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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL, ECONOMICAL AND DEMOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MIGROS AND BIM CUSTOMERS (A CASE STUDY OF VAN)

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Abstract

With the rise of consumerist capitalism, shopping malls have begun to proliferate and take its place as the center of public life and an inseparable part of cities and metropolises. In these places, life is built on and controlled by consumerist capitalism. Here, the customers not only fulfill their needs and desires, but are also offered different life experiences. As the symbol of late capitalism, body of consumerist culture and the sole meeting place for people, shopping malls became the main channel of social, economical and cultural life. Both architecture and interior design of shopping malls are planned to tempt the masses to a consumption-based life style. The number of these shopping centers increases in western countries and also in the rest of the world. Particularly in developing countries, global capital and multinational companies have a myriad of investment in retail and merchandising, including biggest brands of the world. On our way to being a consumer society, several shopping malls have opened branches in most metropolises, particularly in İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir. Migros and BİM supermarkets are two of the leading shopping centers, due to their corporate profiles and their places in the sector. This paper attempts to construct consumer profiles of the customers of these supermarkets, focusing on the consumer societies and historical development of consumer societies in Turkey.

Keywords: Consumption, Consumer Society, Consumerist Capitalism, Shopping malls, Consumer Behavior.

INTRODUCTION

The most important feature of the era in which we live is increasingly spread of consumer capitalism as an economic system and consumerism as a way of life in the world. The consumption culture emerged in the late 19th century and conditions ensuring development of this culture are corollaries of industrial revolution which dominated to this period. While industrial revolution transformed capital accumulation to investment it also changed traditional production logic fundamentally and technological innovations triggered by scientific inventions in this process transformed structural and organizational relations on which social system is based. In the course of time commercial and industrial capitalism was replaced by industrial and competitive capitalism and accelerated the transition from agricultural society to industrial society and modernization, urbanization, liberalization and secularization emerged in Western Europe originally as a result of this rapid transformation have spread to other nations of world.

Changing production relations with worldwide spread of capitalism caused fractures in traditional social order of societies based on subsistence economy and development of the manufacturing industry as a result of rapid development in production techniques. Especially commencement of the implementation of automated production lines in early 1920s, ensured standardization of production on the one hand and expansion of mass production and consumption on the other hand. In this Taylorist management approach where mainly unqualified people were employed "production" has always been at the very center of economic operations. During this period excessive production surplus provided by means of private sector in Western Europe and American continent where industrialization emerged nearly caused cessation of production in global scale because it was not possible to create demand in market due to bottleneck resulted from 1929 financial crisis and decrease in consumer purchasing power.

Social, economic and political reflections of recession in saving, employment and investment in Western societies created a quick impact in the world. Failure to produce at an adequate level and lack of demand resulted in social unrest, mass strikes and unemployment. Western society's quitted production based development model followed nearly for a century to overcome this structural crisis. Because economists of that period believed main cause of the crisis to be strict implementation of classical liberalism and market to be left by state to initiative of the market they criticized macroeconomic structure. Keynesian economic model emerged as a result of these critiques started to focus on interest and monetary policies to increase demand rather than supply-side policies applied until that period and he proposed effective

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presence of state together with private sector in the market and increasing investment and employment opportunities with fiscal policies.

Keynesian theory suggested supplying more money to public services to re-stabilize already stopping production presence he indeed winked to consumer policies. Consumption-based solution offers resulting from this approach were limited to the application of welfare state and it was aimed at reducing excessive profit margins of capital and supporting interests of disadvantaged groups in social sphere. Along with the problems posed by the government's excessive growth in the late 1970s capitalist system has again underwent a crisis due to protection of organized labor, high payments for employees, excessive public debt, chronic budget deficits, squeeze of employers under higher tax burden and high inflation in the market.

The said crisis of the capitalist system was tried to be overcome by neoliberal policies advocating free market regime like derogation of state, privatization of public entities and reduction of public expenses. Together with globalization barriers in front of international capital was eliminated and increase in domination over labor because of flexible production model and taming labor with low payments indicated social and class contradictions sharply. With neoliberal policies it was tried to create a consumer society in the world by replacing production with consumption. In this process, because consumption was envisaged as a solution for the sustainability of the capitalist system, it started to become the most important aspects of a social lifestyle in today's societies.

1. CONSUMPTION AND OVERVIEW OF CONSUMPTION SOCIETY

Nearly one hundred years ago Max Weber (1997) mentioned about the influence of capitalism while thinking on modernity experience Western Europe and he claimed that bureaucratic mentality and rationality created by the economic dynamics, Calvinism and puritanical ethics were decisive in replacement of the traditional society by modern society. Weber's point was to disclose the thing giving spirit modern times and why this spirit emerged in Europe but not in any other geography. In his studies he observed that capital accumulation and unobtrusive way of life shaped by the Protestant belief might answer these questions and it was religious beliefs pushing people to work and praising virtues of earning, profit and production. Depending on this determination he concluded that importance of faith played a very important role in capital accumulation and capitalism's flourishing in Europe.

Weber, later described motivation of the capitalist system that will lead to an industrial revolution as production and claimed that production increase would transform the modern world. According to him main feature of industrial capitalism was rationality. In addition, organization of production and technological innovation would cause strengthening of capitalist system and to have supra-national characteristics. History seems to verify both Weber and Marx for the moment. Because Marx, known for his sharp criticism of capitalism (Turner, 2007) evaluated dynamics of historical change in the capitalist system of the bourgeois class which completely changed means of production and he argued that no other system in history made production as much as capitalism, changed social and class structure and world- historical developments were not transformed in such a short time. Marx also criticized capitalism for being an anarchic system which created production power more than total of all earlier generations and expanding by creating constantly new markets.

Opinions of Marx about capitalism emerged in England towards the end of the eighteenth century and affected the whole world can be criticized in many aspects. However, it is possible to say that societies become captive of consumer economy more than any period else in our century as the most important historical development verifying Marx's idea that capitalism is an anarchic system exploiting labor, environment and humanitarian values. That is why in our century it is possible to say that consumption level of our age is the highest level achieved among all civilizations in human history, consumerist lifestyle spreads unstopably all over the world, brands have become words that are used at homes, packaged, processed and frozen foods are widely used, purchasing and use of goods almost became a ritual, every luxury good becomes a requirement after a short time and consumption has become the criterion recognition and self-esteem, child who did not buy the latest games ashamed to invite his friends to home, leisure, even spare time has become too valuable not to be wasted, even an ordinary physical the exercise was turned into a consumption form and accordingly we live in a society transformed into a consumerist society. (Durning, 1998: 4-34).

Undoubtedly, the most important reason for the widespread consumption and consumer lifestyle in such a universal is consumerist capitalism that occupied almost every aspect of earth. Indeed, because consumerist capitalism, as stated by Marx (Singer, 2013) is a system containing labor and capital conflict and vulnerable to crises it had to constantly maneuver to overcome crises. That is why the capitalist system could not free itself from structural crises sometimes on a global sometimes regional scale throughout its history. For example, in 1929, supply-demand imbalance created by overproduction and in 1973 oil crisis upheaval

economies of the countries dominated by the capitalist system and in 1980s system has focused on consumer policies rather than production policies to revise itself.

Consumption policies were implemented especially as a way of overcoming the structural crisis faced by capitalism after World War II by Western countries and the term "consumption society" was used by French writer Baudrillard to describe a new way of life emerged in particular in post-industrial western countries. According to Baudrillard (2002) consumption is a system formed of symbols and indicators regulated by codes and rules instead of satisfaction of natural needs through many goods and services. The goods and services consumed in this system become a social value, individuals try to create a unique self-identity and awareness and distinguish themselves from others by interacting with objects they consume. Therefore, consumption ceases to be a unique activity of individual and occurs as a result of social order in which it takes place and needs created by this system.

In this regard, it is possible to say that consumption is a lifestyle that is created in the social sphere (Bocock, 1997), as a fact unique to modernity (Slater, 1997), and the most significant side of this lifestyle is to target not only satisfaction of needs but also satisfaction of desires and wills (Odabaşı, 1999) including indicators and images (Urry, 1999: 204 Featherstone 2005: 143). Consumption however, as stated by many theorists, is a word about contemporary society itself, a discourse that reflects the community's speaking style (Baudrillard, 2004: 254), an apparatus representing the class position (Aytaç, 2006: 1-28), a feeling producing happiness simulacra (Heath-Potter, 2012: 38), and an indication of belonging to a particular group or culture (zorlu, 2006: 277). However beyond all of these it is a sociological phenomenon covering production, distribution and sharing of material values of economic sphere from state administration to everyday life of ordinary people (Tellan, 2009: 82-100). Therefore, it is required to assess consumption not as a mere shopping activity or as person's relationships established with object but as a part of value systems built socially, a moral code and a form of communication.

Today the most important reason expansion of consumption to almost all segments of society on a global scale and becoming the first fact to be referred about any issue (Zengingönül, 2012: 37), is excessively increase of individualization and identification-based problems in post-modern society. Indeed, modern consumption patterns often emerged as a result of living in metropolitan areas and its suburbs. Those involved in this way of life are in a search of meaning by themselves. Because as individuals feel that they are lone, alienated and ignored within crowds they are endeavor prove and highlight themselves to their environment. These needs and efforts causes a continuous "struggle to be noticeable" as expressed by Bocock (1997: 27). However, individual cannot achieve victory in this war at any time because there is no break an end for this struggle.

The most important reason that there are no winners or losers of being noticeable struggle is abstraction of consumption from the concept of need and making it a means of identity and belonging. Determination of social identity and sense of identity of the person by consumption patterns naturally led to giving a different meaning to consumption praxis. That is why in post-traditional societies consumption the most important reference source is forming identity. People establish their relations with society according to consumption and build their identity with consumed objects. Consequently it can be said that consumption culture has a very important role in the construction of individual identity. Also "individual socialized through consumption is no longer a socially integrated individual. He is an individual provoked to desire "to be himself" by differing from others, "he is similar to all others with his rejection to undertake liability of joint states with a common activity and oriented to consumption socially."(Gorz, 2007: 67).

Use of consumption as a tool of creating personality in addition to use as a sign of class identity constitutes the main reason for individual to develop belongingness to a specific group or inclusion in any specific group in terms of social psychology. Because unlike traditional societies social identity is expected to be built by individuals themselves in modern society. In this sense identity has become a status that must be acquired by individual rather than a status given and taken to individual by society in modern times (Yanıklar, 2006: 80). In this process individual purchases usually to look like those who are similar to him or to be included in groups he imitates. For such a behavior generally individual needs and desires are not main drives on the contrary main concern is being included in class or group individual admires in the world. Individual tends to define "establishing relationships with those purchasing and using like himself, being like-minded with them and pleasure freedom stemming from belonging to that group as the sole and absolute freedom, leaving instant or temporary satisfaction provided by possessing and being in new searches in short consumption is expressed as a new way of meaning in post-modern life style for individual (Tellan, 2009: 80).

Evaluating such individual search for meaning as a reflection of spiritual crisis; Daniel Bell (1976: 28) explains cause of domination of consumption culture over more and more societies as the termination of relationship between society and religion and misleading remedies offered by secular meaning systems.

According to him because people wander in a spiritual nothingness they try to resolve this problem through consumption. Consumption therefore becomes a temporary state of praxis that veils and hides existential anxiety or soothe. However this existential anxiety that people try to get rid cannot be satisfied with consumption and even it becomes more evident and stimulated in this way. A consumption practice giving a sense of satisfaction that is for a short time is replaced by new requirements after a certain time and vicious cycle will continue without interruption.

People will tend to consume more to get out of this vicious cycle and they will work now not only to maintain their life but also to be able to afford to purchase consumption goods (Bocock, 1997: 57). As it was pointed out by Farrelly (2015: 11) very well "how much we have that much we will request" more. As if it is the will itself what we need. Even if we are immersed in abundance we feel like if we give up willing and possessing our existence also will be given up. The most important reason why we think such is the capitalist system itself that plans everything in details and manipulates our subconscious with different strategies. In this system, with Galeano's (2013: 193) phrase culture spread on a global scale by mass media "invites us to take account the world as a supermarket or a highway that those around us can only be a commodity or a competitor."

If not impossible, it is difficult to refuse this invitation. Because there is already advertisement and unlike religions that promise heaven after death advertisement promises us heaven in market standing right around the next corner (Heath-Potter, 2012: 37). Therefore, advertisement is never limited to a consumption ideology; along with this, it offers a design of consumer "I" reaching satisfaction with a consumer identity (Lefebvre, 1998: 93). In this design consumer is a predator awaiting its prey and ready to act at any moment to buy something new with eye and ears open. Advertisement is the most important weapon seducing and convincing consumer. It is essential to convince consumer, because his continuous shopping and filling his wardrobe with new junk and endless ceremony of his commodity in front of him entails convincing consumer that new junk is better than older ones and accordingly consumer should be convinced that alternatives are more valuable than previous or current ones (Frank, 1997: 151, quoted by Heath-Potter, 2012: 137). The way to convince consumer to purchase something new means ensuring that consumer believes that his purchasing is mandatory. The magic word here is need because needs cannot be and should not be postponed.

Thus, capitalist system producing and manipulating the system of needs tries to place consumption in the center of daily life. Needs are created by the system and the system applies production whenever needs are required to be satisfied. Individual encountered with counterfeit and imposed needs struggles for more consumption in this process. Also human needs are increased especially with mass media ads (Illich, 1990: 59). Indeed, creation, packaging, marketing and launching stages of needs are performed entirely in a planned way and offered to consumers through the mass media. Thus society besieged by mass media is exposed to the pressure of consumer culture more and more each day and manipulated to consumerism.

The most important structural change took place on the road to consumer culture is distribution of welfare created by the capitalist system to different sections of society and especially increase in purchasing power of the middle class. Because capitalist system pioneers a way of life dominated by consumption culture it has also opened the door for globalization of consumption and especially "culture industry" has been the most important aspect of this process. Culture industry definition conceptualized in the literature mainly by Adorno (2011: 72-78) refers to manipulation of society through various means and ways of life guided by fashion and advertisement. According to the said author, the culture industry in the western society alerts and manipulates masses endlessly to consume products and consumption is ensured by making popular values created and goods manufactured.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF CONSUMER CULTURE IN TURKEY

Westernization and modernization movements have been influential in the formation of consumer culture in Turkey. However while consumption was created in Western societies with innovations in social and economic life by society itself, in Turkey during reign of Mahmud II. consumption has been supported by state mainly in apparel and luxury living style and government entities became the center of change and innovation. In other words consumer movement took place top-down from palace to the army, from bureaucracy to wealthy classes, from young Ottomans who have received education in Europe to middle and lower classes. Also one of the most important reasons for the development of a consumer culture in the Ottoman Empire is less social and economic change and prevalence of traditional peasant lifestyle (Orçan, 2008: 36-47) and the other one Muslim population. Because Islam has considered excessive consumption as waste like many other religions and praised puritan lifestyle.

Because consumption was considered as wasting in the Ottoman Empire as a Muslim society generally frugality was praised as a virtue and thus, consumption was not considered as a value. During this period, consumption was possible only in special moments and events like weddings, circumcisions

ceremonies and feast (Aydoğan, 2009: 203-215). The first examples of consumption place in Ottoman were usually closed inns and bazaars standing in the middle of residential areas. Grocery type businesses also were gathered at the indoor market places and in such places basic needs especially food and clothing were shopped. Craftsmen were organized in guilds and commercial life was conducted with strict rules. In the middle 19th century accommodation of thousands of foreign soldiers in Istanbul before deployment to Crimean War through Black Sea influenced Istanbul community especially upper classes deeply and different clothing of soldiers showed its effect over time and an attempt for consumption in people's behaviors became evident.

Another reason for the underdevelopment of culture of consumption in Ottoman society compared to Western Europe is late entry of capitalism to the country. Being the most important causes of underdevelopment of Ottoman Empire industrialization problem prevented naturally formation of bourgeois class and hindered consumer culture. Since Ottoman had a semi- feudal structure it could not create the structural conditions to ensure economic development in the country. Because trade bourgeoisie class was formed of non-Muslims generally created added value was largely transferred abroad. Ottoman faced European capitalism through capitulations and big landowners and Levantine tried to make export by selling agricultural products to European markets. However, due to high internal and external commercial taxes they have not been able to create a rooted bourgeoisie class. Because trade and usurer capital was not converted to the manufacturing industry a Western-style capital and working class were not developed. Ottoman has demonstrated an agriculture-based economic structure as raw material market of foreign countries for many years and development of industry and commerce in this structure could not be possible. Foreign capital investment became possible only in the second half of the 19th century with the establishment of the railway network (Bıçakçı, 2008: 1-15).

With the establishment of the Republic many important reforms were carried out towards the reconstruction of the country. Five-year development plans to support country's economy have been performed by the state. Many needs, especially infrastructure and production were tried to be carried out under policies of state whereas in the aftermath of the war country could not achieve desired objectives both in terms of economy and development. People have tried to make daily living in poverty. In this period dominated by agricultural society and traditional manufacturing no significant success was achieved with regards to economic development. In the early Republican era country focused mainly on cultural revolution and political stability was sought. Turkish society faced with consumer culture first time in the period after 1950 when Democratic Party came to power.

Democratic Party era also represents the period when Turkey was opened to foreign markets, established warm relations with the United States and European goods began to be exported to Turkey. Menderes promised "a millionaire for every neighborhood" in his election propaganda and claimed to make Turkey "little America." Indeed, during this period, multi- partner and multinational companies appeared in Turkey and foreign capital inflow to country was encouraged, some public institutions were tried to be transferred to the private sector, a transition from statism to a free market economy was experienced and significant progress was ensured in multiparty system, democratization, urbanization, industrialization modernization and liberalization areas. The most important development to form the basis of subsequent consumption culture in Turkey was bilateral agreements that have been made with the United States and financial and technological assistance provided by these agreements.

As a result of agreements made with the United States in the framework of Marshall Plan tractors and irrigation equipment were brought to Turkey to be used in agricultural processes and financial support was also provided to the government. In fact, these aids being a part of America's economic expansion policy caused export of certain agricultural products and development of small-scale industry and national economy in Turkey and resulted in migration from rural areas to urban areas. Therefore, every step towards market economy required a move away from state control policy and starting from this period until today Turkey has followed a liberal-conservative policy. Together with urbanization significant progress has been undergone in large store openings, advertisement and marketing fields to stimulate the consumer economy.

Therefore, it is possible to evaluate Democratic Party era not only in terms of Turkish politics and transition to multiparty life and pluralist democracy, but also as a period when economic regime changed radically, transition from statism to liberalism, replacement of state dominated economic model with private and foreign capital though it progressed gradually. During this period, the most important development in the field of economy was mechanization of agriculture and opening fields closed to agriculture until that time to agricultural production. Developments in agriculture have led naturally to a very high growth rate in the GDP in the first four years of DP period. Between the years 1950-1954 average annual GDP growth rate was 11.3%. Together with agriculture there have also been significant developments in the industry and the

first phase of the industrialization process "domestic production of basic consumer goods" stage has been completed again in DP period (Sungur, 2015: 166-167).

Truly apparent consumption culture and formation of a consumer society in the public sphere were completely evident after 1980s in Turkey. Turkey has experienced a radical change in the economic and political senses in 1980s and civil government established under surveillance of the 12 September 1980 military regime performed radical changes in particular in economy and took steps to ensure Turkey's integration with the world. Stabilization program termed as 24th January resolutions in Turkish economic literature and targeting structural transformations basically has changed economic regime of Turkey's economy thoroughly. With aforementioned resolutions for the first time state targeted to regulate economy according to free market rules, to give up a portion of subsidies applied to agricultural products, to develop private sector competing in the world markets by freeing foreign exchange rates, to make legal arrangements to facilitate foreign capital investments and liberalize foreign trade and to support international construction contracting services and most importantly to replace import based substitution model with export-oriented development model.

24th January resolutions have a character of being a milestone for the Turkish economy. That is because with these resolutions Turkey has stepped forward towards industrialization based on integration with world markets and export growth. These resolutions reducing the weight of the state on economy and accelerating foreign capital investments not only reconstructed the deteriorating economic stability in Turkey but also led to the creation of a consumer society. Özal's liberal-conservative policies led on the one hand strengthening of educated new conservative middle class in cities on the other hand led to economic integration of upper classes with the international capital. Therefore, these resolutions offering an economic model based on foreign trade has been the major milestone on the way of consumer society in Turkey (Korkmaz, 2009: 142-144). Also during this period emergence of a conservative ideology oriented middle class named as "Anatolian Tigers" or "Green Capital" in the same way led to spread of consumption in Turkey and enabled said class to make export without Istanbul and reaching world markets without bourgeoisie of Istanbul with financial loans provided by the government.

During this period of liberal economy where development model based on free trade and export was implemented, Turkish society has undergone a rapid transition from production to consumption and each steps on the way of integrating with world economy caused increase of import along with export and almost a boom in consumer goods. During this period, with release of foreign exchange operations, abandonment of import substitution strategy it became possible to purchase all types of food, including fugitive American cigarettes sold under the counter previously, chocolates, distilleries and other consumer products and even famous Levi's jeans. This was in fact a dream for Özal's "middle pillar" which he referred to ordinary citizens as mentioned above. Therefore, removal of financial constraints in the market, freedom of international travels, cancel of foreign exchange transfer controls, spread of credit cards and banking system began to change consumption patterns and habits in daily life of people. For example, credit cards used by only elite people until that period have become a status symbol that can be used easily by ordinary people (Bali, 2011: 27-31).

Luxury goods imported from abroad began to be exhibited in the windows of shops in the main streets of primarily metropolitan cities and Anatolian cities and people started to experience a way of life which is not accustomed and to consume many different products. Especially durable goods described as white goods began to be used in the majority of homes and international brands started to make investments in Turkey in this area. It can be said that consumer culture of 1980s Turkey was experienced in two main dimensions intensely. The first of these, was "materialization, striking it rich and passion to have money were considered as a means of happiness and the second one was development of excessive passion for material products, acquisition of these products for glitter and fantasy, novelty and means of being attached to Western culture all of which became important element of life" (Üstün- Tural, 2008: 263). In particular, shopping centers and global brands adorning the windows of these centers caused consumption to be made not only for need but also as a means of class identity and status. Nevertheless sudden encounter of a yet to be industrialized and urbanized society to consumption culture has led to expansion of vanity based consumption attitudes.

In the early 1980s Turkey was among countries including especially Britain and America where social state view lost altitude and replaced by neo-liberal policies. While Neo-liberal policies opened way for privatization, foreign investment, free trade and global companies on the one hand such policies also opened the way for quick spread of consumer culture on the other hand. Thus, although Turkey was a developing country in Middle East it has one of the most rapidly adapting countries to western consumer culture. The country suddenly faces with emergence of new consumption areas, shopping centers and a new middle class spending time in such centers with vanity and luxury centered life style. The most important feature of this

new consumer class was to utilize benefits of both liberal policies and conservative politics. Traveling between New York, London, Paris, Istanbul and Ankara this consumer class was the class used advantages provided by Özal to the conservative capital.

By the 1990s, a sudden consumption boom appeared in Turkey with relative affluence experienced, adoption of an export-led development model, encouragement of private entrepreneurship, increase in per capita income, expansion of middle class, social and cultural mobility created by urbanization, spread of consumption-manipulating means like mainly credit card and fashion, advertisement and internet (Vural Arslan, 2009: 152-153). In addition, especially with the establishment of private television channels and 24 hours daily broadcasting a culture industry was created and this industry materialized and objectified culture and led consumption of cultural values as a commodity. In the late 1990s with adaptation of capitalist system more and increase in hypermarkets everywhere, culture industry spread and Turkey gained a significant impetus on the way of being a consumption society due to enhancement of public welfare with relative improvements in Turkish economy (Demirezen, 2015: 79). Indeed, destination of Turkey in being a consumption society is obvious from gigantic shopping centers opened every day. For example, the first shopping center was opened in 1988 in Turkey with the name of Galleria in Istanbul, in 1992 Atrium, in 1993 Capitol and Carrefour were opened and in Ankara Atakule was opened in 1988 and Karum was opened in 1993.

3. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND FUNCTIONS OF SHOPPING CENTERS (AVM)

The most important venues of today's consumer society are shopping centers occupy more public area day by day and offer a variety of goods and services to consumers. Shopping centers not only gather shops for daily needs of people under one roof but also provide entertainment and leisure time activities and they are described as sometimes hypermarkets, supermarkets, ultra market, store, shopping mall, atrium, marche and center zone commercial name have become indispensable locations in modern metropolises and began to form the main body of consumption society created by contemporary capitalism in addition to having a semi- public location. Having attractive aspects for consumer and their rational designs made such centers almost temples of new age and became centers for consumers to perform many alternative activities both in a comfortable and safe environment.

Shopping venue is one of the oldest public spaces of human history. It is known that barter system as primitive form of shopping took place in bazaars. Agora of ancient Greek civilization was a place where trade relations were performed. During the Roman period products brought from different continents by traders were put up for sale in fairs. In the 16th century Europe with progress in glass-making techniques shops which are located in the streets and boulevards transformed shopping to a part of everyday life with their flashy showcases and with spread of automobile use and growth in urbanization in the twentieth century shopping centers moved out of cities and began to take the form of complex structures supplying many requirements (Şahin, 2011: 4-5). In fact, fundamentals of shopping centers are based on indoor bazaar models of the 15th century and since that day there is a constant change in terms of architecture, design, goods and services. It is also known that shopping transactions took place in the busiest center of cities or settlement areas in every society throughout the history.

It is well known that today shopping centers with increasing number every day are not independent of industrialization, modernization and enrichment created by existing capitalist system and even shopping activity itself is not independent of life styles of especially upper classes. Indeed, two largest cities in the world London and Paris presented shop culture to world at the time when industrial capitalism spread. In departments of shops that were opened in these two cities mainly clothes and food and goods and souvenirs brought from countries such as India and China were sold. People from different places of Europe also came for shopping to these cities where luxury goods were also consumed. Thus, shopping centers hosting consumption venues began from Europe and spread around the world in the course of time.

Shopping centers in the developed countries has reached its present form passing through many stages. These forms can be grouped under seven categories periodically. The first one is " busy streets and passages" between 18th and 20th centuries, the second one is "garden city shopping centers" emerged at late 19th century and early 20th century, the third one is "supermarkets and large supermarkets" from early 20th century until today, the fourth one is "car-based shopping centers" from 1916 until today, the fifth one is "suburban shopping centers" from 1946 until today, the sixth one is "festival, shopping centers" from 1960 until today and the seventh one is "interactive entertainment-shopping centers" from 1980 until today as indispensable locations of our daily life (Şahin, 2011: 13). If we describe this century as a "consumer society century" shopping centers must be temples of this century.

Temples as known are sacred places where people having the same faith are gathered to perform religious rituals. Religious worship and rituals are performed on a regular basis in these places. Persons belonging to the same faith gather at certain time of the week or day in said places and they are incredibly

pleased and all kinds of connections with the outside world during this ceremony are stopped. After the ritual they get out in a manner freed from worldly and spiritual concerns. Ritzer (2000: 26-27) uses a similar one of this metaphorical relationship related to religious temples and claims that today's post-modern society is actually a "society of demonstration" and shopping centers are "consumption cathedrals." According to author shopping centers provide a centrality provided by traditional temples to satisfy specific needs of people and built with similar balance, symmetry and order.

With semi-public feature, shopping centers try to give a different social status to their customers and to create a different perception of proprietorship for them. Individuals in general are tempted by active slogans of dazzling global brands and mobile logos confusing their minds when they pass shining showcases under the spotlights in such consumption areas. Each store awaits its consumer as if a hunter already prepared his trap. As every customer is a potential buyer for the seller and persuading and convincing consumer to buy something depend on the skills of store employees. In addition, interior and exterior design of shopping centers should be designed and constructed so that the consumer feels himself very special and safe when he enters. Indeed, security checkpoints at the entry of each shopping center welcome customers with a special attention and they try to give consumers feeling that they are outstanding people.

In each visit made to shopping center it is ensured that consumer feels himself as if he is in a special welcoming ceremony and benefits from unlimited possibilities. Because consumer is the one judging, criticizing and choosing (Bauman, 1999: 43). His choice and decision are final and nobody can change it. Main objective should be consumer happiness, because consumer is do-gooder. At the same time the purchasing process should be transparent, easy and convenient. That is to say purchase demand of consumer is so vital that it cannot be postponed and it must be satisfied at that time. To satisfy needs all kinds of convenience should be provided from credit cards to sales on installments, from delay of installment payments to extra installments, keeping ready campaign products to customer- special discounts. Customer taken inside selectively is now under the control and supervision of the shopping center and surrounding visible and invisible dozens of cameras record the customer consumption preferences to be examined later by sales department.

Every shopping center undertakes to be concerned with customers from cradle to grave by taking their personal and contact information in order to inform them about discounts, promotions and campaigns to be made. In addition, since consumers behave in line with social psychology of the masses surrounding them when they buy something they don't demonstrate the will to act rationally. In shopping center individual is not the one deciding his own yet he is the one keeping pace with the community he is surrounded. Here individual becomes communal, public area is privatized or private area publicized. This condition is realized in a formation called 'community space' especially created by designers of shopping centers (Voyce 2006: 277-279, quoted by Aydogan, 2009: 206). Thus, shopping centers providing imaginary opportunity to the consumers are becoming indispensable places of consumption.

The most important reason for consumers to visit shopping centers frequently is their will to "escape from real world." It is because consumers sometimes wish to be attracted by temptation of shopping centers which are extremely controlled and give feeling of confidence physically and mentally and therefore offer an alternative world apart from the real world. All options here are rational and because accuracy of each choice is guaranteed from the beginning taste of consumer in making choice are not overshadowed by concern of making mistake. Here environment is revised carefully, almost all uncertainties are eliminated and direction signs are hung everywhere in a way that everyone can see. Because this world (shopping center) is rationally designed it does not contain any mystery or trap and thus it is simpler, more secure and transparent than the "real world" left behind thick walls and electronic gates. In this expert-made world everything exhibiting irrationality is subordinated to rational design therefore militancy of rationality is removed from insight (Bauman, 3003: 288). Thus, in this world where infinite options are presented together in a certain order consumers cannot be expected to act very rationally.

Huge shopping stores that provide all types of shopping opportunities to their customers in the early 1920s, tried to serve in especially city's busiest areas, streets or passages. However after World War II when social housing projects were carried out outside the city and upper classes began to live in secure housing sites shopping centers also founded outside the city. As city centers were exposed to intense population created suburbanization phenomenon and as a result large shopping centers were founded to serve in many different areas. Indeed, today number of shopping centers increases more than number of cinemas, restaurants, hotels, schools, hospitals, universities and even television stations. The total area of the shopping centers increased 12 times in the last 40 years.... at an ordinary American store there are 80 different painkillers, 40 variety of toothpastes, 150 variety of lipsticks, 116 variety of creams... and 360

variety of shampoos ... (Farrelly, 2015: 29-43) . Again, one of America's largest shopping center "Mall of America" is visited by an average of 42 million people every year.*

Shopping centers similar to huge ones in West began to emerge in developing countries as well. Undoubtedly Turkey is among these countries. After the second half of 1990s our country has experienced a rapid increase in the number of shopping centers and huge department stores and shopping centers were opened especially in big cities like Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir and Bursa most of which have international partner companies. In shopping center investments in addition to foreign investors like Metro Group, Carrefour, Multimall and Coiro local companies like, Sabancı, Koç, Tepe Group also opened several shopping centers (Varol-Özüduru, 2011: 31). These centers target to collect needs for daily life from food to clothing and furniture to household appliances under one roof with customer-oriented operations.

In our country there have been significant investments in shopping and retail sector in recent years and this trend still continues. Indeed, the amount of investments made in this area over the last few years has been about 10 billion dollars (Korkut Altuna, 2012: 40). Majority of shopping centers are outside city centers in terms of location and established in easy transportation areas. Especially supermarkets established with international capital partnership hosted cultural activities like cinemas, theater and sporting events like ice skating and ski resort in addition to basic consumer goods. Delivery of non- shopping activities ensured shopping centers to be open constantly and to move home living activities to such places. It is likely that as in some other countries opening and closing timetable will be removed in shopping center in Turkey as well in the near future and shopping centers will operate day and night like hotels.

Considering the development of shopping sector in Turkey there is a rapid change both in terms of rentable space and number of shopping centers opened. Indeed according to data of Shopping Center Investors Association (AYD) number of shopping centers in Turkey is 350.* There are nearly 100 shopping centers only in Istanbul. Istanbul is followed by 35 shopping centers in Ankara, 19 shopping centers in Izmir and 16 shopping centers in Antalya. Number of shopping centers operating in Turkey and per cities are as follows: Istanbul 100, Ankara 35, İzmir 19, Antalya 16, Bursa 11, Kocaeli 9, Muğla 9, Aydın 7, Konya 7, Balıkesir 6, Gaziantep 6, Kayseri 6, Mersin 6, Samsun 6, Tekirdağ 6, Denizli 5, Diyarbakır 5, Eskişehir 4, Manisa 4, Sakarya 4, Adana 3, Çanakkale 3, Edirne 3, Hatay 3, Karabük 3, Kırıkkale 3, Kütahya 3, Şanlıurfa 3, Trabzon 3, Uşak 3, Afyon 2, Aksaray 2, Bolu 2, Elazığ 2, Erzurum 2, Giresun 2, Kahramanmaraş 2, Malatya 2, Siirt 2, Zonguldak 2, Artvin 1, Batman 1, Bilecik 1, Bitlis 1, Çankırı 1, Düzce 1, Isparta 1, Karaman 1, Kastamonu 1, Kırklareli 1, Mardin 1, Nevşehir 1, Ordu 1, Osmaniye 1, Tokat 1, Van 1, Yalova 1.

Number of shopping centers in Turkey and Some European Countries*

Country	City	Number of shopping centers	GLA (m ²)
Germany	Hamburg	23	362
	Berlin	43	402
Belgium	Brussels	17	233
Czech Republic	Prague	33	691
France	Marseille	15	252
	Paris	15	192
Holland	Amsterdam	10	195
England	Birmingham	18	335
	London	42	360
Spain	Barcelona	45	243
	Madrid	94	460
Sweden	Stockholm	89	869
Italy	Rome	43	228
	Milan	39	176
Turkey (added)	Istanbul	97	263

Sources: DTZ-European Rental Guide
*GLA: rentable area ***rentable area per1000 people

* <http://www.acarindex.com/dosyalar/makale/acarindex-1423877193.pdf>.20.01.2016.

* Information about Migros and BİM is obtained from following web site.

* <https://www.migroskurumsal.com/Icerik.aspx?IcerikID=43#>.27.01.2016.

* <https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Migros>.27.01.2016.

* <http://www.bim.com.tr/Categories/626/tarihce.aspx>.27.01.2016.

4. HISTORY AND CORPORATE POLICIES OF BIM AND MIGROS SHOPPING CENTERS *

The first supermarket of Turkey; Migros Shopping Centers continuously grew in Turkey and abroad since its foundation was founded in 1954 with partnership of 51% Swiss Migros and 49% Istanbul Municipality and Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi and Et ve Balık Kurumu (Tuzcuoğlu, 2011: 118). The company established by Istanbul Municipality to sell food and supplies to the public at fair prices and high quality served to public up to 1974 by traveling district by district with trucks and in 1975 Koç Group has acquired majority stakes of the company and launched fast market expansion process throughout Turkey. By the 1980s the company began to expand by 4 stores founded in Izmir after Istanbul and expanding services from food to cleaning agents and different products with different shelves. In 1990s, Migros opened stores in different categories and different cities.

Migros has become the first company in Turkey to launch hygienic packaging, the first label and shelf-life application and practices the first part-time working concept for labor force in the market, established the first discount store "Şok" and also became a public listed and this company continues to serve with 415 Migros, 11 Macro Centers, 12 5M store within Turkey and 27 Ramstore in Kazakhstan and Macedonia with 2011 data. Logo of Migros in Turkey is similar to the Migros logo in Switzerland. Likewise in Switzerland Migros in Turkey also serves in three categories.

These are;

* M Migros; only basic products other than food.

* MM Migros are; offers a wider range of products.

* MMM Migros are; textile products, electronic products, books and cosmetic products in a market structure.

* 5M Migros; textile products, electronic products, books and cosmetics products within an advanced market concept. Migros was put up for sale by the Koç Group in 2007. In 2008 Koç Holding sold its shares to a British company called Moonlight Capital S.A. but 40.25% stakes of the company was bought the Anadolu Group in early days of 2015.

The company with abbreviated name of BIM (Birleşik Mağazalar A.Ş) was a shopping center founded in 1995 with 21 stores in order to sell basic needs especially food and consumption goods in Turkey. Known as discount market chain and selling retail goods at wholesale prices is the largest retail organization in terms of number of stores and annual turnover in Turkey. The company opened 59 new markets abroad in 2014 and 223 markets in Morocco and 46 new markets in Egypt were opened and total number of stores abroad reached to 81. The Company's management in recent years decided to operate in Middle East countries rather than domestic operations. Bim has a different sales policy and customer base compared to Migros. The said company prefers domestic brands rather than global brands and makes sales with low price policy. Unlike Migros, BIM serves widely from main streets of cities to small streets. With its structure looks like traditional groceries instead of hypermarket concept BIM prefers to sell products at a cheaper price according to market conditions.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study we studied consumption society in general and structure and operation of shopping centers in detail we focused on two basic issues. Firstly it is aimed at explaining reasons why modern society turned into a consumer society today, role of capitalist development in this process, historical stages of the consumption in Turkey and its relationship with politics and secondly to reveal nature of shopping centers as the most important places of consumption societies and perceptions, practices and preferences of consumers related to consumption on the basis of Migros and BIM on examples in city of Van. This study covering comparison of social, economic and demographic characteristics of shoppers from these markets is important to explain relationship of consumer with consumption and class based fundamentals of shopping activity.

The research was conducted in center of Van having the biggest population in the Eastern Anatolia Region. The sample of the study was formed of face to face survey interviews conducted with shoppers from 3 different MM Migros markets and BIM markets in three different neighborhoods (Alipaşa, Cumhuriyet and Fehim Arvasi neighborhoods) in Van to ensure representation feature considering development levels. Social, economic and demographic status of consumers residing in these neighborhoods is quite different from one another. With surveys consisting of 15 questions in total it was aimed to determine demographic and socio-cultural factors affecting the purchasing behaviors of consumers and generally what they consider primarily when shopping. Surveys were conducted with 50 customers from Migros and 50 customers from BIM and in total of 100 consumers. The data were evaluated with the results obtained from the SPSS 22 statistical program.

6. RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this section data obtained from answers given to survey by customers shopped from BIM and Migros Shopping centers and involved in research. The said data reveals consumer profile of both shopping centers and at the same time includes comparison of social, economic and demographic data.

Table 1. Gender distribution of people shopped from Migros

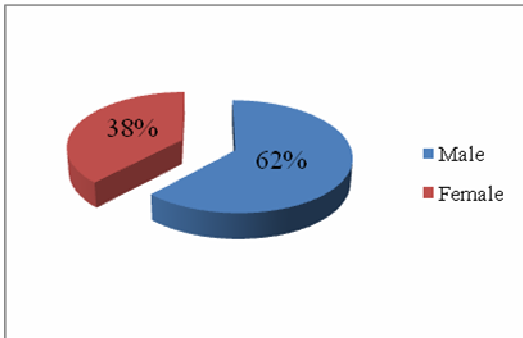
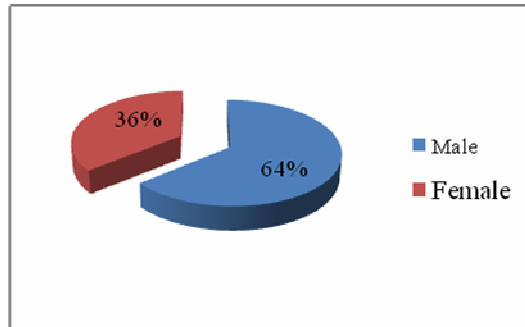


Table.1. Gender distribution of people shopped from BIM



According to gender of shoppers included in the sample group it is understood that generally men go to BIM and Migros for shopping. In Van city center because population working in the public and private sector is mostly male, man is considered to be household head and participation of women in working life is limited mainly men go for shopping. Indeed, most of the participants specified that households needs including kitchen expenditures are made by men usually.

Table.2. Age distribution of people shopped from Migros

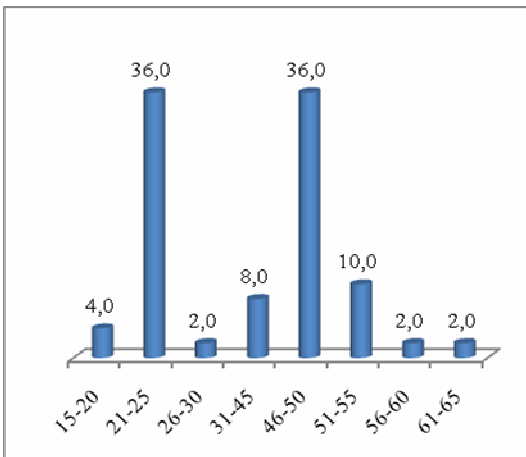
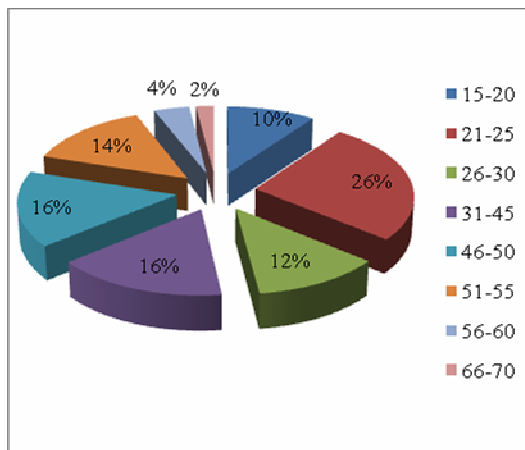


Table.2. Age distribution of people shopped from BIM



According to age distribution of shoppers answered surveys it is understood that there is a significant difference between Migros and BIM markets. While age of 36% of shoppers going to Migros is in the range of 21-25 and 46-50 years this rate has nearly equal distribution for BIM markets. Considering that those shopping from Migros are formed of students, civil servants and self-employed professionals (lawyers, engineers, doctors etc.) age distribution between 20-50 is normal. However, this is not the case for BIM markets. Because consumers of all age groups shop for BIM. The reason of age distribution formation in a wide range for BIM markets is shopping in order to meet the basic needs, especially food products. A significant portion of customers responding to the survey saying that they visited BIM to meet daily needs also explain the situation.

Table 3. Duration of residence in city center for those shopping from Migros

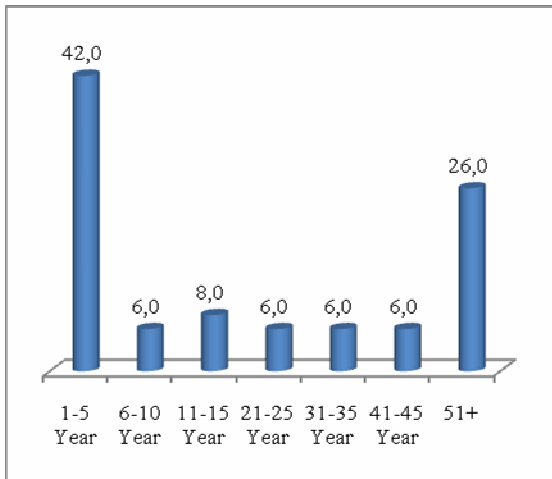
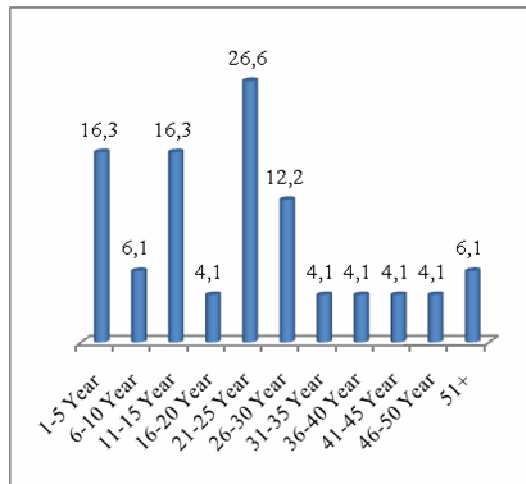


Table 3. Duration of residence in city center for those shopping from BIM



Duration of residence in city center for customers participating in the study differs for Migros and BIM markets. 42% of Migros customers said to reside in Van center 1 to 5 years 26% said to reside 51 years and more in city center. These data demonstrate two important features of Migros customers. First, group saying to reside in Van up to 5 years is particularly formed of those who are not from Van originally but come from outside city and work as public servants or students. Indeed, a significant proportion of shoppers who said to be regular customers of Migros specified that they come from different cities and work in Van for a temporary period. Secondly 26% of shoppers of Migros residing in Van more than 5 years stated that they are from city's noble families and they didn't go to a different center other than Migros generally. Therefore, it can be said that Migros customer base consists of consumers living from many years in Van or who reside in Van due to their work. In the study duration of residing in Van for BIM customers is shorter compared to Migros customers. Given these data, it is possible to say that BIM customers are not urban people but recently emigrated to city center.

Table 4. Education Status of shoppers of Migros

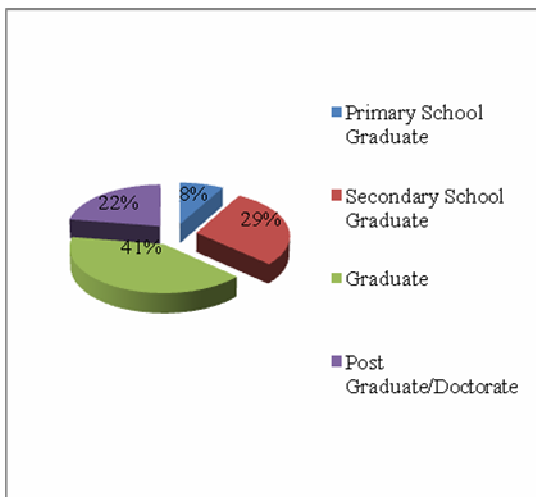
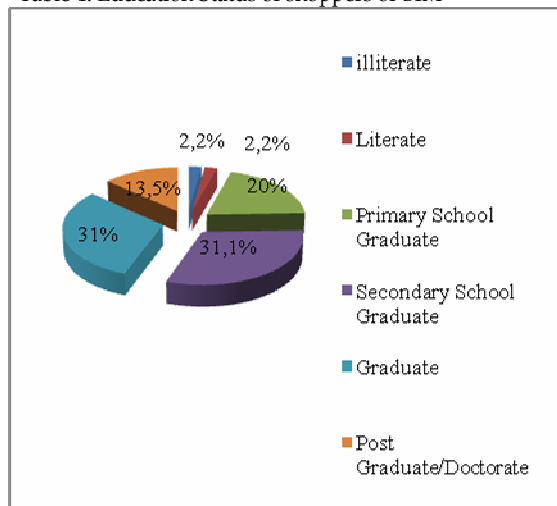


Table 4. Education Status of shoppers of BIM



Education status of consumers is one of the issues mostly considered shopping centers in consumer policies. In fact, customer preferences, tastes, expectations and behaviors vary depending on their class status. In this perspective it is natural that there is an important difference between education status of Migros and Bim supermarket shoppers. Indeed, 41% of Migros shoppers are "University" graduated, 22% is "Master / PhD" graduated, this rate for BIM is 31% and 13.5% respectively. Likewise, only 8% of those who go to Migros are "Primary School" graduated while this ratio is 20.0% for BIM. Given these data customer it is possible to say that Migros customers more educated than BIM customers.

Table 5. Professional status of shoppers of Migros

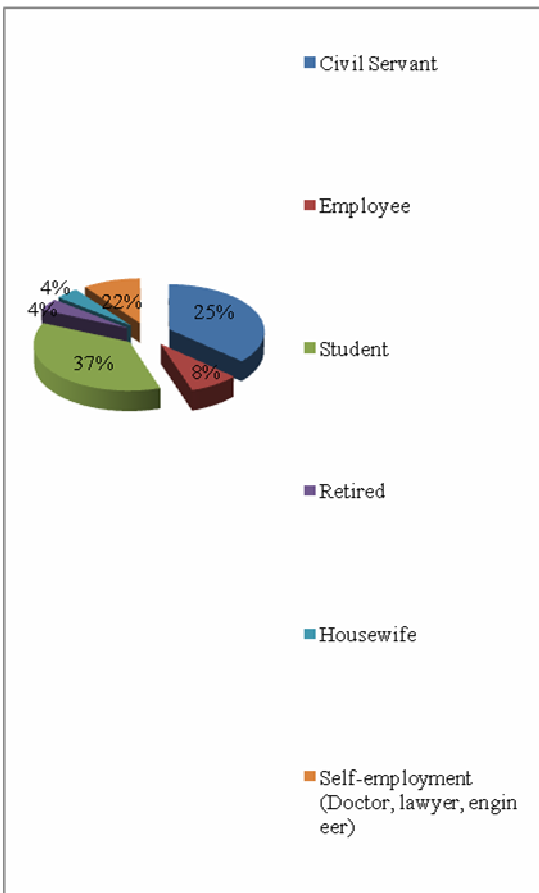
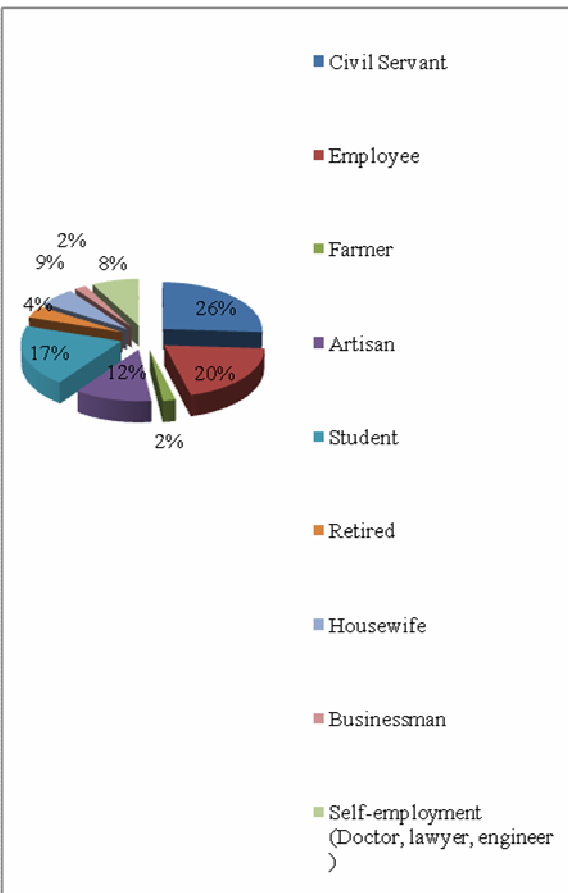


Table 5. Professional status of shoppers of BIM



According to professional status of the participants of research customers of Migros are concentrated mainly in three professional groups. These are; 37% "Students", 25% "public servants" and 22% Self-employed (doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc.) people. Rate of housewives, pensioners, and workers is 16%. Professional status of BIM customers shows a more heterogeneous distribution compared to Migros. BIM is visited by 26% "public servants", 20% "Workers", 17% "Students" and 12% "Merchants." Moreover 9% "Housewives", 8% "Farmers" and 4% "Pensioners" shop from BIM. The percentage of self-employed group in this distribution has an extremely low rate of 2%.

Table 6. Monthly Average Income of Shoppers of Migros

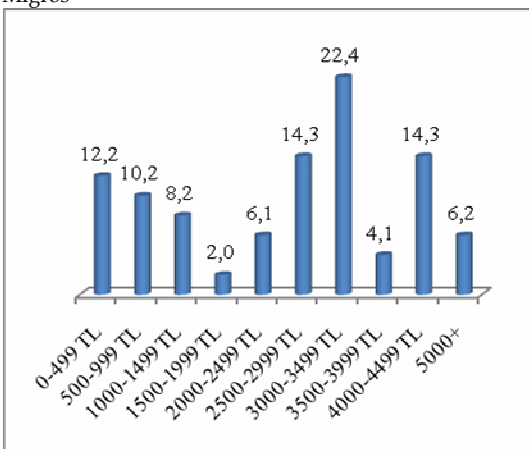
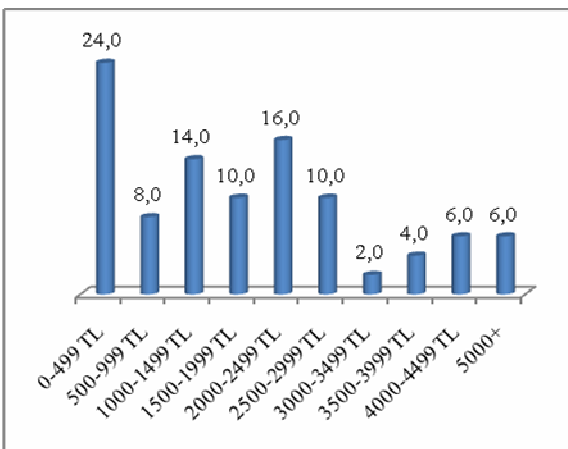


Table 6. Monthly Average Income of Shoppers of BIM



In choosing shopping centers consumers take into account their average monthly income in general. Research shows that consumers having high-income level are more selective in selecting consumption places and they try preferring shopping centers that is more suitable for them. In our research we have found a significant difference in average monthly incomes of shoppers preferring BIM and Migros supermarkets. For example, 22.4% of the customers shopping from Migros said to have "3000-3499" TL monthly income this ratio was extremely low for BIM with 2%. Another interesting point in the study is that 24% BIM customers

said to have average monthly income of "0-499 " TL whereas this rate was 12.2% for Migros customers. Given these data, it is possible to conclude that Migros customers are in higher ranks compared to BIM customers in terms of income and therefore they are in higher rank of class.

Table.7. Number of Households of shopper of Migros

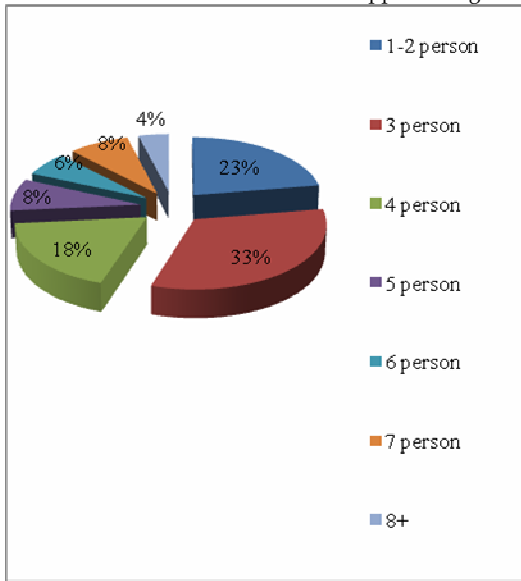
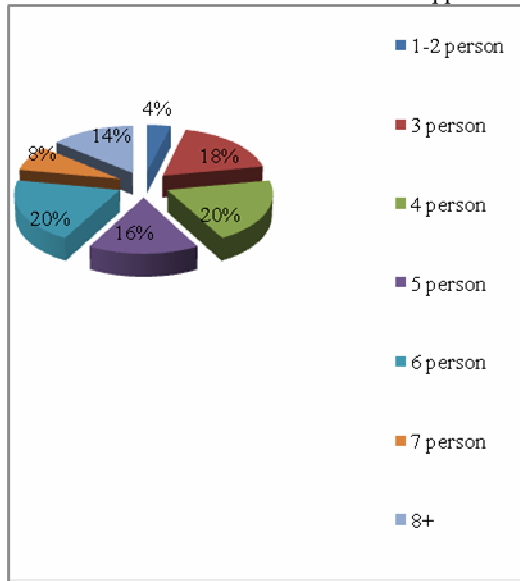


Table.7. Number of Households of shopper of BIM



The number of households has an important place in the consumption policies of shopping centers for indicating family size and related household spending. Looking at the answers of the respondents to our survey it is understood that consumers who prefer Migros have a "nuclear family" type household structure compared to those who prefer BIM. For example, rate of shoppers of Migros having "1-2 people" as number of households is 23% while this rate is 4% for BIM. Similarly while rate of shoppers of Migros having "8 and more people" as number of households is 4% this rate is 14% for BIM shoppers.

Table. 8. Self-description of shoppers of Migros.

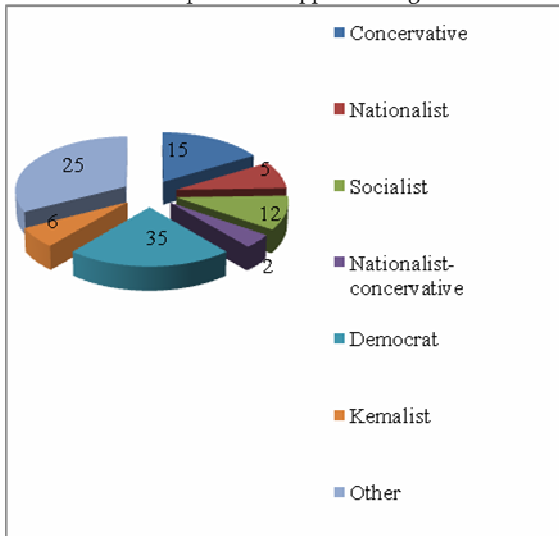
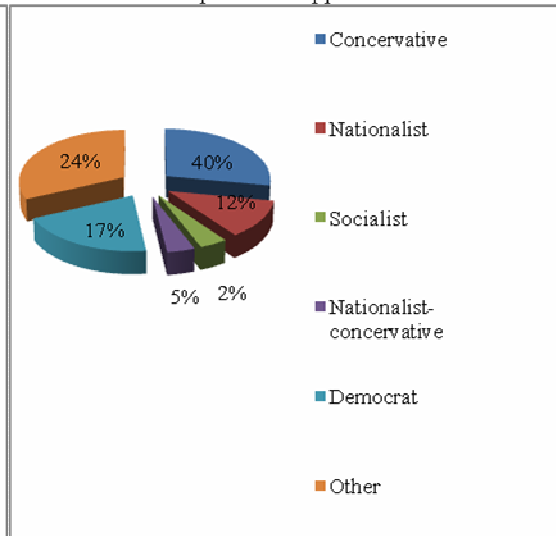


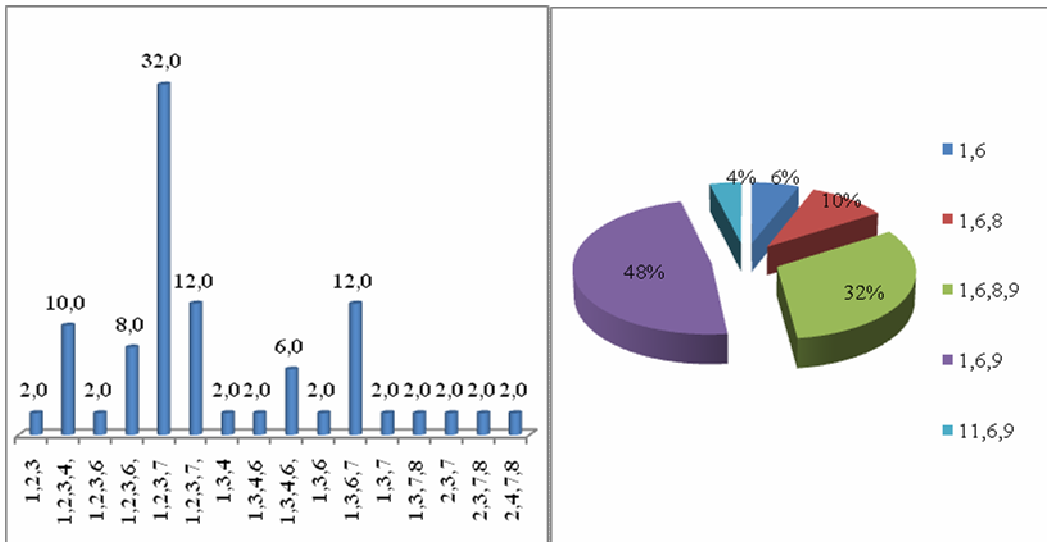
Table. 8. Self-description of shoppers of BIM.



Worldview or ideological stances of consumers are effective factors in choosing shopping centers. Taking into account this fact shopping centers try to execute an appropriate policy according to consumers' lifestyles, values and consumption preferences. It is concluded that Migros customers participated to the study identified themselves different than BIM customers and separated in terms of their worldviews. For example, while 15% of Migros shoppers identify themselves as "conservative", 12% identify themselves as "socialist" and 35% identify themselves as "Democrat" on the other hand 40% of BIM shoppers identify themselves as "conservative", 12% identify themselves as "nationalist" and 17% identify themselves as "Democrat." These data show that there is difference in worldviews of shoppers depending on their class position.

Table. 9. Reason of consumers to prefer Migros

Table. 9. Reason of consumers to prefer BIM



MIGROS

1. Product quality according to price
2. Hygienic, modern and spacious environment
3. Adequate and plenty of product assortment
4. Parking Possibility
5. Opportunity to make shopping with people having Lifestyle
6. Sale of Alcoholic Beverages
7. Sale of Branded Products
8. Closeness to residence place

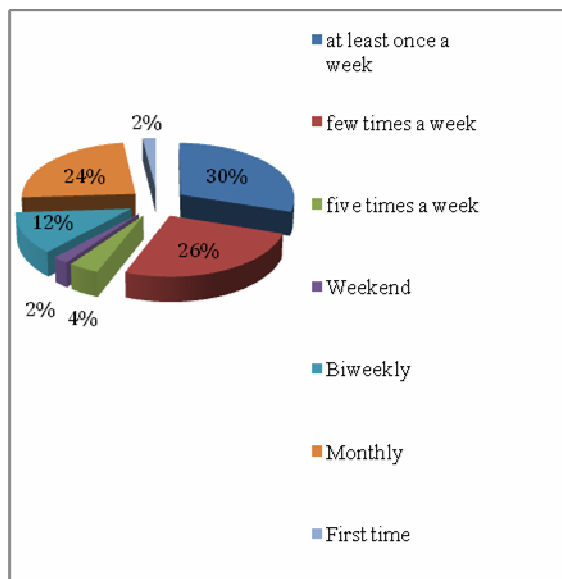
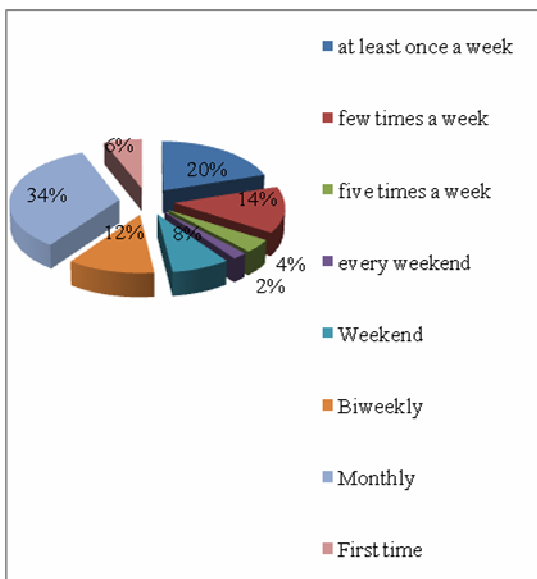
BIM

1. Economic product prices
2. Product quality according to price
3. Adequate and plenty of product assortment
4. Parking Possibility
5. Opportunity to make shopping with people having similar Lifestyle
6. Non-sale of Alcoholic Beverages
7. Sale of Branded Products
8. Closeness to residence place
9. Consideration of Daily Kitchen Needs

It is concluded that customers involved in the study consider many different options in preferring shopping centers for shopping. While 32% of consumers who prefer Migros considers "Product quality according to price," "Adequate and plenty of product assortment" and Sale of Branded Products" factors as important/priority, 48 % of consumers who prefer BIM considers "Economic product prices," "Non-sale of Alcoholic Beverages" and "Availability of Daily Kitchen Needs" as priority. Given these data Migros customers said that they concentrate on mainly the fact that "products are sufficient and high quality, spatial design of the market is large and it is easy to reach product shelves" in Migros. Proportion of those who prefer Migros because alcoholic beverages are sold in Migros is also very high. For customers choosing BIM factors such as "reasonable product prices, non- sale of alcoholic beverages, closeness of market to their residences and they want to purchase basic food items" are influential.

Table. 10. Visiting Frequency of Consumers to Migros

Table. 10. Visiting Frequency of Consumers to BIM



Assessing frequency of visiting shopping centers in the research it may be concluded that consumers visit BIM more frequently compared to Migros. For example, rate of those visiting Migros "at least one day in a week" is 20%, rate of "at least 2-3 days a week" is 14% these rates are 26% and 30%, respectively for BIM. These data suggest that Migros consumers are more selective in shopping and go to market is specific days, whereas customers of BIM markets go to shopping to purchase basic food items such as daily culinary needs or bread and water and they visit BIM markets frequently. Therefore customers of BIM go to shopping every day of the week or once in 3-4 weeks. Because consumers going to Migros are mainly public servants, students and self-employed people they naturally go for shopping less frequently and purchase their weekly needs once a week.

Table. 11 Amount of shopping made in Migros by consumer at once

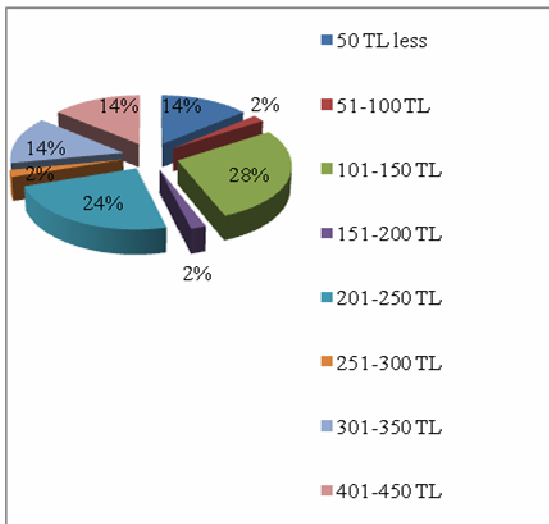
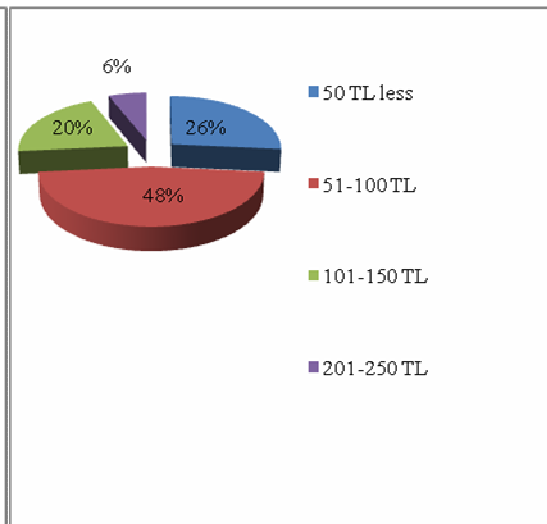


Table. 11 Amount of shopping made in BIM by consumer at once



Considering the amount of purchase of consumers from the market at once there is a significant difference between Migros and Bim markets. Spending of person also varies depending on the customer's class status. In the research it is understood that consumers preferring Migros spend more than those preferring BIM. For example, while the rate of Migros customers spending "201-250" TL at once is 24%, this rate is only 6% for BIM markets. Because BIM customers purchase generally their daily needs they try to make lesser expenditure. Therefore, because economic capital and class status of consumers preferring Migros is higher than those preferring BIM naturally amount of their spending in shopping is higher than those shopping from BIM.

Table 12. Products mostly purchased by consumers from Migros.

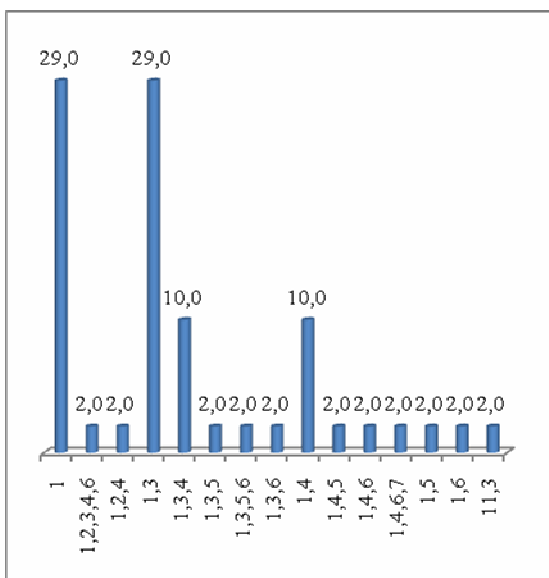
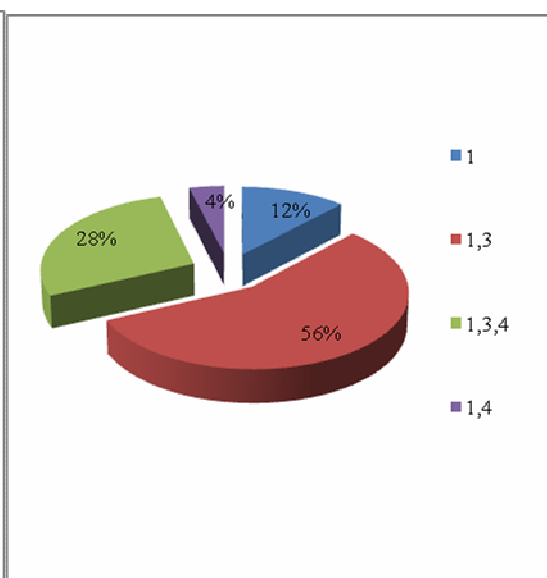


Table 12. Products mostly purchased by consumers from BIM.



1. Food
2. Clothes
3. Cleaning Products
4. Cosmetics
5. Personal Care Products
6. Garden and Hardware Products
7. Stationary items

1. Food
2. Clothes
3. Cleaning Products
4. Cosmetics
5. Personal Care Products
6. Garden and Hardware Products
7. Stationery items

Items purchased from markets by consumers may vary depending on both their basic needs and their economic status. In our research while rate of those going to Migros to purchase "food and cleaning materials" is 29% this rate is 56% for BIM. A significant proportion of consumers who prefer Migros stated that they especially purchase basic food and cleaning agents while BIM customers said that they try to purchase daily kitchen needs mainly. Also clothing, garden products and accessories are not sold in BIM markets.

CONCLUSION

With the rise of consumerist capitalism in today's society; consumption and spaces forming consumption culture have started to become an integral part of social life. Undoubtedly the main one of these places is shopping centers which spread to all areas of public life with daily increasing number. Together with consumption spaces becoming integral parts of everyday life commercial, economic, social and cultural life began to be built around consumption relations, members of the consumerist society began to identify themselves with objects they consume and shopping centers they visit and to create social relationships over consumption patterns and most importantly to generate their identity and self-image through consumption practice. At the center of these processes having the personality of the modern individual stand consumption spaces, places and relationships always.

Consumption and consumption patterns shaping the daily life sociology of post-modern era are maintained as social and cultural process in addition to commercial its aspects. Indeed, consumption-based lifestyle started to become evident in late 19th century began to penetrate into all areas of life due to the culture industry. As culture became the object of consumption this process continued intensely and we already face the reality of consumerist society. This fact can be observed in all aspects of private and public life. Giant shopping centers surrounding the cities, chain stores occupying streets and alleys, icons and spaces such as advertisement and promotional posters publicized in written and visual media only some concrete phenomena that reflect this fact.

Shopping centers became an integral part of the social and public life began to be the most important places which reproduce consumption culture and that manipulate consumer behaviors. Numbers of these spaces transformed into unique environments where individuals may go outside their homes increase more and more every day depending on different opportunities they provide to consumers. Undoubtedly, the most important purpose of shopping centers is to make more profit by increasing consumer mass. In this context, each shopping center has a sales policy to manipulate and determine purchasing behaviors of consumers. Therefore, shopping centers as places of consumption attempt to apply new sales and marketing techniques by analyzing sociological, demographic and psychological factors influencing purchasing behaviors of individuals.

In this article both place and functions of shopping centers are addressed in the context of consumer society and a comparative analysis is conducted about social, economic and demographic characteristics of consumers shopping from Migros and BIM supermarkets based on survey in example of city of Van. Currently, there are 3 MM Migros and 30 BIM markets in Van city center, Migros supermarkets are located in the busiest areas of Van city center whereas BIM markets are located in areas where housing sites locate intensely. Socio-economic and demographic characteristics of customers shopping from BIM and Migros markets in Van differ completely from each other. Identity and personal characteristics of consumers visiting Migros and BIM supermarkets for shopping are given in the table below.

Social, economic and demographical characteristics of customers shopping from Migros		Social, economic and demographical characteristics of customers shopping from BIM
1	Customers age range is between 21-25 (36%) and 46-50 (36%).	Customer portfolio formed of all ages.
2	Customers who work in Van reside in Van about 5 years, while those from city reside for 5 and more than 5 years in the city center.	Customers either recently emigrated to the city, or reside in the city maximum for 21-25 years (22.4%).
3	Higher level of education for customers: primary education (8%), secondary education (29%), university (41%), Graduate / Doctorate (22%).	The low educational status of customers: primary education (20%), secondary education (31.1%), university (20%), Graduate / Doctorate (13.3%).
4	Customers in general work in the public and private sectors: civil servants (25%), students (37%) Self-	Customers from every profession group: public servants (26%), students (17%) Self-employed (2%), workers (20%),

	employed (22%).	craftsman (12%), farmers (8%).
5	High average monthly income of customers (3000-3999 TL - 22.4%).	Low average monthly income of customers 0-499 TL-24%).
6	Low number of households of customers (average 3 people - 33%).	Customers having higher number of households (average 6 people - 20%).
7	Customers often identify themselves as Democrats (35%).	Customers identify themselves generally as conservative (40%).
8	Customers took into account following issues in preferring Migros: -quality and price balance, -hygienic, modern and spacious environment, -sufficient / abundant product variety, -sale of brand products (32%).	Customers took into account following issues in preferring BIM: -reasonable product prices, -non- sale of alcoholic beverages -availability of daily kitchen needs (48%).
9	Most of the customers visit Migros once a month (34%).	Most of the customers visit BIM at least one day a week (30%).
10	Customers spend maximum 101-150 TL at once (28%).	Customers spend maximum 51-101 TL at once (48%).
11	Customers purchase food and cleaning materials mainly (28%).	Customers mostly purchase food and cleaning products (56%).

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