

ABSTRACT

This thesis is based on a six months fieldwork in Istanbul, Turkey. The thesis explores the Gülen movement in theory and practice. My interest was in how the followers of the movement interpret and translate the movement's ideas into practice, and what it means to be a follower of the movement. Furthermore, I looked at the reasons that govern the followers' choice to become a follower and what motivated them. As a follower they were part of the Gülen movement's closely connected community, which meant they also took part of the collective identity within the movement.

The Gülen movement is founded by Fethullah Gülen, who is a Turkish Islamic scholar and preacher. It is a transnational civic society movement inspired from the teachings of Fethullah Gülen with interest in spreading interfaith dialogue, tolerance and a high quality education including science and ethics. He advocates a moderate Islam in interaction with a "modern" world.

The movement has millions of followers worldwide and over 1000 schools in 120 countries spread on five continents. The schools do not give extra religious instruction at school, and in Turkey they follow the Turkish state curriculum for education. The schools offer a holistic education which includes activities outside the school and parent involvement. The teachers of the Gülen schools are seen to have the main role in translating the movement's ideas in practice. Teachers who embody ethical values are expected to set an example in lifestyle and prayer for the students at the Gülen inspired schools. They are expected to dedicate themselves fully to make the students not merely excellent students, but also sincere persons with moral and ethical values. That is why my choice of fieldwork went to a Gülen school.

The fieldwork is based on information gathered from participatory observation, interviews and interaction with primarily Gülen teachers in a Gülen inspired school and preschool. This paper will first address how followers and Gülen teachers interpret and implement the movement's ideas in practice. Furthermore, it will discuss the motives behind being a follower and how they as a follower take part in a collective identity.

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1 INTRODUCTION

My research question is this: What does it mean to be a follower of the Gülen movement and how is Gülen's philosophy interpreted and translated into practice through education?

I decided to do my research on the Gülen movement and the followers of the movement in Istanbul, Turkey. I randomly became introduced for the Gülen movement when I was reading about Islam in Turkey on the internet one day. The Gülen movement caught my interest in their work towards interfaith dialogue and tolerance in the world. I thought it was good to see Muslims wanting to spread these values and that they wanted to change the wrong picture many people have about Islam and Muslims. I chose to do fieldwork in the city of Istanbul simply because I have visited the city since I was a child and find it incredible every time I go there. It is an astonishing city with a mix of the world, and where a majority of the Gülen followers live.

When I heard about the Gülen movement I immediately became interested in learning more about how the followers related themselves to Fethullah Gülen's philosophy and what it meant for them to be a follower. I wanted to find out how the followers translated their beliefs into practice. The movement's value and moral system is founded on Islamic and universalistic ethics which the teachers in the Gülen schools reflect through their own behaviour. The values and ideas within the movement are influenced from both Islam and Turkish culture, which I found essential to distinguish in the data I collected.

Science and ethics are two of the main pillars in Gülen's philosophy, and the Gülen schools are important places where his ideas are put into practice. Fethullah Gülen believes in cultivating faith without excluding the modern society, something he means has not been done in the Muslim world. This, he claims, leads people to get the wrong impression of Islam and Muslims. Fethullah Gülen perceives modern education as work oriented and claims that modern schools are missing spirituality, while the spiritual schools too persistently disregard modern value systems. He sees modernity and Islam not as opposing units, but rather in need of each other to create a full balance within humans. The movement's intentions are to create an enhanced interaction between ethics and science in the schools. The schools which are associated with Fethullah Gülen's name follow his ideas and vision about modern education, which deals with both "head and mind". Being situated primarily at a Gülen inspired school would get me in contact with followers and witness how the movement philosophy is translated into practice.

In my thesis I am not trying to illustrate how Muslims should or are supposed to behave, neither am I focusing on how Gülen followers should or are opposed to behave, but I am interested in showing how the follower's beliefs and ideas are put in to practice and "how they unfold in an observable manner in one small place at one particular time" (Varisco 2005: 140). My thesis produces information on the particular case studied which was a part of my fieldwork. It does not describe every follower of the Gülen movement; neither does it describe all Gülen schools.

To get an understanding of how the followers translated the movement's ideas into practice, I chose to conduct fieldwork mainly at a Gülen school. That gave me possibilities for observation of the movement's idea about education, moral values and teachers being examples for the students. I participated in their daily activities, observed and tried to understand how each follower interpreted the meaning individually, and how the meaning of the movement was expressed collectively. The main topics within the thesis are 1) the expression of ethics and morals within the movement, 2) the motivation behind the followers, and 3) the collective identity of the followers. The thesis will elucidate the teachers' interpretation of the movement's ideas, the moods and motivations of the followers, and the bond they have as a community, as far as I was able to observe through my fieldwork.

During my time in the field I have collected a large amount of data which illustrates, explains and interprets how it is to be a follower of the movement and what meaning they found in being part of the movement. I have witnessed the hard work conducted by the Gülen teachers, how they translated values and meaning into practice and how they bonded as a community. The followers' norms, notions and actions illustrated the movement's ideas in practice and at the same time, how the followers have carried out a subjective interpretation based on those ideas. The Gülen schools are at the same time described as non religious schools. However, a different picture appeared to me in their extracurricular activities which are part of the holistic education model provided by the school. Global ethical values and moral values were taught in the extracurricular activities, but as I found out, the majority of the values were linked and described as Islamic ethics.

First of all I will explain the Gülen movement's relationship to Islam and Muslim ethics, before I go on to discuss the relation between theory and practice in the Gülen School in the light of my experiences.

2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 Focus

Social structure exists of morals, law, etiquette, religion, government, and educations. In a structural point of view these social phenomena are not be studied in isolation, but have to be studied “in their direct and indirect relations to social structure, i.e. with reference to the way in which they depend upon, or affect, the social relations between persons and groups of persons.” (Radcliffe-Brown 2006:125). My interest has been in the followers’ reasons for being part of the movement, how the followers were linked to the movement and how the collective representations and ideas were expressed within the movement.

In the field I had to be careful to associate or categorize certain behaviour and actions as explicit cultural or spiritual acts. The teachers at the Gülen School where themselves swift to connect explanations of social phenomena with Islam, which made an evident influence in their worldview, as it does for people who use practical describing. Morris (2006) asserts that many educated Muslims tend to hold a perspective that Islam is a normative system of social order that exists independently of any social context (Morris 2006:82). The followers’ notions and behaviour were in many incidents typical “Turkish behaviour” and not explicitly “Muslim behaviour”.

Furthermore, there is division between Muslim moral and Islamic ethics in the different aspects of Islam and being a Muslim. Oddbjørn Leirvik (2002) points to the differences between being a Muslim and what Islam is. The Muslim aspect is what Muslims choose to do and stand for. This has often features deriving from culture and religion, and is therefore difficult to describe as a set of totally religious acts. The Islamic aspect concerns the interpretation of Islam based on Islamic sources, resulting in more normative explanations than culture-influenced explanations (Leirvik 2002:9). The separation between what is Islamic and Muslim is especially visible within the movement in their establishments abroad. Gülen and the Gülen movement hold a universalistic worldview in their care for human ethical values as love, tolerance and a worldly dialogue which they try to spread globally. The movement is also greatly influenced by Turkish culture and tradition in its ideas and actions, and this is very visible in the activities and establishments abroad. The movement’s increasingly international development has positioned its values and philosophy on new levels. The globalization of the movement positions the Muslim morals and the Islamic ethics under a universalistic stance which has become a major factor of the Gülen movement today.

Being a movement on Islamic and Muslim ground they have nonetheless spread and become adopted by Christians, Jews and other religions in the countries they have settled. With their universalistic approach they attract international supporters and followers with different backgrounds and religious belonging, but who agree in the ideas of the movement.

Anthropologists' attention should concern how the rules and behaviour within a society work in general and in particular instances to get a scientific understanding (Radcliffe-Brown 2006: 126). As an anthropologist the aim is not to define Islam to find out what Muslims do, but the anthropologist can explore what it means to be a Muslim in order to fulfill their representations. "Only Muslims can observe Islam", Varisco proclaim (Varisco 2005:161-162).

The main theorists I will use in my thesis are Geertz, Barth, Cohen and Durkheim combined with other anthropology and sociology theorists. Religion is a complex and very comprehensive phenomenon. In my perception of religion I emphasize Geertz interpretive and explanatory perspective, but trying to extensively explain or define religion is not my intention in this thesis. I discuss the interpretation of meaning and sense-making in relation with Geertz's (1973) analysis on worldview and ethos. The community of the movement I analyze as a community of meaning where symbolic structures (Cohen 1985) function as community ties and collective identity is created.

2.2 FETHULLAH GÜLEN AND THE GÜLEN MOVEMENT

Be so tolerant that your bosom becomes wide like the ocean. Become inspired with faith and love of human beings. Let there be no troubled souls to whom you do not offer a hand and about whom you remain unconcerned. (Gülen 2006:27)

The Gülen movement is a grassroots-based movement inspired by the scholar Fethullah Gülen. Fethullah Gülen was born in eastern Turkey, in 1938. He was earlier an Imam and has for a long time been a respected man by many Turkish Muslims and Muslims in other countries. His service and activities began in the 1960s and the Gülen movement was born. The movement started growing by establishing summer camps, education and cultural centres, student dormitories, high schools, and universities. By his followers he is also referred to as the Hodjaefendi (Hocaefendi in Turkish). *Hodja* (Hoca in Turkish) means teacher and *efendi* is similar to *sir* or *master*. Efendi is normally used as a title for imams, religious scholars, or religiously knowledgeable people (Ünal 2000:17). Gülen has written a number of books about inter-religious faith, ethical values and Islam in everyday life. Some of his books which are

translated into English include *Toward a Global Civilization of Love and Tolerance* (2004), *The Necessity of Interfaith Dialogue* (2004), *Questions: This Modern Age Puts to Islam* (1998), *Religious Education of the Child* (2006), and *Essentials of the Islamic Faith* (2000). His inspiration is influenced by Said Nursi who believed that education could raise a generation with true Muslims that was also a part of the modern, scientific world (Agai 2003:50). Gülen started studying Islam and reading Said Nursi books at an early age. Said Nursi was the founder of a faith movement in Turkey called the Nur movement which wanted to raise religious consciousness. Said Nursi was stressing the significance of persuasion in religious and public discussions (Yavuz 2003:3-10). The Nur movement shares many common ideas with the Gülen movement. Religious consciousness and implementing faith in everyday life are ideas derived from both the Nur and the Gülen movement. Fethullah Gülen began preaching in mosques and coffee shops before he went on to write books and forming the now called Gülen movement. He started speaking about the human duty, *hizmet*, which stands for a common service to God. *Hizmet*, which I define later on, is used by Fethullah Gülen, in the process of making the followers participate and work for Gülen ideas¹. In the spreading of the human duty “*hizmet*”, Gülen has managed to attract supporters around the world which has built up the Gülen movement.

Gülen is described by many as being a Sufi in his own way (Saritoprak 2003:156). A Sufi is one who follows Sufism (*tasawwuf*) which is based on the mystical dimensions of Islam. A Sufi is learning how to control the *nafs* (the self/ego) to reach the Truth which is God. To control the animal nature in man makes it possible to reach wherever you want, Sufi’s believe (Sedgwick 2005:10). Sufis commit themselves to the divine and search the mystical union with God (Sedgwick 2005:33). The moral dimension of one’s existence is inspired to develop through Sufism and it opens a path for individuals who are willing to give up human vices and weaknesses in order to live in God’s love and knowledge. (Ünal 2000:352-253). Sufism is one of Islam’s most powerful movements and relates on a peculiar tradition of interpretation (Vogt 2005:145).

The Gülen movement is also called the *Fethullahcilar* or “the followers of Fethullah” and the followers are referred to as *fethullahci*. Gülen strongly opposes the movement being referred as “the followers of Fethullah Gülen” because he does not view himself as a leader and he does not own any of the Gülen schools (Yavuz 2003:69), according to himself and his

¹ It is not Gülen’s own ideas and philosophy, but it is his interpretation of universal and Islamic values.

followers. Instead, they are founded by his supporters who are inspired by his philosophy. Companies and businessmen have created foundations to support the movement's activities, which include building schools that follow Gülen's educational philosophy. The movement has a wide range of organizations under its name like "The Turkish Teachers' Foundation", "Kimse Yok Mu Voluntary Organization", and "The Journalist and Writers' Foundation". The movement's foundations and organizations arrange national and international seminars, conferences and panel discussions about interfaith and inter-cultural dialogue.

The movement's main intentions are to create bridges between Islam and the West, educate people, and work towards tolerance and dialogue in the world. The movement wishes to demonstrate to the world "real Islam" to the world and change the negative image many people have of Muslims. The movement's ideas are influenced from a Turkish-style Islam which the followers describe as a "liberal" way of Islam. Not everyone in Turkey has this opinion about the movement, when many non members, in fact, would describe the movement as a conservative Islamic movement.

The followers of the movement are estimated to be between some hundred thousand sponsors and millions of followers, but it difficult to find accurate census of followers as there is no membership registration required or formal process for being a follower of the movement (Turker 2011). The followers are a part of the Gülen movement because they believe in and wish to follow Fethullah Gülen's vision. It is not Fethullah Gülen own ideas, but he brings into play Islamic and universal values that inspire people to do good deeds and to become followers of the movement. Gülen shares his vision through his books, speeches, meetings with followers and through his podcasts on the Internet. His ideas promote activism and pietism. This is realized by the movement's followers in their service of hard work and pietism. Gülen's and the movement's activism is physically expressed through the building of Gülen schools, the charity organization Kimse Yok Mu, and the establishing of economic enterprises. The active follower's altruistic worldview contributes to earn the movement new followers and to spread globally.

The Gülen movement is not a sect or a cult. The Gülen movement is defined as a movement because it is open with its views and philosophy. It is a community of people who gather around same thoughts and ideals. This is accomplished through attaining collective consciousness. Gülen's speeches are easily accessible through the internet and his books are translated into several languages. The ones who wish to follow Gülen's vision are the ones that read his books and believe in his ideas. Since it is not Gülen's own ideas, it is the

interpretation of the ideas and the way he promotes them which the follower is attracted to. People choose themselves if they want to participate in the movement's activities and it is open for everyone who wants to take part in the movement's activities. The ideas and purpose of the movement are open for the public and anyone who wishes to be a "follower" can do so. There are no membership requirements or special group definitions that make up the movement. The movement is not trying to recruit "members", but they try to spread the values and ideas of the movement. People wish to follow the movement because of their mutual beliefs and the work of the movement. The followers share the same beliefs and they are "followers" of the movement in the way that they organize transnational activities and projects under the inspiration from Fethullah Gülen. The movement consists of various national and international networks that connect the followers together. The movement is increasing and expanding largely all over the world and attracts people from different religious belonging.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, Gülen has been a centre of attention and critics have feared it will bring Turkey backwards and disadvantage Turkey's efforts to become part of the European Union. The Turkish state suspicion toward religious groups in Turkey after the state's removal of Islamic formations created some difficulties for the movement through the years. The state and the media have been sceptical towards the movement's true intentions and claim that it has hidden agendas. Because of the accusations and criticism around the movement, the movement is under permanent legal persecution and Gülen himself has moved to Pennsylvania, USA (Aktay 2003:146). This made the movement distance itself from political discourse and made their mystical mood and universalism more evident. At the same time, the movement's ascetic worldview motivated the followers to go abroad to work. Aktay writes about the movement's shift that " they have undertaken such activity for the sake of a higher moral value that transcended the physical values and is symbolized by the employment of a rich vocabulary of the Islamic ethics of hard work, self-sacrifice, and self-devotion" (Aktay 2003:145).

Gülen himself has met with political leaders, presidents, prime ministers and important businessmen all over the world in his work for worldly dialogue. Gülen opposes political Islam and claims the movement does not have any political aims. They distance themselves from other Islamic movements in their emphasis on Turkish nationalism, free market and modern education. The movement takes a stance against terrorism and promotes world dialogue. The followers of the movement claim it is not an ideological movement, but one

that seeks to educate people through flexible strategies. Fethullah Gülen has defended the movement's interest many times by stating that it is not a political movement and he does not wish to create ties between Islam and the Turkish state. The followers say the movement is not hiding any political agendas and that they find it very important to be secular friendly.

They strongly reject the regime in Iran and Afghanistan, and see it as a very unhealthy way of ruling a society. Gülen claims he is wrongly suspected in searching for political power, but he says he hopes to create a better relationship between the state and religion (Yavuz 2003). The movement has many transnational activities and establishments which lead to more connections and supporters all around the world. Their attitude and beliefs stand out from other Islamic movements through the aim to place Islam into a modern context and through a “liberal” perspective on Islam. The people who are active followers have broad educational background and many of them are highly educated in social and political science. They constantly try to renew their knowledge and hard work for the movement by keeping themselves updated about the world society today. They constantly read books to learn more while they can regularly follow Gülen’s podcasts on the internet.

The Gülen network is broadly spread all over the world in many diverse fields. The newspaper Zaman is Turkey's second largest newspaper, and their TV-channel Samanyolu is one of the highest rated TV-channels in Turkey. Zaman newspaper and Samanyolu TV-channel are sponsored by Gülen supporters, but they are not trying to preach through the media outlets about the movement or Fethullah Gülen. If you are not already aware, it would not be obvious that these media outlets are related with the Gülen movement. Zaman news paper declares itself in support of democracy and secularism. The newspaper has also an English version called “Today's Zaman” which is one out of two English daily newspapers based in Turkey.

The Gülen movement works to get Islam and religion a part of the modern society. They seek to blend Islam into a modern context in a way that does not require people to choose between religion and “modern” society. The movement perceives modern society as an important precondition for future-orientation and human growing. The technology and science that has reached so far, is something Gülen means that everyone should be able to take a part in. The movement is also “modern” in the way they deal with global problems that they see as a result of lack of tolerance and dialogue between people. Gülen’s vision on modernity is not related to secularism and consumerism in the Western sense, but he perceives modernity as a world where humans are embedded with religious and secular

knowledge. He claims humans need secular knowledge to go forward in the world, and secular knowledge is what has brought us where we are today. Modernisation needs a redefinition where religious presence is in the new public sphere without having to be split between being secular (modern) or religious (traditional). Gülen's modern society is a society where there is room for being both Muslim and modern at the same time (Yavuz 2003:22-23).

2.3 THE GÜLEN SCHOOLS

The number of Gülen schools is estimated to be around 1000 schools worldwide with 300 schools in Turkey and more than 2 million students spread around in 120 countries around the world (Ebaugh 2010:v, ThePewFormum on Religious Life 2010). Gülen says he is not controlling or even aware of which schools are connected to his name. There are no central institutions that administrate and control the schools. All the schools are built and supported by Gülen businessmen and the movement's foundations until the schools can survive themselves on the academic standard tuitions and fees paid by the students (Ebaugh 2010:97). The schools in Turkey follow the state curriculum of education which is a secular one with only one hour of religious education per week. The compulsory education is 8 years together, from 6-14 years of age (Nohl 2008:44).

The schools which are associated with Gülen wish to offer an education placed between the standard models for the public schools and the traditional Islamic schools (*medrese*). Gülen perceives none of the current school models as conducive to the right integration of scientific education with human and spiritual values. He believes that the religious schools have shown little interest in meeting scientific thinking and have failed to meet the challenges of today's society, while the public schools have excluded ethical values in their model of education. Gülen advocates there should be a balance in education between teaching ethical values and secular science.

Gülen inspired schools are not only for Muslims and Turkish people, their aim is to create an interfaith dialogue between religions. The school curriculum is secular and does not privilege Islam or Turkey (Turnam 2003:195). The schools abroad do not give any extra religious education in the schools. The schools follow the countries' educational curriculum with a majority of the subjects taught in English along with Turkish lessons. The educational model in the Gülen inspired schools is inspired by a holistic approach to science and knowledge which includes a broad spectrum in the student's surroundings (Agai 2003:50). The intention is to create a school filled with quality education and universal moral standards.

Helen Ebaugh writes that approximately 20-40 % students in each school receive need-based scholarships (Ebaugh 2010: 98), but I was told by the teachers that it was 10 % in the school where I did fieldwork.

The essential philosophy of the Gülen schools is to educate a generation with a balanced mind and heart. To gain this one has to be educated in both science and ethical values. The holistic approach which is based on teaching science, values and morals from a various spectre includes not only teaching from the book, but being an example oneself as the teacher. The students are not only valued from the grades they get, but also from their behaviour. The teachers have a close relationship with each student and they follow up on the students not only on an academic level. The teachers are involved with the students growing up through their close contact with the parents and the students. It is not only the teacher's job to make good students, but also make sincere persons. To become a fully educated student the students have to be filled with modern knowledge as well as universal values. This is the job of the teachers which also makes the teachers job especially demanding as they are vital role models for the students.

The movement's aim is to cultivate religious belief without excluding the modern society. This is something they believe to be lost in the Muslim world, and gives people a wrongful understanding of Islam. Islam should not be a religion belonging to the past. People should not be forced to choose between their religion and modern life. They should learn to use their religion in their everyday life without being forced to give up their belief. It is a balance between spirituality and science Gülen wishes to achieve. Fethullah Gülen himself, sees schools as a laboratory where students not only acquire information and skills but also start to ask questions about life and search meaning of things. They reflect over what they will do in life and try to understand life in this world in relation with the next life. In his writings about education he talks about the schools as a holy place where holy activities take part. The school is such an important place where humans develop and mature. For Gülen the schools can shed light on true meanings and lead to fullness of thought in a student's mind. "In essence, the school is a kind of place of worship whose 'holy persons' are teachers" (Gülen 1996:98).

2.4 TURKISH CULTURE AND "TURKISH ISLAM"

To gain a broader understanding of the Gülen movement in Turkey and the Turkish people's attitudes towards the movement, it is fruitful to look back in Turkish history. The foundation

of the Turkish republic in the beginning of 1920's displaced the caliphate which embodied all Muslim political existence and declined the Ottoman body politic. The displacement has since been a "symbol of embodiment for Islamists" in Turkey (Aktay 2003:133). The disembodiment of the caliphate and the reforms of the new republican regime meant the decline of Islam's role in the public sphere. The Ministry of Shariah and Evkaf were abolished in 1924 and the Unification of Education Law in 1924 closed all medreses (Islamic schools). Sufi orders and all religious practices connected with them were banned by law in 1925, and religious manifestations became illegal. Until Mustafa Kemal Atatürk² came in power in 1919, Westernization had been resisted. The Kemalist dictatorship enforced culture change towards a "modern" European and secular reform which led Turkey away from the medieval Arab organization and towards European influences (Spencer 1958:643-644).

The Kemalist movement built their theory of the state on the Turkish sociologist and poet Mehmet Ziya's concept of nation. Ziya exerted a strong intellectual force on the Kemalist movement, and Spencer argues that Ziya's concept of nation were in relation with Durkheim's concept: "Atatürk's concept of nation was essentially Ziya's and Durkheim's" (Spencer 1958:652). The ideology of the Kemalist movement is therefore, according to Spencer, a picture of Emile Durkheim's theory of the state. "There can be no question that Atatürk, as the guiding force behind Turkish culture change, was brought close to Durkheim through Ziya's works and built his theory of the state on applications of the concepts of the French philosopher" (Spencer 1958:651-652). "The collective representations of Durkheim were translated into political action by the party of Ataturk both in their various political pronouncements and in their constitution." (Spencer 1958:652). Islam in Turkey is in a Turkish model, which is different from political Islam and the Islamic models used in other Arabic countries (Aktay 2003:153). Fethullah Gülen place Turkish Sunni Islam as opposed to Iranian Shia Islam which he describes as intolerant, insincere, and reactionary (Aktay 2003:153).

Gülen states he wants the Turkish people to remember its past so the nation can be restored and rediscover Islam and the Ottoman past. He (including other Islamic groups) seeks to reconstruct the nation as Muslim, Ottoman, and Turkish. The movement is therefore constructing its own modernity based on their own national identity as Muslim, Ottoman, and

² Founder of the modern Turkish state and first primeminister in Turkey.

Turkish. Gülen emphasis on Turkish nationalism is something that seems to create scepticism and concern from the critics.

3 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

3.1 GETTING STARTED

I was fortunate to get in contact with a Gülen follower here in Trondheim right before Christmas. I had received his contact information from Dag Aakre, the daily leader of Kirkens Bymisjon in Trondheim. There was an article written in Adresseavisa some years ago about the Gülen movement and their work. In the making of this article, some followers of the Gülen movement in Norway met with Dag Aakre, and he still had their contact information from then. The follower I then became introduced to, named Emre, was originally from Turkey but he now lived in Oslo. He invited me to meet with him and other followers when he was in Trondheim some days to look at the movement's cultural centre at Heimdal. We met at the centre where I introduced my thesis and what I knew from before about the movement. He told me more about the movement and their activities. Emre was working for one of the movement's cultural centres in Oslo where they arrange seminars and meetings associated with the movement's ideas. The cultural centre at Heimdal was in an ordinary house located in a neighbourhood close to the school where pupils could come and get help with their homework. The pupils at the school included a broad spectrum of nationalities which the cultural centre offered extra help with their schoolwork.

At the centre there were three young male teachers and about five children with Turkish background when I came. Already during my first meeting with followers of the movement I became a witness to the movement's philosophy in practice. The teachers there worked voluntarily to help the children with ethnic background in that school with their school work. The teachers said there were many children there that did not know correct Norwegian and therefore at times they had difficulties with their homework. In the meeting I was told about a new contact person who could help me in Istanbul. Emre told me his sister lived in Istanbul and that I could probably stay with her. It was a pleasant meeting and I felt welcomed to study their movement. It also looked like I would get a lot of help when I got to Istanbul.

The next meeting I had with someone from the movement was when I had arrived to Istanbul. It was not with the planned contact person because he was abroad, but I had been

given a new contact which was working for one of the movements foundations. The foundation is called “Journalists and Writers’ Foundation” and is a group of intellectuals that work together for world dialogue and tolerance. The foundation organizes seminars, meetings and courses where they create a dialogue and community with others that are working for the same causes. Many of the workers of the foundation have also written books about the movement and the movement’s ideas.

The first meeting with my new contact person was filled with lots of excitement and eagerness from my side. My contact named Emir was working for the Journalist and Writers’ Foundation and was completing his PhD degree in social science. He was the only one I knew at that time who could help me get a foot inside a Gülen school. In the meeting he was very straight forward and asked me what information I could possibly expect to get from being at a Gülen school. I said I had read about the schools and how essential they were for the movement and their ideas. I had received the impression that the schools were quite different from other “normal” schools. He told me, the schools had a good reputation and good results, but that did not make it stand out as a Gülen school. He could not fully understand why I wanted to be at a Gülen inspired school when I wanted to look at the movement’s philosophy and ideas in practice. Most of the children probably did not even know who Fethullah Gülen was and the schools were not different from other “normal” schools in any way that would connect it with the Gülen movement, he said. He could not see how my choice would result in much useful information. I got quite disappointed after hearing what he said, had I totally misunderstood? I thought to myself. But I decided I still wanted to go for what I had planned. Later on my contact person finally found a Gülen school which I could do research on. Except from this episode, I did not feel any strong distrust towards my chosen topic under my field experience.

3.2 IN THE FIELD AND POSITIONING

During my fieldwork from January to June 2010, I got to know and take part in the lives of followers of the Gülen movement and their family and friends in Istanbul. In the field I undertook participant observation while regularly performing loose unstructured interviews. I wrote field notes whenever I had the time and energy to do so. I did semi-structured interviews regularly and structured interviews when needed. My direct observation concerned the actual existing relations which connected the teachers and the students with the movement’s ideas.

“In the study of social structure the concrete reality with which we are concerned is the set of actually existing relations, at a given moment of time, which link together certain human beings. It is on this that we can make direct observations.”(Radcliffe-Brown 2006:123)

My focus was directed towards the follower’s behaviour and what they thought about their behaviour. I wanted to find an in-depth understanding of what it meant being a follower and how they translated that into practice.

In the field I used qualitative methods by participating and observing. I concerned myself with “(i) *what actually happens*, (ii) *what people think happens*, and (iii) *what they think ought to happen, their legal and moral values.*” (Beattie 2006:149). I was interested in the intrinsic values and beliefs of the teachers. Something I had to be clearly aware of was the verbal statements of the members and their observed behaviour. My challenge was not to depend on being told, but to observe the actual situation (Ladislav & Stuchlik 1983). Some of the verbal recognition of my informants was not in direct relation with their beliefs as Gülen followers. When the members described their behaviour in the capacity of being a Gülen follower, I could not always see it equivalent with their actual behaviour and acts. Disparities between the verbal statements and acts are not unusual and should be included in anthropological field study (Ladislav & Stuchlik 1983). I did not exclude the informed norms and attitudes my informants told me and only focused on their actions, but I took both norms and actions into consideration.

My aim is to describe what I have studied, but also give an explanatory description and interpretive understanding of my collected data to serve the reader the true meaning. By considering the verbal statements of the followers I gained an understanding of the notions the movement relied on and which norms the followers were embedded with. These norms were apparent mainly in the followers’ attitudes and behaviour. The collective norms reflected the movement’s ideas and the followers’ interpretation of the ideas.

I performed regularly informal and formal interviews under the whole field period. Besides spending most of the time with the teacher’s at the primary school and the Children Academy (preschool), I met with other followers which were not teachers. Among the people I met it were people working for the Zaman newspaper (established by Gülen supporters), the President of Journalist and Writers’ Foundation which is also a long time columnist of Zaman newspaper, sponsors of the movement, people working in their charity organization, members of Gülen foundations and other regular Gülen followers. Places I visited included the Zaman

newspaper head office, the Journalists and Writers' Foundation, and Fatih University³. I also visited several of the follower's homes and I spent much time at the Journalists and Writers' Foundation where I had close contact with the journalists and writers working there. There I became informed about events and conferences arranged by the movement, and I got to see how they worked for the movement's ideas.

I participated in everything from the followers' daily activities, activities the movement had organized, extraordinary happenings arranged by the movement, teachers' meetings, and visits to the followers and students' homes. I also went to visit a public school in Istanbul to get an impression of how public schools in Turkey are, something which I knew only a little about from before (my aunt and a friend work as a teacher in Istanbul). There I was greeted by the headmaster, the teachers and the pupils. They also let me take part in the class and informed me about the Turkish school system. Except from being with different followers of the movement in various settings, I had regular connection with people outside of the movement who had different perceptions of the movement. I also arranged a meeting with a well known Turkish social scientist, Nilufer Narli, who has a research interest in Islamist movements, and a critical outlook on the Gülen movement⁴.

3.3 SELECTION OF INFORMANTS, ANONYMITY AND GENDER SEGREGATION

Most of my fieldwork was conducted at Fariah primary school and the Fariah Children Academy⁵ in a new middle-class suburb of Istanbul. The Children Academy was the preschool for children between 3-6 years, and the Primary school was for children aged between 7-14 years. The preschool and primary school was located next to each other which made it easy for me to be at both. Most of the activities and meetings at the school and the children academy were gender segregated which made my research limited to a feminist viewpoint. My thesis is therefore conducted mostly on the female representations which made me stress the particularity within the movement between the individuals. Being in two opposing networks (followers and non followers) and with one particular set of individuals

³ The only Gülen inspired university in Turkey

⁴ Nilufer Narli has written much about Islamic groups in Turkey and has participated in several debates on TV related to her field.

⁵ Name changed for anonymity reasons.

(the females) made me distinguish the field as positioned truths and not as a generalized representation of the movement (Abu-Lughod 2006).

I tried to get a close relationship with my informants so I could get them to open up for me and I could get as much insight as possible. I was welcomed and included straight away by most of the people I met. Except for some of the teachers who seemed a bit sceptical towards me in the beginning, but quickly it seemed they grew trust in me. Some of the teachers did not know exactly what I was doing at the school and they did not really seem that bothered about it either. A few of them thought I was there because I wanted to be a teacher, but the English teachers knew my position and the other teachers saw I was interested in their work so generally they just wanted to bring me with them on their daily activities. I obtained much more information about my informants and the movement from the ones that I had got to know on a friendship level and not only a researcher level. The information the followers gave me on the friend level was more in a natural way, I felt, and it was also more personal. This has made me had to exclude some information in respect for the ones concerned. Hence I came close with my informants; I made sure they had a realistic understanding of my role.

At the primary school and the children academy, I spent most of my time at the teacher's lounge. At the primary school the teachers' lounges were separated by subjects and gender and in the Children Academy the women teachers' lounge was for all the women teachers. At the teachers' lounge I got to know what was going on during the school day and outside school hours. It was also where I learned about *hizmet*, the special work the teachers perform. The teacher lounge was always occupied by teachers since they did not have class every hour of the school day. Most of the women teachers were really lively and outspoken in the teacher's lounge, and much of the time there was a loud discussion going on between them. It was entertaining and interesting being there with them listening to their jokes, stories, and what they had been up to. That being said, it also gave me a lot of information and showed much of the connection the teachers had in their beliefs in Islam and Fethullah Gülen's ideas. Consequently becoming this close to my informants brought on an ethical dilemma. My informants had put trust in me and opened themselves up, not only about their beliefs, but also on personal matters. Having a role of a researcher, but also as a friend, diffused the borders. As a friend, I also received information that would be useful for my assignment, but which could cause embarrassment or difficulties for my informants. The anonymity sometimes made it hard to disguise all my connections to the informants. My informants and other people high up in the movement have told me they were interested in

reading my finished thesis. This forces me to define the borders of which information I can use and what I have to exclude. It will be a challenge to make what I write anonymous but at the same time fruitful and as actual as possible.

My fieldwork was dialogical in the sense that it was not only me observing the informants, but they also observed me in some conduct. In secular Turkey many people have been and still are very sceptical of the Gülen movement. A lot of people see Fethullah Gülen and the movement as a threat to the secular society in Turkey. Some see it as a closed religious movement which must have a hidden agenda. The people I knew outside the movement were all wondering why I wanted to study the Gülen movement. They saw it as a backward group of people which would make Turkey a Muslim state. Not many of them really knew the agenda of the movement or the message which the Gülen movement wants to spread. None of the people I met outside the movement had read any of Gülen's books or writings, and this also made them unaware of the philosophy of the movement. I gained the impression that most people were just sceptical and retained a mistaken picture of the movement. Critique and scepticism towards the movement with suspicions about a "hidden agenda" has made the movement more reserved and uncertain about other people's intentions. In some cases I met with suspicions about my fieldwork, but most of the time people gave me a warm welcoming. They believed I was there with good intentions, which was true.

The data I gathered was not done by me alone, but in interaction with my field informants. The social network I had outside the movement was also useful for my interpretation of the movement. The "outsiders" held opinions and views which gave me a broader perceptive of other people's outlook on the Gülen movement. It was a large contrast between my informants at school and the social network I had outside of school. The social network I had outside school had doubtful opinions about the movement, but thought it was exciting that I had come so close with the followers. Their scepticism and suspicion about the movement made me more observant and fascinated in every aspect of the field, and it also made me raise questions which would respond to these uncertainties. I found it very useful to be surrounded by both Gülen followers and non-followers because it made me able to achieve two different perspectives about the Gülen movement and the followers. Most of the time there was an explanation for the non-follower's scepticism related to unawareness about the movement's philosophy or prejudices about Islamist groups. Many were surprised I was able to come that close to the followers and even allowed to enter the schools and their homes.



The playground of the Children Academy

4 THE FOLLOWERS' EVERYDAY LIFE AND NOTIONS

4.1 REFLECTIONS AND IMPRESSIONS IN THE BEGINNING

It took me almost three weeks from when I came to Turkey till I got access at a Gülen school. Meanwhile, I lived with my sister and her fiancé in a village outside of Istanbul where we have our holiday house. Conversing with Turkish people outside the movement made me become aware and take notice of the different opinions and impression people had of the movement. I noticed that a lot of people had specific ideas about the followers or prejudices against the movement. One day my sister, her fiancée (from Norway) and I were invited home for dinner at Ali's house, an acquaintance of us. Ali's wife, their daughter and a neighbour woman were also there. Ali and his wife are not particularly religious, but his daughter is a strong believing Muslim and works as a religious teacher of Islam. The neighbour woman had in the recent years become very religious, but she was not very positive towards the movement, she had told me some days earlier. She actually said Gülen was *şeytan* (the devil) when I told her about my thesis. She said the agenda of the movement was to Islamise Turkey and make it a country similar to Iran and Iraq. Anyway, now she had changed her opinion and

found the movement interesting. While eating dinner Ali told me he actually rented out his apartment for a week to a young group of men from the Gülen movement. They were living in the ground floor apartment of the house, and he suggested we invite them to speak with me.

After the dinner Ali went downstairs and told them about my interest in the movement. The oldest one in the group came up to meet us, while the rest of the group were reading downstairs. He told us they were a group of friends who had come to the village for a trip to read books together and educate themselves spiritually. They had not gone to a Gülen school, but they followed the movement on their own through this group. They used to meet together to read Gülen's books which they found inspiring. We spoke about the movement's ideas and philosophy while the other dinner guests were listening. The only one of the guest who seemed to have knowledge about the movement from before was the religion teacher, while the others only had heard tales about it. We conversed about the movement and its main pillars such as dialogue, tolerance and education in general, and the importance of it in the world today. The follower that had come to talk to us said that the most important thing was to start by oneself to try to make a change. That was what they tried to do, and also by educating themselves. I did not meet the other boys from the group myself, but my sister's fiancé who is a religion teacher, was invited down to the apartment to meet the rest of the group. He told me afterwards that the boys sat in a circle on the floor reading together when he came in. They had been very welcoming and involved in telling him about what they did. They said they read together and to get fully into the reading they often read out loud together while sitting in the circle. The books they read was Said Nursi and Fethullah Gülen books. One boy said they tried to read as many pages as possible while they were there, and it was helpful to read in a circle with the others because they would not get tired or easily stop reading. My sister's fiancé stayed there for a while and was given a large book written by Said Nursi as a present from them.

The daughter of the neighbour woman was a friend of me, and had also specific opinions about the movement and its effect on Turkey. I never really understood why she was against the movement because she did not seem to know what the movement was about, but she expressed that she did not like it. The interesting thing was that at the end of my fieldwork she came as my translator in an interview with a well known Zaman Newspaper columnist. When we left the meeting she told me she was very surprised over what the man had told her. She had not known the ideas and world view of the movement, and now she had got a broader understanding of it and their philosophy was something she actually agreed with it.

After three weeks, the schools winter holidays were over and my contact had found a school where I could conduct my fieldwork. It was a Gülen primary school and a Gülen preschool placed next to each other. They were named Fariah and were located in the suburbs of Istanbul⁶. The first day at Fariah Primary school and Children Academy did not convince me that the schools were anything different than any other private schools. I was greeted by the headmaster and explained him my purpose for being there. He asked me what I knew from before about Fethullah Gülen and Gülen schools. He also really wanted to know if I liked Turkish food, because they had great Turkish food in their canteen, he proudly told me. His wife and English teacher, Beyhan, was going to be my contact person and show me around in the school. She worked as an English teacher at the school, and took me to her English class after the meeting with the headmaster. In her English class the children found me very interesting. They wanted to know everything about me, such as why I was in Turkey, did I have a boyfriend, and what Turkish singers did I like. After answering many nonstop questions from the children in the English lesson I went to meet the English women teachers in the English teachers' lounge. I felt welcomed straight away after being introduced to most of the women English teachers at the school.

From what I had noticed and the first impressions I received, I could not distinguish this school as being a Gülen school. I could not see any religious symbols on the walls or in the classrooms, nobody spoke about Fethullah Gülen and there were pictures of Atatürk in every class room. It was a modern looking school with new equipments as large smart boards in the class rooms, an inside swimming pool and new exercising equipments in the outside area. The decoration and design was not of any visible religious character, and the school looked like any other modern school, I would say. I realized that you could not sense any difference between this school and other non Gülen schools when walking into the school or being a visitor for a short time. To my impression, this school seemed like a school with an ordinary educational model and set of rules. That was true in many ways, however later I discovered the sides that distinguished this school as a Gülen inspired school, and not just an ordinary one. The more insight I received, the more I found out that this was a school with an extraordinary strong bond that stretched further than the school area. There was a community tie connecting the school, the pupils, the teachers and even the parents, all together. This community tie was part of the holistic education circle the school exercised. Their extended

⁶ Name changed for anonymity reasons

teaching program and their attitudes towards education made up this special circle of education which is quite different from any other “ordinary” school.

4.2 THE TEACHERS IN THE PRIMARY SCHOOL AND IN THE CHILDREN ACADEMY

Real teachers sow the pure seed and preserve it. They occupy themselves with what is good and wholesome and lead and guide the children in life and whatever events they encounter. For a school to be a true institution of education, students first should be equipped with an ideal, a love of their language and how to use it most effectively, good morals, and perennial human values. Their social identity must be built on these foundations. (Gülen 2004:76)

The educational sector in the Gülen movement serve from their discipline in two ways: 1) people from the movement that work outside the educational sector earn money that they invest in the education sector; and 2) the teachers perform their work with piety and enthusiasm even if it is not always under exhilarating circumstances, but it is their duty to God.

The teachers in the Gülen inspired schools are highly valued and looked up to because of their significant role in spreading and communicating the ideas the movement. The teachers communicate and present Islam through their own ethical practice and the work they do. Their role is not to teach or preach Islam to the students, but rather show Islam in everyday life, communicated through their work and lifestyle as a good Muslim.

The Gülen inspired schools does not try to teach the students ethical values and Islam through the school lessons, instead they try to teach it through their own behaviour. That gives the teachers in the Gülen schools an important role with big responsibilities. At school morals are taught through the teachers own behaviour, but as I found out, they also have regular gatherings after school time with the students where ethical values and morals are discussed. The teachers were expected to create thought and reflection, and to help the students to internalize qualities of self-discipline, self-sacrificing, and tolerance for others. The teachers said they always try to sacrifice their own happiness to the benefit of others and society at large.

The Gülen schools’ educational curriculum has a holistic approach towards science and human knowledge. They use a circle of education which includes not only the school, but family, friends, neighbours, faith and cultural organisations, and workplaces. The subjects English, Russian and Chinese were taught at the preschool and high weight on oral and written English in the Primary school. They focus on having an international orientation

through foreign study trips and visits by international students, as the movement sees global tolerance and interfaith dialogue as essential. Many of the teachers had studied or worked at Gülen schools abroad, and they showed great enthusiasm for the abroad school trips that the school arranged at least once a year. The teachers had a feeling of belonging to the movement and they had close relationships with other followers. Nearly all of the teachers I asked at the school were married with men who worked within the movement. Their husbands worked either as teachers, journalists in the Zaman newspaper, in the organization committee for the movement's events, or in some of the movement's foundations.

4.3 THE FEMALE ENGLISH TEACHERS' STAFF ROOM

As mentioned earlier, at the primary school the teacher's staff rooms were divided after gender and subjects. Being a woman, and because of verbal communication, the English female staff room was where I spent most of my time. At the children academy there was only segregation between the genders, not the subjects. There were about 9-10 women teachers using the female English teachers' staffroom in the primary school, and in the children academy it was about the same. Generally the teachers had some hours free in the day between their lessons and they would spend their spare time in the staffroom, which was a lounge with a sofa, computer and some tables. There were always a number of teachers there. Being in the staffroom I could observe how the teachers interacted with each other and how they communicated their religious identity with each other. The social relations between the women teachers were expressed in the lounge and many of the social relations between them were also constructed there. Many of the teachers had small Qurans and Islamic praying books they were reading or which were just laying around on their desks. Sometimes they spoke together about their beliefs as Muslims or about Islamic norms, but normally they conversed with each other about daily activities or their daily lives. They had for the most part sunflower snack they snacked on and drank Turkish tea (çay) while they rested in the lounge. Women teachers from other departments would sometimes drop in for a chat, and students sometimes came in to ask their teacher about something or to get back their mobile phone which had been taken away from them in class. But I never saw a man teacher enter the lounge.

The female staff room could be described as a "backstage room" where they all could relax and step outside of the teacher role. Erving Goffman (1959) asserts that appearances people give out are controlled and can be divided into two regions of behaviour which he

refers to as front region and back region (Goffman 1959:110). The front region is a place where one is being watched and expectations are attached to the role the person has, while in the back region the person can step out of that role and the expectations are lowered. As a school teacher one has to step into the role that is expected as a teacher and play that role out to the audience which is the students. By stepping into the character as the teacher, one is expected to perform what holds that role in a reasonable manner. The character people express is managed within context, and for teachers their characters are managed within the context of the teacher role. There are certain standards for the roles people contain which are expected to be visible in the appearances of those roles. For the Gülen teachers their role included and expected them to be a good example, an educator and a helpful tutor for the students. The teachers seemed to express their role spot on whenever they were in relation with their students. In the classroom, in the moral meetings⁷ or just conversing with the students, the teachers always seemed to be in their role as a tutoring teacher. Within the staffroom the teachers were secluded from the students and they were on a break from their role as a teacher. Sometimes students could walk in and ask questions or the teachers had to correct papers in their spare time which meant they had to step into their teacher role more or less spontaneously even then. But generally the teachers were free from work and free from being a teacher while they were in the staff lounge.

Within those walls of the staff room the different attitudes or de-professionalised behaviour took place which was not visible for the men, students and parents. The topics in the teachers' lounge were often in a manner they most likely would have omitted if there were men in the room. The teachers told me the dividing of the gender in the teachers' lounge made the women teachers able to relax more. They did not have to worry about showing some skin or having their hair out, and they could also talk more openly about things that interested them. The atmosphere in the lounge was often filled with jokes and loud talk between the teachers. They all seemed to have a kind of sisterly relationship with each other in the way they were open about their moods and feelings, but also in the childish way they joked with each other. Even if some of the teachers were louder and more attention seeking than others and some of the teachers were quiet and shy, they all seemed to respect the differences between them. With the atmosphere relaxed and joyful, the teachers seemed to have stepped out of their teacher role. They could complain about how stressed they were, how noisy the

⁷ Moral meetings were after school meetings for the students, which I describe further in chapter 6.2

class had been or that they wanted to finish early that day. They could relax on the sofa, talk loud, tell funny stories or just chat about whatever interested them. Things were discussed, complained about, joked about and even celebrated in the room.

One of the days when I was in the teacher's lounge in the children academy, the teachers were whispering about a surprise party they had arranged for a teacher who was going to get married. At the end of the day all the women teachers from the children academy went into the music room and put on loud traditional Turkish music on the school's CD player. The women dragged the soon married woman into the middle of the dance floor, which normally was the class room with desks, and started dancing around her. The dancing started off as traditional Turkish wedding dances and circle dance (hora dance), and turned into more amusing dancing with shaking of chests and bottoms. Everyone seemed to have a lot of fun while dancing and some of the teachers even did some belly dancing with loud enthusiasm from the others. If any of the male teachers had seen us then, it would have been likelihood for some loud women screams. After all the fun dancing we went across the street to the primary school to continue the celebration in the schools gala hall. The school had arranged for all the women teachers from the children academy and the primary school a celebration with food and non alcoholic drinks.

Being with the female teachers in the teachers' lounge, I also noticed all the details that represented their influence from Fethullah Gülen's philosophy. The fact that they could now talk to me about their daily lives showed me that such a large part of their life was committed to the movement, from their friends to their husbands, and I learned about the movement's "service", *hizmet*.⁸ They often had discussions with each other which reflected their notions and made me see how they had perceived the notions of the movement. Gülen's books were often in their bag or on their desk and they could talk about the ones they had read. I also learned more about all the "extra" work they did as teachers, which no one had told me about before. This "extra" work included for example the home visits to the students, the students' visits to the teachers' own home, and the "moral meetings" for the teachers. It also included "paper work" like the diary books the students had to fill out every day about what they had done after school, and the books about Prophet Mohammad's life the teachers gave out to parents and pupils in relation to the celebration of his birthday. It all gave me a closer look at the ethics behind this school and what bound it all together. In the teachers'

⁸ *Hizmet* is a key term in the movement which I give conceptual clarification of in chapter 7.2

room I built trust and relationship with my informants, and this also gave me useful connections outside the school.

The women teachers were largely involved in their job for the most part of the day. Teacher meetings, moral meetings, seminars and parent visits were some of the things that occupied their days. Most of the teachers also had their own children. They were expected to fulfil their demanding job as good as possible, be a good example for the students, attain all the extra activities, and on top of that be a good parent and wife. They were both nurturers and professionals, dealing with a demanding job and little spare time. It was astonishing to see how they managed to handle all their tasks and still have energy to seek for religious virtues and extra care for others. Some of the women teachers I would categorize as “superwomen”, particularly Beyhan, the principle’s wife. She had two children, was a full time class teacher with every bit of extra attached to that, and being the wife of the principle meant that she had to participate at meetings with her husband and host guests at their home. She had worked abroad with her husband at a Gülen school for many years, where she sacrificed her friends and family in Turkey to provide service for others abroad. This was something she was willing to do for the movement, she told me. At the end of my fieldwork, right before the summer holiday, her husband had been offered a new job in another city, which meant they had to move. Beyhan was upset because she had to leave all the good friends she had at the school and leave her house, but this was something she accepted as part of *hizmet* (the service) she was a part of.

4.4 RELIGIOUS EXPRESSIONS WITHIN THE SCHOOL AND CHILDREN ACADEMY

Following the state curriculum, the Gülen schools were no different than any other Turkish school. The school rules and the educational model were strictly followed in the classroom. Becoming close to my informants I found out more about the school and their after school programs for the students. Furthermore, I started noticing various religious appearances in the school, expressed by the teachers in different ways. The most apparent was the teachers clothing. The women teachers dressed all in modest clothing with long skirts covering their ankles, and fully covering tops. While teaching the women and men had to wear white long “doctor” coats which made them stand out as teachers, in that case their normal clothes did not show much. Approximately all the women teachers wore headscarves. Headscarf was prohibited to wear while teaching or eating lunch in the canteen, but all the women wore headscarves to and from school. They would put their headscarves on in the teachers’ lounge

when their day was finished. It is a Turkish law that forbids teachers to wear headscarves while teaching, and it even forbids students in universities to enter the university using headscarf. Generally at Turkish schools the teachers are not even allowed to enter the school area wearing headscarf, but at Fariah they were allowed to enter the school wearing it. This made the teachers' religious beliefs and devotion in covering themselves obvious for the students at the school.

In Turkey the headscarf is not as commonly used as in many other Muslim countries, especially not by the younger generation. Many religious people in Turkey claim the headscarf is traditionally Turkish, but the use of headscarf in Turkey has been regarded by the secular public as backward and not a Turkish style of dress. In pre-republican Turkey the headscarf was not a common garment and it is not until recent years that it has been used as an Islamic outfit in Turkey. The most common outfits are influenced by the secular clothing model promoted by Atatürk, and headscarves have been normally used by rural women only. The universities and official areas prohibit headscarves, but since the 1980's young women have tried objecting by entering the universities wearing their headscarves (Ask & Tjomsland 1998:137-138).

As mentioned, the Gülen movement practices rigid segregation of the sexes, and this was evident in the school and children academy. The teachers were all separated according to gender in their meetings, in the staff rooms, the canteen and the social gatherings. The students were not segregated in the classroom but they were so in the different after school activities. The English teachers' staff meetings on Fridays included both the women teachers and the men teachers, but were only one of few meetings which did so. The meeting was merely English class related and included the English teachers from the school and children Academy. Even if this was a meeting for both women and men, there was still segregation between them in the meeting room. All the women sat on the right side of the class room and the men on the left side. I noticed the women teachers had an adjustment in behaviour under the meeting. They were much more moderate in their behaviour and less outspoken than I found them to be. The men had small talk and jokes between them, but they did not interfere with the women and vice versa.

It was not only in this meeting that men and women would sit segregated. When there were meetings for example in the assembly hall, the men teachers would sit in the front of the hall while the women sat in the back part of the hall. Every time I was in the assembly hall with the teachers there would be this separation between them. Several of the teachers related

the segregation up to being able to feel comfortable, but when asking deeper they related it to religious explanations. First and foremost, the rigid gender segregation of the teachers was something that made sense for them. Geertz asserts all humans need to make sense of life, and cultural systems are composed of beliefs and practices that serve sense of life and convey the sense made (Geertz 1973). For the Gülen teachers the gender segregation made sense for them as part of a larger Islamic worldview, and for some it was one of the reasons why they were teaching at a Gülen school and not somewhere else.

Except for their religious clothing they also carried or used something throughout the day that had religious relevance. There could be items as for example praying verses, small Qurans or counting watches to count their prayers for a special wish. Everything from small symbols and details carried out by the teachers became noticeable for me after being at the school for about one week. I noticed the women carried small Qurans or praying books with them in the hallways or in the teacher's lounge. There would also be religious books laying on the desks in the teachers lounges which they had brought themselves to read in their spare time. It did not take long before they started talking openly about their religious beliefs to me or with each other in the teacher lounge. The school had to follow the Turkish state curriculum and because of suspicion of religious teaching there were regularly visitors from the government to inspect the Gülen schools. The religious teaching in class was followed by the normal state curriculum which gives only one hour a week for religious courses (Aga 2003:51). Having read in books and been told by followers that the schools are not practicing any religious preaching; the religious symbols expressed within the school, seemed to have some significance in the meaning being sent out and interpreted. In the beginning I did not understand the meaning of many of the religious symbols and customs expressed by the teachers. Later I felt more comfortable to ask them about the specific things, and they would explain me the reason and meaning behind the acts.

One example was that some of the teachers were walking around with small counting watches to keep track on the number of times they had counted one of Allah's names. These counting watches made it easier to keep track on the number of times they repeated Allah's name in a wish for something specific. I found it really strange when I saw some of the teachers walk around in the school or in the staff room counting on these watches because it looked like they were in their own world talking to themselves. After finding out why they did this, it made more sense to me. Allah has 99 different names and each name has its own meaning. Each name represent human wishes and these wishes will come true if the name is

repeated a special number of times. The names could mean for example respect, wealth, forgiveness, knowledge or wisdom. I saw the teacher Beyhan often walk around making prayers for others. She had many wishes or prayers she wanted to come true, so she had to repeat the names numbers of times during one day, she told. She walked around in the school repeating one of Allah's names while counting on her little watch, looking like she was talking to herself. She had different wishes she wanted to come true, not only for herself, she told me. Most of the wishes were for people she knew. One day when I asked her, she had to repeat Allah's name thousand times in one day so that her prayer for a good health in the future would be achieved. Sometimes she repeated one of Allah's names three thousand times a day to achieve a wish, and other times she was counting one of his names in hope for a cure for her friend's disease.

4.4.1 WHEN ACTS BECOMES SYMBOLS

Signals, signs and symbols become a language when there is a mutual agreement upon the meaning it serves. For an outsider the non verbal information within a society will be meaningless if one do not see it as a part of a bigger complex. I was an outsider in the beginning at Fariah School, but as more I became an insider I started to notice the non verbal information and communication being sent out. The acts and symbols did not make much sense to me until someone had explained me the meaning of it. When I had been explained the meaning of these acts and symbols, I could understand and start to see them in relation with their surroundings. Edmund Leach writes; "human communication is achieved by means of expressive actions which operates as signals, signs and symbols" (Leach 1976:9). Leach sees the non verbal dimensions in culture of same importance as verbal dimensions in culture. He assumes the non verbal dimension like clothing; food, physical gestures, hairstyle and attitudes are incorporated codes of information for a culture in the same way as speech and language (Leach 1976:10). In the same way we can visualize what we see and hear into words, we can also speak out what we read. We visualize and sense in different ways, but it is all coded in the same way, Leach claims. To make sense of the visualization there has to be a mutual agreement or understanding of the visualization or statement. In the same way a culture has mutual understanding of a language, it also has mutual understanding of non verbal information.

Clifford Geertz (1973) use of Robert Ryle's "thick description" explains how one is supposed to get the fully meaning of what one has observed. Where a thin description is

explaining what someone does, the thick description explain why they do what they do (Geertz 1973). When dealing with symbols it is very obvious when you have a thin description or a thick description. A thin description would only explain the act of the symbols, while the thick description would explain the meaning and effect of the symbols. The symbols would be invisible or meaningless if you only had a thin description of them, and you would only see them as acts and not symbols. The counting watch carried by some of the teachers did not make any sense for me when I did not know the cause for them. They could have been counting watches to count the teachers steps in a day, as much as it could have been for counting Allah's name in a day. After asking, I found out that they were for counting Allah's name in prayers, and I got to know the meaning behind this ritual. I asked the teacher Gülsen what these counting watches meant, and she confirmed the same answer as Beyhan had given me. But Gülsen also said: *"This prayer is not normally done in public like this. This is something that should be done when you are alone ready to pray or something"*. It seemed like it was a split meaning about that between the teachers, because it was the same teachers that walked around with the counting watch, while some never did it.

The symbols and religious expressions illustrate the importance of interpretive anthropology to get the true meaning of acts. There is no universal symbolism, Geertz claim, and symbols become symbols when you know the full meaning of it. The non verbal statements will have no further meaning if they are not understood in a fully context which also makes the meaning invisible for the outsider. To take thin description for thick will make the outsider miss out on the total plot and isolate the whole description which leads to a superficial and false interpretation. It is not always that people intentionally tries to symbolize and signalize to others with the symbols or signs which is connected to them. As Leach sees it the sender does not have to communicate expressive to the receiver to express the specific meaning (Leach 1976:10). Indirect communication will still be interpreted by the ones for whom it is visible and communicate a meaning. It is messages which are transferred from a sender to a receiver filled with a meaning in context within their mutual "community". Therefore a "language" is only understandable for the ones who have learned the meaning of this non verbal dictionary. The symbolic expression with the praying watches did not seem to be of interest of all the teachers, since only some practiced it within the school day, but the teachers that chose to practice that prayer, communicated the meaning the watches held to the surroundings. For the students who did not know, like me, questions probably got asked and meaning was given to the act of the special prayer.

In occasion with Mevlid-i Şerif, Prophet Muhammed's birthday, the teachers had made presents to the students and the students parents. In the teacher's lounge the wrapping of the presents was in full swing one morning. Books about Mohammad's life were in big stacks on the desks waiting to be wrapped in a silk wrapping paper. Each teacher had chosen their own ideas of presents to give out to their students and their parents. Most of the English women teachers had decided to give a large book about Muhammad's life. Two of the teachers were busy writing the date and little greetings on the front page in the book. One of the teachers wrote she hoped reading this book about him would get them a correct understanding of Muhammad's life. Another teacher had decided to give her students small Turkish Delights which were wrapped in a white paper of silk with small notes from Muhammad's quotes. Some teachers gave their students counting watches for prayers as presents.

The teacher's use of religious clothing and symbols communicate to the students their beliefs which are constructed up to the meaning of this. The teachers being such an important role model for the students were representatives in every action performed by them. The symbol use by the teachers translated a specific meaning to the students which is confirmed as correct and appropriate to act out. This meaning translated is being understood by the students as proper, and without having to preach, the teachers have managed to express suitable behaviour to the students through symbols and performance.

4.5 AFTERNOON WALK WITH MERYEM

The set of notions and norms held by the followers I met was, in many circumstances, directed up to religious understanding and explanation. It seemed to colour their view on a numbers of subjects. One of the women teachers from the Children Academy, Meryem, was showing me specific attention. She would often sing out my name when she saw me and always ask me to join her class or other activities. All the time she seemed happy and bubbly towards the teachers and the children, and sometimes she was so happy that she would sing instead of speaking. I commented to another teacher that it was nice that Meryem was so happy. The other teacher replied that it was only lately she had been this happy, and she was not like this a year ago. It was because she was going to get married and she was happy she finally had found a man, the teacher told me. Meryem was only 23 years old so it was not like she was an old bride, but she was over the top excited about getting married. When I thought about it I realized that most of what we spoke about together was actually her wedding coming up. She had already invited me to her wedding one of the first times I met her, which

were supposed to be in a city in the middle of Turkey. In the beginning I thought she asked me to come in her wedding just to be polite, since I did not really know her then. As the time went on and I started to know her better I understood that she had really meant it. “There are 1000 guests invited, so of course you could come”, she said. My mother would be visiting me at that time and there were activities at the primary school I had to attend. Meryem still did not give up asking. “*Your mother of course has to come. You could stay with my relatives in their house, and flight ticket is not expensive*”, she informed me. Later she handed me their beautiful wedding invitation which I unfortunately had to answer no to. It was significant activities for my fieldwork going on at the primary school right before the summer holiday which made me not able to come for her wedding.

One day at the Children Academy, Meryem asked me if we should go to a café together after the school day. This was the first time I was alone with her outside the school, and it was a good opportunity to get to know each other better. We went on the train to the suburb of Istanbul where she lived with her family. She took me to her standard traditional Turkish restaurant, where we ate delicious food and spoke about almost everything. Much of the talking was about her beliefs and her fiancé. I asked her where she had met her fiancé and what made her fall in love with him. They had met through her parents. Her family knew his family from before. She told me she knew his parents were good people and they were good Muslims. He and his family had come for a visit and she had made them Turkish coffee (a Turkish tradition to see if the women can make good Turkish coffee for the man’s family). That was 1st of May and 3rd of May they had become engaged. Now they had been engaged for almost one year, she told me. I asked her if she felt the engagement was a bit rushed, but she replied:

I loved him, and that is most important.

[But how did you know he was the right for you already then?]

First I looked on his family, and his mother is similar to my mum. And I can trust him.

Meryem had all of her life gone to a Gülen school. She did not know anything different, she told me.

I could never go to a public school, they are so different. The teachers only think about their salary and their work hours. They don’t want to give anything extra. At the Gülen schools the students problems are the teacher’s problems, she said disappointed. I agreed with her on that.

Her father had a high position in the Zaman Newspaper and because of that he had to move to Istanbul. Earlier they used to live in another city where Meryem went to school. Her father was often working abroad and he was helping new Gülen schools to be established in South Africa. Two of her brothers went to a well known Gülen college which was a very important one because Fethullah Gülen had lived at the school. The school even had its own mosque. I had to go there when I came for her wedding, she told me. Her uncle was actually the uncle to Fethullah Gülen, and her father occasionally went to USA to visit him.

My uncle is a principle at the school and he can arrange everything for you. I will also visit Fethullah Gülen when I move to USA. Virginia, where we are moving, is only two hours away from Pennsylvania where Gülen lives. I want Gülen to tell me what I should do in the USA. Maybe he will say that I should work as a teacher at the Gülen School there, or to teach the Qur'an to the Turkish children. It is not sure he will know my name properly, but he knows I am the daughter of my father, and he prays for his children. He has so many visitors, but I know that he prays for my family. When I come there he will probably pray for me, and I will ask him about what I should do in the USA.

When we were finished eating and got the bill, she insisted on paying. She had her fiancé's card and he wanted to pay for both of us. I sought to pay, but she called him on the phone and he insisted on paying. After the restaurant she took me to a known Gülen inspired bookstore. The bookstore has several shops in Turkey with many of Gülen's books, and this shop had newly opened in her area. She told me she loved going there to buy books. The workers there already knew who she was when we entered the shop, and she introduced me to two of the male workers. I told her I maybe wanted to buy some books written by Fethullah Gülen, so she asked the man working there if he had books from Hojafendi (Gülen). They had some of his books translated into English and I wanted to buy two of them. Meryem insisted on paying for me again, but I refused. While we quarrelled over who was going to pay, the worker laughed and said Meryem had a lot of money so she could pay those books. The man gave half price discount on the books for us, and she paid with her fiancé's card. Meryem told me I had to think of her when I was reading in the books, which I said I would.

Walking back to the restaurant for some more food, she asked me about my family. Listening to me speak about my mother, she smiled and said it was nice to hear I had such a good mother. "Her thinking and values are what the Qur'an says. Always thinking of others

before oneself, are Islamic values". My mother is not a Muslim, but Meryem related her behaviour as Islamic. Being brought up to relate to her surroundings to religious explanations, she saw this behaviour as matter of course Islamic. For many it is human behaviour to be a caring human being, and not something related to religion. For Meryem the way of seeing the world is in relation to God and the Qur'an. She linked behaviour and actions into a religious meaning which categorizes the behaviour into right and wrong, good or bad, which I became more aware of later in our conversation.

Walking down to the beach promenade to get an ice cream after our food, we saw a young couple kissing under a tree. Meryem pointed at them and said a bit saddened: "look at the ones kissing". In the restaurant we had talked about how it would be when she moved to USA, and she said it probably would be lots of people kissing and holding hands in public. This was not something she found appropriate to do before being engaged or married. I asked what was special about the people kissing under the tree.

[What do you see as wrong with that [the kissing]? They are probably in love...]

They probably are in love, but they don't have to show that in public. They are not even married it looks like.

[Yes, but it is only kissing...]

It is not allowed in the Qur'an. These things before marriage is wrong and it should only be shared with your husband. I get upset to see so many don't care about that. They should wait.

[So you have never kissed anyone else than your fiancé?]

She told me she actually one time had kissed another person than her future husband. It was a boy at her high school in Izmir which she was really in love with. Unfortunately the teachers found out and they called her parents in Istanbul. The parents got really upset and she had to move to them in Istanbul. The parents had earlier moved to Istanbul because of her father's job, but she had continued to go to her high school in Izmir where she stayed at the dormitory. Her mother was very upset and her father did not speak to her in many weeks. Meryem had regretted for kissed him and she cried over this for many weeks. She connected the women with purity and holiness which should not be polluted by impure acts. These norms were something she connected as Islamic and had found in the Qur'an. The woman was so precious and it was not a proper Muslim behaviour. Meryem told me that;

The woman is like a treasure box full of treasures, you know. It should only be opened and seen by the man she is going to marry and spend the rest of her life with. The woman is so valuable and this can't be shared with others.

Her fiancé did not know that she had kissed that boy, and she was really happy she had no further connection with that boy. She knows today that he would not have been good for her. He was very handsome with beautiful green eyes, but she knew now that he drinks alcohol and smokes, which would have been bad for her.

Many of the actions and surroundings around Meryem she attached a symbolic meaning to. She analyzed and gave her surroundings a religious context. The symbolic meanings she gave the surroundings derived from the Qur'an and was interpreted in present time behaviour. For her, the behaviours and surroundings around her was about right and wrong, God's will, and destiny. The Gülen movement is influenced by a dualistic worldview. A dualistic worldview consists of two opposing principles where the one side is Good and the other is Evil. Gülen writes; "God created our will as an occasion of merit or sin, and as a basis for recompense and punishment, and accepts it as an agent for ascribing to good and evil" (Gülen 2005: 15). Fethullah Gülen suggests people should follow principles of "*Sunnatullah*" which guides the humans to follow the laws of nature created by God. This is the course of God and if it is not followed people will fail in this world and also in the afterlife (Gülen 2005:16). To make sense of life and convey the sense made is done in order to know how to behave. Humans are involved in religion and sense making because "one needs to know what to believe in order to know how to behave" (Glazier & Flowerday 2003:22) The symbolic meaning Meryem attached to the world around her made sense for her and classified her surroundings into descriptions that served her meaning.

I told Meryem I had met many people being critical towards the movement and believing it has a hidden agenda. She was silent for a while and seemed like she was thinking hard. She replied a bit disappointing that she thought it was because many people did not know the real meaning behind the movement and they just made meanings about something they did not have knowledge about. Those people have probably not read even any of Fethullah Gülen's books, she said. That was true. None of the people I had talked to which had a critical approach to the movement and Fethullah Gülen had read any of his books. She was really pleased with the growing up and background she had, because this had made her where she was today. Being "born into" the Gülen movement, her identity and worldview

were shaped after the values and norms that formed the movement. She had a really positive attitude towards things, and she wanted everyone well. She was very respectful to others religions, but when it came to her own religion, she had clear opinions about how things should be.

Her surroundings held similar views as her which contributed to her understanding of the world, she told me. She worked at a Gülen school, her family was followers of the movement, and she had gone to a Gülen school, which also made her friends followers. Now she was going to marry a follower and move to USA to probably work in a Gülen school there. I asked her if she was scared it would be difficult to find friends in USA. Her husband was moving there for his business, but she did not really know what she was going to do there. She told me she was sad about leaving her friends and family here in Turkey. She had good friends here that she would miss very much. I wondered for myself if the new people she would meet in USA would make her see the world any different, but she told me the friends she would get in USA were probably going to be Turkish women working for the movement or in one of their foundations. Predicting she would get a network of friends from the movement communicated the way she saw herself as belonging to the movement. Interpreting social space as a symbolic space, illustrate the persons belonging to a specific group (Bourdieu 1989). Bourdieu argues that the social world is constructed in different ways and presents itself as well structured reality.

Through the distribution of properties, the social world presents itself, objectively, as a symbolic system which is organized according to the logic of difference, of differential distance. Social space tends to function as a symbolic spaced, a space of lifestyles and status groups characterized by different lifestyles. (Bourdieu 1989:20)

4.6 NOTIONS AND INSTABILITY

The movement is presented as a common pathway to the true way of living which means it is a community of worldly knowledge including the mind, body and spirit. The verbal recognition of the teachers varied in some cases from the observed behaviour, which has to be taken into account while doing field work. Usually the teacher's behaviour was in relation with the norms and the ideas they possessed as a group. However, sometimes from what the teachers had explained me about the norms, I could not always see the connection of their actions and their verbal statements.

While eating dinner in the canteen one day with the principle's wife, Beyhan, she started talking to me about her looks. She asked me if I thought she looked old. She meant she looked old and she wanted me to guess how old she was and how old I really thought she looked like. She was about 35 years old, and did not look much older. She told me she was considering a face lift operation to make her look younger. She showed me how she would look by pulling the skin in her face backwards. I got very surprised about her telling me this since we had never spoke to each other about any personal subjects before. However I got mainly surprised for the reason that she had told me a lot about not using time on superficial and unimportant possessions in life.

On other occasions the women teachers were sometimes discussing their own weight, and that they should try to lose weight. One of the teachers which were from Poland and had lived in Turkey for five years said she was not allowed by her husband to join the gym. She really wanted to train at the gym, and was disappointed over her husband not allowing her to do so. She had told her husband she could wear loose fitted clothes and not look at any men while working out, but he still would not let her. It was probably because her husband were scared she would find a new man or notice someone better looking than him there, she told us for a laugh. The polish woman was one out of two teachers in the Children Academy that did not wear headscarf or any specific "religious clothing". She had told me earlier she was not a Muslim, and she did not know much about the movement. The other women teachers did not go to the gym either, even if they wanted to get in better shape. This was not the first time I heard the women talk about weight and dieting. It was persistently a subject at the teacher's lounge, often not long after they had been talking about not being occupied with esthetical things in life.

Right before the summer holiday, Beyhan, was complaining that she was incredibly tired. She told us she had started taking an injection at the doctor to make her lose weight. She had to rest on the sofa in the teacher's lounge because of the tiredness this gave her. This shot she had to take regularly once a week until she had lost the weight she wanted. She was far from over weight, but this was something she meant she needed. She had spoken a lot about what the movement stood for and the norms they believed in as followers of Fethullah Gülen's writings. Being surprised about the teacher's entitle to me was one in several demeanours that I found in unbalance with the movements philosophy. The teachers often talked about their beliefs and lifestyle without trying to lecture about it, but to illustrate what

themselves believed. They would often explain their actions in relation with their beliefs, and often from influence of Gülen's writings.

At times I noticed that what the teachers had told me about their beliefs and Fethullah Gülen's writings did not always equal with their actions. Most of their everyday life existed of actually follow this philosophy and stick to those ethical values Gülen promotes. The teachers varied in a large scale from how much they committed themselves to the movement and the ethical teachings of the movement. There was a significant difference between the teacher's embedded attitudes and norms. Some of the teachers had luxurious homes and expensive accessories, while others seem to live very simple. In the English teachers lounge they spoke many times about their designer bags and looked in hijab designer magazines. Several of the English teachers walked around with noticeably copies or real designer bags. On one occasion I went with the principle's wife for a meeting, she took me to a shop in the area where they sold copied designer bags. She found one she really wanted and decided she would buy that one with her husband later in the day. The next day she showed me in the teacher's lounge the same bag, but this one was the real product. She cheerfully told me her husband, had bought her the real bag as a birthday present.

The teacher's carrying designer bags at school seem to be in contradiction with much of their ethical values. At all the schools seminars and meetings I had attended there was spoken about the significant things in life as helping others and taking distance from luxury and esthetical possessions. It was said that these things would make persons blind on real values in life and create distance from Allah. In relation with a Valentine day celebration for the student's mothers at the primary school, a woman author was invited to hold a speech. The speech was about love, where the author stated that love in life should not be for esthetical things, but for other persons. She made an example in a diamond ring, which she said was a nice thing to have, but something that could easily take the attention away from the real values in life. The diamond ring could be nice to have and look at, but it should not be given much attention or be worn as a possession to show others.

4.6.1 TWO TYPES OF SOCIAL DATA

The unbalance between the teachers set of notions and actual behaviour is normal within groups and individuals. There can be comprehensive descriptions of a group or society, but there will always be discrepancy. Holy and Stuchlik (1983) point to what they call different levels or domains of social reality. They argue the importance of not conceiving all fieldwork

data in a unitary system. Social reality is not something one can determine and use as a common description. The group will also have a comprehensive description about the group, but a social anthropologist can not only see these descriptions as general importance. E.R Leach (2004) argue generalization is guesswork and inductive. He stresses the importance on distinguishing between the set of ideas and the set of empirical facts, which Holy and Stuchlik claims will make misrepresentations and incorrect formulations if not distinguished (Leach 2004:5). Holy and Stuchlik see the disguising between set of ideas and set of empirical facts as not being made clear enough in anthropology, and as a result not even included in the analysis. In earlier research the aim has been, most of the time, to find the holistic picture of the structure in a society as a final description of it. As they point out there is a big difference between the set of notions people hold and their actual behaviour. There are therefore two types of social data Holy and Stuchlick claim an anthropologist have to deal with. There is the observation of what people do, and the verbal statements people say they do (Holy & Stuchlick 1983: 10). There is often discrepancy between the verbal statements and observed behaviour in a society which make the discrepancy also a part of the data collected. These discrepancies are important to notice and respect because they are of great importance to the study. Without these there will be, as Leach claims, inductive analysis of the group studied and only a generalized picture.

There should not be any exclusion of either of the two categories of data in a research, as Holy and Stuchlick clarify. The verbal statements shows the notions the group contains and gives information about the principles or model the group is based upon, while the observed behaviour shows the empirical facts of the group. The importance of including and viewing both categories of social data serious is because they are depended of each other. The two categories of data will not give much meaning for the researcher if they are isolated from each other and not seen in context of each other. The set of ideas does not tell us everything about their actual behaviours, while their actual behaviours do not tell us everything about the set of ideas the group contain. The data refers to two different arenas of the social reality which make them both of great importance. Looking only at the observed behaviour gives the anthropologist no ascribed meaning of the behaviour, while only looking at the set of ideas gives no information about the empirical facts of the group.

5 COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS AND MEANING WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

5.1 A COMMUNITY OF PURPOSE AND MEANING

“People construct community symbolically, making it a resource and repository of meaning, and a referent of their identity.” (Cohen 1985: 118)

The followers of the Gülen movement have created a community of meaning between them built on mutual beliefs and understandings. Constructing and remembering common history and having a shared background in a group can be enough to create a feeling of community and belonging. Jonathan Friedman (1992) claims that constructing the past in the future is a way of producing identity. The history has an important part in influencing who we are, and it creates borders of a group in a common belonging and identity. In the making of an ethos for a group the construction of the past will gain the members closer ties between them. Gülen draws attention to the importance of remembering ones past and especially the Ottoman past of Turkey. He claims that if there was today Ottoman tolerance in the world it would be a good basis for dialogue among humanity (Gülen 2000: 56). The Turks of the Ottoman Empire were Muslims, but they were tolerant to other religions. All religions were practiced on their own without any interference from the Turks.

Use of historical and cultural resources of past and present in the movement is similar used as within ethnic politics. The movement future oriented attitude is clearly noticeable in the Gülen schools. The teachers stressed the importance of always renewing themselves and being updated with the “modern society”. Blended resources of past and present was visible in areas like the emphasis the school had on modern school books, the newest school equipments, mixed with historical stories told in the moral meetings and segregation between the genders. Turkish history was often brought up through story tales about Turkish conquerors in the moral meetings. The major focus on teaching high Standard English in the schools and the early age teaching of English, Russian and Chinese in the Children Academy reflected the movements future oriented vision. Fethullah Gülen writes about the youth that;

Until we help our young people through education, they are captives of their environment. They wander about aimlessly, moved by intense passions and far away from knowledge and reason. They can become truly valiant young representatives of the national thought and feeling only if their education integrates them with their past and prepares them with the future. (Gülen 2000: 116-117)

The social network within the movement also participated to the collective consciousness within the community. Fredrik Barth (1994) claims about ethnicity that the feeling of membership is what makes people act out from and make their ethnicity to a living reality (Barth 1994: 175). With the same intention, I would suggest that many of the followers are making their religion to a behavioural reality. Religion for the Gülen community could create the same group identity as Barth claims about ethnicity. Only to the extent persons feels as members, will they act out from that and make their religion to a behavioural reality. In the Gülen movement the followers think of their own morals and values as derived from the Quran. In many of the teacher's explanation on morals and values I was told they were Islamic or taken from the Quran. In one example I was talking about someone I knew who always put her children in front of her own needs and well being just to make the children as happy as they could be. This, one of the teachers smiled and told me, was an Islamic norm and a good way of thinking. The Quran, she said, always tells you to put your beloved before yourself. It was an Islamic way of thinking and a very good quality to contain, she said to me. For many humans this is a natural way of thinking, but also a good "value" they hold without being a Muslim or have taken it from the Quran. For the followers of the Gülen movement I met with, a lot of everyday moral and values were connected up to religion. The purpose of helping others and having good morals were not simply because they wanted to be a good human being, but it was also because it was a religious duty (*hizmet*) and what it indicated being part of this community.

5.2 COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

A community for Gülen is related upon activism, piety and self-sacrifice for the collective aims. The spiritual person, *shakhs-i manevi*, is represented through a collective body in the movement instead of each individual. *Shakhs-i manevi* is the collective personality and collective mind, which is considered by Gülen as the foundation towards the movement's goals (Hermansen 2005). To gain collective action there has to be created a strong bond that creates the feeling of community.

The Gülen community is, in many ways, built up on a sense of belonging through shared history and a meaningful ethos, which serves a common motivation for action. Turkish is taught in the schools abroad and foreign teachers I spoke with told me they fell in love with Turkey through their Turkish teachers in the Gülen schools. They learned to speak Turkish in the school, they ate Turkish food with their teachers, and they bonded a close relationship

with the Turkish teachers. The inspiration in becoming a better human by practicing true values or being surrounded by faithful people, may contribute to a large part of the collective feeling people have already gained from the start. But the collective identity continues to grow stronger when you have “joined” the movement.

In the process of gaining collective action the group identity is a basis for the collective identity. In the movement the common identity with the followers are for many there from before. They already share something common in their search for meaning, or their wish to become better human beings, which is a major reason why they become a Gülen follower in the first place. It is shared in the inspiration that leads them to become a follower of the movement, and the inspiration that is a part of the movement’s world view and ethos. The world view and ethos is contributing to constitute the movement’s common community of meaning. This is reflected and communicated through the movement’s “collective identity”. Enes Ergene (2008) writes that Gülen's creation of a collective identity derives from three pre-conditions Gülen claims a community needs to meet in order to represent the highest spiritual rank, which is:

1. Community members should be tightly linked to each other
2. Everybody must fully share the same feelings
3. They must pay utmost care about observing prayers, remembrance, and all types of servant hood

The three pre-conditions Gülen claims a community need are transferred in the Gülen schools through the schools activities, social gatherings, norms and rules. The collective identity is what makes the Gülen schools different from other schools, and make the schools diverse in their own way.

Barth (Barth 1969) claims that a membership depends on both attribution and self-attribution. The group has to be based upon an identity which others recognize and relates to, and which the members experience as committing. Barth asserts a “deindividuation” or changing of old identity makes it easier to share the same collective identity as the rest of the group. The movement’s emphasis on self-sacrifice and collective mind removes the individuality of the members and encourage them to see themselves as a collective person instead. It “deindividuate” the followers which makes it easier for them to perform self-sacrifice for others. Ascetic spirit encourages “deindividuation” and hard work for the movement’s goals. The “deindividuation” serves the group stronger group solidarity and correct behaviour in reaching their mutual beliefs. They gain a shared status while having a

shared identity with the rest of the movement's followers. The collective identity and goals contribute to a mutual feeling of belonging, sharing, and group solidarity. This mutual feeling is a part of Gülen's three pre-conditions which makes the movement work as a collective actor.

The Gülen movement is founded on religious identity, which the followers distinguish and relate themselves to. Many of the followers have taken part of this identity, which they confirm as proper behaviour and a life binding one. Religion is for many people their cultural landmark, which of course lead to behaviour influenced from religious values. As stated, a community exist of differentiation between oneself as a group and others as a group. The boundaries that constitute the different communities are composed from differences such as represented through religious symbols, style of clothing, or use of specific titles towards each other. Relations become visible through the acts and practices of the community members which position their partisanship (Barth 1969).

After being at the Primary School for a while, I noticed the teachers used particular words or titles towards each other. The title "abla" which means older sister in Turkish was often used between the women teachers. Some students would refer to their teachers as "abla" and also towards me a number of times. These titles reflected the different statuses between them and also others in the movement. The use of *abla* is very loosely exercised in Turkey, but it also illustrates a closer connection or respect towards that person by stating that they see you as an older sister. Towards the men teachers who were head teachers or leaders the title "bey", which means gentleman, would be placed after their name as a mark of respect. I heard one of the foreign teachers refer to one of the head teachers only with his name, which surprised the other Turkish teacher hearing this. The Turkish teacher told her she always had to say "bey" after his name in respect to his position. Sponsors of the movement were referred to as "bey" in respect of their generosity. This showed their connection as group and reflected what relations they had towards each other.

Marcia Hermansen (2005) writes that within *hizmet*, the ones who are competent to interpret the teachings are referred to with venerable titles as *abi* (older brother) for the men teachers and *abla* (older sister) for the women teachers (Hermansen 2005). The different titles illustrate the connection the followers have between each other, and the respect they grant each other. A few times I heard some of the students refer to their teacher as *hodja* instead of *öğretmen* which mean teacher. It was only towards that teacher I heard they refer to as *hodja*. When I asked the teacher why the students called her that she seemed like she got a bit

surprised I had noticed it and quickly answered it was common to refer to their teacher as that, it was just a bit more respectful. *Hodja* (hoca) is an honorary name for a preacher, and often used to refer to Muslim Imams. It is not a common name towards school teachers in Turkey where most of the time the teacher are referred to as *öğretmen*.

The set of moral rules within the community contributed also to the collective identity. Holding particular set of mutual moral rules makes the community members act similarly and hold similar set of notions. Hakan Yavuz states that Islam means two things at the same time for Gülen; morality and identity (2003: 25). Having good morals makes you a good person, and being a good person is one with good morals, some of the teachers told me. For the teachers it seemed like their identity and feeling of identity at the school was created on (at least) two arenas; within the movement and between the women teachers. The teachers expressed their morals, values and “right” behaviour as acts deriving from their religion. Fethullah Gülen’s claims morals are something that derives from spiritual background and in his writings on morals in the book *Advocate of Dialogue* (2000) he states that;

Morals are a set of noble principles that originate from exalted spirituality and govern human conduct. For this reason, people who neglect spirituality, and are therefore lacking in spiritual values, cannot sustain conduct in accordance with these principles. (Gülen 2000:50)

A vision on morals deriving from spirituality was something obviously expressed by the teachers. They would refer their behaviour and good deeds to Islamic values and norms. The teachers’ norms and morals were transferred through their behaviour, but also through many of the schools collective gatherings and meetings arranged by the school.

The gender segregation together with the regular meetings and the social gatherings between the teachers contributed to create a deeper bond than just as colleagues. The meetings and gatherings also translated and transferred the movement’s values and philosophy. These values were mostly directed towards morals, behaviour and attitudes. The movement practises rigid segregation of the sexes, which I found noticeable in the school. That makes the school differ from other schools in Turkey, where this is not so common. Most of the teacher activities and meetings were gender segregated. This was for religious reasons, but it was also a practice that made the teachers bond closer to each other. The teacher lounges were divided by gender and subject. This made the teachers in their teacher’s lounge know each other better than it would have been in one main teacher lounge. In the canteen the gender segregation were obvious from the different tables the teachers sat in. The men and women would sit on

opposite sides in the canteen. Most of the time the teachers would share table with women from their teacher lounge. This was not always the case, but most of the time they seemed to choose the same dining table. The children would sit in the middle part of the canteen, but they would often come up to talk with their teacher while the teachers were eating. It could be to show the teacher something or just to tell a joke. The youngest students seemed to have a very comfortable relationship with their teachers.

5.3 THE SOCIAL GATHERINGS WITH THE TEACHERS AND THE STUDENTS' PARENTS

The collective consciousness and identity is not reachable without collective interaction. Most of the teachers had a close bonding between each other at school as I witnessed it in the teacher's lounge. The time they used on bonding or get to know each other was not only at school. The school had organized programs for the teachers to be social outside of school like teacher trips, reading groups and celebration of special events. When one of the teachers from the Children Academy had been proposed to marry, the school arranged a celebration dinner in the schools gala hall. The teachers arranged meetings on own initiatives as well. Regular social gatherings such as cinema visits together or visits at each other house was something they enjoyed arranging.

5.3.1 AT HOME WITH THE TEACHERS

In one of the social gatherings with the teachers, we were invited for lunch one Sunday afternoon, home to one of the English teachers, Sena. Sena is 24 years and unmarried so she still lived at home with her parents and siblings. Her family apartment was located in an exclusive suburb area of Istanbul. One of the teachers told me that this girl's father was a large sponsor of Gülen schools and worked in a high position within the movement, which meant he had to work abroad a lot. Sena had prepared Turkish food and baked muffins for us. A friend of Sena, whose name was Ayse, was also invited for the lunch. Ayse worked as an English teacher at a public primary school and not at a Gülen inspired school. She stood out a bit from the rest of the teachers there. She was wearing jeans and tight top, had long hair without a headscarf, and she had bright red lipstick on. She was a good friend of the teacher, Sena, and she lived not far from her apartment in the same area. She and her family believed in Gülen's ideas and they were followers of the movement, which made me wonder why she worked at a public school. I asked her why she worked at a public school and not at a Gülen school. She said she specifically chose to work at a public school because she wanted all

children to have the opportunity to have good teachers like the Gülen teachers. She thought the children at the private schools were much more spoiled than in public schools. The pupils at private schools, she said, did not care if they had good teachers or not. They did not care about school in the same way as in public schools, and neither did they listen to their teachers.

I had noticed at Fariah that many of the pupils did not listen to their teachers in the class room, but they all seemed to behave like that because the teachers let them. The teachers did not tell the students off if they were behaving loudly or naughty in the classroom. One of the reasons was because they did not want to put restrictions on the pupils. The pupils in the public school where Ayse worked appreciated the good teachers and they were willing to learn, she said. This was one of the main reasons why she worked there, even if the work environment and some of the conditions would have been better on a Gülen school. These conditions would not make her change her mind about giving all children the possibility for good teachers, and especially children who did not afford private schools. This was something I was longing to hear because everyone kept on saying that all children need good teachers, but at the Gülen schools it was only for the ones that afforded the high school fees. Were not all children supposed to get the opportunity to have good teachers, and would it not create a large gap between the children who were given these teachers?

None of the other teachers around the table made any comments about Ayse's statements, but I asked some of the teachers later about this. It can be questioned why the movement has their own private schools with a high school fee when they stress so much the importance of education and good teachers for all human beings. Why should this only be limited to the children with parents who are able to pay the high cost? Why not spread the good teachers in the schools that are lacking of teachers like them? I asked some of the teachers if they would ever consider working at a public school, and they all answered they would maybe in the future. Right now they were satisfied with working at Fariah Primary School with the conditions they were given there. There the teachers veiling was not an issue, the teacher lounges were gender segregated, and there was a better system set up for the teacher-student relationship. The teachers were agreeing that all children should have the opportunity to have a teacher who is willing to give more than just his/her work hours. That is what they wanted to do as teachers, but public schools limited that opportunity. "At the Gülen schools we are given the possibility to fill the "good" teacher role at the same time as we are surrounded by other teachers wanting the same. This gives us a stronger influence and a push to serve as much as possible as a teacher", a teacher told me.

In an interview with one of the primary school teachers Gülsen, I asked her about how she thought the Gülen schools were better or different than the public schools. She answered me;

This [the Gülen schools] is much more different. We [the teachers] always come together to share and discuss the children. At public schools the teachers just follow the clock and do not care about the children. We are here for the children; we don't look at the time. We give morals, and we have good results from our students. We are always working on the students and we look at the parents too. We know the parents and the student's environment. You have to know the students in details, also the psychological side and everything. You have to know their background, how she studies, what she studies, problems, health problems. We analyze the students to find out what they know and find their way and how they can adapt to your teaching way. We work with the student personally, not generally as the public schools. Public schools are so crowded, but here we see each student. Here we know the students; if there is a problem we will help them. We work on our students and we have really good contact with the parents too. We have good results, but we can't have good results on everybody. We always ask Allah for help, for our students, for our lessons and so on. The parents know what school this is, and they feel that their children are safe in this school. They know their children learn well.

The teachers found it useful to be teaching at a Gülen school because there they could express their beliefs in terms with the system the school had in order to make their beliefs possible.

One of the other social gatherings with the teachers was on a Saturday morning at one of the Children Academy teacher's apartment. She had just got married and invited the women teachers from the Children Academy and me to her new apartment. We were picked up from the Children Academy with the school bus which drove us to her house. The teacher had prepared an impressive selection of Turkish food for us. After eating lots of delicious food, the teachers went to pray as thanks for the meal. We also said wishes for the future, and some of the teacher's wishes were to see a baby in this home for next visit. We all laughed of that wish. I was the only one being unmarried there, and the teachers thought it was funny if I tried to make Turkish coffee, so they suggested I made Turkish coffee. As I have commented earlier, it is a Turkish old tradition that the girl serves her future husband and his parents Turkish coffee. If it is cooked and served successfully, the girl is "approved" to marry. I made the Turkish coffee with another teacher and placed all the coffee cups on the table, which was

very funny, because I should have served it to each person individually, they laughed and said. While drinking the “perfect” made coffee, the oldest teacher suggested we played a game. The teacher living there had got one of Fethullah Gülen’s latest books in a wedding present which was a large book laying on the tea table. The game went out on to ask questions and then open the Fethullah Gülen book on the first page that would come up when opened the book. The page that would open would answer our questions. No one seemed to make up a question, so the oldest teacher decided just to open the book to see what it said. There was written a special prayer which was important to pray for others. The prayer would help others in their needs and make it easier for them to achieve their wishes.

The game did not continue for a long time, because the teachers were talking so loud that it was difficult to hear what was read from the book. After ending the game the teachers wanted to know more about Norway. Some of them had heard it was a feminist and very expensive country. They were eager to hear about how the women were there, and they seemed enthusiastic about it being a feminist country, as they called it. I said the men often stayed home with the children and there were rules that made the father take paternity leave. One teacher also knew that marriage rates were going downwards in Norway, she told the rest of the teachers. That the marriage rates were not so high seemed however disappointing for them to hear. I told them it was quite normal to start a family without being married. They seemed truly surprised to hear this, and stated it was far from this in Turkey.

The teachers looked like they had great fun together at the visit and they were acting as they had been friends for a long time. The atmosphere was lively and the visit opened up for relations with each other in other terms than at the Children Academy. At the visit they spoke to each other about everything, and it seemed like they were a group of friends hanging out together. One of the teachers which were from Russia had not known them for a long time, but now she got the opportunity to get closer to them. She told them she knew how to cook Turkish coffee and some Turkish food, which impressed the teachers a lot. She spoke about her background and her experience of Turkey and the teachers seemed to get to know her better. Right before we were going to leave, the teacher living there, had a present to give to the Russian teacher and me. It was a set of towel, washcloth, knitted slippers, praying necklace and a scarf which typically used for veiling. This is a present which is normal to give to unmarried girls after one’s own marriage. She told me she had got many gifts like this for her wedding and she had given many away, but she had two left which she wanted to give to me and the Russian teacher. The Russian teacher laughed and asked why she got one, because

she was married, but the teacher said she wanted to give it anyway. The Russian teacher took the scarf out and showed me how I could use it by folding it around her hair like a *hijab*. The other teachers all laughed because the Russian teacher was not a Muslim, and she was quite funny when she put it on. The teacher who gave it to me came and showed me I could put the scarf around my waist as a belt or as a scarf around my neck. It seemed like she wanted to show me this so I did not feel she pushed me to wear it as a veil (hijab). I never saw her cover her hair, except from being at the Tuesday's meetings for the teachers. She did not wear typically religious clothing either.

At the social gatherings with the teachers the teachers got to know each other better and have fun together outside of the school. This seemed to influence the atmosphere between them at the school too. The meetings created good relationships between the teachers which contributed to a better work environment at the school where they knew each other very well.

5.3.2 TEACHERS VISITS TO THE STUDENTS PARENTS

The teachers were always working to help the students and their families. If the student or the family had problems the school or the teachers would come for rescue or support. The teachers would go for visit to ill students, parents with newborn babies or just for regular visit with the parents. The relationship between the teachers and the parents were close. The school even offered marriage counselling for parents with marriage problems.

The teachers often went to visit the parents of the students when there were new occurrences in a family or the mothers needed extra help. It also made them keep a stable and close relationship between them. The visit was normally while the children were at school which made more time for the teacher and mother together. I joined two of the Turkish teachers from the Children Academy in a visit to one of the parents who had recently given birth to a baby girl. A child's mother from the Children Academy also joined us for the visit. At the house the mother with the little baby and her older sister were waiting us. A friend of the mother was also there. The teachers and the other mother gave some small presents and some Turkish delight to the new mother, and she had prepared some food and tea for us. We all got to hold the newborn baby girl while the mother proudly spoke about her.

It was not only the new born baby which was the attention at the meeting, we also spoke about themes including food recipes, losing weight and the mother's homemade clothes. The teachers thought the mother with the newborn baby looked really slim after having birth and they wondered they wondered how she had lost the baby weight. The

teachers jokingly told that all the parent visits had made them fat because of all the good food that was served. The mother showed us a section of clothes and embroidered shawls she had made and tried to sell. The clothes was of religious character in the way they had specific parts which was made to cover showing skin. She had made long sleeves to put under short sleeves jumpers, and she had turtleneck bibs and collars for jumpers without a neck. She showed it to me and said it was a clever way to cover showing skin. The shawls were also of traditional religious character with embroidering, patterns and small flowers. Some of the guests bought garments from her, and I wanted to buy a shawl. The others paid, but when I was going to pay she strictly told me I could get it as a present.

The teachers seemed like they enjoyed visiting the children homes and get to know the parents better. They expressed it like they had pleasurable time visiting the new mother and getting to know the student's parents. Students or school related issues were not much talked about in the conversation under the visits. It was more reminiscent of a friend visits where everyone spoke about their interests and had fun in each other's company. Being able to show interest and care for the students home environments in the way the teachers did illustrated their altruistic attitude and the principles of the movement. The social gatherings between the teachers and to the parents were something they arranged between themselves when they had spare time. Being a part of their job to take full notice in their role as a teacher and towards the students' best, the teachers still managed to dedicate their time towards others outside of the teacher role and with a "human" role.

Gülen stress the importance of living for others and not for one's self. The altruistic feature of the movement is highlighted in Gülen's writings:

"Let me remind you of the necessity here to differentiate between those who live and those who make others live. What we are always stressing is that it is those who live their lives in sincerity, loyalty, and altruism at the expense of their own selves in order to make others live who are the true inheritors of the historical dynamics to whom we can entrust our souls" (Gülen 2005: 95)

5.4 KNOWLEDGE AND MEANING AT THE TUESDAY'S MEETINGS

Every Tuesdays after school the women teachers from the Children Academy and the Primary School would come together at the primary school for a meeting. The meeting room for the women was similar to a big living room with sofas into the walls, no tables and a carpet covering the whole floor. The topic would be sat after the teacher's interest or after some

related issues of that time. Most of the times there was a woman author named Emine leading the meeting. Emine had earlier been a teacher at the school and was now an author in Islamic writings. Before they all started the meeting, they would first pray together. Emine would lead the prayer for those who wanted to pray with her. Not everyone prayed with her, because some had already prayed. She would sing out a prayer in Arabic and the rest would repeat the singing after. After the praying, they all sat down together in the sofas ready to start the meeting.

Emine would ask the women teachers if they had any particular topics they would like to talk about, or if there was anything they wanted to discuss. The teachers would raise their hands to come with suggestions, or there would be a set topic they would speak about, for example about mothers when Mother's Day was and love when Valentine Day was. They would all agree on the topics and Emine would talk out from these topics. She would be reading out loudly from the Qur'an in relation with the topics or in search for related answers. If there was a set topic, the teachers would ask questions from this topic and the author looked for answer from the Quran. Sometimes Emine would start reading about the subject from the Quran and following start a discussion from this. Fethullah Gülen asserts that the Qur'an is the guiding principles for humans. "The Qur'an teaches in a most balanced way the meaning and nature of humanity; truth and wisdom." (Gülen 2000: 46).

The topics in the meetings were not planned out, except from the ones related to the time of the year, so it was mostly up to the teachers what would be discussed at the meeting. The topics related to the time of the year on two of the meetings I attended. The first one was in relation with Valentine's Day. The theme of the meeting then was about love. The discussion was about love for others, and what the Qur'an said about love for others. When Mother's day was it influenced the theme of the meeting to be about the greatness of mothers and women. "*Without mothers the world will stop. Mothers have, and have always had, an inner power to stay strong. They do everything, and no one can understand how it is to be a mother before they have been there themselves*", Emine told the group. Other times the meeting could be all up to what the teachers wanted to air their thoughts or difficulties about. From the meetings I attended it was various toppings they would discuss, and not so much directly towards the students. One teacher told me; "It is funny because we most of the times they end up talking about men or our husbands. It could be questions on how husbands should be as fathers to how to be a good wife for the husband.

Some of the questions which got asked under one of the meetings I attended were about women's body hair. A woman was questioning removing body hair and not crossing Islamic norms. The author gave answers from the Quran where she said the humans should try to stay as natural as possible, and if the women remove the hair it would be against Islam. Removing hair for aesthetic reasons was not natural and not even necessary, she told us. Only if you were suffering from bothersome growth of hair you were allowed to remove it. One of the teachers joked about herself saying that her husband would never have married her if he had known how much body hair she had. They all laughed and some joked about how hairy their body was and how hairy some people could be, especially people from India.

The discussion of personal issues, talking about it together as a group, and even solving these issues between them were in a way what brought them closer to each other. It often turned out to be about marriage and their men, as I was told by one of the teachers, but this was something they all wanted as women to talk about. The Tuesday meetings were on a spiritual level containing collective prayer and religious pursuits for answers. This bonding, I felt, made a kind of sisterhood between them in the way they supported each other and had the trust to open about private issues. It also created a bond and relationship with each other on a closer level than just work colleagues. Three of the teachers, who were not from Turkey, did not participate at the meetings. One of them was not a Muslim, but the two others were Muslims and believed in Gülen. They had young children, so maybe they wanted to go home to them, but so did some of the other teachers. The other teachers with young children had their children in the schools private day care. Two of the teachers that did not participate in the Tuesday's meetings, did also not participate in the social gatherings, I had noticed. One of them that were from Poland, and not a Muslim, attended some of the social gatherings, but the two others I had not seen at all on the social gatherings with the teachers. The two teachers that did not participate in the social gatherings or the Tuesday meetings were also not included in the same way as the rest of the teachers. Mina, the teacher I knew quite well, was not close to any of the teachers. She had only worked at the school some months when I came there, but she kind of not tried to get closer to the teachers either. Neither did the teachers try to include her. She was really friendly to all of the teachers and she spread a lot of joy, but when she left the school she was going to her own life. She told me she did not have many friends in Turkey after she had moved there, and she missed her friends in her home country. When she sometimes asked me what I had done in the weekend, and I had been to a social gathering with the teachers, she several times was not aware of the gatherings.

In one of the Tuesday`s meetings I attended, a teacher suggested we talk about the issue of parents who do not invite the teachers to home visits. She jokingly told about a visit home to one of her students where the mother had delayed inviting the teacher for a visit and when she finally did she had not even prepared the food herself. The mother had only served a cake that was bought and not home made. It was a lack of respect delaying the home visit and not even serving home cooked food. The rest of the teachers laughed a bit about it because the teacher said it in a jokingly way that this supposedly irritated her. The author leading the meeting suggested that they should concentrate on the future and not so much on the past. The problem with the student`s mother was something belonging to the past. It is not the past, but it is the present actions which count for the future. She gave an example in people who had been drinking alcohol earlier;

“If you have been drinking alcohol before it will make you miss it, but if you have not been drinking it before you will not miss it.” What we have to focus on, she said, is to make ourselves stronger so we do not sin again. *“If you do sin then you should give to the poor and pray more. By thinking of Allah and the death more often it will turn your actions into good actions.”*

She then told us she had suffered from cancer before, but after she found out, she brought a praying stone to every room she entered because she taught the death was close. Believing and carrying the praying stone helped her stay strong and she got rid of the cancer.

5.4.1 A FEELING OF COMMITMENT AND COLLECTIVE NOTIONS

These religious ascriptions and self-ascriptions establish and maintain the religious identity within the group. The groups way of ascribing and maintaining their religious identity is similar with Barth`s (1969) discovery within ethnic groups. The religious aspects are used in describing and make boundaries to mark their collective identity from others and bring them more committed to the group. In the same meeting the author compared that school with other schools. She explained to us that being in a same house makes people alike. On this school people are different than in other schools because here you for example gather together around religious duties. Here we read books together, pray together and help each other to climb upwards. She told us about a book she was supposed to read on 600 pages, but she only managed to read 400 pages of the book. To read is not about reading most as possible, but it is to be able to get the full meaning of what you read. That is most important, she said. She had

read the 400 pages like she was studying for her university exam and that is the correct way to really capture the whole meaning in what you read. “Here, at this school, we work together in groups to manage to read as good as possible, and we help each other in understanding what we read”, she said. The teachers should do their religious duties because of themselves and not because it is a job or only a duty. At the end the author came with the concluding answer to the teachers issue on “disrespectful” parents. Everyone should have full understanding of human diversities and that is something which should be universally respected. Being filled with empathy will give you an understanding of why the humans are so different in this world.

The Tuesday meetings were based on examples and discussions about human will, importance of community, and the greatness in helping others. The women teachers were all gathered there to have conversations and discussions on issues on a spiritual level. The content in their discussions were associated to religious writings and stories. The teacher’s questions were ascribed religious meaning and solutions by the religious author and the teachers themselves. This is similar with Barth (1969) claims about ethnicity, which also can be ascribed religion; only to the extent persons feels as members, will they act out from that and make their religion to a behavioural reality. The group meeting searched collectively for religious answers and advice which contributes to the sense of group affiliation and a reality of religious behaviour. As Geertz (1979) writes, religion formulates conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing those conceptions with an aura of factuality. The religious perspective at the meeting contributed in earning collective common-sense perspective, which was clothed in conceptions with an aura of factuality. It also meets Fethullah Gülen’s three pre-conditions a community need to represent the highest spiritual rank. Through the meeting they closely linked with each other, prayed together and shared the same feelings by confessing themselves to each other and having the women author to guideline them.

In the meeting they interpreted situations and evaluated the meaning of it. The meeting pointed out the collective meaning which informed the individuals about the values and norms of the larger group. The statements were interpreted and embodied into the groups meaning system. Relating the meeting’s topics into a religious meaning and to with the movement’s philosophy, the meeting acted as a constructor of the meaning system within the movement. The teachers were served the same explanations out from the meeting which made them get the same understanding and meaning of the topics being discussed. The example where there were some questions around body hair could have been unclear for many before the meeting.

In the meeting they all got the same answer back from the author which stated removing of body hair was not for esthetical reasons. After the meeting they all were interpret with the same understanding answers. It was much respect towards the woman author, and she was after all an Islamic writer, a teacher told me.

The Qur'an is the main source for Muslims in telling the truth about life and existence, but many feel a stronger need in going further with their readings and commitment. Reading books written by Fethullah Gülen and Said Nursi broaden the horizon for the readers and enlightened the followers deeper in their beliefs. The apparent collective reading of religious books within the movement is for many a helpful push to learn more. Teachers told me they read the same books of Fethullah Gülen and Said Nursi several times over again because there are always new meanings between the lines. It gave them always new understandings every time they read them.

The teachers felt committed to the movement and the school in the sense they could identify themselves with the movement's meaning system and its goals. They strived to fulfil the movement's ideas at the same time as becoming more influenced by others always wanting to accomplish more. Not only the Tuesday's meeting contributed to the community feeling and towards the followers ethos and world view. The Sunday reading meetings for the teachers made them jointly read and educate themselves further. There they could read together and inspire each other to read more. The arrangement of the social gatherings worked to catch the teachers more committed to the group and the philosophy of Fethullah Gülen which in turn would benefit the movement increase and work. The commitment to the movement implied a reciprocal relationship where the movement fulfilled the needs of its members, and the members satisfied their desires by helping to maintain the group.

The reading can also make them closer towards a collective personality by gathering them around same conceptions of a general order of existence and serving them the supposedly right answer. In Geertz' argumentation he claims that any religion affirms notions about existence and reality, what this particularly "means", and how one is supposed to act within it (Geertz 1979). These religious notions are received differently from each individual based on what you are searching for. In religious groups or movements these notions are made to collective pathways which the "members" should follow. In creating a collective identity the notions should also give the same collective understanding, and by the regular meetings, readings and gatherings with the group this is being fulfilled. This leads the conception of the notions to become more truthful and creates moods and motivations within the group. The

group's ethos becomes for the followers intellectually reasonable and correct. The group's ethos makes up the collective representations, and the group's collective reality is created.

For Emile Durkheim (2002) religious phenomena fall into two basic categories; beliefs and rites. He claims religion is a product of social thinking where religious representations are collective representations that express collective realities. The nature of sacred things is expressed through beliefs, myths and dogmas which constitute the reality of religious belief and behaviour. The exemplifying from the Quran in the Tuesday meetings adheres to the religious concept of reality for the group, and symbolize correct behaviour. As Durkheim claims, there are fundamental notions that control our intellectual life which are like solid frames that confine thought (Durkheim 2002:38). These notions are in the Gülen community products of religious conduct which frames their thoughts and behaviours. A part of these religious conducts are created in the Tuesday's meetings upon notions taken from the Quran or other religious representations. These notions constitute the followers understanding of the world and themselves.

5.5 THE STUDENT LIGHTHOUSES

It is not only the Tuesday's meetings which illustrate Durkheim's views on religion. Hakan Yavuz describe the movement as working to moralise the public sphere (Yavuz 2003:25-36). The movement provide student accommodation called *Işık Evler* for students who wish to stay in a "safe" atmosphere. The movement's *Işık Evler*, which translated as Lighthouses, can be seen as a major contribution for the movement's moralization of the people. The Lighthouses are apartments where Gülen-followers choose to live together in their period as students at university. In each Lighthouse there are normally about 4-5 students with same gender living together. The students do not need to go to the same university or study the same subject to share housing. Students moving to a big city to study find these Lighthouses especially important. There they can be in safe environments and inspire each other. They stay safe with other students that also share the same belief and lifestyle as themselves. Parents who send their children away to study in big cities feel more pleased and relaxed to know their children are in a safe environment. This is a comforting way for the parents and also for the students who do not have to worry about staying alone in a new city. This contributes to bring more young people into the movement.

Several of the teachers had become followers of the Gülen movement while they were students. When they were students many of them met with people following Gülen's writing

which they felt a connection with in that stage of life. They felt they were not connecting with the other students and they were missing something or they searched for a deeper meaning in life. The students who were followers of Gülen's philosophy would influence the students to get more involved and close to the ideas and philosophy of Gülen, even if they were studying at a public university. In this way the movement acted not only on a spiritual level, but also as a helping hand in searching and finding friends and people with similar interests. It shows the human search for community and belonging, and the Lighthouses seemed to become a place where the students could find this.

Two of the first girls I got to know from the Gülen movement were students living in a Lighthouse. One of the girls, Dua, was the sister of my contact person from Norway, and the other girl was her friend who lived in a Lighthouse next to Dua's. The first day we met, the oldest girls Dua, invited me to live in their apartment. I had not found an apartment to live yet, so she offered me to move in with them. She lived with three other girls, and there were not enough beds for one more person, but she said it would be fine. Even if we had just met, she offered to make space for me in their apartment. I found out after a while that Dua was the "sister" in the Lighthouse which serves as the living example, or role model for the rest of the group. We met up together on several occasions where I become aware of her representative role in the group. The first day on the way to her apartment, I found 20 lira (about 80 kr) on the pavement in front of me. Surprised I showed the Dua and her friend what I found, and was going to suggest we bought some snacks with it. Before I managed to say anything, both of the girls pointed straight at a woman down across the street selling tissue paper, and said "give it to her". That was the first reminder of the living example they try to be, and following examples came to show.

The ones who are in charge in each Lighthouse are the "ablarar" (sisters). They constantly try to help people, and live according to their beliefs. Dua, who was the "abla" in her Lighthouse, seemed to be really responsible. One day I went on a day trip with Dua and her friend to an island outside of Istanbul. Two new girls who had moved in to Dua's Lighthouse also joined us on the trip. One of the girls was aged 22 and studied public relations while the other girl was 18 of age and studies radio and TV. Both of the girls had partaken in a preparation course for their university entry exam arranged and led by Gülen followers and the movement had offered them to stay in a Lighthouse. The new girls stood out a bit from Dua and her friend in the way they did not veil and they did not wear covering clothing. At the island Dua and her friend wanted to pray in the Mosque there, but the two

youngest girls did not seem concerned about that. Dua did not try to make the girls come and pray with her or comment on them not praying, she only showed as an example and went to pray with her friend. The two girls stood together with me waiting outside the Mosque while Dua and her friend were inside to pray. While waiting I spoke to the new girls about their relationship with the movement. They had not been followers before, but now they found the movement interesting. They said they got good friends by living in a Lighthouse and there they could read books together and feel safe. The girls were both from small cities in Turkey and not used to a big city as Istanbul. Dua told me later that the people in a Lighthouse normally stayed in each Lighthouse for about one year and it would rotate so they would meet different people and get more friends.

The other people living in the Lighthouses normally look up to the “*abla*” (older sister) because she has substantial knowledge about the Qur’an and Gülen’s books. The “*ablalar*” is there to help the ones living with them to improve themselves and the most important way to do so is as a guiding principle. They do not try to control or preach to the others, but only enlighten them by reading books together and be a living example (Rausch 2008).

5.5.1 A KEY IN THE COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

The Lighthouses are one of the movements organs in developing collective identity, and they exemplify Fethullah Gülen’s three pre-conditions a community needs in order to embody the highest spiritual rank. The Tuesday meetings can also be seen as a creation of a collective identity springing out from the three pre-conditions Gülen claims a community needs to meet in order to represent the highest spiritual rank. The Tuesday meetings and Light Houses is connecting the followers and clothing conceptions with a religious aura that convinces the collective community to pursuit religious perspectives and constitute religious actions.

The Lighthouses obviously serves the first condition which is that community members should be tightly linked to each other. When the students live in the Lighthouses they do not only live together with other community members, they take care of each other and they link closely to each other. There is normally one main person in each house which is the oldest or most responsible one which has the main responsibility in the house. In each house they cook for each other, they pray together, they have regularly readings together and they do social activities together. All of this makes the community members tightly linked to each other and it is like a small family. There is only one Gülen inspired university in Istanbul, therefore the lighthouses do an important job in holding to old “members” and earning new ones. Followers

do not need to go to a Gülen inspired school to share and hold on to their beliefs while they are students. They can all commit to the movement and good morals by living together in the lighthouses with other students who also share the same beliefs.

The second condition of Gülen`s pre-conditions a community needs in order to represent the highest spiritual rank is that everybody must fully share the same feelings. Being tightly linked to each other makes it easy to also share mutual feelings. Sharing the same feelings is developed in the Lighthouses by bringing religious and secular ideas and practices together. They pray together, they pursuit religious answers together and they imply the same moral conceptions.

Yavuz implies that these lighthouses are also there to shelter the students from temptations the big cities offers like alcohol and drug use, premarital sex or disbeliefs (Yavuz 2003:32-33). For many students, the student life broadens up for new experiences with other students with different views than one self. This leads various students to see life in a new perspective and develop new sides in themselves. Living within the lighthouses can prevent the students to attain other student activities or get influenced by unhealthy behaviours. In these lighthouses there is also a mutual protection between the students living together against “unhealthy” behaviours such as boy visits, staying out late and alcohol use. Being all so dedicated and disciplined in their readings of Fethullah Gülen and Said Nursi, the students protects themselves from behaviours like that by mutual agreement that these types of behaviours are unhealthy and not good for any individual. In the Lighthouses they could be surrounded with others searching the same and together inspire each other to always strive further. Being in a community with other followers they were able to enrich each other with spiritual development and growth.

The third and last pre-conditions a community needs to meet in order to represent the highest spiritual rank is that the member must pay utmost care about observing prayers, remembrance, and all types of servant hood. The students in the lighthouses pray together, and have regularly readings of Said Nursi and Fethullah Gülen books. Yavuz claims that the lighthouses are not only housings for the university students, but also where the students can develop a sense of identity to protect their Muslim-personality from other temptations. He writes that the lighthouses are influenced by Sufi asceticism which contains resisting human appetite for power, material possessions, and sex in order to achieve higher moral perfection (Yavuz 2003:33-34). When I went to one of the lighthouses with the two girl students I knew, I noticed Said Nursi and Fethullah Gülen book laying around in the living room. While we ate

cake and drank tea together we heard the mosque call for prayer and both of them went up to pray in the living room. We also spoke about people's impressions and prejudices of Muslims. They told me they had been to London where they got surprised about people's images on Muslims in Turkey. People there thought that the Turkish Muslim women had to cover themselves in fully covered burqa's and that they could only walk out with a man from the family. They were shocked that people could think this about them. The girls had told them that Turkey was a democratic country and they chose themselves how much they wanted to cover, and they could walk out alone whenever they wanted. It was great to live in Turkey and be this free, they told me. I asked them about the forbidding of headscarves in the universities, and how they deal with that. They were upset that Turkey as a democratic country exercised this control, but they did not let it stop them from studying.

Their belief and servant hood is reflected through little details in their behaviour in a very natural way. The readings of Fethullah Gülen and Said Nursi are rousing them to follow this way of living and serving their religious duty in every aspect of their lives, the girls told me. When I first met these two girls living in the lighthouse they already invited me to live with them in their Lighthouse and showed that they truly cared about other individuals which illustrated their beliefs. They were living up to their servant hood not only in their collective reading and praying, but also in their ordinary behaviour.

The lighthouses perform a major part in moralizing students and producing a closer commitment as a community. It is portrayed as a safe environment for students alone in a city. However it could also be seen as a way of controlling the students from taking part in other student activities or steering them away from secular influences. Living in a lighthouse does not give much freedom to the students in the way that they are "watched" by the rest of the group and there are certain lighthouse rules to follow. The lighthouses could also be represented as a mission in making the students live only for the goals of the movement. However, within the Lighthouses, values are developed in the students and they learn some of the ideas the movement hold such as reading important books, taking care of others and having good morals. Bad habits and threats for the students are controlled and steered away from and moral guidance is given when living in the Lighthouses.

6 THE MORAL COMMUNITY AND DOING GOOD DEEDS

6.1 THE ETHICS OF THE MOVEMENT WITHIN THE SCHOOL

For Gülen, Islam is the constitution of morality and identity. His moral examples are based on stories about the Prophet Muhammad and the first Muslim community (Yavuz 2003:26) which he seeks to create as collective norms. Fethullah Gülen claims that morality is religion's essence:

A true Muslim is one who practices a truly universal, and therefore Muslim, morality. Anyone can see that the Quran and the Sunna are sets of moral principles. The Prophet, the greatest embodiment of morals, said: "Islam consists in good morals. I have been sent to perfect and complete good morals." The Muslim community always has been the representative of good morality and must be so, since only through morality and virtuousness can it attain eternity. Islamic metaphysics is a means to reach the highest point in morality. (Gülen 2000:107)

All public schools and private schools in Turkey have to follow national education program so the Gülen schools follow the education model as other schools. Fethullah Gülen's aim for a science and spiritual (moral and ethics) education is being transformed through the education model they follow and by the teachers spiritual influence on the pupils. The teachers are the most important translators and purveyors of moral and ethics to the pupils. They are examples in themselves on how to be a true Muslim. I have read many places that the schools do not teach any further in Islam than other state schools and that the school curriculum is the same. Elisabeth Özdalga (2002) states that the Gülen schools teach values by examples and providing good examples in daily conduct (Özdalga 2000:19). I did not see any teaching of ethical values in class, but the school had ways in educating the pupils in morals which was outside of the school's education curriculum.

To teach values by examples there had to be situations where the teachers could express these values and norms. Being a teacher at a school and not being able to educate the students' correct behaviour in class, gives limited room to make the students' demeanour these values. The students needed to see actions and behaviour where they could see and learn from the teachers as examples. The arrangement of trips and activities outside of school hours make the students able to get the impressions of their teachers as role models. Moral meetings, home visits to museum tours are places where the teachers could act as examples. There the students got to know the teachers in a more personal way and got to see other sides of the

teachers which were not noticeable in the school. It was not only through the teachers' dissemination as living examples, but also through the regularly moral meetings they had with the pupils.

The teachers continued the follow up of the students even when the students were not at school. The teachers followed an after school scheme which the students had to fill out every day. All the students had their own little scheduled diary book which they handed in to their teacher at the end of the week. In the book it was scheduled days and time from after school till midnight. The students filled in everything they did after school, i.e. doing homework, eating dinner, playing with friends, visiting grandmother or arguing with the parents. At the bottom on the page the teacher would write comments on what was good and what was not so good. There could be notes from the teachers saying for example "*it was great you visited your grandmother, but try not to watch TV that late.*" These schemes were part of the schools holistic educational program which included the student's activities outside the school. This after school diary made the teachers informed on the student's activities after school and kept track over their whole day. The students seemed to be honest about what they had done after school in the filling out of the diaries, even if they had not touched their homework or if they had watched hours of TV instead. The teachers, from what I saw, only came with suggestions to students to watch less TV or commented positively on the students good activities as for example when they had visited their grandmother or done their homework for the whole week.

The extracurricular activities outside of school gave the teachers their chance of showing themselves as living examples where they would bring students for visits to their own homes or visits the students' homes. The activities were focusing on moral and ethical values, and the main extracurricular activities, I would say, were the students' moral meetings.

6.2 THE STUDENTS' MORAL MEETINGS

The moral meetings also called students' visits, was an important part of the holistic educational circle at school. About once a week, the primary teachers would go with a group of students to visit one of their student's homes after school. The visits took place in the students home together with his/her primary teacher, a small group of the same sex students from the class and one of the parents. It was always, after what I experienced, the mothers of the students who where home and welcomed the teacher and the students. We normally drove

with the school taxi to the student's home after the school day had finished. The mothers had, in respect for the teachers, prepared home cooked food for the visit.

The visit started normally by being welcomed by the students mother, the students went to clean their hands before, the ones who wanted, went to pray with the teacher. It was actually only one time I saw the students pray with the teacher, the rest of the time the students were not interested and the teacher prayed alone. It was always prepared delicious food by the mother and there would be informal chats around the dinner table between the children and the "grownups". After eating, the pupils normally went to the student's room to do their homework together while the mother and teacher would have a talk together about the student. The pupils would sometimes come out and ask for help with their homework and the teacher (and sometimes me) would help them.

The time the teacher and the mother had to discuss together was important to clarify or inform each other about the child's behaviour and status. The mother would inform the teacher if her daughter (student) had problems at home and the teacher would tell about any problems the student (daughter) had at school. It was always something that could be discussed about the daughter/student. The conversations varied from topics about the student's concentration or issues with other children, difficulties at home or a general discussion around the student's behaviour- good or bad. After the mother and teacher conversation, the teacher would start the "moral meeting" with the students. The moral meeting were generally on topics including good behaviour, respect towards others and norms in the society. It was often built up on examples from the Holy Quran or other religious book such as hadith which would exemplify good behaviour⁹. Different hadith were sometimes read as supplements to and clarifications of the Qur'an. It could be examples from Prophet Muhammad's life or one of his wife's lives which would illustrate good morals or correct behaviour. One of the teachers was reading a book about Aisha, one of Muhammad's wives in the teacher's lounge and on the way to one moral meeting. She told me she wanted to give her students the same book so they also could read it. Aisha is known to be Muhammad's favourite wife and referred in Islamic writings as the believers Mother. She is also regarded as a role model for Muslim women, as the teacher reading it told me she also was for her.

It was not only religious stories read in the moral meetings. On the first moral meeting I attended the teacher had picked out a short story from a Turkish nationalist storybook. The

⁹ Hadith is used as a supplement of the Qur'an and are narrations concerning the words and deeds of Prophet Mohammad.

story was about Sultan Ahmed and how he conquered Istanbul which is a great heroic story for Turkey. The connection with the Ottoman past as Gülen call attention to became here relevant.

On other moral meetings the teachers could read to the students about Mohammad and his wives appropriate actions and behaviours. It was up to the teachers what they wished to speak about on these moral meetings. Gülsen was for example very interested in analyzing and translating the actions of Prophet Mohammad into modern context. It could be for example how he helped persons in need and how this could be done today, or why he always carried specific tools with him. On the way to a student house one day she showed me a list she carried with the meaning of the specific tools he used to carry and specific acts he did on a regular basis. This was all acts which had a reasonable meaning and which could be still followed today. It was important to see the meaning in his acts and how we could translate and use this today, she told me. “Prophet Mohammad never used his left hand to deliver to others, but he always used his right hand which is the “clean” hand. The Prophet also brushed his teeth with a *miswak*, which is a stick that is used for oral hygiene also today” Gülsen said.¹⁰

At the students moral meetings I got a picture of how the students lived and how they behaved outside of school. This time was good to get to know the students on a regular basis, the teachers told me. The meetings were home to the students, outside of school, so the setting was more suitable to get to know each other better. The teacher could see how the student behaved to their mothers and at home, and the students got to know the other students in the group closer by being placed in this group.

In one of the moral meetings with Gülsen, one of the students was a girl from China which had newly moved to Turkey. There were four other girls from her class also in the moral meeting home to one of the girls. The Chinese girl did not seem to know much Turkish and she did not have many friends in the school, the teacher told me. This was a good opportunity for her to get to know her class mates going to the moral meetings. There she would be in a group of girls which she would get closer contact to. They all were going to each other houses for moral meetings and they were going to this girl’s house later. I could see that the girl laughed a bit when the teacher asked the girls if they wanted to come and pray with her when they came to the student’s house. The teacher told me this girl was not

¹⁰ Miswak, also called a ‘chewing stick’ is a teeth cleaning twig made from a twig of the *Salvadora persica* tree recommended by Prophet Mohammad to use.

religious at all, she did not want to pray and she did not care about religion. The girl's mother had tried to make the girl pray or care about religion, but she had no interest in this. "It is totally ok for us that she doesn't care, that is why I don't force her to pray with me, I just show her. So if she wants, then she can come and pray with me. I can only show, not make anyone do this. It has to come from your heart", Gülsen said. The two other girls did not seem bothered about praying either, but two girls went to pray with the teacher on the living room floor this day.

The moral meetings were something the students looked forward to. It did not seem to be the bliss over the moral teaching the students looked most forward to. For the students, much of the reasons they liked it was because there would be nice food and the joy of having visits in their own homes with school friends and their teacher. It was a day they looked forward to, and it was especially fun when it was their own homes, they told me.

6.2.1 SPIRITUALITY AT THE MORAL MEETINGS

Many of the student's homes had a religious character of the interior, which was not hard to notice at the moral meetings. In the living rooms there would often be Qurans on the tables, Arabic writings and religious poems on the walls, and Arabic inspired decoration around the house. The book shelves had often many books written by Fethullah Gülen and Said Nursi. In one of the moral visits, the student's house was of extra special religious interior and decoration. There was pages from an ancient Quran and Arabic writings framed in hanging on the wall. The framed Qur'an was one of the oldest ones in the world, the mother of the student told me. They were fortunate to have these ancient pages because one member of the family was working in Mecca arranging the ceremonies and had got hold of these. The mother of the student was very eager to show me the religious items. She wanted to show me something special and valuable, and unlocked a cabinet and took out a wooden box with a lock on. In the box there was a little plastic bag with something that looked like dust inside. To my great astonishment it was actually dust. It was a bag containing dust, but it was not any kind of dust. This was dust from the top of the coffin of Prophet Mohammad's grave in Mecca. She opened the bag carefully and showed me the dust through the bag and even I got to smell it. After showing me the dust, she told me to come in another room where she showed me a framed piece of cloth which was from the actual grave to the Prophet in Mecca. This was very unique and valuable to have.

At two other moral meetings I got served holy water from Mecca. The holy water was recently brought from pilgrim trips to Mecca and was suppose to help your prayers become true. The first time we got served the water it was served by the mother which had just been to Mecca. It was served on a silver tray with small silver cups for the teacher, herself and me. The second time we got served the holy water it was given by the mother of a student, which her husband had brought back the water coming back from a pilgrim trip to Mecca just some days ago. It was served on a tray with small decorated cups and the children were also served a cup each. The holy water had to be drank facing towards Mecca, followed by a small pray or a wish after. The water is very precious and is very valuable as you are only aloud to bring small amounts of it back from Mecca. It is seen as an honour to be served this water and it has to be served in precious cups, the teacher told me.

For one of the student's moral meetings we had to drive quite far to get to the student's house. Her house was in Fatih district, which is "real Istanbul in the old times" and is the most visible religious area in Istanbul. In the Fatih area most people are personal Muslims and illustrate that in public. The area stands out from rest of Istanbul with its conservative appearance. There are old buildings and mosques everywhere and it hold a major part of the working class in Istanbul. The women wear fully covered black gowns or burqas, and many of the men are bearded and wear white thawb (long tunics). The student's apartment was in an old apartment in small street, but when walking inside it the house was well decorated and in good standard.

This was the first moral meeting I had been to, where the students were practicing to read the Quran. There were three other students who joined this moral meeting, so they were four students all together. We all got served a traditionally *lahmacun* (thin dough with sprinkled meat) which the dough had been made in a bakery with a real stone oven, and delivered to the mother after so she could put the topping on. After the meal, the girls were doing their homework together in the student's room, while the teacher and mother talked together in the living room. When they had finished the conversation about the student, the four girls came in the living room to practice their reading of the Quran. The teacher told me she and her students had sat themselves a goal to read through the whole Quran before the end of the primary school. They had not come far in the reading and they only had one year left, but it was something they could work from. The students read in order one page each with the teacher. It was difficult for them to read because of the Arabic writings. Not only pronunciation was difficult, but to remember each Arabic letter was confusing for the

students. They practised on their reading and pronunciation of Arabic. The mother of the student also helped with the Quran reading. She was enthusiastic to help with the readings and indication of the words. She sat on the other side of the table teaching one student at time from a piece of paper she had with the Arabic spelling, while the teacher sat with another student who tried to read from the Quran.

It seemed like the students were eager to read from the Quran and they seemed to have fun while reading together. The girls said they wanted to learn Arabic so they could read and understand the Holy Quran. It was a big difference in the student's level of Arabic reading and also how enthusiastic they were about reading it. When we left she gave the teacher and me a little present. It was a pink little sack containing a *tespih* (bean praying necklace), scented flowers and a special Arabic brass pitcher filled with black colour for painting of the eyes. The mother had made a true effort in the visit, and she even helped the teacher with teaching the students reading Arabic. It was the only time I saw a mother help with the teaching, and also the only time we were given a present when we were leaving after a moral meeting. She seemed to really engage herself in the visit and made considerable preparations for the visit, making traditionally *lahmacun* at the baker and preparing little gifts. It illustrated that she respected the teacher and appreciated our visit.

At school they had to stick to the secular school curriculum, but the moral visits opened up for spirituality outside of the school. The different moral meetings illustrated the diversity between the moral meetings and how the teachers chose to spread good morals. Religious books, national stories, Qur'an reading and teachers exemplifying was the different methods used to teach the students morals and values. Conversing with the student around the dinner table, together with the student's mother and other students made the teacher able to spread some of the ideas and philosophy within the movement. It also opened up for a closer relationship between the teacher and the student's milieu. The home arena was a functional place to spread morals in the way that the students were more relaxed and open to converse with their teachers.

6.3 MORALITY, MEANING AND EFFECTS

Durkheim argues in his book "Moral education" that the schools in our time are not providing enough moral guidance. The teachers have the chance to develop moral values for the children, but they lack time to do so. This leads the schools to only educate in science and to treat moral values as natural phenomena (Durkheim 2002:5). Durkheim claims there is a

difference between morals in our society and undeveloped societies. In undeveloped societies they are essentially religious in the way duties are directed toward their gods. The morals are in relation to the holy duties and not duties of man toward other men. Morals are duties which one should fulfil as the duty given by God, and sometimes even sacrifice one's self to God (Durkheim 2002:6). Durkheim claims earlier moral education was essentially religious, while today the moral education is rational. He states; "We have committed ourselves to provide in our schools a completely rational moral education, this is to say, excluding all principles derived from revealed religion." (Durkheim 2002:19). Education, he claims, is in-between between art and science. It is closest to science, but scientific theory only aim to "the expression of reality" whereas the educational theories search to guide behaviour (Durkheim 2002:2). Durkheim's view on education is comparable with the Gülen movement's goals; to conduct a scientific and educational practice within the schools.

Morality is closely related to duty, which Durkheim claims is prescribed behaviour. The teachers in the school see their work as a holy duty given by Allah. By working extra for the students and moralising them, they were fulfilling their holy duty. The moral meetings, the parent visits and the extra lessons given from their own time after their work time was seen as a natural part of being a good teacher and doing one's duty. When other teachers would finish their work and go home, the Gülen teachers would go to the student's home or have the students over to their own homes. When asking them if they ever got tired of spending most of their days being a teacher, most of them said they knew what they were going to when they applied to work as teachers there. Serving their time towards meaningful things and helping others made them happier than spending that time on themselves or on other useless things. Spending your time on important things like helping others would also prevent you from using your time on unimportant things. The students would learn from the teacher's behaviour which would prescribe the right norms to follow. The teachers serving as role models for the students made it easier to transfer morals by action than if the students did not look up to their teachers. Being respected and looked up to, the students seemed to choose themselves what to pick up from the teachers behaviours. By the teachers acting as good examples through their behaviour, the students learn norms and morals by watching and not by being preached to.

If the teachers did not act as role models for the students, the transfer of norms would not have been perceived openly. Of course not all students looked upon their teachers as role models, some did not seem to show much care about the teachers or the school at all. But from the children's behaviour in the Children Academy and the Primary school, it was

obvious that most of them respected their teachers and liked their teachers. By respecting them I mean that they obeyed the teachers in the classroom and would listen to what the teachers had to say. The respect and attitude from the students towards the teachers were not in a strict teacher-student way, but more in a sisterly way. I felt many times that the teachers were almost like an older sister for the students. The way they had a close relationship with each other and the students seemed to look up and respect the teachers almost like a younger sister do to her older sister. The students admiring their teachers were obvious in the behaviour they showed towards them. The children could come up to the teachers to give them a hug, show them a painting they had made, tell them if they had a problem or be eager to join students visit at the teacher's homes. In both the Children Academy and the Primary school, the students got to know their teachers outside of the school which also made them increase their relationship further than just teacher-student. By extending the school day with social activities outside the school made the teachers and students gain a closer relationship. Being surrounded with each other in other environments outside the school is also making the teacher status and student status change.

The teachers were still in their teacher role in the way they were responsible for the students and wanting to teach the students correct, but being in other surroundings made the situations more relaxed than it would have been in a classroom. The teachers could play with the students and joke together. The after school activities made the teachers see the student's behaviour in a wider picture and the student would also relate wider to the teachers. The teachers could see the students play together and how they acted towards their friends and their parents. The students were relating to the teachers on other levels in the way they had time to speak longer with their teachers and they could eat and play with the teacher. In the school's service bus the children would almost always sing together and joke around. Sometimes there would be a student sitting quiet alone on the bus, which the teacher would notice and then try to find out if something was wrong. Noticing the children's behaviour outside the school would also show if some students were left outside or teased. The teacher's would notice these things and try to make an end of it.

6.4 THE NORMS AND ETHICS IN USE

At one parent visit, Beyan and I went to one of the "really smart children's" (statement from teacher) house. This visit was not for a moral meeting, but it was a visit only with a student's mother. Her child had received one of the best results at the school and because of his hard

work he had got a scholarship. His mother and father worked as doctors, but the mother was home now to take care of the youngest child age around three years old. The girl would start in the kindergarten soon, and then the mother would go back to her work as a doctor. The mother welcomed us to their house and she had baked homemade bread. She did not wear any headscarf or religious clothing; neither did their house have any religious decoration as in the other homes. She told us about her own choice to be at home with her girl. She said she wanted to take a break from her job so she could spend time with her daughter and teach her at home. It was really important for her to raise her children in a fulfilling way with healthy surroundings. She showed us books she normally read for her daughter, and she talked about the need to learn her daughter new things. Her daughter was learning fast, she said. Their son had also started learning early, similarly as the daughter, and he did very well at school. The mother showed us the son's bedroom which was decorated with a bed, desk and a book shelf. The book shelf contained English books, dictionaries and some Turkish books. It was very important that the children read, she said while she showed us her son's books. The family hardly ever watched television, and the TV's in the house was not regularly used, she informed us. They had two TV's, one was a small one in the living room with a table cloth over and the other TV was in the guest room. The TV in the living room was only for decoration and did not really work, she said. The TV in the guestroom was only for the guests, but sometimes the son could watch English DVD's to practice his English.

It was the first time I had noticed such a big interest from a parent to show the teacher their ways of raising their children. The mother seemed really concerned about giving Beyhan a good impression on her parenting, and to show her how her children were raised. It was obvious that she wanted to show us how good mother she was through giving us information about the way she raised her children. Behan seemed impressed and told the mother that she did a really good job in raising her children.

Leaving from the parents visit, Beyhan told me that they were really good parents. The mother took time off from her work as a doctor to spend time with her daughter. They could send the daughter to day care or to a nanny, but still the mother wanted to be at home with her. The parents had a good income, as both of them working as doctors, but they chose to not live in luxury, Beyan told me. The apartment was very simple with old interior and not much modern equipments. They hardly watched TV, and the parents showed much interest in raising their children and offering them healthy surroundings.

“This shows what the movement is about. We try to not spend our time on useless things. Also this family had a lot of money, but as you could see their house was decorated poorly. They could easily have used their money on better furniture or on luxury, but we think that even if you have the money, you should not use it on luxury,” Beyhan told me on the way out.

It seemed a bit strange, I thought, because the apartment was in an exclusive apartment block in a big closed off area surrounded with security guards at the gate. The whole area around the closed off apartment blocks were a quite poor area with factories and storage places, but inside the gates of the apartment area the scenery was very different. The closed off area consisted of an artificial lake with a cafe, play ground for the children and green grass around the blocs. It was a big contrast walking from the area around and into the block area. This is not a very abnormal way of living in Istanbul, as I have seen several places like this. Many will distinguish the interior of an apartment as a characteristic of own choice, and so for the area of decision to live. Beyhan’s statement about the choice the parents had taken to not show of their luxury by having simple interior would for many not make much sense when they have at the same time chosen to live in an exclusive closed off area like that.

6.5 DOING GOOD DEEDS; HELPING OTHERS IN NEED

The movement's voluntary organization Kimse Yok Mu arrange days where students and teachers can join them in their voluntary work. This time the voluntary organization had arranged a day where some of the oldest students at the Primary School could join them on two of their regular visits to families in need. The organization helps many needed families in Turkey with accommodation and food. Two school classes from the primary school were joining Kimse Yok Mu in two of their visits that day. I went with the girl students and the women teachers. Boys went on different days, I was told. There were two women from the organization giving us some general information and everyone had to put on bright vests with organization’s logo printed on the front. In two mini buses, filled up with school girls and two women teachers, each bus went off to different places to help others in need.

6.5.1 VISIT TO AN ELDERLY POOR WOMAN

The first visit with the bus, we attended, was to a widowed old lady living alone in a small apartment. We came to visit her to deliver bags of food and to speak to her. Her apartment was small and cold. The neighbourhood was a poor one, and the entrance of her apartment

was similar to an entrance of a basement or a shed. The “living room” was also her bedroom and kitchen. She had a mattress where she slept on and a coal furnace where she kept warm and cooked her food on. The children seemed all excited being there and to deliver her the food. We sat down together at the concrete floor in her living room to listen to her story.

She had a sad story to tell us about her life. Earlier she had lived a wealthy life with her husband and children. They had lived in a big house and they owned other properties. She lived a happy life, she said, but the happiness unexpectedly turned when her husband married another woman. He left this woman with only a small part of the properties. Later she found herself a new man which she married, but he drank a lot of alcohol. His alcohol drinking made her sell the properties she had from before to cover his drinking. At the end they had hardly anything to survive on and her husband died. Now she was all alone and had nothing left. Her children disagreed in her decision to marry that man and they cut the contact with her after she got married. She was not able to work because she had strong pain in her legs and difficulties to walk. Her story was tragic and the school children seemed to listen carefully when she spoke. Kimse Yokmu had sponsored her apartment by paying the rent. She was left alone now and Allah was all she had left, she told us. Being alone so much made this visit truly supportive for her. She was incredible thankful for the support from the voluntary organization and for our visit. She told the children to appreciate what they have now because one day it could all be over. *“You should be thankful for not only your house, but most importantly your family”*, she told us. She seemed thrilled for the visit and she blessed us all many times while we sat there, and much more when we left. The children looked around in her apartment and seemed to be surprised how small it was. We all said goodbye to the old lady, and she gave us kisses on the cheeks and blessed us one more time.

6.5.2 A FAMILY LEFT BEHIND

The next visit on our route was to a divorced woman living alone with her children. This time we had to take off our gloving vests before we went out of the bus and entered the apartment. The children in this family had been teased by the neighbour children after the last visit from the charity organization. The children in the neighbourhood had seen the helping organization come to this family and then started teasing the children for being poor. Because of this we tried to be more discrete. Half of the bus walked in first while the rest of the bus walked in later to make less focus on us coming. This did not seem to help because when we had just

walked in the block, some children had already seen us and followed us. They saw the whole group of children, teachers and voluntary workers walk together into the family's apartment.

When we came in we were welcomed by a young woman and her three daughters. The apartment was under ground floor so all you could see out from the little window in the living room was car wheels and feet walking past. We all sat down on the cold floor in the living room and the mother said she was so happy to see that we cared and wanted to help. She told us about her children being teased because they were poor and her desperate wish to give them what they wanted. She had three daughters, and two sons which had been left by their father who had married a new woman and moved far away. Now she was left alone with their children and had a hard time trying to support her children on her own. Her three daughters who were aged from seven till twelve sat next to her listening to her talk and us asking questions. The oldest of the daughters were in the same age as the school girls who sat in her living room. The mother was very upset and cried when she told us about their situation. She wanted a better life than this for her children, and she was not able to give them that. She did not work when she was with the ex-husband because he earned the money and she took care of the children. Now she had to work, but it was difficult because the job she had as a cleaner, did not pay good enough for the rent and her children. Her two sons also had to work, but their work in a factory did not contribute enough for them all. They were struggling, the mother said. They lived in poor conditions and the mother was working long days. The youngest daughters looked shy and confused when the mother was talking and crying. The school children sat all quiet and listening interested in her story. We gave them bags of meat and the children got children books and some school equipments.

In the school bus back to the school, I asked the students what their impressions was from these visits. They said they thought it was very sad to see the girl in their own age live like this. *"The girl was the same age as us and she lived very poor. It was sad that see had to see her mother cry"*. They said they were really happy their life was not like that and that they were not poor. They felt sorry for the poor families, and they were pleased they could help today. Afterward the students had in homework to write about this day and their impressions. One girl told me she wanted to write a poem about it.

The schools coalition with the movement's charity organization illustrates the movement's philosophy in action. Their belief, it is a duty to God to help others, is what goes under the movements key term *hizmet*. This act of charity is what *hizmet* promote- serving in benefit for others is a religious act and will also benefit in after life. The movement's charity

organization had contact with other Gülen schools which participated regularly on their charity programs.

6.6 FUNDRAISING BREAKFAST

One of the most memorable days I had in my field was when I was invited to the movements fundraising for one of their school dormitories. One of the movement foundations had arranged a gala breakfast at an exclusive hotel in Istanbul. Over 300 guests were at the breakfast in the hotel gala hall, and they had all paid 140 lira (about 500 kroner) each for the event which would cover the costs of the breakfast and contribute to the dormitory. The gala breakfast was only for the women in the movement, while the men took part in the organizing and the economical set up for the dormitory.

For the occasion, a well known author and a famous singer was invited to the event to hold speeches and sing. The author was a well known women author in Turkey and I recognized her from the schools celebration of Valentine's Day where she also held a speech. The author started the event by having a long speech concerning women. The speech regarded women in the past and women of the future and considered the role of women and their powers as women. She pointed out how important women have been in the history and how they have been forgotten today. Under the Ottoman era it was only the men who were honoured, but the women in that era were also working hard, she said. "The women have been forgotten in the history, but they have always been there and participated with important parts", she stated. There were full-size slides displayed on the wall with poems and quotes about women. She talked about great women through the history, which it was important that women memorized. The slides also displayed Fethullah Gülen quotes about women's strength and power, and the charity work women have served through the centuries. The author stated the most important women through the centuries as Virgin Mary, Mohammad's wife Aicha and his daughter Zaynab. She talked about Virgin Mary and how much she could be compared with Mohammad's daughter. All these women gave from themselves to others, which were advised in the holy Quran. The Quran and these women exemplifies that you should always give from yourself and the things you like most, the author stated.

The next person to hold a speech was a famous Turkish woman singer. All the guests seemed especially excited and stood up when she entered the room, similar to a diva with big sunglasses and high heels. She was not a religious singer, but she has a big career in Turkey. She also held a speech about women strength in the world. She spoke about how strong

women are and how important it is to stick up for each other. She told us she was suffering from serious back pain lately and had to stay at home because of this. When she heard about this fundraiser she pushed herself to go because she thought it was very important to raise money for this. It is so important with education, and the Gülen schools offer great schools. The work that the teachers do are admiring, she said. After having a long and emotional speech (as it seemed from the audience wiping), she told us she would sing us a religious song for the first time in her career. Her singing was very beautiful and seemed to touch the audience.

The third and last person to hold a speech was actually me. I had been asked by Beyhan on the way to the gala if I could say some words about my personal impression about the school. She asked me in the taxi on the way to the event, when I was far from aware that the event would be this serious and with so many people, so I said yes to say some words. I was terrified when I realized how big and important this event was and that I was supposed to hold a speech after these professional speakers. Luckily I managed to squeeze out something in a direction of a speech about my impression of the Gülen schools and the teachers work. After my “speech” there was arranged a fundraising sale by the foundation with homemade scarves, table cloths and some other home made things. It was a lot of planning and arrangement behind this event. The whole event was arranged to raise money for their closing down dormitory which they all talked so importantly about. The event being in an exclusive hotel with celebrity entertainment and speeches would make some wonder why it had to be arranged in such a fashionable setting. Would it not have been better off to have a cheaper arrangement which would give more money to the dormitory instead of this event? The movement's activities are in many ways contributing in creating a special feeling of being part of this movement. For some it would be totally unnecessary to have this exclusiveness, and for others this makes one feel like a “special member” of a high status community. The movement arranges many charity fundraisings and activities, which often had an exclusive aura over it. It could be from the school’s celebration of Valentine’s Day for the mothers in the school’s gala hall with food serving, to the international language Olympiad.

6.7 THE MOVEMENT'S ETHICS OUTSIDE SCHOOL

6.7.1 ZAMAN HEAD OFFICE

The movement's various organs are all contributing to do good deeds. The many foundations raise money for the schools and dormitories, while other followers engage in ways to spread the ideas praised by the movement. The Zaman Newspaper is established and supported by Gülen followers. The newspaper has grown to be Turkey's second biggest newspaper, and with Zaman daily, the number one's English newspaper in Turkey. The newspaper does not explicitly promote the movement, but it concern issues which can be put in context with the movement's philosophy. The newspaper regularly distributes Gülen's books put together from his sermons and speeches (Aktay 2003:144). Being such a popular newspaper and a Gülen inspired one; I was interested to know more about the philosophy and the workers for the newspaper. I went to visit the head office of Zaman Newspaper to learn more about the newspaper and talk to some of their journalists.

One of the teachers was married to someone working there, so he made an appointment for me. The head office was impressing with a modern and outstanding look. I had been told the building had been rated to one of the best architectural buildings in Turkey and seeing it I could immediately appreciate that. The building was of modern design like an oblong square in steel with glass windows covering the whole building. It looked a bit out of place from the other buildings around it, but the name "Zaman" was written in large letters in the front which made it recognizable. The whole building outside and inside oozed of modernity and prosperity. The inside was strictly secured with security entrance, walking through metal detectors and security guards. After I had confirmed my visit permission to the guards, I was met with a young woman journalist who showed me around the building. I later on got to meet some other women journalists to ask them some questions about the newspaper. I asked them how the news paper express dialogue and tolerance, which is the main devotion for the Gülen movement. They told me the newspaper was working for a democratic society and that they were not taking political sides in their writings. The news paper worked to get every voice in the society heard. They try to listen to and write about all sides of society and they give for example minorities and powerless people a voice. From what I got told, the newspaper did not want to make shocking stories or take sides, but was aiming to let everyone speak so there could be a dialogue between people. This would result in a broader social understanding and tolerance for each other, they told me. The woman

journalist also said they had lots of different nationalities working there, some with transnational internships, and journalists with a broad spectre of educational backgrounds. The journalist I spoke to was educated in political science and journalism, while the young woman that showed me around had just finished her master degree in political science.

Even if the newspaper is not directly owned by the movement in the way that the earnings and surplus goes to the movement, it still is a newspaper that shows the movements philosophy in practice. The journalists are not all followers of the Gülen movement, and have various backgrounds. When I asked the woman journalist about their relation to Fethullah Gülen, she said the workers there should hold many of the movement's inner values like tolerance, good morals and empathy for Turkey. She said she was not prepared for me to ask questions, she thought I was only going to be shown around. She did not know so much about the newspaper and its relations with the movement, because she had only worked there for half a year, so she could not answer my questions properly, she said. I asked her afterwards about her personal relationship with the movement and Fethullah Gülen. She told me she had gone to a public school, and she was not familiar with the movement before she started at the university. After starting at the university she slowly became interested in Gülen's philosophy and she began reading his books. It made her ask more questions and get interested to know more about Islam and humans meaning in life. The books gave her answers which she liked and made meaning for her. She loved reading books, especially Fethullah Gülen and Said Nursi books because they were all so inspiring and meaningful, she stated. Before leaving she delivered me the contact information to a reading group which she had been a member of. After she began working for the newspaper, she did not have much time to read. A reading group is really good if you want to read and are a bit lazy to do it on your own, she advised me.

The visit at the Head Office showed me the different ways followers try to communicate the ideas of the movement. The philosophy behind the newspaper was to serve the world news from all aspects of the society, and not limit any voices. Minority groups or groups people had prejudices against was something they tried to give a voice so people could get to know them better and hopefully get an acceptance of.

6.7.2 AT HOME TO A ZAMAN COLUMNIST AND AN INTERVIEW WITH ONE OF THE SPONSORS

I was lucky to get an interview with a recognized Zaman columnist who had worked for the newspaper for many years. He was also the president of the Journalist and Writers

Foundation Board of Trustees, and has met with Fethullah Gülen a numerous of times. At his home, in a city outside of Istanbul, he let me interview him for two hours. There, over some tea and Turkish delight, he talked about the movement, his beliefs, Fethullah Gülen and about scepticism around the movement. I had brought my friend, who was the daughter of the neighbour woman from the village, to be my interpreter. As mentioned in chapter 4 page 22, my friend was not fond of the movement and she was very sceptic towards it. Earlier when I had tried to talk to her about the philosophy of the movement or show her books written by Fethullah Gülen, she did not show much interest. It seemed like she had already set her opinion about the movement and was not interested in hearing something else about it. In the interview she got to ask the columnist questions she wondered about. He spoke about universal values between every human being, no matter religion, and love as a global connector. Ethical values and good morals was something he thought was a need in everybody to become sincere human beings. My friend told me straight away after we said goodbye to the man that she did not know that the movement was about these things and she thought his vision on life was so beautiful.

I was interested in meeting a sponsor of the movement, and Behan helped me arranging an interview with one of the major sponsors of the Gülen schools. He was a business man who had taken over his family nut and dried fruit business which did very well in Turkey. Behan went with met to meet him in his office in central Istanbul. He was very welcoming and pleased to see I was interested in the movement. He had just come back from a visit in South Africa where the movement was building a new Gülen school and he was going to participate in the sponsoring. He said it was especially important with good schools there. The schools there were simple, but the most important was to have schools and good teachers. I asked him if the children there knew who Fethullah Gülen was and if the schools were any different than other schools. They were not interested in promoting the schools in that way, or to teach about the movement. The main idea was that the children could get education and learn universal values, to be able to achieve what they wanted in life.

He had sponsored numerous schools and he was content to use his money on Gülen schools. There was nothing he rather wanted to use his money on, he told me. He lived a simple life with his wife. His children were grown up and financially provided themselves. The only travel he did was in accordance with his sponsorship of the schools or other arrangements within the movement. He underlined that he had never thought business or monetarily when he had been abroad with the Gülen schools. That was not of interest neither

was it possible for him. He several times met with Fethullah Gülen, and his last visit to him was six months ago. Gülen had thanked him for sponsoring Gülen schools and he had told him he prayed for him.

7 PARTICIPATION AND DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE SERVICE

7.1 REASONS THAT GOVERNED THE BEHAVIOUR OF THE TEACHERS - WHY AND HOW

There was a huge difference between my informants, but from the impression they gave, sharing same belief was what made them bond together as a group. The social gatherings contributed to make the teachers assemble around the collective activities outside the school and join together on other aspects of daily life. Most of the people working for the movement were highly knowledgeable and modified the meanings of the movement in their own way. They chose the meaning they preferred to acknowledge to the rest of the world, and in what degree they wished to be involved in the movement's activities. The movement is an open community; hence many of my informants had chosen to follow the movement in an adult age. The degree of involvement and activity by the followers varied by their own interest and needs. For the teachers it seemed to be some more inclusion involved in being a follower than it would have been for a non-teacher. Their work arena included activities promoted by the movement where a big degree of the movement ideas and philosophy got exposed. The teacher's involvement in outside school activities, made them followers of the movement on a further level than many other who follow the movement. Being to a large extent included in the movement's activities left little time for other interests or friends outside the movement. The teachers became friends with each other and they would always be there for each other.

In order to understand the dedication and service commitment from the teachers it is necessary to look at the moods and motivations that inspired them.

Religion, Geertz write, gives the believers a kind of manual on what reality is all about, what it "means", and how one is to act within it. Geertz argues that;

Religion is (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (Geertz 1979:79)

Fethullah Gülen formulates conceptions which inspire the followers into the right mood and motivates them to work for their mutual beliefs. For Gülen fundamental universal values as

love, compassion, tolerance, and forgiving is commanded in religion, and altruism generates love. By being in a close community with each other, the followers influence each other into the right mood which serves them motivation to fulfil their “duty”. Fethullah Gülen inspires many of the followers through his books and speeches. In some of his writings he is rather straight forward in his speech;

We must establish everywhere, in homes and streets, in schools and places of worship, observatories from which the truth behind humanity and the universe can be seen. We must reopen the routes to eternity which have been blocked from some centuries. We must raise Islam to the first and most important point on the agenda, one that is to be dwelt on in every element of life. (Gülen 2005:14)

The strong words of Fethullah Gülen contributes to make the followers disposed to work determined for the movement’s goals and to spread further. The followers read his books regularly and the teachers had willingly reading meetings together on Sundays.

7.1.1 THE MOTIVATOR

To achieve an understanding of what drives the followers to take part in the movement and devote themselves to the movement’s work, Fredrik Barth (1990) assert one has to identify how the knowledge is distributed. Fredrik Barth claims by focusing on the “transactions in knowledge” we can identify what produce the forces behind the drive. Fredrik Barth (1990) examines two modes of managing knowledge in social interaction in New Guinea and Bali. He discovers different ways a Guru in Bali and a priest in a mystery cult in New Guinea distribute knowledge to their audience. The Guru taught and spread the knowledge to his audience, while the priest (the initiator) veiled the knowledge and kept it hidden for his audience. In relation with the Gülen movement, Fethullah Gülen can be placed in parallel with the Guru exemplified by Barth, in the spread of knowledge. The Guru reproduces knowledge and “he should explain, instruct, know and exemplify” the audience to make the knowledge credible and to give guidance (Barth 1990:642). The Guru has the role of instructing, clarifying and educating the knowledge to the audience so they can learn from him. Fethullah Gülen distributes his knowledge to the followers, equivalent with the Guru, by teaching and spreading the knowledge through his verbal communication, internet podcasts and in his books. He is not trying to cover or hide any knowledge from them, but instead he is inspiring the followers to understand the knowledge and how to search for it.

The first requirement a Guru needs, Barth writes, is to always serve knowledge and material to the audience in order to last as a Guru as long as possible. Fethullah Gülen's numerous books and regular internet podcasts illustrate his effort and desire to share the knowledge with the followers. Either it is a new book, a podcast, or a speech; he continuously works to deliver knowledge. Various aspects can be linked and applied to the knowledge distributed, which also expand the knowledge in new directions for the Gülen followers. The main ideas and focus communicated by Gülen are based upon universal values which is perhaps "impossible" to run out of knowledge about. Morals, values and education are endless topics and linkable in a variety of situations which makes it possible at all times to serve knowledge and material to the audience.

The second requirement, Barth states, is the importance of always being consistent and not contradicting, to stay trustful and believable to the audience. Fethullah Gülen's conflicting start as being suspected of secular threat, made him grow to be apparent and consistent about his intentions and work. The suspicion about him being a leader of an Islamic new order pressured him to be clear and understandable for others. Being contradicting in that circumstance, would cause additional suspicions and difficulties for him to achieve his goals. The suspicions and claims have forced Gülen to clarify and stabilize the moves and message he transmits to his audience.

The connection I have made with Fethullah Gülen and Barth's guru is to illustrate how a person can "lead" an audience to knowledge which is already reachable other places than from that person. Fethullah Gülen's ideas are not his ideas, but he has managed to ascribe the ideas a meaning and importance which has convinced his audience. The audience which has been convinced chose to be a follower of the Gülen community and work for the knowledge which is transacted by Gülen. The person transacting the knowledge has an important role to fill and communicate to the audience to be credible. Gülen's role as a leading example has made him believable with his illustrative actions and not only words. His openness about the knowledge has made the followers understand it through his explanations and instructions.

The movement is a movement of volunteers that exists of people who are willing to serve themselves towards the movement's goals. Fethullah Gülen has a strong influence in his inspiration messages to the followers, which he present as their religious duty, *hizmet*. The religious meaning behind the self-sacrifice is the award which is given by God after. The motivation is encouraged by the religious award they will be given, but also by each other.

They inspire each other to reach their goals, and together they create a set of moods and motivations based on their religious beliefs which will drive them towards their goals.

7.2 HIZMET AS RELIGIOUS DUTY AND INSPIRATION

Hizmet is the key motivator for the followers in making process. *Hizmet* is a Turkish word which translates as “service”. *Hizmet* is not a term deriving from the Quran but it is a Turkish term Fethullah Gülen and the movement use informal between them. *Hizmet* is used as a key point in the Gülen movement promoted as the work of holy duty (Yavuz 2003:26). It is perceived within the movement as a way of helping others through performing holy work, and is seen as a religious duty in the way that you earn credit for this in your after life and it stops you from thinking sinful thoughts. The work the followers perform is seen as a religious act because it is done in the name of Allah. To work non-stop for Islam is a religious norm for Fethullah Gülen. A constant concern for Allah results in a careful attitude towards humans and the world. Giving money and sponsoring Gülen inspired schools is seen as a religious act because the teachers are Muslims doing holy duty by educating the future.

For Fethullah Gülen no Muslim can be a good Muslim without having knowledge. Knowledge meant for Gülen includes worldly knowledge and science. In that way he motivates people to raise money to build new good schools before new mosques. It is not enough to just give away money to people in need but you should also help people with your own effort to save their soul. This way of helping others will also make you a better human being, in Fethullah Gülen view (Gülen 2004). This has lead people to actually give from them self and use *hizmet* in helping others. Teachers in Gülen inspired schools are doing their *hizmet* within the movement by giving as much as they can of their self to help others. Also other people in the movement have been using *hizmet* to spread the movement philosophy through raising money for new schools, cultural centres, and other projects.

Hizmet can be seen as a way of philanthropy or altruism in the aspect of wishing to do good for others without regard for economic rewards. A philanthropist is one that gives from his own pocket and gives from his own time and competence. A philanthropist is a very important and useful force in religious work. Altruism is the opposite of selfishness and it is portrayed as a religious duty in the Gülen movement. It is not just in religious aspect altruism is used in the Gülen movement, but it is also portrayed as a moral duty from their ethical values. Gülen writes; “A duty is our responsibility, and to have recourse to causes in the

fulfilment of that duty is a form of entreaty or petition presented at the door of God's mercy, equivalent to a prayer made in order to obtain a desired outcome"(Gülen 2005:14).

Fethullah Gülen's altruistic *hizmet* has made many think of him as a sufi. A sufi is normally thought of one that is attached to asceticism and practice *dhikr* (repeating the names of God). Fethullah Gülen's full dedication to Allah and to people is a typical sufi behaviour and also by preferring others to oneself (Vogt 2005). Fethullah Gülen has written much about giving oneself to others and forgetting one's concerns. In my fieldwork it was common for followers of Gülen to talk about being noble and to place others in front of themselves. They did this by constantly giving most of themselves in their work as a teacher and helping others before themselves. Several teachers told me they always tried to use her thoughts on others instead of on herself. One teacher told me she tried to see others as "better" than herself which would help her to become as humble as possible. Being humble and always putting others in front of you, is Gülen's way toward a better world. Regardless of the time and energy the teachers work involved, *hizmet* promoted as a holy duty, made them able to provide their hard work without expectations of economic rewards or any recompense.

The teacher that had been a part of the movement from when she was born told me she had a natural relationship towards *hizmet*. When she spoke about how it was growing up within the movement she told me; "*When I was born, I was born into hizmet. I could from an early age wake up in the night from my father's crying while he was praying night prayer. He would always pray for us and for our future*". Her family had been faithful followers of the movement as long as she could remember. Their house was filled with Gülen's books and her neighbours were even followers. She was born into this and she felt that it was her destiny. She believed it was because of her upbringing she had the job at the school, and developing into the way she was.

7.3 THE TEACHERS' MOODS AND MOTIVATIONS FOR BEING A GÜLEN FOLLOWER

The high standards of the schools put the teachers under pressure to constantly renew themselves and their skills. The schools provides skill training and courses for the teachers which are obligatory. There are arranged training courses and seminars in the weekends with "bought-in" expertise as university lectures and professional seminar leaders to train the teachers. There are constantly conferences and meetings for the teachers which they are founded to attend and in the summer holidays there are training seminars for a long period of time. The teachers spare time is limited and most of their time goes towards being a teacher.

With this hard work and hardly any spare time, what made the teachers motivated and inspired to have this lifestyle?

The moods and motivations behind the teacher's behaviour and actions were influenced apparently by the writings of Fethullah Gülen. This shined through in the extra hard worked they did as teachers, their ascetic way of living and the way they expressed their moral values and helpfulness towards others.

As earlier stated, the followers read handbooks put together by Gülen's sermons and speeches which were successful in motivating the followers to pursue the values and activities of the movement. The aesthetical perspective in those books made moods and motivations for the readers to spread to other countries to work in the movement's educational network. "Modern man, who spends his energies in pursuit of transient material advantages, is wasting himself and all the nobler, truly human feelings in the depths of his being." (Gülen 1996: 27).

Fethullah Gülen asserts that humans have no other way than to follow the example of God's Messenger if they desire to live a happy and peaceful life it should be based on good morals and universal values such as love, mutual respect, compassion, and altruism (Gülen 1996:105). He writes about how God's Messenger managed to solve all problems so skilfully and easily. Prophet Muhammad was sent to an ignorant, wild and rebellious people and managed to make them into a harmonious community of peace and, happiness, knowledge and good morals (Gülen 1996: 105). This inspires a mood for the followers of Gülen's writings which pursue this as the truthful way to a fulfilled life and peaceful world exemplified from and found through religion. Several of the followers mentioned to me their religious "duty" in relation with achievement of Paradise or "after-life". Examples and stories from the Holy Quran were often used in giving advice and courage in the serving of your religious duty, and the meaning of doing so. The follower's concepts of reality were in many ways shaped within and from their religious beliefs. This served them moods and motivations based upon their concept of reality and life which drives them closer to their quest for serving their duty in life.

From my interviews with three of the teachers, two from the primary school and one from the children academy, I was told why they chose to work at a Gülen school.

7.3.1 ZEINEP

Zeinep is 24 year old and has graduated from the university as an English teacher. She has been working as a teacher at the school for three years. She decided to be follower of the

Gülen movement when she was at university studying to become an English teacher. It was her friends at the university she got influenced by. They made her get attracted to the movement through the way they were. *“They knew the community [the Gülen movement]. They were good examples for me so I wanted to be with them. They did not lie, they did not have bad habits, and they were hard working and intelligent students”*. Her parents were not followers of the movement, but she tells me they appreciate the movement. For Zeinep the Gülen movement was a community with good people, where there existed no bad habits, and no bad morals. She claimed reading Gülen’s books taught her to love people and love her students. She always tried to be a good role model for her students by her actions. The community was for her about; “love, peace, dialogue and being good to all people, not only Muslims”.

It was the books that drove her to them and made her want to read them. Being within the movement she told me she got inspired by the others to read more, and it helped her to read together with them in the reading meetings. Zeinep meant that by communicating Gülen’s ideas the followers could show the world their love, and by being “good” people their beliefs were illustrated.

7.3.2 GÜLSEN

Gülseven has been a teacher at Fariah for one year, but had worked eleven years total at Gülen schools abroad. She studied English language and literature at university, and worked after her graduation for about 9 years at an international school abroad. Afterwards she worked two years at an international school in another country, but found it exhausting so she moved back to Turkey with her husband. She tells me she is really trying to learn the details of the Prophet Muhammad, like Fethullah Gülen is. *“Whatever I hear about him [Gülen] is what he does, and then he says. He is effective on us, and he asks us to do the same thing. Do it and then tell the people to be good.”*

She became interested in Gülen’s writings through her teachers in her examination course at college. She went to a public school, but the Gülen movement offers extra courses for the university entrance exams, which she took part in. Her teachers were really good examples through their behaviour and the way they were thinking, which made her look up to them. Gülseven parents were religious, but on a general standard. Her parents were not searching. *“They did not ask questions about their religion, they only heard and assumed things were true. [...] I wanted to know why she [her mother] covered herself, I wanted to*

know more. When I saw the teachers I saw knowledge, and also that knowledge and Islam could be together". She says her religion instigate people to learn everything, which made her really motivated to do so. *"In the Qur'an the first rule the angel say is read, learn"*. She saw this generation as wanting to learn more, while her parent's generation were only "traditionally doing it". *"They are for example only covering, but not praying. Praying is more important than covering"*, Gulsen said.

7.3.3. MINA

Mina is not from Turkey, but used to go to a Gülen school in her own country. She grew up with Turkish teachers at her school which she used to look up to. The teachers were like sisters for her and that is what made her want to follow the movement. *"We had other teachers too, but we were closer to the Turkish teachers. We ate breakfast together with them. We were closer to them because they treated us like their children."* The teachers meant a lot for Mina, and she used to miss them when she was away. It was the teachers, from the way they acted, that made her want to learn Turkish and to work for the Gülen movement. She was not aware about her school being a Gülen school when she went there, that was something she found out later. *"It was not open like that [as a Gülen school, but somehow the ideas were taught to us. The students used to drink tea with their teachers after school and the teachers spoke about different subjects to the students. Now when I think about those speeches I understand that these were all these kind of ideas, like what is "love", "respect" etc. We talked about them, but at that time we did not know who Fethullah Gülen was or talk about teaching Islam. [...] The idea was to teach universal values as what love, hate, tolerance, and respect is"*.

Mina's parents are also Muslims, but only on a general level. Mina started to wonder about Islam when she was a teenager and she would ask her teachers about it. She started learning about Islam which made her interested in knowing more about Islam. It was her own ideas to do so, no one told her so, she informed me. Going to a Gülen school, Mina felt she first of all received good education, and secondly learned how to be "a real and good human being". She said the students learned by example from the teachers which made them stay away from bad habits as other young people had, for instance drinking alcohol or smoking. *We would know the difference in good and bad, and we did not have the time to do bad. We were studying and studying, we had to study. If I did not study, I would lose my scholarship. I*

would always try my best, because my parents were paying and sending me far, they were expecting nice things, so I would also try.

For her the movement is about being there for others and devote your life to save other peoples sole. That made her life meaningful and satisfying. *“People who do not only think of themselves are drawn towards the movement”.*

7.3.4 A FEELING OF COMMUNITY

For the three teachers I interviewed, they all seemed to have chosen to encounter the movement on their own. Being influenced by their teachers and student friends, they chose by themselves to learn more about their own religion and chose to do this in relation with the Gülen movement. They searched answers and explanations in their beliefs which lead them to learn more by reading books including Fethullah Gülen’s. Their teachers acted as role models for them, interpret with science and spiritual knowledge. Their spiritual and scientific knowledge encouraged them to follow in the footsteps of their teachers and their university friends to become followers of the movement. Lacking of spiritual fulfilment at home, they wanted to know more and make sense of their religion. At an age where many feel they have to choose future pathways and are searching meaning of life, the students chose to go in the footsteps of their teachers. The movement acted helpful for them towards their search for meaning in the way it offered ways to find answers.

I asked the three teachers what it means for them to be part of this community. They had different, but similar answers with each other.

Gülşen teacher at the primary school said being a part of this community means;

“To be comfortable with the people who are the same to you. It is satisfying socially. Of course we have different ideas also, but we have general common things. For example when I tell my idea on a topic, I understand my friends have the same opinion”.

Zeinep teacher at the primary school said being part of the community means;

“Friendship and loving people. We can help people overseas, for example in Africa. We do self improvement and we always read”.

Mina teacher from the children academy answered;

“Being part of this community I have met really nice people who are spread all over the world and are well educated. Being part of this community means we are there for each other, you devote your life to save other peoples sole, which is a really nice feeling for me. Being there for others show that your life is not just an empty thing. It is really meaningful. The ideas are shared with others believing in the same. We are surrounded with people who think the same. I can work everywhere in the world, if they said go to Africa to work there I would go straight away. It is really nice to be able to show love like this.

I have friends that are working in Iraq teaching and helping. It is really nice to be able to do that. They work there and they are really happy. It is a nice feeling to be useful for others. When you sacrifice your life to save others, Allah thinks of you more often. When you do things in the sake of Allah it rewards you in afterlife. It’s ideally to always put others in front of yourself. The ideas are really big and wide which makes all types of people come to us, not just Muslims. People who do not only think about themselves are drawn towards the movement. They sacrifice themselves for other, sacrifice their friends and family. That is why the movement is so successful.”

The teacher’s views about being a part of the community served an image on how the movement have managed to get the high scale of followers. Why are people who claim dialogue, tolerance and education as a good mean for the world in need to follow a movement? There are many people who share the same beliefs as the followers of the movement, but not chose to be a follower of the movement. The teachers chose to search their goal throughout the movement so they can go together with others like minded towards a better world. They could of course read Gülen’s books and follow his ideas on their own, but as a community the commitment turned stronger in the way that they inspired and encouraged each other. Clifford Geertz (1973) claims humans are involved in religion and other meaningful activities because it expresses an aspect of fundamental meaning community of human nature. They ascribe themselves those qualities that becomes a part of the religious dynamics within the group and which contributes to the collective identity. The movement’s gatherings and meetings acts both as a creator of the collective meaning system and towards the group’s collective identity.

It was only one teacher who told me she had grown up within the movement. For her growing up within the movement had made her the person she was today. It was her destiny

to have this life, and she felt really blessed with it. Everything she knew about life was formed by the mentality of the movement and she had been surrounded by people within the movement since she was growing up. She felt lucky with her background and it had made her meet all the genuine people she had met, including her future husband. She told me she did not know any other life than this, but she was glad it had made her help others with her job and her inspirational way of seeing life.

7.4 ETHOS AND WORLD VIEW BEHIND THOUGHT AND ACTION

Humans are involved in religion and other sense-making activities because that behaviour serves to express, as opposed to bringing about, a fundamental sense-making aspect of human nature. (Glazier & Flowerday 2003:6)

Geertz (1973) sees “world view” and “ethos” as two factors controlling human thoughts and actions. What he calls “world view” tells people what they should believe in and what he calls “ethos” tells people how they should act in accordance with the world view. The world view describes the way life is, while ethos explains how one should act in life. For Geertz, religion is particularly effective in creating a world view with an ethos. The power of religion supports social values and gives people of the same religious beliefs a mutual understanding of their religious values (Geertz 1973:126-127). From my informants I witnessed their world view and how they were acting to achieve their ethos. The teachers’ world views and ethos were visibly reflected in their lifestyle. Their beliefs were reproduced and visible in their work as teachers, their morals and values, the way they dressed, their friends, their prayers, and the way they spoke. It was very clear that they all had a vision of their life and how they should live it in best possible way. The world view is the surface Fethullah Gülen use in his books and messages to reach out to the followers and inspire them. Being a follower of the movement they were able to perform their ethos in relation with their worldview.

Gülen has managed to transform privately formed piety into public activism which in the school acted as benefitting for the students and the school. It was benefitting in the way the students are being given a heart to heart education where they can have a trusting relationship with their teachers, and the school having trust in the teachers that are willing to fulfil their job. The work performed by the teachers was represented as Islamic because it promoted moral guidance (irşad), served religion (hizmet), and fought ignorance (cehalet) (Ağai 2003:67). The teachers did not receive a high salary, but they performed the demanding

work in correlation with the activism favoured from Gülen's writings. Gülen's activist and pietism combined philosophy was inspiring the teachers to do good deeds (hizmet) and sacrifice themselves in their work doing so, which acted benefitting for both the students and the schools.

When devoting so much time and effort towards their beliefs, it is important that the result of one's work is reflected. As a follower of the Gülen movement they wished to see beliefs turn to action and results. All the hard work performed by the followers gave results and some of the results were illustrated large and significant. Being part of a community is not merely about the important work they take part in, but a large part of it has also to do with the enchantment and rewards of being a in that community.

7.5 THE TURKISH LANGUAGE OLYMPIAD – THE MOVEMENT'S TURKISH DELIGHT?

The followers of the Gülen movement took pride in being part of the community and the movement was good in expressing their triumphs in astonishing ways which, for many, seemed to arouse a feeling of pride. Privileged arrangements appeared to be significant within the movement, and it seemed like they spent enough effort and resources in their arrangements and public events. The results of the movement's work are the prides which work as motivations for a great deal of the people it is presented for. A pride for the movement was their yearly Turkish Language Olympiad.

Every year since 2003 the Gülen movement has arranged an international Turkish language Olympiad for the students of the Gülen schools all around the world. This year it was 750 students from 100 countries participated in the 8th Olympiad arranged in Turkey. The Olympiad competition was of international children who performed their own numbers in dance or singing from their own culture and Turkish culture. They were all wearing traditional costumes from their own country while performing their acts. This competition was very important for the movement in their work of gathering the world and creating a worldly dialogue. While the children got to travel and see new culture, they also got to meet children from other cultures. The Olympiad is known all over Turkey and not only for the Gülen movement, but also for people who do not see themselves as followers of the movement. The Olympiad has got national media coverage from TV channels, newspapers and radio channels, including one of Turkey's largest TV channel which sent the whole Olympiad live.

The whole show was planned in a long time, and much time and money was spent on it. There were big sponsors, including Bank Asya, which financed the show and tickets were

quickly sold out. I was fortunate to be invited to the show by one of the English teachers at the school, whose husband worked with arranging the show. She had managed to get us tickets for two of the shows, which was not an easy job, she told me. They were really hard to get because the first show was sold out and the last show was an extra show for specially invited people, included the Prime Minister.

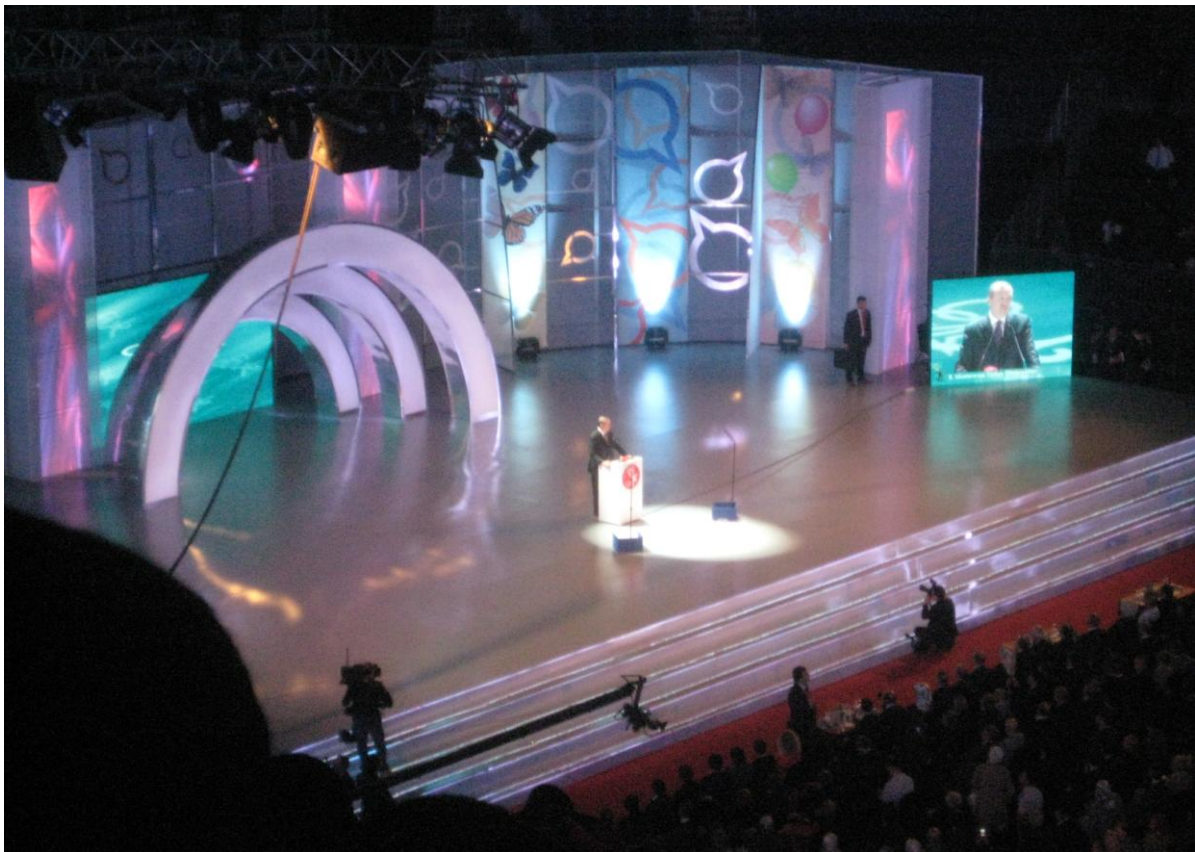
The first show went over all my expectations on size, talent and organization. There was thousands in the audience and the whole show looked stunningly professional. All the children contestants were there to represent their country and show their Turkish linguistics. There were famous celebrities including a football player, singer and actor, who were sitting in the front row as judges. The children sang traditional Turkish songs in Turkish, read famous Turkish poems in Turkish, and they performed national dances from their own countries. They did not have many hours of Turkish language teaching in their school, but it was certainly enough to read, sing and even say some polite phrases. The whole show was very well arranged and impressive.

The other time I attended the Olympiad show it was for the extra show with the winning contestants. The competition was finished and the finalists performed one last time before they went back to their countries. For this occasion the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was invited and came with his wife. He was followed by about 50 security guards and was greeted with high jubilation from the audience when he came before he sat at the first row with his wife and other prominent people.

It had been debated a lot around the current Prime Minister in Turkey and his party, AK party (Justice and Development Party). It is a conservative party and many find it quite controversial of several reasons included their conservative politics and their religious agenda. Women in Turkey are banned from wearing headscarf's in government offices and in universities. In August 28, 2007, Çankaya Palace witnessed the wife of President Abdullah Gül, for the first time in Turkey's history a first lady wear a head scarf publicly (Güngör 2008). During a trip to Spain in 2008 the Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, commented on the head scarf issue in Turkey and claimed the political use of the headscarf was not an offence (Güngör 2008). The President's wife and the Prime Minister's wife wear their head scarf occasionally at public events and meetings, which give fear to many of the secularist in Turkey that it may affect the secular order in the country. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938) were the founder of modern Turkey and stated that the only way to modernity and democracy was through secularism (Yavuz 2003:xiii). Yavuz writes that secularism in Turkish context

exclude ethnic, religious, or regional difference and favours European modernism and Turkish nationalism (Yavuz 2003:xxii-xxiii).

The Prime Minister gave a long speech later in the show about the future of the children and the future of Turkey. All the audience applauded him eagerly and after everyone stood up and sang Turkey's national anthem. The show continued as normal after his speech and the children continued with their impressive performances. One of the contestants was a young girl who read a famous Turkish poem about a child who had just lost her/his mother. The poem reading by the girl seemed to impress the audience and people got very emotional. Most of the audience started to cry, and even the prominent guests were filmed crying. Everyone from the stiff politicians to the tough football player was crying, but one of the people maybe crying most seemed to be the Prime Minister's wife. The TV cameras were showing clips of her crying and wiping tears with a tissue. The performances created a special atmosphere in the crowds in the big stadium. People started to embrace each other, hold hands and smile to each other.



The Prime Minister holding speech at the Olympiad

7.5.1 A TRIUMPH AND A DRIVING FORCE

The Olympiad enlightened the audience about the contestants' countries and showed their traditional costumes and dance. The children had the possibility to learn about the different countries participating and became friends with many of the contestants, but Turkey was perhaps the country they learned most about. The contestants wore their own traditional costumes, but the acts were all in Turkish. It had a pride of Turkish nationalism over the whole show. The audience sang the national anthem and Turkish was the language spoken and performed. Turkey was obviously the main attraction and pride in the show, but the childrens' nationalities were also presented and viewed under the show. The political support and media coverage of the event illustrated the national interest in the Olympiad. It created enthusiasm from others non-followers who watched the show on TV or read about it in the news. It promoted the movement ideas and illustrated them out in action.

The Olympiad demonstrated how the Gülen movement go together to arrange something that works to put Fethullah Gülen's ideas out in practice. It was their approach to create a dialogue between world nations and learn from each other's cultures. The choice of Turkish language certainly illustrated the movement's nationalistic nature, and it could be questioned why they did not include other languages and acts. The Gülen schools abroad emphasize "Turkicness" and attract particularly Turkish families wanting to raise their children in a "Turkish way" (Turam 2003:188-189). Berna Turam claims the followers' goals are to make Turkish an international mean of communication¹¹. But the Olympiad illustrated the movement's ideas in practice and it symbolized how large and significant the movement actually is. Being an extravagant event, the Olympiad could be inspiring for the followers and persuading in earning new followers. The triumph around the yearly Olympiad and the media coverage it was given, illustrated the prestige of being part of a community like this. It could contribute as a motivating factor to the followers and non-followers through the picture it served of the movement's ideas in practice and how it is to be part of the movement.

¹¹ The Gülen movement's teaching of Turkish abroad can be seen further than educational, and in many ways primarily political (Turam 2003:195).

8 ANALYSIS OF RESULT OF FIELDWORK

8.1 ETHICS BEHIND THE SERVICE

There were differences between the characteristic behaviour deriving from religious ground and the writings of Gülen, and the behaviour and actions which were cultural or traditional related. The teacher's self-sacrifice, effort and philanthropy were something they often associated and related to Gülen's writings and Islamic ethics. The regular reading meetings and the teachers' strong dedication to gain knowledge was behaviour aroused by Gülen and their interpretation of the Qur'an. The movement's major influence from *hizmet* constituted the demanding work performed by the followers as a holy duty, but it could also be perceived in connection with the Turkish cultural aspects in helping others. The teachers often related their good morals and goodwill to Islamic values. They could for example say that they gave to the poor and dedicate their time in helping other because that was what Prophet Mohammad did, and that they spend their time on important things as reading and not on aesthetics or luxury which was a true Muslim behaviour. For Gülen, charity is a Turkish value and a basis for tolerance. He links tolerant Islam as grounds for the Ottoman Empire managing to govern people living in three different continents (Agai 2003:64).

The strong dedication and determination to give by the followers can be seen in connection with characteristics deriving from both Turkish culture and Islam. Generosity is something that is familiar within the Turkish society, which is known for its warm hospitality and generosity. Helen Rose Ebaugh (2010) points to the Turkish-Islamic culture of giving, which she asserts has a great influence on the serving aspect of the movement. Self-sacrifice, charity and philanthropy which the movements promotes, is also a feature of Turkish-Islamic culture. Several Turkish practices are related to the values of giving and showing hospitality. The Turkish culture of giving is in addition influenced from Islamic ethics on giving; therefore "Turkish-Islamic" culture is a usable term in this context. Ebaugh consider these Turkish practices of giving as; *sadaka*, *zekat*, *kurba*, *ahilik*, *bereket*, *komsuluk* and *karz-I hasen* (Ebaugh 2010:66-69).

The first factor she point out is the practice of *Sadaka*. *Sadaka* is charitable acts given others in need or people such as neighbours and relatives. People can offer anything from money to books as *sadaka* and the recipients do not have to be Muslims. As hadits suggest, giving a smile to a fellow Muslim can as well be considered a *sadaka*, but *Sadaka* involving self-sacrifice is supposed to be of certain importance. *Sadaka* is a widespread Turkish practice

and was commonly used in the Ottoman times. In the Ottoman times it was given more anonymously and to save the ones in need for embarrassment or sacrificing honor, and it was believed to reward the giver in life after death (Ebaugh 2010:70). Today *sadaka* is still a common practice in Turkey regardless if the giver is religious or not.

The second factor is the practice of *Zekat* in Turkey. Giving *zekat* is a religious duty for people who are not poor. The *zekat* is believed to contribute to harmony in the society and solve social problems. *Zekat* is an institutionalized obligatory payment of 4/40th of one's total wealth each year to the poor (Ebaugh 2010:72).

Kurban, the third factor, is given under *Eid-ul Adha* or "Feast of the Sacrifice" where Muslims sacrifice a lam or cheep. The sacrificed meet is given to the poor and the remainder is cooked as a dinner for family and friends. The Qur'anic and Prophetic traditions emphasize to divide the sacrificed meat into three shares; one for the poor, one for relatives and neighbours and the last for themselves, while many donate away everything. The sacrificing of food mirror the giving and charity traditions embedded in the religious-cultural traditions. (Ebaugh 2010:74)

Ahi organizations (*Ahilik*) were professional groupings which under the foundation of the Ottoman Empire undertook roles as defending the cities and towns against Mongol invasion. They considered themselves as responsible people with moral and spiritual dimensions responsible for the welfare of the community (Ebaugh 2010:77).

Bereket (abundance) is a commonly used word in Turkish, often used after completing a business transaction or something is completed without expectations of worldly rewards. The word is also used when Turkish people are talking about life, time, and food or to when they wish to express consideration for something. Without being particularly religious the saying "May Allah make it abundant" ("Allah bereket versin") is commonly used after a deal or transaction to wish it good luck. The Prophet Abraham is a representation of generosity and hospitality and after a meal in someone's home it is common to say "Let this table be like the table of Abraham!" (Ebaugh 2010:78-79).

Komsuluk means neighbours/neighbourliness. The importance of having good relations with the neighbours is an old tradition in Turkish-Islamic culture. The Turkish hospitality is reflected through their well-known tea and coffee invitations, where guests are invited to drink tea and unwind. It is also common to invite neighbours for dinners or regularly tea drinking, especially on the country side and in villages. Prophet Muhammad emphasized the importance of neighbourliness; the neighbours (*komsuluk*) should be respected and

maintained a good relationship with (Ebaugh 2010:79). Most Turks find a high value in a neighbourly relationship therefore they make an effort to keep a good relationship.

In the Turkish, and many Muslim societies, it is considered as a good deed to give *karzi-i-hasen* to help out someone. *Karz-i-hasen* indicates a good loan for someone without expecting rewards. Verses from the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions praise *Karz-i-hasen* and give forgiveness from God. It is common by Turkish people to lend from their relatives, friends or close neighbours instead of taking a loan from a bank or creditors. The loan is believed to strengthen social harmony and it is presumed to give worldly profits for the receiver and rewards by God for the loaner (Ebaugh 2010:80).

The Turkish-Islamic practices illustrate the broad aspect behind the acts of giving within the Gülen movement. The motivations behind the followers to dedicate themselves or their businesses toward good deeds were emphasizes on values and ideas already embedded in the Turkish culture which they were brought up in. Within the Gülen movement the followers were given possibilities which enabled them to express this generosity rooted in Turkish-Islamic culture and transferred in Gülen writings.

8.1.1 ISLAMIC ETHICS IN HUMAN GOVERNING

A modern Muslim for Gülen is one who is united with Islam and universal education. Bekim Agai calls Gülen's new meaning on education the development of an Islamic ethics on education (Agai 2003:51). For the Gülen followers one should contain a balance of ethical values deriving from Islam and education based on worldly knowledge and science (Agai 2003:51). Geertz' attitude towards religious beliefs as something essentially functioning to provide meaning and explanation to things how they are and ought to be, seemed to be similar with the view of the followers I had met. Faith is the leading way to right and wrong in life, and the teachers let their faith lead them. Faith teaches humans the right pathway to a perfect way of living, and between good and wrong in life. The ethics and moral values of Islam were the lighting rod to inspire the teachers to live correctly, and in combination with education of science humans would be more beneficial for the society.

The education of the Islamic and secular knowledge was performed and exemplified by the teachers as an assigned duty which is correlating with Weber's term "worldly asceticism." (Weber 2006: 361). The holy duty in the Gülen movement is *hizmet* which can be described as the person of inner-worldly asceticism. In the Gülen movement, knowledge itself becomes an Islamic value when it is exemplified through the teachers on how to live as a true

Muslim (Agai 2003:62). The moral guidance at the school was transferred through the acts of the teachers who were role models for the students. Teachers told me the students respected the teachers even more than their own parents despite the teachers were never strict or aggressive as I noticed.

Gülen perceives morals as spiritual principles that govern human conduct. It is only spiritual persons that can conduct and act from these principles, in his opinion (Gülen 2006:27). Gülen assert that; “A true Muslim is one who practices a truly universal, and therefore Muslim, morality. Anyone can see that the Qur’an and Sunna are a set of moral principles.” (Gülen 2000:107). The narratives used in the moral meetings acted as constructions, interpretations and reinterpretations of the past suited for the present. The morality taught was perceived as Muslim morals.

Oddbjørn Leirvik (2002) points to Fredrick S. Carney writings about Islamic ethic. Carney divides the moral philosophical typologies into *duty ethics*, *virtue ethics* and *value ethics*.

Duty ethics in Islam is systemized in the Islamic law, while virtue ethics has been created in the mysticism and the philosophic ethic. Islamic value ethics gaze behind the concrete rules and focus on the life values that the duty ethics or virtue ethics is meant to rise. Carney is claiming that the virtue orientated value ethics finds its highest expression in the notion that the human is suppose to copy the divine qualities which are expressed in the 99 most beautiful names of God. The praying some of the teachers did throughout the day with the count watches were in hope to achieve some of these qualities expressed in the most beautiful names of God. The prayers included also praying for others, which is emphasizes within the ethics of the movement.

The virtue ethics create ideals for personal making and the fulfilled society. It is psychological related to feeling of shame. The virtue ethics in the movement is created in the follower’s depiction of the “perfect human” and the “perfect balance”. The perfect human is the altruistic person that commits himself to God and the service of God, *hizmet*. The perfect balance is to entail spiritual and scientific knowledge. A person who fulfills these criteria will help fulfill the society. In the Gülen schools the teachers perform *hizmet* and the students learn spiritual and scientific knowledge. The teachers who are performing *hizmet* are under high expectations, and doing something wrong or a misdeed will for many lead to shame or dissatisfaction of themselves.

The value ethics Carney describe is regarding the highest goals in life. The value ethics can in psychological perspective lead to regret over disrespecting the highest values and prior wrong in their life. The value ethics in the Gülen movement is highly cherished and idealised. The highest goals in life are reaffirmed in Gülen's books and writings which are transferred through the follower's actions and meaning. Serving others good through altruistic behaviour and performing *hizmet*, is seen as some of the major value factors within the movement. I did not sense that the people in the movement focused on regrets earlier in life, but they focused rather on the future and what changes they could complete next. As stated by the author in the Tuesday's meeting, one learns from one's past, but it is not the past that matter- what is important is the future. The constant focus on the high values and the depiction of the perfect human influenced the followers to do good deeds. As a teacher one was surrounded with others holding the same view and their extensive job made little room for disrespect of the values or wrong priorities.

The movement has a universalistic approach, but it is also rooted in Islamic ethics. These Islamic ethics influenced the establishment of moods and motivations needed to reach the collective goals and ideas of the movement. The movement acted as a gathering organization where events and experiences were made meaningful into the community's system of meaning. The cognitive aspect of religion shapes the worldview of the followers and serves as a basis for action (McGuire 2002). Explanations of events are given a religious meaning and action is motivated into religious aims. In example with the Tuesday meetings the discussions and themes were ascribed religious meaning and explanation. The author served the teachers meaningful explanations of their questions and recommended guidelines for future action.

8.2 A COMMUNITY OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

The movement's rapid spread and accessible philosophy contributed to get people who had chosen themselves to be a follower instead gaining "members" through membership requiring. The followers controlled the degree on how much they wanted to be involved in the movement and the activities from what they felt themselves. For the followers who followed Gülen by reading his books and agreeing on his philosophy had more space and choice to decide what they would use their time on and how much time they would dedicate towards the movement. The collective identity is not as essential for them as for the followers who chose to get intensely involved in the movement activities. In the aspect of the teachers there

was additional obligations attached to being a follower of the movement. This is something they were aware of from before and something they were dedicated to do. The social gatherings and the meetings for the teachers were features making them closer to the movement and as a social community. The followers not working for the movement, but who read the books and follow the ideals of Gülen's writings would still call themselves followers, but the followers who worked for the movement were closer to the movement in the way they were participating and influenced by the regular gatherings. The regular gatherings translated the movement's meaning system and increased the community feeling through the bonding between the teachers.

8.2.1 THE TUESDAY MEETINGS AS A KEY FACTOR IN THE COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

The Tuesday meetings created and rooted more than a few effects in the teachers and their connection with the movement. I assert the Tuesday meetings created 1) a collective experience, which 2) reaffirmed belief through the choice of answers, and 3) made the teachers closer as community.

Collective experience. The meeting could be seen as a ritual in the way they performed the same meeting regularly every Tuesday, the way they prayed together, the reading from the Qur'an and the social discussion related to daily issues at every meeting. The function of a ritual is known to reaffirm and strengthen the unity of a group and works as an identifier of the group's meaning system and its goals. By participating in the rituals and asking questions together as a group, the meeting served a collective experience for the teachers. Through the ritual action "the group collectively remembers its shared meanings and revitalizes its consciousness of itself" (McGuire 2002:17). The ritual creates the sense of belonging stronger to a group through its collective experiences. The Tuesday meetings acted as a collective binder through its ritual aspect, but also through the collective sharing and problem solving. The meeting acted as a collective gatherer and created harmony between the individual, social group and environment. The individuals aired their issues or problems out to the group, later on the group searched a solution to the problem together, and the solution would fit in with their view of the environment. They framed their reality around the same interests and gathered collectively a mutual meaning to their interest. The women author assembled meaning into the teachers' interests which contributed to the teacher's collective experience of the world.

Reaffirmed beliefs. The purpose of the meetings seemed to be to evoke, maintain and reaffirm the movement's principles, which parallels Durkheim view on the purpose of rites (Durkheim 2002:38). Having Tuesday's meetings once a week made it achievable to spread out the philosophy the movement beliefs and for the teachers to make use of their beliefs in daily situation. The Tuesday meetings were reproducing the movement's identity through the collective problem sharing and the author's answers. The teachers asked questions and brought up themes in relation with the teachers interest and the women author served answers which mirrored the movement's beliefs. The movement's meaning system was translated through the group discussions on the issues found interesting. Practical questions such as what to do with body hair, make-up, or with disrespectful parents were reaffirmed and connected up to a new context different from what they perhaps had read before. The answers given enlightened the movement's beliefs and reaffirmed them once again for the teachers. By reaffirming the group's beliefs and linking it to the teachers interests made it possible for the teachers to make out and use their beliefs in contexts of practice and everyday life. The meeting reaffirmed correct behaviour through the movement's philosophy and guided the teacher's in the true way.

Closer community. The meetings functioned to strengthen and improve the collective identity of the group. Sharing of mutual and personal thoughts while being guided collective in the right direction creates group identity and a closer community feeling. The collective feeling raise the community identity in the way they feel connected with each other and view each other in the same way. In the meeting the themes discussed were in relation with the group's interest and the answers given were applicable for the whole group. The collective identity also serves to the collective action of the group by focusing and strengthening the collective drive towards their goals. The goals for the Gülen movement are to make the world a more tolerant and peaceful place containing of people with good morals. The movement agrees the goal will be reached through education and dialogue. Agreeing on the same issues and system of values produces a sense of common identity with each other, and make the teachers closer as a community.

The Tuesday meetings acted as both explanatory and normative. They gave the teachers an explanation to why things ought to be the way they were, and prescribed how things were supposed to be. The meeting was there to air problems or questions to the rest of the group in order to make sense of these thoughts. The group searched collective answers and directions with help from the author serving them religious directions from the Qur'an.

Fethullah Gülen's philosophy and ideas are not his own, but they are derived and created from the Qur'an. The movement's meaning system is therefore not based on Gülen's ideas, but ideas he has enlightened from the Qur'an. The way Gülen has put these ideas together and his vision on how to make them work in the world today is what attracts the followers. The meaning system of the movement worked as a describer and manual on how things were and how they ought to be from the discussions brought up in the Tuesday's meetings. The meetings came to illustrate the meaning system of the group accordingly through the answers and directions which were given in the meetings. Through the meeting there was assigned meaning to the discussion of mutual interest and beliefs, while at the same time instituting moral norms on expected behaviour. Norms and values were discussed and constructed the appropriate and correct behaviour to be acted out by the teachers. The meeting legitimated behaviour through justifying actions and exemplifying appropriate future behaviour which made clear the social order of the movement. Through historical legends and stories about sacred persons certain acts were justified and exemplified. They evaluated past actions and embodied norms and values in the meaning system which acted as motivating for future action.

8.2.2 SHARED MEANING AND AN EXPERIENCE OF UNITY

Community is a well discussed term in contemporary anthropology. Communities are no longer studied in isolation or as bounded units. Cohen (1985) perceives communities to be symbolically constructed as a system of values, norms, and moral codes which produce a feeling of similarity between its members. The similarity feeling between the Gülen followers were produced from their shared meanings. Shared meanings were (re)produced within the social gatherings and between the followers. The shared meanings directed the teachers to merge into the movement through the embedded collective identity and the collective representations that were essential for Gülen. The collective representations within the movement led to community involvement and an experience of unity between the teachers. I perceive the collective representations as constructed on shared meaning which create an experience of unity. I wish to illustrate that through the theory that; 1) shared meaning which provide 2) shared reality, produce 3) participation which 4) reduce the boundaries between participants and 5) create an experience of unity. (See Douglas 1966, Turner 1969).

1) Shared meaning.

Cohen (1985) claims that communities are best approached as 'communities of meaning'.

The movement's ethos and worldview are what constitute the meaning of the movement. The movement's ideas and ethics gather the followers in sharing the same meanings and attitudes. The shared meaning is the set of notions the followers contain and communicate between each other.

Meaning is messages that are communicated between each people, and therefore the meaning is not fully explicable for a stranger. To understand the meaning of a symbol, one cannot try to translate the meaning isolated from its environment. Mary Douglas (1999) stress the importance of having a holistic approach to gain an understanding of meaning as; "meaning is part of a constructed world" (Douglas 1999:vii). Beliefs are given a constructed meaning by the believers and therefore the meaning is only understandable in relation with the believer's worldview. For the Gülen followers meaning was constructed from the movement's worldview.

The movement contain a worldview that scales everything up to cause and effect, effort and gain. Gülen writes; "The Qur'an warns people that what they have experienced and what they will enjoy or suffer of good or evil is a result of their own behaviour, actions, and deeds."(Gülen 2005:16). The teachers were strongly influenced by the vision that the results of their actions would benefit them in the afterlife. When I asked them the reason why they dedicated most of their time in helping others and on the movements programs, they several times answered because it is what a good Muslim does and that it will benefit in Paradise. Through Geertz view on religion, religion not only interprets reality but also shapes it, which is a major reality with the Gülen movement.

For the Gülen followers I met, they were attracted by the universal values and the movement's work for a worldly dialogue, tolerance and education. Since I was in Turkey, it was a not a coincidence that the followers I met was Muslims. However, the views and meanings that they implied in being a Muslim varied between them. In the approach I took I did not try to conceptualize Islam or Muslim behaviour. In accord with Talad Asad, I believe that "A Muslim's beliefs about the beliefs and practices of others are his own beliefs. And like all such beliefs, they animate and are sustained by his social relations with others."(Asad 1996:382). There are significant differences in the beliefs and practices of Muslims and so as for the Gülen followers. Asad criticize Geertz for not taking in the varying social conditions for the production of knowledge. The production of knowledge within the Gülen movement has taken place on various levels and under a range of circumstances. Still the followers agreed, in varying degrees, in the vision promoted by Gülen and they shared meanings by

holding the values and beliefs of the movement. The follower's subjectively reality and meanings developed into collective meaning after they "joined" the movement where the meaning was collectively expressed.

Malinowsky agreed with Durkheim that religion provides a basis of moral cohesion to the social group (McGuire 2002:198).

Durkheim described religion as a system of shared meaning by which individuals represent to themselves their society and their relations to that society. Thus, religious meanings are metaphorical representations of the social group, and participation in religious ritual is experience of the transcendent force of society itself. (McGuire 2002:198)

As a global movement and a range of followers with different background there is to be expected a commonplace distinction in the Gülen follower's beliefs and interpretations. The difference between being a follower of the movement and being a non-follower, who share similar beliefs, is that the followers of the movement follow a person who distributes the "knowledge" to them. The distribution of knowledge contributes to the collective understanding of the knowledge. As a "Guru", in Barth's description, Gülen have managed to connect the followers and create a collective identity through the knowledge he distribute. For the teachers dedicating themselves entirely in the movement's activities and practicing self sacrifice, their subjective reality got weakened and the collective identity stronger in the way they put the movement's goals in front of themselves. Their shared meanings promoted by Gülen gathered the teachers in to collective representations through the shared rituals and activities which were coordinated by the movement. The activities and participation linked them to the larger social group, and strengthened the collective community. Gülen distributes the knowledge in ways that acted to unite his audience and construct shared meaning.

The ethos tuned the follower's moods and motivations towards the movement's principles. The worldview created images and envisions which inspired the collective action within the movement through its construction of moods and motivations. The worldview was based on humanistic universal values which included making a peaceful world, creating interfaith dialogue, and tolerance. The worldview provided a framework which inspired the followers to increase moods and motivations. The holistic education model in the Gülen schools and the teacher's hard work were inspired by the movement's ethos. Moods and motivations were resulting from the movement's ethos and worldview which created hard work activism by the teachers. The ethos within the movement was reflected through the

followers set of moods and motivations which was individual ones and grew to become collective ones through *hizmet* and the collective identity.

The movement's use of *hizmet* has close linkage with Max Weber's worldly asceticism and influences the movement's ethos. Max Weber claims that religious world view produces a rational view on the world, from which follows rational behaviour. Historically the different religious orientations to the world on the outside lead to different types of rational development in knowledge, science and art. In Weber's definition, orientation a society takes towards the outer world always derives from its religious world view. He claims people's rational behaviour is a result from a religious worldview they hold which creates sense in their view on the world (Morrison 2006:282). The Gülen teachers considered being a teacher as a holy work and in relation with teaching which was ascribed to the Prophet Mohammad himself. The teachers perceive their work comparable to the Protestant ethic described by Weber. The teachers are learning and educating as well as doing good deeds, which can be seen as a form of "piety through work".

Geertz (1973) asserts religious symbols produce worldview and ethos which influence people's quality of life and ideas of order. The religious symbols construct symbolic structures that work as a model of "reality" and a model for "reality" (Geertz 1973:90). For the teachers their worldview seemed to be created on their Islamic beliefs and the ideas promoted by Fethullah Gülen. Their worldview sought many times to be specific and deriving from their religious beliefs which were constructing their model of reality. Their "use" of religion was to gain and create their "correct" way of living and to provide meaning in their lives. In making the right choice or making the right decision they would turn to religious sources for guidelines. Much of the universalistic attitudes and world views were related up to religious meaning and existence. Not everything had specific religious background or meaning, but it was anyhow presented in a religious relation or meaning. Geertz write;

For what else do we mean by saying that a particular mood of awe is religious and not secular, except that it springs from entertaining a conception of all-pervading vitality like mana and not from a visit to the Great Canyon? Or that a particular case of asceticism is an example of a religious motivation, except that it is directed toward the achievement of an unconditioned end like nirvana and not a condition like weight-reduction? (Geertz 1973:98)

For the followers it was a way of making sense of their surroundings into surroundings with meaning. Mary Douglas claims the religious believer is using a theology for unknown and vague areas which make his own faith secure in a puzzled setting (Douglas 1999:xv)

Religious worldview and system of meaning

The goals of the movement became their own personal goals, and developed further into the collective identity of the group. The constant commitment and involvement from the teachers blended the goals of the movement in with their own worldview and ethos. The system of meaning which is inscribed within the movement contributes to make sense of one's identity and social being. Being a follower of the Gülen movement was apparent in the teacher's attitudes and beliefs which endorsed their ethos and world view.

The followers emphasized subjective meaning, but the movement's arrangements and holistic education circle created, as well, an advanced community of mutual meaning. Not all the teachers took the groups meanings for granted, but the movements work towards an enhanced world was something, all my informants agreed upon. The dedication and commitment in the movement philosophy varied between the followers, and not everyone adapted to Gülen's writings in the same way. Some of my informants were much stronger influenced by the movement's meaning system in their notions and way of living than some other informants. The teachers earlier perspective on life and behaviour still followed them after they joined the movement, but in various degrees. There was not a generalized behaviour of the teachers, but there were a lot of similarities. This varied in many aspects from the teachers' behaviour till their selection of clothing. The variation between the teachers was also visible in for example the women teachers who veiled or not, the ones who frequently talked about Islam, the ones that bought expensive designer bags till the ones that rejected most aesthetical things.

The extracurricular activities in the moral meetings made the home environment interfere and get involved in the students' life. The teachers' monitoring of the students in their private sphere made them capable to almost have complete control over the students' life. The large involvement from the teachers and the parents did not concern the student's own choice of pathways or interests. Even if the teachers motivated the children to follow their talents, those motivations were only prescribed when it was within the teachers margins. Telling the students what films and TV programs they should not watch made the students steer towards the teacher's desires and not their own natural senses. The teachers had a vital part in shaping the identity of the students, and the shape they took was the collective identity which Fethullah Gülen promotes. However, the significant influence the students get is something they could have achieved from parents, friends, TV, hobbies and so on. Many of the followers had themselves chosen to be influenced by their teachers, which they perceived

as positive influences in times when they were striving between different standards of living and directions in life. The values and moral aspect of the movement was something that made them tempted to take part of the Gülen community.

2) Shared reality.

Geertz, believing with Max Weber, that “man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun” (Geertz 1973:5) is an essential line in the interpretation of the shared meaning and how meaning can provide shared reality between humans.

The shared meanings and set of notions interpret in the followers’ contracted them in a state of mind which provided a shared reality. Being gathered most of the time and being deeply involved in the movement’s activities and social gatherings influenced their reality to be more shared. The teachers’ social gathering at each other’s homes and the extracurricular activities as a teacher was something they all took part in. The involvement and ascetic lifestyle from the Gülen teachers made them share a reality which was unique from any other teachers. The shared reality between the followers, could be linked to Durkheim’s statement on religion as a social thing; “Religious representations are collective representations that express collective realities.” (Durkheim 2002:38). Gülen has, as stated earlier, managed to create collective identities enclosing collective meanings.

Radcliffe-Brown claims social relations are observable and described in patterns of reciprocal behaviour. These patterns exist with the group’s verbal recognition or in their observance in behaviour such as rules of etiquette, of morals and of law (Radcliffe-Brown 2006:126). The teachers’ behaviour and actions were purposive from their respective interest which confirmed a pattern of behaviour. Through the social relations within the movement and the meetings, the pattern of behaviour illustrated how the social structure in the movement worked in general. The morals and rules were illustrated from the patterns of the teacher’s behaviour and acts, and the social relations were illustrated in the patterns of the reciprocal behaviour between the teachers. The Tuesday’s meetings enhanced the shared meaning of the group and continued to keep up on the existence and importance of the group community. Being part of a group or community is a constant reminder to the people of their collective belief and norms. The moral meetings and the teacher’s meetings at the school acted as a constructor and supporter of the movement’s philosophy. The collective realities were produced and represented collectively both at school and outside of school.

The commitment and the support to the movement were based on religious virtuosi by the followers. Many of the teachers were striving for religious perfection through every act

they performed. The norms of perfection they followed were based on the Qur'an and the writings of Fethullah Gülen. Their moral ideals and their ascetic lives were the pathway leading them there. Surrounding themselves with people who pursued religious virtuosi made it easier to reach the religious virtuosi together. The self-consciousness of the whole group was reflected through their self-sacrifice and the bond they had between each other. Gülen's quest for a collective identity was met through the activities and the events arranged by the movement which contributed to the self-consciousness of the whole group. All the time and effort the teachers devoted to the movement made it almost impossible for them to focus on themselves. The only focus, many of them exercised on themselves was self-criticism and ascetic living.

According to Durkheim the human personality in itself is not the focus in traditional religious groups, but the reflection of the self-consciousness of the whole group (Durkheim 2002). By inspiring each other and preventing each other from falling into temptations became ones collective responsibility as being part of the group. The teachers told me they chose to teach at a Gülen school because there they were surrounded with others having the same view as them. They would be inspired by each other to reach higher and to do the right things. Searching religious perfection depends on strong determination and willpower. Being in contact and surroundings where these norms are not practiced can easily weaken or distract the person from the religious virtuosi they pursued. Being united and regularly expressing their worldviews collectively, shaped their daily lives and state of mind to be more collectively shared.

3) Participation.

A shared reality requires participation. The participation by the followers was influenced by the moods and motivations which had collectively and individually inspired them. The teacher's moods and motivations for being Gülen followers varied between them, but their reasons they mutually agreed upon was their wish for a better world through shared values and searched religious virtuosi. Their mutual beliefs were the major tie that bonded them as a community. McGuire divides between substantive and functional definitions of religion. The substantive definitions define what religion is, while the functional definitions focus on what religion does for the individual and social group. Melford Spiro defines religion as an institution consisting of socially shared patterns of behaviour and belief (McGuire 2002:9-11). I will not go specific into defining religion, but looking at the Gülen movement, I can see the

connection with Spiro's definition of religion. Through my time with Gülen followers I got to witness their functional aspect of religion. Geertz assert that;

Religion is (1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (Geertz 1979:79)

I recognized Geertz definition on religion in relation with many of the Gülen follower's reasons for being part of the movement. Furthermore, I see Geertz definition of religion comparable with the function and meaning religion seemed to serve for the Gülen followers. The teacher's ability to endure their hard work, despite being tired, was clearly visible through their attitudes. They connected their religious beliefs with religious explanations to make up their worldview and serve them energy to strive for their beliefs. As Geertz states, their motivations were made meaningful with reference to the ending result while the moods were made meaningful with reference to the conditions the ending result would give (Geertz 1979:79).

Hizmet represented as a religious duty contributed the followers to participate and fulfil their "duty" within the community. *Hizmet* used within the movement is comparable with Max Weber's "worldly asceticism". Those who perform their holy duty can be described in Weberian terms as person of "inner-worldly asceticism", that sees his/her position given from God. Worldly asceticism does not refer to people who withdraw them from the world, but it refers to people who choose to live an ascetic life within a normal society. Being a follower of the Gülen movement they perform holy work, *hizmet*, in their job by giving themselves fully to the work they perform. Working as a teacher is one of the top jobs they can have in serving themselves to God. As a teacher they help others to gain knowledge and educate the future of the world.

Many reasons can be said to be behind the acts of altruism in humans. The act of love is filled with different motives, and also some negative ones. Stephen G. Post (2002) suggests these motives can include factors such as:

need for reciprocal love and affection, need to be accepted by others or by God, need to belong, guilt, fear, seeing the other as an extension or reflection of oneself (ego), pleasure in looking well in the eyes of others, control of the other through their indebtedness, desire to reinforce positive image of self and feelings of superiority, desire to avoid confrontation. (Post 2002:74)

Altruistic love is closely connected up to action. The teachers expressed their altruistic love through almost every action they performed. Their altruistic thinking and behaviour were expressed in a natural way by them, and it did not really seem to be a question of doing anything else. Even if they were tired or could have spent their free time on themselves or family, they still chose to help the other students.

Altruistic love implies action based on benevolence, care, and compassion for others. Giving love through action is showing care towards others and care is love that is meant for others in need (Post 2002:4). Love and care implement each other, and both of them imply action. Caring for and loving the people close to you is what most people do, but in altruistic love the care and love is to everyone. The teachers stated they behaved the same to the students as they would have done to their own children. They compared the students with their own children, and would always show care to each student. Even if they were tired or upset about the student's behaviour, they would never let their anger or frustration go out on them. The children run around loudly in the corridors which sometimes could be quite stressful, but I never saw a teacher tell the students to stop. Asking about this to a teacher, she told me they let the children play around like this. She would never put these kinds of reins on her own children because they needed to grow and expand in this age, so was the same for the students at school. Having this altruistic love, the teachers did not let their own frustrations or problems show, they would always put others in front of themselves.

For Fethullah Gülen, it is a religious duty to perform the holy work *hizmet* in a best possible way and to devote it to God. To get money for that work is only wrong if it is used on luxury (Agai 2003:61). The strong support and work ethic performed by Gülen members is mainly influenced by the way they perceive their work as a holy duty. Their work is given to them from God but also devoted from them to God. Max Weber explains the hard work of Protestant asceticism as based on the calling (Berufsarbeit) from God. Doing "good work" made asceticism a sign of God's blessing and "the religious valuation of restless, continuous, systematic work in worldly calling, as the highest means to asceticism, and at the same time the surest and most evident proof of rebirth and genuine faith." (Weber 2006:362).

Weber claims asceticism dominated inner worldly morality and had a tremendous impact on the modern economic order. The outcome of asceticism in the Gülen movement has similar effects on the inner worldly morality by the followers and the economic order pursued by the movement. The work morality by the teachers was to perform their job given by God

as good as possible to be an excellent teacher and a person of example. The work being a religious duty built a strong inner power that drove them through hard and long days. Fulfilling their work as a religious duty would be rewarded by God and in their afterlife. This made all the extra hours at the school meaningful and manageable, the teachers told me. Economic or material pursuit was reprehensible and therefore not of importance by the teachers, rather was their hard work influenced by the pursuit Godly rewards.

4) Reducing the boundaries between the participants.

Communities have traditionally been viewed as having gathering functions. They have been used to mark similarity as well as dissimilarity, within and outside borders (Cohen 1985:12-13, Howell 2002:86) Cohen (1985) does not intend to study communities in context with ethnicity or localism, but instead he argues the importance of studying how communities are symbolically constructed where values, norms and moral codes provides a sense of identity within the group and the members. Signe Howell (2002) writes that; “What has become clear in recent years (...), is that place, or location need not to be an integral part of sense of community.”(Howell 2002:86-87). The commonality people chose to ascribe is not dependent on place or location which the Gülen community illustrates with their global success. Cohen claims communities imply both similarity and difference. A community exists of inclusion and exclusion by the members, and by their interpretative picture of the community. Social relations, identities and values are created and made desirable for the members within the community through ceremonies and the community’s ideas.

As mentioned, the collective participation contributed to bond the followers and creating a unity between them. By participating and being gathered together the boundaries reduced between the followers in the way they developed into a gathered organ working for their (the movement’s) beliefs. By being gathered together as living organs made them see each other as a community with same meaning and experience the same reality. Sharing same meaning and reality, the boundaries within the group lowered and the external boundaries were enlarged. Barth claims that the differences between the members in a group do not make any differences for the group boundaries. The dissimilarities within the group are not the definer, but instead it is their common alliance to the shared culture with the ones outside the group. I am not suggesting the Gülen movement is a closed group categorized from the society, but the shared reality and participation is defining the follower’s sense of being a distinguished group. Barth writes that if a group is categorizing themselves as A’s and not as B’s, they are willing to be interpreted and judged as A’s and not as B’s (Barth 1969:15). Then

they have ascribed notions and acts which they share together as a group and boundaries are therefore reduced within the group. The Gülen follower's attribution of values and behaviour as typically Islamic or Gülen inspired shows them ascribe this as already belonging to the group.

Cohen (1985) in relation with Barth (1969) is interested in showing that communities exist largely in terms of their symbolic boundaries. Cohen argue communities need boundaries to be meaningful spheres and distinguishable from others. The community marks that the members have something in common. It does not have to be everything they have in common, but the meaning for being a part of the community is what bonds the members together. The symbolic concepts have itself a gathering function. The symbolic concepts can have a variety of meaning and Cohen implies that some can be so unclear that the members do not necessarily agree upon the meaning of a symbolic concept. The members can share the symbols, but not necessarily the same meanings for the symbols (Cohen 1985:15).

Expressing meaning (Symbols)

There are many ways to express meaning, and the expression of meaning in a community is a particularly important mean for the existence of the community feeling. In Anne Krogstad's (1986) study on punks in Oslo and their use of symbols, she separates between two types of symbols. She argues there are declarative and regulatory aspects which separates symbol use by humans. The declarative aspects are expressed through symbols including dress, hairstyle and makeup use. The regulatory aspects are expressed through symbols referring to the group's perceived behaviour which deals with norms and rules about for example food, gender, and alcohol. Krogstad claims that most symbols have a declarative and regulatory potential to organize behaviour.

In the Gülen schools the declarative and regulatory use of symbols, such as in clothing and notion of behaviour, was influencing and acting to establish and preserve certain behaviour and norms within and outside school. The teacher's symbol use served the school an aura of spiritual commitment and participation without teaching or preaching about it directly to the children. The small symbolic gestures, acts and objects performed in the school could be anything from small details till more obvious symbol performances. I call it performance because I saw it as a chosen act which translate or sends out a specific meaning. This translation of meaning is a symbolic act because the sender and receiver are aware of the meaning behind the act. Carrying out these acts was possible at a Gülen school where the receiver was aware of the meaning. The teachers acted in relation and influenced each other

which made the symbols and customs not a stranger. Everything from the gender segregation between the teachers till the carrying of praying counting clocks are symbols which acts to serve a religious meaning. This is something the teachers were aware of, and contributed to the religious aura within the school. Symbols such as *hizmet* created a sense of commitment to the common goals of the movement and a sense of unity between those who performed it. Through the shared symbols, meaning was transferred and contributed to the follower's belief of sharing the same sense of the world.

5) Producing an experience of unity.

Through shared meanings, shared reality and participation together with the other followers built a bond of unity within the community. The shared symbols together with the social gatherings and meetings for the teachers made them experience collectively which attracted ties and beliefs between them. McGuire sees religious groups as essentially “communities of memory” (McGuire 2002:20). Collective memories in a group are important in the continuity of the collective sense of their group identity. Experiencing and acting together as a group made the followers closer and stronger as a community through their mutual beliefs. Being on the same level as the others in the community and acting as a gathered group produced an experience of unity between them.

For Durkheim collective representations were mental representations and something collective experienced (Durkheim 1965). The collective representations were gained through shared experiences between the teachers which gathered them closer and also made them feel as a part of that group. Through the collective meetings and experiences the individuals in the group gain and reaffirm shared meanings within the group. This was very clear at the Tuesday's meetings for the teachers where they had a collective agreement on questions they wondered about. Throughout the meeting the group collective meaning got expressed by the answers given and the social representation of the group was reaffirmed through their collective agreement and togetherness as a group. Not only reading about the representations and meanings of the movement, but also collective experience it with the group helped expressing the social unity of the group. To read about the meaning system of the movement expressed the group unity, while sharing experiences together produced that unity. In the school the social unity were produced through the activities and meetings which were organized for the teachers and the students. These gatherings contributed to the social unity feeling, and also to express the movement's world view. Being involved in the movement's activities with people who shared the same beliefs made the teachers feel gathered about their

goals and beliefs. Together as a community they benefitted from the others and did not get the feeling of being alone with their beliefs. They sustained their motivations and convictions about their beliefs through their constant involvement, which had an inspiring affect for other interested.

The meaning of being part of a community is not about what it means for the outsider, but it is about what it means for the members. My interest was in how the followers constructed symbolic community between each other and how that provided meaning and identity for them. A member of a community feels more similar with people in its own community, than with another community. Members may recognize differences among themselves and others in the community, but not more than in comparison with members of other communities. The movement's ideas and philosophy is based on Islamic and universal principles which does not make one in need to be in a community to express or follow. Being part of a community means there are room for differences between individuals, but with major similarities at the same time.

Cohen (Cohen 1985) draw similarity with Barth (1969) in the way he distinguishes the identity of a community as created in relation with boundaries of other communities. Cohen suggest looking at the boundaries between 'us' and 'them' constructed by the symbols of group identity as a way of examining the nature of community, with reference to Barth's concept of ethnic boundaries, Cohen asserts that the group boundaries constructed by the symbols of group identity between the members and non-members is vital in examining the nature of community. I find their perspective on communities essential in the interpretation of the follower's choice to be in the Gülen community and their sense of unity among other followers. It is also nurturing in the perception of the grounds for the movement's popularity. Communities are created of social processes, and hold symbols, values and ideologies meaningful for the members. Participation in the movement's rituals and activities appeared to reduce the sense of boundaries between them, producing an experience of unity. The followers were in a large scale diverse; however they still managed to draw similarities between them. This being done through their mutual belief in the movement's interest in moral codes, norms and their system of values embedded within the movement.

9 CONCLUDING REMARKS

With an interpretive approach I have been interested in the meaning the followers attach to being a part of the Gülen movement and the reasons that had driven them to become followers. I have seen how they deal with the meaning, and how they interpret the meaning in their everyday life activities and make sense out of it. I would suggest that Fethullah Gülen has succeeded in creating moods and motivations for the movement's followers by linking them together in a community filled with an inner meaning. In the Gülen movement, moods and motivations are enclosed to a conception which is given a religious meaning and nature. Their moods are inspired from religious representations and their motivations are inspired from religious achievements. The religious representations are built on religious persons such as Fethullah Gülen, Said Nursi, persons from the Qur'an, Prophet Muhammad, and the Prophet's wives.

The Gülen movement is an organism of meaning which expresses and shapes the social reality for the followers. In the teachers' case their dispositions and sense of identity was influenced by the movement's ideas and other followers. The collective identity was constructed on mutual beliefs and social connections, but also from the ways they perceived themselves and others. There was diversity between the Gülen followers that were my informants, but the bond they had between them made them perceive themselves as interconnected people. Through the teacher meetings and the social gatherings, the teachers got closer to Gülen's pre-conditions he claims a community needs to meet in order to represent the highest spiritual rank. The meetings and the social gatherings contributed towards the collective identity between the teachers, but acted also as normative and explanatory, such as in the Tuesday's meetings. Through the meetings and social gatherings the collective identity was continuously (re)constructed and mutual meaning was communicated. Each communities use different criteria for inclusion and exclusion, but there is an agreement on shared meaning and reality that makes them bond as a community (Howell 2002:87).

My question of what it means to be a follower and how Gülen's philosophy is interpreted and translated into practice through education brought in a variation of reasons and inspirations that made the followers dedicate their life to the service *hizmet*. Within the movement their formation of meaning took shape and became common with the rest of the followers. Meaning was constructed and communicated between the followers through relations and belonging to the community. With mutual beliefs they could together involve

themselves within the Gülen sphere and carry out this meaning. The movement's aspect of their identity was made relevant in their lives in different ways, and the engagement with the movement principles varied. However, by becoming a follower they took a step further towards their beliefs than they would have as a non-follower. The difference from being excluded from this sphere and being within the movement, was that as a follower they were included in a circle of trust where others pursued the same as them and together they inspired each other. The focus on how my informants interpreted and translated the movement's philosophy introduced me to the movement's key term *hizmet* which acted as a motivator to perform the movement's ideas in practice. Through the communication of *hizmet* to the followers, Gülen has managed to motivate them to take action for the movement's ideas. The followers' everyday life was constructed around the ideas of the movement which they all believed in, and placed in circumstances that gave them the chance to execute their beliefs. The philosophy of the movement influenced the followers' worldviews and provided them their ethos. Geertz (1979) argues that charity becomes religious when it is enclosed in a conception of God's purposes and nature. By connecting charity and religious duty with each other Gülen has managed to fill the followers with long lasting moods and motivations. In their actions, their speech and their vision of life do their moods and motivations shined through. As teachers of the movement they had the possibility to translate the movement's philosophy into action and follow their own beliefs. The extracurricular activities seemed to be where the teachers transformed most of the movement's theory teaching by living example and spreading ethical values. They were able to educate themselves further in the teacher's in-service training programs and through the reading meetings they had together. They spread their knowledge to the students, not only in the classroom, but also in the extracurricular activities.

Durkheim (2002) takes example in the social life in Paris where the present-day Parisians are continuously renewed, but still the social life has characteristics that it had a hundred years ago. He asserts that a group is something more than a number of individuals because it is "the characteristic influence of the group that imposes these similarities on the individuals who continually enter it" (Durkheim 2002:63). Within the Gülen movement the followers were influenced by Fethullah Gülen speeches and writings, but they also influenced each other. The individuals within the movement became part of a collective identity that formed their world views, ethos and identity. Being part of this collective identity made them able to perform their holy duty and make their beliefs and pursuits become a reality.

The teachers interacted with the students and they were exemplary individuals in their lifestyle, prayers and the extracurricular activities. Through the extracurricular activities the teachers were able to connect interpersonal ties with the students and provide one-to-one counselling and directions. The ethical values and moral values which the movement specify as universal values were through the moral meetings and in various occurrences explained as Islamic values and not universal values, such they claim to promote them. Not all acts of the teachers, such as the teachers' interests in designer bags or their looks, corresponded with the ethical values they said to believe in. The teachers' misrepresentations were in connection with the degree of attachment and engagement they had with the movement; however some of the teachers that seemed to be most dedicated were sometimes the ones undertaking the discrepancy.

Being situated between followers and non-followers, made me become aware of my role as a researcher and keep my anthropology glasses on. The divided perspectives enlightened me on the different notions the followers and the non-followers held on the movement. I took those notions and views into consideration and in mind. It coloured my view in a way that made me conscious of aspects I would perhaps not have noticed otherwise, but I did not let myself get blinded by the notions. According to my data the followers translated Fethullah Gülen's ideas into practice in various ways, and some with a slight discrepancy, but all with their desire in doing good and being a good Muslim. The movement's meaning system were translated in the school during the social gatherings where there were discussions of the movement's ideas (as in the Tuesday's meetings), together with reading inspiring books (as in Sunday readings) and by moralizing each other (in the Tuesday's meetings and moral meetings). The teachers were all eager in spreading the movement's philosophy on moral values and set an example of true Muslims. They had their own individual reasons for involvement and attraction to the movement, but together as followers they took part in a community existing of collective identity where their search for meaning could become a reality.

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