

**A COUNTRY IN A SCHOOL: *FAJR* IRANIAN SCHOOL IN  
TURKEY**

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**A COUNTRY IN A SCHOOL: *FAJR* IRANIAN SCHOOL IN  
TURKEY**

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## ABSTRACT

### A COUNTRY IN A SCHOOL: FAJR IRANIAN SCHOOL IN TURKEY

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The Fajr Iranian School has been located in Sultanahmet, in the center of Istanbul, for more than one hundred years, and it has operated as a foreign school continuously since 1882, providing education for the Iranian community in Istanbul. After the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran, the Fajr Iranian School has become affiliated with the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) in Turkey. This special position of the school, as a government-run school of the Iranian regime located in a foreign country, implies the significance of this school's spatial setting. This thesis is an ethnographic exploration into this spatiality. After presenting a brief history of this educational institution and the Iranian community in Turkey, this thesis argues that the spatial setting of the Fajr Iranian School, examined as an ideological state apparatus that creates a state-centered habitus, plays a significant role in constructing social identities of the Iranian students in Turkey. Furthermore, it shows that these students negotiate their identities differently based on their self-positionings, which are examined through their collective and personal negotiations. On the one hand, the Fajr Iranian School plays a vital role in creating a 'safe' and 'private' space for its students to learn and maintain the culture, history and language around being Iranian in Turkey; on the other hand, it also constitutes a site of struggle due to being a 'closed place' where the symbolic power of the state is differently exercised over its agents as the school aims to exert a dominant Iranian identity. Collective negotiations represent how the students negotiate their identities through a collective group lens. Personal negotiations, however, somehow as counter examples against the image of group identity, prove to be valuable to analyze that there are different positionings of some students in their interpersonal relations within this state-centered habitus. In this way, the thesis shows that, symbolic capitals and levels of symbolic power are prone to shifts for particular groups in the school space.

## ÖZET

BİR OKUL İÇERİSİNDE BİR ÜLKE: TÜRKİYE'DE FAJR İRAN OKULU

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Anahtar Kelimeler: İran okulu, ideolojik devlet aygıtı, habitat, sembolik güç, sosyal kimlik

Fajr İran Okulu, İstanbul'un merkezinde Sultanahmet'te yüz yıldan fazla bir süredir bulunmaktadır. 1882'den beri kesintisiz olarak eğitim hayatına devam eden okul, uzun bir süre yabancı okul statüsü altında İstanbul'da bulunan İranlıların eğitim ihtiyacını karşılamıştır. İran'daki 1979 İslam Devrimi'nden sonra ise, okul İran İslam Cumhuriyeti Büyükelçiliği'ne bağlı hale gelmiştir. Yabancı bir ülkede İran rejimi kontrolünde bir büyükelçilik okulu tanımını aşarak birçok öğrencisi olan okulun bu özel konumu, okulun mekansal ortamının önemini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu araştırılmamış eğitim kurumunun kısa bir tarihini kısaca verdikten sonra, bu tez devlet merkezli bir alan yaratarak ideolojik bir devlet aygıtı olarak tartışılan bu okulun, İranlı öğrencilerinin sosyal kimlik inşalarında önemli bir yeri olduğunu söyleyerek bu öğrencilerin kimliklerini toplu ve kişisel olarak öz-konumlanmalarına göre farklı şekillerde müzakere etmekte olduklarını iddia etmektedir. Okul, öğrencilerinin söyleminde Türkiye'de İranlı olmak etrafında oluşturdukları kültürleri, tarihleri ve dilleri hakkında öğrenmelerini ve bunları sürdürmeleri için 'güvenli' ve 'özel' bir alan yaratmada önemli bir rol üstlenir. Bir yandan ise, okul, devletin sembolik gücünün farklı bir şekilde uygulandığı kendilerini farklı şekillerde de ifade eden grupları da barındırmakta ve bu gruplar için okul alanında oluşturulmuş egemen bir İran kimliğine karşın bir mücadele alanı oluşturmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, toplu kimlik söylemleri öğrencilerin toplu bir grup merceği aracılığıyla kimliklerini nasıl müzakere ettiklerini temsil ederken, kişisel görüşmeler, bir şekilde bu grup kimliği imajına karşı örnekler olarak, bazı öğrencilerin kişiler arası ilişkilerinde farklı konumların olduğunu analiz etmek için değerli olduğunu kanıtlamaktadır.

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*Dedicated to the 'students' of the Fajr Iranian School*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>IOM</b> International Organization for Migration .....	51
<b>IRI</b> The Islamic Republic of Iran .....	3
<b>MOE</b> The Ministry of Education in Iran .....	3
<b>MONE</b> The Ministry of National Education in Turkey .....	3
<b>RPE</b> Regulation of Public Education .....	35
<b>SIT</b> Social Identity Theory .....	64
<b>USA</b> The United States of America .....	20
<b>WWI</b> World War I .....	38
<b>YÖS</b> University entrance exam for the foreign students in Turkey .....	77

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS IN FARSI

<b>Adab</b> Decent, or good behaviour.....	2
<b>Allah</b> God (Arabic expression) .....	70
<b>Basiji</b> Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in the IRI .....	81
<b>Bismillahirrahmanirrahim</b> In the name of the God (Arabic expression).....	1
<b>Din-e islam</b> Religion of Islam .....	69
<b>Elm</b> Science.....	69
<b>Ettela’at</b> An abbreviation for the Vezaret-e Ettela’at Jomhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran (Ministry of Intelligence of the IRI) .....	23
<b>Fajr</b> Dawn.....	1
<b>Haft sin sofreh</b> Norooz’s traditional celebration table that include Sabzeh (wheat- grass), Samanu (sweet pudding), Senjed (sweet dry fruit of the lotus tree), Serkeh (Persian vinegar), Seeb (apple), Seer (garlic) and Somaq (sumac) .	89
<b>Hejab</b> A piece of garment used to cover the head and the chest, a headscarf....	1
<b>Konkur</b> Iranian national University entrance exam .....	77
<b>Madraseh-ye ‘eshq</b> School of Love used for martyrdom.....	81
<b>Mellat</b> Nation.....	69
<b>Mullahs</b> Guardians used to refer to Islamic clerics of the IRI .....	22
<b>Nabat</b> A sugar made of saffron in Iran.....	23
<b>Norooz</b> Celebration of the Persian New Year .....	2
<b>Salaat</b> A religious duty for each Muslim while it is a physical & mental performance of praying to Allah.....	2

<b>Taarof</b> A ritual politeness in Iran .....	4
<b>Toman</b> Iranian currency .....	45
<b>Ummat</b> Muslim nation .....	79
<b>Velayat-e faqih</b> Guardianship of the Jurist .....	79

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The *Fajr* Iranian School has been located in Sultanahmet, in the center of Istanbul, for more than one hundred years. From the moment a visitor walks in, s/he has to walk over the flags of the United States of America (USA) and Israel, at the front garden where the students gather for the morning rituals that are conducted with each grade in a line. In the mornings, students sing the national anthem, listen the speech of the school administration mostly including either verses from Quran or the speeches of Khomeini-the first Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI), and engage in some physical movements such as stretching, flexion, etc. As one walks up the stairs towards the entrance door, s/he sees a small room on the right side where one of the teachers in charge of monitoring sits during the school day to control the students' apparel, fix the girls' *Hejabs*, check the nails and make-ups, and schedule the arrival and departure time of each student. On the walls, there are black-white big pictures of the building, alumni photographs of the previous years, plaque of '*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*' as well as large portraits of Khomeini and Khamenei. In contrary to an ordinary school in Turkey, there is not any corner dedicated to the Turkish flag, national anthem or the portrait of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

After walking through this entrance hall and common lounge, where there are Iranian flags hanging down from the ceiling as well as a large closet to keep the cell phones of the students, one sees a wide staircase leading upwards to the classrooms, the lab, and the old library, while the downwards are going to the sports room, the canteen, and the back garden inside the school. Along the staircases, the portraits of Khomeini and Khamenei, the plaque of '*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*' and the photographs of the national and religious monuments in Iran- such as the Holy Shrine of Imam Ayatollah Khomeini in Tehran, the tombs of Twelver Shia Imams, Fatima Masumeh Shrine, Bibi Masooma Shrine and Jamkaran Mosque in Qom- are lined, likewise most of them welcome you in each classroom, in addition to the show boards

that include martyrdom stories, *Adab*<sup>1</sup> rules for the students' behaviors, verses from Quran, and so forth. When checking the course schedule, one sees that the courses taught in the School, that follows the national curriculum of the IRI without the supervision of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in Turkey, mostly weight on the theology and Quran lessons, and they are shaped in accordance with the regime values based on Shia doctrine of Islam. So, the walls and the curriculum welcome you into a regime school of Iran in Turkey.

At the very top, there is a theater saloon in which some religious and national commemorations, such as Ashura or *Norooz*, are held and the students perform three times *Salaat* during a day in accordance with the Shia Islam. The students, segregated in different sex groups and regardless of their beliefs, perform the *salaat* for almost ten minutes, and then come back to the classrooms. At this floor, the old library stays in silence as it is always locked and closed to the students since it mostly includes the books belonging to the pre-Islamic Revolution of Iran (1979).

The classroom windows are large and with bars, and most of them look out to the back garden and its high wall with fence at first glance, resembling a prison. Even if some rumoring in other languages- such as Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian or Azeri- is heard in the hallways or classrooms along with a follow up of the teachers' warnings on using one language, Farsi becomes the dominant language in the school environment. After spending some time inside the *Fajr* Iranian School, one easily realizes that there are some distinct peer groups among the students of the school based on their different language usages, their ethnic and religious affiliations, their proper outfits, their use of the school space or their attitudes against the school administration.

My initial interest in conducting ethnographic fieldwork in the *Fajr* Iranian School was based on me having several Iranian friends who graduated from there. Before them, I have never heard about this school despite its location in the center of Istanbul along with over a hundred years of history. What were their reasons and motivations behind their choice of education there? How was the Iranian school used as a space for the IRI since it has been affiliated with the Iranian Embassy? And more importantly, how was the school employed as a space for the Iranian community in Turkey? Those were the primary questions that guided me to think of this Iranian school and its members, and then, I frenetically started to consider the ways of entering the *Fajr* Iranian School and conducting research there for my

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<sup>1</sup>Adabiat means descent, good behaviour in Farsi. This word is significant in both Iranian and Islamic cultures. As indicated as one of the values of the regime in Iran, good behaviour provides a platform for a greater society to become devoted to the religion. In addition to the knowledge and skills through schooling, adabiat should also be taught in the schools, as it enables to secure the spiritual needs of a Muslim society (Martin 2003, 82).

master thesis.

The *Fajr* Iranian School was established at the end of the nineteenth century during the Ottoman Empire. The school has operated continuously since 1882, providing education for the Iranian community in Istanbul. Following the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran, the *Fajr* Iranian School has become affiliated with the Embassy of the IRI in Turkey. Since then, the school follows the regulations of the Iranian Ministry of Education (MOE) as an ‘embassy school’ without the requirement of the supervision of the MONE of Turkey. In general, the purpose of an embassy school is to provide the children of parents working for the foreign offices access to the national education of their home country since the positions of the parents have been assigned temporarily. However, in a similar vein to its historical roots in the Ottoman Empire, the *Fajr* Iranian School continued to function beyond its affiliation with the Embassy and remained its sphere as alternative education for the current Iranian population living in Turkey.

In this sense, the rationale for conducting research in the *Fajr* Iranian School is two-fold. First, although the *Fajr* Iranian School was established in 1882 as a foreign school during the Ottoman Empire, there is almost absence of researches on it (however see Vahapoğlu 1990; Haydaroğlu 1993; Mutlu 2005). Second, there is little qualitative research built on the narratives of Iranian youth in Turkey to explore their identity negotiations, primarily through a school space, considering the special position of the *Fajr* Iranian School on the Iranian community in Turkey, that deepens and complicates the discussion on understanding the relationship between the school space and identity construction.

The primary purpose of this qualitative research is to examine how the social identities of the Iranian students are negotiated through the *Fajr* Iranian School in Turkey. In this sense, this thesis is based on a two-bend action plan: 1) to examine if the *Fajr* Iranian School has a specific spatial position (as an embassy school under the supervision of the IRI) and 2) to investigate how the participants negotiate their social identities through this specific spatial position of the school. So, certain themes and discourses reifying in the interviews with the participants are portrayed and articulated, while the research findings are presented and analyzed separately in the chapters titled as The School and The People. The following central questions guided this research:

- 1) What narratives do the students tell of their ‘Iranian’ schooling experiences in a foreign country?
- 2) How is the spatial setting of the *Fajr* Iranian School used as a space for the IRI, as well as for the Iranian students?

3) How do the students negotiate their social identities through an Iranian school in Turkey? If the spatial setting of the Iranian School has influenced them to construct their identity politics under a specific discourse, what influenced their notions of belonging or membership to a given group against another?

In order to answer those research questions, a qualitative research was conducted at the *Fajr* Iranian School in Istanbul and included semi-structured and in-depth interviews carried out with the Iranian students between the ages of 14 and 18, teachers and administrative staff, as well as some parents and graduates. For the interviews with the research participants, I mostly utilized a single interview format. The interview language with the research participants was mostly Farsi, in addition to Turkish and English. This study lasted for approximately one academic year, starting from October 2017 until June 2018. During the entire fieldwork, I have been in the School at least four times a week for a limited time-around 3-4 hours daily. Even if the first month was hard to adapt to the unwritten rules- such as wearing *hejab* inside the building, behaving following the *adab* rules, not talking or laughing loudly, not forgetting to make *Taarof* every time, not touring around the building by myself, and so forth-, I was trying my best to be part of the atmosphere. In the *Fajr* Iranian School, I talked with students and teachers, participated in some courses, joined the religious commemorations, national celebrations, and daily morning rituals, observed the changes on show boards, banners, material objects, and learned about the institutional habitus of the School. Moreover, upon the request of the Principal of the school, toward the end of my fieldwork, for about two months, I did give counseling to students on university life in Turkey- like orientation events- for the 12th-grade students.

In this study, as ethnographic fieldwork would advance meaningful themes, patterns and interpretations in the preliminary findings under the umbrella of qualitative research (Marshall and Rossman 2016, 52), I sought to gather details about the participants' lived experiences in order to make sense of social identity through their narratives, self- positioning, and actions. Since the details on the methodology of this study are described further in Chapter One, I will not delve into this more here; and instead will explain my theoretical framework in the following.

This thesis represents the narratives of the Iranian students studying in an Iranian school in Istanbul since they have had a presence in neither majority of Turkish or Iranian society nor academic literature. In the context of this thesis, my purpose is to observe the reflections of the state ideology in the school space, and then examine the students' articulated experiences and self-positioning through this spatiality in order to critically explore how an Iranian school has shaped the participants' social



identities. While doing this, the theoretical foundations of this thesis are mostly based on the works of Althusser (1971), whose discussion is on the role of school as an ideological state apparatus (Althusser 1971); and Bourdieu, whose analysis is in the role of schooling in cultural reproduction (Bourdieu 1977) and in the allocation of social power (Bourdieu 1977, 1986); as well as Tajfel and Turner, whose emphasis in their social identity theory is on the dynamics of ingroup and outgroup relations (Tajfel and Turner 2004).

In order for implementing a two-bend action plan in this study as mentioned above, the research findings are separately discussed in accordance with the key interferences related to the theoretical framework on space and social identity. In the first part of the thesis related to the spatial setting of the *Fajr* Iranian School, I will use Althusser's and Bourdieu's perspectives as a lens, in particular, where the concepts of ideological state apparatus, habitus, symbolic capital, and symbolic power are made salient. Here, I analyze data on the spatial configuration, material objects, and the school rituals related to the formation of the school as an ideological state apparatus, where the symbolic power of the state is reproduced through the spatiality of the school over its students while a state-centered habitus is constructed in this process.

Along with that, since school is considered as not only a space for reproduction of power or dominant groups (Althusser 1971; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron 1979) but also a site of struggle (Freire 1970; Giroux 1983; Mayo 2010), some experiences of the students are analyzed through the notion of 'tactics' of Michel De Certeau (1984). Although these students of the *Fajr* Iranian School behave in accordance with the norms of the school, they also express of an underlying discontent and a hidden agency in different ways of acting within the school space. Both of the chapters related to the analysis of the research findings occasionally refer to these 'tactics' in order to reiterate the significance of the role of agency even within a state-centered habitus.

The school habitus that the Iranian students occupy is not only a material space but also a social space conceived by them in various ways. Within this social space, as Bourdieu (1989) discusses, certain social structures are functioned through this symbolic system, while people in this system have the same perception over different forms of capital. In this study, language (Farsi) and religion (Shia Islam), regarded as the primary symbolic capitals, are constructed and promoted by the symbolic power of the IRI upon the *Fajr* Iranian School, where its members' understanding of identity is influenced accordingly. In this research, the shared narratives of the students about their school experiences and self-references are considered their iden-

tities. As Sfard and Prusak (2005) highlights the relationship between narratives and identity by defining identity-as-narrative, the identities are negotiated via these told narratives. When referring to social identities in the analysis of Chapter Five, I posit that the students construct their collective identities through the spatiality of the *Fajr* Iranian School around the themes of being a student of the school and being a foreigner in Turkey. However, some narratives of the students elicit that symbolic power is not shared at the same level by all, and symbolic capitals are prone to shifts based on the different positioning of some groups in a society. So, in this sense, this thesis also briefly transcends beyond this collective (ingroup) lens and examines some narratives as counter examples against this collective identity since the members of the school are heterogeneous with different religious and ethnic affiliations. Chapter Three provides further discussions on the framework around space and social identity and introduces other researchers whose studies are interwoven with the theoretical indications of this study.

Hence, since the primary aim of this thesis is to examine how the social identities of the Iranian students are negotiated through the *Fajr* Iranian School in Turkey, building on the research findings and data analysis, I reiterate the main argument of this thesis as follows: The spatiality of the *Fajr* Iranian School, discussed in this study as a state ideology apparatus that creates a state-centered habitus, plays a significant role in constructing social identities of the Iranian students in Turkey, and these students negotiate their identities differently based on their self-positionings that are examined through their collective and personal negotiations.

This study is significant in terms of revealing the presence of the *Fajr* Iranian School in Istanbul with its long history based on its establishment during the Ottoman Empire, as well as in investigating the social identity negotiations of its current Iranian students through the Iranian School in Turkey. Although some academic studies are examining on the schools in Turkey established by the US, France, Britain, Germany, or Austria-Hungary, foreign schools that belonged to other countries such as Italy, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Iran have hitherto remained neglected due to the comparatively minor importance attributed to them related to their relatively small size or the limited knowledge of the languages used in research (Vahapoğlu 1997). Though limitations of archival data and time constraints did not permit a broader examination, this study presents a brief exploration of the School's institutional history so that the setting for research in this School is built in detail within a historical and social context.

Even if some academic studies are focusing on Iranians in Turkey, they mostly address the experiences of Iranians as transit migrants and asylum seekers (Fathi 1991;

Bauer 1991; Pahlavan 2004; Koser-Akçapar 2004; Danış 2007; Jefroudi 2008), while there are very few studies on the settled community (Koloğlu 1993; Zarinebaf-Shahr 2008; Zijlstra 2014). Besides, there are not many known studies that particularly bring social identity and the schooling process under the framework of a single study.

As a result of the near absence of research on the *Fajr* Iranian School, and the lack of studies on the interplay of social identity and schooling, particularly by examining an Iranian School and its high school population of Iranian youth in Turkey, my thesis intends to fill a gap in the literature. Hence, I believe that this thesis contributes to the academic literature because of its interest in a rarely known historical education institution, its specific spatial setting and its students' social identity formations through this institution.

Furthermore, an examination of youth narratives of any immigrant group might be a beginning of venture for other immigrant populations, amidst their differences. Notably, in this case, as the primary aim of this thesis is to examine how Iranian youth are negotiating the complexities of their social identities, and if their positions at the Iranian school have influenced them to construct their identity politics under a specific membership discourse, which may influence their notions of belonging to a given group or isolation from another group, this study paves the way for further studies on the role of the particular educational institutions (such as minority schools, international schools, foreign schools, etc.) on their members' how to negotiate their identities under the special spatial position of their schools and how to posit their members' sense of belonging. When tracking this intention into a migration context, even if the scope of this study does not touch upon the integration issue, it also calls attention to that research topic for further studies since there are various immigrant groups, currently settled in Turkey for many years, and there is a proliferation of private schools providing education in their mother tongues, even in their national curriculums.

Before moving towards the chapters of this thesis, the coverage of each chapter is laid out as follows: Chapter One describes the methodology and research design of the study conducted in the *Fajr* Iranian School. This chapter discusses the research context and the data sources, procedure and analysis; and introduces the participants' profiles. Moreover, in this chapter, my field experience is presented in detail since researching a school with an ethnographic method becomes a complicated work, particularly if it is a school under the supervision of the Embassy of the IRI. The chapter concludes with the limitations of the study.

Chapter Two provides a brief historical background about the *Fajr* Iranian School, as well as the Iranian community in Turkey, from the Ottoman era to present-day

Turkey. The first part introduces the different forms and functions of foreign schools during the Ottoman Empire and, later on, in Turkey's education system, in order to situate the *Fajr* Iranian School's position within this context. The second part mainly introduces the history of Iranian schools in Turkey, with a focus on the *Fajr* Iranian School, as it has a very long history in Istanbul, being established in 1882 during the Ottoman Empire. Afterward, the third part contextualizes and complicates the status of the Iranian community in Turkey, always regarded as 'migrants', extending again from the Ottoman Empire to the present day. Chapter Three details the theoretical foundations of this study, before moving towards the research findings in the following two chapters, Four and Five. This chapter presents the key concepts and framework for the discussions related to the themes, driven from the accounts of the participants and participant observations during the fieldwork in the *Fajr* Iranian School. This chapter intends to provide a critical understanding and a conceptual basis on the sociology of education, space, as well as the social identity framework, for the discussions of the thesis on the spatial setting of the School and its influences on its agents' social identity negotiations.

Chapter Four, drawn from research findings, focuses on the specific spatial position of the *Fajr* Iranian School, examined through the themes on school rituals, routines, and rules; material objects and symbols; and the space configuration. This chapter discusses the school as an apparatus of state ideology and studies the reflections of that ideology inside the school space, as well as in the participants' narratives of the role of school practices in establishing the school context. The analysis mostly builds on Althusser's analysis of schooling as a 'state apparatus' along with the usage of Bourdieu's conceptualizations of 'symbolic power', 'symbolic capital' and 'habitus'. This chapter argues that the symbolic power of the state is reproduced through the spatial position of the school over its students, who, in return, construct their multiple positionings differently based on their social identity negotiations.

Chapter Five examines how the Iranian students negotiate their social identities through the spatiality of the *Fajr* Iranian School in Turkey. In this chapter, the collective and personal negotiations (identifications) are explored as the subtypes of social identities. In the first part of this chapter, being a student of the Iranian school and being a foreigner in Turkey are described as two themes, which explore the participants' narratives of the role of the spatial setting of the *Fajr* in the construction of identities through a collective group lens. The second part describes the personal negotiations of some of the Iranian students as counter examples to the collective identity construction within the school space since the different positionings can influence the ways individuals interact with each other and negotiate their identities. The Conclusion provides a summary of the research findings and

discussions related to the research aim of the study, as well as possible implications and projections for further studies. This chapter ends with a revisit to the preceding chapters.

## 2. METHODOLOGY AND FIELDWORK

This chapter describes the methodology and research design of this study, which was based on qualitative data from student and adult participants at the *Fajr* Iranian School, located in Istanbul, Turkey. As an ethnographic study, data was collected using semi-structured in-depth interviews and participant observations. The research lasted for approximately one academic year, starting from October 2017 until June 2018.

In this chapter, I will discuss my research approach, which consists of a) a descriptive case study approach of selecting sites and participants, and b) a grounded theory research design that provided the framework for data collection and analysis. I will also present the sequences of entering the field and then discuss the study's limitations in the overall methodology process.

### 2.1 Qualitative and Ethnographic Research

The intent of this research was to examine how Iranian students in Turkey negotiate their social identities through an Iranian school in Turkey. Using a qualitative methodology to investigate my research questions lets me probe for a deeper understanding of lived experiences among a small sample of participants, while this qualitative design suits very well in determining participants' perspective as an 'insider' in greater depth (Guba and Lincoln 1994; Creswell 2007; Marshall and Rossman 2016). Considering the study of Denzin and Lincoln (2005), qualitative research, based on its transformative aspect in making the world more visible, enables the researchers "study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (3). So, through qualitative research, how people make sense of their experiences and how the researchers interpret these meaning-making processes are studied. Since qualitative research

helps to explore the meanings people attach to their lives and experiences through their own words in a meaningful context, it also provides insights about the ongoing relationship between social life and the subjectivities of people (Luttrell 2010). Since my research pursues an exploratory approach towards how Iranian students negotiate their social identities through an Iranian school in Turkey, a qualitative design is adopted very well to analyze patterns and themes from the data.

In this study, I chose using ethnographic methods to make the research inquiry, as "... ethnographic fieldwork provides anthropology with its best source of data for understanding the cultural groups throughout the world" (Zaharlick 1992, 122). Ethnography is defined by Paul Willis and Mats Trondman (2000) as "family of methods involving direct and sustained social contact with agents, and of richly writing up the encounter, respecting, recording, representing at least partly in its terms, the irreducibility of human experience" (9). What makes the ethnographic methodology vivid for a research relies on the strength of the ethnography in presenting sequences of underrepresented narratives, and in its questioning nature of the social spaces within which these narratives are positioned in. As Eriksen (2002) states, ethnographic fieldwork proves to be useful to analyze how the perceptions of the participants are formed about their group in addition to the other groups, and how their speeches appeal their understandings of the situation articulated.

This thesis represents the lived experiences of the Iranian students studying in an Iranian school in Istanbul since they have had a presence in neither majority of Turkish nor Iranian society nor academic literature. In the context of this thesis, my purpose was to observe the reflections of the state ideology in the school space implemented through the school practices and the space configuration, and then examine the students' articulated experiences in this habitus- such as social affiliations, perceptions of belonging -; in order to critically analyze the findings to explore how an Iranian school has shaped the participants' social identities. Since a lived experience is intertwined between systems of power, struggle, and socialization, discourse analysis provides the researcher to a critical, subjective, reflexive position towards the data instead of a single, descriptive analysis (Lee 2019, 64). So, in this study, critical discourse analysis is also adopted besides the thematic analysis elaborated in the sections to follow.

## 2.2 Research Design

The research design for this study included semi-structured and in-depth interviews carried out with students and staff of the *Fajr* Iranian School, as well as parents and previous graduates. I also carried out participant observations in the school's primary location in the Sultanahmet district. Following the fourth month of this study, the new building of the School in Şehremini was also added to the research site. However, the fieldwork in the new building of the School was not adequate for a meaningful data analysis due to various reasons, as will be detailed in the following sections.

This ethnographic study lasted for approximately one academic year, starting from October 2017 until June 2018. I was allowed to enter into the *Fajr* Iranian School in Sultanahmet at least four times a week for a limited time-around 3-4 hours daily-during the entire fieldwork; whereas my access to Şehremini compound was limited to one day per week for a few months. Overall, during the school day, I was allowed to participate in various courses such as Theology, English Language, Persian Literature, Quran, History, etc., and I talked with students, teachers, and the school staff. I observed boards, bulletins, artifacts, and their changes over time, learned about the special days and rituals along with the bureaucracy inside the *Fajr* Iranian School. I could join morning rituals, religious celebrations, and national days throughout my fieldwork. Moreover, upon the request of the Principal, toward the end of my fieldwork, for about two months, I did give counseling to students on university life in Turkey- like orientation events- for the 12th-grade students. The details of my fieldwork will be presented in detail in the following sections of this chapter.

A single-sited case study design was used for collecting data. Since a case study design is adjusted for a limited number of participants in a contained geographical area, this method provides a comprehensive analysis of a particular group (Zainal 2007; Yin 2014). Moreover, a descriptive case study method enables the researcher to focus on the complex lived experiences of the participants more in detail based on the presentation of the data on real-life situations (Ibid). So, my aim to collect data about many aspects of my participants, even beyond their statements, interactions, and experiences, was employed via the case study design very well. Since my humble attempt to opt for the method of the case study was to observe preliminary patterns in the participants' negotiations of social identity through the *Fajr* Iranian School, this study further enriches our understanding of the Iranian community in Turkey.



In terms of articulating some limitations for this case-study approach, one is its lack of generalizability based on its ‘microscopic’ focus (Hussein, Hirst, Salyers and Osuji 2014). Relying on the intention of my study on gathering lived experiences of the students in *Fajr* Iranian School and drawing some trends and patterns from them, generalizing the whole Iranian youth in Istanbul or the Iranian community in Turkey was aside from the focus of the study. The specific context of school as a biased zone for identity construction was a distinguishing factor during the data collection and analysis periods. Thus, this study adopts a case study about specific Iranian youth in Istanbul and their social identities. Since its microscopic focus may be discussed as a methodological weakness in terms of validity, it turns into an advantage for a more holistic understanding. Further studies could serve to take on a much larger sample size of participants out of the specific preliminary patterns of a focused group.

In this thesis, a grounded theory research design, which is a method that "grounds" a theory in the context under which a phenomenon occurs around repeated codes, concepts, and categories, was also utilized (Corbin and Strauss 1990; Glaser and Strauss 2017). For the purpose of the study, coding was used to analyze the responses to the questions and respondent information in specific categories. As the study aimed to address the interaction between school space and social identities, coding focused on both spatial and social phenomenon. I had entered into the "field" with a few conceptual questions and keywords in mind without any deeper actual insight. However, along with each interview and observation, I left the field with more specific concepts to guide the research by relying on the grounded theory method and its flexibility that allows me to develop interpretations of my research questions during the data analysis process.

As a preliminary step of my field study, I distributed an anonymous questionnaire to 48 high school students at the *Fajr* Iranian School in order to understand their basic demographics, their experiences at the school and their immigrant experiences in Turkey. These questionnaires (see Appendix A for details) included questions about the participants’ educational background, family life, daily life in Turkey, language usage, school experience, extracurricular activities, and post-graduation plans. These questionnaires proved to be valuable in gathering the information on how many years the students had attended the *Fajr* Iranian School, how they feel about living in Turkey, and other vital issues that are useful to situate the spatiality of the *Fajr* Iranian School related to the students’ experiences in Turkey through negotiating their social identities. During the time of survey distribution, I was not very knowledgeable about the sequences inside the school and was broadly interested in learning about the perceptions of the Iranian students on mother tongue language

education in a foreign country. Thus, the questions had been formed mostly around this interaction.

Following my adaptation to the *Fajr*, I began to conduct semi-structured interviews with the participants. As Maxwell describes, purposeful selection is a method that is used for determining particular settings, persons, and activities in order to provide information associated with the research questions and objectives (Maxwell 2013, 90). However, this method may cause a representation problem as the broader population stays out of the sample pool. This method is criticized due to the risk of key informant bias, or the basis on a small number of participants to generate the majority of the data (Maxwell 2013). However, it is essential to recognize that this research and the analyses are limited to the context of where the perceptions, feelings, and thoughts of my participants are reflected upon even though data collection is an open-ended process as “there is always another person who could be interviewed, another observation that could be conducted, always more documents to be reviewed” (Merriam 1998, 125). So, I used this strategy for selecting the participants who could provide information based on the criteria of my research. I also chose to do interviews with the school administration and teachers as ‘panels’ of the institution since they are informative based on their expertise and experience (Maxwell 2013, 92). Moreover, given that this thesis aims to discuss the *Fajr* Iranian School as an ideological state-apparatus that creates a state-centered habitus for the Iranian students in a foreign country, the school administration and teachers were also seen as significant as the ‘executives’ of this habitus.

For the interviews with the research participants, I mostly utilized a single interview format. The interview language with the students was mostly Farsi in addition to Turkish and English. Since the teachers and school administration did not speak Turkish, except the English teacher who preferred to speak English, most of the interviews were done in Farsi. Throughout the research, a professional translator who is fluent in Farsi, Kurdish, and Turkish helped me for the interviews since I am not fluent in Farsi but have a C1 level language user. All interviews were conducted on the premises of the School, during school hours.

In total, I conducted 30 semi-structured in-depth interviews with the students at the *Fajr* Iranian School between the ages of 14-18 (see the Appendix D for further details about the participants profiles). In the course of the interviews, questions were asked to obtain more detailed information about their schooling experiences, reasons for attending an Iranian school, perceptions about the school, and different identifications, while I was leaving enough room for the participants’ answers to lead the direction of our conversation. Following each interview, I took notes on key

concepts related to my theoretical framework. I would have preferred to conduct interviews with students who could sign the consent form on their own behalf, but since the majority of the students were under 18 years old, it was almost impossible. However, opting for reflections on complex concepts such as identity and belonging, I tried to choose the students with a level of maturity that at least enables them to understand what a consent form is or what the framework of this research is. The school administration helped me with submitting the forms to the parents. At the beginning of my fieldwork, my desire was to interview students who had different ethnic, sectarian, and socio-economic backgrounds, as well as those who have a different range of years of schooling experience at the *Fajr* Iranian School. The Principal had talked about the students' different backgrounds by referring a similarity of the School to the mosaic nature of the homeland, Iran. Hopefully, my desire was actualized during the research process.

I also conducted 14 semi-structured in-depth interviews with teachers and school administrators related to the *Fajr* Iranian School for their expertise comments on how the position of the school influences its subjects, as well as for a discourse analysis on the dominance of state ideology exercised through the curriculum and practices of the school administration.

Besides the current student and adult participants at the *Fajr* Iranian School, 12 graduates and 5 families were also interviewed in order to ensure a broader understanding. The graduates and families participating in the study were selected through snowball sampling. The graduates preferred Turkish as the interview language, whereas some families (3 out of 5) also spoke in Turkish. In-depth interviews with the families helped to understand how the narratives of families are dominated by their desire to shape their children via the education run by the *Fajr* Iranian School, and what kinds of messages they seek to give to their children, their original state as well as to the host country. In this respect, it became beneficial to conduct interviews with the families, as they were mostly the decision-makers on choosing the school, and they had different reasons and motivations behind their decisions.

I would like to emphasize that the attitude of all the interviewees was very cooperative. The reason for not being able to conduct interviews with some was associated with the problems of time in the *Fajr* Iranian School, while the unwillingness of the institution emerged as a problem in the second research site, the new building of the School located in Şehremini. So, none of my interview offers were rejected because of a reluctance to be interviewed.

During the whole research, I used a tape recorder with some reservations. In such cases, when I observed that some students became uncomfortable with recording,

I stopped using the tape recorder. At such times, along with my interviewees' allowance, I did take notes in front of them instead of doing a recording. Among the total 61 interviews, 34 were recorded in total. Interviews were conducted mostly in Farsi besides English and Turkish and transcribed accordingly.

Participant observation also proved pivotal throughout the research. I was able to gather information about the students' interactions and the school's spatial setting through this method. Following my first day of the fieldwork, I established contact with the students and teachers even in informal senses, both out of the semi-structured interviews in informal conversations and during the break times in the hallways or common areas. Furthermore, attending communal events, morning rituals, and religious ceremonies enriched my observation sessions. The plethora of observations inside the *Fajr* Iranian School provided me a more in-depth insight into the structure of the school – physical and symbolic features of it-, besides the daily experience of an Iranian student inside it. Those observations of the school experiences of Iranian students enabled me to analyze how narratives emerge in day-to-day school life and how the students engage with their identities through the school's spatial setting. Through my fieldwork, as aforementioned, I was able to join classes and to observe the classroom environment, and more, I was in contact with the students even outside the classrooms. However, I was not allowed to tour around the school by myself or use a camera for taking photos. Once, along with the escort of a teacher, I was allowed to enter into each room of the building and take some photos. Later, I learned that taking photos was strictly banned inside the school, and that on that day I was given the privilege by the initiative of that teacher who had the duty to monitor the students on that school day. The details of my extensive field notes related to my observations will be presented in the following sections of this chapter.

Before the beginning of my fieldwork, I had also searched the website of the *Fajr* Iranian School. Even though the website was not well prepared in terms of content and it was not frequently updated -2009 being last updated year when I did the search in 2017-, the information about the history of the school, the alumni notes, and the photographs of the graduates were available on the website. Furthermore, I started to follow the social media account of a Facebook group that was formed by the graduates and the students of the *Fajr* Iranian School in order to be informed about the events of the school or examine the dialogues among the members of the group. However, this Facebook group was not active during my fieldwork, and the last post was belonging to the year 2016.

## 2.3 Research Participants

In this section I will provide an overview of the school's population, while Appendix D details the demographic information of the participants in the research. Before particularly looking at the *Fajr* Iranian School's population, though, I will briefly present some information on the number of Iranian students in Turkey at the time of this study in order to show the sample size of the research. At the time of the research, there was only one Iranian high school in Turkey, the *Fajr* Iranian School, and its total population was 752 students in which 284 of them were registered as high school students. Looking at the population of Iranian students studying in the public and private schools through Turkey under the supervision of MoNE, the total number was approximately 5484 students, in which 1149 high school students were registered for the 2017- 2018 school year while only 242 high school students were located in Istanbul<sup>1</sup>. Building on this data, we can say that over half of the Iranians living in Istanbul at high school age were registered to the *Fajr* Iranian School. However, this size is only a quarter of the Iranian population at high school age in proportion to the overall Iranian peers in Turkey.

In the following, I will mention some of the main characteristics of the school's student profile, based on information from Principal of the *Fajr* Iranian School and questionnaires. Among the total 752 registered students of the School, only 80 students, approximately 10% out of the total number, have families who work for the Consulate of the IRI in Istanbul or the *Fajr* Iranian School. Most of these families are permanently residing in Turkey due to their job assignments, and without any need for applying for a separate residence permit, they and their families stay in Turkey via their specific foreign officer cards assigned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. Their stay in Turkey changes from two years to ten years in regards of the job position in general speaking. For the other students, most of the fathers of the students are involved in private business in the form of commerce, logistics and tourism while the mothers are mostly housewives or are in the professions such as tailor, coiffeur, officer in the tourism agencies or translator. In regard to the legal statuses of these families, the majority of them are issued long-term residence permits, with some having Turkish citizenship and others being asylum seekers in Turkey.

While a few students commented that they have been in Istanbul for a few gener-

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<sup>1</sup>Upon my petition for information regarding the Iranian population in Turkey, these numbers are shared by the Provincial Directorate for National Education in Istanbul, located near the *Fajr* Iranian School on 27th May 2018.

ations, the rest of the families had moved to Turkey as the first generation. Aside from the students whose families are working temporarily in the Consulate of the IRI or in the school, the majority of the current students have been in the school since their first grade. There are students from the north, the south-east and the central parts of Iran. To put it more specifically, there are students whose families had migrated mostly from Tehran, Shiraz, Isfahan, Qum, Kermanshah, Sanadaj and Urumieh.

In the interview with the Principal, she mentioned about different ethnic and religious backgrounds of the students as they gathered this information based on the registration forms of the students. Even if the school administration did not allow me to look at any document related to the school, the Principal gave a brief background information upon my question related to the families. She stated that there are 70% Persians, 20% Azeris and 10% others with ethnic backgrounds such as Assyrians, Armenians, Kurds and Turks in the school. In terms of religious affiliations, the majority of the students are coming from Shia families, but there are also students from families with other sects of Islam or other religions, such as Sunnis, Christians, Jews and Bahais. So, the school reflects the heterogeneity of Iran, and these various identities related to ethnicity and religion become important in analyzing different personal negotiations in contrary to the privileged dominant identity imposed within the school space in the following sections.

The majority of the students' Turkish language proficiency is very limited; and some of them are enthusiastic about learning Turkish for their daily life, particularly those who want to study for higher education in Turkey. Since the other languages taught in the school have been Arabic and English, most of the student population might be considered to have multi-language abilities in this sense.

The majority of the students are living in Istanbul's Başakşehir, Bakırköy, Beylikdüzü, Yeşilköy, Zeytinburnu, Bayrampaşa and Sultanahmet districts. Some of these areas are famous for their large number of Iranian residents. Even if the school provides a shuttle for the students, most of the students prefer to use public transportation to reach the school.

The teachers in the school are charged with temporary positions for two-year periods. In the interviews with teachers, they told me that the process for being appointed to an abroad mission in the MoE of Iran has been very challenging and a long process to encounter due to the high demands of the teachers in Iran and financial motivations behind it. They take an exam to prove their expertise in relation to their field for an abroad position, and upon their success, they are trained for two months under an orientation program before going to their appointed countries. The contents of

this orientation program, as the teachers explained, include the social, political and economic structures of the appointed country, the terms and conditions of their contact, the instructions on the paper-work for the required work and residence permissions, guidance for protecting the cultural, national and religious aspects while abroad and maintenance for a national educational discipline in similar vein to the home country upon the Iranian diaspora. In this sense, the Iranian teachers appear to be tasked with a mission to pursue a strict national educational program, to maintain close political engagement to the current regime, and to preserve the national, religious and cultural identities of the Iranian students in Turkey. This became clear to me through the remarks the teachers made, as well as during the breaks or silences during the interviews.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

A synthesis of thematic content analysis and critical discourse analysis was used for data analysis. The thematic analysis method was utilized to identify recurring themes and patterns in the narratives of participants' schooling experiences. In this sense, the participants' responses were analyzed to identify the semantic and interpretive themes since "the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations" make sense of the semantic content of the data beyond "what a participant has said or what has been written" or participants' input to the interview (Braun and Clarke 2006, 84). Braun and Clarke (2006) also indicate the six-step guideline for a thematic analysis which are followed as: "(a) familiarization with data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) searching for themes, (d) reviewing themes (e) defining and naming themes and (f) producing the report" (87-91). Since this research employed an adapted thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke, I followed these six steps. The first step was accomplished by listening to recorded data many times. In the second step, I transcribed all recorded data along with cross-checking with the audio recordings in order to identify the narratives. The third step was applied in accordance to the research questions while the fourth step was administered by checking for the findings underlying each theme as well as by checking if they generated a vivid narrative that supported to the data set. Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasize that the fundamental aspects of the data are captured under a theme "in relation to the research question and represents some levels of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (82). So, in the fifth step, I prepared a descriptive

template along with a section theme and subthemes in order to identify what was of interest related to my research questions. Among the data set, I attempted to write down the commonalities to indicate the prevalence of the commonality ( e.g., of the 20 female students, fifteen mentioned that they uncover their headscarves after the school) and also to highlight any differences or outliers (e.g., of the 30 students, seven mentioned that they intentionally walked over the Israel and USA flags). In the sixth step, I demanded to present a narrative about the representations of what the data shows to produce "a scholarly report of the analysis" along with a critique towards a researcher perception in terms of the argument of "how we sample in the field, and then sample again during analysis in deciding who and what to quote, involves decisions about whose voices will be heard" (Braun and Clarke 2006; Patton 2002; Bruner 1990).

I also utilized the methodology of Maguire and Delahunt (2017) by conducting a theoretical thematic analysis rather than an inductive one, in which themes were searched associated to the research questions instead of coding every piece of text. In the context of the thematic analysis of this study, the surface-level data (semantic analysis) presented basic demographic information of the participants in addition to their approaches about their social identities as members of the *Fajr* Iranian School and as foreigners in Turkey. In contrast, the latent analysis (or interpretative analysis) provided me what may have been hidden ‘in between the lines’ of their attitudes, which may have led into the more complex negotiations of their identities within the School.

In order for identifying themes, I played an ‘active role’ during the processes of data transcription, description, and interpretation (Braun and Clarke 2006, 80). Throughout the research process, I maintained to question the core interferences grounded on my theoretical framework, analysis, and interpretations as well as the engagement of these assumptions in the presentation of the findings. Throughout this study, against the concern on the validity of this study, reflexivity became an analytical tool in order to reflect how "meanings are made rather than found" (Mauthner and Doucet 2003, 414). In this sense, Braun and Clarke’s (2006) 15-point checklist enabled me to analyze the findings properly without getting stuck only on my perceptions. Since the write-up interpretation has been elaborated by the link to the theoretical framework on space and social identity, the main themes that emerged will be discussed in detail in chapters to follow, Four and Five.

Using also critical discourse analysis, I aimed to gain insights into what type of a school space is constructed, what this space offers to its participants, and what types of subjects it promotes under the phenomenon of identity formation. In critical



discourse analysis, under a given discourse situated in a historical and social context, the linkages to broader systems of societal power asymmetries, social circumstances, and hierarchies are examined (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999). According to Lefebvre (1991), space is both an abstract and a real notion and "it serves as a tool of thought and action; in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power; and yet it escapes in part from those who would make use of it" (26). So, since space produces and is produced by social interactions, that both shape the spatial environment and are shaped by the spatial environment (Massey 1994, 28), space evolves like a discourse in process, recontextualizing and decontextualizing it. Hence, for this research, it is complementary for using this analysis to trace how space is represented, what type of conceptions and ideologies this representation derives from, and what type of precise meanings and practices are highlighted while others are neglected or disregarded.

## **2.5 Fieldwork- Before, During and After**

Having detailed the different research and data analysis methods of this study, I will now turn to describing my process of fieldwork at the at the *Fajr* Iranian School in Istanbul during the 2017/18 academic year. In order to present an overall narrative, I wanted to give the sequences of my fieldwork by separating the processes into three parts; before, during, and after. The ‘before’ section will explain the process of getting official permission to do research in the *Fajr* Iranian School. The ‘during’ section comprises of samples from my field notes on my impressions and some interactions between the teachers, administration officers, and students in ‘informal’ settings, such as in the corridors during their break times, in addition to the ‘formal’ settings, such as during the classroom hours. In the ‘after’ section, I try to condense my overall fieldwork upon the end of the field as a researcher before delving into my data set for analysis.

### **2.5.1 Before**

For the required permission to conduct a field study inside the school, I first visited the Consulate of the IRI in Cağaloğlu district, which has remained a prestigious

residential area for the Iranian community for centuries since the Ottoman Empire. With the help of a family friend working for the Consulate of the IRI, I was able to get an appointment with the Head of the Culture and Education Unit. Mr. Rasouli was very kind, and he was delighted when I spoke in Farsi with him in order to explain my study interest inside the *Fajr* Iranian School. Since I have had many Iranian friends and an Iranian stepfather- whose family live in Iran and work at the high positions within the government-, they had warned me about not mentioning the details of my research as my projections might make them think that my study includes a political stance. Relying on the remarks of these people and my lack of knowledge regarding the school and how my proposed study would be shaped through the field, I preferred to present general research questions in order to enter the *Fajr* Iranian School. Mr. Rasouli gave me an address, where the *Sarparasti-ye Jomhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran dar Türkiye, Rusiye ve Asiyaye Miyane* (Supervision of the Schools of the IRI in Turkey, Russia, and Middle Asia) is located in Merter - a commercial neighborhood in Istanbul.

The building was near a subway and there were outlet shops of famous brands on the basement floor of the building. I have never imagined that the office of the Education Attaché of the IRI would be on the sixth floor of this enormous building, but there it was. I went there with an Iranian male friend, Payam, a graduate of the *Fajr* Iranian School, since he has known Dr. Sepheri, the Attaché, before. At the building entrance, I took my scarf out of my bag to cover my head, and the security guard already guessed to which floor we would go. An old man with a mustache, the tea vendor, opened the door and enthusiastically expressed, “Salam, agha!”, by looking at my friend. Even if he has never looked into my eyes, I did wave back with a smile. The flat was not big, including some five or six tables and bookshelves along the walls. It was an open-plan office, but there was only one room walled and diversified from the rest of the place out of its stylish furniture seen behind the glass-made door. We asked the man to see Dr. Sepheri, and he led us to someone else looking at an old computer screen while sitting with his slippers on his table. At that moment, I looked around and saw that everyone was with their slippers, while their shoes were put under their tables. Later, I learned from my friend that almost everyone working in the public offices in the IRI wear slippers inside the offices, which I found very interesting. My friend explained the reason behind it as, in the Iranian society, the shoes are seen as a signifier of someone’s socioeconomic background, and the *Mullahs* generally wear old shoes or slippers to prove the people their distance from wealth. While thinking of that, the officer welcomed us kindly, and started a conversation by asking questions about where we are from, what jobs we have and what we think about Iran, etc. Even if my language ability in Farsi

was minimal, I was following the conversation flow and when I needed to answer, my friend, Payam, was helping me as well. When Dr. Sepheri accepted us to his room, the officer was checking the high-school grades of Payam and printing them even though Payam had not asked for it.

Following a sincere and curious dialogue with the officer, in the end, we met in person with Dr. Sepheri, and our teas with *Nabat* -a sugar made of saffron in Iran- were already waiting for us. I briefly explained the scope of the project and asked permission to conduct participant observations in addition to interviews with students and teachers. He looked like he was suspicious about my research at first along with his detailed questions; but, after listening to the background of my friend and myself, as a person having an Iranian stepfather whose family has been very famous and wealthy in Iran, he seemed more convinced. He made me write a petition about my research project in detail and asked me to add my interview questions to the petition. I was not ready to present any interview questions, and we asked for another appointment to submit our petition. He agreed on that after he received my identification information, including my phone number. Since Dr. Sepheri has been a close family friend of Payam's family, he sincerely warned us that my personal contact details would be sent to the MoE in Tehran along with my petition to conduct fieldwork at the *Fajr* Iranian School. According to him, the waiting process for a response could be very long as he thought that *Ettela'at* would also be informed about it. *Ettela'at* is used as an abbreviation for the *Vezaret-e Ettela'at Jomhuri-ye Islami-ye Iran* (Ministry of Intelligence of the IRI). I thought that he would be exaggerating in purpose in order to make me quit at the beginning, or maybe he would be just tricking me into seeing my reaction when he mentioned the name of *Ettela'at*, I do not know. What I only know is it was the truth, and my study did require the approval of the *Ettela'at*.

After writing an appropriate petition and preparing the general interview questions, we made our second visit to the office in Merter in May 2017. At that time, Dr. Sepheri was not there; but the officer we met before was sitting at his table. Even without asking, our teas arrived. Upon my question about the geographical extension of their supervision and how the office runs, he talked about how they are responsible for the 53 Iranian overseas schools in Russia and Middle Asia and Turkey. He said that since the *Fajr* Iranian School has been registered as an embassy school after the Islamic Revolution (1979), its education is limited to primary education in Turkey. So, the school does not have any warrant from the MoNE to run secondary education, and the diplomas of the high-school students are coming under the name of a school that has been officially running in Moscow. Even if I wanted to ask more questions about this unofficial status of secondary education in the *Fajr* Iranian

School in Turkey, the officer stopped me and requested my petition.

While the officer was showing us to the door, he said to my friend that we would hear from them within a few weeks. However, it took five months instead. Within this period, I was called by the Iranian country code numbers for more than ten times to give information about my education, family background, and masters project.

### 2.5.2 During

Walking through the outdoor of the *Fajr* Iranian School was like walking through Iran for me each morning, due to the obligation of wearing a *hejab* and long coat along with an uncanny feeling coming through. I have been in Iran once, and even if it was one of the great long trips of my early 20s thanks to the fantastic touristic places and people there, I did always feel unsafe upon being a woman and foreigner there. I always had the fear that if anything gets wrong even independent from me, I might get arrested or deported anytime. Upon my return to Turkey, I found that feeling very exaggerated and constructed on the myth of an Islamic political country from the eyes of a woman grown in Turkey, where the country's political agenda was mostly occupied with the fear of losing secularism for many decades. However, the same feeling was there; once I stepped into the Istanbul Consulate of the IRI for permission to conduct my study project, and then upon my first step into the *Fajr* Iranian School.

Throughout my fieldwork, whenever I left the research site, each day, I carried the feeling that I would not have the permission to get inside the school for the following day as my permission for the study might have been abolished at any moment. I named this feeling above as an uncanny feeling, as it descended over my fieldwork, while the school was giving the sense of a space where the Iranian regime maintains its borderless and unpredictable dominance. I felt, saw and heard this uncanniness in all the spaces inside the school that I inhabited as a researcher. "*Heimliche*" (canny), in German, means "belonging to the house, intimate, friendly, familiar." However, it also means "something concealed, kept from sight so that others do not get to know of or about it." (Freud 1919, 2). Therefore, "*unheimlich*" has the opposite meaning, yet we should not disregard one more meaning of the word: "mystic, unconscious, and withdrawn from knowledge." As Freud (1919) emphasizes in his article '*Das Unheimliche*', these two opposite words come into a circular turn, and we start to move towards somewhere where "*heimliche*" and "*unheimliche*" meet (3). So, Freud describes the uncanny as the situation of something familiar and established in mind

becoming alienated, unfamiliar, and strange to it.

As mentioned above, my stepfather is an Iranian, and I grew up with him. So, I think of myself with a strong familiarity with the culture, history and even politics of Iran since my childhood. However, in later ages, my knowledge through the news articles and scholarly literature about the state ideology of the IRI and its' ways of exercising repressive power over its citizens created an alienation or unfamiliarity towards Iran. So, it was the same as what happened during my fieldwork, and the school turned into an uncanny space for me, stuck within the feeling of being familiar and being strange at the same time. This uncanniness was also observed in the interactions between the students and the school administration in terms of discipline issues. In the narratives of some students' migration stories or daily experiences inside the school, this uncanny feeling continued to occur when examining the traces of the state's repression and violence in their past as well as through the unpredictable projections in their future.

Regarding the architecture and design of the *Fajr* Iranian School, it was what I would imagine an Iranian institution in Ottoman times to be like now. The walls of the school was scattered with paraphernalia in Farsi mostly related to Shi'ism-very plugged into the language and religion- and it seemed very isolated from the rest of the world due to the political, cultural and social differences, besides a physical distance created via the use of the place. Walking through each floor made me feel like I was in prison due to the window guards and wire fences around the building. The students and teachers find the school quite nostalgic as its old architecture seems to come from the middle of the nineteenth century. According to them, the *Fajr* Iranian School's interior decoration was very similar to the schools in the homeland, Iran. For me, it was more like travelling to a past time due to the colors of the walls, material objects as well as outdated furniture.

The structure of the school is portrayed along with detailed descriptions via a school sampling plan in Appendix E. This plan was helpful for me to understand the spatiality of the school in detail through the data analysis process on the Chapter Four related to space. Some of the most important observations were noted on the decorations (such as the portraits of Khomeini and Khamenei, the pictures of the Iranian flag, the plaque of '*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*'), and on the boards (such as the current news on Iranian martyries, banners on warnings to behave with '*adab*' rules, or national poems). As will be discussed in Chapter Four, since the *Fajr* Iranian School functions as a state-apparatus via the school routines, rules, and rituals as well as its spatial configuration, it creates a state-centered habitus for its participants.

In the beginning, I was always carrying a pen and a notebook in my hand during the breaks, and it was giving the message around me that I was conducting a research project, and my presence was related to my research position. Then, I preferred to put them in my pocket; and divided the day into two sessions to take notes about the break times in the shared lounge when I did not enter into a class. I did not ask the participants questions on any phenomena I observed during the observation process. This was very useful in understanding the students' social identities through observations of their specific persona interactions.

The *Fajr* Iranian School felt very crowded at the beginning of my study, after the opening of the new building, it changed. At the time of my research in the academic year of 2017/2018, there were 752 students registered at the school. Some of the classrooms had ten students; the most was in the high 20s. It was like a private school in terms of student-teacher ratio compared to those of other schools in Turkey and Iran. However, since the size of the classrooms was small even for these low numbers of students, another building was rented in Şehremini. It happened at the beginning of the second semester of my fieldwork, and mixed-sex education was removed while this new building had been assigned to the male students. However, only the male students in the 12th grade continued to get educated in the original building located in Sultanahmet.

This new building was previously a hotel, and the students started to receive education in the classrooms turned from the hotel rooms. In this new building, I even could not talk about field experience since it was a fragmented and unsteady one due to the aggressive and skeptic position of its Principal towards my study. He never allowed me to conduct any interviews out of his room, and his third-party involvement led to an unsatisfactory field experience for me. Moreover, I could not visit this building regularly as I was only allowed to enter this second school once a week. Since it was a continuously broken space, I can only articulate my experience as a limitation to this study.

As a detailed site description will be presented in Chapter Four, in which the *Fajr* Iranian School's spatiality is discussed, I am leaving to introduce the architectural layout of the school, the positioning of various classrooms and common areas, and decorations to this chapter. Furthermore, this chapter will acquaint the school rituals, routines and rules in detail in order to establish the spatial setting of the school so that Chapter Five will present an analysis of the research findings on responding how the Iranian students negotiate their social identities through this spatiality of the *Fajr* Iranian School in Turkey.

### 2.5.3 After

As noted above, throughout my fieldwork, I faced many restrictions. At the beginning of the field, the Principal's eye was always on me, and for a while, she decided who would be interviewed and who would not be interviewed; even though as time progressed the process became easier. I was also restricted in how much time I could spend at this school in Sultanahmet in that I could not stay at the school during a whole school day but was permitted only for 4 hours each time of my visit. Moreover, there was the issue of privacy due to the obligatory presence of the Principal during the interviews in both of the research sites, but particularly in the new school building located in Şehremini so that the research findings in this new building of the school could not be acquainted with the arguments of this thesis. What made this field harder was the constant feeling of being under a watchdog- the teachers in charge of monitoring, the school administration and video cameras- over my behaviors and interactions with the students, even during the break times in the garden. The annoyance of the Counselor with his daily inquiries related to the aim of my research while trying to look at my notes, or people who introduce themselves as teachers and ask me the submission day of my thesis- even if they do not look like teachers since they stay for 1-2 months without giving any class in the school-, also refer to the fact of a third eye on my work, and strengthen the uncanny feeling.

Sometimes, I thought that I would never finish my fieldwork, or my data set would never be satisfactory due to the limitations presented. Even if some of the students sincerely tried to talk about their narratives or opinions upon my questions within a comfortable and calm atmosphere without any hesitation, some of them chose to remain silent while preferring not to respond or trying to change the topic in certain moments. So, besides the unwillingness of the institution that shows itself via a third eye on my work throughout the fieldwork, I thought that some students' silence would also lead to unfinished fieldwork and unsatisfactory data set. However, later on, I recognized that this silence had been a part of the answers that I was looking for my research questions as Gal (1991) cited that "silence, like any linguistic form, gains different meanings and has different material effects within specific institutional and cultural contexts." (176). Even the students who agreed to cooperate switched the tone of their voice either related to the flow of the discussion during the interviews or because of getting affected by the presence of the Principal in the interview room. I also thought that many interviewees felt intimidated during the interview process while other students were around, particularly during the focus group discussions.

Building on the distinction that anthropology draws between field and home, it is important to mention here that as I was living with a graduate of the *Fajr* Iranian School, home, where I, as the ethnographer returned and wrote my ethnography based on field observations, meant that it also turned into a part of my field. In fact, here, I need to mention that this circumstance gained me a greater and deeper insight regarding the influence of the school in its members, even after graduation.

Within a retrospective look, the fieldwork was like a stage for me in terms of the requirements on the dress-code and behaviors framed under the plethora of ‘*adab*’ rules of the school, and the performativity was always there in that sense. In what ways I was performing my identity as an ‘outsider’ and as a ‘researcher’, the students were also performing or exhibiting their ‘collective’ identities under the framework of the school practices constructed around the religious and national myths of becoming an Iranian. On the last day of my fieldwork, having considered my multilayered bureaucratic adventure during the permission process before the field, witnessing the practices of the school as a state ideology apparatus on penetrating the everyday lives of the students, the situations of the Iranian students in purgatory between their identity negotiations, I felt a burden over my shoulder but released in a way to have accomplished the fieldwork. What scared me at that moment was that there were many essential variables such as displacement stories, class and gender issues, political violence and migration narratives that emerged through the course of this research, and I would not be able to pursue all of them by knowing that some narratives would stay hidden along with their realities and secrets.

As a whole, I need to say about my field experience in the *Fajr* Iranian School that what I could not listen to, hear and see were more than what I have listened to, heard and seen. It was tough to evaluate diversified aspects spoken and unspoken during the interviews of the students, teachers and administrators, while the transcripts of these interviews also included some of silence, and ambiguity within the sentences.

## 2.6 Limitations of the Study

The limitations to the study are articulated in this section. The first limitation was the third-party intervention due to the assistance of a translator since I have had an inadequate level of interview language proficiency. As detailed above, the interview language with the participants was mostly Farsi. Since I am not fluent



at Farsi but only a C1 level language user, throughout the research, a professional translator helped me for the interviews. However, my Farsi helped me to prevent any limitation that a language barrier might result in any misunderstanding. Although the translator has understood the study very well after my briefing about the research task, and she saved her objectivity during the interviews out of her formal translation training, this third-party process might have caused some articulations on the part of the interviewee, translator, or both parties. Moreover, I believe that giving the students as much time until they understand the question in their mother tongue and find the correct word for what they are trying to say also helped to the interviews. When they struggled to find the right words, they sometimes used other languages they felt more comfortable in, such as Kurdish. Involving a translator figure in these interviews may have negotiated the students' ability to articulate some of their answers, but since this person has also been a graduate of the *Fajr* Iranian School, hence one of them, she constructed a friendly relationship with the study participants. I think that it was even helpful to break the students' distanced approach to me as an outsider. I had been welcomed firstly as an unexpected visitor and undesirable outsider for them, then within a short time, was labeled as a desirable listener and almost an insider who also speaks to them in Farsi or joins to the classes, religious and national celebrations with them. Later on, towards the end of my fieldwork, my task on counseling about university life in Turkey has also deepened our sharing.

The second limitation was on the validity concerns of my position as an amateur ethnographer and researcher. It is essential to recognize that this research relies on the voices of the participants spoken to 'an outsider', which may lead to some distortions and gaps in their narratives. Since I have played as a constitutive role as a researcher in my research design and data analysis, following each interview, I was also aware of bringing preconceived ideas or assumptions to my analysis (Mauthner and Doucet 2003). Thus, it required me to separate the content from my subjective interpretations or biases. I tried to stay neutral in my interactions with the participants and kept the interview setting as receptive as possible. My way to achieve that was to keep a journal in order to reflect on different aspects of the interviews, my influences on the interviews and notes to myself to fix what I observed as a drawback for the study (e.g., the third-party involvement of the Principal in the beginnings of the field). Later on, these reflections helped me to highlight my preconceptions and biases during the fieldwork. During the interviews, I also tried not to paraphrase the articulations of my interviewees. I reviewed the whole parts of the conversation and the remarks during the focus group discussions. Then, I tried to find any trend or pattern without forgetting that the stories and sentences are personal to every

participant, and it is important not to assume any generalization.

The third limitation was the use of a single interview. Even if I desired for a two or three-step interview process, the scarcity of time- the majority of the students were preparing for the university exam and they mostly did not want a second interview- and the changing conditions on the school buildings- the movement of the students to the new building and their inaccessibility over time- were interfering with my primary intention. The use of a second or third interview may have enhanced the findings to fill in the gaps when clarification was necessitated. However, focus group discussions with the students and the graduates, which were unstructured conversations of approximately one hour each, were also favorable for clarification through the data analysis process. Moreover, using a combination of multiple interviews, such as in interviews with parents and teachers, proved to be useful for subsequently enriching the findings and to potentially endorse the students' narratives.

Another limitation was related to the research site. Since the interviews were conducted in the premises of the *Fajr* Iranian School, it may have resulted in the participants' bewilderment biases in presenting their voices about the position of their school. Given that the *Fajr* Iranian School was surrounded by other Iranian students, teachers, accessories with national and religious symbols, and the homeland language, space was a biased one and may have stressed upon the collectiveness on the student identity formations of the participants. Moreover, in the beginnings of my fieldwork, the Principal's eye was always on me, and she decided on the place of the interview to be conducted and the student to be interviewed for a few weeks. Later, after we constructed a formal and friendly language, the process became slack and I could interview with whom I wanted to and where I have decided on. In the new building of the school where the male students started to get educated, the Principal did not provide a place for the interviews and forced me to conduct interviews in his room. Because of his obligatory third-party involvement, my interviews were very fragmented and unsuccessful in providing a data set. Thus, my data analysis was mostly embellished by the findings of my fieldwork in the old historical building, named as the *Fajr* Iranian School through the thesis and further where the majority of the high school students were studying in.

As a limitation to the study in terms of equal representation of different sexes in the research, the numbers of the female students are much higher than the male students, in accordance with the school's weight of the female students' population in general. Moreover, through the fieldwork, as a significant finding, oral accounts of male and female students differ from each other in many ways. While the female students were more open to share their experiences in detail along with their multiple

coping mechanisms without hesitation, probably emerged out of their exposition to an explicit gendered segregation by the school, the male students exhibited very little descriptions of daily life, school routines, rules, social affiliations, interactions, hence their lived experience inside the school.

### 3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND SETTING

This chapter aims to provide a brief historical background of the *Fajr* Iranian School in Istanbul and the Iranian community, from the Ottoman era to present-day Turkey. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section discusses the position of foreign schools within the education system of Turkey, beginning from the final phases of the Ottoman Empire into the early years of the Turkish Republic in order to understand the context around the Iranian schools as foreign enterprises within this system. The second section presents a brief history of Iranian schools established during the Ottoman Empire, particularly of the *Fajr* Iranian School, as it has a very long history in Istanbul, being established in 1882 during the Ottoman Empire. Afterwards, in the third section, I will briefly introduce the Iranian community in Turkey, extending again from the Ottoman Empire to the present day.

In this chapter, I intend for the reader to gain an understanding of the setting related the *Fajr* Iranian School as well as the situation of the Iranians in Turkey before discussing the social identity negotiation processes of the Iranian students through the *Fajr* Iranian School based on an ethnographic study. Having relied on the secondary resources in this chapter, my purpose was to provide scenery for Iranians and their educational institutions in Turkey to frame the school's current spatial position and contextualize the backdrop of the identity negotiations of the Iranians in Turkey.

#### 3.1 The Place of Foreign Schools within the Educational System since the Ottoman Empire

There is significant literature on Ottoman schools and the education system, most being focused on public schools, and on the modernization and secularization processes of the Ottoman Empire and their influences on the education system (Kazamias 1966; Bilim 1984; Koçer 1991; Tekeli and İlkin 1999; Akyüz 2001; Bilim 2002;

Fortna 2002; Okçabol 2005; Gelişli 2005). However, when it comes to the particular studies on foreign and *millet*<sup>1</sup> schools (Dinçer 1978; Çetin 1982; Vahapoğlu 1990; Haydaroğlu 1993; Büyükkarcı 1995; Mutlu 2005; Somel 2005), there are very scarce resources. Moreover, they mostly deal with millet schools and foreign schools together, although both are quite distinct. Furthermore, these studies inevitably reflect the official viewpoint of Ottoman administration as they are based on a study of the official Ottoman records.

Among this literature aforementioned, there is also a common tendency to overlook the diversity of foreign schools. During the Ottoman Empire, the majority of foreign schools were missionary schools established by foreign organizations without the intervention of governments. Yet there were also schools that were directly established by governments or governmental agencies, such as the *Fajr* Iranian School. These foreign schools established by foreign governments, hereafter referred to as “governmental foreign schools”, constitute a smaller part in the literature since these schools require to review materials in other languages while there are not many studies whose bibliographies include materials in languages apart from Ottoman and Turkish (Kazamias 1966; Somel 2005, 2007). So, these governmental foreign schools were either studied under the broader umbrella of foreign schools, without being distinguished from the missionary schools, or they were examined along with the *millet* schools (Şar 2010, 5).

Last, but not least, the majority of the literature on foreign schools in Turkey from the Ottoman period until present have been limited in their geographic scope, being focused on schools established by institutions and governments of the US, France, Britain, Germany, and Austria-Hungary. In contrast, other foreign schools linked to countries such as Italy, Bulgaria, Serbia and Iran have hitherto remained neglected. The reasons behind this gap in the literature might be related to the comparatively minor importance attributed to these schools in Turkey, to their relatively small size or due to records of the schools having more limited access to Turkish scholars due to linguistic barriers (Vahapoğlu 1997). In this respect, although the scope of this thesis does not present an extended institutional history of Iranian schools during the Ottoman Empire based on primary resources, it does hope to pave the way for further studies through its modest presentation of the historical setting behind the *Fajr* Iranian School active in Istanbul for more than one hundred years.

In the following section, I will provide a brief historical overview on the place of foreign schools under the education systems during both the late Ottoman Period and Republican Era of Turkey, detailing also how changes in education politics and

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<sup>1</sup>In the Ottoman Empire, there was a millet system, and *millet* was used to refer to non-Muslim communities of the Empire such as Ottoman Greeks, Armenians, Jews.

key historical events transformed the position of foreign schools. I have purposefully focused on the late Ottoman period in the nineteenth century, as this was a period in which a new paradigm emerged in terms of the relations between state and education, the number of foreign schools on the Ottoman territory proliferated.

### 3.1.1 The Ottoman Empire Period

During the nineteenth century of the Ottoman Empire, the Tanzimat and Islahat Edicts (1839-1876) and the Hamidian era (1876-1908) are known as periods of significant transformation for the Ottoman state and society, leading to different changes in the political, social and economic spheres (Kırlı 2000; Zurcher 2001; Somel 2001). Due to the increase of the political, military, economic power of Europe in contrast to the decline of the glorious history of the Ottoman as well as the separationist movements of the era within the territories of the Empire, the Ottoman state changed its governing practices through becoming a central state, and heightened secularization and modernization attempts in institutional, administrative, legal and political spheres (Zurcher 2001). Ministries of trade and commerce, health, education, and public emerged at this period. Besides the constitutions of the new governmental structures, along with the *Tanzimat* and *Islahat* Edicts, the state also redefined the status of its Muslim and non-Muslim subjects and guaranteed the fundamental individual rights - life, security, property, education - of all citizens (Kırlı 2000). Public education was one of the significant reforms of this period, and the Ottoman Empire began to educate its citizens.

During the period of Mahmut II (1808-1839), primary education became compulsory for the residents of Istanbul at first in 1824, and then for all populations in 1826 (Okçabol 2005, 26). Following the existing type of schools for centuries, such as *sibyan mektebi* and *medrese*, the new types of schools- *rüşdiyyes*, *idadis*, and *sultanis*- were introduced under the educational reforms during this century. These *sibyan mektebis* and *medreses* served free education in the Ottoman territory, and religion was the dominant subject of the education taught there. The instruction was limited to the teaching of the Quran, and the Ottoman language in these *sibyan mektebis*, whereas the courses in the *medreses* were more diversified including grammar, syntax, logic, metaphysics, rhetoric, geometry, arithmetic, tropics, stylistics and medicine (Kazamias 1966, 32). As the curriculums of these existing schools were not adequate to train the necessary personnel for the new bureaucracy in the process of a reformist period, the new type of schools such as *rüşdiyyes*, *idadis* and

*sultanis* were opened under the modernization agenda of education. Even if the primary education was left to the *ulema* and continued to be supported by the local people in each neighborhood until the introduction of the new primary schools-*iptidai mektepleri*- mostly financed by the state in 1870, Sultan Mahmut II established the Ministry of Pious Foundations (*Evkâf Nezâreti*) in 1826 to supervise the *sibyan mektebis* under this institution. Although the Sultan Mahmut II (1808-1839) was criticized by the prominent people of the reformist era for not attempting to modernize *sibyan mektebi*, it was challenging to act against the power of the *ulema* at that period (Koçer 1991, 40). So, even during the reformist period of the state, the purpose of the primary schools continued to raise the level of literacy and to train citizens obedient to the *sultan* and *ulema* (Somel 2001, 51).

As essential institutionalization attempts of the state in the education sphere, in 1857, the Ministry of Public Education (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti*) was established and in 1869 the Regulation of Public Education (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi*) was passed. The Regulation of Public Education was promulgated in order to arrange state education in both in Istanbul and other provinces (Somel 2001, 51). It had 198 articles in five chapters and was very detailed. Notably, as Somel (2001) states, the purpose of the document was as follows; "The RPE [Regulation of Public Education] could be seen as a part of the Ottomanist project by trying to integrate Muslim, non-Muslim and foreign schools within a legal framework, and to found government schools for non-Muslim communities" (83). So, besides providing a legal and institutional framework for Ottoman public education until the Young Turk period (1908), the Regulation of Public Education constituted the effort of the state to integrate all different types of schools under the Ministry of Public Education (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti*). However, the Ottoman Empire could not accomplish to apply this integration provision since it was a late project of *Tanzimat* Enlightenment (Somel 2001, 84).

Until the Regulation of Public Education, the educational reforms, within the period between 1838 and 1869, were taken on an individual basis without regulating the administrative, professional and budgetary aspects of the schools without constructing an 'education system' related to specific 'educational policies' of the state (Somel 2001, 52). So, the Regulation of 1869 was a significant step in overall transformation of Ottoman education in the nineteenth century. This Regulation divided schools into two categories: public (*umûmî*) and special (*husûsî*). Public schools were defined as the schools such as the *iptidai* schools, *rüşdiyes*, *idadis*, and *sultanis*. In contrast, special schools were categorized as the schools established by non-Muslim communities, by foreigners, and by Muslim individuals. It seems that this was the first time that the foreign schools and the *millet* schools became part of Ottoman

Empire's agenda under an official document.

The majority of the non-Muslim and foreign students continued to go to the *millet* schools or foreign schools instead of public schools, particularly after the Regulation of 1869, in which the knowledge of Turkish language became a prerequisite to enter into the primary education. Hence, along with the Regulation, Turkish was settled as the standard medium of instruction for primary education for all Ottoman citizens, and as a projected result of a common language, the state aimed to strengthen the collective Ottoman identity among students from different communities living within the Ottoman territories. However, this remained in theory, as every religious community kept its own schooling system (Kodaman 1999, 78). Furthermore, during the Hamidian period (1876-1908), the numbers of foreign schools proliferated, which created a competitive environment in terms of schooling. As the budget of the state allocated to education became limited due to the failures and increasing war amends of the Empire in the nineteenth century, private initiative partially replaced the role of the state (Ibid). So, the intention of the state on a unified primary education in order to increase an Ottoman identity around one language through schooling has failed.

For both the Muslim and non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire, education before the nineteenth century consisted of religious training. Likewise, the *sibyan mektebi* was under the supervision of *ulema* and comprised of one room space near the mosque, the non-Muslim community schools (*millet* schools) were mostly attached to churches or synagogues, in which basic religious knowledge and limited literacy were taught mostly under the supervision of a local religious figure. As aforementioned, prior to the nineteenth century, there was not a single document regarding *millet* schools until the comprehensive 1869 Regulation of Public Schools. In the nineteenth century, along with the reformist attitudes of the state through a central governmental form, schooling became a common issue to be regulated by the state. In terms of the *millet* schools, relying on the enforcement of the community regulations by the Edict of *Islahat*, schooling issues were also handled under the regulations of different communities aftermath of 1856 (Mutlu 2005).

By 'foreign' schools in the Ottoman Empire, what I mean is that there were schools either established by foreign organizations- such as the missionary schools pursuing religious orders by the Catholic Church or by the Protestant societies-, or by the governments and governmental agencies- such as the Italian schools, Iranian schools, etc. (Şar 2010, 16). In the nineteenth century, a majority of European states had either their national schools such as Italian schools or Austria-Hungary schools, or supported a group of schools functioning by the foreign organizations within the



Ottoman boundaries in order to create a network of schooling for their indigenous people such as French Missionary Schools (*Mission Laïque Française*), or Alliance Israélite Universelle Schools (Mutlu, 2005). The schools established by the governments were generally concentrated in particular geographies such as the Bulgarian, or Iranian schools comparing to other foreign schools established and funded by foreign organizations such as the British and French Missionary Schools that were dispersed through the Empire (Ibid, 120). So, there were also small-scale foreign schools such as Bulgarian or Iranian schools in the Ottoman Empire in comparison to other larger foreign schools of the European states, considering the school numbers and student population<sup>2</sup> (Ibid). Since this thesis is related to the *Fajr* Iranian School, established as the first Iranian school within the Ottoman territories in Istanbul by 1882, a brief history of it will be presented in the following section. However, before that, with the help of this section, it is essential to recognize the historical context around it as a foreign school within the Ottoman territories.

Besides their geographical spread, foreign schools in the Ottoman period can also be distinguished according to their forms of establishment, such as financing sources of the schools, governmental contributions to the functioning of the schools, the reasons behind their establishments as well as their target subjects, and the way of how it was seen by the Ottoman Empire (Şar 2010, 207). While the foreign schools, established by foreign organizations, were mostly financed by a central budget from these foreign organizations, the governmental foreign schools were mostly supported by governments along with the support of the local community in the geography where the school was founded (Mutlu 2005; Şar 2010). The extent of the local population's contribution to the school budget served as a reflection of how local populations perceived these schools. For example, during the establishment of the *Fajr* Iranian School, the local community had also taken a role and provided financial assistance for any educational activities or basic infrastructure needs of these schools, such as the building of a school premise or employing a teacher. Furthermore, it is important to measure the governmental contributions to these foreign schools, since the financial and political support of the governments to the establishment and functioning of these schools were interpreted as a foreign policy maneuver altogether (Şar 2010, 218).

In the literature, the activities of the foreign schools within the Ottoman territories were mostly discussed in terms of their intervention into the domestic politics of the Empire, their dissolving effect on an Ottoman identity, and dissemination of

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<sup>2</sup>For example, there were approximately 25 Italian schools in 1903 (Mutlu 2005, 55). In 1905 Austria-Hungarian ambassador presented a list of their national schools according to which there were 42 schools (Ibid, 77). Russian schools numbered to 90 with 456 pupils (Ibid, 90-92). In comparison to these numbers, there were only 3 Iranian schools and 2 Bulgarian schools in 1904 (Ibid, 93).

the foreign ideologies (Ergin 1940; Somel 2001). In this sense, Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876-1908) imposed restrictive regulations on foreign educational institutions in the 1880s since these schools were also generating the idea of nationalism, seen as a tremendous danger for the Empire due to the ongoing domestic-separationist rebellions within the Ottoman territories. In 1886, a memorandum related to issue inspection for the *millet* schools by a *Müfettiş-i Mahsûsa* (specific inspector) passed by the authority of Münif Paşa, Minister of Public Education. Then, the Inspectorate of Non-Muslim and Foreign Schools (*Milel-i Gayr-ı Müslime ve Ecnebi Mektepleri Müfettişliği*) was instituted after a year. Along with these changes, the establishment of the foreign schools became harder, and the state identified the standards for the teachers, curriculums, and physical facilities of these schools. Moreover, the state's surveillance over the curriculum, textbooks, and the recruitment of teachers increased (Koçer 1991; Kodoman 1999).

After the Young Turks revolution by 1908 resulted in the proclamation of a Second *Meşrutiyet* in the Ottoman Empire, the reformist changes in the education sphere continued until the First World War (WWI/ 1914-1918). As one of the essential attempts of this period, the Provisory Primary Education Law (*Tedrisati İptidai Kanunu*) was passed in 1913 as a part of the ongoing reformist movement of the Young Turks in the education sphere (Celep 2006, 46). This provision determined instruction at primary education until 1924. When it comes to the positions of the foreign schools in this period, the Private Schools Directive was established in 1915, as the most comprehensive Regulation of the Ottoman State on the control of foreign and *millet* schools after the 1869 Regulation. The foreign schools were authorized to carry out education in their mother tongues, while Turkish and culture courses became mandatory (article 6). Moreover, the Article 10 of the Basic Law on National Education was stating that the Turkish language as one of the essential elements of national integrity, will be taught at every level of education, without deforming its characteristics and without committing excesses (Kodaman 1999, 79).

During the WWI (1914-1918), majority of the foreign schools were closed since the Ottoman Empire confiscated both the health and education institutions of the allied states within its territories because of the war conditions. The schools belonged to the central powers, or Italy and Iran were left as the only foreign schools functioning in the Empire (Büyükkarcı 1999; Öksüz 2010). Hence, the Iranian schools were one of the foreign schools without having a discontinuity in its education during the Ottoman Empire. After the defeat of the Empire in the WWI, the foreign states demanded the protection of their institutions' rights at the Paris Peace Conference held on January 18, 1919, and they succeeded their demands in the peace agreement with the Ottoman Empire, the Sevres Treaty (1919). The article 149 of the

Sevres Treaty was associated with the foreign schools, and relying on this Treaty, the Ottoman state accepted the absolute autonomy of foreign schools along with the abolition of the 1915 Private Schools Directive (Ökçün 1959, 147-148).

At the end of WWI (1914-1918), the Ottoman Empire was defeated, and the allied powers occupied the Ottoman territories. In 1919, Mustafa Kemal started the War of Independence, and when this struggle was won, it did lead to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of a new Turkish Republic (Kazamias 1966, 56). The next section will present a brief context on the educational policies of the founding years of the Turkish Republic, with a particular focus on the regulations about the foreign schools, which is inherited from its Ottoman roots, considering that the *Fajr* Iranian School is one of them.

### **3.1.2 The Republican Turkey Era**

During the First World War (1914-1918) and the War for Independence (1919-1923), education was interrupted due to the fact that either the schools were closed, or they were destroyed by the belligerents. Following the War of Independence, along with the proclamation of the Republic (1923), the new regime tried to construct a society based on Turkish nationalism, without religious communities inherited from its Ottoman background, as well as independent from the undesirable influences of foreign states (Somel 2010, 90). In the early Republican period, educational institutions were reinstated, but education throughout the country was performed under a new type of ideology of national education. Turkish nationalism was the most critical constitutive ideological source of a secular and modern nation-state-society project of that era. The essential aim of the official nationalism was to create a homogenous and modernized society. In this regard, education was considered as the preliminary condition of social, economic and cultural development as well as a political instrument to mobilize the populations; likewise, Fortna (2013) states for the Turkish context as follows; " education and literacy were the vehicles through which the state was to pursue its aim of both creating and then shaping national identity and loyalty" (69).

On the other hand, the secularist approach of the new regime was also adopted towards education, and the priority was on eliminating different forms of schooling, particularly the religious ones, in order to shape uniformity at schools across Turkey. The Law of the Unification of Education in 1924 was ratified for the aim of standardizing and unifying the educational institutions under the same construction.

Along with this document, all types of schools were taken under the surveillance and control of the state, and the religious seminaries and dervish lodges were closed through the secularist aspect of education.

Given this significant change in the education system, both minority<sup>3</sup> schools and foreign schools were also undoubtedly impacted. Religious propaganda was banned; the curriculums were adopted to the political aspects of the new Republic, history, geography, citizenship; and Turkish lessons were obligated in the curriculums of these schools (Uygun 2003; Azak 2010; Özkan 2016). So, under this Law, there were strict regulations about the minority and foreign schools out of the fear of the nationalist state for a pretense missionary activity of these schools, while these schools were obliged to comply with the order to remove all religious material from the classroom (such as removing crosses and other religious paraphernalia from the school-buildings themselves) (Başgöz and Wilson 1968, 80). So, the spatiality of the schools has also become an issue to be regulated by the state for the new Republic. In an interview, Mustafa Kemal-the President of the Turkish Republic- legitimizes the state's precautions on a possible threat of the anti-Turkish propaganda in these foreign schools as follows:

“Although we may be suspicious of religious propaganda in your schools, we would like to have them remain in the country. However, we cannot allow these schools to have privileges that our own schools in Turkey do not possess. Your institutions can continue their existence only as long as they are subject to the same laws and regulations governing the Turkish institutions of the same category” (cited in Başgöz and Wilson 1968, 82).

Akyüz (2001) states that Mustafa Kemal formulated a new philosophy of education which creates a citizen who will not only further the aims of the six principles of the new state (Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, *Étatisme*, Laicism, and Reformism), but will also be the protector of the Republic. Since education and educators have been the main components in the creation of a new nation, education was a way of building a nation, and the teachers were the agents of the knowledge to be transformed into the new generations. In regards of some scholars' views on the education policies of the new regime, education had to be national (related to the principles of nation-building; nationalism), rational (based on science; related to the principle of laicism), and practical (resting on a foundation of life experiences; pragmatic), under the control of the state (centralized; related to the principle of

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<sup>3</sup>Millet schools are mentioned as minority schools after 1920s since minority term belongs to the era of nations-states while millet term was relevant to the era of multi-cultural Ottoman Empire, So, today, there are minority schools in Istanbul, belonging to Greek, Armenian and Jewish Turkish citizens and these schools of non-Muslim communities were named as millet schools previously in Ottoman context in order to provide anachronistic usage.

étatisme), guaranteed by the Turkish Republic (related to the principle of republicanism) (Topses 1999; Çelenk 2000; Akyüz 2001).

Returning to the demeanor of the new Republic against the foreign schools, in the 1930s and 1940s, both the official and unofficial Turkish attitudes towards foreign institutions of education were heavily besieged by a feeling of suspicion and mistrust (Bozkurt 1995, 18). The new regime adopted a secularist and modernist approach towards education, and its priority was relying on eliminating different forms of schooling in order to build uniformity at schools. So, the imposition of new regulations and limitations upon foreign school functioning should be understood within such a context. Dewey (1983) argued that the regulations imposed on foreign schools by the Republic were justified, since the same rules also applied to Turkish schools, and since there were valid reasons for suspicion of foreign schools (56). In order to strengthen his notion that any educational undertaking had political motives, Dewey (1983) gave the example of the Galatasaray Lycée, which he regarded as the most critical institution in disseminating western and liberal ideas among Turks during the Ottoman Empire, that even gave the way of changes in the governmental structures (57). Hence, the new regime retained its reservations against the possibility of any separationist ideas disseminated in the foreign schools opposing to the ideas of the new Republic, and more, its attitude towards foreign institutions of education was outlined by a feeling of suspicion and mistrust.

The impositions related to the functioning of the foreign schools were very rigid in terms of protecting the new Republic values in these schools. In this sense, the presence of a Turkish Associate Principle in these institutions was brought as a requirement by legal regulations (Sezer 1999, 56-57). Since any form of religious propaganda was prohibited in these schools' curriculum, the classes of history, geography, and civics were decided to be taught by the Turkish faculty, only in the Turkish language (Ibid, 73). Along with these regulations, it seems that the Republic apparently still left some room for the foreign schools to continue their existence, instead of closing them all. In the early years of the Republic, we know that the *Fajr* Iranian School also continued its educational activities as a private foreign school without any reservation since the *İhsaiyat Mecmuası* includes an informative section regarding the school's curriculum, student population and teacher profile in between 1924-1926 (Vahapoğlu 1997, 168).

As discussed in the previous section, the literature on the *millet* schools and foreign schools, generally tends to examine these schools altogether likewise they refer to the same types of schooling during the Ottoman Empire. However, in the post-Republic education literature, minority schools and foreign schools are defined dif-

ferently, considering the different principles under Turkish Law they are subjected to (Sezer 1999; Özbek 2006). Minority schools are defined as the private pre-primary, primary education and secondary education schools that students who belong to non-Muslim minority (Greek, Armenian and Jews communities) can attend, secured by the Lausanne Convention (Article 2, LPEI 5580<sup>4</sup>). Foreign schools are considered the 'schools where foreigners may enroll', which were established during the Ottoman period, but carried out their activities based on previously established rights (Özbek 2006). Foreigners can enroll both in foreign schools and international schools as well as Turkish private schools, although there are some quotas for these students in the Turkish private schools (MoNE 2014; Özbek 2006).

Even if there is not a specific article in the Lausanne Treaty bounding to open new foreign schools, it was almost impossible for foreigners to open educational institutions for years in Turkey since the Turkish Law defined the status of foreign schools based on their historical basis. In the latest Law of Private Education Institutions, the arrangement on limitations concerning education and training activities of foreign schools was indicated as "education and training in violation of indivisible integrity, security and interests of Turkish Republic with its territory and nation, and against national, ethical, humane, moral and cultural values of Turkish nation may not be carried out at these educational institutions." (Özbek 2006, 97). So, the latest provision on private foreign schools also set borders around maintaining the unity of the Turkish nation in educational activities and bans any anti-Turkish propaganda in the private foreign schools in parallel to the first regulations on these schools expended by the early Republican period.

A brief history related to the Iranian schools, with a focus on the *Fajr* Iranian School in Istanbul, will be provided in the next section. However, before moving towards this section, it is essential to recognize that although the studies based on the resources of the early Republican era refer to the *Fajr* Iranian School as a private foreign school owing to its roots in the Ottoman Empire (Haydaroğlu 1993; Vahapoğlu 1997; Mutlu 2005), its current status, like those other Iranian schools located in Istanbul and Ankara, is affiliated with the Embassy of the IRI. Since an examination on both the Ottoman and Farsi resources has been beyond the scope of the thesis to explore this transformation in the legal presence of the Iranian schools in Turkey, in the next chapters, the current *Fajr* Iranian school will be introduced under the supervision of the IRI, as an embassy school.

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<sup>4</sup>Law of Private Education Institutions 5580, promulgated in Official Gazette 26434, February 14, 2007. This is the latest Law after the 1965 Law of Private Education Institutions 625 of 1965

### 3.2 A Brief History of the *Fajr* Iranian School in Istanbul

The founding of the Iranian schools in the Ottoman territories can be understood in the framework of increasing diplomatic and trade relations between the Ottoman Empire and *Qajar* Iran during the nineteenth century. In a similar vein to the Ottoman Empire, during this period *Qajar* Iran was also going through a reformist era in response to the technological, intellectual, economic, and social developments that resulted from interaction with the West (Upton 1961). In the nineteenth century, both Empires established regular diplomatic relations with the outside world, as well as with each other. Especially after the signing of the Treaty of Erzurum in 1823, which settled their border disputes, and the opening of the Tabriz-Trabzon-Istanbul trade route in the 1830s, relations between these Empires significantly intensified in the second half of the nineteenth century (Zarinebaf 1993). In the wake of trade, Iran-Ottoman bilateral relations were crowned with the establishment of the Iranian Embassies and Consulates within the Ottoman territories (Ibid). The improvement of these relations in the late nineteenth century contributed to the rise of the number of Iranians moving to and living in Istanbul. Relying on the reports of the Iranian Embassy, by 1889, according to Khan Malek Sassani, the Iranian Ambassador in Istanbul between 1919-1921, Iranians in Istanbul were around sixteen thousand (Zarinebaf 1996).

In order to facilitate education for the Iranian community in Istanbul about the Iranian culture and curriculum in Farsi language, the *Fajr* Iranian School was established in 1882 at Grand Valide Khan, the neighborhood where the majority of Iranians were residing in that era. The school's foundation was during the delegated years of Mirza Muhsin Khan Mu'in al-Mulk, the Iranian Ambassador in Istanbul from 1880 to 1898 (Ibid). On the weekly Farsi newspaper, *Akhtar*, published during the Ottoman Empire, it was indicated that Mirza Muhsin Khan Mu'in Al-Mulk (1880-1898) had a close friendship with Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1908), and this friendship ensured privileged favors for the Iranian community within the Ottoman territories, such as the establishment of *Fajr* Iranian School without any reservation, and the print of Farsi newspapers for a long time without any censor (Lawrence 2012).

There is an almost complete absence of academic studies on the institutional history of the *Fajr* Iranian School in the Ottoman and Farsi resources. According to the Ottoman archives, the school, firstly known as "*Debistan-ı Iraniyan-ı İstanbul*" and later named as "*Medrese-i Iraniyan der İstanbul*", was founded in 1882 by the

*Cemiyet Debistan-ı İraniyan* along with the support of the Iranian Embassy (Mutlu 2005, 372). The Iranian community, mainly led by the merchants, facilitated the establishment process of the school. However, since the foundation of the school was related to the agenda of the *Qajar* Iran in terms of promoting and preserving the culture, religion, and language of its people living outside its territory (Adelfar and Parvish, 2005, 92) and accordingly, the Iranian Embassy assumed the establishment of a school in Istanbul, the *Fajr* Iranian School was defined as a foreign government school, abiding by the discussions in the first section. Hence, when the school has started its educational activities by 1884, its mission was to preserve the "national and sectarian" characteristics of the Iranians in Istanbul (Resulzade 2009, 52).

The first location of the school, Grand Valide Khan, was a center for the Iranian community during the Ottoman Empire. It enclosed *Masjid al-Îrâniyân* (Shi'ite mosque) in the middle of it, and the Iranian merchants' shops were also located there. In the *Islamic Encyclopedia of Religious Affairs*, Grand Valide Khan was indicated as the local environment associated with both the Iranians and Shi'ite Azeris living during the Ottoman Empire. While the Iranian Shi'ites made the Grand Valide Khan a home for them, the place did also attract the other residents and tourists of the city for the Muharram rituals performed around the *Masjid al-Îrâniyân*. Hence, this Khan was also perceived as the midpoint of Shi'ism in Istanbul. As noted in the Encyclopedia, in the Khan, there were also carried out illegal printing activities for Quran and religious books in the printing houses whose owners were mostly Iranians (Islamic Encyclopedia of Religious Affairs- 06, 516-517).

Related to the *Fajr* Iranian School's position and affairs, there have been some records regarding the teacher profiles, student population, and frequently changing locations of the school. The first teacher of the class was Mirza Ali Hui in the school, and then, Hacı Reza Kali Khan Khorasani took over the responsibility of the school since he was also leading the *Cemiyet Debistan-ı İraniyan* (Iranian community) of that era (Resulzade 2009). So, there was an organic boundary between the *Fajr* Iranian School and the Iranian community in Istanbul in terms of administrative aspects. Following the dissemination of the news on the foundation of the school among the Iranians residing in Istanbul, the number of students increased from 6 fellows to 30 in a short time by 1888. So, due to the oversize number of students, one room became tight, and the school moved to a relatively larger room rented in *Yıldızhane* Mahmut (must be Yıldız Khan) in Mahmutpaşa (Resulzade 2009, 52). However, after the Iranian community considered that a comprehensive education would not be applied in small Khan rooms due to the busy environment of the Khans in terms of commercial activities, the Iranian Embassy supported them to find a new place to accommodate the school (Ibid).



In light of the archival research of Rezulzade (2009), Hacı Rıza Kali Khan and other notables of the Iranian community in Istanbul arranged a meeting with the Iranian Ambassador in 1888. In this meeting, it was decided to hold a concert in Tepebaşı in order to collect funds for a new school building. With the help of 10 thousand gold acquired from the concert, a building was purchased near the Iranian Embassy in Cağaloğlu. A few years later, though, this building was sold, and the school moved to the current premises near the *Adliye Sarayı* (The old Courthouse) in Sultanahmet (Rezulzade 2009, 52).

After the visit of Muzaffereddin Shah (1896-1907) of the *Qajar* dynasty to Istanbul in 1900, and as a result of his meeting with the *Cemiyet Debistan-ı İraniyan*, the Shah ordered to build a hospital-associated to the Iranian community in the neighborhood of the Embassy. Following this inquiry, the Shah appointed some bureaucrats to study on a feasibility report on the buildings belonging to the Embassy in order to allocate a proper place for a community hospital. Then, the school building was found suitable for a hospital, and it was transformed into it for the Iranian community in Istanbul. In the beginning, an annual allowance of 500 *Tomans* (Iranian currency) was reserved from the budget of the Embassy for this transformation, however, after a while, this budget was cut off due to the uprisings in the homeland of Iran (Constitutional Revolution of Iran between the years of 1905 and 1911), and the local community took responsibility to accomplish the establishment of the hospital (Rezulzade 2009, 53). After the conversion of the school building into a hospital, the school was transferred to a house in the Soğanağa neighborhood in Bayezid (Mutlu 2005, 33). However, after this building was burned down in 1908 due to an unknown reason but associated with the upheavals during the Young Turk Revolution (1908), the school moved to Çemberlitaş, until it was relocated to its present premises on the heels of the closure of the Iranian hospital during the visit of Reza Shah in 1934 (Rezulzade 2009, 53). So, the *Fajr* Iranian School changed its address several times due to different reasons before 1934, but since that time, it has been staying in its current location in Sultanahmet.

Having considered the prologue about the school above, now, I want to focus on how the Ottoman Empire saw the school in administrative terms, how it functioned in Istanbul, and what the reasons were behind its foundation. As discussed in the first section, the Ottoman Empire had instituted an institution under the name of “Inspectorate of non- Muslim and Foreign schools” (*Mekâtib-i Gayr-i Müslime ve Ecnebiyye Müfettişliği*) in 1887, categorizing the *millet* and foreign schools altogether under the same institution (Kodaman 1991, 93). Opening a school, or even repairing a school’s building was subject to specific procedures under this Inspectorate. For a foreign school such as an Iranian school, the relevant Embassy had to

intervene to its every process appertaining to the Ottoman institutions, since the Embassy was accountable for the schools' activities in the eyes of the Ottoman administration (Haydaroglu 1997, 46). Under the Article 129 of the 1869 Regulation, there were also standardizations for foreign schools regarding the teacher profiles—such as the requirement for an accredited diploma and certifications, as well as regarding the curriculum, such as elaborative audit for the textbooks and curriculum of each school in each semester (Koçer 1991; Kodaman 1999; Mutlu 2005). So, these impositions were supposed to be applied upon the *Fajr* Iranian School as a foreign school; however, since this chapter based on secondary resources was not adequate to examine the administrative processes directly imposed on the Iranian school in detail, this study remains deficient in this sense. As this examination requires mostly to be based on the primary resources, it hopes to pave the way to further studies related to the administrative practices of the Ottoman Empire upon the Iranian schools.

Even if the basis of the school relied on maintaining the 'national and sectarian interests of the Iranians', its role has been discussed more in terms of its influence on modernization coming from the West to Iran rather than carrying the Iranian influence to the Ottoman lands (Mutemedi 2010, 33). Over time, the school also became a space where the Iranians exchanged their views on freedom and constitutional issues related to the upheavals and upcoming political shifts in their home country. Since there were significant Farsi newspapers published during the Ottoman Empire and shipped to Iran, these newspapers had more progressive ideas than those in Iran. Furthermore, they contributed to emblaze the turmoil in the homeland as many scholarly pieces of research have been done upon the ideological influences of the Iranian intelligentsia in the Ottoman Empire over the Constitutional Revolution period of Iran (1905-1911) (Azadi (1909), Ahter (1896), Surush (1909), Shahseven (1889), Shams (1909), Sheyda (1911), cited in Mutemedi 2010, 33). So, while the school functioned as a place to reach education in mother tongue for the Iranians in Istanbul in addition to preserving the culture and religion of the origin country, it also became a hub for accumulation of the new liberal and modern ideas that carried out influence on the *Qajar* Iran.

Furthermore, influenced by the educational reforms in the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth century, the Iranian school in Istanbul has adopted the modern educational principles of the era, such as the reformation of the textbooks and instruction along with modern methods. According to Mutemedi (2010), the *Fajr* Iranian School under the influence of the Ottoman Empire has played a role in the emergence of a new type of institutional culture in Iran, leading to the development of modern education during the *Qajar* Dynasty (1796-1925) (33). Having mentioned

about the institutional structure of the school, Mutemedi (2010) states that when the school was founded, a detailed regulation was prepared to determine the assignments of the school administration, the enrollment requirements and selection criteria for students, teacher profiles as well as teaching methods and curriculum (34). Accordingly, the school had eight years educational program, and the classes were compromised of Farsi language and literature, *akait* knowledge (outlining the doctrines of religious faith), Arabic grammar, calculus, logic and semantics, geography, algebra, general history, Iranian history, and painting. The official language of the school was Farsi. Although the Ottoman Empire imposed the Turkish language class mandatory by the Regulation of 1869, and its surveillance upon the foreign schools increased along with the Inspectorate of 1887, Turkish was not listed among the classes, and it was indicated that it was forbidden to speak Turkish inside the school (Ibid). There has not been any trustworthy information regarding whether other Ottoman subjects have education in the *Fajr* Iranian School besides Iranians. Even if there were restrictions on the enrollment of Ottoman Muslim subjects with Turkish ethnicity into the foreign schools until 1908, the control of the state upon these schools was not considered very extensive, as is seen from the exempt of the *Fajr* Iranian School from mandatory Turkish language classes in its curriculum (Mutlu 2005, 13).

Mutemedi (2010) also mentions about the unwritten rules of the *Fajr* Iranian School, as this point is in parallel to the current affairs of the school. He states that humiliation was strictly prohibited, and there was an awarding system inside the school for the ones complying with the rules and the expectations of the school (34). The students were taught to become an excellent example of being an Iranian with ‘Shi’ite and Farsi’ aspects. As education was mostly based on religious aspects, students were performing their prayers at the school likewise they do in the present-day of the school.

The institutional history of the *Fajr* Iranian School in Istanbul has not been studied in detail until now, and the information regarding it is restricted to one or two pages within the literature of foreign schools during the Ottoman Empire. However, relying on these texts, it is understood that the school in Istanbul was established based on both a political agenda of *Qajar* Iran and a civil initiative, *Cemiyet Debistan-i Iraniyan*, in order for inheriting the aspects of the Shi’ism and Persian nationality to the children of the Iranian community living under the Ottoman Empire. Even if the Iranian School was regarded as a foreign school established by the government, the *Fajr* Iranian School was also supported by the Iranian community in Istanbul during the Ottoman Empire. As a reference to the previous chapter, the contribution of the local community to the budget of the school reveals a belonging and engagement

to it, considering the continuity of this feeling in the school's present time via the donations of the families to the school.

Besides the *Fajr* Iranian School in Istanbul, Albayrak (2008) mentions the other Iranian schools in Erzurum and Trabzon, where the Iranian population has been relatively large due to merchants' commercial roads (175). The Iranian school in Trabzon was called '*Nasiri*', and it was established in 1884, with its population of around 30-75 students. As one of the headmasters of this school was from the locals of Trabzon, Muallim İbrahim Cudi Efendi, and in contrast to the *Fajr* Iranian School in Istanbul, the Turkish lessons were also taught in this school besides Farsi and Arabic. Albayrak (2008) states that this Iranian school in Trabzon was being financed by the merchants since it was stated: "The Iranian merchants give an amount to the school per goods they imported to their countries" (176). If this information is accurate, it means that the Iranian state might have designated an allowance for the school directly from the merchants, since Trabzon was the center of the trade route between Istanbul and Tabriz. As Mutlu (2005) mentions, *Nasiri* was burned down in 1908, and then, even if it was reconstituted again, it continued its educational activities until 1914 due to the decrease of the Iranian residents in Trabzon after the outbreak of the WWI (372).

Even if there has not been any reference among the secondary resources of this thesis to an Iranian school located in Erzurum except the study of Mutlu (2005), he briefly emphasizes on an Iranian school established in Erzurum by 1896 (373). Since Erzurum was one of the provinces with a large number of Iranian residents during the Ottoman Empire, and accordingly, an Iranian Consulate was established there by 1831, the establishment of an Iranian school might be likely to happen. Mutlu (2005) says that this Iranian school in Erzurum was closed during the WWI in similar to the school in Trabzon (374). Unlike the Iranian schools in Trabzon and Erzurum, the *Fajr* Iranian School in Istanbul continued to function its educational activities during the WWI, and even after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (driven from the resources of Haydaroğlu 1993; Vahapoğlu 1997; Büyükkarcı 1999; Mutlu 2005; Öksüz 2010; see also the interview with the Principal of the *Fajr* Iranian School in Appendix F). So, the *Fajr* Iranian School in Istanbul, as a foreign government school established in the Ottoman Empire, carried on its activities during the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, based on previously- established rights. However, preceding the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, the school transformed into an embassy school of the IRI (the Education Attaché of the IRI, personal conversation, September 21, 2017).

In the education literature related to the early Republican period and the present

day of Turkey, there is an absence of any study regarding the *Fajr* Iranian School, and even there is no scholarly reference to this school within the literature. Since research based on the primary resources is beyond the scope of this thesis but is promoted for further studies, in which aims to establish a continuous institutional history of the *Fajr* Iranian School, the literature review on the secondary resources will not be adequate to examine the history of the school throughout the history of Turkey. Returning to the early years of the Republic of Turkey, the *Ihsaiyat Mecmuası* (Statistics Magazine) was one of the resources referring to the *Fajr* Iranian School. In the magazine, the school was indicated as a foreign school, and brief information was given about it in different years, 1925 and 1962. For the academic year of 1925-1926, it was stated that the education was until the midday at the school, and the total number of students were 119 male studying in five classes (Ihs.M. 1928, 222). The professions of the parents of these students were indicated mostly as craftsmen (42 students), merchants (16), state officials (5), and other professions (Ihs.M. 1928, 225). When it comes to the second and last mention of the school in a published document, by 1962, the school population was provided as 62 students, including 26 females and 36 males, and the library of the school received praise out of its extensive inventory for a primary school with 1245 books (Ihs. M. 1964, 135). In order for a comprehensive review on the history of the school through the Turkish Republic history, it is recommended to examine the archives in both the Ministry of Education of these countries; the diplomatic documents in these countries' Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the reports of the Istanbul Iranian Consulate and the Iranian National Documents Organization. I believe that further studies based on the archival materials will be able to clarify the continuities and discontinuities in the activities of the school under different governing periods of both Turkey and Iran, considering the shortfall of the primary resources as a limitation for this study due to the study's priority on the current Iranian students and their identity negotiations instead of presenting an extensive institutional history of the school.

So, in the present-day of Turkey, the *Fajr* Iranian School has been defined as an embassy school affiliated with the Embassy of the IRI, and it is not authorized by the MoNE of Turkey. In fact, based on the interviews with the key informants such as the Directorate of Ministry of Education, the Education Attaché of the Istanbul Iranian Consulate, and the Principal of the school, the legal status of the school has always been an issue, particularly after the Iranian Revolution. Even during my field study, the school did not have a license for running a secondary education since the primary education was only acknowledged under the Embassy of IRI, and the secondary degree diplomas were drawn up by the Education Consulate of Iran

in Moscow.

Along with its historical entity over one hundred years old, the *Fajr* Iranian School in Istanbul is currently located at the same building in Sultanahmet and continues its educational activities along with its 752 students. With the aim of providing a brief context about the subjects of the *Fajr* Iranian School before moving towards the following chapters, the following section will present an overview of the Iranian community living in Turkey.

### 3.3 Iranian Immigration to Turkey

Although the Iranian community residing in this geography has a long history since the Ottoman Empire, there are very few studies on the settled community (Koloğlu 1993; Zarinebaf-Shahr 2008; Zijlstra 2014). The existing literature on Iranian migration to Turkey mostly addresses the experiences of Iranians as transit migrants and asylum seekers (Fathi 1991; Bauer 1991; Pahlavan 2004; Koser- Akçapar 2004; Danış 2007; Jefroudi 2008).

When the *Fajr* Iranian School was established in 1882, there was a strong presence of Iranians in Istanbul, approximately sixteen thousand people, alongside six thousand Iranians residing in other provinces of the Ottoman Empire such as Trabzon, Erzurum, Adana and Aleppo (Zarinebaf 1996; Koloğlu 1993). The majority of the population in Istanbul consisted of the merchants and traders since Istanbul was one of the important trade centers for Iranians throughout the nineteenth century, and the large number of the community was ensuring the requirement of some civic institutions belonged to the local community such as school, hospital, cemetery, etc (Zarinebaf-Shahr 2008, 154). Throughout the nineteenth century, immigration from Iran to the Ottoman Empire, particularly to the city of Istanbul, was explained in terms of three categories; those who had been deported by the government, those who had fled from persecution, and those who had pursued a more free environment for political and literary activities (Lawrence 2015, 10).

For the Iranians in Istanbul, the district of the *Fajr* Iranian School, the Grand Valide Khan was a living center not only concerning the commercial activities but also for the production of knowledge, as the printing activities of the Iranians in Istanbul were discussed to have created a great impact upon the upheavals during *Qajar* Iran in the previous section. Since there have been limited resources regarding the

Iranians in the Ottoman Empire as Ottoman subjects (Hakimian 1995; Zarinebaf-Shahr 2008; Lawrence 2015; Lawrence 2018), and this section aims to focus more on the migration movement from Iran to Turkey in contemporary Turkey, the Iranian community as the Ottoman subjects and their motivations behind their move to the Ottoman Empire might be a topic for further studies to fulfill this gap in the literature.

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 is noted in most literature on Iranian migration to Turkey as the year setting the beginning of Iranian transit migration flows to Turkey (Icduygu 2000; Ghorashi 2002; Kirisci 2003; Jefroudi 2008; Koser-Akçapar 2004). In these studies, the Iranians were defined as temporary or transit migrants since they considered themselves temporarily in Turkey and stopped on their way to the European countries to arrange their journeys. In this sense, Turkey becomes a transit route for this irregular migration flow of Iranians. By the International Organization for Migration (IOM), transit migrants are described as foreigners who wait in the first asylum country for a while before migrating permanently to another country.

Even if most of the Iranian migrants thought of Turkey as a transit route, some of them had to remain in the country due to the challenges of reaching their final destination (Kirisci 2000; Koser-Akçapar 2004; Pahlavan 2004). The studies of Kirişçi (2001) and İçduygu (2000) emphasize on a small group of 10,000 Iranians undocumented in Turkey after they failed to transit to a Western country in the 1980s and 1990s. Besides this problem of undocumented Iranian migrants, some research findings also demonstrate that the Iranians that could not transit to a third country and had to remain in Turkey, were able to receive a residence permit or a citizenship thanks to the Settlement Law of 1934 (Danış 2006; Zijlstra 2009). For those who applied for international protection in Turkey, they are left at limbo due to Turkey's temporary protection regime on its asylum policy rather than legally recognized refugees under the 1951 Refugee Convention (Kirisci 2014; Hoffman and Samuk 2016; Memisoglu and Ilgit 2017).

During the years between 1979 and 1981, the Iranian transit migration was discussed as the first wave migration of the supporters of Pahlavi regime while afterward, the years between 1981-1987 was categorized as the mass migration of opponents to the new regime, who escaped from the oppression of the post- Revolution of Iran or the collisions of the Iran-Iraq war (Ghorashi 2003, 8). Lewin (2001) also states that the first wave even started in the pre-revolution years when people associated with the Pahlavi regime, such as the industrialists, investors, and high ranked officials, escaped from Iran along with some ethnic and religious minorities following their

movement (121). Lewin argues that the removal of the first elected president Bani Sadr in 1981 triggered the second wave of migration of people with strong political affiliations (ibid). During this political migration of the 1980s, it was predicted that 300,000 to 1.5 million Iranians entered Turkey, and the majority reached third countries. Today, it is estimated that there are over five million Iranians dispersed throughout the world (Naghdi 2010).

The Iranian migration of the early 1990s was discussed more as economically oriented (Bozorgmehr 1997; Roy 2003; Vahabi 2016). Despite the articulations of the economic motivations of the Iranian migrants of the post-1990s, many Iranians also continued to flee from Iran due to their political, gender, religious, or ethnic affiliations, making them eligible for international protection. The Iranians constitute a large number of asylum applicants in Turkey in addition to larger numbers holding other legal statuses in Turkey by obtaining either short-term or long-term residence permits, study permits, or even citizenship (Zijlstra 2014, 194). In the 2000s, a new pattern of migration for Iranians has been added with Turkey's shift from a 'transit country' to 'settlement country' based on changing border policies of Turkey and ameliorating attitudes towards foreigners based on Europeanization period (Ibid). Zijlstra explains the reasons of this shift as being based on the difficulties to reach to a third country as well as in regard to the comfort of the geographical and cultural similarities of Turkey with Iran without the daily limitations of the regime (195).

In sum, this last section aimed to provide a brief context over the Iranians in Turkey by examining the migration trends of different decades and by referring to the legal statuses of these people in Turkey. I hope that, for the reader, this concise review helps to construct a background related to the people of the *Fajr* Iranian School before delving into their narratives. So, throughout this chapter, I intend to establish a scenery for Iranians and their educational institutions in Turkey to frame the *Fajr* Iranian School's current spatial position and introduce a context for the identity negotiations of the Iranian students. The following chapter will provide theoretical foundations of this study, before moving towards the research findings and discussions in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.



#### 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

So far, in this thesis, I have described the methodology and research design of this study, along with the presentation of my fieldnotes at first. Then, I have tried to illustrate an overview of the foreign schools within the education system from the final phase of the Ottoman Empire through the period of nation-building within the Turkish Republic; in order to understand the position of the *Fajr* Iranian School as a foreign enterprise, though, it was transformed into an embassy school after 1979. Moreover, I have attempted to provide a brief context on the Iranian community, starting from the Ottoman Empire to the contemporary state of affairs in present-day Turkey. So, having relied on secondary resources in the previous chapter, I tried to present a historical background on the *Fajr* Iranian School under the Ottoman Empire's foreign school network and provide a setting related to the Iranian community and their situations in Turkey.

This chapter will introduce the conceptual framework for this study before moving towards the research findings in the following two chapters, Four and Five. This chapter is broadly divided into three parts. The first section will present the theoretical framework for this thesis's discussion on the school as a state apparatus. It will start with a brief overview on sociology of education since the *Fajr* Iranian School is an educational institution and it is essential to provide some critical context related to education. Even if education has been an extensive field along with a vast literature on social sciences, this section will humbly aim to discuss some significant theories by aiming to position the *Fajr* Iranian School accordingly to the approach of this study. While doing this, this section will particularly focus on Althusser's discussion of school as an ideological 'state-apparatus'. Hence, via this first section, I present the discussions on reproduction and critical theories' perspectives towards education in order for the reader to gain a critical understanding on the sociology of education since the subject of the thesis includes the concept of 'school', and an approach upon the relationship between education and society is necessitated for articulating the social identities of the students through the Iranian school in the succeeding chapters. In the second section, I will mostly benefit from the works of

Bourdieu and use his concepts of ‘habitus’, ‘symbolic power’ and ‘capitals’ in order to provide a broad theoretical framework for my study, particularly while discussing the spatial setting of the *Fajr* Iranian School in Chapter Four. This second section includes a description of the basic tenets of Bourdieu’s concepts and discusses the school as a social space by benefitting from the literature on space in terms of conceptualizing the school space by mainly exploring sociological theories, particularly Lefebvre’s study. In the last section, as the main topic of this thesis revolves around the Iranian students’ social identity negotiations through the *Fajr* Iranian School, I will aim to contextualize the complexity of the broad topic of social identity. Social identity is a framework that describes identity as fluid and context dependent. By following a social constructivist approach, I will assume that social identity refers to how the students in this study define themselves in their relations to oneself and collectivity where the self is positioned.

#### 4.1 School as a State Apparatus

Even since the Ancient Greek times when education started being institutionalized in formal schools, the aim of education was to "develop in the young boy values and skills needed to participate in society and to the attaining of the ideal humanity" (Nash, Kazamias and Perkinson 1972, 21). However, the ways of this aim have been problematized in different realms. In terms of the relationship of education with the society, different perspectives have been studied by many scholars in the sociology of education (Freire 1970; Althusser 1971; Gramsci 1971; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Willis 1977; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Giroux 1983; Lauder et al. 2006; Mayo 2008). Broadly speaking, there are two main answers to the question on the role of education in society in the literature, as either serving for domination (reproduction theories) or being a site of struggle (critical theories). However, since these theories are strict theories that separately relieve the aspects of power and agency, it is also possible to make a synthesis of them in order to examine the role of education in society (Willis 1977; Mayo 2008, 2010). In this thesis, the *Fajr* Iranian School is discussed in the perspective of the reproduction theories while examining the spatial setting of the school in Chapter Four. However since the ethnographic work of Willis (1977) points out the importance to discuss how a school works for both reproduction and resistance ways at the same time, Chapter Five of this thesis mainly transits between these two main strict theories, and brings the agency aspect by examining

the collective and personal identity negotiations of the students in the *Fajr* Iranian School.

In brief, while the reproduction theories argue on the role of education for dominant groups (Althusser 1971; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron 1979), critical (resistance) theories discuss education as a site of struggle (Freire 1970; Giroux 1983). As a classical sociologist and significant author on education, Durkheim pioneers the literature on education by stating that schools are "primary socialization agents for the production of future adults. [...] which places the development of consensus and solidarity in society in the hands of the school" (Saha 2008, 301). In Durkheim's definition of education, he states education, on the one hand, as a "contested social institution in society" that establishes the social consensus; on the other hand, he points that "the self-interest of the individuals and groups requires the state regulation of education" (Ibid). Hence, he examines the human capital aspect of education within a comprehensive meaning of it. Starting from this point of view on the role of education from 'consensus theories', the supporters of the reproduction theories signify the institutional side of this perspective of Durkheim, and extends it to argue that educational institution is considered as an essential area for the state ideology to reproduce privilege of the dominant capitalist ruling class, mostly following the capitalist society structure (Lauder, Brown, Dillabough and Halsey 2006). This structuralist approach is opposed by a 'cultural' turn within conflict approaches such as post-structuralists and post-modernists theories. From a cultural perspective, the reproduction theories focus on 'power' and consider education as serving for domination (Althusser 1971; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron 1979). In this sense, school is structured as an institution that enables the dominant classes to create particular borders that will contribute to the exclusion of subcultures, while school also becomes a useful means of the state to produce the necessary ideological essentials in order to maintain its political power.

In his work, Giroux (1983), who supports critical theories, groups these reproduction theories in detail under three categories in order to extend his discussions beyond these theories; the economic-reproductive model, the cultural-reproductive model and hegemonic-state reproductive model. Starting with the economic-reproductive model theories, they mainly focus on the relation between school and society, as well as the impact of educational institutions on students as subjects. In the economic-reproductive category that Giroux (1983) groups, power and domination are the tenets for the discussion on the role of education. These theorists mainly focus on student subjectivities inside schools or classrooms, as well as under a hidden curriculum (Giroux 1983, cited in Özdoğan 2019, 46). As Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis (1976) have been the supporters of this model, they argue that the role

of education is to compensate for the inequalities in which the capitalist relations within a society are consolidated (86). On the contrary, the study of Bourdieu and Passeron (1970) argues that education system reproduces inequalities within society to strengthen the dominant groups by disguising their privilege over dominated groups. So, while Bowles and Gintis (1976) examines the role of education along with correspondence or equalizer principle, Bourdieu and Passeron (1979) explain it in terms of its symbolic power to create the inequalities. In the case of the *Fajr* Iranian School, along with a material existence of power or 'ideology' in the school space as discussed in the following chapter, this first model of Giroux combines explains how reproduction of regime values occurs in the school space.

Continuing the categorization of Giroux, the cultural-reproductive model implies to unpack the relations between class, culture and domination. As one of the developers of this model, Bourdieu (1986) extends the economic reproductive model by discussing that the subjects, who get exposed to the domination or get suppressed by the dominant groups, also become agents of this suppression process (Giroux 1983). A detail discussion on the views of Bourdieu will be given in the following section while discussing how the conceptualizations of Bourdieu will be used through the analysis of the research findings of this study.

Having considered Giroux's last categorization (1983), the hegemonic-state reproductive model theories support that the education system is under the impact and interference of the state. Since the center of this model is on the relationship between knowledge and power in the educational system, they argue that the main function of the schools is to eulogize the importance of mental labor over manual labor. This model, as it is significant for the analysis in the following chapter, might be discussed around the embodiment of formal education via the works of Althusser (1971) and Apple (1995) briefly mentioned below.

Formal education is embodied in the form of school space as this space is established under the control of the state while this fixed space creates its norms and moral codes. As Apple (1995) notes, formal schooling "is organized and controlled by the government. This means that by its very nature the entire schooling process- how it is paid for, what goals it seeks to attain and how these goals will be measured, who has power over it, what textbooks are approved, who does well in schools and who does not, who has the right to ask and answer these questions, and so on- is by definition political" (2). In terms of the relationship of education with politics, a state-centered approach is affiliated by a majority of education theorizations in terms of the state's institutionalized forms and actors determining these forms (Althusser 1971; Willis 1981; Dale 1981; Bourdieu 1993; Apple 1996; McLaren 2000).

Althusser (1971), in his book *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, argues on the existing relations of power and the forces that provide the continuation of these power relations. In his work, he distinguishes the repressive and ideological state apparatuses. While the repressive apparatuses- such as armed forces- use mechanisms of violence, the ideological state apparatuses-such as schools and churches-function through the distinct institutions by encompassing the sources of power around certain ideas, perceptions, attitudes, and so forth. In this sense, Althusser defines education at the heart of the ideological state apparatuses since it is the only institution that a generation gets involved starting from a 6 years old age. In his analysis, schools are the places of learning skills and behaviors, which are needed to reproduce the existing production relations (Giroux 2001, 8). In his work, Althusser concludes that schools are where state ideology is imposed in order to shape the subjects ideologically due to its significance to encompass a whole nation. Moreover, as a response to how this state apparatus functions through, Althusser (1971) states that education forms subjects through an 'interpellation' (11). Interpellation is a process of encountering some ideologies while internalizing them in which one is bred to think and act in certain ways. Since Althusser's interpellation belongs to the dominant state ideology, the other ideologies remain outside of it. In this sense, through this thesis, grounded on this concept of ideological state apparatuses of Althusser (1971), that categorizes schools as institutions structuring the ways individuals understand and represent themselves in a society, the *Fajr* Iranian School is discussed as an ideological state apparatus in the following chapter.

The categorizations of Giroux (1983) mentioned above enable the reader to understand the reproduction theories in a short manner. As it is seen and criticized by Giroux in his work, the strong emphasis of the reproduction theories on the role of education is made on its role of serving for domination. In this sense, Giroux (1983) criticizes that these reproduction theories led to ignorance of any possibility that considers education as a means of social change. Giroux states that as follows: "Subordinate cultures, whether working-class or otherwise, partake of moments of self-production as well as reproduction; they are contradictory in nature and bear the marks of both resistance and reproduction." (Giroux 1983, 261). Furthermore, as the analysis of the reproduction theorists has been mostly based on the logic of 'domination' reduced to structural determinism, the element of agency and the role of education in creating social change have been ignored (Fernandes 1998, 169). The ignorance of the agency of teachers, students and other actors is criticized by Giroux as these reproduction theories "have failed to provide any major insights into how teachers, students and other human agents come together within specific historical and social contexts in order to both make and reproduce the conditions of their ex-

istence." (Giroux 1983, 259). Hence, against the reproduction theories, the critical theories claim that education can also be a site of struggle (Freire 1970; Gramsci 1971; Willis 1977; Giroux 1983; Mayo 2008). So, although the *Fajr* Iranian School is discussed as an ideological state apparatus by examining the specific spatial setting of the school, this thesis will also look at how the *Fajr* Iranian School's students negotiate their social identities through this ideologically occupied space- which will be named as state-centered habitus during the analysis- by adding the perspective of agency to the discussion on the role of education. So, particularly Chapter Four, discussing the school as an ideological state apparatus, will also extend beyond its perspective close to the reproduction theorists, and refer to some experiences of the students at the *Fajr* Iranian School that include the role of agency within the school space considered as a site of struggle by reference to the work of Certeau (1984).

Since majority of the sociological theories have implied on that the social agents maintain and internalize the aspects of the dominant ideology or power in a passive way, cultural studies theories (such as those represented by Michel Foucault, Michel De Certeau or John Fiske) have agreed on the active role of the agent by emphasizing a notion of resistance against the power. What Micheal de Certeau writes of in *The Practice of the Everyday Life* comes to the foreground in the practices of the Iranian students inside the school, as they use methods that Certeau calls 'tactics', to confront the 'strategies' or the attempts of institutions, that gain power from being embedded in a certain place and time to assimilate them. A tactic is an "art of the weak", or the "ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong." (Certeau 1984). Certeau argues for the manipulation of the system in itself through everyday practices of its subjects whereas he emphasizes on these ordinary practices involve both the domination and resistance at the same time. According to De Certeau, there are multiple ways of resistance and the term 'heterology' is developed by him to explain the plurality of resistance. Michael Gardiner also defines this concept as: "A plurality of meaning-constitutive practices, as against the official practice of historiography and sociological analysis, is intended to highlight and preserve the irreducible multiplicity of human social and cultural forms." (Gardiner 2000, 162). So, in accordance with this idea, behaving in compliance with the dominant ideology may also include an opposite logic in itself as a way of resistance since it is produced by each individual in a different way (Colebrook 2001, 54). So, this invisible resistance may be investigated within the ways each individual operates as they are playing against hegemony dominance by obeying its rules but keeping their otherness within its boundaries. This perspective will be applicable to analysis of the Iranian students although Certeau explains this process by referring to the Indians as the colonies of Spain and argues that the colonized Indians utilized the

assimilative culture imposed by the Spanish people, but not in the way that the colonizers planned (Certeau 1984, 14).

## 4.2 School as a Space

In this section, I present the frameworks of the relevant notions-space, habitus, capitals, symbolic power- used in the context of this thesis to provide a brief introduction for discussing the spatial setting of the *Fajr* Iranian School and its influences upon its members' identity negotiation processes in the following chapters.

The aspect of space is often regarded either too empirical (object of geography or proxemics) or mostly metaphorical (Habermassien 'public space', the Bourdieusian 'social space'). In the scholarly literature on space, the writings of Henri Lefebvre on the analysis of space are considered very significant and inspirational, particularly, in his book *The Production of Space* (1974). In general, although his analysis is mostly on public and urban space, his approach reveals 'space' as a social and organic product of emerging social relationships. In his words, the study of space offers an answer "to the question what the mode of existence of social relationships exactly is" in accordance with "which the social relations of production have a social existence to the extent that they have a spatial existence; they project themselves into space, becoming inscribed there, and in the process of producing that space itself" (Lefebvre 1991, 129).

Delving into the details, Lefebvre (1991) proposes three types of space as production of social activities: perceived space, conceived space, and lived space. While perceived space is defined in terms of geographical settings, conceived space refers to how space is thought of with regards to one's relation in the space, where the institutional power is exercised, and sociocultural practices are produced. So, a conceived space determines "what types of social activities are expected to take place by which groups of people, as it is a discourse on space" (Qian 2012, 43). For example, the classroom creates a venue where students listen and teachers teach, not vice versa. When it comes to the lived space, it is developed through an individual's lived experience within the sociocultural practices of space. So, space is discussed as an imagined zone between the real-life implications of the ways where individuals interact with each other and places around them and the symbolic meanings they carry (Lefebvre 1974; Soja, 1980, 1989).

In this study, I discuss the *Fajr* Iranian School as a social space, a place where the domination of the state is reproduced through the spatiality of the school over its students, who in return, construct their multiple positionings differently based on their collective/personal negotiations. By using social space as both a social process and product (Bourdieu, 1977, 1986; Lefebvre 1991; Kostogize 2006), I suggest that certain routine practices produce certain social spaces in a dialectical way. Moreover, the material setting of a social space also augments these certain practices. In my conceptual framework, I use the term social space by containing the notions of Lefebvre's three spaces as they exist concurrently (Lefebvre 1991). By extending this discussion, I will also provide Bourdieu's notion of social space as "an invisible system of social relations representing a field of power in which people position and are positioned differently" (Bourdieu 1989, cited in Quian 2012, 45). As a French sociologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu, writes and proposes theories on the interactions between culture, power, and education (Bourdieu 1977; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Bourdieu 1986). As his notions of habitus, field, symbolic capital, and symbolic violence are relevant to the analysis of this study, the following paragraphs will provide a brief introduction to his studies and these notions, starting from his perspective as a cultural reproduction theorist based on his social theory.

As one of the significant supporters of the cultural-reproductive model mentioned above in Giroux's categorization on reproduction theories, Pierre Bourdieu (1986) argues that educational system reproduces the knowledge of society by imposing acquired and inherited transmission of cultural and social capital in addition to the economic capital. So, Bourdieu adds two more capitals in his analysis of social relations as well as in his examination on the connection of schooling to these concepts; cultural capital, as institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications, and social capital as institutionalized in the form of recognition or acquaintance. In Bourdieusian terms, social capital can be explained as membership in a network since this membership provides "collectivity-owned" references such as shared values, norms or identities (Bourdieu 1986). The social capital requires an ongoing effort of socialization where recognition is continuously affirmed, and it also implies a hierarchical structure inside the social group that gives one person or group to speak on behalf of the whole group. Cultural capital can be evaluated via the forms of embodied (dispositions) state, objectified (cultural goods) state and institutionalized (academic qualifications) state. The link between economic and cultural capital is established through the mediation of time, while cultural capital requires a hidden and accumulated hereditary that would affect one's habitus (Ibid, 44). The objectified state is explained through the form of cultural goods such as books or paintings when the cultural capital is transmitted for possession for both material and sym-



bolic purposes. The institutionalized state level brings us to the objectification of cultural capital in the form of education when a formal recognition of one's cultural capital leads to a conversion of cultural capital into economic one (Ibid, 45). A comprehensive understanding of cultural capital is important as it is embodied in the other notion of Bourdieu, 'habitus'.

According to Bourdieu, state is defined as a space in which 'legitimate identities' are constructed within a legitimization agenda of inclusion and exclusion whereas it is also described as a place where the 'public' and 'official' are produced from the cultivation of its power in order to generalize certain practices. So, symbolic power between a state and an individual is produced in everyday practices as a result of a contest between a habitus embodied in these practices and meanings upon them (Bourdieu 1986). In Bourdieu's (1981) division of the learning history into 'objectified history' and 'embodied history', the former one is named as 'habitat' taking history as a process of accumulation of things over time such as 'things, machines, buildings, monuments, books, theories, customs, law, etc.' whereas the latter, named as 'habitus', refers to a history which includes certain dispositions an individual have in the form of perceptions or actions (Bourdieu 1981, 305). In his later works, Bourdieu (1986) explains 'habitus' as follows:

"The habitus, as the word implies, is that which one has acquired, but which has become durably incorporated in the body in the form of permanent dispositions... And indeed, the habitus is a capital, but one which, because it is embodied, appears as innate". (86)

Habitus refers to the ways where the social realities are produced through a constructed social process, that results in oblivion patterns of behaviors in social relations. Hence, individuals perceive the world around them shaped mainly by a biased discourse from dominant institutions and react accordingly. In this sense, since the notion of 'habitus' refers to a multiplicity of social factors and practices in the construction of identities where these individuals internalized and practiced these social experiences (Bourdieu 1977, 54), the *Fajr* Iranian School becomes a 'place', (un)willingly constructed and performed by all participants of a given social space. As Ashcroft (2001) claims, place is 'like a discourse in process' that evolves with "a result of habitation, a consequence of how people inhabit space (155-156). More, the structure of a place is "intimately bound up with the culture and identity of its inhabitants." (Ashcroft 2001,156) So, besides its historical walls and its objects associated to a particular nation and a particular state ideology, the *Fajr* Iranian School creates a place resulting from the way the Iranians inhabit it. At the same time, their settlement is also influenced by identities already constructed in other

places such as their identity as a foreigner in the Turkish public society.

Along with the 'habitus', Bourdieu (1986) describes the notion of 'field' as a form of social organization that has a pattern of 'social roles, agent positions, and the structures' as well as 'a historical process' in which those positions are fit into by actors, either individually or collectively (cited in Hanks 2005, 73). So, one of those fields ascribed by Bourdieu is taken as education in which an opposition (teacher/student; state/citizen; advantaged/disadvantaged) is defined between the ruler and the ruled so that a dynamic power struggle is played out in a school site. In the *Fajr* Iranian School, this power struggle has been operationalized via some students-who will be discussed under the personal negotiations section in Chapter Five- against the dominance of the state ideology that is exercised through the school administration, curriculum, and the spatial setting of the school.

In line with Bourdieu's studies, education is seized not only within the scope of formal schooling -a curriculum- but also within the establishment of cultural capital where domestic practices and extracurricular activities are also analyzed. In the work of Bourdieu and Passeron's (1977), they state that "pedagogic action is, objectively, symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power" (5). As children receive the messages of the school through an official curriculum and daily practices, and realize the limitations or inequalities reproduced in the school environment, the symbolic violence is echoed through this 'pedagogic action' in the schools (Giroux 1997, 61). In a similar vein, a "hidden curriculum" is conceptualized to refer to the norms, dispositions, values, or classifications (Apple 1971; Lynch 1989). For the *Fajr* Iranian School, this hidden curriculum mostly includes the religious codes and regime values as examined through the school practices, material objects, and the spatial configuration of the school in Chapter Five. Moreover, since this state-centered habitus constructs a collective Iranian identity in the narratives of the students, as examined in Chapter Six, this dominant identity is defined under an Iranian identity associated with Shi'i centered state position of Khomeini (Mcauliffe 2007, 313).

In addition to Bourdieu's social and cultural capitals mentioned above, it is also essential to define symbolic capital here since it has a broader function in transforming the *vis insita* –"a force inscribed in objective and subjective structures", into *lex insita*- "the principle underlying the immanent regularities of the social world" (Bourdieu 1986, 46). Since Bourdieu defines cultural capital and social capital as a form of symbolic capital, he identifies symbolic capital as "capital, in whatever form, insofar as it is represented, i. e., apprehended symbolically, in a relationship of knowledge ..... presupposes the intervention of the habitus, as a socially con-

stituted cognitive capacity” (255). This concept signifies great importance for this study since this concept of symbolic capital involves culture, identity, language, and the institution of schooling, and the habitus also exists through the internalization of the symbolic capitals. Moreover, symbolic capital creates the symbolic power, whereas it reproduces through social networks along with a definite sense of value within a cultural and historical framework (Ibid). In this manner, by utilizing these concepts of Bourdieu, this study argues that the spatial setting of the *Fajr* Iranian School and the dominant ideology carried and applied in the school space generate explicit symbolic capitals to be accrued by its students, such as the Farsi language and Shia Islam. After analyzing the habitus where these symbolic capitals are generated and transmitted in Chapter Four, Chapter Five argues on the dispositions of the students towards their collective and personal identity negotiations determined by the differences or commonalities in their accumulated capitals through their narratives and perceptions of the school space. Likewise this study does, the concept of Bourdieu’s symbolic capital has been studied in a number of studies related to the immigrants and refugees (Zhou and Bankston 1994; Pierce 1995; Norton 1995; Drzewiecka 2001).

Besides, school space is conceptualized as a venue of state-centered habitus where Iranian members interact and negotiate their identities within while it also constitutes a ‘closed space’ along with the rules and boundaries where the state hegemony is exercised through the *Fajr* Iranian School. Through constructing social identities, the space emerges not as static but as a "holistic construct that includes geography, history and society... it is self-generating and self-regulating, with things shaping each other and other beings, including humans" (Canagarajah 2017, 33). Canagarajah (2017) further talks about a dialectical relationship between place and space as follows: "If a place is a space ascribed with social meaning and shaping, as in bounded constructs, such as nations, communities, and cities, we must also hold places in dynamic tension with space as an expansive material construct, providing possibilities for reconstruction" (Ibid). Here, based on the idea of negotiating one’s "place" along with social implications of a group or society, ‘position’ is contextualized as the interaction between space and place (Merrifield 1993), where these "bounded constructs" are also in "dynamic tension" with each other, and in need to be reconstructing each other in the process.

In this sense, the *Fajr* Iranian School has a position with a private property that refers to a topographical character in a foreign country, whereas the curriculum and school practices comply with the principles of formal schooling in the IRI. As this position is used by re-appropriating, particularly the broader notion of ‘symbolic capital’ of Bourdieu besides his other forms of capital imputed to the education

institution, the *Fajr* Iranian School holds relations to symbolic power and belonging. Hence, as the school space is in the process of being (re)produced, it is imbued with power relationships, and dominant forces- in this case the symbolic power of state exercised via the school rituals, material objects, and the spatial configuration as will be discussed in Chapter Four in detail.

In this Iranian context constructing its citizens in line with the formal ideology of the state, the relation between education and politics is inevitable; likewise, Freire (1970) claims as "education is never politically neutral". In this sense, it is essential to recognize that the IRI aims to reproduce Shi'ism through the schools' sites since it has been the dominant identity. Considering the responses of the participants, they indicate that the state ignores other ethnic or religious identities such as Kurdishness, Bahaism, Sunnism, rather than reproduce them. So, the *Fajr* also becomes a space that reproduces existing inequalities. The school space has been constructed to "sustain dominance, hierarchy, surveillance and segregation" (O'Donoghue 2007, 69), and the 'lived' curriculum of the school referring to the physical and social places inside the school is vital as much as the formal curriculum (Gruenewald 2003; Prosser 2007).

### 4.3 School as a Site of Social Identity Making

Since this section aims to avoid the complexity of the broad topic of social identity, I will briefly present the framework of social identity theory of Tajfel and Turner in order to refer to how the students in this study define themselves in their relations to oneself and collectivity where the self is positioned, as discussed in Chapter Five.

In the study of Tajfel and Turner (2004) proposing a social identity theory (SIT), they mostly focus on the concept of 'membership' while examining the dynamics of ingroup and outgroup relations. They argue that one's membership is based on the groups s/he affiliates with, and these groups might be categorized in accordance with the nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion, and language, and so forth. This study proposes that these categorizations derive from one's desire to belong, or feel connected to a group, while excluding the others. So, according to this theory, people feel a high level of belonging towards a proper (in)group while they disassociate themselves from other (out)groups. So, while SIT begets a group differentiation, it emphasizes on intergroup relations and the role of outgroup to identify the ingroup

(Hogg, Terry and White 1995). Individuals place themselves as representative of their social groups along with certain characteristics or beliefs about their ingroups while this placing generates self-stereotyping (Hogg et al. 1995; Hogg and Williams 2000).

In this study, relying on the SIT theory, Chapter Five explores two identity negotiations as collective and personal. Collective negotiations are driven from the reifying themes in the accounts of the participants concerning their group identity, which results in a shared sense of belonging to a specific group against another, by relying on the self-evaluations of the students around the dichotomy of ingroup (Iranians) and outgroup (Turkish society). What I mean with ‘personal negotiations’ is that, for a proper analysis, it is also essential to transcend beyond this collective (ingroup) lens and examine the interpersonal relations since the members of the *Fajr* Iranian School are heterogeneous with different religious and ethnic affiliations. In a similar context, the use of ‘personal negotiations’ corresponds to the interpersonal relations, woven from one’s association within a web of social relationships, usually in a small group and face-to-face interactions (Lamont and Molnár 2002).

Since social identity is a broad concept along with its connection to the other self-associated identities, the social self occurs when certain characteristics with others within an ingroup become dominant (Taylor and Dubé 1986, cited in Lee, 2019, 59). The shift of the pronoun from ‘I’ into ‘we’ is a symbolic sign for a collective reference of the self, and this notion automatically occurs while carrying a positive emotion (Taylor and Dubé 1986; Perdue et al. 1990; Hogg and Williams 2000). According to Hogg and Williams (2000), as this self-representation is formed through ingroup affiliations, this position leads to biases for the oneself as associated with group identity against others. In this sense, this circumstance leads to that ingroup members label each other along with positive connotations, such as comfort, support, interaction while these people perceive the outgroup members along with negative attitudes (Tajfel and Turner 2004).

Moving away from this classical SIT approach towards an anthropological one, this study also supports that social identity is negotiated in interaction. The anthropological approaches mostly build on social identity construction among the relationship between language and identity (Norton 1997; McNamara 1997; Hansen and Liu 1997; Lauring 2008). Among these scholars, Lauring (2008) proposes that nationality, ethnicity, and language construct an individual’s position for both self and group identities since “identifications are contextual and situated, deriving from social negotiations that do not necessarily build on objective criteria or observable traits” (347). In this sense, the proposition of this study on the second section of Chap-

ter Five while examining the narratives of some students with different contextual identifications is presented as a humble attempt to illustrate this interaction.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

In sum, through this thesis, grounded on the concept of ideological state apparatuses of Althusser (1971), that categorizes schools as institutions structuring the ways individuals understand and represent themselves in a society, the *Fajr* Iranian School is discussed as an ideological state apparatus for socialization to a collective Iranian identity. In other words, it is shown as being more like a state-centered habitus by which students learn how to continue being a 'member' of a specific 'community' even in a foreign country. So, in a sense, the school as an official institution becomes a transmitter of official ideology not only through the syllabus, the school practices or the attitudes of the administrative staff but also on the walls, desks, and boards of the school, hence through its spatiality. Extending this discussion on theoretical indications mentioned above, the *Fajr* Iranian School holds a "symbolic power" over its students so that this power translates into a conceptualized social reality, creating a "habitus" for its members with specific mechanisms and meanings that regulate its structure. As the main argument of this thesis relies on that, this habitus plays a key role in constructing social identities of the Iranian students of the *Fajr* Iranian School. These students negotiate their collective and personal identities based on their positions and perceptions ideologically imposed by the school setting, that are examined through the narratives of the students related to belonging, representation, ingroup/outgroup, and collective/personal negotiations.

## 5. THE SCHOOL

As presented in Chapter Two, the *Fajr* Iranian School was established at the end of the nineteenth century during the Ottoman Empire. The school has operated continuously since 1882, providing education for the Iranian community. Following the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran, the *Fajr* Iranian School has become affiliated with the Embassy of the IRI in Turkey. Since then, the school follows the regulations of the Iranian MoE as an ‘embassy school’ without the requirement of the supervision of the MoNE of Turkey. In general, the purpose of an embassy school is to provide the children of parents working for the foreign offices access to the national education of their home country since the positions of the parents have been assigned temporarily. However, in a similar vein to its historical roots in the Ottoman Empire, the *Fajr* Iranian School continued to function beyond its affiliation with the Embassy and remained its sphere as alternative education for the Iranian population living in Turkey. So, even if the *Fajr* Iranian School is officially regarded as an ‘embassy school’, it runs like a private Iranian community school along with its total 752 students, in which only 10% of the total number comprises of the children of the officers of the Istanbul Consulate of the IRI or the *Fajr*. So the *Fajr* Iranian School goes beyond being a mere embassy school belonging to the children of the foreign officers of the IRI, and becomes an educational institution open to other Iranians living in Istanbul, similar to the other private or public schools in Turkey. In accordance to its functioning as an ordinary school for the Iranian community settled in the Ottoman Empire since the nineteenth century, the school performs similarly in present-day regardless of its ‘embassy school’ status. The *Fajr* Iranian School has a large population of students enrolled by comparison to a classic embassy school. It also transcends its official boundaries determined only as a primary school in Turkey, as it runs secondary education for its 284 students at high-school grades.

Drawing upon the findings of the field research, the main aim of this chapter is to exhibit the spatial position of the *Fajr* Iranian School through examining its spatial configuration, school rituals, routines, and rules, as well as material objects and

symbols. The participants of this study are situated under various institutions, both tangible (i.e., the Turkish state, the Iranian school) and intangible (i.e., symbolic power, socialization processes, collective/personal negotiations). Since the primary aim of this thesis is related to examining the Iranian students' negotiations of their social identities through the *Fajr* Iranian School, it is important to consider the interaction between social influences or myths and the spatial setting where these social relations are carried out in terms of the acquisition of a critical understanding of social identities (Tajfel and Turner 2004).

In this chapter, I will discuss the *Fajr* Iranian School as an ideological state apparatus, a place where the symbolic power of the state is reproduced through the spatiality of the school over its students. In return, students construct their multiple positionings differently based on their collective/personal negotiations, which will be discussed in the following chapter. This chapter is constructed under two sections. First, I will give some brief information on the state ideology of the IRI and schooling in Iran. In the second section, I present the empirical findings of this study, describing the spatial setting of the school, focusing on school routines, rituals, and rules, material objects, and symbols, as well as the design of the space.

## 5.1 On the State Ideology of the IRI and Schooling in Iran

The Islamic Revolution of 1979 was initially a populist and nationalist mass movement against the regime of the Shah. The Revolution was simultaneous; a political reaction against the increasingly autocratic rule of the Shah, an economic and social revolution against the visible inequalities in income and opportunities, and a cultural revolution that was "in the guise of religion" against a feared loss of national identity (Amuzegar 1991). Although political dissent during the Shah's regime was severely suppressed, the focus was on leftist groups, while the more popular religious opposition was gradually able to undermine the monarchy. The exiled leader, Khomeini, grew in fame, as his image was elevated to a semi-divine figure until when he finally returned in 1979, he was greeted by a crowd of millions. After a national referendum, Iran has become the Islamic Republic, and a theocratic constitution was approved with Khomeini's becoming 'Supreme Leader'. Thus what began as "an authentic and anti-dictatorial popular revolution based on a broad coalition of all anti-Shah forces" was soon transformed into "an Islamic fundamentalist power-grab" creating an even more authoritarian regime than before (Zabih 1982).



Following the Islamic Revolution in Iran, national identity was articulated around Islam in countering against the secularism of the Pahlavi Period (Vaziri 1993, 199). The state has tried to integrate Shi'i culture and politics into a single integrated political culture while Hunter (1992) claims this attempt as follows:

“The most important change for the Islamic regime has been to accept and legitimize the concept of Iran and Iranianism as a coequal focus with Islam of national loyalty and a component of Iranian cultural identity. The regime has now accepted the notion of an ‘Iranian nation,’ and it has also concluded that the nature of the Iranian culture is ‘Iranian Islamic.’ The Islamic Republic, assuming a hegemonic position in control of the state, took cultural transformation very seriously. It sought to institutionalize an Islamic political culture. It resulted in an Islamicization process to be instituted in accordance with the clerical Islamic culture – the Islamic Republic’s way to rehabilitate an Islamically ill society.” (94-95)

In the process of creating this national identity, education became a vehicle for the creation of the new Iranian citizen. So, under the authority of the new regime, significant shifts have been made in the education policies since the policy is “the accumulated standing decisions of a governing body by which it regulates controls, promotes services, and otherwise influences matters within its sphere of authority” (Guba 1984, 63-70). According to Mossayeb and Shirazi (2006), what Khomeini discharged was a Cultural Revolution (*enghelab-e farhangi*) on the educational landscape that consists of three stages as purification (cleansing anti-regime actors and aspects), preservation (placing the state supporters), and (re)production (imposing a monolithic and hegemonic state ideology) in order to strengthen the State’s power (31). In the speeches of Khomeini, he states that the ideology of Westernism, which was conveyed through the education system during the Shah era, kept the young people away from the traditional and religious beliefs and caused them to lose their self-identity (Menashri 1992,13). So, following the Islamization of education, the aim was to eliminate the ‘Western values’ promoted by the education system in the cultural sphere during the Shah period in order to consolidate the values of the Revolution in line with the goal of the creation of a new national identity through education (Godazgar 2003, 331).

*Mellat* (nation), *Din-e islam* (Islam), and *Elm* (science), are regarded as the basic elements of education while the ultimate aim to produce knowledge through schooling is the preservation and independence of the Islamic nation (Malehzadeh 2011, 120). When the education strategy of the IRI was firstly established by the “General Plan for Education in the IRI” in July of 1989, one of the primary commissions was on value programming, in which religion has become an important part of the

education in post-revolutionary Iran (Safavi 2004, 83).

In the IRI, the schooling system includes one year of preschool, six years of elementary school, and six years of secondary school. The schools in Iran follow two tracks in their studies, and they separate male and female students into two cohorts. The secondary education comprises of two stages of the first and second three years in which the first secondary education is for the general elementary subjects while the second part includes a specialized education dividing into three theoretical, technical and knowledge branches. The ultimate aim of education is indicated to receive the blessings of *Allah* Almighty since the sovereignty of each individual belongs to *Allah* in accordance with the Constitution of Iran (Menashri 1992, 14).

After the inference of this brief section on the IRI and the regime ideology, starting with the preceding section, I will examine the spatial setting of the *Fajr* Iranian School, relying on the empirical data of my fieldwork.

## 5.2 The Spatial Setting of the *Fajr* Iranian School

In this section, the spatiality of the *Fajr* Iranian School is examined through the configuration of the space, material objects and symbols, and school practices. The following examples from the interviews and my field notes highlight this deliberate process of ‘how we do what we do’ as a setting for ‘symbolic power’ of the state upon the school space, while the school has been discussed as an ideological state apparatus. The analyses of this section paves way to the discussion of the following chapter on identity negotiations as it is essential to recognize that, in McLaren’s words, “signs, symbols, and rituals are central to the construction of a student subjectivity and to the interpellation of students within it” (cited in Luykx 1999, 127).

### 5.2.1 The Configuration of Space

After passing the entrance door of the *Fajr* Iranian School that opens out the front garden, one immediately sees the flags of the USA and Israel painted on the ground, and it requires an attentive effort not to walk along this route towards the stairs of the building. In the IRI, schools, universities, as well as public institutions have the sketching of the flags of the USA and Israel on the ground at their entrances in order to insult both countries as they are labeled as enemies of the regime. In the speeches of Ayatollah Khamenei, the “ideological hostility towards Israel and the USA” was exposed while these countries were accused of “fomenting internal instability in Iran” as they are against the “essence of the Islamic Republic as a potential regime” (Alvandi 2004, 46). Beeman (2008) as a linguistic anthropologist, whose works explore the theme of demonization between Iran and the USA, states that each country ‘constructs a mythological image’ to demonize each other in symbolic discourse while the image of the archetypal enemy is built to develop for each other regardless of the facts (1). So, this demonization of the USA and Israel has been symbolized in the *Fajr* Iranian School in Turkey as well.

“I do not understand why they paint the flags there. I like neither the USA nor Israel; because of them, we are living under the sanctions in Iran; but nothing happens when you walk over their flags, very pointless. In Iran, I was not even realizing them; because they were painted almost everywhere, on schools, on some roads, or squares. But, here, I recognize more the fact that I am walking over these flags each morning.”(Ali, male, 16/12/17) <sup>1</sup>

The narrative of Ali is not an example of a radical demonization of the USA and Israel, even if he lays the blame of the governmental failures merely on these countries’ actions. However, the main point in his narrative should be emphasized that the painted flags on the ground have been more visible or recognizable for him in the *Fajr* Iranian School. This ‘more visible’ or ‘recognizable’ narrations recur during the interviews in order to refer to these flags. Hale states similarly as follows:

“Walking over these flags means an entrance to my country from Turkey. It does not mean anything to me, no hate or no love towards these countries on my side; but each morning, I look at that and I consider it as a ringing bell to be prepared for my performance inside.” (Hale, female, 15/10/17)<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 1

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 2

The paintings of the USA and Israel flags on the ground are perceived through a sense of interpellation of Althusser on the norms and values of the state through the use of the school space. What is significant in both narratives of Ali and Hale is that the visibility of the IRI's politics in the space configuration of the *Fajr* Iranian School is more accurate while they are not exposed to it outside of the school space in Turkey. Beyond this, Hale narrates her experience as a 'performance' inside the school. This school performativity will be discussed as the secondary analysis of this thesis is on the negotiations of the social identities of these students through the spatiality of the school.

Then when you pass the flags of the USA and Israel drawn on the ground, you realize that you are in a small front yard covered with concrete. This is the place where the students gather each morning, and the morning rituals are conducted. In this small front yard, there are no trees or flowers, while the walls around the building are very high with fences like a prison. These high walls even hide the flagpole with the flag of the IRI from outside. This closedness surrounding the building explains why the *Fajr* Iranian School is underrecognized despite its location in the middle of Istanbul, and it feels the way that its isolation connotes an intentional agenda. One of the graduates, Takin, emphasizes on that as follows:

“I have spent twelve years there (referring to the *Fajr* Iranian School). In Turkey, it is very easy to recognize a school building, but our school is not like them. I think that it was on purpose, they do not want to be watched or recognized from out. This is typical Iran, instead they watch, and they recognize.” (Takin, male, 19/06/18)<sup>3</sup>

Takin's reference to a 'typical Iran' reminded me the feeling, I had during my touristic visit to Iran as well as throughout my fieldwork, of being watched and being required to be recognized as unoffending to the regime. In my visit to Iran, I had always carried a nonsense concern to be regarded as a casual tourist, likewise I was, by the border police or armed forces inside Iran since my Iranian friends warned me about the state's intention to suppose each foreigner as a spy. In a similar vein, during my fieldwork in the *Fajr* Iranian School, I have always been obliged to explain my study purpose, and there was always a third eye in my study (see the further details of my field notes in Chapter One). Besides, in the personal conversation with Takin, he mentions about the visit of *Arena* Program to the school at the end of 1990s and emphasizes that the school preferred to stay invisible following those years in particular. As he remembers, Uğur Dündar had tried to enter into the school and asked the questions to the doormen related to the absence of a Turkish flag and the

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<sup>3</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 3

picture of Mustafa Kemal, as well as the *hejabs* of the students. Takin says that this visit had been the most spoken topic of his primary school years, and he realized then that his school is different from other schools in Turkey. Having considered the Turkish politics of 1990s in which the revival of political Islam was marked, Turkish model of secularism has been discussed and criticized, and the post-modern coup of February 28, 1998 happened, it is understandable that the *Fajr* Iranian School had become a headline in the news since the absence of a flag and picture of Atatürk were intolerable in the Kemalist Republic.

Returning to our small tour inside the *Fajr* Iranian School, as you walk up the stairs towards the entrance door of the building from the front yard, you see that the main entrance is enormous, and right across the entrance, the portraits of Khomeini and Khamenei and the old black-white photographs of the school are very notable at first glance. Without a corner dedicated to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk along with a statue and a Turkish flag- even the foreign and minority schools are obliged to have this in Turkey-, the *Fajr* Iranian School is very distant of entailing an ordinary Turkish school image, likewise the aforementioned story of Takin shows an example of pejorative consequences of this situation.

During the interviews with the graduates, different narrations on the existence of the statue of Atatürk and the Turkish flag are stated for the different time periods of the school. By tracing the latest graduation year, relying on the responses of the graduates, it seems that the *Fajr* Iranian School had a corner dedicated to ‘Turkish’ symbols inside the school until 2003. In addition, my graduate interviewees mentioned about the compulsory ‘Turkish Language’ courses in their curriculum and the presence of a Turkish vice-principal in the school administration. In Article 10 of the Basic Law on National Education of Turkey, there is a provision on the compulsory Turkish language classes at every level of education even for both foreign and minority schools since one of the basic elements of national integrity is seen through the language (Özbek 2000, 41). Even if the schools affiliated with the embassies are not under the supervision of the Turkish MoNE or obliged to the article mentioned above, this narration is confirmed by each interviewee who has graduated before 2003. Moreover, the Education Attaché had informed me that the *Fajr* Iranian School became an embassy school after the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran. Since a historical investigation on this case is beyond the scope of this thesis and this situation did not occur as a significant theme for this chapter analysis, I will leave this circumstance for the further studies on the school.

The *Fajr* Iranian School has four floors in total along with the ground floor and entrance floor. There is a wide staircase leading upwards to the classrooms, the lab,

and the old library. The staircase leading downwards goes to the classrooms, the sports room, the canteen, and the back garden. The paintings of the primary school students, the portraits of Khomeini and Khamenei, the photographs of the nationalist and religious monuments in Iran- such as the Holy Shrine of Imam Ayatollah Khomeini in Tehran, the tombs of Twelver Shia Imams, Fatima Masumeh Shrine, Bibi Masooma Shrine and Jamkaran Mosque in Qom- are lined along the staircases.

Starting from the ground floor, there is a sports room- mostly used as a university exam preparation class for the 12th-grade students- and a small canteen. During break times, this floor becomes very crowded due to the primary students waiting in line for the canteen while the upper classes studying at the sports room warn these kids to get silent. The only door opens out into the back garden is located here as well. In this sense, this floor is one of the common areas mostly used by the students during break times. The students order snacks, beverages or food in the canteen during break times. Although the common lounge room on the entrance floor is officially acknowledged as the center of the school life by the school administration, this lounge is not frequently used by the students. In terms of their engagement in social relations, the students mostly identified hallways, canteen and toilets. What I observed during my fieldwork is that the use of space is sex-segregated at the *Fajr* Iranian School so that the female and male students' identifications differ from each other, and this segregation leads to different 'feels' of space for the different sex groups. While the female students are positioned within the insider walls such as the classrooms or toilets, the male students tend to prefer the commonplaces of the school, such as the lounge or the garden.

By extending the reference to this default gendered use of space, during my fieldwork, I observed the attitudes of the school administration over the design of the space in various ways, which works towards enforcing different spaces for the students from different sex groups. During break times, one or two teachers always take charge of monitoring the students. The garden and the halls are monitored by a male teacher due to the fact that the back garden is mostly used for playing football by the male students. On the other hand, the classrooms are watched by a female teacher because of the majority of the female students stay in the classrooms in their break times. Gender segregation, which determines the students' usage of the school space, was also applied in the roles of the teachers; likewise, the rooms of the teachers are designed in accordance with their sexes. While the door of the male teachers' room is mostly open and interior is always visible from the corridor, the door of the female teachers' room is always closed. As one of the students, Telya, accurately points out to the gender-segregated spaces inside the *Fajr* Iranian School as follows:

“In this building, it is like there are places belonged to the girls and boys. The boys use the back garden generally to play games and particularly football, and each time when I tried to use the garden, our teachers warn me to be careful and make me wait in the entrance door until their game is over. We, the girls, generally stay in the classrooms or use the front garden where the morning rituals are practiced.” (Telya, female, 5/11/17)<sup>4</sup>

This gendered segregation on the use of the space is very related to the education system run by the IRI. There, most schools are entirely gender-segregated with the exceptions of where population is deficient and two different buildings are not feasible. The *Fajr* Iranian School has always run as a mixed-sex school in contrast to the schools in Iran, but it applies this gender segregation approach of the regime via the seating arrangements in the classrooms. For that purpose, the girls sit in the front while the male students are sitting in the back desks. Moreover, during break times, even if there are not any written signs on the use of the space preventing the association between female and male students, the presence of female and male teachers in different places of the school is a way of enforcing this unspoken segregation.

Massey (2005) defines space as a product of human interactions, and rituals, materials and symbols, as well as the physical properties of the space while these factors constituting a space contribute to the ‘feel’ of the space. Here we see how the ‘feel’ of the *Fajr* Iranian School as a space changes according to different sex groups and their negotiations on their agency in this space. Bringing the experiences of the participants, the female students identify the classrooms and toilets as spaces for social relations and to exercise their tactical agency by taking off their headscarves, putting makeup on each other, or talking about some taboo subjects. The latter included, I observed, conversations about their sexuality, their political stances, their lifestyles (their stories on parties, drinking alcohol or smoking), as well as their future plans, mostly planned as abroad. For the male students, the garden and the common lounge are identified as places not only for their social affiliations but also for developing their tactical agency while they hide some playboy magazines under the armchairs or they speak in other languages and laugh very loudly regardless of the teachers’ eyes or they play games in which the rules and control are exerted by them.

Here, we see that even if the usage of the school space is formed in accordance with the Iranian regime’s values on applying gender-segregation and the students seem to behave in accordance with these norms by performing their obedience in

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<sup>4</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 4

these spaces. Yet they also use some tactics in their occupations of these spaces that turns into a form of resistance inside the school. According to Certeau (1984), there are multiple ways of resistance and the term ‘heterology’ is developed by him to explain the plurality of resistance. Michael Gardiner also defines this concept as: “A plurality of meaning-constitutive practices, as against the official practice of historiography and sociological analysis, is intended to highlight and preserve the irreducible multiplicity of human social and cultural forms.” (Gardiner 2000, 162). So, in accordance with this idea, behaving in compliance with the dominant ideology may also include an opposite logic in itself as a way of resistance since it is produced by each individual in a different way (Colebrook 2001, 54). So, this invisible resistance may be investigated within the ways each individual operates as they are playing against hegemony dominance by obeying its rules but keeping their otherness within its boundaries.

Moving upwards the staircases from the ground floor, by reaching back to the entrance floor, there is a common lounge in the middle of this entrance floor where students relax between their classes. There are Iranian flags hanging down from the ceiling, and course schedules on the lower wall. The sofas are located near the closet where the phones of the students are kept, but the students are not allowed to use their phones during the school day. The small library is also located on the entrance floor with an open door that welcomes each student inside it; but it is mostly used by the children of the teachers or Consulate officers, I easily observe during my time at the *Fajr* Iranian School. These students, particularly the female ones, differentiated themselves in their dress of chador and demeanor, easily recognizable from their embodying an image of a clean-cut, more academically oriented student.

In each floor, there are classrooms, in which the total number is 25. Classrooms of the high school students are located on the top floor, as the classes are separated in terms of the fields of the literature, biology, and mathematics. Classrooms for primary education are located in the entrance floor. Kids at the different grades are taught in one class and there is a total of six primary classrooms. Classrooms for secondary education are nine in total while the rest of the classrooms are for the high school grade students. The classroom windows are large and with bars, and most of them look out to the back-garden wall with a fence and the small street where the building is located in. On the walls of the classrooms, there are the portraits of Khomeini and Khamenei along with the plaque of ‘*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*’ under these portraits; likewise, these pictures are in each room, and in each corridor within the building. More, there is a bulletin board mostly encumbered with the current news on Iranian martyries, the biographies of Twelve Imams, warnings to behave with ‘adab’ in the building, dress code regulations, course schedules, some writing



competition posters as well as some hints on how to become successful in *Konkur* (university entrance exam held in Iran) - and *YÖS* (university entrance exam for foreign students in Turkey).

Continuing the walk towards the other rooms inside the building, at the top floor of it, there are a student lab, a theater saloon, and an old library. In the building, there is only one lab for biology, chemistry and physics classes, and at the entrance door of this lab, there is a placard of the family who provided monetary funds to found the lab without giving a precise date for its opening. However, this lab almost looks as if it is from the middle of the twentieth century, along with the aged equipment and traditional interior design. Next to this lab, there is a theater saloon. The size of the saloon is quite large, designed for 150 people, in comparison to the relatively small building layout. The theatre saloon of the school is a typical saloon with red velvet curtains on a stage along with the chairs. This place is a significant spot inside the school, where the religious ceremonies, commemorations and celebrations are held beside the students' daily *salaat* performance. The students stay at the salon for almost 10 minutes to perform the *salaat* and then come back to the classrooms. So, this saloon is one of the places used frequently, not for the leisure time of the students but to comply with the practices of the school such as praying, national and religious celebrations and the rituals. The details regarding these practices will be discussed in the following sections of this chapter.

In the building, there is only one room locked, located at the top floor, next to the theatre saloon, the old library. Students are not permitted access to this room since the books are very old and valuable, as one of the teachers stated. However, building on the narratives of all graduates and some students, this room is locked due to the fact that the books in this library were published before the Revolution. Pendar states:

“I know it, Khomeini changed many things after Revolution, and they do not want us to see or study these books here, so it is always locked since my first grade.” (Pendar, male, 15/03/18)<sup>5</sup>

This locked room is perceived by the participants as an effort of the school, - using the ‘school’ refers to the state in a direct manner in their discourse-, to conceal what belongs to the era before the Islamic Revolution. It is important to note that the books published before the Revolution have been accessible in Iran for sure, but what the participants during the interviews emphasize is the school’s discomfort on using these books inside the school by using the school facilities. This is another example of interpellation, in which a discontinuity is constituted between the Islamic

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<sup>5</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 5

Revolution and before it. And, here it is essential to recognize that when the students talk about the school, they do not only refer to the administrative staff but also to the regime and its visible practices within the school space. In the same way, the Principal of the *Fajr* Iranian School states as follows:

“We (referring to the teachers) are here not only to teach the subjects such as history or mathematics, but also to transfer the ideology, national and religious values of the IRI, and we are obliged to do it more here, in a foreign country, as representatives of our regime. We know that what our students learn here become their truths.” (Principal, female, 13/10/17)<sup>6</sup>

In this study, the *Fajr* Iranian School is introduced as an ideological state apparatus in the way Althusser and many educational sociologists argue. By focusing on how the issue of reproduction of state ideology works beyond what is reproduced, the speech of the Principal is regarded as a trace to see how the apparatus of the state is carried out along with the representation concern of the administrative staff. In his work, Paulo Freire (2007) presents a detailed account of the roles of the students and teachers in addition to the classroom environment. Since Freire describes the teachers as the only authority, he says that the truth is only said by them in a classroom environment, in which he resembles this to a “Banking Model of Education”. The Principal’s point of creating the truths for their students matters from a critical perspective, considering Apple’s description of the teacher as a carrier and applier of the state’s ideology to the students (Apple 1995, 22). Hence, the students’ coding of the school and its teachers similar to the regime ideology is reflected legitimate even within the discourse of the teachers.

### 5.2.2 Material Objects and Symbols

It is essential to recognize the aspect of state’s capacity to use symbols in order to endorse its political agenda with the intent of serving the maintenance of state power, social cohesion and people’s engagement to key national ideals (Edelman 1985), particularly through its institutions. States can mobilize symbols to easily introduce background assumptions in this way, while these symbols become compelling tools for shaping the beliefs and attitudes of the states’ agents. So, as part of a broader program of the IRI, symbols and material objects are used inside the *Fajr* Iranian School in various modes of expression. In this sense, through this section, I

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<sup>6</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 6

will examine the material objects and symbols used in the school space, such as the plaques of political or religious leaders and symbolic places (the portraits of Khomeini and Khamenei, the pictures of the national squares or tombs), show boards and banners (the stories of Twelve Imams, the narrative of Islamic Revolution, news on martyrs, pictures of families in Iran, the religious celebrations).

Even if the state-sponsored symbols are not easily seen from the outside of the building such as the state flag, the plaque of the school with the national emblem as well as the school garden with the drawings of the USA and Israel flags on the ground, the first step inside the territory of the school welcomes one into a spatial setting where it is not easy to miss the presence of the state that surrounds you. Inside, the pictures and show boards on the walls are significant parts of the atmosphere in the school.

The portraits of Khomeini and Khamenei welcome you everywhere. Khomeini was the leader of the Islamic Revolution of 1979, whereas Khamenei is currently the Supreme leader of the IRI. In *The Work of Mourning*, in which Derrida begins with a citation from Pascal's "the portrait of the king is the king", he discusses on the significance of the 'portrait effect' as follows:

"The title "portrait", is that what is shown, portraiture, is what was (supposed to have been) real, really present. (...) The presidential portraits that can be seen today in all places of public authority (government agencies, town halls, departmental and municipal buildings, police stations) express the origin, identity, and place of the capital gathering of legitimate power insofar as it holds us in its gaze and looks at us looking at it by recalling us to what looks at and regards us, that is, to our responsibility before it and in its eyes." (154-156)

Khomeini is a central figure as the first and eternal leader of the Revolution and as the first Supreme Leader in the construction of the new regime. The legitimacy of the Supreme Leader in the IRI comes from the guiding principle, *Velayat-e faqih* (Guardianship of the Jurist). Within Shi'ism, the person owning *velayat* is regarded with the Twelve Imams and considered as in charge of the *Ummat* (Muslim nation) until the *Mahdi* (the twelfth Imam Muhammad al-Mahdi) returns. After the death of Khomeini, his absence becomes 'presence' in the public spheres where his image is sustained through the photographs on the walls. The photograph of the current Supreme Leader and Khomeini's successor, Ali Khamenei, appears next to Khomeini's, within the same frame presents a continuity of the ideals and values of the regime as well as the leadership. The use of photography in this way is an important ideological device. Inside the *Fajr* Iranian School, the images of the Supreme leaders surround each hall and classroom, constituting a subtle effect on

the students. In a sense, these students are ‘interpellated’ by the image of the religious leaders in their daily lives as the hegemonic public discourse is implicitly constructed on the premise of their values, norms and guidance based on the new regime’s ideal. For Donya, she states:

“Here, we live in Turkey, but when I come to this school each morning, I feel like I am turning back to my country. Here, I have to wear this- (showing her headscarf)-, and I have to see these- (pointing the photographs of Khomeini and Khamenei) on each wall, and I have to pray during the day. They remind me that I have to obey their rules; likewise, I do in Iran.” (Donya, female, 15/2/18)<sup>7</sup>

The pictures of these leaders are also suspended on show boards in each classroom and each floor differently inside the building. The boards within the corridors are mostly full of the historic, memorable and religious places’ photographs of the IRI, such as the tombs of Twelve Imams, Husayn’s tomb in *Karbala*, the tomb of Ayatollah Khomeini, Imam Reza Shrine, etc. Moreover, it is inevitable that in every show board, there are pictures of the Iranian flag, pictures of the Supreme Leaders painted by the students, and poems written about him, as well as essays on the doctrines of Shi’ism, *salaat* rules and holiness of the Supreme leader in addition to the narrative of Islamic Revolution.

The show boards in each classroom differ according to grade levels. In the classrooms for primary students, in addition to the themes of the corridor boards, the family illustrations and the pictures of the religious ceremonies such as *Ashura* are suspended on show boards. At first glance, since the boards in these classrooms are colorful, it seemed that the school gives the students a chance to express their feelings with their paintings; however, during a conversation between teachers, I learned that these boards are not actively used and these paintings and pictures are sent by the MoE of the IRI, centrally. Similarly, the English teacher approves:

“This school is a copy of a school in Iran, and they are the same in each term; the exception is maybe student profile... The MoE has the full authority in Iran, and the schools are expected to respect program of each event, bulletins and even the things suspended on boards determined by the MoE.” (English teacher, male, 5/11/17)<sup>8</sup>

The boards suspended on the higher grade classrooms are filled with the bulletins such as the courses and university entrance exams, the ‘*adab*’ rules to follow inside the school, the narratives of the martyrs of Iran-Iraq war, as well as the photograph

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<sup>7</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 7

<sup>8</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 8

of a boy visiting the graves of martyrs at *Behesht-e Zahra*, -the illustration being of a young boy visiting this graveyard and smelling a large red tulip is one of the traditional symbols of martyrs-. These boards are actively used because I could see different things on them almost every month, with the exception of the constant of the pictures of the Supreme leader, the verses from Quran, and the Iranian flag.

As the boards of the classrooms are displayed with heroism stories of the martyr, this constitutes a significant effect of getting students to tacitly accept the assumption that the nation is under threat or in conflict without explicitly considering or reflecting on the idea, and dying for the nation is portrayed as a very sacred mission. It is hard for one to question or reject an idea that is taken to be generally held as a truth, particularly if it is a school, where you are supposed to learn facts about the world around you. As an example, Ata tells the story of his friend while he was studying in Iran:

“My friend was only sixteen years old when he became a *Basij*. One of our teachers was from them (referring to the regime supporters, Mullahs), and they were always talking about how holy it was to be a martyr for Iran in the foreign lands to save our *ummat*. I know these things from my family; they are not the regime supporters and always warn me to be distanced to these things. I warned him too, but he was keeping saying that what our teacher says is the truth, and martyrdom is the most important mission for us to serve our country. After a while, he stopped coming to the school, and I never heard from him later on and heard that he became a *Basij*.” (Ata, male, 3/1/18)<sup>9</sup>

*Basiji* group is one of the forces of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and this group consists of paramilitary volunteer militia. The narrative of Ata’s friend is an example of how ideas of the Revolution are established and promoted through schools, which is also pointed out in the work of Nima Adelhah who points out to the institutionalization of various *Basiji* (volunteer militia) centers in elementary schools in Iran ( Adelhah 2010, 23). Furthermore, the *Basij* is defined as *Madrashah-ye ‘eshq* (School of Love) in the textbooks as it is related to martyrdom in the discourse of the regime (Pardo 2016, 63). So, the theme of martyrdom is processed in the content of the textbooks, via the attitudes of some school agents, as well as on the show boards as it refers to one of the significant symbols carrying the values of the regime.

There are some other illustrations that I want to mention. The themes in some religious or national celebrations are exhibited in these show boards in different times. For example, in *Ashura*, there is a drawing suspended on the board designed

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<sup>9</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 9

for pictures about this commemoration in a mosque. Even in this drawing, the picture of Khomeini appears in the scene. Another picture related to *Norooz* depicts *nan* (bread), and *anar* (pomegranate) as these objects are associated with traditional Iran. Moreover, the *Norooz* celebration is described with the illustration of a family sitting around a table while the father, as the leader of the family, is reading Quran. In fact, all of these pictures are representative of the way in which the regime tells students how to commemorate these events. Somayye states:

“The teachers pick some students to draw these pictures. It is idiotic, we are almost eighteen years old. They tell them what they expect, and generally, the kids of the teachers copy one of the pictures from the textbooks. And, then, all of the teachers compliment on these drawings.” (Somayye, female, 5/12/17)<sup>10</sup>

Hence, the pictures that seemed to reflect students’ own expressions, in fact, were the ones that were implied or told to do so. Throughout my fieldwork, there were also the pieces of news on these show boards about events in Iran such as the White Wednesday<sup>11</sup>. In this news, the protestors were portrayed as "*fetneh*" and "*khashak*" by the government, and the response of the government was publicized against this demonstration by particularly warning the ‘female’ students not to join the movement. Zehra refers to an exciting side behind this warning:

“In Iran, it is impossible to see this news on the school boards, or even on the TV news. They (referring to the regime, the *Mullahs*) did not broadcast these movements; likewise they ignored the bigger ones such as the Green Movement (big protests in 2009). They know that this kind of movements gets more supporters from the Iranians living abroad, and as the potential supporters, they warn us here. Hence they speak softly but carry a big stick.” (Zehra, female, 12/04/18)<sup>12</sup>

Here, the remarks of Zehra refer to the importance given by the IRI to the Iranian diaspora since a number of protests have been supported by this group of people and got strengthened in Iran. In this sense, the concerns of the regime upon the Iranian communities living abroad are exercised through this news on the show boards, and the warning of the school administration proves that symbolic power of the state is imposed explicitly, and the students are expected to behave accordingly. If not, a punishment system is indicated by the teachers even during the course hours.

Besides all these poems, pictures and drawings suspended on the show boards, there

<sup>10</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 10

<sup>11</sup>This included discussions around the protests of women in Iran such as White Wednesday. I was fortunate that throughout my fieldwork, these protests happened in Iran, and without asking it, almost over the half of the female participants mentioned about it

<sup>12</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 11

are also ubiquitous signs of ‘Islamic’ elements of the regime on the walls. The plaques of ‘*Bismillahirrahmanirrahim*’ appear in each corridor and classroom. As another, the photograph of the first female teacher of the school following the Islamic Revolution wearing a *hejab* as her garment symbolizes the transition of the state from the Shah period to the Islamic Republican period. While there is no other example of this photo, it broached the issue of the female body as a marker or indicator of the new regime’s politics. Having also considered the changes made in the post-revolutionary textbooks, the image of female teachers with *hejab* was one of the primary updates of the regime while the curriculum and the textbooks were transformed into static and ‘sacred’ objects (Malehzadeh 2011). Hence, the female body under the banner of the photograph of the female teacher inside the *Fajr* Iranian School becomes a symbol for the regime and its Islamic elements for ‘producing effects in the material realm’ (Ibid).

### 5.2.3 School Practices

Since the *Fajr* Iranian School is discussed as an ideological state apparatus in this chapter, this section will extend the analysis by establishing the school context along with the school practices. By discussing the school as a social space in this term, this section describes the school rituals, routines, and administrative rules.

Each school day, the students parade at the front garden of the school for the morning rituals after walking over the national flags of Israel and the USA. The morning rituals include either the Principal’s or Vice-principal’s speech from the verses of Quran or speeches of Khomeini following an epilogue of the Iranian national anthem, and some physical exercises. For the school community, morning rituals are certain examples of social practices (Packer and Goicoechea 2000). The Quran teacher emphasizes the importance of morning rituals as follows:

“Starting the day with warm-up and Quran is perfect for a Muslim. The physical activity makes your body healthier while the Quran makes your heart and your soul cleaner.” (Quran teacher, male, 16/03/18)<sup>13</sup>

The morning rituals are the places where the students gather together and are introduced to the hidden curriculum of the *Fajr* Iranian School. In this case, performing the morning ritual with Quran and national anthem can be interpreted as a reflection of how the school practices and institutional culture confer the state ideology

<sup>13</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 12

under the banner of Iranian identity. So, the students do not only participate in the formal curriculum but also follow the pattern of the participation of a hidden curriculum along with the school community. The ceremonies of the national anthem, Quran recite, and physical activities in the mornings are the places where the Iranian students perform the image of an ordinary student.

An Iranian student's image belongs to the dominant religious identity, Shi'ism, while s/he is also agile with nationalist sentiments. However, the students do not always behave according to what the administration of the school asks them to obey. During these morning rituals, male students talk to each other regardless of the warnings of the teachers around them; and some of them keep laughing by looking at the female peers standing in the front line separately. Here, as they signify multiple ways of resistance to the order in the morning ritual, so to speak, they do likewise to what Certeau says; "divert the dominant order in the system without leaving it". Manipulating the power relationships, they use them in ways that divert from the initial aims and strategies of the system ( Certeau 1984). In other words, they do not only obey, but also find alternative ways to express themselves and their identities. In our interview, the Vice-principal criticized the 'undisciplined attitudes' of the students as follows:

“The mornings are more important here to make the students remember their Iranian identities, but the students mostly behave in improper ways during the ceremonies. They talk and laugh a lot despite our warnings. It was worse before, but after our Principal gathered the families and warned them about their children so that they respect our values (referring to the regime), now what you see is better... We mostly have problems with the male students during the ceremonies, they talk and laugh loudly... We know that they are young. Even if the female students respect the ceremonies more than the male students, the female students create troubles in administrative terms regarding their apparel, and close association with their male friends.” (Vice-Principal, female, 19/12/17)<sup>14</sup>

The speech of the Vice-principal reflects the attitude of the school's administration in regard to the disciplinary circumstances, and their expectations from the students. Respecting the morning ritual, emphasized as a "ceremony", where students were lined up in the schoolyard as they listen to the pieces from Quran, engage in morning warm-up, sing the national anthem, symbolizes the values of the state, and the students are expected to obey the necessities of this ceremony. Furthermore, the important of gender segregation is revealed in the speech of the Vice-principal in terms of behavioral stances of the female and male students differently observed

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<sup>14</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 13



by the administration. While the male students are criticized in terms of their restlessness of being a juvenile, the female students are evaluated by their outfit and their relations with the opposite sex. Similarly, Niloufar describes this situation:

“Each morning, after this ceremony (laughs), the Vice-principal stands at the entrance and checks how long our hair is, checks our nails, fixes our *hejabs*, and takes our phones. That’s the situation we go through each morning, and the male students are not controlled as much as we are. . . And, during the day, they always watch with whom we are talking, where we are chatting, and whether our headscarf is fixed.” (Niloufar, female, 14/11/17)<sup>15</sup>

Hence, the female body’s usage to represent and preserve the regime values reaffirms itself in the school space. The school even tries to set the boundaries of its students’ experiences in the public sphere of Turkey by exerting control over them. However, since the school is not only a space for reproduction of the ideology of the state but also a site of struggle, some female students follow the rules set forward by the school on the Iranian state’s compulsory attire while they stretch the limits of the compensatory black *hejab* as they replace it for brightly colored headscarves along with a heavy make- up or with a bunch of hair seen under the veil against the warnings of the school administration. So, again, they do likewise to what Certeau (1984) says; "divert the dominant order in the system without leaving it" (16).

School as space is not necessarily isolated from other spaces such as a home or street. These spaces have their own knowledge that transmits to children. In this sense, going beyond formal schooling, the life of the students outside the school is also among the things that the *Fajr* Iranian school aims to intervene via posing rules about social media usage or the *hejab* control. As Mahide mentions:

“One day, after the morning ritual, I was called to the Principal’s room before the start of the class. The Principal welcomed me with an angry voice. After ending the classic *taarof* greeting, he spilled the beans. He had seen me at the front door camera with the angle of the street. That morning, since my boyfriend had taken me to the school, I was not wearing my headscarf until reaching the street. So, he warned me that as an Iranian living in Turkey, I should have been more careful with my behaviors and should have worn my headscarf while leaving home, not on the front door of the school, as this shows disrespect for me.” (Mahide, female, 19/12/17)<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, another example of the surveillance of the *Fajr* Iranian School upon

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<sup>15</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 14

<sup>16</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 15

the students is the presence of the video cameras throughout the school building. It is a definite sign of reminding the students that they have been watched for their behaviors, and the school rules, particularly surrounding the use of space, are often enforced through the strategic use of these cameras besides the teachers in charge of monitoring. It might not be unexpected for the schools to have security cameras for visitors or some unprepared criminal cases, and they are mostly placed in the halls and outdoor space of the buildings. On the contrary, in this case, there are surveillance cameras even inside the classrooms, and more, the school rarely hosts any visitor. It feels like the cameras are not inserted to protect the school from the outsiders, but to control the insiders. Donya states on what the students generally think about the cameras as follows:

“We know that they are recording everything, because last month, a discipline case happened when my friend’s expensive watch was stolen. The Principal immediately found who did it, and we all got shocked. We always thought they are just cameras, and not recording anything, but we know now and very shocked. Nothing works in this school, but this, for sure.” (Donya, female, 10/10/17)<sup>17</sup>

The emphasis of Donya’s *’but this, for sure’* explains too much regarding what the students expect from their school and see how their school is capable of, nothing but control. However, the students have a claim on the school space as agents of using it even with the possibility of co-creating it in some terms. One teacher explained to me that the students know that they "keep an eye on them through the cameras and the appointed teachers for monitoring around the building", but what the teachers do not know is that the students are very creative for some privacy so that they measure the angle that drops out of the camera viewpoint in order to gather there in the halls during the break times. Even if the school is not a large one, Elnar states that they figured out six places out of the camera viewpoint to create their own space and some privacy until the teacher reaches their floor.

“Once, I even tried to smoke in the hall to test whether they see me or not. If the teacher is not around, I know where my place is for my break. Sometimes, we gather there with friends as well as even with my girlfriends. They really do not like us to have a close relationship with our female friends, but I do not get it. They have no idea what we have outside the school, we hang out too much. You know, we eat and drink together all the time.” (Elnar, male, 26/03/18)<sup>18</sup>

There are also different student perceptions of how the school administration ap-

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<sup>17</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 16

<sup>18</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 17

proach to the association between female and male students. In the interviews, particularly with the children of the teacher and consulate officers, they do not generally emphasize a strong practice of the school on the issue:

“Here, we study with other girls and boys, and I do not see any particular administration action to keep us away from each other. I think they are trying to do what it is supposed to be. In Iran, the schools are separate, and it has to happen here as well, it is more suitable and gives us comfort as girls.” (Fatma, female, 28/01/18)<sup>19</sup>

Upon my questions to Fatma regarding in what terms she explains ‘suitability’ and ‘being comfort’, she states as follows:

“Based on Quran, it is not suitable to share the same space with the boys that are not family. Here, for example, we coincide with each other in the toilets as they are side by side, and sometimes I want to take off my headscarf in the toilet and while setting my headscarf, I am walking towards the door, and I realize that a boy looks at me. I think that it is not appropriate, and I do not feel comfortable. In Iran, since there was not any boy around us, we sometimes take off our headscarves in the classrooms during the break times, but here it is impossible.” (Ibid)<sup>20</sup>

As I delve into the school rules and the administrative attitudes more, I also need to mention about the story of the establishment of the second school building. As detailed in the methodology chapter, in the middle of my fieldwork, the second building in Şehremini was rented for education of the male students at the beginning of 2018. As this arrangement happened during my fieldwork, it provided me the opportunity to observe the chaotic setting as well as to ask both the school administration and the students for the reasons behind this movement and their thoughts related to this separation. The responses were articulated in different ways. Upon my question about the renting of the second building, the Principal responded as follows:

“The reason for the second building is overpopulation. The classrooms were over the capacity, and the quality of education was getting worse. More to say, we want to be open to more students from other nations coming from Islamic countries. We receive many demands related to that, from here, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, etc.” (Principal, female, 01/02/18)<sup>21</sup>

Here, the reason for the new building is emphasized due to overpopulation, and

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<sup>19</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 18

<sup>20</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 19

<sup>21</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 20

the intention of the school is centered around reaching more students from ‘Islamic countries’. However, the responses of the students articulate the discomfort of the school on the association between the male and female students as follows:

Azade: I don’t think they did it for the crowd. They were not controlling over the girls and boys, and even more, romantic relationships started to be seen in the school. Despite the warnings of the teachers and administration, some continued. For example, some started to sit at the same desk or walked together hand by hand in the garden. Elena: I agree with that. Why did they not continue education with the girls and boys together in the second building as well? They are trying to do the same; likewise, they do in Iran. Ferhad: It is hilarious that they could not move the 12th-grade boys to the other building, they were against it, and the school admitted it. I heard from my friends that the new building was an old hotel before, and they did not even have a garden. Me: How did they achieve it? Did they do something, do you know? Azade: Their parents came to the school, and they talked to the Principal as I remember. (13/03/18, focus group )<sup>22</sup>

Here, in the remarks of Azade, we realize that the families also become the actors of the *Fajr* Iranian School. However, throughout my fieldwork, I have seen neither a parent coming to the school nor a parent-teacher meeting. The interviews with the families, examined further in the following chapter, also prove the distance of the families from the school and the administration for different reasons.

Returning to the school practices, the students are taken to the theatre salon for praying each day following the timings of Shia doctrine of Islam - three times a day-. The students, regardless of their sectarian differences with the exceptions for other religions such as Christians and Jews, are obliged to pray as it is observed as another practice of the dominance of the school over its students based on the dominant Shia ideology of the state. One of the teachers tried to justify this practice during an interview as below:

“We know that we have some Sunni and Bahai students inside the school, but we don’t want to separate them by asking and assume that they have the same religion. Otherwise, I think that this creates a messing around, and others also start not to join the praying times. We have to do it like this, and it does not mean that we don’t respect them. For example, Christian and Jew students are not obliged to join.” (Mathematics teacher, male, 16/12/17)<sup>23</sup>

During my fieldwork, I participated in two significant Iranian celebrations: *Norooz*

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<sup>22</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 21

<sup>23</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 22

and *Ashura*. *Norooz* is the celebration of the Persian New Year, along with its origins of a thousand-year-old tradition in Iran's pre-Islamic, Zoroastrian culture. *Norooz* is a paradoxical celebration, as in some ways it creates a struggle for the regime's desire to emphasize Islam in constructing an Iranian identity following the Revolution. However, even if the early Revolution years mostly tried to eliminate this celebration in school contexts through minimizing its place in the textbooks and through considering *Norooz* as an ancient holiday without indicating any reference to its religious linkages, in later years, the regime has changed its position by reclaiming its importance for Persian culture by associating it to revolutionary events in the textbooks and the banners of the celebrations (Malekzadeh 2011, 267). The official "birth" of the IRI on April 1, 1979, and even if *Norooz* proceeds a few days from this date, 'Persian New Year' and 12th of Farvardin, Islamic Republic Day" are presented together, as shown the intention of the IRI on bidding these two' creation myths'. (Ibid). So, *Norooz* has been fit into an Islamic holiday by the regime over time, but the importance of the *Norooz* is not mentioned or emphasized as much as the *Ashura* Day by the regime. In the interview with Parisa, she states:

“*Norooz* is one of the most significant celebrations for Iranians, particularly, Persian people like me. Even if this school does not give importance to the thirteen days celebration of *Norooz*, we, students, celebrate it with our friends. We gather in the houses and exchange presents with each other.” (Parisa, female, 27/03/18)<sup>24</sup>

Similar to the statements of Parisa, the unwillingness of the school on the *Norooz* celebrations is dedicated in other interviews. At the *Fajr* Iranian School, the only notable thing regarding the *Norooz* celebration is the insertion of the traditional *haft sin* (seven items that begin with the letter "sin") *sofreh* at the school's entrance. In the *Haft sin sofreh*, there are *Sabzeh* (wheatgrass), *Samanu* (sweet pudding), *Senjed* (sweet dry fruit of the lotus tree), *Serkeh* (Persian vinegar), *Seeb* (apple), *Seer* (garlic) and *Somaq* (sumac). Even if the origins of the celebration are not associated with Islam, Quran is also put on the *haft sin* table. This symbolizes the state's intention to bind this rooted ancient tradition to the regime's Islamic character. The banner of an illustration of a family gathered around the *haft sin sofreh*, along with the father reading from Quran is put on the walls in the hallways during the *Norooz* celebrations. The *haft sin sofreh* stayed for thirteen days inside the *Fajr* Iranian School during my one-year fieldwork.

Like *Norooz*, *Ashura* commemorations also have deep roots in Iranian culture, but is directly associated with Shia Muslims, marking the tenth day of the month of

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<sup>24</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 23

Muharram as the remembrance of the martyrdom of Husayn, the grandson of the prophet Muhammad at the *Karbala* Battle in 680. Yitzak Nakash (1993) writes on the rituals of *Ashura* as follows:

“These rituals include the memorial services (*majalis al-taziya*), the visitation of Husayn’s tomb in *Karbala* particularly on the occasion of the tenth day of ‘*Ashura*’ and the fortieth day after the battle (*ziyarat ashura and ziyarat al-arbain*), the public mourning processions (*al-mawakib al-husayniyya or al- ‘aza’iyya*), the representation of the battle of *Karbala* in the form of a play (*the shabih*), and the flagellation (*tatbir*).” (163)

The *Ashura* is very significant in locating the elements of martyrdom as supreme self-sacrifice and human suffering for a valid form of Islam, Shi’ism in Iranian identity under Islamic governance (Nakash 1993). Moreover, the ‘*Karbala* paradigm’ is also induced by the current regime in order to symbolize the justice towards the third-world countries by the IRI against the injustice of the West (Pardo 2016, 48). So, the *Ashura* and *Karbala* discourse assumes a pattern within the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Regarding the importance of these celebrations and commemorations, the Literature teacher states that:

“Here, the kids are away from their homeland, and these national celebrations and commemorations preserve the memory of their home, the Islamic Revolution, as well as their identities.” (Literature teacher, female, 6/11/17)<sup>25</sup>

So, celebrating these days encourages students to remember where they come from and also dictates how they are supposed to remember their home along with the dominant ideology of the Islamic Revolution.

#### 5.2.4 Conclusion

In sum, this chapter discusses that all of these spatial configurations, material objects and social rituals mentioned above reproduce the ideology of the state, and the school exercises a symbolic power over its students as these symbols stand for a political content favored by the state. The examples that I introduced as the space configuration, material objects, the rituals proved the idea that the *Fajr* Iranian School has a (re)productive force, and it (re)produces the values of the regime, gender norms, nationalism, and Shia culture, etc., as parts of the state ideology.

<sup>25</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 24

Students must be quiet during the morning rituals, they must behave according to the *adab* rules, and they must give expected answers to the questions during the courses, they must carry out the apparel requirements demanded by the school administration, they must prepare the boards as required, and so forth. In contrast to what would be expected, even break times do not belong to the students as ‘free’ times as they are obliged to perform *salaat* and spend their leisure time quietly in gender-segregated spaces.

As mentioned above, the walls of the school are surrounded by the national and religious symbols related to the IRI. The representation of the “multiple illustrations” of the IRI’s founder, Ayatollah Khomeini and his successor, Khomeini, the presence of the flag of the IRI and the portrayal of the state’s enemies’ flags, the depiction of the religious symbols such as Quran, the school rules and ceremonies are shaped by the narratives of the participants and my participant observation. So, in a sense, the *Fajr* Iranian School as an official institution becomes a transmitter of the official ideology through the spatial setting of the school as thematically analyzed above, and the rules and the attitudes of the administrative staff become the representatives of the official discourse of the regime based on *Iraniyyat* and *Islamiyyat*. So, it refers to the regime intention on constructing a dominant identity in accordance with the regime values discussed via the symbols, rituals and the usage of space in the *Fajr* Iranian School. This identity is mainly formed by the symbolic capital of the religion, Shia Islam, and even if the narratives of the following chapter refer to this more, the symbolic capital of language is also observed within the school space, where the regime values are exercised.

As the spatial setting of the *Fajr* is also determinant in constructing the social identities, the students of this Iranian school in Turkey negotiate their identities based on their different positionings along with the differential meanings of being a student, being a foreigner, or being a Sunni, or being a Kurdish, and so forth. So, in the following chapter, what I will discuss is the collective and personal negotiations of the social identities of those students as I suggest that these identities are experienced in daily life as well, through the various uses of space where the socialization processes are constructed under the domain of the state ideology, in addition to the narratives. The discourse circulating in the school, articulated as homogeneous and supreme Iranian identity constructed by the regime values, proves to be valuable while examining the collective negotiations of the students’ social identities in the following chapter. In contrast, some actors disrupt this hegemonic discourse, in which I will discuss these figures while examining the personal negotiations of the students’ social identities.

## 6. THE PEOPLE

This chapter mainly addresses the question of how the Iranian students in Istanbul negotiate their social identities through the *Fajr* Iranian School in Turkey. Through this chapter, I will present the research findings and discuss how the students' negotiations of identities within the *Fajr* Iranian School—as members of a collective group and as individuals engaging in their site of struggle—are processed. While the previous chapter traces the reflection of the state ideology imposed through the spatial setting of the *Fajr* Iranian School, primarily relying on Althusser's discussion of school as an ideological state apparatus, the research findings analyzed in this chapter will refer to the conceptualizations of Bourdieu (as discussed in Chapter Three) as well as Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory.

The habitus that the students occupy is not only a material space but also a symbolic and social space conceived by them in various ways. Within this social space, as Bourdieu (1989) discusses, certain social structures are functioned through this symbolic system, while people in this system have the same perception over different forms of capital. In this study, language (Farsi) and religion (Shia culture), regarded as symbolic capitals (using this broad notion as cultural and social capitals are forms of it), are constructed and promoted by the symbolic power of the school where its members' understanding of identity is influenced. However, within the framework of the articulations of the second section of this chapter, it is also essential to recognize that social space does not always share the same level of symbolic power, and the level of it is determined differently based on the different positionings of some groups in a society. So, in this sense, discussing the *Fajr* Iranian School as a space for socialization and the students' negotiations of social identities based on their different positionings -as a group and as an individual- in this space are presented in this chapter. In this section, the students' shared narratives about their school experiences and self-references are considered their identities, as Sfard and Prusak (2005) highlight the relationship between narratives and identity by defining identity-as-narrative.

On the one hand, the *Fajr* Iranian School plays a vital role in creating a 'space' for



its students to learn and maintain the culture, history, and language around being Iranian; on the other hand, it also constitutes a site of struggle due to being a ‘closed place’ where the symbolic power of the state is exercised over its agents as the school aims to exert a dominant Iranian identity. This chapter presents Iranian students’ experiences inside the *Fajr* Iranian School in Istanbul to understand how they construct their social identities at the intersection of these two processes/forces. The chapter builds mostly on the students’ narratives, as narratives of school experiences are essential to how the school as a social institution impacts identity in individuals (Packer and Goicoechea 2000). As the reflection of the state ideology and mechanisms of symbolic power that the Iranian school upholds to sustain its habitus were analyzed in the previous chapter, this chapter focuses more on the question of how the spatial setting of the *Fajr* Iranian School influences the social identities of its students differently under two subthemes of collective/personal negotiations.

In this study, collective negotiations are driven from the reifying themes in the accounts of the participants concerning their group identity, as will be discussed under the framework of the social identity theory, which results in a shared sense of belonging to a specific group against another, by relying on the self-evaluations around the dichotomy of the ingroup (Iranians) and outgroup (Turkish society). What I mean with ‘personal negotiations’ is that, for a proper analysis, it is also essential to transcend beyond this collective (ingroup) lens and examine the intragroup dynamics since the school members are heterogeneous with different religious and ethnic affiliations. In a similar context, the use of ‘personal negotiations’ corresponds to the interpersonal relations, woven from one’s association within a web of social relationships, usually in a small group and face-to-face interactions (Lamont and Molnár 2002). In this sense, in contrast to discussions of the previous chapter complying with the reproduction theories implying on the school space as a site for dominant ideologies and groups (see the further theoretical discussions in Chapter Three), the *Fajr* Iranian School is also articulated as a site of struggle for those of whom are different from the privileged ‘Iranian’ identity in the school space or who are discordant vis-a-vis the school practices. Hence, bringing the reference to the critical theories emphasizes the changing role of agents in the relationship between education and politics. And these personal negotiations are articulated as contradictory to the group identity evaluated in the first section.

The chapter is divided into two sections, titled as collective negotiations and personal negotiations. The *Fajr* Iranian School uses socialization mechanisms that create a state-centered, closed, and somehow ‘private’ habitus for its members in Turkey through the school’s spatial setting that comprises the design of the space, material objects, and symbols as well as school rituals. As these themes were examined in the

previous chapter in detail, the first section will discuss that as the members of the school are modified into a habitus, their identities are mostly constructed around the world perceived via a collective group lens. In the second section, somehow as counter examples against the image of group identity, I will present some students' different positions in their interpersonal relations within this state-centered habitus by discussing that symbolic capitals are prone to shifts for particular groups in the school space. Likewise, the *Fajr* Iranian School' space is not only a site for the reproduction of state ideology of the IRI but also a site of struggle for the Iranian students.

## 6.1 Collective Negotiations

Drawing on the research findings, this section categorizes the collective group lens of the students by discussing two most prominent identifications; 'being a student of the Iranian school' and 'being a foreigner in Turkey'. Drawing mainly on Tajfel and Turner' s social identity theory, in which people identify themselves with certain in-groups while disconnecting them from other outgroups, this section will discuss the accounts of the students grounded on this dichotomy by creating distinct spaces as well.

In the accounts of the students, being a student of the Iranian school is associated with the banner of the Iranian identity. The school's state-centered habitus generates its symbolic power via certain practices as analyzed in the previous chapter. At the same time, it imposes certain images of identity and belonging within the field following the regime values. According to Billig (1995), impressed by Tajfel's discussion on social identity, the existence of national identity is dependent on the creation of 'us' and 'them', and the continuity of this community is established through the reproduction of this ideology while the members of a nation are to sustain their membership daily through contributing to this discourse on 'us' and 'them'.

As the privileged identity of the IRI has been strengthened within the school habitus through the school practices, the first part of this section will introduce the influences of this symbolic power in the students' identity negotiations by examining the reasons for attending to the school, the perception of the school space as well as the feeling of religious ceremonies. In these sections, besides presenting the narratives of the students at most, I will utilize from the accounts of the teachers and admin-

istrative staff as ‘panels’, as noted in detail in Chapter One on methodology. Since the families are mostly defined as the decision-makers on the choice of the school for many students, and the family is considered as the first institution in identity construction, where the cultural capital started to be accumulated (Bourdieu 1986), the interviews with the families are also included in the analysis, particularly inside this first subsection.

In the second section, their negative experiences in either Turkish public schools or Turkish public space are discussed around being a foreigner in Turkey. This section discusses that as the pejorative image of the outgroup (Turkish society) is strengthened in the students’ narratives, the belonging to the ingroup (Iranian) membership enhances at the same time.

### **6.1.1 Being a Student in an Iranian School**

#### **6.1.1.1 Reasons for attending the Iranian school**

The students’ narratives present three themes in terms of the reasons and motivations for choosing the Iranian school. The majority of the reasons rely on the family backgrounds, protecting Iranian identity, and reasons related to the negative connotations on Turkish people and Turkish schools.

One of the recurring themes in the interviews with the students was on their families’ backgrounds. Since the *Fajr* Iranian School is regarded as an embassy school, the children of the officers working at the Istanbul Consulate are registered to this school. As their missions are temporarily assigned, and the possibility of turning back to Iran is highly considered in the practices of the foreign offices, these families prefer to send their children to the *Fajr* Iranian School for the continuity of their education upon their return. In the interview with the family in which the father is working at the Consulate, he states his reason as follows:

“We are here for not a long time. So, for my daughter not to fall behind her classmates in Iran, I want her to study the same curriculum in *Fajr*. More, it is not an advantage for her to learn Turkish, and learning a language is a long process. . . Even if we would stay here more likewise some of my colleagues and their families have been living here for more than ten years, I would prefer to send her to our school again. It is crucial to learn our values, norms, religion, and culture, and this school

teaches how to be a good Iranian by our regime. We have had so much efforts to create a good nation after the Revolution.” (Ahmad, male, 16/04/18)<sup>1</sup>

Ahmad’s remarks refer to how a good Iranian through schooling should be in the regime’s eyes. Mehran (1989) states that the IRI has created "a new generation of committed and doctrinaire Muslims through the study of socialization in schools" (35). For the IRI, an Iranian identity is built on a new nationalism of the Revolution, defined as the intersections of Iranism, Islam and Shi’ism (Akbarzadeh and Barry 2016, 613). As the schools are fundamental in terms of constructing a nation, the Iranian government has brought the values of the Revolution into the educational system. In this sense, socialization through schooling is considered as "the process by which people learn to adopt the norms, values, attitudes, and behaviors accepted and practiced by the ongoing system." (Sigel 1970, 1). So, it seems that, for the families bound to the regime values in Turkey, likewise the Consulate officers or teachers explicitly mention it during the interviews of this study, education in the Iranian school is a necessity for their children to have an Iranian identity defined by the IRI and accrued by the symbolic capitals of religion and language in Bourdieusian terminology.

Besides children of the Consulate staff, the *Fajr* Iranian School is also a host to the Iranian children, temporarily or permanently living in Turkey, whose fathers are mostly involved in private business in Turkey in the form of commerce, logistics, and tourism. At the same time, the mothers are mostly housewives or are in the professions such as tailor, coiffeur, officer in the tourism agencies or translator. As the families’ choices, consisted of the Istanbul Consulate of the IRI or the *Fajr* Iranian School’s staff, are understandable upon the reasons mentioned above, for the other families whose children are the students of the *Fajr* Iranian School, the reasons are varied.

Based on the accounts of the students and teachers, as well as the interviews carried out with the families despite its small size, the significant family characteristics included but was not limited to being attached to the Persian culture, history, and language, being concerned about the continuity of their children’s education, and worrying about the uncertainty about their migration story. In this sense, the *Fajr* Iranian School is positioned at the intersection of the beliefs and concerns of these families. Firstly, the school creates a space for the practices of Iranian culture, history, and language in Turkey.

One of the parents states her high importance to the Persian culture and language,

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 25

along with her fear of losing her daughter's Iranian identity in Turkey:

“It is really important to get an education in Farsi. Farsi is a hard language, and if you don't learn the language at the school, you might be able to speak it, but not write it. This school also preserves our Persian culture, history, and religion...I fear that my daughter will forget her identity here as the kids expose many distractions in Turkey.” (Sima, female, 14/5/18)<sup>2</sup>

So, besides the role of the school to preserve the culture, history, and language in the eyes of the parent, the concern on the second generation's losing identity is specified. Secondly, since the education at the *Fajr* Iranian School corresponds to the national curriculum in Iran, and the instruction language is Farsi, the families think that the school provides continuity in their children's education, and presents a reliable alternative against the public schools in Turkey, in which the instruction language is Turkish, and the foreign students are taught in inclusive classes. It is essential to open a parenthesis here that in the case of inclusive education, the foreign students do not only encounter with a new education system, unfamiliar language, and different curriculum, but also with discriminatory acts of peers, teachers and institutional structure (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; McBrien 2005; Matthews 2008; Güneş 2013; Beyazova-Seçer 2017; Serim 2019).

Lastly, the *Fajr* Iranian School constitutes a betwixt and between space in the evaluations of these families, in which two scenarios are possible for them and their choices to return or to immigrate to another country do not impact their children's educational lives. Hence, these families strategically send their children to the *Fajr* Iranian School. In contrast to what expected, there are even the students coming from families, who have marginalized ideologies or beliefs against the IRI, or who are seeking international protection in Turkey. In this sense, the choices of some families are made despite the political differences or preferences.

In a similar vein, relying on the five years' experience at the *Fajr* Iranian School, the Vice-Principal summarizes similar reasons gathered from the interviews with the families' sending their children to the school by adding something crucial as follows:

“The reasons for the families to choose this school are very diversified. . . . The last one is that these families do not have any other alternative since they fled from Iran and are not registered in Turkey.” (Vice-Principal, female, 15/11/17)<sup>3</sup>

Upon my question seeking more information regarding the unregistered students in

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 26

<sup>3</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 27

Turkey, she prefers to stay silent by stating that she even should not mention it at first stance. The uncanny feeling in the school space carries its presence in the silences or unanswered questions as well as taboos.

Since most of the students studying in the *Fajr* Iranian School have either temporary residence permits or citizenship of the Turkish Republic, there are very few students who have asylum seeker statuses or are undocumented. More, this ‘asylum’ issue seems a taboo for the school administration and not a spoken thing within the students’ interpersonal relations. The school’s English teacher was one of the key informants on the school’s unspoken issues during my field study. He states on the issue as follows:

“Some undocumented kids are studying in the school, or some are registered to UNHCR. That’s also a reason for the families to make their kids register to this school. Because the school only asks for an Iranian identity card, they don’t seek a residence permit or documentation from Turkey while the graduation degrees come from Moscow” (English teacher, male, 28/12/17)<sup>4</sup>

So, the *Fajr* Iranian School also becomes a place to reach education for both undocumented and asylum-seeking Iranians in Turkey. Some families also searched for other alternatives within Turkish education system likewise the father of Mikhail, Anderanik, who was a journalist in the IRI and an asylum seeker in Turkey, states:

“When we first come here, we searched for the Armenian schools. . . . I did not have a chance such as a private Iranian school here. Mikhail was going to a private school in Iran, and the impact of the state was not so powerful upon these schools comparing to the public schools there. Here, at least I know that I am more powerful and free because Turkey is not like Iran. They have limits here; they can not make my son a *Basiji*.” (Anderanik, male, 15/2/18)<sup>5</sup>

*Basiji* is the Revolutionary Guard paramilitary volunteer force of the IRI, and it is described as the School of Love (*madrash-ye ‘eshq*) in the textbooks and in the banners of the classrooms while the stories of self-sacrifices of these young militias are encouraged by the school context (Pardo 2016, 12). As discussed in the previous chapter, the martyrdom has been a strong discourse of Imam Khomeini and the regime. Here, Anderanik recognizes the boundaries of the regime actions outside the school environment in Turkey by referring to the *basijis* selection through public schools in the IRI while this process is inapplicable in Turkey.

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<sup>4</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 28

<sup>5</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 29

Hence, the reasons for the families' choice on the Iranian school are presented above with the help of the interviews with the families as mostly being decision-makers in the process and the teachers as panels. Moreover, some families' specific conditions, as indicated by the English teacher, and the absence of any alternative private school, in which the instruction language is Farsi, can also be regarded as the other reasons.

In the accounts of the students, most of them clearly stated their motivations to become the students of the school, using specific discourse related to the preservation of their Iranian identity. Upon my asking them what it meant to be a part of the Iranian school, the participants talked about the importance of speaking Farsi to protect their language at first. So, the symbolic capital of the language is negotiated in their identity narratives by explaining the reasons for being a student of the school. They also added their interest to continue learning the Persian culture and history along with their religion. Even the students, who explicitly mention about their discomfort against the practices of the school and values imposed within its habitus in their (in)direct acts, as briefly mentioned under 'tactics' in the previous chapter, gather around a collective identity negotiation constructing on being Iranian, even if it is constructed within a state-centered habitus, as they think that it is a way of protecting their Iranian identity in Turkey. The accounts of these particular students will be analyzed under the personal negotiations section.

Mahsa's account extends the meaning of this reifying discourse on identity preservation and presents an intentional separation from the 'outside' by choosing the Iranian school as follows:

“I am here not only for learning in my mother tongue or learn my history but also for that I do not want to be out. . . I want to be with my friends here, not alone there as open to everything.” (Mahsa, female, 15/11/17)<sup>6</sup>

As discussed in the previous chapter, the *Fajr* Iranian School constitutes a 'closed' space for its members, along with lack of interaction with the broader sphere- meanly Turkish public space- and symbolic boundaries implicitly are established between inside and outside, along with the construction of insiders (Iranians) and outsiders (Turkish society). Mahsa's notion 'out' is used for referring to the Turkish public space in contrast to the school space, and her desire to be with her pre-agreed 'friends' (referring to the Iranians in the school) shows her sense of belonging to a group of people with the same background. In Mahsa's account, being outside leads to being alone, and being alone makes one open to everything, in which she tries to posit the fragility of a foreigner among the majority of the host society. In

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<sup>6</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 30

the narrative of Mahsa, she has been studying in the school for three years, never studied in a Turkish school, and not mentioned a bad experience related to living in Turkey, among the Turkish public society. However, she is aware of Turkey's political and social context, and she knows the stories of her friends. So, she colors the Turkish society with negative emotions, and the possibilities of being beaten up in the public sphere have made her fearful against the outsider when bringing the distinguished communities regarding their imagined 'style's (Anderson 1983, 5). Moreover, the school's position is regarded as a shielded space-as will be discussed in detail in the further section-, and the dangers of the outside enhance the positive bias of the ingroup against the outgroup (Tajfel and Turner 2004).

Similarly, Asel states the Iranian school's importance for strengthening her Iranian identity in Turkey by illustrating her brother's story in a Turkish school:

“My little brother, nine years old, he is going to a Turkish school. He is like a Turk now. He speaks Turkish very well, and he has more Turkish friends than Iranians. . . However, I am not like him, he is forgetting our culture and is getting educated without knowing our history, and even without being able to write our language. I feel happy to study here even if I don't love the regime, and its presence inside the school.” (Asel, male, 26/1/18)

Like Asel, some students expressed their discrepancies between being students of the Iranian school while being against the regime values and practices. The school is explicitly introduced as a space for reproducing the state ideology within a state-centered habitus. However, although their political engagements mostly seemed to be constructed around their family's resistance and opponent stories on their departure from Iran, they consider less political concerns in contrast to their concerns to lose their language, culture, and identity. Moreover, they mainly do not prefer to speak out their ideas about the regime inside the school, and in their words, they 'perform' as if they obey the regime values and norms through schooling. Hence, they revolve around a system of obedience and a hidden resistance while their narratives on performance express an underlying discontent and a hidden agency (Lüküslü 2009; discussed in Lüküslü's necessary conformism used for the post-1980 generation in Turkey). So, their performativity is considered as a survival strategy that enables them to develop a sense of comfort, belonging and attachment to the school space since the school is also perceived as a private space for the Iranian community in Turkey- next section will emphasize on this 'private' space.

In this sense, Asel continues by differentiating the politics of regime and her education, in the following part of the conversation, and states that:



“We are a little group of people in Turkey, Iranians. The culture is significant for our identities. It is not a political choice, and this school is the only place where I can get Farsi education, learn Persian culture and history without being exposed to the restrictions of being a foreigner. We should be together on that to be a free Iranian.” (Ibid)<sup>7</sup>

In addition to the language and culture preservation, the discourse of religion preservation is demonstrated by some of the participants:

“For an Iranian, learning and practicing his religion is as important as much as his history, culture, and language. If these aspects get lost, he will get lost. . . Specifically, in a foreign country, he should hold on to his religious identity more. Otherwise, he will be no one and alone. . . This school gives us the chance of being together.” (Samaneh, male, 13/2/18)<sup>8</sup>

As noted in detail in the introductory part of the previous chapter, the rhetoric of the regime in Iran directly emphasizes on Islam, particularly Shi’ism, as being the essential feature of the Iranian identity. The IRI’s education system is also designed for the country’s youth not to forget their religion and homeland (Khomeini 1990, cited in Malekzadeh 2011, 136). In this sense, Samaneh’s account directly refers to one of the symbolic capitals within the realm of the school, in which the spatial setting of the school generates.

Hence, the students’ attendance at the Iranian school, similar to their families’ interests, was closely connected with their motivations to preserve their language, culture, history, and religion that construct their ‘Iranian’ identities. More, their studentship was closely connected with being together with the Iranian people in Turkey.

In sum, through this section, the participants frequently used the terms "lose" and "protect" to reiterate their intention for attending their schools for their language, culture, religion, and history. Moreover, the preservation of being discriminated against in Turkish schools is nuanced. In parallel to the students’ accounts, the family decisions on the students’ schooling were further determined by the expectations set in their habitus, which, for many, mainly comprise of the concerns on not losing the Iranian identity in a foreign country, being a representative Iranian, and having a better education. Since the Iranian students have been socialized towards a collective identity within the school setting in a foreign country, they may feel the responsibility to learn, practice, and preserve their identities against the impact of a host society.

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<sup>7</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 31

<sup>8</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 32

### 6.1.1.2 Perceptions about the Iranian school as a space

The *Fajr* Iranian School functions under the rules and regulations of the Ministry of National Education of Iran. As the school is affiliated with the Embassy of the IRI, its position- regardless of the obligations on the foreign and minority schools to represent the Turkish association within the school space-, creates a space that only belongs to the Iranian association and community. Despite the students' accounts analyzed under the personal negotiations as contradictory to the analysis here, the results from the majority of the interviews and participant observations revealed that the participants considered the Iranian school as a 'special' space for the Iranian community in Turkey. Even the students frequently used the notion of 'a safe space' and 'like being in the home country'. The Iranian school is perceived as a 'safe space' for its members temporarily or permanently residing in a 'foreign country', Turkey. As discussed in the previous chapter, the school's spatial setting reflects only Iranian-specific characteristics without any symbolic cue of being in Turkey. These characteristics grew into feelings of safety and home country for the students. The most recurring words used to refer to the Iranian school were "community", "safe", "like home country" and "familiarity". The Principal talked about how the specialty of the school for the Iranians in Turkey relies not only on continuing a national curriculum that provides preservation of the language, culture, and religion to some extent but also on avoiding the discrimination or the struggles of being an immigrant in a foreign country. Having considered the interviews with the students, the majority of them stated that they feel safe to be around Iranians in the school. For example, Tina states:

“I'm comfortable in the school because we all speak in Farsi and we are familiar with the school structure, nothing new comes with being in this country (referring to Turkey), neither language nor people.” (Tina, female, 19/4/18)<sup>9</sup>

The spatial characteristics of the school and the national curriculum affirm the theme of 'home country'. The school space is concentrated with banners, decorations, and artifacts that symbolize the IRI's national and religious codes. The application of the national curriculum of IRI without any associated Turkish elements, and the school administration and staff that are all Iranians, establish the school as an ordinary school in Iran. Nergis states her feelings as follows:

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<sup>9</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 33

“When I first came to this school, I felt like I turned back to my country. Since then, each morning it is a way back home.” (Nergis, female, 1/12/17)<sup>10</sup>

This familiarity is not limited to the school setting but also used by indicating for the people inside the school. Ahsen mentions how everyone is like a familiar face in the Iranian school for her, after spending two years in a Turkish school. This sense of close spatial contact and social affinity affirm the theme of ‘being like in the home country’. In contrast to the positive connotations on the narratives of the school as ‘home country’ for some students, this familiarity was also associated with the dominance of the state associated items inside the school, that give little space for others who are not articulated under the dominant identity of the state. I will delve into this issue in the second section of this chapter.

When considering the school environment and its impact on the students, being in Turkey strengthens the feeling of ‘a nation’ or ‘community’ in their statements. In this sense, Elhan states:

“This school belongs to us in Turkey. We speak Farsi here, and we do what we do in our home (Iran)... We also belong to this school as we are a small Iranian community in Turkey. This is our space.” (Elhan, male, 5/3/18)

When asking what he means with belonging to the school or Iranian community, he continues:

“In Iran, I have never defined myself as an Iranian; I was an Azeri there. But, here, I feel Iranian... We are not many in Turkey, and Istanbul is too big. So, the school is a meeting point for Iranians in Istanbul, as a second home for the whole community.” (Ibid)<sup>11</sup>

So, the school is used as a private space that creates a collective sense of community that highlights its linguistic and national difference from the outgroup, the Turkish public society. The teachers’ talks and attitudes towards the students also aim to support this collective sense of community in Turkey. The Quran teacher mentions:

“This is an Iranian school, and the language is Farsi here for our students. The right thing to do in a foreign country is to be united as Iranians together, and we are here to remind us that because the kids are too young.” (Quran teacher, male, 13/6/18)<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 34

<sup>11</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 35

<sup>12</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 36

Even if the teachers and the administrative staff's attitudes are mostly presented in the previous chapter, it is essential to recognize the students' perspective related to the interpretation of these attitudes of the 'executives' of a state-centered habitus. Elena talks about the warnings of the teachers during the classes on the need to be more protective of preserving their culture, language and religion in Turkey as well as to become a good representative of the IRI. She states:

“Teachers are saying that you are representing your country, nation here with your outlook, uniform, and behaviors. It is important to be more careful when you are away from home as you are carrying your home in you. . . I believe that I am a good representative of my country in Turkey.”  
(Arsel, male, 14/4/18)<sup>13</sup>

Here, in the account of Arsel, the role of 'representation' emerged, likewise, this theme is recurred in the accounts of other students as well, particularly in the accounts of the female students. As discussed before, the regime values of the IRI imposed on the education system are how a Shia Iranian is to be an example for the wider *ummah*, how *adab* should be thought in the schools, and how the nation should be independent via the knowledge and science through schooling. In this sense, since a particular social identity is made salient, individuals intensify this particular identity and think of themselves as representatives of this social group (Hogg et al. 1995). In this sense, the words of Arsel, on being 'good representative', is also related to the broader term 'belonging'. Since the individuals with a strong sense of 'belonging' to a group associate themselves with certain (in)groups while they disassociate themselves from (out)groups (Tajfel and Turner 2004).

In sum, through this section, as a 'safe space' and like 'home country', the *Fajr* Iranian School is perceived as a private space along with its contribution to 'being Iranian'. Since the school has established an inner space for its members while creating some boundaries from the outside world- associated Turkish items-, the sense of safety and comfort can easily be felt. These feelings of safety and comfort create a definite sense of belonging, and the participants envelop the school space as a determiner and protector for their social identities during their interviews. The participants' positive thought in favor of their Iranian school system, along with their negative connotations in the Turkish school system, creates an ingroup/outgroup dichotomy and promotes a collective status against an outgroup. So, this symbolic status strengthens their sense of belonging to their Iranian ingroup (Tajfel and Turner 2004). Furthermore, the students also use the same symbolic capital of the language and religion that dominates the habitus of the Iranians in the school.

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<sup>13</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 37

Speaking in Farsi language was the most important signifier for upholding their collective identities.

### 6.1.1.3 Common sense of religious ceremonies

In the previous chapter, the school rituals and ceremonies were demonstrated in detail, but here, I want to touch on the collectiveness of these activities on the social identities of the students, particularly examining one of them, *Ashura* mourning, since the participants' articulation of collective negotiations were observed more, comparing to the other commemorations. Moreover, religion is regarded as a signifier in the school space as one of the symbolic capitals as well as in constructing identity.

*Ashura* commemorations have deep roots in Iranian culture associated with Shia Muslims, and it marks the tenth day of the month of Muharram as the remembrance of the martyrdom of Husayn, the grandson of the prophet Muhammad at the *Karbala* Battle in 680. *Ashura* is very significant in locating the elements of martyrdom as supreme self-sacrifice and human suffering for a pure form of Islam, Shi'ism in Iranian identity under Islamic governance (Nakash 1993).

As previously mentioned in detail in the previous chapter, Valide Khan, where the Iranian Shi'ite Mosque is located, is used as a space for the Iranian community gatherings for the *Ashura* mourning. The *Fajr* Iranian School brings its students to the mosque in groups for this commemoration each year. In addition to that, at the *Fajr* Iranian School, the students and staff hold in remembrance of Husayn along with the banners, the creation of a '*heyat*' corner, and theater play, as symbolism and religious content within such processions are notably strong. In the previous chapter, the banners and the '*heyat*' corner were defined within the school space. Here, I will focus on the impact of this practice for the participants on their collective identifications.

The narratives of the participants concerning *Ashura* mostly include emotional reactions as they have been attending these processions since their nipples, even in the narratives of non-Shia students. While talking about his feelings and thoughts about *Ashura*, Yashar, the kid of the Quran teacher, states:

“I feel the sorrow of Huseyin inside me, and my weeping comes from there. I read the poems with this feeling, and we honor his sacrifice via

this way since our childhoods.” (Yashar, male, 10/10/17)<sup>14</sup>

As the intensification of religious performances necessitates precise mechanisms and contexts, the school environment and its practices become very influential in this sense. Building on the nuanced notion of ‘habitus’ of Mahmood (2005) away from Bourdieu’s use of the term, she states on the embodiment of pious behaviors that “. . . moral virtues (such as modesty, honesty, and fortitude) are acquired through coordination of outward behaviors (e.g., bodily acts, social demeanor) with inward dispositions (e.g., emotional states, thoughts, intentions) through the repeated performance of acts that entail those particular virtues” (136). Samaneh states in a self-reflexive manner upon her feelings about *Ashura*:

“I don’t know. This is maybe because we have these ceremonies and performances since our childhood, but I feel the pain in my body and this pain is like a part of me, even if I do not identify myself devoted to Shi’ism.” (Samaneh, female, 14/10/17)<sup>15</sup>

In regards of the statement of Samaneh, as Mahmood (2005) emphasizes, "what is noteworthy is that habitus in this tradition of moral cultivation implies a quality that is acquired through the human industry, assiduous practice, and discipline, such that it becomes a permanent feature of a person’s character." (136). Moreover, she also remarks on the schooling process by which a habitus is learned through the body practices and roles that "self-directed action plays in the learning of an embodied disposition and its relationship to ‘unconscious’ ways of being." (Ibid). More, through the obligation of the students’ participation to this commemoration, intensification of the dispositions of the *Fajr* Iranian School is enforced upon the students. Hamed affirms ‘a way of being’ via the *Ashura* performances as follows:

“It is where my faith becomes visible, not only weeping or beating oneself with the chains. This is the most visible version of representing our identities in a collective manner to the others. . . . And, here (in Turkey) the school and the mosque are the only places left to us” (Hamed, male, 14/10/17)<sup>16</sup>

The notion of the ‘collectiveness’ around *Ashura* used against the ‘others’ in the account of Hamed, matters in terms of his conceptualization of collective identity along with a distinction from an outgroup. He also emphasizes the importance of the school for the construction and representation of the collective identity in this sense. The *Fajr* Iranian School’s non-Muslim population is exempt from the obligation for

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<sup>14</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 38

<sup>15</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 39

<sup>16</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 40

attending the *Ashura* mourning rites at Shi'ite mosque. However, all non-Muslim participants of this study express that they attend the mosque ceremonies, and they emphasize their attendance at the religious ceremonies for social enjoyment in a collective setting. Likewise, Elena states:

“*Ashura* is like a festival. We are allowed to stay together and close until the evening on the *Ashura* day in Valide Khan, so it is a place for us to socialize. If I miss it, I would miss the entertainment there.” (Elena, female, 15/10/17)<sup>17</sup>

In the *Fajr* Iranian School, for most of the students, *Ashura* becomes a great signifier that has been conceptualized within the framework of the visibility of collective identity in a relevance context of the school practices, even regardless of their religious background. During the *Ashura* mourning rites, a specific school event, a theater play about Huseyin's martyrdom is performed at the theater saloon with the parents' attendance and the members of the Istanbul Consulate of the IRI. Most of the participants spoke a close affinity with this one theater play that is performed annually. On that, Hamed states his enthusiasm as follows:

“Last year, I could take a role in the play because it is tough here as the Consulate children generally have the roles in the performance. It was an important day in my life. . . Our families cried while we were performing the play. . . incredible” (Hamed, male, 15/11/17)<sup>18</sup>

Pernaz was also involved in the same play due to the decision of the school administration as it was assigned as a punishment for her use of alcohol inside the school, and she states:

“It is meaningless to perform this play, they only show us how to sacrifice ourselves for them via this” (Pernaz, 15/11/17)<sup>19</sup>

In contrast to the negative expression of Pernaz on the theater play, as aforementioned, the majority of the students share their positive feelings to affirm ‘togetherness around *Ashura* commemoration’. The Principal highlights the importance of *Ashura* for them as follows:

“*Ashura* ceremonies strengthen the students' Iranian identities, and the students learn to gather around a historical religious story and share the same feelings. This leads to a strong membership towards our community

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<sup>17</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 41

<sup>18</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 42

<sup>19</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 43

here” (Principal, female, 19/11/17)<sup>20</sup>

So, the Principal’s statement refers to the religious, cultural ceremonies, and theater performances to serve to bring the students together under their imposed collective identity, Iranian identity.

In sum, although the religious and ethnic affiliations are diversified within the students of the Iranian school, as Bourdieu would state, a "common sense" is established through the socialized conditions of these religious and national ceremonies for assuming an engagement to the private habitus of the Iranian school to uphold their collectivity. Their attendance at these ceremonies, in the mosque, present symbolic extensions of the school space, where a collective Iranianness continues to be asserted in more powerful ways. These provide more accrued symbolic capitals for a strong membership to the Iranian community.

### **6.1.2 Being a Foreigner in Turkey**

Being a foreigner in Turkey means being fragile in terms of encountering with discriminatory practices. This may lead to complications in the identity construction processes of the immigrant population, especially for youth. In particular, foreigners from Middle Eastern countries are perceived as refugees by the host society, without knowing the difference among the legal statuses, and the foreigners are mostly discussed around certain stereotypes and second-hand stories.

In this section, the accounts presented are mostly depended on the students with Turkish school experiences, as they are more eager to express their negative experiences. Here, it is also important to mention that, for some of the students- particularly the children of the Consulate officers and teachers- as the school provides a ‘closed’ space and their outside lives are mostly restricted due to their short term stays or their families’ boundaries to determine their interactions with the outside world, they do not emphasize on their immigrant negotiations. Throughout the fieldwork, it always makes me question how strong the school’s spatial setting is that it might provide pure isolation from the outside world, even not to feel like an immigrant at all.

Returning to the students’ Turkish school experiences and negotiations of feeling ‘immigrant’, the stories on bullying, exclusion and discrimination in Turkish schools,

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<sup>20</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 44



and the inadequacy of Turkish language are the primary signifiers for their identity negotiations on being a foreigner. These circumstances also affect these students' decisions to return to the Iranian school after enrolling in a Turkish school, or their choice for attending the Iranian school at the beginning.

For example, Aynaz is one of the students mentioning her negative experience at a Turkish public school:

“When we came here, I went to a Turkish school because I thought it would be better to learn the language as I am a speedy learner. I also got enrolled in a Turkish language training course outside the school. I could stand the school only for three months, then started here. . . It was tough to be friends with Turks. They always ask absurd questions about life in Iran, thinking that I am a refugee. It is disrespectful. It was like they were belittling me because of my culture. . . When I say I am Assyrian Iranian, they had no idea what it is. . . More, when I tried to speak in Turkish during the classes, they were laughing at my accent.” (Aynaz, female, 7/2/18)<sup>21</sup>

So, the narrative of Aynaz refers to the stereotyping of a foreigner as a refugee in Turkey, established by the Turkish people's superiority over the people mainly coming from Middle Eastern countries. Previously, the possibility of being discriminated against in the Turkish public space, hence 'outside' of the school space, is actualized in the account of Aynaz. Despite her Assyrianness and Christian background, distanced from the dominant identity (Shia-Persian) in the Iranian school, she prefers to return to the Iranian school instead of encountering with the discriminative against her both identifications- Assyrian Iranian-, and bullying via the oblique questions on her origin country, in a Turkish school. Above, being a refugee is also interpreted as 'disrespectful', while refugeness is used negatively. Aynaz also complains that her friends were reputed to be Syrians in recent years, and she finds it as ignorance of Turkish society. Since the Syrians, as the largest foreigner group, are more visible in the media and, Farsi and Arabic are potentially confusable languages for the host society. A similar story, including a hatred speech, was told by Sahar, as follows:

“I remember, once, after leaving the school with my friends, I was speaking in Farsi and a guy sitting in front of a shop shouted me *'Pis Kürt, burası Türkiye! Türkçe konuş'*. I could not speak a word out to say I am Iranian, and we started to run as if we are guilty. . . Turkish people do not know the difference between Kurdish or Farsi and even Arabic, I guess. They see all foreign languages the same and all foreigners as enemies like Kurds.” (Sahar, female, 4/4/18)<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 45

<sup>22</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 46

Here, minority politics of Turkey ignoring the minority groups' languages, and conservative stances of the Turkish society related to the Turkish language is illustrated in the narrative of Sahar. Moreover, this conservatism on the language is also emphasized differently by Ali. Ali emphasizes his struggle with the Turkish language as follows:

“First, I got enrolled in a Turkish school. I did know very little Turkish, and due to that, the classes were very hard at the beginning. However, what I cared most was that I was feeling very alienated. It was like a sin to be an Iranian at that school, and even not to be able to speak Turkish. . . The other kids make fun of my Turkish, and they were not accepting me to their football games. I hate them, and they are very nationalist. I spent one year there, and then my father heard about this school. And now, I am happy here.” (Ali, male, 8/6/18)<sup>23</sup>

Ali's experience of being bullied and excluded as an immigrant student in a Turkish school strengthens his sense of belonging to the Iranian community. Even if, in my personal conversations with him, his conflicts with the school administration or his friends are highly emphasized as a Sunni Kurdish student, -hence encounter problems interpersonal relations due to his personal negotiations- his notion of 'happiness' without any hesitation within the dichotomy of in/out is associated with a positive bias to his ingroup, and negative outgroup feelings and labels, bringing the group differentiation of Tajfel and Turner (2004) to our analysis.

This feeling of being discriminated against or being despised is also reviewed in other interviews with the students. Pouya states that he had studied three years at a Turkish school, and he was one of the students, who emphasized the discriminative behaviors of Turkish people against them:

“For us, behaving with respect and kindness matters a lot, but the way of speaking and behaving of Turks are very rude and like, you know, from above. It is like they think they are more superior over Iranians. And because of this, I thought that I should save my character by going to this school.” (Pouya, male, 11/12/17)<sup>24</sup>

In the remarks of Pouya, in addition to the recurring theme of 'despise', a cultural difference between two societies in terms of etiquette also comes to the forefront. He explains his motivation for attending the Iranian school in regard to protecting his 'character' as he defines with inherited pride and politeness of the Persian culture.

So, the shared narratives of the students on their negative experiences in the Turkish

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<sup>23</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 47

<sup>24</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 48

schools or the Turkish public space increase the feeling of alienation to the host society-outgroup- as well as strengthen the belonging to their ingroup. The school space is considered as a place where their Iranian identities are actualized, and they feel happy. In contrast, the Turkish public sphere is considered as separate in the students' narrations as they are mostly felt excluded from that space as 'foreigners'.

## 6.2 Personal Negotiations

In this section, I turn the focus to some students' different identity negotiations, which is smaller in size and less specific than their collective identities. The *Fajr* Iranian School presents a population similar to the mosaic nature of the geography of Iran that includes different ethnic, sectarian or religious backgrounds such as Sunni, Shia, Christian, Jew, Zerdust, Farsi, Assyrian, Kurd or Azeri. In this sense, besides the collective identity negotiations of the students analyzed above, the intergroup relations between some groups with different backgrounds deserve mentioning in the scope of the study. So, in this section, how the students speak about their identities as members of a collective group differed from the ways they speak with each other, in interpersonal settings. Even these collective and personal negotiations might be regarded as contradictory, almost clashing with each other to some extent.

Hence, in this section, I will focus on some students' identities since the discourse of these students about their personal negotiations differs from the discourse when speaking as they are in a collective domain. As discussed in the previous section, the students mostly speak about 'being Iranian' and the school's domain on constructing an Iranian identity formed through the Farsi language and Shia Islam. Here, in the interpersonal domain, the participants associated themselves as belonging to the different sub-groupings (language, ethnic or religious) inside the *Fajr* Iranian School. At the same time, they behave within an exclusionary stance towards each other. Even if the examinations of this section seem overlapping or conflicting with the participants' collective identifications discussed above, it opens a discussion for the intragroup relationships to measure the membership to the ingroup beyond its affiliation against an outgroup.

### 6.2.1 Students with Different Ethnic and Religious Affiliations

The IRI recognizes the demographic diversity in Iran to regulate ethnic communities and religious minorities to maintain stability and avoid tension between these groups (Tohidi 2009; Stansfield 2014; Posch 2017). However, as the dominant identity driven by the regime priorities is constructed around *Iraniyyat* and *Islamiyyat*, this led to privileges to some groups while manifesting repression to other groups. In fact, the regime in Iran implicitly and explicitly recognize various sub-groups within its territory. As an explicit recognition, the 1989 constitution includes the articles related to the rights of ethnic minorities in Iran since Article 19 states: ‘The people of Iran enjoy equal rights, regardless of the tribe or ethnic group to which they belong. Color, race, language, and other such considerations shall not be grounds for special privileges’, along with a reservation of the implementation of this article due to forceful resettlement and assimilatory policies of the regime for years (Asgharzade 2005, 44). In terms of the religious minorities, the regime implies implicit recognition through tolerance of these groups’ activities without endorsing the existence of these groups but giving ‘permission’ to practice their beliefs. Since the scope of this thesis is not extended to the discussions on the minority issues of the IRI, I will stop here and focus on the inner dynamics of the *Fajr* Iranian School in parallel to the regime strategy in the homeland.

In Iran, these different ethnic and religious groups are mostly distinguishable from one another through geographical location, such as the province of Kurdistan in south-west Iran, or the province of Azerbaijan in North-west Iran, and so forth. So, this geographic separation contributes to the strategy of the regime to avoid inter-ethnic and religious conflicts. However, since the *Fajr* Iranian School is like a mirror to the whole geography of Iran, the Literature teacher emphasizes the conflicts based on gathering these groups in one place as follows:

“We, here, have many students from different backgrounds under the same roof. In Iran, there are some geographical distinctions; we have Kurdistan, for example. You know, as a teacher, in Tabriz, there are more Azeris in the classroom, or in Kermanshah, there are more Kurds and Sunnis. Here, they are all together, students from different cities ore regions, and there are more conflicts among them due to that. The students usually ignore each other, but sometimes some group of students fights with each other. For example, the last fight was related to *salaat* times. One Sunni student had supported five times, and others (referring to Shia students) started to throw punches.” (Literature teacher, female, 11/4/18)<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 49

As discussed before, the regime in Iran addresses the educational content for the ideological reorientation of society in order to align them with regime agendas. Schools are used for the socialization of an envisioned ideal citizen by generating two tenets of Iranians' national identity, Shia Islam and the Persian language; likewise, the *Fajr* Iranian School functions through Turkey's same values. So, since the school has a heterogeneous population but promotes a privileged identity, this creates different negotiations for some particular groups, such as Sunni Kurds, Christian Assyrians or Turk Azeris. Relying on the research findings, the students belonging to these groups are mostly experiencing isolation due to the oppressive conduct of members of the dominant group, Shia Persians inside the school, as well as exclusionary stances of some teachers. Moreover, it is observed that how these students define their identity inside the school are largely due to their reaction against the religious emphasis of the IRI on Shi'ism. Ahmad, as a Sunni Kurd self-negotiated, narrates his experience as follows:

“Here, we learn Shia way of living Islam, praying in accordance to their styles, or respecting their prophet, Hz Ali. Theology and Quran teachers are mostly conservative, and when I share information related to the Sunni version of Islam, they shout at me and force me to learn what Shi'ism tells about it. . . My mother tongue is Kurdish, and I learned my Farsi later on during my primary school years in Iran. Due to that, my Farsi is not very well, and the other students generally laugh at me while speaking. . . So, I hang out with my other Kurd friends inside the school. So, outside, I am Iranian, but here I am a Sunni Kurd.” (Ahmad, male, 7/5/18)<sup>26</sup>

So, Ahmad's narrative sheds light on the continuation of 'othering' in a sense, not only considered for outside of the school, but also inside it. Moreover, Ahmed experiences a between and betwixt situation of having an Iranian identity outside (in Turkey), but a Sunni Kurd identity inside (in the *Fajr* Iranian School). This led to different self-determination at both individual and collective levels for Ahmed, considering his high level of belonging to the ingroup against an outgroup while feeling viciousness of exclusion and oppression in his intragroup relations.

In a similar vein, Delara, as a Sunni Kurdish student, states:

“I don't like to be here (referring to the Iranian school). I cannot speak Kurdish with my friends here, even if I do not have so many friends. In Iran, our village is a Kurdish one, and we are allowed to speak in Kurdish there. Even our teachers understand us. But, here, it is different. I feel more excluded by the school, even among other students. Here, there

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<sup>26</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 50

are separate peer groups, such as *Mullahs'* children hang out together, Kurdish or Christians together. If there is no difference from Iran, and even worse, why am I here?" (Delara, female, 14/3/18)<sup>27</sup>

Upon my question about her family's migration story due to having prior knowledge of her 'different' situation, Delara continued the following:

"We are Sunnis, and the oppression of the regime upon us was too much. We are obliged to perform the wrong practices of Islam, such as three times praying a day or the supremacy of Ali. My dad decided to flee from the country one night, and as our city was very close to the Turkish border, we walked through the border three months ago." (Ibid)<sup>28</sup>

Delara was one of the undocumented students in the *Fajr* Iranian School. Even if I wanted to interview with her family, unfortunately, the meeting was canceled due to their unexpected departure from Turkey. Later on, I heard from her friends that Delara and her family crossed the Aegean Sea to reach Germany, where her aunt lived as a refugee. When I asked about the school staff's knowledge of Delara's departure, no one spoke apart from the English teacher. He started with an attempt to clarify the silence of the other teachers as follows:

"...I can say that most of the teachers and the school administration behave differently to those kids (referring to the asylum seekers or undocumented ones) as they think that what they do is humiliation towards their country, their culture. Even if they know their situations against the regime, they behave as if nothing happens in Iran and they even force those students more." (English teacher, male, 13/4/18)<sup>29</sup>

So, the remarks of the English teacher give references to the unspoken things inside the school while any act that cracks the regime values or is distanced from the exercises of the symbolic power is punished. Even if the teachers are familiar to the domestic politics of the IRI and the existence of the migration movements from Iran along with their backgrounds, they are abided by the norms and values of the regime so that they behave as if nothing happens as this circumstance strengthens the uncanny feeling that revolves around the familiarity and strangeness at the same time. Here, it also reminds Bourdieu's analysis of his social theory that social space does not always share the same level of symbolic power, and the level of it is determined differently based on the different positionings of some groups in a society. Here, we see that the symbolic power of the school upon these students exercises rigidly.

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<sup>27</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 51

<sup>28</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 52

<sup>29</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 53

Niloufer and her family fled from Iran in order to seek international protection in Turkey. She identifies herself as Baha'i without an indication to an Iranian identity, and she narrates their migration story and her end up in the *Fajr* Iranian School as follows:

“I didn't understand why my father wanted us to leave Iran, but I was aware of our situation there for sure. If you don't say anything explicitly in Iran, it becomes a non-existing thing for both of you and the regime, but you say, you get punished. When we left Iran, I had one year to graduate from high school, so I could not learn Turkish to go to a school here. . . However, compared to Iran, I feel my Bahai identity more here, in this school. Here, other kids and teachers are more judgmental towards me than other Christian friends.” (Niloufer, female, 6/3/18)<sup>30</sup>

In contrary to the majority of the students, Niloufer is highly politically oriented. Her reference to the Iranian regime's stance on assuming something as non-existent to becoming its reality in real life means a lot for her community, Baha'is, in Iran. This religious minority group has experienced the highest level of regime oppression and assimilation politics among other religious minorities in Iran, and this group is not regarded as a religious minority, likewise, the Jews and Christians are recognized, and the people with the Baha'i Faith are labeled as 'heretics and infidels' (Mossayeb 2010 159). The narrative of Niloufer also emphasizes on the reflection of the state ideology into the intragroup dynamics of the school.

Contrary to the aforementioned pejorative experiences of the Sunni Kurds and Baha'i students, Aynaz states her experience as a Christian Assyrian with positive feelings inside the *Fajr* Iranian School:

“We are a few here as Christians, but I have many friends and I share everything with them and they respect what I believe. . . I am not obliged to join the *salaat* times, Quran or other religious courses or events. However, I am hearing from my friends, particularly Sunnis, Bahais or atheists, even if they speak with the Principal, they have to join the religious classes and routines.” (Aynaz, female, 7/2/18)<sup>31</sup>

In the study of Mossayeb (2010), he mentions that the IRI's aim is the institutionalization of its recognized minority groups while it eliminates and marginalizes its unrecognized groups (162). So, unlike Baha'is or other belief groups such as Zarathustras, atheists, etc, the Christians and Jews are less pressured by the regime unless the believers are converted Muslims or promote their religious systems over Islam within the territory of Iran (Ibid). However, for sure, as the traditional Shia

<sup>30</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 54

<sup>31</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 55

culture is promoted in the education system of Iran, the schools reinforce negative stereotypes of Christians, and particularly Jews in Israel (Farahani 2005). So, the narrative of Aynaz also confirms this regime performance inside the school and being distanced from the group identity accrued by the religious and symbolic capitals inside the school; different identity negotiations of these groups are constructed within the school space as this space is evaluated in interaction with others.

### 6.2.2 Students as Other Language Users

Regarding the linguistic diversity of Iran in the beginning of the twentieth century, Ervand Abrahamian (1982) provides an excellent picture, and this multilingual character of the country even continues in present-day of the IRI:

“The geographical barriers were compounded often by linguistic differences. Persians, Bakhtiyaris, Qashqayis, Arabs, and Lurs lived in the Central Plateau. Small groups of Baluchis, Afshars, and Arabs were scattered in the southern deserts. Kurds, Lurs, Arabs, Afshars, and Mamesenis inhabited the western mountains. Azeris, Shahsavans, Kurds, together with scattered settlements of Armenians and Assyrians, lived in the northeastern districts. Gilakis, Taleshis, and Mazandarani populated the Caspian provinces. Finally, Persians, Turkomans, Kurds, Shahsavans, Afshars, Timurs, Baluchis, Tajiks, and Jamshids resided in the northeastern regions. Iran, thus, was a land of linguistic diversity.” (cited in Mossayeb 2010, 389)

As language is the most salient marker for a separation between different ethnic groups or communities from one another, and language is regarded as a significant symbolic capital through the thesis, it is essential to recognize the students' narratives as other language users in this section. Despite Iran's multilingual character provided above, only Farsi is acknowledged by the authorities as to the 'official' and 'national' tongue of all Iranians, even if no more than half of the population speak Farsi as their mother tongue. As Farsi is regarded as the only legitimate language by the regime, the school administration bans to speak in other languages inside the *Fajr* Iranian School. However, it is very common to hear the Turkish, Armenian, or Kurdish words inside the school, particularly during break times. The participants from different backgrounds, which comprise of another language knowledge besides Farsi, expressed their desire to speak in their 'other' mother tongues with each other in the school setting. However, as the Theology teacher also emphasizes the necessity of speaking Farsi, the rules are very rigid inside the *Fajr* Iranian School:



“This is an Iranian school, and the language is Farsi here for our students. Sometimes I hear that our students speak other languages; it is not the right thing to do in a foreign country. We need to be united under our regime with one language and one religion.” (Theology teacher, male, 13/3/18)<sup>32</sup>

So, despite the students with different ethnic and religious affiliations, the school obligates the usage of Farsi language not only due to its value as a tenet for a national identity promulgated by the regime agenda but also with an emphasis on being in a foreign country where a collectivity around a common language would be necessitated more.

In parallel to the narratives of the Sunni Kurdish students in the previous section, the students with other mother tongues such as Armenian or Assyrian emphasize the importance of the mother tongue education for their language-specific identifications without a censor of the state. However, the school perpetuates the Iranian identity through pushing for teaching and learning of the only Farsi language and targets to accumulate any other language capital by banning the other language usages within the school space. One of the Armenian students, Mikhail, states this circumstance very well as he states his losing Armenian below:

“I am so used to speaking in Farsi here, but I don’t prefer to communicate in Farsi even with my Armenian friends during my school day. . . If they cannot let us speak, we are writing to each other in Armenian during the courses” (Mikhail, male, 3/4/18)<sup>33</sup>

Starting from Mikhail’s narrative, when I asked the setting where the participants used other languages, the students told me that they used their Kurdish, Armenian or Turkish when they wanted to hide something from either the school staff or from other peers. Rather, despite their strong collective membership affiliation as Farsi users, their language attitudes change by using another language as a tactic against the school or a way of exclusion of the other peers. As Scott (1990) proposes the concept ‘hidden transcript’ to distinguish between the private and public transcripts in his study *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* to indicate the performative differences within an individual life, this notion is relevant here to emphasize on the implicit struggle mechanisms of the students against the dominant structure of the school. Besides Farsi, it is normal and even promoted to use Arabic words to refer to specific religious terms. The statement of Elnaz affirms the privilege and exception of Arabic as follows:

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<sup>32</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 56

<sup>33</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 57

“They (referring to the school administration and teachers) always say that Arabic is the language of the Quran, so it is very important for our religion, so you should use words from it instead of other languages.” (Elnaz, female, 14/3/18)<sup>34</sup>

Hence, since Quran is scripted in Arabic and religion is regarded as a symbolic capital to be accrued by the students of the *Fajr* Iranian School, Although the school has another language course in English in its curriculum, the hours for Arabic course double the hours of English language course, and the students are also warned when they use English words in the corridors or the classrooms. So, Arabic is exempted from the ban on using another language in the school environment.

So, through this section, some students with different ethnic and religious affiliations, and as different language users negotiate different identifications as the state dominance exercised over the school space proposes otherness for those due to their self-positionings that lead to cracks in the norms and values of the regime generated around a homogenous and supreme Iranian identity, formed by the Shia culture and Farsi language. Here, this section proves that these students protect their otherness inside the school without totally rejecting it, and even some of them gain an opportunity to play with the rules to be able to protect themselves. And, it is essential to recognize that these examples are not limited to the subsections here.

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<sup>34</sup>See Appendix F for original quotation in Farsi: 58

## 7. CONCLUSION

On the first day of my fieldwork, I was terrified of how I would be received inside the *Fajr* Iranian School after my struggle against the education bureaucracy of the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) in order to obtain permission to conduct a study inside the school, in which the process took over six months. Then, throughout my fieldwork, as the details were given in the chapter related to methodology and fieldwork, I always panicked from the thought of not being able to complete my fieldwork, ever, as the school seemed a ‘wild’ place to conclude fieldwork with accomplishment, especially for a master’s degree student at that critical moment of someone’s life. I purposefully wanted to use the notion of ‘wild’ regarding my field space as to how Gupta and Ferguson (1997) summarized their perception of going to the ‘field’ as going to a ‘wild’ space (8). However, at the end of my fieldwork, I had become the only scholar who could spend a year researching the *Fajr* Iranian School.

This thesis aimed to examine how the social identities of the Iranian students are negotiated through the *Fajr* Iranian School in Turkey. Since the *Fajr* Iranian School has operated continuously since 1882 as a foreign school, providing education for the Iranian community, following the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran, it has become affiliated with the Embassy of the IRI in Turkey. Since then, the school follows the regulations of the Iranian MoE as an ‘embassy school’ without the requirement of the supervision of the MoNE in Turkey. This special position of the school, as a government-run school of the Iranian regime located in a foreign country, implied the significance of the school’s spatial setting. Accordingly, one of the research questions emerged on how the spatial setting of the *Fajr* Iranian School is used as a space for the IRI, as well as for the Iranian students. As the spatial setting where the social relations are carried out in terms of the acquisition of a critical understanding of social identities (Tajfel and Turner 2004), extending my interest, I started to question on how the students negotiate their social identities through an Iranian school in Turkey, and more importantly, if the spatial setting of the *Fajr* Iranian School has influenced them to construct their identity negotiations under a

specific discourse, how their negotiations are formed and articulated. In this sense, this thesis was designed as a two-bend action plan, in which the spatial setting of the school was examined as a first step, and then, how the participants negotiate their social identities through the spatiality of the school were investigated as a second step.

In this thesis's context, my primary purpose was to observe the reflections of the state ideology in the school space and then examine the students' articulated experiences and self-positionings through this spatiality. Relying on the research findings and data analysis, this thesis argued that the spatiality of the *Fajr* Iranian School, regarded as a state ideology apparatus that creates a state-centered habitus, plays a significant role in constructing social identities of the Iranian students in Turkey, and these students negotiate their identities differently based on their self-positionings that are examined through their collective and personal negotiations.

This thesis pursued ethnographic fieldwork in the *Fajr* Iranian School in order to respond to the research questions mentioned above. In brief, this qualitative research was based on participant observation, in-depth interviews, and thematic analysis. The semi-structured and in-depth interviews were carried out with the Iranian students between the ages of 14 and 18, teachers and administrative staff, as well as some parents and graduates. After completing the total numbers of 61 (30 students, 14 school staff, 5 families and 12 graduate) interviews with the participants, thematic analysis was carried out based on the six-step guideline of Braun and Clarke (2006) which are followed as: "(a) familiarization with data, (b) generating initial codes, (c) searching for themes, (d) reviewing themes (e) defining and naming themes and (f) producing the report" (pp.16-23). The first step was accomplished by listening to recorded data many times. In the second step, I transcribed all recorded data along with cross-checking with the audio recordings to identify the narratives. The third step was applied in accordance with the research questions, while the fourth step was administered by checking for the findings underlying each theme as well as by checking if they generated a vivid narrative that supported the data set. Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasize that the fundamental aspects of the data are captured under a theme "in relation to the research question and represents some levels of patterned response or meaning within the data set" (82). So, in the fifth step, I prepared a descriptive template and a sectioned theme and subthemes to identify what was of interest related to my research questions. Among the data set, I attempted to write down the commonalities to indicate the prevalence of the commonality ( e.g., of the 20 female students, fifteen mentioned that they uncover their headscarves after the school) and also to highlight any differences or outliers (e.g., of the 30 students, seven mentioned that they intentionally walked over the Israel and USA

flags). In the sixth step, I demanded to present a narrative about the representations of what the data shows to produce "a scholarly report of the analysis" along with a critique towards a researcher perception in terms of the argument of "how we sample in the field, and then sample again during analysis in deciding who and what to quote, involves decisions about whose voices will be heard" (Braun and Clarke 2006; Patton 2002; Bruner 1990). Following these steps on my analysis, the research findings were discussed in separate chapters regarding their research topics distinguished as the spatiality of the school and the social identity construction of the students through this spatiality as it was determined significant in this process.

Before delving into the results of the ethnographic fieldwork inside the school, having relied on the secondary resources, this study aimed to provide scenery for Iranians and their educational institutions in Turkey to frame the school's current spatial position and contextualize the backdrop of the identity negotiations of the Iranians in Turkey. In order to do that, since the *Fajr* Iranian School was established in 1882 during the Ottoman Empire and the school is rarely known in the literature, I presented a historical background on the *Fajr* Iranian School under the Ottoman Empire's foreign school network to understand the position of the school as a foreign enterprise, though, it was transformed into an embassy school after the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979. I tried to illustrate an overview of the foreign schools within the education system from the final phase of the Ottoman Empire through the period of nation-building within the Turkish Republic and provided a brief historical background on the establishment of the Iranian schools. By detailing how changes in education politics and key historical events transformed the position of foreign schools, I aimed to trace information regarding the *Fajr* Iranian School while providing a brief institutional history of it, that has changed in accordance with these educational politics or transformations from the Ottoman Empire to the present-day of Turkey. Moreover, in the same chapter, I provided a background related to the Iranian community and their situations in Turkey. Here, I intend for the reader to gain an understanding of the setting related to the *Fajr* Iranian School as well as the situations of the Iranians in Turkey before discussing the spatiality of the school and social identity negotiations of the Iranian students through the *Fajr* Iranian School based on an ethnographic study.

During the analysis of the spatial setting of the *Fajr* Iranian School, this study traced the reflection of the state ideology of the IRI by examining the spatial configuration, material objects and symbols and social routines and rituals. Through this analysis, I utilized the theoretical indications of Althusser and Bourdieu and other significant researches relevant to the purpose of my study. I argued that the school functions as an ideological state apparatus (Althusser 1971) and exercises a symbolic power

over its students by creating a state-centered habitus along with its capitals (religion, language, apparel, martyrdom, and so forth) to be accrued by its students (Bourdieu 1977, 1986), as these capitals stand for a political content favored by the regime of Iran.

The walls of the school were surrounded by the national and religious symbols related to the IRI. The representation of the "multiple illustrations" of the IRI's founder, Ayatollah Khomeini and his successor, Khomeini, the presence of the flag of the IRI and the portrayal of the state's enemies' flags on the ground of the front garden, the depiction of the religious symbols such as Quran, the school rules and ceremonies were narrated by the participants as well as were presented through my participant observation. In a sense, the *Fajr* Iranian School as an official institution becomes a transmitter of the official ideology through the spatial setting of the school as thematically analyzed in Chapter Four and the rules and the attitudes of the administrative staff become the representatives of the official discourse of the regime based on *Iraniiyyat* and *Islamiyyat*. Moreover, the examples I introduced in Chapter Four have (re)productive forces and (re)produce the regime's values on gender norms, nationalism, and Shia culture, etc., as parts of the state ideology. To illustrate, students must be quiet during the morning rituals, they must behave according to the *adab* rules, and they must give expected answers to the questions during the courses, they must carry out the apparel requirements demanded by the school administration, they must prepare the boards as required, and perform *salaat* during a school day.

Sibley (1995) defines 'closed' space as a strictly defined place with boundaries, in which people comply with already granted norms and values. Within these closed spaces, 'fitting in' is cultivated through the rituals, orders, hierarchy and dominance of one actor or group of actors over another. So, in this study, even if the students' agency was considered very limited on these norms and values that produce the spatial setting of the school, their narratives are valuable here in recognizing that space is always in the process of being produced by encounters and interactions between heterogeneous 'agents' including humans, imaginations, materials and so on (Massey 2005). Since Massey (2005) states that spaces are continuously co-produced by various agents, power relations or dominant forces, they never 'finished' while occurring in the realm of possibility. In this case, in order to extend the analysis of this thesis mostly based on the reproduction theorist' discussion on the role of the school as the reproduction of the dominance power or dominant groups, the role of agency within this 'closed' school space was regarded as the accomplishment of the possibility of unfinished space and was discussed in both of the chapters related to the research findings on the introduction of the tactics of some students by giving

a reference to the conceptualization of Certeau's tactics. As discussed in the previous chapters, these tactics some students made use of included wearing colorful *hejabs* against the compensatory black *hejab* or heavy make-ups, using other languages in purpose against the rules of the school, transforming the non-conformity of the gender-segregated usage of the school space into their ways of living, speaking up the taboos or unspoken topics of the regime within the school space or sometimes staying in silence as a form of resistance.

As the spatial setting of the *Fajr* Iranian School was articulated as significant in certain themes and discourses reifying in the interviews with the participants in constructing social identities, the second part of the analysis of this thesis addressed how the Iranian students of the *Fajr* Iranian School negotiate their social identities through the spatiality of the school. Here, first, I discussed that as the school members are modified into a state-centered habitus, their identities are mostly constructed around the world perceived via a collective group lens. As collective negotiations are driven from the reifying themes in the accounts of the participants concerning their group identity mostly by relying on the self-evaluations around the dichotomy of the ingroup (Iranians) and outgroup (Turkish society), these negotiations were discussed around two most prominent identifications; 'being a student of the Iranian school' and 'being a foreigner in Turkey'.

In the accounts of the students, being a student of the Iranian school was associated with the Iranian identity banner, which compromised the Shia culture and Farsi language. So, as this study claimed that language (Farsi) and religion (Shia Islam), regarded as symbolic capitals (using this broad notion as cultural and social capital are forms of it), were constructed and promoted by the symbolic power of the school, its members' understanding of identity is also influenced by that. As the privileged identity of the IRI has been strengthened within the school habitus through the school practices discussed in the first part of the analysis of this thesis, the students' collective identities were negotiated via their narratives on their reasons for attending to the school, the perception of the school space, the feeling of religious ceremonies as well as their experiences as a foreigner in Turkey.

In the narratives of the students, along with the words of 'safe space' and like 'home country', the *Fajr* Iranian School was perceived as a private space along with its contribution to 'being Iranian'. Since the school has established an inner space for its members while creating some boundaries from the outside world- associated Turkish items-, the sense of safety and comfort can easily be felt. These feelings of safety and comfort create a definite sense of belonging, and the participants envelop the school space as a determiner and protector for their social identities during

their interviews. The participants' positive thought in favor of their Iranian school system, along with their negative connotations in the Turkish school system, creates an ingroup/ outgroup dichotomy and promotes a collective status against an outgroup. So, this symbolic status strengthens their sense of belonging to their Iranian ingroup (Tajfel and Turner 2004). Since these narratives included an image of (in)group and (out)group, drawing on Tajfel's social identity theory, in which people identify themselves with certain in-groups while disconnecting them from other outgroups, I discussed that as the pejorative image of the outgroup (Turkish society) is strengthened in the narratives of the students, the belonging to the ingroup (Iranian) membership enhances at the same time. So, the Iranian students are more likely to think of the significance of ingroup homogeneity and enhanced ingroup identification against the image of the outgroup. Moreover, as Bourdieu would state, a "common sense" is established through the socialized conditions of some religious and national ceremonies of the school for assuming an engagement to the private habitus of the Iranian school to uphold their collectivity. Their attendance at these ceremonies, such as *Ashura* in the mosque, also present symbolic extensions of the school space, where a collective Iranian-ness continues to be asserted in more powerful ways.

However, since the members of the *Fajr* Iranian School are heterogeneous with different religious and ethnic affiliations and some narratives of the students elicited that different positionings of some groups- such as Sunnis, Kurds, Christians, Bahais- were articulated within the school space, it is also essential to transcend beyond this collective lens analysis. Even, these collective negotiations are contradictory to these personal negotiations. In this sense, in contrast to discussions on the group identity complying with the reproduction theories implying on the school space as a site for dominant ideologies and groups, the *Fajr* Iranian School was also articulated as a site of struggle for whom is different from the privileged 'Iranian' identity in the school space or is discordant vis-a-vis the school practices. Here, the ways these students speak about their identities as members of a collective group differed from how they speak about their personal references in interpersonal settings. Here, I argued that as the dominant identity driven by the regime priorities is constructed around *Iraniyyat* and *Islamiyyat* in the school, this led to privileges to some groups while manifesting repression to other groups. So, the participants, who have associated themselves as belonging to the different sub-groupings (language, ethnic or religious) inside the *Fajr* Iranian School in interpersonal domain, were exposed to the different levels of symbolic power within this state-centered habitus, since symbolic capitals are prone to shifts for particular groups in the school space.

Hence, while the *Fajr* Iranian School plays a vital role in creating a 'space' for its students to learn and maintain the culture, history and language around being



Iranian; on the other hand, it also constitutes a site of struggle due to being a 'closed place' where the symbolic power of the state is exercised over its agents as the school aims to exert a dominant Iranian identity. In this sense, the students negotiate their social identities differently based on their self-positionings discussed through the sections on the collective and personal negotiations.

In sum, through this thesis, grounded on the concept of ideological state apparatuses of Althusser (1971), that categorizes schools as institutions structuring the ways individuals understand and represent themselves in a society, the *Fajr* Iranian School is discussed as an ideological state apparatus for socialization to a collective Iranian identity, more as a state-centered habitus by which students learn how to continue being a 'member' of a specific 'community' even in a foreign country. So, in a sense, the school as an official institution becomes a transmitter of official ideology not only through the syllabus, the school practices, or the attitudes of the administrative staff but also on the walls, desks, and boards of the school, hence through its spatiality. Extending this discussion on theoretical indications, the *Fajr* Iranian School holds a "symbolic power" over its students so that this power translates into a conceptualized social reality, creating a "habitus" for its members with specific mechanisms and meanings that regulate its structure. As the main argument of this thesis relies on that, this habitus plays a key role in constructing Iranian students' social identities at the *Fajr* Iranian School. These students negotiate their collective and personal identities based on their positions and perceptions ideologically imposed by the school setting, that are examined through the narratives of the students related to belonging, representation, ingroup/outgroup under the collective/personal negotiations.

Since this study is significant due to its recall of the presence of the *Fajr* Iranian School in Turkey for over a hundred years in Turkey, further studies could focus more on the institutional history of the school based on the primary resources. For a comprehensive review on the history of the school through the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic era, it is recommended to examine the archives in both the Ministry of Education of these countries; the diplomatic documents in these countries' Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the reports of the Istanbul Iranian Consulate and the Iranian National Documents Organization. I believe that further studies based on the archival materials will clarify the continuities and discontinuities in the activities of the school under different governing periods of both Turkey and Iran. In this sense, future researches are encouraged to point out historical patterns in the school following the changing educational policies in Iran before and after the Islamic Revolution. They could also examine the interaction between the IRI and Turkey by focusing on the measures of control exercised over the school in different

decades and how the school's students experienced it in different terms. Different methodologies and research designs may also be adapted for further studies, such as oral history or comparative analysis. Moreover, as the scope of this thesis is not on the examination of the migration movement of the Iranians from Iran to the Ottoman era, but the literature was briefly explored while writing a section on the Iranian community in Turkey, there is almost absence of the studies on it. In this sense, the Iranian community as the Ottoman subjects and their motivations behind their move to the Ottoman Empire might be a topic for further studies to fulfill this gap in the literature.

Since this study is pioneer along with its ethnographic research inside the *Fajr* Iranian School to examine the spatial setting of the school and its impact on its subjects' social identity negotiations, another possibility for future research could be conducting a longitudinal study of Iranian youth in Turkey by including the Iranian students in other public or private schools to see how the students' language attitudes shift and how the intersection between the language and identity is constructed in a comparative sense. Moreover, this research with the Iranian students might shed light on future education and social identity research with immigrants in general or other Iranians who attend public and private schools in Turkey. For several negotiations of social identity through Iranian schools, the scope would extend to different Iranian communities in other countries. So, comparing the ways of social identity negotiations in various parts of the world would be extremely interesting. I am curious to see how future research related to the Iranian schools or Iranian community extend and challenge the preliminary findings of this study even further.

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## APPENDIX A

### PARTICIPANT QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this questionnaire is for the researcher to gain a better understanding of Iranian students at the Fajr Iranian School in Istanbul. This survey is conducted as a part of a Master's Degree dissertation for Turkish Studies at Sabancı University. In this survey, you may answer as little or as many questions as you would like. For some of the questions, you may choose more than one answer if it applies. You may use the back of the paper if you need additional space.

1. **Age :**

2. **Gender :** ( ) Female ( ) Male ( ) Other

3. **The place of birth :**

4. **Nationality :**

5. **The professions of the family:**

Mother:

Father:

6. **How many siblings do you have? If you have, where are they studying?**

7. **When did you move to Istanbul?**

8. **What is the motivation behind your moving?**

( ) Education ( ) Business of the family ( ) Transit to another country ( ) Other:

9. **How many years have you attended Istanbul Iranian School?**

10. **Which class are you studying in?**

11. **Before Istanbul Iranian School, where were you studying? Please specifically mention about the details of the type of education (ex. private, public, gymnasium, etc)**

12. **When you compare, is there any difference between your school experience between Iran and Turkey?**



Curriculum  Friend circle  The physical conditions of school  Quality of education  The influence of Turkish culture  School Discipline  Other:

**13. Which language do you speak with your family?**

Persian  Kurdish  Azeri  English  Turkish  Other:

**14. Which language(s) are you learning inside the classroom?**

Persian  Turkish  Arabic  English  Other:

**15. Which language(s) the most difficult for you to learn inside the classroom?**

Persian  Turkish  Arabic  English  Other:

**16. Which language(s) are the most enjoyable for you to learn in the classroom?**

Persian  Turkish  Arabic  English  Other:

**17. What is your fluency level for the Persian language?**

Elementary/ Basic  Limited Proficiency  Professional Proficiency  Full Proficiency/ Fluent

**18. What is your fluency level for the Turkish language?**

Elementary/ Basic  Limited Proficiency  Professional Proficiency  Full Proficiency/ Fluent

**19. What is your fluency level for the English language?**

Elementary/ Basic  Limited Proficiency  Professional Proficiency  Full Proficiency/ Fluent

**20. Which language(s) do you think are the most important for your personal life (family, friends)?**

Persian  Kurdish  Azeri  English  Turkish  Other:

**21. Which language(s) do you think are the most important for your professional life (career)?**

Persian  Kurdish  Azeri  English  Turkish  Other:

**22. Have you ever attended a Turkish school?**

Yes  No  The reason to leave:

**23. How do you feel about living in Turkey? Could you please describe it in terms of how comfortable, safe, happy, foreign, homesick, similar you are feeling?**

**24. Do you think that Persian and Turkish cultures are similar?**

Yes  No  I don't know

**25. If your answer is 'yes', how do you think they are?**

Religion  Nation  Food  Tradition  Language  Living standards  Politics  Other:

**26. Do you have any Turkish friend (s)?**

Yes  No

**27. If your answer is 'yes', how have you met with them?**

Neighborhood  Affinity  School  Friend Circle  Courses outside the school  Other:

**28. I do not feel comfortable with .....**

Studying in the Iranian School  Living in Istanbul  Turkish culture and society  Turkish state policies towards the foreigners  Life style in Turkey  Other:

**29. Do you feel isolated from Turkey inside the school?**

Yes  No

**30. If your answer is 'yes', what kind of reasons might be appropriate for your feeling?**

Language problem  Having only Iranian friend circle  Cultural difference  Different education systems  Having a foreign citizenship  Discriminatory behavior of the Turkish people  Other:

**31. What are the problems that you have been facing with during your education life in Istanbul?**

1  Host country based =  Language  Culture  Adaptation to Turkish education system during the preparation for YÖS  Communication  Social life style  Scarcity of Persian resources  Homesick for Iran  Other:

2  School based =  Circulation of the teachers biyearly  Scarcity of resources  Difficulty of the courses  Lack of the availability for the preparation for YÖS  Internet availability  Other:

**32. In the future, would you like to live in Turkey or abroad?**

Turkey  Iran  Abroad  I don't know

**33. Do you have a plan to go to university? If yes, what are you planning to study?**

Yes  No  The field:

**34. In which country are you planning to go to university?**

Turkey  Iran  Another country ( Please specify the country:  
.....)

**35. What is the motivation behind choosing Iranian School to study in Turkey?**

To follow the Iranian education curriculum  Possibility to go back to Iran  Commitment to Persian history and culture  Persian language difficulty  Affect of a relative or a friend  Lack of Turkish language ability  Lack of knowledge about the Turkish education system and schools  Other:

**36. If it was not your choice, would you prefer to go to a Turkish high school? Why or why not?**

Yes  No  The reason:

**37. What are the main topics do you discuss about with your friends?**

Courses and exams  School issues  Future plans  Social Media  Family issues  Leisure time hobbies  Dress codes  Other:

Thanks for your help

1. سن:
2. جنسیت:  
( ) زن ( ) مرد
3. محل تولد:
4. ملیت:
5. حرفه های خانواده:  
مادر:  
پدر:
6. چند خواهر و برادر دارید؟
7. چه زمانی به استانبول رفتید؟
8. انگیزه مهاجرت شما چیست؟  
( ) آموزش ( ) کسب و کار خانواده ( ) انتقال به کشور دیگری  
( ) دیگر:
9. از چه زمانی در مدرسه استانبول تحصیل کرده اید؟
10. کدام کلاس در حال حاضر حضور دارید؟
11. قبل از مدرسه استانبول ایران، کجا تحصیل کردید؟ لطفاً به طور خاص ذکر کنید که آیا این یک مدرسه دولتی یا خصوصی بود ..

12. هنگامی که آنها را مقایسه می کنید، تفاوت بین تجربه مدرسه ای در ایران و در ترکیه وجود دارد؟

( ) برنامه درسی ( ) دایره دوست ( ) شرایط فیزیکی مدرسه  
( ) کیفیت آموزش ( ) جنبه فرهنگ در ترکیه ( )  
مدیریت مدرسه ( ) سایر:

13. کدام زبان در هنگام برقراری ارتباط در خانه استفاده می شود؟ (شما می توانید بیش از یک علامت بزنید)  
( ) فارسی ( ) کردی ( ) آنری ( ) انگلیسی ( ) ترکی ( )  
دیگر:

14. آیا می توانید به زبان ترکی صحبت کنید؟ اگر "بله"، میزان مهارت زبان شما چیست؟

( ) نو ( ) مبتدی ( ) متوسط ( ) پیشرفته ( )

15. آیا تا به حال به یک مدرسه ترکیه رفته اید؟

( ) بله ( ) نه ( ) دلیل برای ترک:

16. آیا در ترکیه راحت هستید؟  
( ) بله خیر

17. آیا فکر می کنید فرهنگ های فارسی و ترکی شبیه هستند؟  
( ) بله خیر

17. آیا فکر می‌کنید فرهنگ‌های فارسی و ترکی شبیه هستند؟

( ) بله خیر

18. اگر پاسخ شما "بله" باشد؟ چه چیزی متفاوت است (شما می‌توانید بیش از یک علامت بزنید)

( ) دین ( ) ملت ( ) غذا ( ) سنت ( ) زبان ( )

استانداردهای زندگی

( ) سیاست ( ) دیگر:

19. آیا دوست ترکیه دارید؟

( ) بله خیر

20. اگر جواب شما «بله» به سوال بالا باشد، چگونه آنها را می‌شناسید؟

( ) محله ( ) بستگان ( ) مدرسه ( ) دوستان ( ) دوره‌های

خارج از مدرسه ( ) دیگر:

21. من مشکلات سازگاری با ..... (شما می‌توانید

بیش از یک)

( ) مدرسه ایرانی ( ) زندگی در استانبول ( ) فرهنگ و

جامعه ترکیه ( ) سیاست‌های دولت ترکیه نسبت به

خارجی‌ها ( ) سبک زندگی در ترکیه ( ) سایر:

22. آیا در ترکیه احساس تنهایی می‌کنید؟

( ) بله خیر

23. اگر پاسخ شما به سوال بالا «بله» باشد، چه

دلایلی ممکن است برای احساس شما مناسب باشد؟

(شما می‌توانید بیش از یک علامت بزنید)

( ) زبان ( ) تنها دایره دوستی ایران ( ) تفاوت فرهنگی

( ) سیستم‌های آموزشی مختلف ( ) ایرانی بودن ( )

رفتار تبعیض‌آمیز مردم ترکیه ( ) سایر:

24. مشکلات شما در طول تحصیلات در استانبول چیست؟ (شما می توانید بیش از یک برای هر دسته تیک بزنید)

1- مشکلات میزبان کشور

( ) زبان

( ) فرهنگ

( ) سازگاری با سیستم آموزش ترکیه در هنگام آماده

سازی برای YÖK

( ) ارتباطات

( ) سبک زندگی اجتماعی

( ) کمبود منابع ایرانی ( ) احساس غربت برای ایران

( ) دیگر:

2- مشکلات مدرسه

( ) تغییرات معلمین سالیانه

( ) کمبود منابع

( ) دشواری دوره ها

( ) فقدان در دسترس بودن برای آماده سازی برای

YÖS

( ) دسترسی به اینترنت

( ) دیگر:

25. آیا شما برنامه ای برای رفتن به دانشگاه دارید؟

و چه می خواهید مطالعه کنید؟

( ) بله ( ) نه ( ) زمینه آینده شما:

26. شما فکر می کنید که به دانشگاه بروید؟

( ) ترکیه ( ) ایران ( ) کشور دیگری (لطفا کشور را

مشخص کنید: .....

27. اگر می‌توانید، به دبیرستان ترکیه بروید، آیا می‌خواهید؟ چرا و چرا نه؟  
( ) بله ( ) نه ( ) دلیل:

28. انگیزه انتخاب مدرسه ایرانی برای تحصیل در ترکیه چیست؟ (شما می‌توانید بیش از یک برای هر دسته تیک بزنید)  
( ) پیروی از برنامه درسی آموزش و پرورش ایران  
( ) امکان بازگشت به ایران ( ) تعهد به تاریخ و فرهنگ ایران  
( ) مشکل زبان فارسی ( ) تأثیر یک نسل یا یک دوست  
( ) عدم توانایی زبان ترکی  
( ) فقدان دانش در مورد نظام آموزشی و مدارس ترکی ( ) سایر:

29. موضوعاتی که با دوستان خود بحث می‌کنید چیست؟ (شما می‌توانید بیش از یک برای هر دسته تیک بزنید)  
( ) دوره‌ها و امتحانات ( ) مسائل مدرسه ( ) برنامه‌های آینده ( ) رسانه‌های اجتماعی ( ) مسائل خانوادگی  
( ) سرگرمی اوقات فراغت ( ) کدهای لباس ( ) دیگر:

با تشکر برای کمک شما ☺



## APPENDIX B

### SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### Student Interviews

##### 1 Introductions

- Please give some background information about yourself (age, class, etc.)
- Where are you from?
- Where is your family from and what are their professions?
- How do you identify yourself in terms of your ethnical background?
- Have you ever experienced discrimination based on your ethnicity or on your religious faith?
- Would you say that you are religious?
- Which religion and sectarian do you consider yourself belong to?
- Do you wear headscarf outside the school?
- Which neighborhood are you living in Istanbul?
- In which city were you living before moving to Istanbul?
- Do you have family members living in different countries or other cities in Turkey?
- What's your family life like?
  - Which languages do you speak with your family?
  - How close are you with your family? In what terms?
- Do you have any relative working for the Consulate or the school?

##### 2 Migration story

- For how long have you been in Turkey?

- Have you ever talked about the reasons of your moving to Turkey with your family?
- How often do you go to Iran?
- What type of residence do you have? Do you have any registration with UNHCR in Turkey?
- Could you please mention about your visa process in Turkey? Have you been facing with problems during this process? If yes, how?
- Is your family thinking about going back to Iran or going abroad? If yes, what do you think about it?
- How do you feel about being an Iranian in Turkey?
- Do you feel closer to the Turkish culture?
- Where is home for you?
- What is your opinion of Turkey and Turkish people? Do you think the Persian culture and the Turkish culture are similar?

### 3 Being a student at an Iranian school

- For how many years have you attended to this school?
- What were the motivations behind attending to this school?
- Do you enjoy being a student at this school?
- What are the most and least enjoyable parts of school for you?
- What are your classmates and teachers like?
- How close are you with your teachers and the school administration?
- Have you ever gotten any punishment from the school administration? If yes, why?
- Do you think that the school administration is directly under the jurisdiction of the Iranian state authorities? How do you feel about it?
- Could you compare your experience in this school with your previous school experience in Iran? How similar and how different are they?
- Out of all the classes you're taking, which one(s) are the most and least important for you? Why?

- What do you think about your ‘religion lessons’?
- Do you have any music or sports lessons?
- How do you spend your course breaks?
- What kind of social, cultural or religious events are organized inside the school? Do you like to join these events? Why or why not?
- How do you feel about wearing headscarf inside the school?
- Which languages are you learning at school right now?
- Is Iranian language and history learning important for you? If yes, how so?
- Which languages do you use the most?
  - At school?
  - At home?
  - With friends?
- How do you come to the school? Shuttle, public transportation or private car?

#### 4 Social life

- Are your closest friends from your school?
- Do you see your friends and teachers outside of the school?
- Do you have friends outside of the school environment?
- Do you have friends with different backgrounds (educational, ethnic, religious, etc.)?
- What kinds of social activities do you participate in?
- How do you spend your spare time? Could you please specify one day of your life?
- What kind of difficulties and conveniences do you have in your daily life in Turkey?
- Do you use social media? How often?
- Are your friends and teachers added to your social media accounts?

- How do you feel sharing your private life outside the school via your social media accounts? Any pejorative reaction until now?
- How often do you read about the current news in Iran?
- How often do you read about the current news in Turkey?
- How do you see yourself politically situated in?

## 5 Post-graduation

- What are your plans for after you graduate from this school?
- Would you prefer to study/live in Turkey or in a different country?
- If you are not planning to come back to Iran, what are the reasons for that?
- Which academic skills do you think will be the most useful for you after graduation?
- Do you think you will use your language skills in your life after you graduate? If so, in which ways?

## 6 Reflections on the participant's identity

- Identity Chart
 

"An identity chart is a diagram that individuals fill in with words and phrases they use to describe themselves as well as the labels that society gives them" (from Facing History and Ourselves website)

  - Think about the question, "Who am I?"
  - Background
  - Ethnic
    - \* National
    - \* Religious
  - Roles
    - \* Family
    - \* School
    - \* With friends

- Hobbies and interests
  - \* Art and Culture
  - \* Sports
- Other questions
  - \* What are the most important parts of my life?
  - \* What do I want others to see about me? What do I want others to not see about me?
- It would be difficult to verbally express these thoughts. An alternative way you can articulate these thoughts is by drawing an identity chart on a piece of paper. One way to do this is with the following:
  - 1 Write the word “me” and draw a circle around it.
  - 2 Create some categories with circles around them. Examples of categories might be characteristics, interests, hobbies, goals, etc
  - 3 Draw lines extending from these category circles and write down specific words that are connected with these categories, which describe different aspects of who you are.
  - 4 Looking at your chart; what are the five things you think are the most significant in shaping your identity?
- Follow-up questions:
  - \* Do you feel like you have grown, developed, or changed since attending this school?
  - \* Do you think that attending this school as influenced the way you see yourself and the world?
  - \* Do you think that you have enough personal space inside the school to express your identity?
  - \* If you did not attend this school, how might you be similar or different today?
  - \* Do you identify with certain identities (national, ethnic, religious, etc.)? If yes, do you think this school shaped the way you perceive your identity?

- \* Do you think that your language learning processes at this school have shaped your identity?

### **Administration and Staff Interviews**

- Please give a basic description about yourself and your role at this school.
- How did you get appointed to this role? What is the process of it for the Consulate?
- What were the motivations behind your moving to teach in Turkey?
- For how long have you been in Turkey?
- How do you feel about living in Turkey as an Iranian?
- Is there any difference in the education curriculum thought in the Fajr Iranian school from Iran? If yes, how?
- Since you've been working at this school, have you noticed any trends in students in terms of:
  - Behavior and discipline
  - Interactions with teachers
  - Interactions with classmates
  - Interactions within the public space
  - Interactions with the families
  - The languages they speak inside and outside of the classroom environment
- Since you have worked in Iran and have had enough experience to compare, how similarities and differences between the students in Turkey and Iran are there in terms of trends you mentioned above?
- How close are you with your students here?
- In your opinion, what is the role of the Iranian school in helping its students learn about culture and language?
- Do you think that the school is an important shaper of its students' identity? If yes, how so?

- What do you think are the positive and negative aspects about attending an Iranian school for your students?
- What do you think the positive and negative aspects about living in Turkey for your students?

### **Graduate adults**

- Please give some background information about yourself (age, ethnicity, religion, profession, family background etc.)
- For how many years did you attend to the Iranian school?
- What were the motivations behind attending to this school?
- Did you enjoy being a student at this school?
- What were the most and least enjoyable parts of school for you?
- In your opinion, what was the role of the Iranian school in helping you learn about culture and language?
- What do you think were the positive and negative aspects about attending an Iranian school following your graduation?
- Do you think that the school was an important shaper of your identity? If yes, how so?
- What do you think the positive and negative aspects about living in Turkey but having studied in the Iranian school?
- How did you feel about being an Iranian in Turkey while studying in an Iranian school?
- After graduation, why did you prefer to study/live in Turkey? Or turn back to Iran? Or go to another country?
- If you had a chance to go back, would you prefer to attend the same school or change it?

APPENDIX C

PETITION FOR APPROVAL FROM IRANIAN CONSULATE

بسمه تعالی

به سرپرستی جبهه روس اسلام ایران در ترکیه، روسیه و آسیای میانه  
سرپرست محترم جناب آقای دکتر سپهری؛  
با سلام و احترام اینجانب - آلوایرک اورتولوش دانشجو فوق لیسانس رشته  
علوم اجتماعی دانشگاه سابانی مراس جمع آوری اطلاعات مربوط به پایان نامه  
فوق لیسانس خود به عنوان "دلیل موفقیت دانش آموزان مجتمع غیر" نیاز به  
عکاسی مجتمع غیر ۱، دانش آموزان و مدیران دارم، خواهشمند است ضمن بررسی  
موضوع با اینجانب عکاسی نمایید.

باتشکر

Alan İsmail Karabulut  
*[Signature]*

بسمه تعالی  
جناب آقای سپهری، سرکار خانم حسینی  
با سلام و احترام  
لطفاً با تأیید و صورت پذیرد. باتشکر  
پیشکش با نامبرده صورت پذیرد.

جناب آقای ...  
با سلام و احترام  
اینجانب ...  
با تشکر

۹۶، ۸، ۴



## APPENDIX D

### PARTICIPANTS' PROFILES

The following table provides a brief summary of the demographic information of the participants to the research. These points were collected through the questionnaires and the course of semi-structured interviews. In the chapter related to the research findings, I had written detailed descriptions of the personal background of some participants as significant informants based on repeated points of conversation and topics in our conversations. In addition to that, the table below presents basic information in order for the reader to get to know who the participants of the research are.

	Students	Graduates	Teachers	Families
Age Period	14-18	28-62	30-60	35-65
Gender	18 Female, 9 Male, 3 not indicated	6 Female, 4 Male, 2 Gay	7 Female, 7 Male	5 Female, 2 Male,
Department/ Field	Literatures Biology Mathematics	Literatures Biology Mathematics	English, Theology, Quran, History, Maths, Geography, Social Sciences, Persian Language and Literature, Arabic, Biology and Lab, Defense studies, Career planning	Teacher,  Businessman, Journalist,  Tailor, Consulate officer

Regional/city affiliation	Istanbul: Başakşehir, Beylikdüzü, Bakırköy, Yeşilköy, Ataköy, Zeytinburnu	Istanbul: Bakırköy, Yeşilköy, Ataköy, Zeytinburnu  Toronto, Canada, Los Angeles, USA	Istanbul: Sultanahmet	Istanbul: Ataköy, Bayrampaşa, Başakşehir, Yeşilköy
Original regional/city affiliation	Iran: Tehran, Tabriz, Shiraz, Qum, Kermanshah, Sanadaj, Urumieh	Iran: Tehran, Khuzestan, Isfahan	Iran: Tehran, Isfahan, Tabriz	Iran: Tehran
Religious affiliation	10 Shia 6 Sunni 6 Not indicated 4 Christian 2 Bahai 1 Jew 1 Ateist	5 Ateist 2 Sunni 2 Shia 2 Not indicated 1 Deist	14 Shia	5 Shia 2 Deist
Years at Fajr Iranian school	Avg. 8 years	Avg. 8 years	Avg. 2 year	-
School activities	Theater, Reciting Quran during the morning rituals	Theater	-	-
Languages spoken	Persian, English, Turkish (6 fluent), Kurdish (4 fluent)	Persian, Turkish, English	Persian, English (1 fluent)	Persian, Turkish (3 fluent)
Languages spoken at home	Persian, Azeri, Kurdish (1), Turkish (1), Assyrian (2), Armenian (2)	Persian	-	Persian
Ethnic Background	Farsi, Kurdish, Azeri, Assyrian, Armenian, Turk	Farsi, Kurdish	Farsi	Farsi, Azeri

Self-assessed level of Turkish	18 beginner or none, 6 daily usage, 6 fluent	10 fluent, 2 very limited -none user	None	3 fluent, 2 very limited, 2 none user
Family Backgrounds	Teachers (6) Consulate (4) Others (20)	Teachers (2) Consulate (2) Others (8)	-	-
Most personally important language	Persian, Kurdish (1), Armenian (1)	Persian	Persian	Persian
Most professionally important or required language	Persian, English	Turkish, English	Persian	Persian, Turkish
Plans for future place to study or live	Abroad or Not Sure (20) Iran (8) Turkey (2)	Abroad (7) Turkey (5)	Abroad (2) Iran (12)	Turkey (2) Iran (4) Abroad (1)

## APPENDIX E

### SCHOOL SAMPLING PLAN

PLACE	Fajr Iranian School (Old Building)
Address	Sultanahmet, Istanbul Near to the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of National Education
Common places	Common lounge Libraries Corridors Back garden Front garden (Entrance of the school)
Eating areas	Canteen on ground floor Kitchen on entrance floor
Recreation areas	Theater saloon and the science lab on top floor Sports room on ground floor
Classrooms	Entrance floor, Ground floor, 1st and 2nd floors The windows are large and barred, and the garden wall with fence is visible from almost all classroom window + The portraits of Khomeini and Khamenei are on the walls
Other rooms	Theater saloon (used for the commemorative ceremonies, parent-teacher association board meetings and salaats) on top floor, Two Libraries- small library on entrance floor and old-large library (no access permit to the students since the books there were published before the Revolution) on top floor, One Science lab on top floor

Teacher's rooms	Two separate large rooms next to each other on entrance floor (one for male and one for female teachers) The portraits of Khomeini and Khamenei are on the walls
Principal's office	Entrance floor Door always closed and decorated with banners in Persian and the carpets The portraits of Khomeini and Khamenei The names of previous principals and graduation pictures
Vice principal's office	Entrance floor Door always closed Next to the female teachers' room
SCHOOL SCHEDULE	
Breaktime	10-minute breaks between lessons Two sessions for each six lessons (from 07.30 am to 1 pm & from 01.30 pm to 7 pm) - Students on the mornings and students on the afternoons
Before and after school	Shuttle buses take students to and from their homes; or students use the public transportations or the parents lift the students with their private cars
EVENTS / ACTIVITIES	
Clubs	None
School trips	Park trips to Belgrade Forest (twice a year)
Special school events	Islamic Revolution Day, Islamic Republic Day, Martyrdom of Imam Ali, Nowruz celebrations, Demise of Imam Khomeini, Ashoura ceremonies
ARTIFACTS	

Common areas	<p>American and Israeli flags drawn on the ground of the school entrance (at the front garden)</p> <p>Khomeini photography and paintings in corridors</p> <p>Iranian flags and maps created by primary education students in stairwells</p> <p>The closet for storing the phones of the students (phones are banned inside the building)</p> <p>Garden approximately 30 m2 with a basketball hoop</p>
Classrooms	<p>Damaged wall paintings, old classroom chairs, one blackboard, one table and chair for the teacher</p> <p>On the walls :</p> <p>The portraits of Khomeini and Khamenei</p> <p>The picture of the Iranian flag</p> <p>The tableaux of Bismillahirrahmanirrahim</p> <p>The country news and banners in Persian</p> <p>Non Atatürk portrait nor Istiklal Marşı banners</p>
Banners	<p>The current news on Iranian martyries</p> <p>Warnings to behave with ‘adab’(decent)</p> <p>Classroom schedules</p> <p>National poems</p> <p>The behavior rules of the school</p> <p>Composition competition posters</p> <p>The studying suggestions on Konkur (university exam in Iran)</p>
Objects	<p>Old Piano, Tall Dressing Mirror, Photographs of alumni, Small table for Haftsin (Nowroz’s seven symbols)</p>

## APPENDIX F

### ORIGINAL QUATATIONS OF PARTICIPANTS (in Farsi)

1. نمی فهمم چرا آنها یرجم ها را در آنجا نقلتی می کنند. من نه ایالات متحده آمریکا و نه اسرائیل را دوست دارم. به خاطر آنها ، ما در ایران تحت تحریم ها زندگی می کنیم. اما هیچ چیز اتفاق نمی افتد وقتی شما بر روی یرجم های آنها قدم می زنید ، بسیار بی معنی. در ایران حتی متوجه آنها نمی شدم. زیرا آنها تقریباً در همه جا ، در مدارس ، در برخی از جاده ها یا میادین نقلتی شده اند. اما ، در اینجا ، من این (Ali, 16/12/17) واقعتاً را بیشتر تشخیص می دهم که هر روز صبح بر روی این یرجم ها قدم می زنم
2. قدم زدن بر روی این یرجم ها به معنی ورود به کشور من از ترکیه است. این برای من به معنای چیزی نیست ، هیچ نگرانی و یا هیچ محبت نسبت به این کشورها از طرف من نیست. اما هر روز صبح ، من به آن نگاه می کنم و آنرا زنگ زنگ می دانم که برای اجرای من در داخل آماده می شود (Hale, 15/10/17)
3. من دوازده سال را در آنجا گذرانده ام (مراجعه به مکتب ایرانی فجر). در ترکیه تکلیف یک ساختمان “ ، مدرسه بسیار آسان است ، اما مدرسه ما مانند آنها نیست. من فکر می کنم که این به هدف رسیده است ، آنها نمی خواهند از بیرون تماشای یا تشخیص داده شوند (Takin, male, 19/06/18)
4. باغچه از عموما پسران است پسران و دختران به متعلق هلی مکان که است این مثل ، ساختمان این در معلمان ، گم استفاده باغ از کردم سعی که بار هر و کنند می استفاده فوتبال مخصوصاً و بازی برای پستی خود بازی پایان تا ورودی درب در صبر به مجبور مرا و یاتم مراقب که دهند می هشدار من به ما مراسم آن در که جایی جلوی باغ از یا مانیم می درس کلاسهای در کلی طور به ، دختران ، ما کردم (Telya, 5/11/17) کنیم می استفاده شود می انجام صبحگاه می
5. من آن را می دانم ، خمینی بعد از انقلاب خیلی چیزها را تغییر داد و آنها نمی خواهند ما این کتاب ها را (Pendar, 15/3/18) در اینجا ببینیم یا مطالعه کنیم به همین دلیل است که این کلاس همیشه قفل می شود
6. به بلکه ، ریلیسیات یا تاریخ قبیل از میاحتی آموزش برای تنها نه اینجا در (معلمان به مراجعه با) ما را کار این موظفیم ما و هستیم نیز ایران اسلامی جمهوری مذهبی و ملی ارزشهای ، ایدئولوژی انتقال آنچه که دانیم می ما ما رژیم نمایندگان عنوان به ، خارجی کشور یک در ، دهیم انجام اینجا در بیشتر (Principal, 13/10/17) شوند می تبدیل آنها حقیقت به گیرند می یاد اینجا در ما آموزان دانش
7. در اینجا ، ما در ترکیه زندگی می کنیم ، اما وقتی هر روز صبح به این مدرسه می روم ، احساس می کنم به کشور خود باز می گردم. در اینجا ، من باید این را بیوشم - (که روسری او را نشان می دهد) - و باید این ها را ببینم - (اشاره به عکس های خمینی و خامنه ای) بر روی هر دیوار ، و بلید در طول روز نماز بخوانم. آنها به من یادآوری می کنند که من باید از قوانین آنها پیروی کنم. به همین ترتیب ، من در (Donya, 15/2/18) ایران نیز انجام می دهم

- این مدرسه یکی از یک مدرسه در ایران است ، و در هر ترم یکسان هستند. استثنائاً ممکن است مشخصات دانش آموزان باشد ... وزارت آموزش و پرورش در ایران اقدار کامل دارد ، و از مدارس انتظار می رود برنامه هر رویداد را رعایت کنند ، حتی مواردی که در تابلوهای تعیین شده توسط وزارت آموزش و پرورش تعیین شده است (English teacher, 5/11/17)
8. دوست من وقتی بسیجی شد ، شانزده سل داشت. یکی از معلمان ما از آنها بود (با اشاره به هواداران رژیم) ، آخوندها و آنها همیشه صحبت می کردند که چقدر مقدس است که یک شهید برای ایران در سرزمین های خارجی برای نجات امت ما باشد. من این چیزها را از خانواده ام می دانم؛ آنها حامی رژیم نیستند و همیشه به من هشدار می دهند که از این چیزها فاصله بگیرم. من هم به او هشدار دادم ، اما او همچنان گفت که آنچه معلم ما می گوید حقیقت است ، و شهادت مهمترین رسالت برای خدمت به کشور ما است. پس از منتهی ، او از آمدن به مدرسه منصرف شد و من بعداً از او تشکر کردم و بعد تشکریم کردیم (Ata, 3/1/18)
9. معلمان برخی از دانش آموزان را برای ترسیم این تصاویر انتخاب می کنند. این احمق است ، ما تقریباً هجده ساله هستیم. آنها آنچه را که انتظار دارند به آنها می گوید و به طور کلی بچه های معلمان یکی از تصاویر را از کتاب های درسی یکی می کنند. و سپس ، همه معلمان در مورد این نقاشی ها تعریف می کنند (Somayye, 5/12/17)
10. در ایران بدین این خبر در صفحه مدارس یا حتی اخبار تلویزیون غیرممکن است. آنها (با اشاره به رژیم ، آخوندها) این حرکت را بخش نکردند. به همین ترتیب آنها بزرگترها مانند جنبش سبز (اعتراضات بزرگ در سال 2009) را نادیده گرفتند. آنها می دانند که این نوع حرکات از طرف ایرانیانی که در خارج از کشور زندگی می کنند طرفداران بیشتری پیدا می کند و به عنوان حامیان (Zehra, 12/4/18) بالقوه ، ما را در اینجا هشدار می دهند
11. شروع روز با گرم کردن و قرآن برای یک مسلمان کامل است. فعالیت بدنی بدن شما را سالم تر می کند. (Ouran teacher, 16/3/18) در حالی که قرآن قلب و روح شما را تمیز تر می کند
12. صبح ها در اینجا مهمتر است که باعث شود دانش آموزان هویت ایرانی خود را به خاطر بیاورند ، اما دانش آموزان لکتر در طول مراسم رفتارهای نادرست دارند. آنها علیرغم هشدارهای ما زیاد صحبت می کنند و می خندند. قبل از آن بدتر بود ، اما بعد از اینکه منیر اصلی ما خانواده ها را جمع کرد و در مورد فرزندانشان به آنها هشدار داد تا به ارزش های ما احترام بگذارند (مراجعه به رژیم) ، اکنون آنچه می بینید بهتر است ... ما بیشتر در طول مراسم با دانش آموزان پسر مشکل داریم ، آنها با صدای بلند صحبت می کنند و می خندند ... ما می دانیم که آنها جوان هستند. حتی اگر دانشجویان دختر بیش از دانشجویان پسر به مراسم احترام می گذارند ، دانشجویان دختر از نظر اداری با توجه به پوشاک خود و ایجاد ارتباط نزدیک با دوستان پسر خود باعث ایجاد مشکلاتی می شوند (Vice-Principal, 19/12/17)
13. هر روز صبح ، بعد از این مراسم (می خندد) معاون مدیر در ورودی می ایستد و بررسی می کند که موهای ما چقدر طول دارد ، میخ هایمان را بررسی کنید ، حجاب هایمان را اصلاح کنید و تلفن های ما را دریافت کنید. این وضعیتی است که ما هر روز از صبح می گذرانیم ، و دانشجویان پسر به اندازه ما کنترل نمی شوند ... و ، در طول روز ، همیشه ما را تماشا می کنند که ما با چه کسی صحبت می کنیم ، در کجا صحبت می کنیم و اینکه روسری ما ثابت است یا خیر (Niloufar, 14/11/17)
14. یک روز ، بعد از مراسم صبحگاهی ، قبل از شروع کلاس به منزل مدیر اصلی فراخوانده شدم. رئیس با صدای عصبانی از من استقبال کرد. او پس از پایان دادن به سلامتی طارف کلاسیک ، به من هشدار داد. او مرا در دوربین درب جلو با زاویه خیلان دیده بود. آن روز صبح ، از آنجا که دوست پسر مرا به مدرسه رسانده بود ، تا رسیدن به خیابان ، روسری خود را پوشیدم. بنابراین ، وی به من هشدار داد که به عنوان یک ایرانی مقیم ترکیه باید رفتارهای خود را بیشتر مراقب باشم و هنگام خروج از منزل ، روسری خود را می پوشیدم ، نه در مقابل درب مدرسه ، زیرا این نشان از بی احترامی به من دارد. (Maede, 19/12/17)



16. اتفاق زمانی انضباط و نظم مورد یک ، گذشته ماه زیرا ، کنند می ضبط را چیز همه آنها که دانیم می کرده را کار این کسی چه فهمید بلافاصله رئیس رفت سرقت به من دوست قیمت گران ساعت که افتاد نمی ضبط را چیزی و ، هستند دوربین فقط آنها که کریم می فکر همیشه بشنید شوکه ما همه و ، است کار این مطمئناً اما کند نمی کار مدرسه این در چیز هیچ . هستیم شوکه بسیار و دانیم می اکنون اما ، کنند (Donya, 10/10/17) دهد می انجام را
17. یک بار ، من حتی سعی کردم در سالن سیگار بکنم تا تست کنم آیا آنها مرا می بینند یا نه. اگر معلم اطراف نیست ، من می دلم که مکان من برای استراحت من است. بعضی اوقات ، ما با دوستان و همچنین با دوست دخترم در آنجا جمع می شویم. آنها واقعاً دوست ندارند ما با دوستان زن خود رابطه تنگاتنگی برقرار کنیم ، اما من آن را نمی گیرم. آنها نمی دانند چه چیزی در خارج از مدرسه داریم ، ما بیش از حد آویزان هستیم. می دانید ، همه وقت با هم می خوریم و می نوشیم (Elnar, 26/3/18)
18. در اینجا ، ما با دختران و پسران دیگر تحصیل می کنیم ، و من هیچ اقدام دولت خاصی نمی بینم تا ما را از یکدیگر نور نگه دارد. من فکر می کنم آنها سعی می کنند آنچه را که تصور می شود انجام دهند. در ایران ، مدارس جداگانه هستند و باید در اینجا نیز اتفاق بیفتد ، مناسب تر است و به عنوان دختران به ما (Fatma, 28/1/18) راحتی می دهد
19. بر اساس قرآن ، به اشتراک گذاشتن فضای مشابه با پسرانی که خانواده نیستند ، مناسب نیست. به عنوان مثال ، در توالف فرنگی با همدیگر مصادف هستیم و در کنار هم قرار دارند و بعضی اوقات می خواهم روسری خود را در توالف بردارم و در حالی که روسری خود را تنظیم می کنم ، به سمت درب می روم و می فهمم که پسر به من نگاه می کند فکر می کنم مناسب نیست و احساس راحتی نمی کنم. در ایران ، از آنجا که هیچ پسر بچه ای در اطراف ما نبود ، ما گاهی اوقات در زمان استراحت روسری های خود (Fatma, 28/1/18) را در کلاس های درس می کنیم ، اما در اینجا غیرممکن است
20. دلیل ساختمان نوم جمعیت زیاد است. کلاسهای درس بیش از ظرفیت بود و کیفیت آموزش بدتر می شد. به بیان بیشتر ، ما می خواهیم برای دانشجویان بیشتری از سایر کشورها که از کشورهای اسلامی آمده اند ، باز باشد. ما از اینجا ، آذربایجان ، ترکمنستان ، و غیره خواسته های زیادی در رابطه با آن دریافت (Principal, 1/02/18) می کنیم
21. فکر نمی کنم آنها این کار را برای جمعیت انجام دادند. آنها بر دختران و پسران کنترل نمی کردند و حتی بیشتر ، روابط عاشقانه در مدرسه آغاز شد. با وجود هشدارهای معلمان و دولت ، برخی همچنان ادامه داشتند. به عنوان مثال ، برخی شروع به نشستن در همان میز کردند یا با هم به صورت دستی با هم در باغ قدم زدند. من با آن موافقم. چرا آنها همچنان در ساختمان دوم با دختران و پسران به تحصیل ادامه ندادند؟ Elena: آنها در تلاشند همین کار را انجام دهند؛ در ایران نیز همین کار را می کنند. خنده دار است که آنها نتوانستند پسران کلاس دوازدهم را به ساختمان دیگری منتقل کنند ، Ferhad: آنها مخالف آن بودند و مدرسه آن را پذیرفت. از دوستانم شنیدم که ساختمان جدید قبلاً هتلی قدیمی بوده و حتی باغی هم ندارند. Researcher: چگونه آنها به آن دست یافتند؟ آیا آنها کاری انجام داده اند ، می دانید. Azade: (FGD) والدین آنها به مدرسه آمدند و همانطور که به یاد می آورم با مدیر صحبت می کردند. (13/3/18)
22. ما می دانیم که تعدادی از دانش آموزان اهل سنت و بهایی در داخل مدرسه حضور داریم ، اما ما نمی خواهیم یا درخواست و تلاش برای اتحاد تحت همین آیین ، آنها را از هم جدا کنیم. در غیر این صورت ، من فکر می کنم که این مسئله باعث ایجاد یک آسفتگی می شود ، و دیگران نیز شروع به پیوستن به زمان نماز نمی کنند. ما باید اینگونه عمل کنیم و به این معنی نیست که به آنها احترام نمی گذاریم. به عنوان مثال ، دانشجویان مسیحی و یهودی موظف به پیوستن نیستند (16/12/17)

23. نوروز یکی از مهمترین جشن ها برای ایرانی ها به ویژه ایرانیان مانند من است. حتی اگر این مدرسه به سیزدهمین جشن نوروز اهمیتی ندهد ، ما دانش آموزان ، آن را با دوستان خود جشن می گیریم. ما در (Parisa, 27/3/18). خانه ها جمع می شویم و با یکدیگر تبادل می کنیم
24. در اینجا بچه ها از وطن خود دور هستند و این جشن ها و یادبودهای ملی حافظه خانه خود ، انقلاب (Literature teacher, 6/11/17) اسلامی و همچنین هویت آنها را حفظ می کند
25. ما مدت زمان طولانی در اینجا نیستیم. بنابراین ، برای اینکه دخترم از همکلاسی هایش در ایران " عقب نماند ، می خواهم او همان برنامه درسی را در فجر تحصیل کند. علاوه بر این ، آموختن زبان ترکی برای او هیچ فایده ای ندارد و یادگیری یک زبان یک فرایند طولانی است ... حتی اگر ما در اینجا بیشتر بمانیم برخی از همکاران و خانواده های آنها بیش از ده سال در اینجا زندگی می کنند ، من ترجیح می دهم دوباره او را به مدرسه ما بفرستیم آموختن ارزشها ، هنجارها ، دین و فرهنگ ما بسیار مهم است و این آموزشگاه می آموزد که چگونه یک ایرانی خوب باشیم. ما تلاشهای زیادی برای ایجاد (Ahmad, 16/04/18) " ملت خوب پس از انقلاب کرده ایم
26. گرفتن آموزش به زبان فارسی بسیار مهم است. فارسی زبان سختی است و اگر در مدرسه زبان را یاد نمی گیرید ، ممکن است بتوانید آنرا صحبت کنید ، اما نمی توانید آن را بنویسید. این مدرسه همچنین فرهنگ ، تاریخ و آیین فارسی ما را حفظ می کند ... می ترسم که دخترم هویت خود را در اینجا (Sima, 14/5/18) " فراموش کند زیرا بچه ها در ترکیه در معرض حواس پرت بسیاری هستند
27. دلایل انتخاب خانواده ها برای این مدرسه بسیار متنوع است. یکی از آنها دغدغه های مذهبی این خانواده ها است ، آنها اکثراً محافظه کار هستند و به دلیل تجارت ، در ترکیه ساکن می شوند و فرزندان خود را به اینجا می فرستند دیگران که به فرهنگ ، زبان و تاریخ فارسی خود علاقه دارند این مدرسه را ترجیح می دهند. برای خانواده ها ، عامل دیگر به احتمال بلوغ است به ایران متکی است. مورد آخر ، این است که این خانواده ها از آنجا که از ایران گریخته اند و در اینجا وضعیت قانونی ندارند ، "جلیگترین دیگری ندارند" (Vice-Principal, 15/11/17)
28. ثبت نام UNHCR بویخی از بچه های بدون مدارک در مدرسه تحصیل می کنند ، یا برخی دیگر در می کنند. این هم دلیلی برای خانواده ها است که فرزندان خود را به این مدرسه معرفی کنند. از آنجا که دانشکده فقط شناسنامه ایرانی را در خواست می کند ، آنها در حالی که مدارک تحصیلات تکمیلی از ، (English teacher, 28/12/17) " مسکو می آیند ، به دنبال اجازه اقامت یا مدارکی از ترکیه نمی روند
29. من مجبور شدم کشورم را بخاطر ظلم و ستم رژیم ترک کنم و هیچ وقت تصور نمی کردم که یسرم را به یک مدرسه ایرانی بفرستم که حامل همان ارزش های رژیم در خارج از کشور باشد. وقتی برای اولین بار به اینجا آمدم ، مدارس ارمنی را جستجو کردیم. همسرم مخالف آن بود زیرا او بسی ار به پیشینه فارسی خود علاقه دارد ، اما به جای یک مدرسه ترکی ، در این مورد موافقت کرد. زیرا ، ما می دانیم که مردم ترکیه ارمنه را دوست ندارند. برای مدارس ارمنی یاد گرفتیم که آنها خیلی گران هستند یا کلاس های ترکی اجباری نیز دارند. یکی از دوستانم که در ترکیه زندگی می کند در مورد مکتب ایرانی اشاره کرد و سه سال دیگر ، ما فکر کردیم که بهتر است میخائیل در اینجا برنامه های ایرانی را به زبان فارسی (Anderanik, 15/2/18) " دنبال کند
30. گرفتن آموزش به زبان فارسی بسیار مهم است. فارسی زبان سختی است و اگر در مدرسه زبان را یاد نمی گیرید ، ممکن است بتوانید آنرا صحبت کنید ، اما نمی توانید آن را بنویسید. این مدرسه همچنین فرهنگ تاریخ و آیین فارسی ما را حفظ می کند ... می ترسم که دخترم هویت خود را در اینجا فراموش کند زیرا بچه ها در ترکیه در معرض حواس پرت بسیاری هستند (Mahsa, 15/11/17)

31. برادر کوچک من ، نه ساله ، او به یک مدرسه ترک می رود. او اکنون مانند یک ترک است. او خیلی ، خوب به زبان ترکی صحبت می کند ، و دوستان ترکی بیشتری نسبت به ایرانیان دارد ... با این حال من مانند او نیستم ، او فرهنگ ما را فراموش می کند و بدون دانستن تاریخ ما ، تحصیل می کند و حتی بدون اینکه بتواند زبان ما را بنویسد. حتی اگر رژیم را دوست نداشته باشم ، خوشحالم در اینجا تحصیل می کنم (Asel, 26/1/18)
32. برای یک ایرانی ، یادگیری و تمرین دین او به همان اندازه تاریخ ، فرهنگ و زبان وی مهم است. اگر این جنبه ها از بین برود ، او گم می شود ... به طور خاص ، در یک کشور خارجی ، او باید بیشتر هویت مذهبی خود را حفظ کند. در غیر این صورت ، او هیچ کس و تنها نخواهد بود ... این مدرسه به ما این فرصت را می دهد که در کنار هم باشیم (Samaneh, 13/2/18)
33. من در مدرسه راحت هستم زیرا همه ما به زبان فارسی صحبت می کنیم و با ساختار مدرسه آشنا هستیم (Tina, 19/4/18). " هیچ چیز جدیدی با حضور در این کشور (مراجعه به ترکیه) ، نه زبان و نه مردم نمی آید ،
34. وقتی برای اولین بار به این مدرسه آمدم ، احساس کردم که به کشور خود بازگشتم. از آن زمان ، هر روز صبح من در راه بازگشت به خانه هستم (Nergis, 1/12/17)
35. این مدرسه متعلق به ما در ترکیه است. ما اینجا فارسی صحبت می کنیم و آنچه را که در خانه خود انجام می دهیم انجام می دهیم (ایران) ... ما نیز به عنوان یک جامعه کوچک ایرانی در ترکیه متعلق به این مدرسه هستیم. این فضای ما است. " در ایران ، من هرگز خودم را ایرانی تعریف نکرده ام ، من در آنجا یک آذری بودم. اما ، در اینجا ، احساس می کنم ایرانی تر هستم ... ما در ترکیه تعداد زیادی نداریم ، و استانبول خیلی بزرگ است. بنابراین ، این مدرسه یک محل ملاقات برای ایرانیان در استانبول است ، به عنوان خانه دوم برای کل جامعه (Elhan, 5/3/18)
36. این یک مدرسه ایرانی است و زبان فارسی برای دانش آموزان ما در اینجا است. کار درستی که در یک کشور خارجی انجام می شود این است که ما به عنوان ایرانیان با هم متحد می شویم و ما در اینجا هستیم (Ouran teacher, 13/6/18). " تا این موضوع را به ما یادآوری کنیم زیرا بچه ها خیلی جوان هستند
37. من دوستان زیادی دارم که مدت طولانی در ترکیه زندگی می کنند و آنها به مدارس دولتی ترکیه می روند. از آنجا که یاد می گیرند در مدرسه به زبان ترکی صحبت کنند آنها نیز از آن در خانه ، در همه جا استفاده می کنند. من نمی خواهم کسی باشم. مانند آنها و یک ترک شد ... ما باید به فارسی صحبت کنیم تا فراموش نکنیم از کجا آمده ایم و ما باید در اینجا با سایر ایرانیان کنار هم باشیم. اگر زبانی عملی نشود ، فراموش می شود ، بنابراین هویت نیز هست (Arsel, 14/4/18)
38. غم و اندوه حسین را در درونم حس می کنم ، و گریه من از همان جا می آید. من شعرها را با این احساس می خوانم و از همان کودکی ما فداکاری های او را از این طریق سلام می کنیم (Yashar, 10/10/17)
39. ، من نمی دانم. این ممکن است به این دلیل باشد که ما از زمان کودکی این مراسم ها و اجراها را داریم ، اما من واقعاً درد را در بدنم احساس می کنم و این درد مانند بخشی از من است ، حتی اگر خودم را به عنوان شیعی تعریف نکنم (Samaneh, 14/10/17)
40. اینجاست که ایمان من قابل مشاهده می شود ، نه تنها گریه می کند و یا خود را با زنجیر کتک می زند. این بارزترین نسخه نمایش هویت های ما به صورت جمعی برای دیگران است ... و ، در اینجا (در ترکیه) مدرسه و مسجد تنها مکانهایی هستند که برای ما باقی مانده است (Hamed, 14/10/17)

41. عاشورا مانند جشنواره است. ما اجازه داریم تا غروب روز عاشورا در ولید هن در کنار هم بمائیم . (Elena, 15/10/17) " بنابراین مکانی برای معاشرت است. فقط سرگرمی را در آنجا یادآوری می کنم
42. سال گذشته ، من می توانم نقشی را در این بازی بازی کنم ، زیرا در اینجا سخت است زیرا کودکان کسولگری در این نقش نقش دارند. این روز مهمی در زندگی من بود ... خانواده های ما هنگام اجرای کسولگری (Hamed, 15/11/17) " نمایش گریه می کردند ... باور نکردنی
43. اجرای این نمایشنامه بی معنی است ، آنها فقط به ما نشان می دهند که چگونه از طریق این کار بتوانیم . (Pernaz, 15/11/17) " خود را فدای آنها کنیم
44. مراسم عاشورا هویت ایرانی دانش آموزان را تقویت می کند و دانش آموزان یاد می گیرند که در اطراف یک داستان تاریخی مذهبی جمع شوند و با همان احساسات به اشتراک بگذارند. این منجر به یک (Principal, 19/11/17) " عضویت شدید به جامعه ما در اینجا می شود
45. وقتی ما به اینجا آمدم ، من به یک مدرسه ترکی رفتم ، زیرا فکر می کردم بهتر است که من زبان را یاد بگیرم زیرا من یک زبان آموز سریع هستم. من همچنین در یک دوره آموزش زبان ترکی در خارج ... از مدرسه شرکت کردم. من فقط سه ماه می توانستم مدرسه را تحمل کنم ، سپس از اینجا شروع کردم دوست داشتن با ترکها دشوار بود. آنها همیشه سوالاتی بوج درباره زندگی در ایران می پرسند ، فکر می کنند که من پناهنده هستم. بی احترامی است. مثل این بود که آنها به دلیل فرهنگ من از من دریغ می کردند ... وقتی می گویم من آشوری ایرانی هستم ، آنها هیچ تصویری از این نداشتند ... حتی بیشتر (Aynaz, 7/2/18) " وقتی در کلاسها سعی کردم به زبان ترکی صحبت کنم ، آنها به لهجه من می خندیدند
46. به یاد می آورم ، یک بار ، بعد از ترک مدرسه با دوستانم ، به فارسی صحبت می کردم و مردی که من نمی ... 'Pis Kürt ، burası Türkiye! Türkçe konuş ' : جلوی مغازه نشسته بود ، فریاد زد ... توأم حرفی بزنم تا بگویم من ایرانی هستم ، و ما مثل اینکه گناهکار بودیم شروع به دوییدن کردیم حدس می زنم که مردم ترکیه تفاوت بین کردی یا فارسی و حتی عربی را نمی دانند. آنها همه زبانهای (Sahar, 4/4/18) " خارجی را یکسان و همه خارجی ها را دشمنانی مانند کردها می دانند
47. اول ، من در یک مدرسه ترکیه ثبت نام کردم. من زبان ترکی خیلی کمی بلد بودم و به همین دلیل کلاس ها در ابتدا بسیار سخت بودند. با این حال ، آنچه من بیش از همه به آن توجه کردم این بود که احساس اضطراب زیادی می کردم. این یک گناه بود که نتوانستم به زبان ترکی صحبت کنم ... بچه های دیگر به زبان ترکی من مضحک می شوند و مرا به بازی های فوتبالی خود قبول نمی کردند. من از آنها متنفرم و آنها بسیار ناسیونالیست هستند. من یک سال را در آنجا گذراندم ، و سپس پدرم درباره این مدرسه (Ali, 8/6/18) " شنید. و اکنون ، من اینجا خوشحالم
48. برای ما ، رفتار با احترام و مهربانی بسیار اهمیت دارد ، اما شیوه صحبت و رفتار ترک ها بسیار بی ادب است و فروتنانه نیست اینگونه است که فکر می کنند آنها نسبت به ایرانی ها برتر هستند. و به همین (Pouya, 11/12/17) " دلیل ، من فکر کردم که باید با رفتن به این مدرسه شخصیت خود را نجات دهم
49. ، ما ، در اینجا ، دانش آموزان زیادی با زمینه های مختلف در زیر یک سقف یکسان داریم. در ایران " برخی از تفاوت های جغرافیایی وجود دارد ، ما به عنوان مثال کردستان را داریم. شما با عنوان یک معلم می دانید که در تبریز ، تعداد بیشتری از آنری ها در کلاس حضور دارند ، یا در کرمانشاه ، کردها و سنی های بیشتری هستند. در اینجا ، آنها همه در کنار هم هستند ، دانش آموزان از شهرها یا مناطق مختلف هستند و به همین دلیل درگیری های بیشتری بین آنها صورت می گیرد. دانش آموزان معمولاً یکدیگر را نایب می گیرند ، اما بعضی اوقات برخی از دانش آموزان با یکدیگر دعوا می کنند. به عنوان مثال آخرین دعوا مربوط به زمان نماز بود. یکی از دانشجویان سنی پنج بار از آن حمایت کرده بود ، و دیگران (با مراجعه به دانشجویان شیعه ه) که 3 بار از آنها حمایت کردند می خواستند نبرد کنند (Literature teacher, 11/4/18)

50. در اینجا ، شیوه زندگی اسلام شیعه را یاد می گیریم ، مطابق سبکهای آنها دعا می کنیم ، یا احترام به “ پیامبرستان ، هرتز علی. الهیات و معلمان قرآن لکتر محافظه کار هستند ، و وقت اطلاعاتی را در رابطه با نسخه اهل سنت اسلام به اشتراک می گذارم ، آنها به من فریاد می زنند و مرا مجبور می کنند که آنچه تشیع درباره آن می گوید را یاد بگیرم ... زبان مادری من کردی است و من فارسی خود را بعداً آموختم. سلهای دبستان من در ایران. به همین دلیل ، فلوپی من خیلی خوب نیست و سایر دانش آموزان به طور کلی در حالی که صحبت می کنند از من می خندند ... بنابراین ، من با سایر نوبستان کرد خودم در داخل مدرسه قطع می شوم. بنابراین ، در خارج ، من ایرانی هستم ، اما اینجا هستم. من یک کرد سنی هستم. (Ahmad, male, 7/5/18)
51. من نوبت ندارم اینجا باشم (مراجعه به مکتب ایرانی). من نمی توانم در اینجا با نوبستانم به زبان کردی صحبت کنم ، حتی اگر نوبستان زیادی ندارم. در ایران ، دهکده ما کردی است و ما اجازه داریم در آنجا به کردی صحبت کنیم. حتی ، معلمان ما ما را درک می کنند. اما ، در اینجا ، متفوت است. من حتی در بین دانش آموزان دیگر احساس م حریمیت بیشتری از مدرسه می کنم. در اینجا ، گروه های همسالان جدگانه ای وجود دارد ، مانند کودکان ملا ، با هم کردی یا مسیحی با هم بیرون می روند. اگر هیچ تفاوتی وجود دارد ، ما از ایران نیستیم و حتی بدتر ، چرا من اینجا هستم؟ (Delara, 14/3/18)
52. وی گفت: “ما سنی هستیم و ظلم رژیم بر ما خیلی زیاد بود. ما موظف هستیم که نادرست اسلام را انجام دهیم ، مانند سه بار دعا در روز یا برتری علی. پدرم تصمیم گرفت یک شب از کشور فرار کند و چون شهر ما بسیار نزدیک مرز ترکیه بود ، ما سه ماه پیش از مرز عبور کردیم (Delara, 14/3/18)
53. می توانم بگویم که بیشتر معلمان و اداره مدرسه با فرزندان متفاوت رفتار می کنند (مراجعه به ...). پناهجویان یا افراد غیرمجاز) زیرا فکر می کنند کاری که انجام می دهند تحقیر نسبت به کشورشان فرهنگ آنها است. حتی اگر آنها شرایط خود را علیه رژیم بدانند ، چنان رفتار می کنند که انگار هیچ اتفاقی در ایران نمی افتد و حتی آنها را مجبور می کنند که بیشتر از اینها استفاده کنند (English teacher, 13/4/18)
54. من در ابتدا نمی فهمیدم چرا پدرم می خواست ما ایران را ترک کنیم ، اما مطمئناً من از وضع بیت ما در آنجا آگاه بودم. اگر شما به صراحت چیزی در ایران نگوئید ، برای شما و رژیم یک چیز غیر موجود می شود ، اما شما می گوئید ، مجازات می شوید. بنابراین من نمی توانم ترکی را یاد بگیرم که به مدرسه ای بروم در اینجا ... با این حال ، در مقایسه با ایران ، هویتبهایی خود را بیشتر در اینجا ، در “این مدرسه احساس می کنم. در اینجا بچه ها و معلمان دیگر نسبت به من قضاوت می کنند (Niloufer, 6/3/18)
55. ما چند نفر در اینجا به عنوان مسیحی هستیم ، اما من نوبستان زیادی دارم و همه چیز را با آنها در میان می گذارم و آنها به آنچه عقاید دارند احترام می گذارند ... من موظف نیستم به زمان نماز ، قرآن یا سایر دوره ها یا رویدادهای مذهبی بییوندم. با این حال ، من از دوستانم ، به ویژه اهل تسنن ، بهائیت یا آیتست ها. ” (Aynaz, 7/2/18)
56. این یک مدرسه ایرانی است و زبان فارسی برای دانش آموزان ما در اینجا است. بعضی وقت ها می شنوم که دانش آموزان ما به زبان های دیگر صحبت می کنند ، کاری در کشور خارجی نیست. ما باید (Theology teacher, 13/3/18)
57. ن در اینجا به فارسی صحبت می کنم ، اما ترجیح نمی دهم حتی در طول روز مدرسه با نوبستان ارمنی خود به زبان فارسی ارتباط برقرار کنم ... اگر آنها نتوانند به ما اجازه دهند صحبت کنیم ، ما در طول دوره ها با یکدیگر به زبان ارمنی می نویسیم (Mikhail, 3/4/18)
58. آنها (با اشاره به مدیریت مدرسه و معلمان) همیشه می گویند که عربی زبان قرآن است ، بنابراین برای “ (Elnaz, 14/3/18)