

Memory, Conviviality, and Coexistence

Negotiating Class Differences in Burgazadası, Istanbul

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In much of the literature on peace and conflict resolution in the Balkans, Southern Europe, and the Middle East, scholars attempt to analyze cultural plurality using the concept of coexistence. This is a coexistence that is being excavated from the ruins of conflict, with the idea that it may shed light on how people could live together again. Examples of such coexistence include that between Israelis and Palestinians; Greek and Turkish Cypriots; or Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians (e.g., Wallensteen 2007; Abu-Nimer 2001; Dayton and Kriesberg 2009; Phillips 1996; Anastasiou 2002; Gidron, Katz, and Hasenfeld 2002). This is the coexistence that Bryant, in her introduction, contrasts with “everyday coexistence” and notes “the legal, political, and discursive forms of coexistence that imply the ‘living together’ of millets or ethnic groups within the empire or nation” (Bryant this volume, p. 8).

This chapter represents a critical engagement with coexistence in the context of Turkey, where the idea of “living together” has been burdened with concepts of “toleration” inherited from the Ottoman past and inscribed in Republican law. Coexistence, with its connotations of different ethnic or religious groups living together, has no equivalent in Turkish. Rather, the most commonly used term to refer to the interaction of such groups is *hoşgörü*, literally “to see well” and usually translated as “tolerance.” While I cannot engage here in all the connotations of the word and ways in which it may diverge from the primarily negative connotations of “toleration,” it is a word that has been applied in the post-Ottoman Turkish context primarily to non-Muslim minorities whose status as minorities was secured by the Treaty of Lausanne. As

Bryant notes in the introduction, this does not mean that there have not been concepts of everyday coexistence in operation, especially the idea of *komsuluk* and the *mahalle*. However, these ideas of living together have been problematically projected onto the scale of relations between ethnic and/or religious groups, blurring the scale that equates “the existence of certain neighborhoods where persons of different religions lived side by side, sharing the responsibilities of the *mahalle*, with the ‘peaceful’ existence of religious and ethnic minorities within the Empire” (Bryant this volume, p. 17).

To complicate matters further, this discourse of coexistence, with its blurring of scale, furthermore returns to have real impact on actual everyday coexistence in the present. For instance, in the post-Ottoman context, scholars tend to view coexistence as something that belongs to the Ottoman past, a time before conflict based on ethno-religious identities (especially Couroucli 2010). Problematically, this literature tends to view the loss of religious minorities as necessarily creating homogenized nations. Couroucli, for instance, claims that with the departure of the non-Muslim *millet*s—the Jewish, Armenian, and Greek-Orthodox minorities—Turkey has long ago lost its pluralism. Such assumptions, however, rebound to reinforce the idea that minorities are those non-Muslim *millet*s who are the subject of toleration, thus reducing coexistence to a form of hierarchical indulgence. Moreover, this understanding of coexistence, by equating plurality with those differences acknowledged by the *millet* system of the Ottoman Empire, makes it seem as though other forms of difference in Turkey today are not significant and do not require the sort of “labor of peace” that Bryant discusses in her introduction.

This chapter shifts the emphasis in this study of post-Ottoman plurality from coexistence/toleration to “conviviality”—that is, ways of both sharing and contesting particular lifestyles in a place through daily interactions and a sense of belonging (Duru 2015). I refer to “coexistence/toleration” to emphasize the complex ways in which local discourses of tolerance are fed by and feed into historical and scholarly understandings of coexistence. And in my analysis of conviviality, “living together” is understood as sharing the same space and socio-economic resources, and a process that involves both cohesion and tension. While I emphasize conviviality and tensions due to differences in lifestyle and class (see also Navaro-Yashin 2006), I also complement conviviality with an analysis of coexistence/toleration, which I understand in the context of Turkey to apply specifically to recognized (former *millet*s) and unrecognized minorities (e.g., Alevi and Kurds) who explicitly articulate their identity based on ethnic and religious difference in relation to the Sunni Muslim majority. My study of pluralism in the Turkish context draws attention

to the intersection of class with ethnicity and religion (see also Smith 2000) through the concepts of coexistence/toleration and conviviality. In this chapter, I explore three complex effects of class in everyday interactions: (1) the ways in which belonging to the “same” class creates similar lifestyles and tastes and subsumes ethnic and religious differences; (2) how differences in lifestyle become exacerbated by class difference; and (3) how, nonetheless, class difference and economic mutual dependency may create a sense of belonging to Burgaz, through conviviality. Hard times, tensions as well as sensorial pleasures, produce a sense of place, where the islanders enjoy the shared ways of living in this diverse setting.

Throughout the chapter, I distinguish memories and practices of coexistence/toleration, which we might understand as “living with difference,” from memories and practices of “conviviality,” which I argue here are shared ways of living. While coexistence/toleration places emphasis on the need to share space with persons whom we already presume to be different, conviviality places emphasis on the production of place through shared attitudes and experiences. As I will show, conviviality may be seen as a particular form of everyday coexistence in which pluralism is self-consciously valued for its own sake. In this context, while memories of coexistence/toleration become a nostalgia for multiculturalism or an irreversible loss of pluralism as a result of nationalist homogenization (Bryant this volume, p. 17), memories of conviviality are used to create a sense of belonging to Burgaz. The shared ways of living that create such a sense of belonging to Burgaz include both sweet memories of leisure and also bitter memories of adaptation, hardship, class, and lifestyle differences.

This chapter responds to a particular strain in the analysis of the post-Ottoman space that takes as its subject the paradoxes of contemporary Ottoman nostalgia. In one form, that nostalgia posits that people got along well before the ravages of nation-state homogenization. Interestingly, this particular form of nostalgia coincides with official Turkish versions of the past that see life in the Ottoman Empire as harmonious and assert that it was broken up only by upstart minority nationalists. As a result, others have suggested in regard to Turkey that nostalgia for a pluralism that no longer exists is easy, but dealing with pluralism that actually exists (Kurdish, Alevi, etc.) is much more difficult (e.g., Onar 2009; Tambar 2014). Nicholas Doumanis (2013), in his important *Before the Nation*, attempts to take seriously the nostalgia of Greeks displaced from Anatolia before and during the 1923 population exchange. In that nostalgia, Greeks tend to assert a good life before they began to feel the effects of nation-state ideologies. However, while Doumanis sees the interactions of various religious groups in the empire as a form of everyday

practice, he is never sufficiently able to solve the puzzle of its nostalgia today. I argue that this puzzle of nostalgia becomes easier to solve when one sees it as a nostalgia for a place to which one belonged that was created out of shared ways of living that encompassed and enjoyed diversity. This is different from seeing it as nostalgia for diversity itself, which suggests that we are nostalgic for specific features of other cultures.

Burgaz is an especially interesting site for exploring this question, as it is known in Turkey primarily as an elite resort of non-Muslim minorities that is dominated by the lifestyle of a secular upper class (compare Couroucli 2010: 223). Burgaz is one of nine islands in the Marmara Sea that constitute a separate district within the Istanbul Province and are today accessible by a short boat ride from central Istanbul. Based on my ethnographic research, I suggest that, contrary to the dominant perception of Burgaz as a home of non-Muslim elites, there is a significant class difference between the permanent and the summer inhabitants of the island who come from not only different ethno-religious groups but also different socio-economic backgrounds. The economy of Burgaz depends on the mutual relationship between the permanent inhabitants (mainly Zaza, Kurds, and Turks who are Alevi, Sunni, or Shaf'i from eastern and south-eastern Turkey) who run the shops and the restaurants, and the summer inhabitants, who are the customers, clients, and occasionally the employers (for instance hiring cleaners, gardeners, care takers, etc.). Moreover, despite these class differences there are strong community relationships and friendships that go beyond economic exchange and involve forms of recognition, respect, and gift giving.

Conviviality and Cosmopolitanism

Scholars frequently refer to the upper-class sociality of the Ottoman context as cosmopolitanism, a word with connotations of urban cultural pluralism (see, e.g., Zubaida 2002; Driessen 2005; Gekas 2009). In contradistinction to this, Ulrike Freitag argues that the political normative understanding of cultural pluralism implied in cosmopolitanism does not apply to the daily interactions among non-elite Ottoman subjects, which she describes as a form of conviviality. She shows that craftsmen and traders who belonged to different corporate organizations or guilds (Arabic *tai'ifa*, Ottoman *sımf*) engaged with each other in structured quotidian rituals in order to sort out tax collection (Freitag 2014). Locals and strangers socialized in coffee houses, taverns, and bathhouses, while families went on excursions together or visited each other's homes (Freitag 2014).¹ Freitag's (2014) analysis is useful for thinking about how

belonging to the same or similar classes intersects ethnic and religious differences. However, her analytical framework neither explains the negotiations between different classes and socio-economic groups nor the ways in which people from different classes negotiate ethno-religious differences.

I chose Burgaz as my fieldwork site because of its diverse population and because it was one of the rare places where people collectively resisted the 1955 riots, one of the most significant events of Republican Turkish history in that it resulted in a mass migration of remaining Greek Orthodox from Istanbul, primarily to Greece. I aimed to understand the diversity that still exists in Burgaz, and how persons who consider themselves “Burgazlı” understand that diversity. Hence I analyzed both the islanders’ narratives of past diversity and their current practices of conviviality, notably interactions across different classes and ethno-religious communities. My fourteen months of research in Burgaz (June 2009–September 2010) included both formal and informal interviews regarding past diversity, including life history interviews, as well as long-term participant observation, including in cafes, restaurants, embroidery class, and social clubs, as well as churches, mosque, synagogue, and *cemevi* (Alevi places of worship). I also analyzed novels and a documentary film that Burgaz islanders have produced. This approach to current and past diversity and conviviality in the island also allowed me to assess how the island’s population has changed over time and how long-term residents assess those transformations. As my research progressed, I began to understand the difference between memories and practices of conviviality and a sense of belonging to Burgaz, and my informants’ narratives of coexistence/toleration, which fragments the sense of belonging into sharing space with different co-existing groups.

My first introduction to this distinction was when I met Orhan Özalp, a Burgazlı then in his mid-eighties, who was introduced to me by the security officer of one of the social clubs. The officer gave him my mobile number, and Orhan called me to arrange a time to meet. On the phone, I explained to him that I was doing doctoral research about the memories of Burgaz islanders currently living on the island. I added that as he was one of the oldest inhabitants in Burgaz, I would be very grateful for an interview with him. When he arrived for our morning meeting at the Blue Club, one of the island’s social clubs, he brought along sheets on which he had listed names of friends, activities, and events. I was surprised that he was so well prepared, and I was happy that he was eager to talk to me. When I took out my small notebook, he exclaimed, “What, how can you write all the memories of many years in such a tiny book! Go get a proper notebook!” So, I went to the security desk and asked for

a stack of A4 sheets and came back prepared to write, as he preferred me to take notes rather than to record the interview. I quote a section here from the uninterrupted stream in which he narrated his story of Burgaz to me:

Burgaz was an island of Greek fishermen. The permanent inhabitants of Burgaz, such as restaurant and coffee shop owners, storekeepers, fishermen, bakers, and grocers were all Greeks. My father was one of the first Turks, who came to Burgaz between 1915 and the 1920s. They were governmental officers, doctors, or lawyers, and the majority of them used the island as a *sayfiye yeri* [summer resort place] and were very few in number. In the 1930s and 1940s, summer inhabitants, such as Ashkenazi Jews and Germans, were rich and elite. The Jews of Burgaz were upper class in comparison to the Sephardic Jews who were lower middle class and who lived in Heybeli, another Princes' Island. The Jews of Heybeli and Istanbul used to come for a day trip to Burgaz as they could not afford to have houses in Burgaz. These Sephardic Jews became richer when the Democratic Party was in power between 1945 and 1960. Thus, from the late 1940s onwards, the Jews from Heybeli moved to Burgaz and the ones in Istanbul either rented or bought property in Burgaz.

This island was the island of fish. Greeks were very into fishing. *Istavrit, uskumru, palamut, lüfer, torik, lapin, mercan, karagöz, orkinos, sinarit, kılıç balığı* [names of fish varieties] ... there were so many fish that the fishnets used to break. When there was excess fish, the fishermen used to throw the excess back to the sea. The fishermen used to compete with each other in order to catch the biggest fish, especially *orkinos*. The fish caught were always displayed and sold in the market. The fishmonger used to mark the name of the fisherman on the *orkinos* caught, thus you would know who caught it and see the pride in the eyes of the fisherman when he walked in the market. Now, there are fewer and fewer fish in the sea. People are not as careful as the fishermen of the old days. The new generation put dynamite in the fishes' nests and fish when the fish were reproducing. Now the seagulls are hungry. I used to go fishing with my summer Greek friends. They had boats. We used to go to Sivriada and Yassıada [the uninhabited islands]. These islands were a heaven of fish and mussels. We used to go there in the afternoon, fish and eat the fish there, get drunk and sleep and come back in the morning. *Sivriada geceleri* [the nights of Sivriada] ...

These times were the times of *bolluk* [abundance, prosperity]. The rich Greeks had big gardens. For example, Taso's garden was full of

fruit and vegetables. Quince, plum, lettuce, onion ... Mimi had a flower garden. In Foti's garden there were almond trees. They used to sell their fruit, vegetables and flowers to the islanders. Have you been to the Austrian chapel, high up in Burgaz? [I said "yes."] Good. The Austrian nuns used to sell the spare produce to the islanders. They had cows and chickens. The yogurt, cream, cheese, and milk that came from them were the best I have eaten in my life.

Do you know Kalpazankaya? [I said "yes, I have been there."] Do you know the *Hişt Hişt* story from Sait Faik?" [I said, "Yes I have read it."] Sait got inspired to write the story on the way to Kalpazankaya. He lived in Burgaz, he was much older than me but he was my friend and Burgaz is known as *Sait Faik'in adası* [Sait Faik's island]. In the story, Sait is on the Kalpazankaya road, he hears *hişt hişt* [similar to the "psst" sound that one person whispers to another to get their attention] but he cannot tell where it comes from. A plum tree? A hedgehog? A person? A bird? The sea? Saik writes it so well. It does not matter where the sound comes from. It is the sound of what makes you feel alive. He says in the end that if you do not hear *hişt*, then it matters. In Burgaz, you constantly hear a *hişt* sound, whether it is a person, a tree, the sea, the nature, an animal; these things keep you alive.

The times of the Greeks were the times of fun. I loved attending the church at Christmas and on important Greek Orthodox religious days. They offered pastry, biscuits, cookies, and meals at the church. There was not a mosque on the island until 1954. I did not care about the mosque. I did not care when it was built. I am not interested in religion, but I enjoyed attending the church because it was good fun to socialize with my Greek friends. There were five *gazinos* [dancing and drinking places] in Burgaz. In *gazinos*, Greek and foreign music played, sometimes live, sometimes from the gramophone. We danced day and night—tango, slow, swing ... The Greeks knew how to drink. There was always one person at the table who would control anyone who was getting too drunk. Now, people do not know how to drink. They get drunk and they start fights.

Adanın tipleri vardı [there were unique, almost crazy people]. You know, every place has its own unique people. Ali Rıza Kondos. *Kondos* means short in Greek. Ali Rıza was a short drunkard. He had built a cave for himself in Burgaz. When we saw him, we used to yell *pirr*, which would make him so angry; he would throw stones at us and run after us. And then Şilep [Ocean liner] Hasan ... He was so huge we used to call him Şilep. The islanders used to give names to these unique people. Now, people are boring. The island was more diverse in the old days, we had *adanın tipleri* and everyone had a particular character,

fault, weakness, funniness, craziness that made Burgaz a place of fun. Now, everyone is the same. People watch TV, they go to work. They do not have fun in their lives. There are no *adanın tipleri* anymore.

Orhan's memories of his youth are memories of conviviality, and they take their sources from the shared life in Burgaz. Orhan began the story of Burgaz with the Greeks, Turks, Ashkenazi Jews, Sephardic Jews, and Germans, which shows that ethnic and religious differences were acknowledged, not as "coexistence/toleration" but as part of what it meant to live in Burgaz. Orhan, like many of my Jewish, Muslim, German, and Armenian informants, joined and enjoyed the sociality at the churches. Greek rituals added to the richness of Burgaz. The luxurious summer lifestyle—full of discos, music and fun, drinking, and fishing lifestyles—brought people from different ethno-religious backgrounds together to socialize.

Furthermore, Orhan's perception of diversity is not limited to ethnic and religious differences. People's particularities, stories of craziness, anger, and jokes made Burgaz diverse and interesting to him. He also criticized greediness as what decreases the diversity in nature. The fact that he remembered what kind of fruits and vegetables grew in which garden, which dairy products came from where, and the names of particular fish shows that the tastes of these foods are significant elements that tie him to the island. He has embodied Burgaz through dancing, fishing, drinking, attending church, socializing with his friends, and having fun. Orhan's memories are of what Chau calls a "social sensorium," a term he uses to refer to "a *sensorially rich social space* such as found at a temple festival, a busy market, or a packed dance floor" (2008: 489, emphasis in original). However, while Chau explores "red-hot sociality," or the way that sociality is produced through a type of heated frenzy, Orhan refers to the way that a sense of the social, of what it means to be a Burgazlı, is produced through the experience of sensory diversity. Orhan's concept of *bolluk*, abundance, includes a diversity of people, animals, and natural beings. The "*Hişt Hişt* story of Saik Faik Abasıyanık (1993) that Orhan referred to indicates that Burgaz—with its people, nature, animals, tastes, trees, and its sea—whispers into islanders' ears and keeps them alive. The experience of diversity is what makes Burgaz the place that it is, and enjoying diversity is what it means to be Burgazlı.

However, while Orhan remembers the years prior to the 1950s mainly as joyful and harmonious times for the non-Muslims and the Sunni Muslims, these were class-based memories. Orhan was a summer inhabitant; his friends were mainly wealthy summer inhabitants from di-

verse ethno-religious backgrounds. In contrast, in the same years, male Alevi workers came to Burgaz from Turkey's east to do menial jobs. For the Alevis, the 1940s and 1950s were years of hardship, adaptation, and suffering. A couple of Alevi families came to Burgaz from Erzincan after the devastating earthquake in Erzincan in 1939. More male Alevi migrants came from Erzincan in the 1940s, to work during the summer season and take back what they earned to their families in Erzincan. My Greek, Sunni, and Alevi informants relate the immigration of the Alevis to economic factors. In the 1950s and 1960s, the migration from Anatolian villages to cities was increasing.

The Alevi men engaged in temporary migration to Burgaz in the 1940s did menial jobs such as helping the Greek fishermen reel in nets when they came back from fishing. They worked as *hamal*, carrying the furniture of the summer inhabitants when those inhabitants moved to the island and when they moved back to Istanbul. The Alevi men also built and restored houses, and worked as waiters and helpers in grocery shops, restaurants, and cafes. The building sector in Burgaz had been increasing and hence provided new job opportunities. They worked as doorkeepers and gardeners in Greek houses (especially in the Ay Nikola area, which is higher up, away from the town center), where they were given rooms or flats in which to stay. The *zangoç* (verger) of the Greek Orthodox Ay Yorgi church in Burgaz explained to me the story of how Ay Nikola became an Alevi neighborhood. He said: "Alevis came to work temporarily in summer. Most of them worked in Garipi monastery, in Ay Nikola, painting walls, and fixing things for the church. The priest who was in charge of the church at that time let the Alevis settle in the Ay Nikola area, near the Garipi church. Hence, they built small houses and made them bigger when they brought their family to the island." Thus, Ay Nikola started to become an Alevi neighborhood.

My male Alevi informants always began their tales of this period with the many difficulties they faced when they started working. Nuri and Mustafa say that their fathers were among the first Alevis to come to work in Burgaz and were looked down upon because they did menial jobs. For instance, Mustafa's father was a shoemaker and now does freelance casual jobs, like painting boats. Mustafa said: "The Greeks used to call us 'kïro.' When we passed near them they said 'To kïro einai' [He is *kïro*], and we started fighting with each other." Although the sentence was in Greek, the word *kïro* comes from Kurdish and is used in Turkish as a derogatory term for someone uneducated and ill-mannered. These two Alevi informants recall that when they were children, the rich Greek children used to exclude them because they were *kïro*. Nuri said, "When we wore shorts, t-shirts, and sunglasses, they [Greeks] used to belittle us

and make fun of us. I was very upset about this because it was as if we did not have the right to wear these clothes and accessories. The Greeks behaved as if the sun and the summer belonged to them.”

The tensions that arose between the Greeks and the Alevis were triggered by class differences² as well as lifestyle differences. The summer inhabitants were generally upper-middle class, and they did not appreciate the presence of the Anatolian culture on the island. There were differences in city and village lifestyles. What people wear in Istanbul and Burgaz and in Erzincan and how people talk in these two different regions were markers of difference. The summer people in Burgaz wore bathing suits and modern European clothes such as shorts and t-shirts. When women went out in the afternoon, they wore perfume and elegant evening dresses. The Alevis grew up in villages in Erzincan. They wore modest and comfortable clothes to work in the fields and did not have elegant or fashionable dress. There were also differences in accents. Alevis from Erzincan spoke Zazaki and a version of Turkish that has a harder accent, in which letters like “k” and “g” are emphasized and syllables are rolled in their throat. In Istanbul, these letters are softer and the syllables are rolled in the mouth. In Burgaz, people sprinkle their speech with many Greek and Ladino words, as well.

Nuri also commented that in the times of his father’s generation there was tension between Greek employees and Alevi workers. The Greeks who worked in the building sector, constructing walls and painting, employed Alevis as their assistants. The Alevis of his father’s generation wanted to have more experience in the building sector. The Greeks gave menial jobs to Alevis, such as carrying the cement, while they (Greeks) performed the main duties of making the walls. When these Alevi male workers also wanted to learn to paint the walls, the Greeks did not let them. The Alevi men with whom I spoke interpreted this as “the Greeks did not want us to learn more and be better, because we might take their jobs.” On the other hand, Nuri also said that the Greek women treated them well, giving food and clothes to them and being hospitable towards Alevi children. This also raises a significant gender issue, because while there was tension between the male Greek employers and the male Alevi employees, the Greek women apparently behaved in a maternal way towards Alevi children.

Nuri’s and Mustafa’s memories are ones of conviviality in the sense that I am using it here. My use of it derives less from the English and French meanings that connote feasting and celebration, and more from the Spanish *convivencia*, meaning “a shared life.” Expanding on this meaning for their own work in Amazonia, Overing and Passes remark

that conviviality's "features would include peacefulness, high morale and high affectivity, a metaphysics of human and non-human interconnect-edness, a stress on kinship, good gifting—sharing, work relations and dialogue, a propensity for the informal and performative as against the formal and institutional, and *an intense ethical and aesthetic valuing of sociable sociality*" (2000: xiii–xiv, emphasis added). I would like to put emphasis here on the performative aspect of conviviality, as well as the valuing of "sociable sociality." Sociable sociality, or conviviality in the more conventional English sense, is something that, in this definition, is valued enough to be produced through performances that involve transforming "the violent, angry, ugly capricious forces of the universe into constructive, beautiful knowledge and capacities" (Ibid.: 6).

Conviviality, then, is not only "sociable sociality" but is the production and performance of that sociality, which often also involves control of tensions (see Bryant this volume, p. 21). Moreover, this control of tensions appears often to be gendered. For instance, in her ethnography of gendered spaces in a Karachi apartment building, Laura Ring shows that the production of the apartment building as a peaceful space is achieved not only through pleasurable moments but also through the management of tension in everyday interaction and exchange (Ring 2006). While Mustafa and Nuri were discriminated against because of differences in lifestyle, and Alevi employees and Greek employers experienced competition, Nuri also remembers the hospitality of Greek women. While he articulates that it was hard for them to adapt to island life and that there was tension between the previous settlers and themselves, he also emphasizes that he was a part of this conviviality, attending church, playing marbles, and fighting with Greek children. All of these memories made Burgaz his home.

I suggest, then, that conviviality is not only the ways of living that Orhan remembers so fondly but is a particular *valuing* of sociable sociality in the making of place. It is the sort of "everyday coexistence" discussed in the introduction but here given "an intense ethical and aesthetic valuing" and self-consciously performed. For those who live there, what makes Burgaz a place with which they identify is precisely this form of sociality; to be Burgazlı is to experience and value this sociality and to invest in its reproduction. That reproduction involves the performance of particular forms of sociality, as well as the management of tensions. Tension, then, is not absent from conviviality, just as it is not absent from what Bryant describes as the everyday "labor of peace." Rather, the management of tension is also a way of reproducing conviviality in that it performatively demonstrates the value placed on shared ways of life over other differences.

Conviviality and Coexistence

Throughout the region of what was once the Ottoman Empire, the rise of nationalisms has led to homogenization processes: the construction of ethnic and national differences led to violence; forced migrations; oppression towards “minorities;”³ conflicts over territory, shared space, and borders; and changed demographics of the region (see also introduction and chapter 8 by Kasbarian). Political tensions between Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus, followed by the Turkish government’s restrictive policies on minorities (e.g., Wealth Tax in 1942,⁴ the expulsion of persons with Greek citizenship in 1964) and the riots of 6–7 September 1955, which were an attack on the socio-economic power of the non-Muslims, were various ways of consolidating the ethnic and religious identity of the non-Muslims and making them feel as though they were “others within.” This sensation was, I argue, a local consequence of coexistence/toleration, a creation of an Other and compartmentalization of people into groups that had to coexist or continue to survive within the majority. That sense of coexistence/toleration and its potential consequences triggered the emigration of non-Muslims, while the sense of conviviality tied the non-Muslim islanders to Burgaz and enabled them to remain in the island. Conviviality also enabled the newcomers such as Alevi and Kurds to adapt and become a part of Burgaz diversity.

The sense of coexistence/toleration appeared in Orhan’s narrative in the form of the homogenization process that took away his friends. I asked Orhan: “You talk as if all these things do not exist anymore. What happened? What has changed? You said there were many, many Greeks? Where are they now?”

Orhan:

The Greeks left. They went to Greece, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. *Varlık Vergisi* [the Wealth Tax], the 6–7 September events in 1955, the 27 May 1960 coup, the Cyprus events scared them all. They said: “Every twenty-five years, something will come up, the government will do something, we better leave.” The government did many things wrong. My father had a Jewish friend who was required to pay such a high *Varlık Vergisi* that it was impossible to pay, thus he was sent to do military service in Aşkale. When my father’s Jewish friend came back from Aşkale, my father lent him some money that helped him reconstruct his business. *Varlık Vergisi* made the *ekaliyet* [an older term used for minorities] suffer economically. Furthermore, the Greeks had many shops in Beyoğlu, they all got destroyed during the 6–7 September events. Here in Burgaz nothing happened. We

protected the island and no one could enter. However, what was happening in Istanbul and in Turkey was scary enough for them to leave. And they left. They sold their properties at a low price to Erzincanlı Alevi who were working for them. Erzincanlıs had saved money while working so Erzincanlı bought these properties. Now the permanent inhabitants are Alevi and Kurds.

When I asked Orhan what had changed, he referred to policies (the Wealth Tax in 1942), the riots on 6–7 September 1955, the coup in 1960, and events in Cyprus as what changed life in Burgaz. All of these were a logical consequence of what I refer to here as coexistence/toleration, or the management of difference. In this case, that difference was “managed” by the state as a form of homogenizing social engineering. For Orhan, it appeared as the distinction between the conviviality that he remembered and related with such fondness, his eyes sparkling as he looked dreamily towards the horizon, and the management of difference that led to his friends’ departure and the political tensions, which he related staring at the ground and with much reticence. It was clear in his mind that government policies had brought a rupture to people’s daily lives. Through those policies, the identity of the religious minorities was crystallized around their difference. Nevertheless, he still stressed the conviviality in Burgaz, in the ways in which his father helped a Jewish friend in Burgaz, and how the islanders did not turn against each other during the riots. On the contrary, the islanders cooperated with the police on Burgaz and protected the island from an outside attack, by waiting at the bays, scaring away the invaders who could not get to the island.

The Lausanne Treaty of 1923 provided the framework for this coexistence/toleration, as it made the Greek Orthodox, Armenians, and Jews remaining in the new Republic of Turkey official minorities. This official status of minority gave them recognition with particular rights, a recognition that Muslim groups, such as Kurds and Alevi, have been denied. But it also set them apart as non-Turkish, not a part of the majority, despite the fact that the Republic of Turkey was originally intended as a civic nationalism in which every Turkish citizen would be a Turk. Moreover, as Istanbul’s Greek Orthodox were excluded from the population exchange with Greece, Istanbul remained the center of Greek Orthodox life until the 1950s. Istanbul, then, remained a heterogeneous city despite the nationalizing homogenization that affected the rest of the country, and as a result the Muslims and non-Muslims of Istanbul remember the 1955 riots as the event that caused rupture in a previous harmony.

While in Istanbul the riots are remembered as an experience of coexistence/toleration in which their religious identity made them the sub-

ject of attack by non-Muslims,⁵ in Burgaz the resistance against the riots is remembered by my Greek, Muslim, German, and Alevi informants as a result of conviviality: Burgaz islanders collectively resisted the riots and protected their island from being invaded by outsiders. *Kestane Karası* (Aktel 2005) and *Son Eylül* [Last September] (Aktel 2008), both novelistic memoirs of Burgaz conviviality, describe how the islanders (both Muslims and non-Muslims) gathered together by ringing the bells of the church and made a plan of waiting and protecting the bays in order to prevent invasion of Burgaz during the 1955 riots. For instance, Ajda (a half Turkish - half Kurdish Sunni woman, who later married a Greek) told me that she was around fifteen years old in 1955 and clearly remembers her father saying, “Unless they kill me and step on my dead body, they will not be able to set foot in Burgaz.” The shared memories of daily life and conviviality as described in Orhan’s vignette had created such a strong Burgaz identity that it overcame ethnic and religious identities in times of crisis. The discursive effect of these memories (Bakhtin 1981: 269) is a type of “Burgaz ideology,” a sense of belonging to Burgaz that is also infused with a moral discourse about how a “real” Burgazlı should behave, both in everyday life and in times of crisis.

In the early 1960s in Burgaz, people heard on the radio reports of the tensions in Cyprus and of Greek Cypriots oppressing Turkish Cypriots. Because the 1955 riots were linked to events in Cyprus, this later wave of intercommunal violence in this faraway island made the remaining Burgazlı Greeks anxious. And their fear would prove to be justified. The majority of my Burgaz informants, regardless of their ethnicity and religion, told me that 1964 was also one of the most important dates they remember, because that year was the time when their Greek friends with Greek citizenship were expelled.⁶ The islanders reminisce that many Greeks of Greek citizenship were married to Greeks of Turkish citizenship. Hence, not only the Greeks of Greek citizenship left, but their families left as well.

I wanted to explore how the remaining Burgaz islanders interpreted the departure of their Greek friends. Nuri narrated:

I used to play marbles with my friends [probably in the mid-1960s] and realized that my friends were gone. I did not understand why they left, as I was a child. I knew that some Greeks never did military service, and later, I understood that these Greeks were of Greek citizenship. Some of the ones who left were the ones who did not do military service.

The 1964 expulsion was a memory of coexistence/toleration for Nuri, because prior to that, he did not have in his mind a category for “Greeks

with Greek citizenship” and “Greeks with Turkish citizenship.” Nuri realized the ethno-religious and citizenship differences of his childhood friends at the moment when they left Burgaz. One Greek informant with Turkish citizenship (a male aged 65) recalled that when he came back from military service in 1971, the island was “empty.” For him, the existence of Greeks made Burgaz a place with meaning and when many Greeks left, Burgaz became empty for him. The departure of the Greek friends who had to leave because of having Greek citizenship was an experienced consequence of coexistence/toleration.

Furthermore, the rise of Islamism and Kurdish nationalism in the 1980s and the Alevi revival in the 1990s helped to create a new appreciation of political and cultural pluralism (Neyzi 2001: 422; Çolak 2006: 587). During the years of my fieldwork (2009–10), the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) introduced “democratization packages” that included increased freedom of speech and Kurdish cultural rights intended to meet the Copenhagen criteria for Turkey’s accession to the European Union (Baç 2005). In addition, the government initiated a dialogue with the Alevis to discuss their demands for political and cultural rights (Soner and Toktaş 2011). During this period, the Kemalist homogenizing impulses of early Republican Turkey were subject to new historical scrutiny, while varying ethnic and religious groups began to revive their identities, demand education in their native languages, and in the case of Alevis, the right and space to worship.

In Burgaz, this political context created an atmosphere where Alevis started to articulate their memories of coexistence/toleration by expressing the ways in which Alevis had been oppressed in and assimilated into the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic.⁷ Alongside this politicization of identity, however, Alevis in Burgaz also recalled both bitter and sweet memories of conviviality in Burgaz. Quarrelling, fighting and playing marbles with the earlier established settlers in Burgaz and feeling sad about the departure of their Greek friends also signify their sense of belonging in Burgaz. When, at the end of the interview, I asked Nuri what Burgaz meant to him, he said “I was born in Burgaz, and I have sixty years of friendship with my oldest friend. You cannot find these long friendships in Istanbul or somewhere else for example.” In this experience of locality, Burgaz is separate from other places. His years in Burgaz and his lifelong friends from there make the island a unique place for him. He added:

The islanders do not know how to walk on the streets of Istanbul. We do not know what traffic is, here on the island, we walk in the middle of the streets. Burgaz is a *büyülü* [mysterious] place; it has its own way

of life. Burgaz means the sea, the seagulls and the pine trees for me. Whenever I go outside of Burgaz and I see seagulls and pine trees, it reminds me of Burgaz.

Nuri's comments echo those of Orhan and many other Burgaz islanders whom I met and talked with. This sense of Burgaz as having a special way of life is both what creates the sense of it as a place and also what its inhabitants value and attempt to reproduce.

Negotiating Class and Religious Differences in Today's Burgaz

Burgaz is heterogeneous not only in terms of ethnicity and religion, but also in terms of class difference. Minority religious communities in Turkey, as well as in Burgaz, tend to be well educated, and are financially comfortable. These minority elites (e.g., Armenian, German, Levantine, Greek, and Jewish) and majority elites (Sunni Muslims) usually go to the same foreign schools in Istanbul, work in similar sectors, and hence can afford to pay to eat out or to become members of social clubs. Sharing the same class creates similarities in lifestyle. In Bourdieu's (1990) terms, they have the economic and also the cultural capital and share a similar *habitus*. Their similar lifestyle creates milieux for interactions. They spend the weekends at the social clubs mostly swimming, sunbathing, playing scrabble or cards. They can afford to have most meals at cafes and restaurants and do not cook at home, with cleaning done by a maid. Most of the old, wooden mansions are owned by these summer residents. These mansions were designed and built by Armenian and Greek architects, mostly at the end of the nineteenth century (Tuğlacı 1992), and are spread between the center and the peak of the island.

However, the houses in Turgut Reis, toward the back of the island, are concrete constructions, most of them built by the permanent Zaza and Kurdish Alevis and Sunni Muslim inhabitants with their own hands. The waiters, seasonal workers, horse cart drivers, and menial laborers are mostly of Kurdish origin from Southeastern Turkey or of Turkic nationalities (e.g., Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan). Islanders' everyday interactions across classes, between summer and permanent inhabitants, between customers and restaurant and shop owners, form an important part of conviviality on the island. My last ethnographic account illustrates current practices of conviviality and the ways in which class and religious differences are negotiated in Burgaz today. It is a story of an Anatolian family who moved to Burgaz and became Burgazlı through acquired ap-

preciation of the cultural diversity that is explicitly valued in the island and is what people there consider to be “sociable sociality.”

I met Zümrüt on a winter day in January 2010 at the embroidery class taken by the permanent inhabitants, mainly Sunni Turkish and Kurdish Shaf'i women. While the other women were embroidering flowers and animal patterns on their fabric, Zümrüt wanted to embroider a big cross, a symbol of Christianity, and was looking for a cross pattern. I told her that I could bring a pattern and asked what she planned to do with it.

Zümrüt: I want to make a big cross for Niko *Ağabey* (elder brother). He is my boss and he is so nice. If I embroider a big cross on a big piece of fabric, he will be very happy and then we can put it in the church.

Author: I know Niko! He is in charge of Ay Yanni Church, isn't he? And how come he is your boss?

Zümrüt: I am the verger of the Metamorphosis church on the top of the island. Niko *Ağabey* [whom the reader will know from the previous section] is in charge of the bills and formalities of Ay Yanni and Metamorphosis churches.

I was struck by the fact that a Sunni Muslim family took care of the Greek Orthodox Church and that she called her boss *ağabey*, and so I went to visit Zümrüt *Abla*, coincidentally on Easter Day 2010. As I was thumbing through her poetry book, where she wrote about welcoming the spring on top of Burgaz, we heard some people entering the garden. A French tourist couple came to visit the church as guests of a Turkish and a Greek Burgazlı couple. I found myself in the middle of translating in Turkish and French the conversations between Zümrüt and the couple. The French woman asked how and why Zümrüt took this job. Zümrüt responded:

When I was young, with my friends, we used to clean the mosque in our village in Sivas, in Anatolia. I married my paternal uncle's son and came to Istanbul as a bride in 1987. While working in Istanbul, my husband developed good relationships with the Greeks. These Greeks who lived in Istanbul also had houses in Burgaz. When they proposed to us the job of taking care of the church, my husband and I accepted. I said: “both mosques and churches are the houses of God. Why wouldn't we take care of the church?”

When the French woman heard this, she had tears in her eyes and said, “While there are wars between different religions, it is very touching

to see a Muslim woman taking care of a Christian church, this is very moving and impressive.” When I translated that, Zümürüt did not react as if she was doing something spectacular or extraordinary but that was a natural act for her.

After regular visits to Zümürüt, I learned more about how she keeps the traces of her Anatolian rural life and how much she has learned from the Greek community. She climbs up and down Burgaz on her donkey, makes *mantı* (Turkish tortellini), and grows vegetables and herbs in her garden as she did in her village. Nonetheless, through interactions with Greeks and to do the job properly, Zümürüt and her son picked up a few Greek words, which are used in the mass, like *ψωμί* (bread), *κρασί* (wine), *νερό* (water). Her little son, aged nine, puts out the candles of the church, carries the ritualistic items listed above and holds the big keys of the church. Zümürüt knows the important Greek Orthodox religious days and the meaning of rituals, and she paints and cleans the church and shows it to visitors. While Niko was telling me the story of the departure of some Greeks, he added, “Today Greeks do not want to work as a verger. There are not many Greeks left to take care of the church, and those who stayed are all educated, with good jobs, and do not want to do this job.” This sentence shows a significant class difference and also economic mutual dependency between the Greeks and the Muslims.

In Niko and Zümürüt’s case, class difference and mutual dependency played a positive role in the ways in which they embraced their religious differences. Zümürüt and her husband accepted the job out of necessity. As they took care of the church, they were given free accommodation and salary. If Zümürüt and her husband had been religiously conservative or prejudiced, they could have simply refused to work under the authority of a Christian and taken jobs similar to those of other Muslims in the island. On the contrary, Zümürüt and her husband greatly respect Niko, their boss whom they address with a kinship term “elder brother.” Zümürüt does not only do the basic duties of a verger, she looks after the church as if it were her own house, through cleaning the crystals of the church lantern one by one. She even embroidered a large cross on a piece of cloth that would be put on the alter table of the church, as a present to Niko *Ağabey*. To show their appreciation, the Greek community held Zümürüt’s son’s circumcision ceremony in the garden of Ay Yanni Church: a Muslim ritual took place in a Christian religious setting.

Even though the Muslim family took the job of a verger out of necessity, then, the relationship between Zümürüt and Niko goes beyond an employee/employer relationship. This is again an example of conviviality, where we see that Niko is not a “Greek” in Zümürüt’s mind, but an “elder

brother.” Zümrüt, in return, is not “just a verger” or “Muslim” to Niko and the Greek community. They work together, they exchange gifts, and they make Burgaz a place where they can easily practice their religious rituals. The relationship between Zümrüt and Niko is not an exception. The boundaries of client/customer and employer/employee blur quite often and become that of friendship among café and restaurant owners or waiters and their regulars; grocery store owners and their clients; and Burgazlı people from different class, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.

Conclusion

This chapter argued that in the Turkish context, where the main word for living with difference is “toleration,” “coexistence” represents a compartmentalization of the community into fragmented ethnic and religious groups who have to live together and share space. This sense of coexistence/toleration was contrasted with shared ways of living and a sense of belonging to a place through the prism of conviviality. I described the homogenization of nation-building and crystallization of ethnic and religious identities as a logical consequence of coexistence/toleration. Despite the negative connotations of *hoşgörü* (tolerance), however, a new discourse of human rights attached to minority groups has also resulted in a politics of difference that mobilized Alevis to ask for recognition. My approach to “conviviality,” on the other hand, highlighted the cohesions and tensions that emerge from shared lifestyles and class difference, and how these tensions are managed in daily life and create a sense of place and belonging. I suggested that a more careful ethnographic analysis of specific locations in the post-Ottoman space may direct us beyond the coexistence/toleration paradigm to see the ways in which conviviality, or common ways of living, may lead to a conscious valuing of the sociable sociality of plural lives.

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Notes

1. In that sense, Freitag's take on conviviality is similar to Werbner's (2008) working class cosmopolitanism and Diouf's (2000) vernacular cosmopolitanism, in the ways in which they criticize Hannerz's (1990) elitist view of cosmopolitanism.
2. See Passerini (1987) and (1992), where she analyzes memories of the working class in Turin under a totalitarian regime.
3. During the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and the "minoritization" process (Cowan 2001), the concepts of minority and majority came into the Balkan nations' state system. Cowan (2001:156) points out, "A minority is better understood as a product of particular ideological, social, political and economic processes, rather than a clear-cut component of a pre-existing multiplicity. In most cases, minorities are formulated at the moment of state formulation."
4. The CHP (Republican People's Party) government of İsmet İnönü passed the *Varlık Vergisi* (Wealth Tax) law in 1942 and explained that *Varlık Vergisi* aimed to redistribute the capital that was unequally and unfairly distributed during World War II (Ökte 1951: 15, cited in Güven 2006: 135; Kuyucu 2005: 370). *Dönmes* (non-Muslims, mostly Jews, who had converted to Islam) were supposed to pay double and non-Muslims had to pay ten times more (Güven 2006: 139, 141).
5. There has been a recent proliferation of writing and representation of the events. See especially the documentary films, *Unutulmayan iki gün 6-7 Eylül* [An unforgettable two days, 6-7 September] (2007) and *6-7 Eylül Belgeseli* [The 6-7 September documentary], as well as Aktel (2008), Güven (2006), Kuyucu (2005), and Mills (2010).
6. The Greeks of Turkey with Greek citizenship were blamed for helping the Greek Cypriots economically (Akgönül 2007: 267) and also accused of being on the Greek side (Akgönül 2007: 252). In March 1964, the İnönü government decided to expel the Greeks with Greek citizenship (Akgönül 2007: 257, 409). The Turkish government did not renew the Seyrisefain pact, which was signed between Turkey and Greece in 1930, and which gave residence and free movement to Greek citizens in Turkey (Akgönül 2007: 86-87). With this pact, the Greeks who had migrated to Greece during the population exchange, and who had become Greek citizens were allowed to settle back and work in Turkey (Akgönül 2007: 87). Hence, work permits, freedom of movement and residence of Greeks with Greek citizenship were cancelled. Furthermore, this expulsion would make the Greeks of Greek citizenship lose their jobs thus enabling the Turks to take their places (Ak-

gönül 2007: 261, 265). This would also “solve” the unemployment problems of the immigrants from the Anatolian villages to cities (Akgönül 2007: 265).

7. See Neyzi (2004) and Shankland (1999) for Alevi memories of the 1938 rebellion in Dersim and the massacres in Çorum, Kahramanmaraş, and Sivas/Madımak.

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