

**BETWEEN DISSIDENCE AND HEGEMONY: THE  
FORMATION OF SOCIALIST MASCULINITIES IN TURKEY  
IN THE 1970s**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis analyzes the formation of a specific mode of masculinities, which I call socialist masculinities, in the period of the socialist movement's explosive growth in Turkey between 1974 and 1980. It discusses the gender politics of the socialist movement in relation to the formation of political masculinities among socialist men. Additionally, the thesis investigates the ways in which socialist men appropriated a hegemonic form of masculinity while addressing the oppression of women as part of socialism's political agenda. I take two radical left-wing organizations in Turkey during the 1970s as my case studies: the first one is named *Devrimci Yol* [Revolutionary Path] whose ideology was based on Marxism-Leninism but can be also defined as 'left populism,' and the second one is *Türkiye Komünist Partisi* [The Communist Party of Turkey, *TKP*], a pro-Soviet Union party that espoused the Marxism-Leninism advanced by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The sources I used included secondary literature, 1970s political publications, and oral history interviews.

This thesis argues that large-scale contemporary political violence encouraged male bonding among the male socialist activists. Moreover, it points out the implications of the populist discourse, which reinforced hegemonic notions of gender differences, on the formation of socialist masculinities in Turkey in the 1970s. Lastly, it also examines the impact of a specific reading strategy of classical Marxist texts that can be regarded as one of the central components in the formation of the political identities of male socialists (in Turkey, as well as more broadly). I found that this reading strategy had a formative influence on the male socialist identity, because it produced a language of class priorities while tending to deprioritize "the woman question."

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## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

### *1.1 Background of choosing the topic and research question*

“What are phenomena rescued from? Not only, and not in the main, from discredit and neglect into which they have fallen, but from the catastrophe represented very often by a certain strain in their dissemination, their ‘enshrinement as heritage.’- They are saved through the exhibition of the fissure within them. –There is a tradition that is catastrophe”.<sup>1</sup>

In March 8, 2007, I attended the International Women’s Day rally that took place in Ankara, Turkey, with a socialist group of which I had been a member for years as a young socialist activist. The participant groups of the rally, Marxist-Leninists, were explicitly calling the day “International Working Women’s Day” in order to accentuate their own perception and imagining it a day of working-class women. In their perspective, the working women’s struggle is part of the broader struggle for achieving socialism. One of the slogans the crowd shouted was “March 8 will remain a red [socialist] event,” which did not make any sense for me during the rally until I encountered another rally on my way home that was organized by feminist groups.

There were major differences between these two rallies. First of all, the one that I participated in was a gender-mixed rally, whereas the other one was a women-only one, which means that cisgender males were not allowed to participate. Regarding the different compositions of these two rallies, the sound of the audience that I took part in was dominated by the male voice tone. Secondly, the dominant color of the rally organized by Marxist-

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Benjamin and Rolf Tiedemann, *The arcades project* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1999), 473.

Leninist groups was red, while the participants of the feminist rally were carrying flag and banners that were mainly purple. I realized that the predominance of purple in that demonstration was the reason behind shouting a slogan to highlight the red content of March 8. The last thing that I remember about the “red rally”, which for me was the most unsettling feature at the same time, was that a man was assigned to read the public declaration, not a woman. Actually, I cannot remember the content of the declaration but most probably it was repeating a story on feminism and separatism that I heard many times afterwards, and calling for women of the working class to join the march in the cause of overthrowing capitalism and achieving socialism. I will never forget that rally and the man with mustache and beard reading the declaration, making it the first and the last International Women’s Day rally that I have participated in in Turkey.

After that day, I found myself wondering what were the underlying reasons behind that scene in which a socialist man could speak on behalf of women, and on that specific day. Since I knew that socialists are mindful of giving priority to a worker to read the public declaration on May Day demonstrations, how come a man was allowed to read a public declaration in a demonstration marking International Women’s Day? This question has occupied my mind for years.

Five years after my experience with the International Women’s Day rally, another incident happened. On 25 November 2012, a new leftist political party was founded in Ankara, Turkey. It not only identified as a left-wing party, but it also carried green values. In the founding congress of this new green-left party, three different groups participated—the members of the Green Party of Turkey [Yeşiller Partisi], the members of the left-wing Equality and Democracy Party [Eşitlik ve Demokrasi Partisi, EDP], and people who participated individually and were not members of these parties, such as feminists and LGBT

rights activists.<sup>2</sup> The participants of the congress chanted slogans addressing the political position of the party like anti-capitalism, anti-fascism, ecological socialism, feminism and LGBT liberation. At the end of the congress, the name of the party, which was a merger of the Green Party of Turkey and the Equality and Democracy Party, was announced as Greens and the Left Party of the Future [Yeşiller ve Sol Gelecek Partisi]. After the announcement of the name of the new party, some participants, mostly LGBT rights activists and youth members of the merging parties, started shouting slogan *Faşizme Karşı Bacak Omuza* which can be translated as “Legs on shoulders against fascism”. The older generation socialists were outraged. And here is why.

The slogan “legs on shoulders against fascism” to this day is shouted during the LGBT Prides in Istanbul. It refers to a conventional sex position known as “shoulder holder position”, a variation of the missionary position, in which one of the partners places his/her legs on his/her partner's shoulders. The slogan is considered as an attempt to dismantle a traditional left-wing slogan, “Faşizme Karşı Omuz Omuz” [Shoulder to shoulder we stand against fascism] by sexualizing its content. In dismantling the traditional rhetoric of anti-fascism and left-wing politics and re-articulating it in a sexually explicit way, the LGBT movement challenges the sex-constraining and sex-negative position of left-wing groups in Turkey. In other words, the slogan represents a clear objection to and a transgression of the sacralization of the socialist struggle in which sexuality is excluded from the political discourse of the socialist movement. As a result of such this, socialist movements in Turkey deprioritize LGBT rights issues and subordinate these to other, supposedly ‘bigger’ concerns of class struggle and anti-fascism. In the last decade LGBT movement in Turkey has been promoting the ideas of sexual liberation against the sex-negative tendency among socialist groups, and the slogan “legs on shoulders against fascism” exemplifies that challenge.

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<sup>2</sup> “Green Left Party,” *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, May 2, 2016, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Green\\_Left\\_Party&oldid=718231827](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Green_Left_Party&oldid=718231827).

However, the Turkish left did not pay attention to that challenge until the moment described above when that slogan echoed in the congress of a left-wing party. The slogan openly transgressed dominant and long-held beliefs and values of Turkish socialism, but this was the first time it was heard within a space that was supposed to identify with the conventional codes of socialist politics in Turkey. For the older generation socialists, mostly male, the incident marked the unwelcome entrance of sexuality, which was supposed to remain in the private space, into the sphere of socialist politics.

Besides the dispute among the participants of the congress, some other socialists started to make fun of the slogan and by extension they ridiculed the newly established party as well. According to those socialists who were ridiculing the new party, that slogan was disrespectful to the legacy of socialist movement and the memories of the socialists who lost their lives in the cause of anti-fascism. They took the slogan and the incident as an insult, reviling against the ‘glorious’ history of socialism in Turkey. Then, the people who shouted that slogan, and the new party as well were labeled as flippant leftists who are not capable of grasping the solemnity of being a socialist.

Bringing these two incidents together, I asked a basic question: Is there any existing pattern underlying the conventional attitudes of socialist men in Turkey? In addition to this, since some contemporary socialists consider sexuality as a transgression of the socialist tradition in Turkey with reference to the ‘glorious history’ of socialism in the country, I also searched for the possibilities to narrate and build a history of socialism in Turkey—which has been glorified, sacralized, and “enshrined as heritage” —from a critical perspective. These questions were the starting point for my research, which I conducted as a socialist who wants to narrate the ‘unpleasant’ aspects of the history of socialism in Turkey, in order to save its heritage “through the exhibition of the fissure within them,” in the words of Walter Benjamin quoted above.



This thesis is an effort to unveil the masculinity in the history of socialism in Turkey in the 1970s, the period of the socialist movement's explosive growth in Turkey, and to reveal the gender politics of the socialist movement that were influenced by hegemonic gender norms, which induced the formation of socialist masculinities among male socialists. In order to do this, I take two radical left-wing organizations in Turkey during the 1970s as my case studies, which are *Devrimci Yol* [Revolutionary Path] and *Türkiye Komünist Partisi Communist* [The Communist Party of Turkey, *TKP*], the mass socialist organizations in Turkey in the 1970s. My intention with exploring a specific mode of masculinity among male socialist activists who were members of *Devrimci Yol* and *TKP* is to investigate the ways in which they achieved a gender identity and became political subjects in Turkey in the 1970s. While doing this, I investigate the connections between the formation of socialist masculinities and “configurations of practice[s]” among socialist men that were structured by the gender order during these years.<sup>3</sup> Considering the fact that gender is constructed relationally through the “historical interplay between masculinities and femininities,” I will also explain the relationship between male and female socialists in Turkey in 1970s.

The framework on which the concept of socialist masculinities that I use rests has two dimensions: first, it involves a definition of gender regarding it as “ways in which sex and sexuality become[s] political;” secondly, I use a definition of political identity and agency as “not given but achieved on the basis of practices that alter the subject”.<sup>4</sup> In this way, I use the concept of socialist masculinities to critically examine the relationship between the collective experiences of gender and political identification with socialism in the case of male socialists in Turkey in the 1970s.

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<sup>3</sup> R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Polity, 2005), 44.

<sup>4</sup> Carver, *Men in Political Theory*, 4; Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 1.

## ***1.2 Sources and methodology and thesis structure***

The sources that I used in this thesis consist of primary and secondary sources. Firstly, the official publications of *TKP* and *Devrimci Yol* are the most significant and primary sources for my study. The first publication that I used in my study is *Atılım* (in English, Breakthrough), which was the official journal of *TKP* and published monthly from January 1974 until November 1987. I investigated eighty-one issues of the journal, from the first issue that was published in January 1974 to the eighty-first issue published in September 1980. I collected the materials related to my topic from the archive of the Social History Research Foundation of Turkey (TÜSTAV) in Istanbul during the summer of 2015.<sup>5</sup> The other publication that I used in my study is *Devrimci Yol*, which was first published in May 1977, and subsequently had an irregular publishing schedule. For my research, I looked over thirty-eight issues of *Devrimci Yol*, from May 1977 to December 1980, which are available online as *Devrimci Yol Archives*.<sup>6</sup> The press archive of *Devrimci Yol* was digitalized by the Research Institute on Turkey (RIT), which is “a grassroots research cooperative based in New York City”.<sup>7</sup> RIT explains its goal as “to contribute to a pluralistic, egalitarian, and democratic Turkey with an emphasis on social and economic justice, gender equality, sexual rights, cultural and political recognition and ecologic sustainability from a critical historical perspective.” They further aim at “narrating and documenting” the history of movements and groups in Turkey that attempted to contribute to the same goal of an “an egalitarian and democratic Turkey”.<sup>8</sup> In that regard, the *Devrimci Yol Archives* at RIT Collective Memory are “the largest and most comprehensive digital archive compiled about the movement’s

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<sup>5</sup> “About TÜSTAV – TÜSTAV,” accessed May 30, 2016, <http://tustav.com/about-tustav/>.

<sup>6</sup> “Research Institute on Turkey | New York,” accessed May 30, 2016, <http://riturkey.org/research/collective-memory/devrimci-yol-archives/>.

<sup>7</sup> “Research Institute on Turkey | New York,” accessed May 30, 2016, <http://riturkey.org/#section-about>.

<sup>8</sup> “Research Institute on Turkey | New York.”

publications that span over 15 years in its continuity, [which] is open for the non-profit use of researchers”.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the above-mentioned publications, there are a few published secondary sources directly and indirectly related to my topic. The secondary sources that I used in my thesis that are published biographical and autobiographical accounts of male and female socialists in the 1970s, consisting of their testimonies about the socialist movements in Turkey during these years.

Lastly, I used a series of oral accounts in order to expand my research. In the summer of 2015, I started to conduct semi-structured interviews with male and female socialists, who had been active participants of the socialist movements in Turkey between 1975 and 1980. There are 4 interviews that I used in particular in my thesis: 2 of them with male members of the *Devrimci Yol* movement between 1975 and 1980, who were imprisoned after the military coup in September 1980, and the other interviewees were members of *TKP*, one with a male socialist who was a factory worker and the member of *TKP* in the 1970s in Istanbul, the other one with a left-feminist woman as a member of Progressive Women’ Organization (*IKD*) during these years. In “Appendix 1” I provide details about the interviews and information about the interviewees. In these interviews, I asked some specific questions addressing their experiences related to being a male socialist in the 1970s, and their relations with female socialists who were their comrades. In the interview that I did with a left-feminist woman, I also asked questions regarding her experiences with her male comrades.

Whenever I quote from a Turkish- language source, the translations have been made by me.

The reason behind conducting interviews with male and female socialists in my research is to analyze and reveal the ways in which a certain form of masculinity was formed

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

in that period, and to show the relational construction of masculinities. Thus an analysis of the formation of male subjectivities and masculine dispositions should include the search for a connection between different subject positions among male socialists that produce their experiences. While doing this, I always keep in mind that “experience is at once always already an interpretation and something that needs to be interpreted [...] what counts as experience is neither self-evident nor straightforward; it is always contested, and always therefore political”.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to the discursive character of experience that makes it always already an interpretative entity, the subject position of the researcher and the interviewer has to be taken into consideration, since the presence of the researcher is one of the central elements of the discourse constituted in an oral history interview. Before the interviews that I made for my research, I openly described my political identity as socialist. Thus, all the narratives told by the interviewees were shaped around an exchange between a young male socialist researcher asking questions about the gender relations between male and female socialists in the 1970s and former male and female socialists who experienced the 1970s and constructed a narrative that was a “discursive production of the self”.<sup>11</sup>

#### ***1.4 Structure of the Thesis***

Chapter 2, “Literature Review and Theoretical Framework”, addresses the literatures that are related with the topic of socialist masculinities in Turkey in the 1970s. In this part, first, I examine feminist criticisms of the classical Marxist framework to see the ways in which feminist materialist scholarship in the 1970s problematized the core assumptions of classical Marxism. Besides, there is a section in this part where I critically investigate studies

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<sup>10</sup> Joan W. Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991): 797.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 795.

that take different approaches to Marxism framework by searching for the ways in which man is present in classical Marxist literature.

There are two theoretical frameworks that will be introduced in this chapter. Under the first theoretical field, I briefly discuss post-structuralist reassessments of Marxism. Then I introduce the concept of reading strategy proposed by Terrell Carver (1998), which enables me to analyze the Marxist corpus and its reception in a new way.

The second framework that I will use in my study is adopted from the literature in critical studies on men and masculinities. Under this theoretical field, I review R.W. Connell's (1995) important contribution to the field of studies on men and masculinities: the concept of hegemonic masculinity. After that, I outline Pierre Bourdieu's sociological and anthropological understanding of the production of masculine domination. I use these two mutually adoptive theoretical perspectives in my analysis of socialist masculinities in Turkey in the 1970s.

In Chapter 3, "Historical Context: The 1970s, A Decade of Struggles in the History of Socialism in Turkey, I review the period that I use to frame my thesis, beginning in 1974 and ending in 1980. This chapter is designed to contextualize my study by looking into the socio-economic and political background of that era, and to answer the question what are the underlying reasons for the growth of socialism in Turkey during these years. In addition, I briefly illuminate the major ideological and organizational features of *Devrimci Yol* and *TKP*, the two organizations that I explore in my thesis.

Chapter 4, "The Formation of Socialist Masculinities in Turkey in the 1970s", focuses on the formation of a specific mode of masculinities among the members of *Devrimci Yol* and *TKP* during the years between 1974 and 1980. In this chapter, I reflect on the consolidation and intensification of left-wing political activism and the rise of far-right mobilization that created political violence between these two groups. By referring to the political violence

erupted during these, I argue that it had a major influence on the formation of that specific mode of masculinity among socialist men in Turkey in terms of the construction of male-oriented comradeship between male socialists. Further, I critically examine the political discourse of *Devrimci Yol* that I identify as a left-populist discourse, and I explain how populism served the appropriation of the hegemonic notions of gender by the male members of *Devrimci Yol*. After that, I analyze some texts published in *Atılım* to see how did reading strategies of Marxist texts become associated with masculine subjectivities, and examine narratives of socialist women on their relationship with their male comrades to show the relational production of masculinities and femininities in that particular context. Lastly, I summarize my findings by identifying the socialist masculinities I uncovered as politically dissident but hegemonic in the contemporary gender order.

## CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter provides the literature review and theoretical concepts for my study of socialist masculinities in Turkey in the 1970s. Firstly in section 2.1, I give an overview of feminist accounts, namely the materialist strand of feminist thought in the 1970s, on the gender-blindness of the classical Marxist framework. Under heading 2.2, I discuss the literature that aiming to locate men in Marxist theory while critically examining the classical Marxist literature and generating new insights into the feminist critique of Marxism.

In section 2.3 I look at the post-structuralist reassessments of Marxism. These reassessments apply certain analytical tools adopted from post-structuralist theory, such as that of the reading strategy, which change our understanding of classical Marxist texts. In that section, I specifically examine Terrell Carver's book *The Postmodern Marx* (1998) in which he introduces the concept of the reading strategy, which is a key theoretical concept for my analysis of socialist masculinities in Chapter 4.

In section 2.4 I introduce some theoretical frameworks and concepts offered in the field of critical studies on men and masculinities. I will argue that socialist men have been left prominently unstudied within this field.

In the last section, 2.5, I review the historiography on socialism in Turkey, including the mainstream historiography and recent attempts at rereading the history of socialism in Turkey from a feminist perspective.

## 2.1 Feminist Critiques of Marxism

Classical Marxist texts faced criticisms from feminist theorists from the 1970s onwards, regarding Marx and Engels' neglect of social reproduction and the categorical priority they give to the sphere of production. The common ground of the feminist criticisms were the limitations of the Marxist framework in terms of theorizing women's oppression and patriarchy. Here I briefly review the questions the theorists of the feminist-materialist corpus raised in regard to the gender-blind categories in classical Marxism.

I want to begin with British socialist-feminist Juliet Mitchell's critique of the classical-Marxist literature on the woman question in her article entitled "Women: The Longest Revolution," that was first published in 1966.<sup>12</sup> According to Lise Vogel, author of the book *Marxism and the Oppression of Women* (1983) that has been considered as the founding text of Marxist feminist corpus, Mitchell's piece had "a major theoretical influence on the merging socialist-feminist trend within the women's liberation movement" in the late 1960s and early 1970s.<sup>13</sup> In this article, Mitchell problematizes the schematic view that is present in classical Marxist texts in which "the position of women [...] remains dissociated from, or subsidiary to a discussion of family, which in turn is subordinated as merely a precondition of private property".<sup>14</sup> Mitchell argues that the solutions proposed in the classical Marxist literature rest on this overly economic stress, which makes the classical Marxist framework inadequate for an analysis of "the complex unity of women's position".<sup>15</sup>

The introduction of women's unpaid domestic labor as the material basis for women's oppression in the late 1960s and early 1970s made an important contribution to the debates on the root of women's secondary status under capitalism. Especially the works of Margaret

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<sup>12</sup> Juliet Mitchell, "Women: The Longest Revolution," *New Left Review*, no. 40 (November 1966): 11–37.

<sup>13</sup> Lise Vogel, *Marxism and the Oppression of Women toward a Unitary Theory* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 14.

<sup>14</sup> Mitchell, "Women," 15–16.

<sup>15</sup> Vogel, *Marxism and the Oppression of Women toward a Unitary Theory*, 14.



Benston (1969) and Mariarosa Dalla Costa (1972) shifted the materialist framework in the debate on women's oppression from the production-based analysis to questions concerning social production and the material aspects of unpaid domestic labor in the household that constitute women as a distinct group.<sup>16</sup> According to Benston and Dalla Costa, the relations of reproduction are inseparable from the relations of production in terms of the reproduction of the labor power. Domestic labor theorists reformulated certain components of Marxist analysis by adding the relations of reproduction to the framework, and they proposed a political economy of housework by reassessing the analytical framework of classical Marxism.<sup>17</sup>

The last theoretical contribution to the feminist critique of Marxism that I want to mention is here known as the "Dual Systems Theory," which is based on the thesis that capitalism and patriarchy are two autonomous but cooperating systems. In her article "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union" (1979), Heidi Hartmann attempts to develop an alternative framework going beyond the limitations of Marxism and radical feminism.<sup>18</sup> According to Hartmann, Marxist analysis is insufficient to answer the question "why *women* are subordinate to *men* inside and outside the family and why it is not the other way around".<sup>20</sup> Following that argument, Hartmann underlines the gender-blindness of Marxist categories like capital that do not allow classical Marxism to

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<sup>16</sup> M. Benston, "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation," *Monthly Review* 21, no. 4 (1969): 13–27; Mariarosa Dalla Costa, *Women and the Subversion of the Community* ([New York]: [Falling Wall Press], 1972).

<sup>17</sup> Vogel, *Marxism and the Oppression of Women toward a Unitary Theory*, 22.

<sup>18</sup> Heidi I. Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union," *Capital & Class* 3, no. 2 (June 1, 1979): 1–33.

<sup>19</sup> Radical feminism is a theoretical and political strand within feminist thought that "contends that the oppression of women is the first and primary oppression [...] and maintains that men oppress women through patriarchy, a system of structures, institutions, and ideology created by men in order to sustain and recreate male power and female subordination" Robyn

<sup>20</sup> Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union," in *Women and Revolution: A Discussion of the Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism*, ed. Lydia Sargent (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1981), 10.

develop a coherent theoretical framework for understanding the historical formation of patriarchy and its connections with capitalism.<sup>21</sup>

## 2.2 *Locating Men in Marxism*

In this section, I look at major works that incorporate masculinity into their analysis of Marxism.

In the article “Victorian Sexual Ideology and Marx's Theory of the Working Class” (1984), Harold Benenson investigates the relationship between Victorian sexual ideology and Marx’s conception of production and the working class.<sup>22</sup> This article is one of the first attempts to reconsider and problematize the underlying assumption of classical Marxist texts in which the male worker is represented as the breadwinner. Benenson argues that two important dimensions of Marx’s analysis of the working class are the emergence of the Victorian ideal of female domesticity and “the rise of working men’s movements which

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 10–11.

<sup>22</sup> Harold Benenson, “Victorian Sexual Ideology and Marx’s Theory of the Working Class,” *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 25 (April 1, 1984): 1–23. Victorian sexual ideology is anchored in the emerging middle-class culture in eighteenth-century England that rests on the idea of separate spheres for men and women. In his book *A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*, John Tosh (1999) argues that the Victorian ideal of female domesticity marks a shift in the formation of masculine identity in which the home, or the domestic sphere, becomes central to the formation of masculinity “as the place where the boy was disciplined by dependence, and where the man attained full adult status as householder”. In their influential work *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, Leonore Davidoff and Catharine Hall (1987) elaborate an analysis of Victorian middle-class culture, and the idea of separate spheres, and they underline the mediatory role of the family between public and private “that connected to the market with domestic”. In doing this, they challenge the “simplistic models of separate spheres”, and provide a more complex picture of the era. In that broader and complex picture, they point out contradicting positions within the middle-class culture. In relation to this, in her book *European Feminisms, 1700-1950: A Political History* (2000), Karen Offen draws attention to different positions among progressive middle-class intellectuals and the members of International Working Men’s Association, often called the First International, on debate over “women’s role in the labor force and in the family”. Besides the anti-feminist stances of prominent male intellectuals like Pierre Proudhon, Jules Simon and Jules Mitchel saying that “a woman could choose only harlotry or housewives”, some men supported the principle of women’s right to work. For more detailed accounts on the issue, see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, *Women in Culture and Society* (London: Routledge, 1992); Karen M. Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700-1950: A Political History* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2000); John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Have [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 1999)..

appealed to the new Victorian norm to buttress their demands”.<sup>23</sup> Thus, masculinity is produced and reproduced through man’s relation to the both public and domestic sphere, and men are identified as the breadwinner within the household, and the producer in the workplace. Secondly, Benenson underlines the influence of Victorian sexual ideology on Marx and Engels’ comments on the practical absence of the family among the proletariat, in which their comment rested the common identification of male skilled workers in the mid-nineteenth century as family breadwinners “who struggle to regulate labor conditions in order to secure their families’ livelihoods”.<sup>24</sup>

In 1987, Jeff Hearn, a British sociologist, published *The Gender of Oppression: Men, Masculinity, and The Critique of Marxism*. Hearn’s book is the first comprehensive study providing a critique of Marxism in terms of its “neglect of men and the social construction of masculinity”.<sup>25</sup> In his book, Hearn highlights the significance of the contributions made by feminist scholars and the feminist critique of Marxism for an analysis of men and masculinities. He then demonstrates the relationship between the concept of patriarchy and the reproductive process, and elaborates on the institutional aspects of patriarchy.<sup>26</sup> Besides his critical account of the classical Marxist literature, he incorporates a Marxist dialectical method in his analysis of men and masculinities, in which he investigates the construction of men and masculinities through looking into their relationship with reproduction. In that regard, Hearn criticizes “taken-for-granted conventions of production-based (male-dominated) Marxisms” to develop a new framework for understanding of the construction of masculinity by shifting the focus from production to reproduction.

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<sup>23</sup> Benenson, “Victorian Sexual Ideology and Marx’s Theory of the Working Class,” 1.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>25</sup> Jeff Hearn, *The Gender of Oppression: Men, Masculinity, and the Critique of Marxism* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1987).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

Another dimension of locating man in classical Marxism is Alfred Mayer's understanding of Marx and Engels as men who were men of the nineteenth century, even though they were advanced for their time.<sup>27</sup> In Meyer's point of view, although Marx and Engels's analysis of the society under the rule of capitalism is "very underdeveloped concerning women [and] most of their ideas about the oppression of women were too much abstract, they did provide at least some elaboration".<sup>28</sup> Thus, a comment merely pointing out that Marx and Engels "lack a developed critique of sexism under capitalism" is unfair because it does place them in their historical context nor not recognize the fact that they were ahead of their time.<sup>29</sup>

### ***2.3 Reading Marx with a political purpose: Reading strategy as a component of political identity***

In this thesis, I use the concept of "reading strategy" to analyze the formation of political and masculine identities of socialist men in Turkey in the 1970s through their readings of classical Marxist texts. In Chapter 4, I show socialist men's efforts to find the true meaning of Marxism and the canonization of the broader goals of achieving socialism. Socialist men in Turkey in the 1970s concluded that only socialism can bring the liberation of women, and I argue that kind of conclusion was product of a particular reading strategy of classical Marxist literature that tended to deprioritize "the woman question", and this reading strategy had a formative influence on the male socialist identities in Turkey in the 1970s. Here, firstly, I briefly summarize major assumptions of the "linguistic turn" that challenges the idea that the meaning of a text is fixed and inherent. Then, I turn to Terrell Carver's book

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<sup>27</sup> Alfred G. Meyer, "Marxism and the Women's Movement," in *Women in Russia*, ed. Dorothy Atkinson, Alexander Dallin, and Gail Warshofsky Lapidus (Hassocks, UK: The Harvester Press, 1978), 96.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

*The Postmodern Marx* (1998), to discuss his point on the always-constructed character of Marxism by pointing out different readings of classical Marxist texts, specifically the texts that are written by Karl Marx.

The “linguistic turn” represents a shift within the Western intellectual history in terms of the development of new techniques of textual and narrative analysis that have been demonstrated by post-structuralist thinkers, most prominently by Louis Althusser, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault.<sup>30</sup> The defining aspect of the linguistic term is the priority that is given to “the textual surface” that represents a shift from “the reality that language purportedly described, and toward the subjects (writers and audiences) and objects (meaningful activities or ‘discursive practices’) that language was said to construct or constitute”.<sup>31</sup> In that regard, reading is of central importance in a post-structuralist framework. French philosopher Jacques Derrida points out that the practice of reading has a transformational effect and that texts “are not to be read according to a hermeneutical or exegetical method which would seek out a finished signified beneath a textual surface”.<sup>32</sup>

Terrell Carver’s *The Postmodern Marx* is an important contribution to the Marxist literature in which he challenges the conventional readings of classical Marxist texts that are seeking for a ‘true meaning of Marxism’. Against the conventional assumption that Marxism has an essence, he employs the concept of the reading strategy in his analysis of classical Marxist literature, which rests at the core of his argument about the existence of “multiple Marxes” that are products of different reading strategies. In his definition of reading strategy, Carver conceptualizes reading as a practice which involves “a choice of texts in a biographical frame, philosophical presuppositions about language and meaning, and political

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<sup>30</sup> Dick Geary, “Labour History, the ‘Linguistic Turn’ and Postmodernism,” *Contemporary European History* 9, no. 3 (2000): 445–62.

<sup>31</sup> Terrell Carver, *The Postmodern Marx* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 7.

<sup>32</sup> Jacques Derrida, Alan Bass, and Henri Ronse, *Positions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 63.

purpose-whether acknowledged or not”.<sup>33</sup> According to Carver, it is not possible to make any *essence claim* about Marxism. In saying this, he refers to the multiplicity of reading strategies to underline Marxism’s “contingently constructed character”, which is always open to new significations that incite various subjectivation processes for the formation of socialist/Marxist subjects.<sup>34</sup> Thus, an analysis of the Marxist canon should be accompanied by an understanding of the “always-constructed” character of multiple Marxes that are products of specific reading strategies.<sup>35</sup> In other words, on the one hand reading Marxist texts has a constitutive and transformative function in the construction of political identities. On the other hand, the reading process and meaning making involved in that process are at the same time informed by the political positionality of the reader.

Situating my analysis of socialist masculinities in Turkey in the 1970s into this theoretical framework, I aim to demonstrate the ways in which a politically oriented reading strategy that carries out a political purpose becomes a basis for the production of a political identity. My assumption here is that a reading strategy enables the production of “positions of assumed authority” and provides “a trajectory towards closure and exclusion”.<sup>36</sup> Such closure and exclusion are translated into a political identity, which allows someone to say, “We are right and you are wrong”.<sup>37</sup> In other words, a subject is interpellated into a certain socialist subject position and granted a distinct political identity through certain established reading practices that put forward and mobilize a discourse of ‘rights’ and ‘wrongs’ of the socialist political stance.

Since the members and followers of *TKP*, one of the leading socialist groups in Turkey in the 1970s that I analyze in Chapter 4, were calling themselves Marxist-Leninist

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<sup>33</sup> Carver, *The Postmodern Marx*, 234.

<sup>34</sup> Paul Bowman, *Post-Marxism versus cultural studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2007), 83.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Carver, *The Postmodern Marx*, 234.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

revolutionaries, it is possible to argue that there were certain reading strategies in process that interpellated them into socialist subjecthoods in the particular ways in the context of Turkey that I will be discussing in Chapter 4. To do so, I will analyze the formation of the socialist masculinities mainly with regard to that group's approach of "the woman question".

## ***2.4 Studies on men and masculinities: From 'the male sex role' to multiple masculinities***

The concept of masculinities occupies a central place in my analysis of socialist men, as evident from the title of my thesis. Under the guidance of feminist scholarship that "puts men and masculinities in a critical spotlight", the literature in critical studies of men and masculinities (also known as sociology of masculinity), "highlight[s] the ways in which men's powers come to be differentiated, naturalized and embedded across all cultures, political borders and organizational networks".<sup>38</sup> In this section, I advance a framework for historical research on socialist masculinities in Turkey in the 1970s based on theoretical tools employed in the field of critical studies on men and masculinities. My framework combines two mutually adaptive theoretical perspectives: (1) R.W. Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity and (2) Pierre Bourdieu's relational sociological account on the production of masculine domination.<sup>39</sup> By integrating these perspectives into my framework, I seek to demonstrate the ways in which political and gender identities of socialist men were articulated in a specific historical context, rather than focusing on the formation of modern

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<sup>38</sup> Stephen Whitehead and Frank J Barrett, "The Sociology of Masculinity," in *The Masculinities Reader* (Cambridge, UK; Malden, MA: Polity ; Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 15.

<sup>39</sup> R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Polity, 1995); Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination* (Stanford University Press, 2001); Tim Carrigan, Bob Connell, and John Lee, "Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity," *Theory and Society*, 1985.

gender order and features of the “gender *longue durée*” vis-à-vis hegemonic masculine attributes.<sup>40</sup>

Before introducing the conceptual framework that I adopt from the literature in critical studies on man and masculinities, I want to point out the earlier formulations in the field “to create a social science of masculinity”.<sup>41</sup> The first attempts to conceptualize masculinity are based on the functionalist analyses of the family that was introduced by American sociologist Talcott Parsons in the mid-1950s in which family is identified as a “socialization process that channeled men into instrumental roles and women into expressive roles”.<sup>42</sup> In that framework, sex roles are considered as “the cultural elaboration of biological sex differences” and masculinity is defined as the internalization of the male sex role.<sup>43</sup> From the 1970s, the male sex role theory faced serious criticisms in terms of its limited understanding of masculinity “that tends to dissolve into individualistic, voluntaristic levels of analysis”, and the sex role paradigm was criticized for not being capable of analyzing the relations of power operating in institutional levels.<sup>44</sup>

The concept of hegemonic masculinity, which R.W. Connell introduced in 1982, is regarded as a major contribution to the field of men’s studies as a theoretical stance against the “male sex role” paradigm that dominated the field until then.<sup>45</sup> Against the oversimplification of the male sex role framework, Carrigan, Connell and Lee attempted to propound “a realist sociology of masculinity” that takes the relations between men into

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<sup>40</sup> John Tosh, “Hegemonic Masculinity and the History of Gender,” in *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History*, ed. Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann, and John Tosh, Gender in History (Manchester ; New York : Manchester University Press ; Distributed exclusively in the USA by Palgrave, 2004), 48.

<sup>41</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*, 21.

<sup>42</sup> Michael A. Messner, “The Limits of ‘The Male Sex Role’: An Analysis of the Men’s Liberation and Men’s Rights Movements’ Discourse,” *Gender and Society* 12, no. 3 (1998): 257.

<sup>43</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*, 22-23.

<sup>44</sup> Messner, “The Limits of ‘The Male Sex Role,’” 258.

<sup>45</sup> Carrigan, Connell, and Lee, “Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity,” 551.



consideration as the most important component of the “constitution of masculinity as a political order”.<sup>46</sup>

One of the most influential works within the field of critical studies on men and masculinities is R.W. Connell’s book entitled *Masculinities* (1995).<sup>47</sup> In this book, she contributes to the field by discussing the concept of hegemonic masculinity in a comprehensive way. Her conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity consists of two components, namely her definition of gender, and the Gramscian term “hegemony” adapted to her analysis. Firstly, Connell conceptualizes gender as a “social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do”.<sup>48</sup> Since Connell embraces social practice in relation to major structures that “generated as people and groups grapple with their historical situations”, she refers to larger units that configure gender practices as femininity and masculinity.<sup>49</sup> In that regard, Connell defines masculinities as “configurations of practice structured by gender relations [...] which may be following different historical trajectories”.<sup>50</sup> Thus, importantly, her definition of masculinity rests on a model of the structure of gender that is involved in other social structures. Secondly, Connell incorporates the Gramscian term “hegemony” into her analysis in order to mark a “historically mobile” relation between social practices and structures, which is a major component of her understanding of masculinity, and to show different configurations of masculinities that are struggling to become hegemonic.<sup>51</sup>

Regarding the male as a “hegemonic project” in a specific historical condition, hegemonic masculinity refers to a type of masculinity “that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable”.<sup>52</sup> This explanation contains two major elements: firstly, the concept refers to a complex configuration of gender

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 552.

<sup>47</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 76.

practice by considering “the interplay of hegemonic, subordinated, complicit and marginalized forms of masculinity”.<sup>53</sup> In that regard, Connell’s working definition of masculinities, far from referring to fixed and monolith existences, affirms contingent elements in the identity formation process, which is a “complicated process of active construction involving and linking many different dimensions”.<sup>54</sup> At the same time, Connell’s conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity can be employed for an analysis of the masculinities constructed not only by dominant groups, but also by subordinate classes and dissident groups, such as working-class and socialist men, which “lie outside the circle of power [and] have, to a greater or lesser extent, been structured around their own masculine codes, which may vary significantly from those at the top”.<sup>55</sup>

The second theoretical perspective that underpins my work is French anthropologist and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s conceptualization of gender in his 2001 book *Masculine Domination*, a conceptualization which he uses for a better understanding of the formation of political group identities among men and to analyze the role of violent practices. I use Bourdieu’s conceptualization to investigate the role of political violence in the constitution of masculinity; I will analyze features of violence practices in relation to the production of sexual division of labor and a sexually differentiated structure of the field of socialist struggle particularly. In this book, Bourdieu proposes a framework in which gender is defined as a *habitus* within patterns of power relations.<sup>56</sup> The first thing that has to be mentioned is Bourdieu’s emphasis on co-operative and sexually differentiated dispositions. According to Bourdieu, “the social [masculine] order functions as an immense symbolic machine tending

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<sup>53</sup> Jeff Hearn, “From Hegemonic Masculinity to the Hegemony of Men,” *Feminist Theory* 5, no. 1 (April 2004): 57.

<sup>54</sup> Thomas Welskopp, “The Political Man: The Construction of Masculinity in German Social Democracy, 1848-78,” in *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History*, ed. Stefan Dudink, Karen Hagemann, and John Tosh, Gender in History (Manchester ; New York : New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 257.

<sup>55</sup> Tosh, “Hegemonic Masculinity and the History of Gender,” 49.

<sup>56</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*.

to ratify the masculine domination,” is conditioned by that symbolic construction of bodies that inscribes masculine and feminine dispositions. Bourdieu explains the origins of co-operative dispositions as follows:

The masculinization of the male body and the feminization of the female body, immense and in a sense interminable tasks which, perhaps now more than ever, always demand a considerable expenditure of time and effort, induce a somatization of the relation of domination, which is thus naturalized. It is through the training of the body that the most fundamental dispositions are imposed, those which make a person both *inclined and able* to enter into the social games most favorable to the development of manliness - politics, business, science, etc.<sup>57</sup>

Bourdieu here demonstrates the links between perceivable body traits and the fundamental dispositions to which men subscribe through social games. This is where Bourdieu uses the concept of *illusio* as a key constitutive element of masculinity that refers to the tendency of participants, namely men who want to succeed within the field of power and the public sphere, “to engage in the [social] game and believe in its significance, that is, believe that the benefits promised by the field are desirable”.<sup>58</sup>

The other Bourdieusian concept that I use in my analysis is that of *libido dominandi*.<sup>59</sup> With the notion of *libido dominandi*, Bourdieu refers to “a central disposition of the naturalized masculine habitus” that also indicates “the dominant dispositional” attribute.<sup>60</sup> In my opinion, masculine-oriented comradeship among socialist men can be investigated through the concept of *libido dominandi*, that “what causes men (as opposed to women) to be socially instituted and instructed in such a way that they let themselves be caught up, like children, in all the games that are socially assigned to them of which the form par excellence

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 55–56.

<sup>58</sup> Carl-Göran Heidegren and Henrik Lundberg, “Towards a Sociology of Philosophy,” *Acta Sociologica* 53, no. 1 (March 1, 2010): 12.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>60</sup> David Brown, “Pierre Bourdieu’s ‘Masculine Domination’ Thesis and the Gendered Body in Sport and Physical Culture,” June 2006, <https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/handle/10036/37112>.

is war”.<sup>61</sup> *Libido dominandi* is a key constitutive element of the division between the sexes, and violence appears as a tool for the maintenance of the masculine order: violence is embedded in the sexualized body of men by the historical structures of the masculine order.

Besides the above-mentioned perspectives, there is a limited number of works within the field of studies on men and masculinities that study political identities. Most studies the relationship between daily politics and masculinities focus on right wing and far-right masculinities.<sup>62</sup> Thus, socialist masculinities are a missing element in the literature on critical and historical research on masculinities, which underpins my motivation for studying this topic.

In relation to the topic of my thesis, historical research of masculinities is another important field that has to be addressed. An alternative perspective on men’s history rests on the idea of masculinity, which was “missing was missing from the non-gendered history of men”.<sup>63</sup> In that regard, the history of masculinity is a field that attempts to “give historical substance to masculinity like femininity” in order to trace the ways in which it was constructed throughout the history.<sup>64</sup>

It can possibly argued that contemporary historiography on men and masculinities consists of a remarkable amount of works that contribute to the field by providing historical analysis of the ways in which men’s identities are structured and constructed in specific contexts. Since the early stages of the history of masculinities, the body of literature has been dominated the studies focusing on the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when modern forms of

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<sup>61</sup> Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination.*, 75

<sup>62</sup> John Champagne, *Aesthetic Modernism and Masculinity in Fascist Italy*, 2013; G Gori, “Model of Masculinity: Mussolini, the ‘New Italian’ of the Fascist Era,” *The International Journal Of The History Of Sport* 16, no. 4 (1999): 27–61; Christina Wieland, *The Fascist State of Mind and the Manufacturing of Masculinity: A Psychoanalytic Approach* (Hove, East Sussex: Routledge, 2015); Sandro Bellassai, “The Masculine Mystique: Antimodernism and Virility in Fascist Italy,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 10, no. 3 (September 1, 2005).

<sup>63</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*, 28.

<sup>64</sup> Michael Roper and John Tosh, “Introduction: Historians and the Politics of Masculinity,” in *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, ed. Michael Roper and John Tosh (London: Routledge, 1991), 2.

masculinities were constructed in the Western world, namely Western Europe and Northern America.<sup>65</sup> In other words, the major concern of the recent scholarship on masculinities during 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was to examine the experiences of manhood and the formation of masculinity in order to contextualize established modern gender orders, thus, the period after 1950s has remained under-researched.

The purpose of this section was to advance a framework for a historical research on socialist masculinities in Turkey in the 1970s by theoretical tools employed in the field of critical studies on men and masculinities. In chapter 4, I seek to analyze and interpret the formation of socialist masculinities in Turkey in the 1970 within a framework that incorporates Connell's conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity with Bourdieu's sociological account on the symbolic construction of masculine (and feminine) dispositions.

## ***2.5 Short Overview of historiography on socialism in Turkey***

The historiography of socialism in Turkey is a developing field. First of all, I want to mention that there are ongoing debates on reassessing the legacy of socialism in the Ottoman Empire for the history of socialism in Turkey. The mainstream historiography of socialism in Turkey shares the core assumption of the official historical narrative about the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 as a total rupture with the previous Ottoman state. That perspective tends to exclude different ethnical groups, specifically Armenians and Greeks, from the historical narrative, as well as their role in the formation of the socialist movement in the Ottoman Empire. It has to be noted that there are some works investigating the legacy

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<sup>65</sup> John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family, and Empire* (Harlow, England; New York: Pearson Longman, 2005); John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 1999); Michael Roper and John Tosh, eds., *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London: Routledge, 1991); Michael S Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006); Michael S Kimmel, *The History of Men Essays in the History of American and British Masculinities* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*, Women in Culture and Society (London: Routledge, 1992).

of Ottoman socialism, such as Paul Dumont's book *The Workers' Federation of Thessaloniki* (1994) and Anahide Ter Minassian's (1984) comprehensive study of the Armenian revolutionary movement during the late Ottoman era.<sup>66</sup> Yet, the scholarship on the history of socialism in Ottoman Empire and Turkey continues to be bound by the tendency to ignore the role of non-Muslim communities in the formation of the socialist movement in the Ottoman Empire.

Mete Tunçay's comprehensive work on the emergence of socialism as a political movement in Turkey, which was first published in 1967, is regarded as a fundamental contribution to the historiography on socialism in Turkey.<sup>67</sup> After Tunçay's work on the emergence of socialism in Turkey, numerous works have been published that contribute to the field of historiography of socialism in Turkey.<sup>68</sup> Yet, none of these works have taken gender into account as a category of analysis. Even in the monograph about Behice Boran, the most prominent woman leader in the history of socialism in Turkey, the author, Gökhan Atilgan, does not employ gender in his narrative and instead examines Boran as a gender-less

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<sup>66</sup> Paul Dumont, "A Jewish, Socialist and Ottoman Organization: The Workers' Federation of Thessaloniki," in *Socialism and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1923*, ed. Mete Tunçay and Erik Jan Zürcher (London; New York: I.B.Tauris, 1994); Anahide Ter Minassian, *Nationalism and Socialism in the Armenian Revolutionary Movement (1887-1912)* (Cambridge, Mass.: Zoryan Institute, 1984).

<sup>67</sup> Mete Tunçay, *Türkiye'de sol akımlar 1908-1925* [Leftist tendencies in Turkey between 1908-1925] (İstanbul: İletişim, 2009).

<sup>68</sup> Emel Akal, *Moskova-Ankara-Londra üçgeninde: İştirakiyuncular, komünistler ve Paşa hazretleri* [Socialists, communists and Kemal Pasha between Moscow, Ankara and London] (İstanbul: İletişim, 2013); Ergun Aydınoglu, *Türkiye solu, 1960-1980* [Turkish left, 1960-1980] (Kadıköy, İstanbul: Versus, 2007); Belge, "Türkiye'de Sosyalizmin Tarihinin Ana Çizgileri [Major Lines in the History of Socialism in Turkey]"; Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil, eds., *Sol* [The Left] (Cağaloğlu, İstanbul: İletişim, 2007); Y. Doğan Çetinkaya and M. Görkem Doğan, "TKP'nin Sosyalizmi 1920-1990 [TKP's Socialism 1920-1990]," in *Sol* [The Left], ed. Murat Belge, Tanıl Bora, and Murat Gültekingil (Cağaloğlu, İstanbul: İletişim, 2007), 275–338; Vehbi Ersan, *1970'lerde Türkiye solu* [Turkish Left in 1970s] (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013); Kerim Sadi, *Türkiye'de Sosyalizmin Tarihine Katkı* [A Contribution to the History of Socialism in Turkey] (İstanbul: İletişim, 1975); Haluk Yurtsever, *Yükseliş ve düşüş: Türkiye solu, 1960-1980* [The rise and fall: Turkish left, 1960-1980] (İstanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2008); Mete Tunçay and Erik Jan Zürcher, *Socialism and Nationalism in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1923* (London; New York: British Academic Press in association with the International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam, 1994).

figure.<sup>69</sup> Additionally, *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasî Düşünce/ Sol* [The Encyclopedia of *Political Thought in Modern Turkey/ Left*], which is part of a broader series of encyclopedias of modern political thought in Turkey, only includes two articles that directly address issues related to gender through analyzing the relations between the Turkish left and feminism.<sup>70</sup> Only a few publications about the history of socialism in Turkey do employ gender in their analysis. The topics of these works range from the history of left-feminist organizations in Turkey to the feminist critique of socialist movements throughout the twentieth century. Some of the main examples of the studies incorporating a feminist perspective are Emel Akal's (2001) study on The Progressive Women's Organization (IKD), and Birsen Kalay Keşeoğlu's (2007) doctoral dissertation on socialist women's organizations in Turkey between 1975 and 1980.<sup>71</sup>

As mentioned above, the historiography on socialism in Turkey is a developing field, and there is a limited number of works that can be considered as feminist and revisionist interventions. In that regard, the field is still dominated by a paradigm ignoring gender as a category of historical analysis and merely focusing on the broader features of the socialist movement in Turkey rather than developing an integrated perspective that acknowledges the agencies of the participants of movement. In this thesis, I attempt to fill this particular gap by

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<sup>69</sup> Gökhan Atılğan, *Behice Boran: öğretim üyesi, siyasetçi, kuramcı* [Behice Boran: A professor, politician and theorist] (Cağaloğlu, İstanbul: Yordam Kitap, 2007).

<sup>70</sup> Gülnur Acar-Savran, "Feminist Eleştiri Karşısında Marxist Sol [The Marxist Left Against Feminist Criticism]," in *Sol* [The Left], ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil, vol. 9 (Cağaloğlu, İstanbul: İletişim, 2007), 1146–52; Yaprak Zihnioğlu, "Türkiye'de Solun Feminizme Yaklaşımı [Approaches to Feminism by Turkish Left]," in *Sol* [The Left], ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil, vol. 9 (Cağaloğlu, İstanbul: İletişim, 2007), 1108–45.

<sup>71</sup> Emel Akal, *Kızıl Feministler: bir sözlü tarih çalışması* [The Red Feminists: An Oral History Project], Araştırma İnceleme Dizisi 1632. 267 (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011); Birsen Kalay Keşeoğlu, "Socialist Women's Organizations in Turkey, 1975-1980" (Unpublished Dissertation, Bogazici University, 2007); Fatmagül Berktaş, "Has Anything Changed in the Outlook of the Turkish Left on Women?," in *Women in Modern Turkish Society: A Reader*, ed. Şirin Tekeli (London; Atlantic Highlands, N.J: Zed Books, 1995), 250–62; Gülfer Akkaya, *As If We Were Equal: Feminist analysis of the revolutionary struggles in 1960's and 1970's in Turkey* (İstanbul: Kumbara Sanat, 2011).

offering an alternative perspective for an analysis of the socialist movement in Turkey in the 1970s.



## CHAPTER 3 – HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE 1970s, A DECADE OF STRUGGLES IN THE HISTORY OF SOCIALISM IN TURKEY

### 3.1 Introduction

When discussing socialist masculinities in Turkey in the 1970s, there are two basic questions that should be asked: First, what are the reasons explaining the growth of socialism as a political movement in Turkey in the 1970s, and second, what are the major ideological and organizational features of socialist movement during these years?

In this chapter, in order to answer the questions asked above, I outline the historical context of my study to understand the formation of the socialist movement in Turkey in the 1970s. In section 3.2, I briefly portray the political climate of the 1960s in which the rise of the Turkish left “became possible for the first time in the history of modern Turkey”.<sup>72</sup> A review of the political climate of the 1960s in Turkey is necessary in order to demonstrate the legacy of these years that was inherited by the socialist movements formed in the 1970s. In section 3.3, I examine the social, political and economic situation of the 1970s, during which socialist movement was consolidated, and discuss the context of the explosive growth of socialism in Turkey. Then in section 3.4, I introduce the two socialist groups that I take cases for my research, *Türkiye Komünist Partisi* (the Communist Party of Turkey, TKP) and *Devrimci Yol* (Revolutionary Path), both of which had a considerable effect on the politics in Turkey in the 1970s.

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<sup>72</sup> Mehmet Salah, “The Turkish Working Class and Socialist Movement in Perspective,” *Libcom.org*, accessed May 24, 2016, <http://libcom.org/library/turkish-working-class-socialist-movement-perspective>.

### ***3.2 The 1960s: The Rise of Socialism in Turkey***

In the morning of 27 May 1960, the Turkish army captured political power in what was the first military intervention taking place in the history of modern Turkey.<sup>73</sup> The military takeover of 27 May 1960 was carried out against the ruling Democrat Party (DP), a moderately right-wing party headed by Adnan Menderes. The Turkish armed forces legitimized the takeover by defining the DP government as a corrupted one that “lost respect for the constitution, the press, the army and the university”.<sup>74</sup>

Two major objections were directed against the Democratic Party government. The first was the authoritarian measures that it used against the opposition, and the second was “the absence of any coordination and long-term perspective in the management of the economy”.<sup>75</sup> Following the seizure of political power, the junta invited a group of academics to prepare a new constitution that would bring “Turkey’s institutions in line with the requirements of the post-world war”.<sup>76</sup> The major goal of the junta in preparing a new constitution was to restructure both the political regime and the economic policies. In order to do so, the new constitution of 1961 introduced new institutions such as “an electoral law,” which was designed to prevent “majoritarian democracy of the type practiced” during the Democrat Party rule between 1950 and 1960.<sup>77</sup> In addition to the enactment of the new electoral law, the 1961 constitution guaranteed “social and economic rights (...) and the freedom of work and enterprise,” as well as freedom of thought, publication and association.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, the new military regime quickly proposed a new economic policy

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<sup>73</sup> Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London; New York: Routledge, 1993), 121.

<sup>74</sup> Feroz Ahmad, “Politics and Political Parties in Republican Turkey,” in *Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 240.

<sup>75</sup> Şevket Pamuk, “Economic Change in Twentieth-Century Turkey: Is the Glass More than Half Full?” in *Turkey in the Modern World*, ed. Reşat Kasaba (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 283.

<sup>76</sup> Ahmad, “Politics and Political Parties in Republican Turkey,” 240.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

based on the criticisms directed at the economic policies implemented by Democratic Party government. The new policies aimed at restructuring the Turkish economy by replacing the agriculture-led economy of the 1950s built on short-term expansionist policies, with new economic policies aimed at the protection of the domestic market and industrialization”.<sup>79</sup>

These features of the new political and economic regime and the 1961 constitution, introduced after the military coup in 1960, had major effects on the social structure and the political climate of Turkey in the 1960s. First of all, the new constitution was “more liberal than the old one in the sense that it tolerated a wider spectrum of political activity than before”.<sup>80</sup> In the wake of the political liberalization within the regime and the new constitutional framework, a number of trade unionists in 1961 founded the Workers’ Party of Turkey (TİP). It became the first socialist party to compete in elections in the history of Turkey.<sup>81</sup> According to historian Erik Jan Zürcher, the Workers’ Party of Turkey “attracted the support of many young intellectuals and it served as a kind of laboratory for the Turkish left” during the 1960s.<sup>82</sup> In this way, the greater political freedom the new constitution provided had a direct impact on the rise of the socialist movement in Turkey.<sup>83</sup> Secondly, the shift from an agriculture-led economy to an industrialization-led economy, and industrial growth achieved through investments in urban areas by state economic enterprises, increased the demand for labor.<sup>84</sup> On the one hand, the industrial working class grew in numbers, as a consequence of the intensification of industrial activities in the urban areas, and the increasing demand for the labor force. On the other hand, since the agricultural sector “was mostly left outside” the new economic model, agricultural producers who lived in rural areas

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<sup>79</sup> Pamuk, “Economic Change in Twentieth-Century Turkey: Is the Glass More than Half Full?” 283.

<sup>80</sup> Erik J Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London [u.a.]: I.B.Tauris, 2004), 246.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.

<sup>83</sup> At this point, it has to be mentioned that, establishing a communist party was prohibited by the 1961 constitution. Thus, the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) remained outlawed during the 1960s.

<sup>84</sup> Pamuk, “Economic Change in Twentieth-Century Turkey: Is the Glass More than Half Full?” 284.

started to move into urban areas, thus causing a significant demographic and social change in the 1960s.<sup>85</sup>

Regarding the above-mentioned developments, “the 1960s were years of rapid change [in which] people became more mobile, both socially and physically”.<sup>86</sup> The expansion of the industrial proletariat was accompanied by a growing student population in the universities. Since the 1961 constitution guaranteed collective labor rights, such as right to unions and striking, “the 1960s witness the transformation of a young and inexperienced working class into a very militant and highly organized sector”.<sup>87</sup> In addition to the notable dynamism within the growing working-class movement, the 1960s were characterized by a growth of the left-wing movement, consisting of university students and intellectuals.<sup>88</sup> Students started to establish political debating societies in the major universities in Turkey, like Ankara University, Istanbul University, and the Middle East Technical University, forming a platform where widespread discussions on the socialist literature were held.<sup>89</sup> In addition to these developments regarding the rise of socialist movements in Turkey in 1960s, it has to be noted that the common feature of all these organizations established was that male socialists dominated them.<sup>90</sup> In 1970 Suat Derviş, who was a left feminist political activist, and a group of socialist women founded *Devrimci Kadınlar Birliği* [Socialist Women’s Association], and which aimed to “create a revolutionary women’s movement and raise women’s consciousness”.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, 269.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

<sup>87</sup> Ronnie Margulies and Ergin Yildizoglu, “Trade Unions and Turkey’s Working Class,” *MERIP Reports*, 1984, 16.

<sup>88</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, 254.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>90</sup> Akkaya, *As If We Were Equal: Feminist analysis of the revolutionary struggles in 1960’s and 1970’s in Turkey*.

<sup>91</sup> Fatmagül Berktaş, “Suat Derviş,” in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women’s Movements and Feminisms: Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Francisca de Haan, Krasimira Daskalova, and Anna Loutfi (Budapest; New York: CEU Press, 2008), 111.

TİP remained at the core of the socialist and working class movement in Turkey until 1969. By 1969, the student groups active in TİP started to criticize TİP because of the parliamentarist tendencies dominating the party politics and decided to form their own organizations, influenced by the youth protests in Europe in 1968.<sup>92</sup> The leaders of these young socialist groups like Deniz Gezmiş, Mahir Çayan and İbrahim Kaypakkaya, still university students during that time, formed illegal organizations designed to start guerilla warfare in Turkey in order to achieve socialism. The underlying reasons behind the decision of choosing illegality as a political strategy were twofold. First, they believed in armed struggle as the only way to liberate Turkey of imperialism and to achieve socialism, since the government's oppressive measures against socialist opposition made it impossible to carry on the struggle with democratic and peaceful methods.<sup>93</sup> Secondly, these groups were influenced by the Chinese and Cuban revolutions, both achieved through armed struggle, and were also inspired by the left-wing urban guerilla groups formed in Europe in the 1960s and 1970s, such as the *Rote Armee Fraktion* (RAF) in Germany and the *Brigate Rosse* (BR) in Italy. There were three groups formed in the beginning of 1970s in Turkey that aimed to create a revolutionary state in Turkey, through guerilla warfare. In December 1970, *Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi* (People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey, THKP-C) was founded by Mahir Çayan, and it was the first group that began a campaign of urban guerilla warfare. Military forces killed Mahir Çayan in March 1972. In March 1971 Deniz Gezmiş founded a group named *Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu* (People's Liberation Army of Turkey, THKO). Deniz Gezmiş was sentenced to death after his capture and was executed by the government in May 1972. Lastly, *Türkiye Komünist Partisi/Marksist-Leninist* (Communist Party of

<sup>92</sup> Vehbi Ergan, *1970'lerde Türkiye solu* [Turkish Left in 1970s] (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013), 19.

<sup>93</sup> According to these groups, Turkey is under occupation of American imperialism and the US military presence in Turkey was considered as the evidences of the occupation. In addition to that, from 1968 onwards, student protests directed toward the US presence in Turkey and the students who participated in these protests got arrested. As a NATO member-state, the government had a clear stance against these student protests and took harsh measures against university students.

Turkey/Marxist-Leninist, TKP-ML) was founded by İbrahim Kaypakkaya in 1972, who was tortured to death by military forces in 1973.<sup>94</sup>

On 12 March 1971, the Chief of the General Staff, and the generals acting on behalf of the military forces, handed a memorandum to the prime minister Süleyman Demirel, the leader of the right-wing Justice Party, demanding “a strong credible government be formed that would be able to end the anarchy”.<sup>95</sup> With ‘anarchy’, they were referring to the activities of radical guerilla organizations as well as the whole body of political left, such as the Workers’ Party. After the memorandum Prime Minister Demirel resigned, and his government was replaced with a cabinet of technocrats whose members were appointed by the military forces. In April 1971 the new government declared martial law in eleven provinces in order to proscribe and curb the left-wing opposition.<sup>96</sup> In consequence of the oppressive measures taken by the new government, the security forces systemically targeted left-wing political activists, and groups of activists were either killed by the security forces or sent to prison between 1971 and 1973.

The semi-military regime that was established after the 1971 memorandum ended in the summer of 1973 when “the military-backed regime had accomplished most of its tasks,” including the crushing of the left-wing opposition.<sup>97</sup> In October 1973, elections were held, considered as a major step towards the restoration of a democratic society, aiming “to heal the wounds left by the military regime”.<sup>98</sup> The results of the elections were quite surprising. The Republican People’s Party (CHP), with a social-democratic stance, won with a slim majority, thereby not allowing the party to form a stable government.<sup>99</sup> The leader of CHP, Bülent Ecevit, decided to form a coalition with an Islamist party named National Salvation

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<sup>94</sup> Ersan, *1970’lerde Türkiye solu* [Turkish Left in 1970s], 20.

<sup>95</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, 258.

<sup>96</sup> Ahmad, “Politics and Political Parties in Republican Turkey,” 251.

<sup>97</sup> Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 156.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

Party (MSP). Since these two parties had different political philosophies, they decided to form a coalition “not because of their shared goals but because of political opportunism” that served the restoration of a democratic regime. In the name of a more democratic society, the new government assured that a general amnesty would be declared “for those convicted of political offences and to restore the rights taken away from the workers and the intelligentsia”.<sup>100</sup> In that regard, the coalition of CHP and MSP enacted an amnesty law in 1974. With the general amnesty, left-wing political activists were released from prisons, and they found themselves in a situation “where the mass youth following of the left had grown enormously”.<sup>101</sup>

### ***3.3 The 1970s: The Explosive Growth of the Socialist Movement in Turkey***

The decennium between 1970 and 1980 can be described as a peculiar era in the history of Turkey. The social and political circumstances of this period had major effects on Turkish politics, which are still present even in contemporary Turkey. First of all, it should be emphasized that it is not possible to discuss the social and political features of the given era independently from either the pre-1974 nor the post-1980 period. Secondly, as a result of the multi-layered aspects of these years, it is important to establish a periodization that will provide a necessary framework for the discussion.

The period of interest begins with the amnesty declared by the government in 1974, and ends with the military takeover on 12 September 1980, when the military forces established their rule over the parliament that lasted until 1983.<sup>102</sup> The period between these two events is identified with the explosive growth of socialist and working class opposition that inherited certain characteristics of the movement between 1961 and 1971.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>101</sup> Ahmet Samim, “The Tragedy of the Turkish Left,” *New Left Review*, I, no. 126 (April 1981): 73.

<sup>102</sup> William L Cleveland, *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2004), 285.

Correspondingly, it meant intensification of the attacks organized by the far-right movement, whose political orientation was chauvinist and anti-communist, and who targeted oppositional and socialist groups.<sup>103</sup>

The years between 1974 and 1980 are identified with a “severe economic and political crisis” that was closely related to the failure of the industrialization-led economy and the intensification of political violence that undermined the political system.<sup>104</sup> Here it is necessary to briefly discuss the underlying reasons for and features of the crisis that Turkey faced between 1974 and 1980. The socio-economic and political consequences of that crisis had devastating effects on the growth of the socialist movement in Turkey between these years, and the crisis also paved the way for the military forces to seize political power again on 12 September 1980.

As previously mentioned, after the military coup in May 1960 Turkey adopted new economic policies aimed at a rapid industrialization with the support of state economic enterprises and protection of the domestic market.<sup>105</sup> These policies brought a significant change in the economic direction of Turkey, and sustained the economic growth in the first years of the policy implementation. Moreover, during the years between 1974 and 1980, characterized by weak and short-lived coalition governments and ongoing violence on the streets, “the high rates of industrialization and accumulation of the 1960s and the early

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<sup>103</sup> With far-right movement, I refer to the attacks and assaults that were initiated by Ülkü Ocakları (The Grey Wolves) that can be briefly described as a youth organization under the control of the ultranationalist *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Action Party, MHP). The members of the Grey Wolves were calling themselves *ülküci* that refers to their political affiliation. *Ülkücü* means the follower of Turkish nationalism and the members of this organization situated themselves as a civil force supporting the state in the efforts to eliminate communists. The Grey Wolves was active in the late 1960s and the early 1970s but by the year 1975, they intensified their attacks against left-wing groups. See Ahmet Samim, “The Tragedy of the Turkish Left,” *New Left Review*, I, no. 126 (April 1981): 62; Tanıl Bora and Kemal Can, *Devlet, ocak, dergâh: 12 Eylül’den 1990’lara ülkücü hareket* [State, Hearth and Religious Lodge: Ülkücü movement from September 12th to the 1990s] (Cağaloğlu, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991); Banu Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>104</sup> Sevket Pamuk, “Political Economy of Industrialization in Turkey,” *MERIP Reports*, no. 93 (1981): 26.

<sup>105</sup> Pamuk, “Economic Change in Twentieth-Century Turkey: Is the Glass More than Half Full?” 283.



1970s” could not be preserved because of the instable political system that did not provide suitable conditions for the industrialization-led policies of the governments sentence is too long.<sup>106</sup> In addition to the continuing political turmoil, the macro-economic balances of the Turkish economy were hit by the oil crisis of 1973 when the oil price rose drastically.<sup>107</sup> Consequently, the Turkish industry, supported by protectionist measures for the benefit of the domestic market, suffered from an oil scarcity that hurt industrial output as a result of frequent power cuts.<sup>108</sup> Therefore, as the rate of industrial output decreased, “shortages of even the most basic items became widespread, arising from both the declining capacity to import and the price controls”.<sup>109</sup> As a consequence, the majority of the population, specifically the working class, found themselves in a situation in which they were deprived of the basic daily needs. This dire situation influenced the radicalization of the working-class movement and the growth of socialism in Turkey between 1974 and 1980.

The other distinguishing feature of the era between 1974 and 1980 is connected to the social and demographic changes, resulting from the industrialization policies in the 1960s. As noted above, the increasing industrialization in urban areas triggered an increase in the flow of people from the countryside to the big cities.<sup>110</sup> Since the infrastructure and the housing opportunities were limited in cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir, squatter neighborhoods, called *gecekondu* (built at night), and emerged as an outcome of the migration flow from rural to urban areas.<sup>111</sup> The inhabitants of these neighborhoods were socially tied to each other because most of them were working-class people. Additionally, the lack of basic infrastructure created major problems in the daily lives of the squatter neighborhoods’ inhabitants. These problems became important elements of the political

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<sup>106</sup> Pamuk, “Political Economy of Industrialization in Turkey,” 29.

<sup>107</sup> Pamuk, “Economic Change in Twentieth-Century Turkey: Is the Glass More than Half Full?” 285.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, 269.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

agendas of socialist movements, providing them the opportunity to mobilize people living in the squatter neighborhoods, which became a major sphere of activity for socialist movements.

The last important element of the historical background of the era is the context of this Cold War. Turkey became a member state of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952. Turkey's geographical location largely determined its position within the Western bloc, making Turkey a key country "to encircle the Soviet bloc with regional alliances based on NATO".<sup>112</sup> Because of Turkey's key position within the Western bloc, the Cold War "became the guiding principles of Turkish political life".<sup>113</sup> The governments that ruled Turkey between 1960 and 1980 had a clear stance against the Soviet Union; keeping up a constant anti-communist propaganda and exerting continuous pressure over left-wing political movements.<sup>114</sup> The Cold War thus had a direct impact on the political repression of the left in Turkey.

### ***3.4 Two main socialist groups: Devrimci Yol (Revolutionary Path) and Türkiye Komünist Partisi (the Communist Party of Turkey)***

The period after the 1974 amnesty can be regarded as one of revival of socialist movements in Turkey. With the release of the arrested socialists in 1974, socialist groups and organizations started to become active again. At the same time, the increasing activities of socialist groups after 1974 were accompanied by an intensification of the attacks organized by far-right groups and the oppressive power exerted by the security forces.<sup>115</sup> Thus, the years between 1974 and 1980 were characterized by an intensification of the clashes between

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>113</sup> Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 224.

<sup>114</sup> Zürcher, *Turkey*, 251.

<sup>115</sup> Sümercan Bozkurt, "The Resistance Committees: Devrimci Yol and the Question of Revolutionary Organization in Turkey in the Late 1970s" (METU, 2008), 51.

the socialist movements and far-right groups and government-backed paramilitary groups. In the late 1970s that conflict turned into a systemic political violence perpetrated by both socialists and the far-right groups, and thousands of people lost their lives during these years.<sup>116</sup>

The socialist groups active in Turkey between the years 1974 and 1980, the post-amnesty left, can be divided into three groups: Sovietics (followers of the Soviet Union), Maoists, and the independent left.<sup>117</sup> The groups taken as the case studies of my thesis were two competing groups within the Turkish left of that period; *Türkiye Komünist Partisi* (the Communist Party of Turkey, TKP), which was a pro-Soviet group, and *Devrimci Yol* (Revolutionary Path), which defined its position neither as pro-Soviet nor Maoist.

Let us begin with *TKP*, established in September 1920, during the First Congress of Communist Organizations in Turkey held in in Baku, Azerbaijan.<sup>118</sup> After the massive wave of arrests launched by the police against socialists in 1951, *TKP* lapsed into a long-term silence until 1974.<sup>119</sup> During these years, the active members of *TKP* became political refugees living abroad, mostly in Eastern Bloc countries. As a consequence, they were not able to get in touch with the workers' and socialist movement that was revived in Turkey in the 1960s. In January 1974, the central committee of *TKP* started to illegally publish the monthly journal *Atılım* (in English, Breakthrough). It can be considered as a historical moment for *TKP*, since it marked the first time that *TKP* became politically active in Turkey after 1951. In the first issue of the journal, the central committee declared its new policy to

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<sup>116</sup> M. M. Gunter, "Political Instability in Turkey during the 1970s," *Conflict Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (1989): 63–77.

<sup>117</sup> Samim(Murat Belge), "The Tragedy of the Turkish Left," 61.

<sup>118</sup> At the same congress, the founding members of TKP decided to move to Anatolia to be a part of the War of Independence. Upon their arrival to Trabzon, a city in Black Sea coast, paramilitary groups had murdered them on the night of January 28, 1921, including the first leader of TKP and members of the central committee. Ersan, *1970'lerde Türkiye solu* [Turkish Left in the 1970s], 17.

<sup>119</sup> Emel Akal, *Kızıl Feministler: bir sözlü tarih çalışması* [The Red Feminists: An Oral History Project], (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), 92; Ersan, *1970'lerde Türkiye solu* [Turkish Left in the 1970s], 113.

create new networks between party members in Turkey and party members who were in exile, calling it a “breakthrough.”<sup>120</sup> After that, *TKP* started gaining support from socialist youth, trade unionists, and working class activists within Turkey, and had a considerable influence on the socialist movements in the 1970s.<sup>121</sup>

In 1973, *TKP* issued a new programme, known as the “Third Program” in the history of *TKP*, which in comparison to the previous one expressed the *TKP*’s political and theoretical considerations in a more coherent way. Furthermore, the 1973 program has remained the major political and ideological reference point for the members and the followers of the party.<sup>122</sup> In this program, the party defined Turkey as a capitalist country dependent on the USA, ruled by a coalition that was comprised of the *haute bourgeoisie* and landlords.<sup>123</sup> As previously mentioned, *TKP* described itself as a Marxist-Leninist party, and consequently identified the proletariat as the pioneering power, which could form “a democratic and anti-imperialist government when the idea of socialism expands among the masses”.<sup>124</sup> *TKP*’s political strategy as declared in the “Third Program” was to achieve socialism in Turkey, built on organizing within trade unions, specifically in *Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu* (The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey, *DİSK*), and establishing legal organizations such as *İlerici Kadınlar Derneği* (Progressive Women’s Organization, *İKD*) and *İlerici Gençler Derneği* (Progressive Youth Organization, *İGD*), intended to provide a space for *TKP* which had been outlawed by respective Turkish governments since 1923.<sup>125</sup> The political strategy of *TKP* rejected any kind of political

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<sup>120</sup> “Atılım,” *Atılım*, January 1974, 1.

<sup>121</sup> Samim, “The Tragedy of the Turkish Left,” 61.

<sup>122</sup> Ersan, *1970’lerde Türkiye solu* [Turkish Left in 1970s], 125.

<sup>123</sup> *TKP Davası İddianame* [Bill of Indictment of The Trial of the Communist Party of Turkey] (Morning Litho Publishers, 1982), 18.

<sup>124</sup> Çetinkaya and Doğan, “TKP’nin Sosyalizmi 1920-1990 [TKP’s Socialism between 1920-1990],” 330.

<sup>125</sup> Ersan, *1970’lerde Türkiye solu* [Turkish Left in the 1970s], 119. At this point, I have some remarks on *İKD*’s relations with *TKP*. Emel Akal, an ex-member of both *İKD* and *TKP* and the author of a book on *İKD*, argues that despite the fact that *İKD* supported the political agenda of the *TKP*, and that

violence and tried “soft slogans” in order to get organized within trade unions, and TKP’s clear stance against violence was differed from other socialist groups in Turkey in the 1970s, which articulated a “revolutionary language [...] to prove its own courage, in a way designed to attract militants”.<sup>126</sup>

Another important feature of the *TKP* politics was its claim of “a monopoly on pro-Soviet politics” in Turkey in the 1970s.<sup>127</sup> As the primary Moscow-oriented group, *TKP* had a clear stance against Maoism.<sup>128</sup> *TKP*’s position against Maoist groups in Turkey in the 1970s, and their identification of Maoism as an “aberrant tendency,” caused tension between *TKP* and Maoists, occasionally ending up with fights and casualties.<sup>129</sup>

The second organization that this research focuses on is *Devrimci Yol* (Revolutionary Path).<sup>130</sup> The primary features that distinguished *Devrimci Yol* from the main pillars of the socialist movement in Turkey in 1970s was its capacity to mobilize hundreds of thousands of people against the attacks organized by far-right groups, and to form the largest socialist organization in the late 1970s.<sup>131</sup>

What furthermore distinguished *Devrimci Yol* was the way in which the movement was formed. Its initiators were mostly young people and university students, and predominantly man who regarded themselves as the inheritors of *Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi* (People’s Liberation Party-Front of Turkey, THKP-C), whose leaders had been either killed or imprisoned by the government in the wake of the 1971 military

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a considerable number of women were active in communist party politics, it is unclear to what extent İKD acted under TKP control. See Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*.

<sup>126</sup> Samim, “The Tragedy of the Turkish Left,” 82.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>128</sup> Çetinkaya and Doğan, “TKP’nin Sosyalizmi 1920-1990 [TKP’s Socialism between 1920-1990],” 330.

<sup>129</sup> Samim, “The Tragedy of the Turkish Left.”

<sup>130</sup> Thus, I prefer describing it a quasi-organization that was not able to form a party, but organized around more flexible structures. For a detailed discussion on the topic, see Pekdemir, “Devrimci Yol [Revolutionary Path].”

<sup>131</sup> Samim, “The Tragedy of the Turkish Left,” 77.

memorandum.<sup>132</sup> When the imprisoned members and followers of THKP-C were released after the amnesty in 1974, they encountered a new generation of young socialists who were more politicized in comparison to the generation of 1968.<sup>133</sup>

In 1975, the followers and inheritors of THKP-C started to publish a magazine, entitled *Devrimci Genclik* (Revolutionary Youth). This magazine was designed as an attempt to establish a connection between the older generation of socialists, those recently released from prison, and the new generation of young socialists, who were influenced by the theoretical and political considerations of THKP-C and its leader Mahir Çayan.<sup>134</sup> The journal adopted the ideas of Mahir Çayan. Thus, they summarized their political motivation in the journal *Devrimci Genclik* as an attempt to reformulate ideas proposed by Mahir Çayan, and to translate Marxism-Leninism into the Turkish context.<sup>135</sup>

In May 1977, the group that was publishing *Devrimci Genclik* released a new journal called *Devrimci Yol*, representing a new step towards forming an organizational structure. *Devrimci Genclik*'s aim was to give the new generation of socialist youth a direction in its struggle against the far-right. Indeed, *Devrimci Genclik*'s followers released the journal *Devrimci Yol* in order to articulate their ideological and political perspective in a more coherent way.<sup>136</sup> Their primary task, as described in the journal, was to form a vanguard Leninist party, and as such to support the demands of the working class and integrate these demands into the revolutionary program proposed by *Devrimci Yol*.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Ersan, *1970'lerde Türkiye solu* [Turkish Left in the 1970s], 272.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 273.

<sup>135</sup> Pekdemir, "Devrimci Yol [Revolutionary Path]," 746.

<sup>136</sup> Ersan, *1970'lerde Türkiye solu* [Turkish Left in the 1970s], 282.

<sup>137</sup> Pekdemir, "Devrimci Yol [Revolutionary Path]," 746.

According to *Devrimci Yol*, the primary conflict in Turkey was between working-class people and the oligarchy.<sup>138</sup> In addition to the argument about this primary conflict, *Devrimci Yol* defined Turkey as a “new/semi-colonized” country that was under the rule of imperialism in many different ways, and identified Turkey’s political regime as a “colonial type of fascism,” which differed from traditional fascist regimes due to Turkey’s distinctive conditions.<sup>139</sup> In *Devrimci Yol*’s terms, there was an ongoing conflict within the dominant class bloc and oligarchic forces, which caused instability in Turkey in the 1970s.<sup>140</sup> In this context of instability, the attacks organized by far-right groups were escalated by the state itself in order to avoid any kind of insurgency by the popular classes. Thus, *Devrimci Yol* identified Turkey a country under the rule of an “institutional fascism” set by the state from top to bottom.<sup>141</sup>

*Devrimci Yol* determined the primary task of the socialists as to get organized in the slum areas where subaltern classes were settled, in order to form popular forces with the residents against the attacks of far right groups that were targeting those areas.<sup>142</sup> Since *Devrimci Yol* defined its revolutionary strategy as active resistance against the threat of far right groups in slum areas, political violence and armed conflicts became a daily routine for the militants and the supporters of *Devrimci Yol* until the military coup in 1980.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> In *Devrimci Yol*’s definition, oligarchy refers to a dominant class alliance, which is “consisted of domestic monopoly bourgeoisie as the extension of imperialism and large landowners.” *Devrimci Yol*, “Bildirge [The Manifesto],” 1977.

<sup>139</sup> *Devrimci Yol*’s definition of imperialism rests on the Leninist conceptualization which identifies imperialism with “the formation of international monopolist capitalist associations which share the world among themselves, [...] the territorial division of the whole world among the biggest capitalist powers is completed.” *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> Pekdemir, “*Devrimci Yol* [Revolutionary Path],” 752.

<sup>142</sup> “Anti-Faşist Halk Eylemleri ve *Devrimci Mücadele* [Anti-Fascist Action of the People and the Revolutionary Struggle],” *Devrimci Yol (Special Issue)*, August 1, 1977.

<sup>143</sup> The organizational features of *Devrimci Yol* are a controversial issue, which has been widely discussed within leftist-socialist circles in Turkey, since *Devrimci Yol* never formed a party in a Leninist sense, although they regarded themselves Marxist-Leninists. Some might argue that *Devrimci Yol* can only be described as a movement rather than an organization, due to the lack of a party-like organizational structure. Rather, they organized around a journal. In my view, that kind of

### 3.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined the general traits of the two socialist groups in Turkey that were active in the 1970s, by taking the historical context of the period into consideration. Within this context, these groups represent two different positions within the socialist movement in Turkey in terms of their political and ideological discourses and their practices.

One of the major differences between *TKP* and *Devrimci Yol* is found in their approaches to the anti-fascist struggle that was a central issue among socialist groups in the 1970s. While *Devrimci Yol* was strongly emphasizing the anti-fascist struggle as the primary way to mobilize popular sectors of the society by perpetrating political violence, *TKP* excluded political violence from its agenda, and the party members seemed unwilling to respond to attacks organized by far-right groups against themselves.

The other difference between *TKP* and *Devrimci Yol* derives from their preferences for the fields in which they became organized. *TKP*'s political strategy rested on becoming a mass working-class party; hence, party members were active in industrial areas and in factories, since those were considered as the primary fields for the growth of party.

By contrast, *Devrimci Yol* had a considerable influence in the squatter and slum areas. It directed its supporters to focus on the protection of these areas from far right groups' attacks, and on solving the daily problems that the inhabitants of the neighborhood were facing, such as problems related with the water supply, roads and the sewage system. I will discuss these differences in my analysis in Chapter 4 of the formation of socialist masculinities in Turkey in the 1970s among the members and supporters of *TKP* and *Devrimci Yol*.

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argument is partly true if we compare *Devrimci Yol* with the other socialist organizations that were active in Turkey in 1970s. Yet, it is not possible to define it merely as a movement that had no organizational structure and a hierarchy. *Devrimci Yol* had a central committee that made the decisions and determined the political orientation of the movement.



## CHAPTER 4 – THE FORMATION OF SOCIALIST MASCULINITIES IN TURKEY IN THE 1970s

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the years between 1974 and 1980 in Turkey are characterized by the consolidation and intensification of left-wing political activism and the political mobilization among different sectors of the society. Another important fact that makes this period distinctive is the rise of the far-right movement, which situated itself as the counterpart of the revolutionary sectors of society. By far right movement I refer to the increasing number of attacks and assaults systematically organized by members of the Grey Wolves (*Ülkü Ocakları*) on a large scale. Thus both the intensification of left-wing radicalism and the rise of right-wing mobilization resulted in an exacerbation of street level politics through shootouts between socialist activists and far right groups. Since Turkey was a prominent member state of NATO and the Western bloc in the 1970s, successive governments kept up a constant anti-communist propaganda during this decade. The Grey Wolves received considerable support from the Turkish military and the state backed them to function as paramilitary groups against socialist mobilizations, and they were considered as the most effective anti-communist force during these years.<sup>144</sup>

Against this background, this chapter brings into focus the formation of specific mode of masculinities, which I call *socialist masculinities* in the period of these socialist movements' explosive growth. With doing this, I examine the specific characteristics of these years can that be translated into “an equally specific form of masculinities, which, in turn, became the basis of group identity formation and revolutionary politics”.<sup>145</sup> Thus, I analyze

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<sup>144</sup> Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey*, 92.

<sup>145</sup> Thomas Welskopp, “The Political Man: The Construction of Masculinity in German Social Democracy, 1848-78,” in *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History*, ed. Stefan

the formation of socialist masculinities in Turkey between 1974 and 1980 and the shaping of group identity formation of men who were members and/or supporters of two different organizations—namely, *Devrimci Yol* and *TKP*.

In section 4.1, I discuss the role of violent practices and clashes between socialists, far-right groups, and the police in the formation of the masculine-oriented comradeship that created a male sociability reproducing specific masculine and feminine dispositions. While discussing this, I critically analyze the narratives of former male socialists based on semi-structured interviews that I conducted with them for my study, and on published biographical and autobiographical accounts of some prominent male socialists in the 1970s.

In section 4.2, I question the preponderance of populist notions in the political discourse of *Devrimci Yol* and the implications of the populist discourse for the daily practices of socialist men, a discourse that, I will argue, reinforced hegemonic notions of gender differences.

In section 4.3, I discuss reading strategies—a concept that I introduced in Chapter 2—socialist men in Turkey in the 1970s employed in their readings of classical Marxist literature in relation to the formation of masculine socialist identities. In order to show the relationship between these reading strategies and masculine identities, I analyze the texts that were published in the monthly journal *Atılım*, the official journal of the Communist Party of Turkey and distributed illegally between 1974 and 1982. In addition to that journal, I examine the points mentioned by socialist men in the interviews that I conducted with them addressing the ways in which they read classical Marxist texts in the 1970s.

In section 4.4, I focus on the narratives of former socialist women, especially their critical accounts of the male dominance in the socialist movements in Turkey in the 1970s. In

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Dudink, Karen Hagemann, and John Tosh, *Gender in History* (Manchester ; New York : New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 257.

doing this, I try to show how male and female dispositions were produced and socialist male identities were relationally constructed *vis-à-vis* the identities of socialist women.

In the last section, 4.5, I bring together my findings about the formation of socialist masculinities in Turkey in the 1970s. I argue that these socialist masculinities were dissident but hegemonic ones: On the one hand, socialist men in Turkey at the time formed a dissident political identity, on the other hand they were bound to a hegemonic masculine identity.

#### ***4.1 The role of the anti-fascist struggle and political violence in the construction of socialist masculinities***

This section will analyze the ways in which political violence influenced the production of male bonding among male socialists. The socialist activists' clashes with the far-right groups and the police can give us some important insights into the masculine-oriented comradeship learned through street politics that were dominated by violent acts. Here, I show that the dangerous practices provided an important space for a masculine exertion to fulfill "a sort of sense of duty based on an inner drive that man 'owes himself'".<sup>146</sup> So, in the case of socialist men in the 1970s, the violent practices were a field for "the training of the body [on which] the most fundamental dispositions are imposed, those which make a person both *inclined and able* to enter into the social games most favorable to the development of manliness – [such as] politics", which are expressions of *libido dominandi*.<sup>147</sup>

In the case of *Devrimci Yol*, it is rare to find the kind of narratives praising violence and violent practices among men. Rather there are many instances pointing to a strict division

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<sup>146</sup> Miklós Hadas, "Gymnastic Exercises, or 'Work Wrapped in the Gown of Youthful Joy': Masculinities and the Civilizing Process in 19th Century Hungary," *Journal of Social History*, no. 1 (2007): 173.

<sup>147</sup> Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, 56.

of labor that was constantly producing feminine and masculine dispositions. For example, Bulent Aydin, who was a university student between 1976 and 1980 and at the same time one of the prominent militants of *Devrimci Yol*, told me about the ways in which they prevented their female comrades from participating in certain missions, specifically in actions like writing slogans on walls and hanging posters:

These practices were considered as quasi-legal ones. Yet, even if we got permission from the local government for the posters, fascists or the police were always attacking us. Thus, it was a legal but dangerous mission and we were carrying guns too. Ahead of the action, we usually declared [to our members and supporters] that we are going to go for writing slogans on the walls and hanging posters. Then, after the declaration, we called people to gather in a classroom, and then assigned people to do specific tasks during the mission. I remember that our female friends very much wanted to come with us because it was the only militant action that they could easily participate in. But we were trying to limit the number of women in those kinds of actions. Our female friends never asked us to protect them and we had many debates for that reason. And they were particularly refusing our protection. However, we, as male revolutionists, felt we were responsible to protect them while watching out for the police and the fascists for ourselves at the same time. For this reason, we felt that their presence led to a sort of double burden on us.<sup>148</sup>

These practices, such as writing slogans on the walls and hanging up posters, which were regarded as potentially dangerous ones, and the sometimes violent character of these actions, provided reasons for the male socialists to exclude their female comrades from participating and to constitute themselves as the dominant subjects of the struggle. Feeling themselves responsible for their female comrades and saying of a female socialist who wanted to participate in these actions that she was not capable of protecting herself were “ particularly

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<sup>148</sup> Interview with Bulent Aydin, Beşiktaş, December 23, 2015.

subtle way[s] of denying her the right to the specifically masculine attribute of power” and, ways of producing male dispositions.<sup>149</sup>

Based on Aydın’s testimony on the exclusion of female socialists from above-mentioned actions, we see that violence was perceived a male business and protecting women as a source of burden for the men. Even though female activists did not ask for protection, Aydın and his male comrades saw them as inherently vulnerable to violence and potential crackdowns with police and far-right groups. Aydın tells about his own experiences regarding backing socialist women:

There was a sort of backing of women during dangerous missions. For example, if we needed to organize a team with three members for such dangerous missions, all the members were selected among men. Of course women were opposing it because that kind of a selection might be the result of good intentions but ultimately it prevented them [female socialists] from participating in action. For instance, when we went for writing on the walls, our female friends were not allowed to be responsible for the security but rather men were assigned to do it. Our male friends were the ones who carried buckets because it was dangerous to carry them while escaping from the police. I remember one more thing. For example, while organizing a team that had ten members and three of them were women, in order to write slogans or hang posters in a dangerous zone, I remember that we also assigned three guys to protect our female comrades. We never told the women this because the women got angry if they learned that someone protected them. And if the girl got caught and the guy who was assigned to protect her came back, we got angry at him because we had told him that he must protect her at the cost of his own capture.<sup>150</sup>

Selcuk Yildirim, who was a male militant of *Devrimci Yol* in a squatter neighborhood in Ankara, makes a similar remark about gender segregation in political actions that the socialist

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<sup>149</sup> Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, 99.

<sup>150</sup> Interview with Bulent Aydın, Beşiktaş, December 23, 2015.

activists carried out. In the interview that I had with him, he answered my question about the cases in which he prevented his female comrades from participating in missions that were assumed to be dangerous:

Although it seemed that we [socialist men and women] were dealing with different tasks, obviously we never thought that we [as male militants] are superior to our female comrades. Yet, for instance, while some of them [female militants] were organizing campaigns among women who were living the neighborhood, I participated in armed missions. I am still questioning it, how come I had become a member of revolutionary armed units without having a proper training [he refers to the trainings for learning how to use a gun and to aim]. What did I do for being selected as an armed militant? For sure, the criteria were being courageous and such requirements that were essential for armed practices [...] Since we were constantly mobilized on the streets, we might asked our female friends to stay on the sidelines. For instance, if we were going for a mission which would be potentially ending up in a clash with fascists or the police and us, we might asked them [female militants] not to participate. However, I do not know the underlying reasons behind such an attitude, whether we opposed their [female militants] participation because of their sex or just because they [female militants] were lacking practical skills needed for these dangerous missions.<sup>151</sup>

Based on Aydin's and Yildirim's accounts, it can be argued that the gendered segregation of duties within the *Devrimci Yol* movement in the 1970s produced an androcentric cosmology in which both socialist men and their far-right opponents were ultimately configured as the perpetrators of violence. By identifying specific practices as dangerous, socialist men created gendered patterns and a masculine space that imposed male dispositions, such as being courageous and protective, by excluding women from certain tasks. Thus, socialist men's

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<sup>151</sup> Interview with Selcuk Yildirim, Kızılay, December 21, 2015.

subjectivities were shaped around specific qualities of manhood that translated into a “contentious masculinity”.<sup>152</sup>

In that regard, male and female socialist identities were produced through “the labor of diacritical construction” in which a socialist masculine identity was constructed as “socially differentiated from the opposite gender”.<sup>153</sup> Thus, political violence reflected physical manifestations of manliness that operated as symbolic violence exerted on socialist women through their exclusion from certain practices. Cezmi Ersoz, who was a former socialist activist in the 1970s, describes how that symbolic violence operated:

In order to gain a place in the socialist movement, as a last resort, our female comrades had become more masculine. For instance, in my opinion, in the 1970s we masculinized our female comrades. Socialist movement put certain practices, such as speaking in a harsh way or bullying, forward.<sup>154</sup>

The gendered-segregation of duties was accompanied by women’s exclusion from all decision-making bodies of *Devrimci Yol*. Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu, the leader of *Devrimci Yol* from 1977 until 1980, is still a prominent figure in socialist politics in Turkey today. In a (2001) book that compiles interviews conducted with him, he responds as follows to the question about the reasons for the absence of women from the executive bodies of the organization:

There were many women in the struggle in the years 1975-1980. Yet since the struggle turned into a pretty tough one, it was not easy for women who mostly remained in auxiliary positions to come to the forefront. In our organization, we did not assign people to the higher positions through elections. These people gained a footing as a result of a sort of natural

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<sup>152</sup> Welskopp, “The Political Man: The Construction of Masculinity in German Social Democracy, 1848-78,” 273.

<sup>153</sup> Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, 23–24.

<sup>154</sup> Quoted in Hacer Yıldırım and Hatice Meryem, “Sol Ve... [The Left And...],” *Öküz*, May 1997.

selection. The logic of natural selection enabled men to become prominent in comparison to women because of the structural characteristics of women. As a consequence of this, women were repressed. Especially, it was a consequence of the uphill struggle against fascists during that time. Women generally stayed in the background.<sup>155</sup>

Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu's comments on the exclusion of women from certain actions give us important details to understand how masculine dispositions were produced with reference to the conditions of existence that were being perceived as natural. Regarding Müftüoğlu's perspective, I argue that the street politics that was accompanied by violent acts allowed the male members of *Devrimci Yol* to associate themselves with specific acts that were marking their gender identity and to acknowledge their male comrades' manliness. In addition, the notion of natural selection is striking here. It seems to suggest almost a 'Darwinization of gender relations' that legitimizes keeping socialist women in the background of the socialist movement. Male socialists acquired masculine dispositions and accommodated manliness by naturalizing of such a division of labor in the case of *Devrimci Yol* in the 1970s discussed here.

#### ***4.2 “We should act in alliance with the values of the oppressed”: The symbiotic relationship between left-populism and the reproduction of the gender order***

The years between 1975 and 1980 are generally described as a fruitful era for the socialist movements and the radical left in Turkey, in which they gained popular support from different sectors of society.<sup>156</sup> The increased popular support drastically changed the movements' and organizations' relations to mass initiative. As mentioned above, *Devrimci*

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<sup>155</sup> Adnan Bostancıoğlu and Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu, *Bitmeyen Yolculuk: Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu Kitabı* [Unending journey of Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu] (İstanbul: Ayrıntı, 2011), 219.

<sup>156</sup> Ahmet Samim, “The Tragedy of the Turkish Left,” *New Left Review*, I, no. 126 (April 1981): 60–85.



*Yol* is the name of both a journal and an organization. Although the journal *Devrimci Yol* had an irregular publishing schedule, the published issues had a wide circulation from 1977 until the military coup in 1980, selling 100,000 copies.<sup>157</sup> In this regard, *Devrimci Yol* can be evaluated as one of the most influential journals between 1977 and 1980, and one that was read by many people.<sup>158</sup>

In this section I use the term left-populism to investigate implications of the populist discourse that reinforced hegemonic notions of gender differences. My definition of left-populism rests on Ernesto Laclau's conceptualization of populist discourse in which he describes it as a distinguished ideological discourse that is generated through "*a peculiar form of articulation of the popular-democratic interpellations in it*".<sup>159</sup> Left-populism constitutes the social and political sphere as a field that rests on an antagonistic relationship between popular sectors and the dominating classes.

Laclau's understanding of left-populism is useful in my conceptual framework so as to analyze *Devrimci Yol's* ideological discourse. When we look at the political discourse of both the journal and the movement of *Devrimci Yol*, we see that the conflict between "the people" and the "oligarchy" was defined as the major conflict within society.<sup>160</sup> In my analysis below, I will reveal populist moments in the discourse of *Devrimci Yol* that can be translated into certain features of a permanent state of symbolic dependence on the gender order, features that are articulated in the journal as the popular values of the oppressed.

At this point, I want to highlight the notions of motherhood and *bacı* (the sister) that the journal *Devrimci Yol* typically used in articles and news reports addressing women's participation. The notion of *bacı* is an old Turkish word that is a "rustic and folksy-sounding

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<sup>157</sup> Samim, "The Tragedy of the Turkish Left," 77.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>159</sup> Author's emphasis Ernesto Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory: Capitalism, Fascism, Populism* (London: Verso, 1979), 172.

<sup>160</sup> For example in *Devrimci Yol*, "Bildirge [The Manifesto]," 1977, 19.

[one] drawn from provincial speech” which denotes an “unsexed, depersonalized kind of ‘woman comrade’”.<sup>161</sup> In my view, the notion of *bacı* operates as a nodal point, in other words as a “privileged signifier” in the ideological discourse of *Devrimci Yol*. Hereby, the notion of *bacı* became constitutive of male socialist identity as a consequence of masculine domination that “constitutes women as symbolic objects whose being (*esse*) is being-perceived (*percipi*)”.<sup>162</sup> In other words, the formation of a male socialist identity is reiterated with a gendered notion like *bacı* besides the “revolutionary appropriation of the symbol of motherhood”.<sup>163</sup>

As I mentioned above, the notion of *bacı* has sex-less connotation. Female supporters and participants of the socialist movement were desexualized in order to preclude any kind of sexual interaction between men and women in the context of the socialist struggle. Such a signification of woman as desexualized being reflects power operating beneath the surface, dynamics in which woman was constituted as a symbolic object whose sexuality was controlled through interpellations, such as being called *bacı* by male socialists.<sup>164</sup> Sexuality is being perceived as a threat to “maintaining the inner cohesion” of the socialist movement, and in that regard, with the notion of *bacı*, socialist women are constructed as “[the] element of discord capable of ‘going off the rails’ at any moment”.<sup>165</sup> In relation to this, according to feminist political scientist Fatmagül Berktaş, the notion of *bacı* is analogous with “Islamic

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<sup>161</sup> Berktaş, “Has Anything Changed in the Outlook of the Turkish Left on Women?,” 252.

<sup>162</sup> Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, 66.

<sup>163</sup> Maxine Molyneux, *Women’s Movements in International Perspective: Latin America and beyond* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 40.

<sup>164</sup> With the word of interpellation, I refer to Louis Althusser’s argument that “ideology has always-already interpellated individuals as subjects” through “the constitutive process where individuals acknowledge and respond to ideologies, thereby recognizing themselves as subjects”. Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), 176.

<sup>165</sup> Berktaş, “Has Anything Changed in the Outlook of the Turkish Left on Women?,” 253.

ideology's exclusion and negation of personal erotic love [and] against women's potential for introducing discord (*fitna* in Islam)".<sup>166</sup>

In relation to the above mentioned point about the relationship between the construction of women as desexualized beings and the marginalization of sexuality in the context of socialist movements, Bulent Aydın told me one of his experiences related to the issue.

Our faculty was the most militant one in Istanbul in terms of the left-wing political mobilization. We had clashes with fascists almost every day. There was a girls' high school right next to our faculty, and the students of the high school were mostly fancy and good- looking girls. We never allowed our male friends to communicate with the students of that high school. Once I warned some of these girls not to come to our faculty, and forbade them to spend time with our male friends. Otherwise, our male comrades would have been easily allured.<sup>167</sup>

There are plenty of examples of such construction of women as sexual objects in the journals of *Devrimci Yol*. The first example is a report on the struggle of people living in the Ankara neighborhood *Keçikıran* who demanded a proper sewerage system. In the report, the participants of the struggle are specified as "grandfathers, mothers, sisters [bacı] and kids" who "went to the directorate of technical works to claim their rights".<sup>168</sup> Another example is present in the special issue of the journal with an open call for a political campaign organized by the supporters of *Devrimci Yol*. The name of campaign was "Resistance Against Fascist Cruelty and Costliness" and the journal called on "workers, peasants, civil servants, teachers, youth and mothers-sisters [*bacılar*]" to take part in the campaign.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 252.

<sup>167</sup> Interview with Bülent Aydın, Beşiktaş, December 23, 2015.

<sup>168</sup> Devrimci Yol, "Keçikıran Halkının Mücadelesi," *Devrimci Yol*, September 1, 1977, 6.

<sup>169</sup> Devrimci Yol, "Faşist Zulme ve Pahalılığa Karşı Direniş Kampanyası," *Devrimci Yol* [Special Issue], October 5, 1977.

In an interview conducted in 2011 with Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu, there is a specific section related with the topic of *bacı*. The male interviewer asked him a question about the relations between male and female members of the organization and reminded him of the criticisms from former female members of *Devrimci Yol* that the common use of the notion of *bacı* led the organization to be repressive in terms of gender relations.<sup>170</sup> Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu openly said that *Devrimci Yol* avoided going against the values of the society, especially hegemonic elements of gender order, as much as possible.<sup>171</sup>

We were attentive not to go against the people and values of the society [...] In every aspect... When we went to slum areas, we avoided behaving in a way that might be at variance with the widespread forms of relations among the people who were living there...yes, we sometimes avoided to be in conflict with moral values that might be delineated as totalitarian and conservative values... We paid attention to our clothing, our behaviors [...] I see that kind of concerns as completely normal. The liberal leftists of new times criticize such features of the revolutionary movement as feudal and conservative, as if these features were bad ones. In my opinion, it is very normal for a revolutionary movement to be attentive of the behaviors of its members within the society, as long as it does not turn into adulation.<sup>172</sup>

Müftüoğlu's statements show that there was a kind of appropriation of the moral values of the society by the members of *Devrimci Yol*, and this appropriation resulted in a justification of the major components of masculine domination among male socialists.

Motherhood is another important element within the political discourse of *Devrimci Yol* in terms of appropriation of popular values. In the journal *Devrimci Yol*, it is possible to find representations of “combative mothers” who are constructed as “heroines such as wives

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<sup>170</sup> Ümide Aksu, who is a former female militant of *Devrimci Yol*, criticizes the movement by saying that the organization was repressive in terms of gender relations. Gülfer Akkaya, *As If We Were Equal: Feminist analysis of the revolutionary struggles in 1960's and 1970's in Turkey* (İstanbul: Kumbara Sanat, 2011).

<sup>171</sup> Bostancıoğlu and Müftüoğlu, *Bitmeyen Yolculuk: Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu Kitabı* [Unending journey of Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu], 220.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

and mothers dedicated to the anti-fascist cause [who] constituted the prevailing model for women to imitate”.<sup>173</sup> There are many examples in *Devrimci Yol* in which women are represented in that way; for instance, the eighteenth issue of the journal, published on January 22, 1978, mentioned that “A mother is honored with the certificate of appreciation because of her remarkable support for the revolutionary struggle in the neighborhood”.<sup>174</sup>

In her critique of the Turkish Left in the 1970s, Fatmagül Berktaş in 1995 drew attention to a similar point:

In the name of ‘cherishing the values of the people’, the Turkish Left has steeped itself in feudal prejudice and behavior, coming to embrace [...] the family, monogamy and all else that goes by the name of ‘the values of our people’.<sup>175</sup>

While avoiding to be in conflict with these values, socialist men were reproducing the gender order and the collective expectations of society that are inscribed within the social structure. Hence, left-populism both as a discourse and as a set of practices had important effects on the formation of socialist masculinities in a hegemonic sense, in terms of “legitimizing male jurisdiction over women”.<sup>176</sup>

### ***4.3 Reading Marx and Becoming Masculine: The Production of the Language of Priorities***

In section 2.3, I introduced the concept of reading strategy. Here I will use this concept to show that socialist men’s attempts to find the true meaning of Marxism are products of a

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<sup>173</sup> M Nash, “Milicianas and Homefront Heroines - Images of Women in Revolutionary Spain, (1936-1939),” *History of European Ideas* 11 (1989): 239.

<sup>174</sup> *Devrimci Yol*, May 22, 1978.

<sup>175</sup> Fatmagül Berktaş, “Has Anything Changed in the Outlook of the Turkish Left on Women?,” in *Women in Modern Turkish Society: A Reader*, ed. Şirin Tekeli (London ; Atlantic Highlands, N.J: Zed Books, 1995), 253.

<sup>176</sup> Berktaş, “Has Anything Changed in the Outlook of the Turkish Left on Women?,” 253.

specific reading strategy of Marxist literature, which also shaped their approach of the woman question.

The construction of certain socialist masculine subject positions should not be understood as merely stemming from primordial patriarchal gender hierarchies and gendered subjectivities. Rather, the process of subjectivation, through which aforementioned subjects are interpellated into socialist subject positions, is governed by a chain of citationality that Marxist readings are embedded in and constitutive of. With respect to this chain of citationality, the subject/the reader engages in a Marxian knowledge production, which at the same time has the function of informing future readings and also future Marxist writings. And by virtue of reiterative reading of Marxist texts, the male subjects reproduce themselves, and through these reiterative practices a certain chain of citationality is mobilized as well. The shaping, signification and circulation of Marxian ideals and socialist subjects take place with reference to this evolving chain of citationality, which simultaneously incites those who engage with Marxist readings to reiterate/cite the canonized reading strategies. In this sense, this chain of citationality functions as a regulatory locus for the reading strategies that are available for the socialist subjects. As a consequence of this performative reading process, the subject is assigned into a socialist subjecthood in accordance with the reading strategy she/he performs.

Lastly, it must be emphasized that this process is never fixed and foreclosed. As philosopher Judith Butler suggests, it is never possible for the subject to identically cite/reiterate the norm, which is what makes it possible for reading strategies and certain significations these practices mediate to be resignified and altered.<sup>177</sup> However, my analysis here does not focus on that part of the process.

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<sup>177</sup> Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993).

Based on my understanding of reading strategy as a major component of the male socialist identity, in this section, I analyze the texts published in the journals *Atılım* and *Ürün* in which *TKP* articulated its political proposals and agenda. Since *TKP* identified itself as Marxist-Leninist, the texts in these journals embody certain reading strategies of Marxist corpus that were regarded as the major reference points for *TKP*'s revolutionary political discourses, and the party's perspective on the woman question. In this section, I analyze *TKP*'s approach of the woman question on different levels, from the top of the party that was producing texts to proclaim the party's stance on the women, to the bottom where male party members discussed these texts published in these journals, and developed their position in relation to these texts. In that regard, I also examine and problematize the way in which the party and its male members treated the woman question. Before doing this, I first describe the main features of the orthodox Marxist-Leninist understanding of the woman question that the *TKP* accommodated during the 1970s.

In her 1981 study of the record of socialist countries "in abolishing gender inequality" in the twentieth century, Maxine Molyneux attempted to "assess what the positive achievements and what the failings have been".<sup>178</sup> While doing this, Molyneux outlined the policies implemented by socialist governments for achieving the emancipation of women and the difficulties that these governments faced in their efforts to overcome gender inequalities. In Molyneux's view, the difficulties that the socialist governments faced were not only arising from "the practical execution of government policies, but [also from] the way in which the 'woman question' [was] approached".<sup>179</sup> According to her, "there is a striking degree of uniformity between the two types of post-revolutionary developments," that is, post-revolutionary states in the Third World, and the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, in

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<sup>178</sup> Maxine Molyneux, "Socialist Societies Old and New: Progress Towards Women's Emancipation?," *Feminist Review*, no. 8 (1981): 1.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

terms of solving the woman question. She underlined the relationship between socialist governments' approaches of the woman question and the uniformity in the theoretical premises on the woman question that was influenced by the Comintern.<sup>180</sup>

One important reason for the uniformity in these theories of women's emancipation is to be found in the historical formation and subsequent reproduction of the orthodox communist position on women. This position was not a simple transposition from the Marxist classics: the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin on women were fragmentary and, in some ways, inconsistent. What has been created is a selective canonization of their observations to produce an apparently coherent theory. Just as in the aftermath of Lenin's death an orthodox corpus called 'Marxism-Leninism' was created in Moscow and disseminated through the international communist movement, so an orthodox position on women was also developed, based on an instrumental reading of the classical texts and on the official codifications of the early period of the Third International. This orthodox position on women has remained dominant and relatively unchallenged to this day; it is not only the theory officially diffused in Eastern Europe but also that with which newcomers to the 'socialist camp' and communist parties in capitalist countries continue to be supplied.<sup>181</sup>

The Marxian knowledge production was shaped by the centralizing tendencies of the Comintern following the Fifth Comintern Congress held in 1924, in which 'the Bolsheviks' brand of Marxism, deterministic and productionist, became compulsory for all [members of

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<sup>180</sup> The Comintern is the abbreviation of The Third Communist International, was founded at the conference held in Moscow March 1919, and dissolved in May 1943. The aim and the central politics of the Comintern was to guide the international communist movement in terms of establishing communist parties all around the world to aid the international communist revolution. "Communist International," *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, May 31, 2016, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Communist\\_International&oldid=723026949](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Communist_International&oldid=723026949).

<sup>181</sup> Molyneux, "Socialist Societies Old and New," 8.



the Comintern]”.<sup>182</sup> The political strategy model proposed by the Comintern was based on a “program of Bolshevization [...] recognizing the proletariat as the chief target of campaigns (‘Face to the Factories’ was the watchword) and reorganizing party cells on that basis”.<sup>183</sup> In that regard, the historical formation and subsequent reproduction of the orthodox communist position on women was informed by that tendency, and reiterated the blind spots of classical Marxist literature by conceding the priority given to production above, and separate from reproductive labor.

As mentioned by Emel Akal (2001), *TKP*’s position on the woman question was utterly shaped by the above-mentioned orthodox Marxist-Leninist position based on recognizing the proletariat and its struggle as the primary field in party politics. So, one of the major features of the reading strategy that was employed in the political discourse of *TKP*, which had a formative influence on the male socialist identity, was the tendency to deprioritize “the woman question”.<sup>184</sup> For a better understanding of *TKP*’s stance on the woman question, I analyze a text that appeared in the magazine *Ürün*, which published *TKP*’s theoretical considerations on Marxism. This text was published in April 1975 and was written by Elmas Tatarova, a Bulgarian left-feminist and member of The Committee of the Bulgarian Women’s Movement.<sup>185</sup> The version published in the journal was an excerpt from a book by Elmas Tatarova titled ‘Woman and Socialism’, which was written in Turkish and published in

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<sup>182</sup> Elizabeth Waters, “In the Shadow of the Comintern: The Communist Women’s Movement, 1920-43,” in *Promissory Notes: Women in the Transition to Socialism*, ed. Sonia Kruks, Rayna Rapp, and Marilyn Blatt Young, New Feminist Library (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1989), 48.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Molyneux, “Socialist Societies Old and New,” 21.

<sup>185</sup> The Committee of Bulgarian Women’s Movement was the official state-socialist mass organization of women in communist-era Bulgaria. For more detailed studies on the committee, see Miroslava Nikolova and Kristen Ghodsee, “Socialist Wallpaper: The Culture of Everyday Life and the Committee of the Bulgarian Women’s Movement, 1968–1990,” *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 22, no. 3 (September 1, 2015): 319–40 and Kristen Rogheh Ghodsee, “Rethinking State Socialist Mass Women’s Organizations: The Committee of the Bulgarian Women’s Movement and the United Nations Decade for Women, 1975-1985,” *Journal of Women’s History* 24, no. 4 (2012): 49.

Sofia in 1973.<sup>186</sup> It is the only text that I found in the journals of the Communist Party that directly addresses the woman question in a detailed way. Hence, the party was suggesting this article to its members as their official theoretical stance regarding the woman question. Tatarova begins her analysis of the “true Marxist position” on the woman question by criticizing August Bebel:

The idea that A. Bebel could not analyze from a Marxist viewpoint was the following: The emancipation of women from home is possible even under capitalism. Bebel argues that thanks to the mechanization of housework and scientific and technical innovations, women could be liberated from domestic slavery. Based on these data, he claims that revolutionary novelties might take place even within the bourgeois society. (...) These novelties, however, cannot be accomplished under the conditions of a class society. Thus, Bebel misinterprets Marxism and falls prey to social-democratic, opportunistic views. As Lenin wrote, he [Bebel] maintains the idea of the transformation of the state that is based on class domination into a national state.<sup>187</sup>

According to Tatarova, Bebel was wrong in terms of being optimistic about the possibilities of any kind of positive change in women’s status under capitalism. She outlines what she sees as the essence of Marxist-Leninist theory, which was never losing sight of the broader goal of achieving socialism, represented as the only stage in which women will be emancipated.

The main problem in the women’s question, i.e., harmonizing the socially beneficial labor with the task of motherhood [...] Marxist-Leninist theory does not separate the women’s question from the general question. That is to say, this question depends upon the proletariat’s class struggle for its

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<sup>186</sup> Elmas Tatarova, *Sosyalizm ve kadın* (Sofia: Narodna Prosveta, 1973).

<sup>187</sup> Elmas Tatarova, “Sosyalizm ve Kadın [Women and Socialism],” *Ürün Sosyalist Dergi*, April 1975.

emancipation against the capital.<sup>188</sup>

Tatarova's text is the only theoretical piece that offers a coherent Marxist-Leninist approach to the woman question in the publications of *TKP* between 1974 and 1980. There are a few other texts published in the journal *Atılım* describing the party's position regarding this issue. The most important features of these texts are their references to Lenin's statements on women in order to reiterate the party's Marxist-Leninist position, and the members of *TKP* were expected to determine their position regarding the woman question in relation to these texts. Here is an example of a text published in *Atılım* that reiterates the Leninist position similar to Tatarova's explanation quoted above:

Lenin asserts, "The success of a revolution depends on the participation of women." There has not been any oppressed nation throughout the history that has achieved its national independence without women's participation.

It is the same in our country. As more workingwomen participate in the revolutionary warfare and we set up and improve the economic and political organizations for the workingwomen, so our struggle will succeed. In that regard, it is crucially important for the branches and the cells of *TKP* and the communists to work and organize among broad masses of women.

The women in Turkey are living under a double exploitation as are women in all the capitalist countries around the world. They endure the most difficult conditions devotedly. They organized a "Mothers' March" for their sons who were killed by fascists. They shouted "Down with Fascism!" These are the concrete examples and indicators that they take side with the struggle against fascism. It is evident that women are marching on the way to the emancipation of the proletariat and towards the same goal. Women are inseparable elements of the struggle of the proletariat. The women can only be emancipated through the emancipation of the working class.

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

The role of working-class women is to fight against the bourgeoisie on the side of men, contrary to the arguments of some separatist-feminist tendencies saying that women should fight against men.

*TKP* has been struggling for the emancipation of women together with the liberation of the proletariat and to bring women under the flag of the proletariat for fifty-six years, and it will continue to struggle for it.<sup>189</sup>

The danger of losing the emphasis on the unity of the struggle of proletariat was repeated many times in the articles that were describing the *TKP*'s approach to the woman question. Thus, *TKP*'s orthodox Marxist-Leninist position was reiterated in two ways: first, by reminding the communists that their major goal was shaped around the idea of general emancipation which could only be achieved through the struggle of the proletariat, and second, while doing this, targeting feminism as a 'separatist' and therefore dangerous tendency. After the party conference that was held in 1977 in Moscow, *TKP* describes its approach to the woman question by reminding the central place of the idea of general emancipation:

There is an approach to the woman question disengaging it from its class origin, albeit admitting its existence. This approach includes bourgeois feminism that is built upon the idea of the opposition between male and female, and upon all sorts of opportunist and reformist ideas that offer solutions to the woman question with adjustments that do nothing regarding the exploitation within the system. Communists are fighting against these errors. Communists shape the women's movement around Marxist-Leninist ideals. Women's emancipation cannot be considered separate from the emancipation of the proletariat and the workers, briefly, of everyone; accordingly, the general emancipation of the people cannot be achieved without the contribution of women who make up half the population and a significant part of the working class. Solutions of the woman question and the struggle for that solution cannot be considered separately from national

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<sup>189</sup> "8 Mart Belgimiz [Our Stance on the March]," *Atılım*, March 1978.

independence and the struggle for an advanced democracy and the further struggle for achieving socialism. However, the revolutionary women's movement can only be created through setting up an organization and action plan that rests upon solid, vital and immediate demands. And only the masses of women who are struggling for such concrete demands can figure out that the solution is related to radical social changes and to the question of political sovereignty.<sup>190</sup>

Regarding all these texts published in the journals of *TKP*, I trace the ways in which socialist men were informed by these texts and cited them in their political struggle. In the interview that I conducted with Mustafa Pacal, who was a male factory worker and a former-member of *TKP* in the 1970s, he describes their priorities in the political struggle in relation to their understanding of a broader struggle against capitalism and imperialism:

Since we were Marxist-Leninists, it was crucial for us to stick to the fundamental of socialist politics, which was the struggle of the working class. Thus, we never prioritized the woman question or the problems related to women's oppression. Moreover, we were identifying those attempts addressing the woman question with the theologians and the philosophers from Constantinople who were having a debate on the sex of the angels, while the Ottoman armies were surrounding the city walls.<sup>191</sup>

According to Pacal, the struggle of the working class against capitalism was considered as the major political struggle, and the woman question was bound by the class struggle. The revolution would solve the woman question. In relation to his point about the 'true Marxist-Leninist' stance, he describes how he cited these texts and constructed his reader/subject position:

We were mostly reading *Atılım*. I remember some articles and commentaries on the topic of the woman question, but to be honest, the

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<sup>190</sup> *TKP Konferansı* [The Conference of TKP] (Ankara: Temel Yayınları, 1978), 194.

<sup>191</sup> Interview with Mustafa Pacal, Taksim, April 13, 2016.

only thing that I got from these texts was the information that everything will be solved after the revolution. For instance, there were some male party members were also working in the factories. I clearly remember that these men were very conservative in terms of gender relations, they had feudal residues because of their background. Most of them came to Istanbul from rural areas, and there was a huge difference between the male members of the party in terms of their background. Those who had come to Istanbul recently from the countryside were very traditionalist, even misogynist. Yet, we never problematized their traditionalism. I mean, for example, often we criticized our female comrades because of how they dressed, but we never called these men and warned them that “what are you doing, it is against the party politics”. Because the working-class struggle was the primary political struggle and the workers were the subjects of this struggle. So, I can tell you that the thing that I got from the articles published in *Atılım* was that there was no need to criticize these men. We considered that kind of debate as a petty-bourgeois one that would disengage us from the main struggle.<sup>192</sup>

At this point, it is important to note that the reading strategy employed by socialist men and the subject positions of readers are shaped by social relations. In other words, subject positions and reading strategies are not produced through individual processes; rather they are products of collective and interactional processes. To show this, I want to cite some points made by Emel Akal, a female member of the *TKP* in the 1970s, in the interview that I held with her:

If you are asking about the level of political awareness on the woman question, we knew about the clear stance of Lenin, which says that women had been tied to the home, and only socialism can save them from this. This quote of Lenin made us, men and women altogether, to think that it cannot be solved in a capitalist society. We will make the revolution and the problem will be solved then. Thus, we were aware of the fact the women

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

should not be confined to child-care and washing the dishes, but we thought that it was not the solution if we load all these tasks on the shoulders of men. And we knew that the problem could only be solved with advancing women in the public sphere and opening crèches. That was what we knew. So, we [women] did not know either to ask questions like ‘why didn’t you clean the toilet? Why didn’t you cook?’<sup>193</sup>

Emel Akal’s remarks on how subject positions were relationally constructed in my view further demonstrate that the formation of masculinities and femininities is a bilateral process.

It is important as well to examine the distribution of *TKP*’s membership in order to see the extent to which *TKP*’s position on the women question affected and allowed women’s participation in party politics. Since the *TKP* was an illegal party, it is not possible to establish the exact number of party members. Yet, *TKP*’s perspective on recruiting women as members can be easily deduced from the testimonies of former members of the party. According to Emel Akal, on the one hand, *TKP* recruited many women for party membership, especially after 1975 when the party decided to become a mass organization of the working class.<sup>194</sup> However, Akal added that the number of women who held an executive position decreased drastically from top to bottom within the party hierarchy.<sup>195</sup> If we look at the composition of the *TKP* central committee, we can notice that Gönül Dinçer is the only woman who was ever a member.<sup>196</sup> Moreover, in line with the *TKP*’s position on the woman question that it would be solved with the establishment of socialism, the low number of women in its decision-making bodies was never problematized.

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<sup>193</sup> Interview with Emel Akal, Ankara, December 23, 2015.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> *TKP Davası İddianame* [Bill of Indictment: The Trial of the Communist Party of Turkey], 25.

#### ***4.4 Revealing gender relations through the narratives of socialist women***

The point of departure for looking into the narratives of socialist women in order to examine the formation of socialist masculinities is Natalie Zemon Davis' famous 1976 remark in which she urged a feminist historical audience to extend its scope through an analogy:

It seems to me that we should be interested in the history of both women and men, that we should not be working only on subjected sex any more than an historian of class can focus entirely on peasants. Our goal is to understand the significance of the sexes, of gender groups in the historical past.<sup>197</sup>

In his analysis of the relations of domination between men and women, Bourdieu similarly defined masculinity as a form of symbolic capital that is derived from “a naturalized social construction” in which male and female are based on the understanding of each of the two genders as “existing only relationally”.<sup>198</sup> In addition these points, I want to call attention to the “practices of women and to the historical interplay of femininities and masculinities” in order to overcome the dichotomy between masculinity and femininity in which constitution of masculinity is attributed solely to the practices of men and vice versa.<sup>199</sup>

Starting from the relational approach of the constitution of masculinity, the experiences of socialist women matter in order to link objective structures to subjective experience while analyzing the sexual division of labor within the socialist movement in

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<sup>197</sup> Natalie Zemon Davis, “‘Women’s History’ in Transition: The European Case,” *Feminist Studies*, 1976, 90. Interestingly, the same quotation is used by John Tosh and Michael Kimmel, who are prominent scholars of the field of history of masculinities, in their works in which they are discussing the potentials of studying men for restructuring the history. See Michael S. Kimmel, “Invisible Masculinity,” *Society* 30, no. 6 (September 1, 1993): 28–35; John Tosh, “What Should Historians Do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain,” *History Workshop*, no. 38 (1994): 179–202.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,” *Gender and Society*, 2005, 848; Raewyn Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1987); Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).



Turkey in the 1970s. Thus, it is critically important to reveal the ways in which socialist women perceived the feminine dispositions that the gender social order produced and the socialist movement appropriated. Interviews that other scholars conducted with former female socialists provide important examples of this, as I will show below. Additionally, women's narratives are crucially important to determine to what extent socialist men reproduced hegemonic masculinity.

First of all, I discuss the narratives of socialist women addressing their experiences of the sexual division of labor within socialist organizations in the 1970s. Saadet Arıkan Özkan, who is a former member of both *TKP* and *İKD*, criticizes her male comrades who took the sexual division of labor in the household for granted in the interview that was conducted by Emel Akal, and published in her (2001) book:

First of all, husbands were creating problems. We were facing criticisms and questions like 'Where have you been, the house is messy and there is a pile of dirty dishes'. For this reason, there was a constant debate with our husbands. The members of *İKD* were responding by saying that my activism is as important as yours. We are not on the streets for joy.<sup>200</sup>

This example shows that socialist men belittled women's activism and at the same time reproduced their own self-importance in regard to doing activism, which focused on the working-class struggle. Another example from Saadet Arıkan Özkan shows the ways in which male socialists constituted women as a negative entity and tried to direct them through the male gaze.

We were restraint by *TKP*. We had a member who had graduated from college [this refers to a private school in the context of Turkey] and she was playing the piano. She was combing her hair in a nice way and wearing

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<sup>200</sup> Emel Akal, *Kızıl Feministler: bir sözlü tarih çalışması* [The Red Feminists: An Oral History Project], İletişim Yayınları ; Araştırma İnceleme Dizisi 1632. 267 (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), 256.

earrings. She was a nice girl and she was active in the union of textile workers [...] One day, I received a message from the party saying that ‘The members of İKD who visit the union are wearing earrings, acting freely and taking care of their hair’. I tried to argue against them by saying that ‘The worker girls in the union are also wearing earrings and they liked our fellows from İKD very much because they are peers and it is normal to behave in this way’. But my comrades from the party said no and told me to ‘warn them not to behave in this way again’, and I did not continue arguing against them, although I should have done so.<sup>201</sup>

This example shows that Saadet Özkan’s male comrades had a patronizing attitude towards female socialists. According to Fatmagül Berktaş, there was a common pattern among male socialists in Turkey in the 1970s who were “exercising control and supervision over women, precisely because they are women (purely on account of their gender, in other words), they have a greater tendency to ‘go bourgeois’”.<sup>202</sup> As a result of this way of thinking about women, socialist men considered their patronizing attitudes “legitimate to exercise daily jurisdiction over [women’s] dress and behavior”.<sup>203</sup> Another dimension that can be found in that example is related to the class background of the woman who was from a middle-class family. Being graduated from the college and playing piano were imperatives that conditioned that very specific attitude towards her, and she was considered as a woman who is more likely to ‘go bourgeois’.

According to Bourdieu, “all work of socialization [...] tends to impose limits on [woman’s] body, which have to be inscribed in the dispositions of the body”.<sup>204</sup> Taking the above-mentioned example as point of departure, the feminine body and dispositions (female habitus) become a counter-point not only to the masculine habitus, but also to the masculine

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 258.

<sup>202</sup> Berktaş, “Has Anything Changed in the Outlook of the Turkish Left on Women?,” 252.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

<sup>204</sup> Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, 27.

*and* socialist identity. Looking down upon or strictly criticizing and rejecting what is deemed by them as "the feminine way" then, directly reproduces the male domination and specifically, socialist men's domination in the political struggle as well.

I faced criticism. I was sent to Democratic Germany, which was a reward, with a group of 4-5 people. I like drinking and dancing very much. The environment was suitable for it, and I danced and drank too. But I did not go overboard. When I returned back to Turkey, a comrade who loves to drink as well told me that 'you drank a lot'. Then I replied him by saying that 'yes, I like drinking very much'. That was all I could say to him.<sup>205</sup>

In this example, a communist woman was condemned by one of her male comrades because of her "improper" behavior. This example shows how a communist woman was constituted as a symbolic object that exists through men's gaze, as a being-perceived. Thus, certain behaviors like drinking alcohol and dispositions were deemed forbidden for a "communist woman", which situated men in the position of power that can dictate what is expected and accepted from women or not. In this narrative, we can notice that socialist women were constantly experiencing the discrepancy between their actual practices and the collective expectations.

#### ***4.5 Concluding remarks on socialist masculinities: Neither ahead nor behind their times***

The concept of socialist masculinities allows for an investigation of the ways in which socialist men produced and reproduced the gender order, and for exploring whether this differed from the hegemonic mode of masculinity. Since socialism occupied a central place in progressive politics and offered a liberationist perspective for women, it might be assumed

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<sup>205</sup> Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*, 258.

that male socialists adopted discursive and performative practices that were in line with such emancipatory ideals for women. In this regard, the concept of socialist masculinities marks an attempt to investigate whether in the case of Turkey, socialist politics provided a space for counter-hegemonic masculinities or not.

This chapter has shown the ways in which social, cultural and political bonds had a formative influence on gender and political identities of socialist men in Turkey in the 1970s. The first finding of this chapter is the determining role of the anti-fascists struggle and of political violence in the constitution of male socialist identities in Turkey at the time. Violent practices that were regarded as potentially dangerous and that indeed often were dangerous, took place like operations of differentiation in order to construct gender, hence to signify perceived differences between men and women. The anti-fascist struggle was configured by socialist men as the stage to perform both their gender and political identities in the 1970s.

The second finding of this chapter is the role of social conditions in the actualization of the male and female habitus in the formation of socialist masculinities. Since the interactions between socialist men and women were structured by the agents' habitus, the gender identities of socialist men were constructed on the basis of the oppositions between differentiated male and female habitus.

Lastly, socialist men constructed themselves as the major actors of the political struggle by employing a language of priorities in which the woman question was subordinated to the broader goals of the working-class struggle and achieving socialism. Such a language enabled socialist men to produce positions of authority over socialist women, which were translated into a political identity.

To conclude based on my findings in this chapter, I see the formation of the socialist male identity among socialist men in Turkey in the 1970s as a dissident but nonetheless hegemonic mode of masculinity. On the one hand, socialist men occupied a dissident political

position that challenged the established social, political and economic order of capitalism, and had an alternative vision in terms of being a socialist. On the other hand, as can be seen in the sections above, they reinforced hegemonic notions of gender differences and reproduced the established gender order through certain discursive and material practices on an everyday basis. Turkish socialist masculinities were therefore dissident in the sense of being engaged in an antagonistic relationship with capitalism, yet hegemonic at the same time in terms of appropriating masculine domination within the framework of the socialist struggle.

## CHAPTER 5 – CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis, I have analyzed the formation of socialist masculinities on Turkey in the 1970s by focusing on two different socialist groups, *Devrimci Yol* and *TKP*. The history of socialism in Turkey has been narrated and discussed in a number of books and scholarly works, and no doubt it will be further discussed from different perspectives since the historiography on socialism in Turkey is a developing field.<sup>206</sup> There are some other works incorporating a critical perspective on the history of socialism in Turkey, problematizing the male dominance within the socialist movement throughout its history, and narrating the history of socialist women's movements in Turkey that have been neglected within the field.<sup>207</sup> However, socialist men and the masculinities constructed around a political identity of being socialist have not been addressed and analyzed within the history of socialism in Turkey. Additionally, socialist men have been largely unstudied by scholars in the field of critical studies on men and masculinities more broadly. With my study of socialist masculinities, I tried to narrate the history of socialism from a different perspective through the lenses of critical masculinities studies. The second goal of my study was to understand how political identities and gender were mutually constructed among male socialists in Turkey in the 1970s.

In order to answer my research questions, I used two theoretical frameworks to examine my materials. First, I relied on two theoretical perspectives: Connell's realist

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<sup>206</sup> Aydınöğlü, *Türkiye solu, 1960-1980*; Tunçay, *Türkiye'de sol akımlar 1925-1936 (Leftist tendencies in Turkey between 1925-1936)*; Tunçay, *Türkiye'de sol akımlar 1908-1925 (Leftist tendencies in Turkey between 1908-1925)*; Bora and Gültekinçil, *Sol (The Left)*; Ersan, *1970'lerde Türkiye solu (Turkish Left in 1970s)*; Yurtsever, *Yükseliş ve düşüş*.

<sup>207</sup> Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*; Zihnioğlu, "Türkiye'de Solun Feminizme Yaklaşımı [Approaches to Feminism by Turkish Left]"; Berktaş, "Has Anything Changed in the Outlook of the Turkish Left on Women?"; Akkaya, *As If We Were Equal: Feminist analysis of the revolutionary struggles in 1960's and 1970's in Turkey*; Keşeoğlu, "Socialist Women's Organizations in Turkey, 1975-1980"; Kader Çeşmecioğlu, *Ateşe Uçan Pervaneler: Devrimci Yolcu Kadınlar Anlatıyor* [Months flying into flame: Stories from the female members of the Revolutionary Path] (İstanbul: Kalkedon, 2015).

sociological approach of masculinities and Bourdieu's relational sociological account of the production of masculine domination. I used Connell's definition of masculinities "as configurations of practice structured by gender relations [...] which may be following different historical trajectories".<sup>208</sup> In relation to her definition of masculinities, the concept of hegemonic masculinity refers to the relationship between the production of hegemonic gender norms and the interplay of different forms of masculinities. Connell's analysis of multiple and contesting masculinities was a fitting framework for studying the case of socialist masculinities in Turkey in the 1970s in order to analyze the construction of masculinity among dissident groups, such as socialists. In addition to Connell's conceptualization, I used Bourdieu's understanding of masculine and feminine dispositions that are inscribed through certain practices such as violence and produced on a daily basis by constituting men as dominant and woman as a being-perceived.<sup>209</sup>

Regarding the second theoretical framework, I used Terrell Carver's conceptualization of reading strategy in *The Postmodern Marx*, a concept that acknowledges the transformative and productive role of reading as a practice inciting various subjectivation processes for the formation of (in this case socialist) subjects.<sup>210</sup> The concept of reading strategy was important for my thesis to reveal the reading strategies employed by socialist men in Turkey in the 1970s, to show the relationship between the construction of male socialist identities and these men's attempts to find and maintain the assumed "true meaning" of Marxism, which are products of a specific reading strategy of Marxist literature.

My analysis in chapter 4 of archival materials, secondary sources and interviews, informed by this theoretical framework, led to the following findings:

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<sup>208</sup> Connell, *Masculinities*, 44.

<sup>209</sup> Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*.

<sup>210</sup> Carver, *The Postmodern Marx*, 234.

Firstly, I found that the street politics accompanied by violent acts allowed the male socialists to become associated with specific acts that were marking their gender identity and to acknowledge the manliness of their male comrades. Using Bourdieu's concept of *libido dominandi*, I showed that the violent practices were constituted as the field that made socialist men both *inclined and able* to enter into certain actions that were expressions of a *libido dominandi*. I also found that violent practices were based on a strict division of labor that was constantly producing feminine and masculine dispositions in the context of the socialist movement in Turkey in the 1970s.

Secondly, my research showed the important role of populist ideas that were articulated in the political discourse of Devrimci Yol in reproducing the gender order and the collective expectations of society that are inscribed within the social structure. While socialists were avoiding coming into conflict with these 'popular' values, they were simultaneously appropriating hegemonic gender norms that reiterated male and female dispositions through the notions of '*bacı*' and motherhood, which were manifest in their discursive practices in a number of ways.

Thirdly, by analyzing the major features of the reading strategy that were employed in the political discourse of *TKP*, I showed that this reading strategy had a formative influence on a male socialist identity that tended to deprioritize the woman question. In this sense, I argue that the reading strategy that was based on an orthodox Marxist-Leninist position, which posits the proletariat and its struggle as the primary field in the party politics, is a reading process by which the subject is assigned into a socialist subjecthood in accordance with the reading strategy socialist men perform.

Lastly, regarding "the historical interplay of femininities and masculinities," I have argued that socialist men achieved a power position to impose what is expected and accepted from women or not, which created a discrepancy between women's actual practices and the



collective expectations.<sup>211</sup> Thus the masculine *and* socialist identity was not solely constituted through the “behavioral patterns manifest in [...] bodily traits” of masculine, but rather feminine body and female habitus also became a counter-point for the constitution of masculine identity, in terms of the way in which socialist women were perceived by socialist men.<sup>212</sup>

The central finding of this thesis is that Turkish socialist masculinities of the time were both dissident and hegemonic simultaneously. Throughout the whole thesis, I have attempted to show the ways in which socialist men in Turkey in the 1970s failed to construct a counter-hegemonic masculinity, despite the acknowledgement of the woman question in the political program of the organizations that they were members of.

My historical research was limited to two organizations. Considering the fact that there were tens of socialist groups that were active in Turkey in both the 1970s and the 1980s, this research could be expanded by taking the broader body of Turkish left into consideration. For example, by including the whole body of the socialist movement in Turkey in the 1970s, it could possibly allow us to see a pattern that operated among socialists in terms of masculinities.

This thesis can be considered as part of the field of historical research on men and masculinities and the developing field of historiography on socialism in Turkey, and as far as I know is the first contribution to the history of socialist masculinities in Turkey. By bringing socialist men and their masculinities into focus, this thesis was an attempt to re-narrate the history of socialism in Turkey from a critical perspective. In addition, this thesis can be considered as a contribution to the field of studies on men and masculinities in which most of the studies focus on right-wing and far-right masculinities. By studying dissident political identities, this thesis aimed to broaden the scope of the studies on political masculinities.

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<sup>211</sup> Connell and Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity,” 848.

<sup>212</sup> Hadas, “Gymnastic Exercises, or ‘Work Wrapped in the Gown of Youthful Joy,’” 161.

## APPENDIX: INTERVIEWS

In chapter 5, I referred to four interviews in order to support my arguments on the formation of socialist masculinities in Turkey in the 1970s. The cited interviews are conversations and discussions with former male and female participants of the socialist movement in Turkey in the 1970s. I conducted three interviews with male socialists in order to explore male socialist subjectivities by looking into their narratives, and one interview with a female socialist to see the relational construction of masculinities and femininities.

Before conducting these interviews, I prepared a sample of questions for each interviewee regarding the differences between the organizations they had been members of, yet I did not limit the interviews to only these questions. The questions that I asked during the interviews were shaped around these themes:

- How did you become a member of the organization?
- How did you perceive the gender differences within the organization?
- How did you describe the content of the relationships between male and female socialists?
- How did you think about what we now call hegemonic gender norms?
- To what extent did you or your group appropriate these norms?

### *Interview with Mustafa Pacal, 13 April 2016.*

Mustafa Pacal, trade unionist and columnist, is currently writing for an online newspaper haberdar.com on daily politics in Turkey. I conducted an interview with him in a café at Taksim Square in Istanbul that lasted for forty-five minutes. The interview was recorded by a MP3 device.

Pacal was born in Istanbul in 1954. In 1976, he started working in a factory after finishing his compulsory military service, and became a member of The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DİSK). In 1977, he became a member of the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP), and he was active in the campaigns organized by *TKP* among workers in Istanbul. He got arrested after the military coup in September 12, 1980, and was subjected to torture following his arrest. Pacal spent four months in prison, and he was accused of attempting to annihilate the social order, but after his trial, he was released due to a lack of evidence in his case.

***Interview with Emel Akal, 18, December 2015.***

Emel Akal is an independent researcher and activist. She earned her Master's degree in sociology with a study on the history of the Progressive Women's Organization (IKD) in Turkey in the 1970s. She did research on the history of socialism in Turkey, and published two books. She gave lectures on the history of modern Turkey at different universities in Turkey. The interview was conducted in a café in Kızılay, Ankara, and lasted for an hour. This interview was recorded by a MP3 device.

Akal was graduated from the Department of Psychology at Istanbul University. In the 1970s, she was an active participant of the socialist movement in Turkey, and she worked for the local branches of IKD in Istanbul, Diyarbakır, Trabzon, Van, Bursa and Samsun. Akal became a member of *TKP*, while she was working for IKD. After the military coup in 1980, she started to be sought by the police, but she managed to escape for ten years until her case was abated.

### ***Interview with Bulent Aydin, 23 December, 2015***

Bulent Aydin, a retired graphic designer, is living in Beşiktaş, Istanbul, and he is a peace activist who initiates campaigns to end the armed conflict between the Turkish state and Kurdish guerilla fighters (Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK) and to bring about an enduring peace in the Kurdish region in Turkey. The interview with him was conducted in a café in Beşiktaş, Istanbul, and lasted for one hour and thirty minutes. The interview was recorded by a MP3 device.

Bulent Aydin was a student at the Faculty of Mining at Istanbul Technical University (ITU) when he became a member of *Devrimci Yol*. He was one of the prominent names in the socialist youth movement between 1975 and 1980 in Istanbul, and he was also the person in charge of the organization of *Devrimci Yol* in the neighborhoods in the old part of Istanbul. He got arrested after the military coup in September 12, 1980, and was subjected to torture following his arrest. He spent almost ten years in the prison.

### ***Interview with Selcuk Yildirim, 21 December 2015***

Selcuk Yildirim, working for an insurance company, has been living in Ankara since he came to Ankara for educational purposes in the 1970s. The interview was conducted in the central of office of the Foundation for Friendship and Benefit (Dostluk ve Yardımlaşma Vakfı), of which he is a member, in Kızılay, Ankara. It lasted forty-five minutes and was recorded by a MP3 device.

While he was studying high school in Ankara, Yıldırım was an active participant of the socialist movement in 1975, and afterwards, by 1977, he became a member of *Devrimci Yol* and started to work in Dikmen, which was one of the squatter neighborhoods in Ankara. In the later 1970s, he was selected for the armed revolutionary units by the decision-making bodies of *Devrimci Yol* and started to work in the underground. After the military coup in

1980, he got arrested and was sentenced to fifteen years in prison. He spent eleven years in the prison in Ankara and was released in 1991.

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