	% in education	41%	60%	
	% in vote	18%	20%	19%
	High school	22	27	49
	% in education	45%	55%	
	% in vote	23%	21%	22%
	University	6	8	14
	% in education	43%	57%	
% in vote	6%	6%	6%	
Total	95	128	223	
		43%	57%	

\*The likelihood ratio for this table (Women) is significant,  $p=.012$ . Significant adjusted residuals are found for "Illiterate" and "High school."

\*\*The likelihood ratio for this table (Men) is not significant,  $p=.991$ .

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