

**PATRONSUZ KAZAK, OR JUMPERS WITHOUT MASTERS: A CRITICAL  
ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMONING AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN  
TURKEY**

by

**EBRU ÖZDEŞ**

Submitted to the Institute of Social Sciences  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts

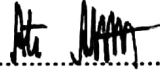
Sabancı University

January 2018

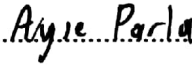
PATRONSUZ KAZAK, OR JUMPERS WITHOUT MASTERS: A CRITICAL  
ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMONING AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN  
TURKEY

APPROVED BY

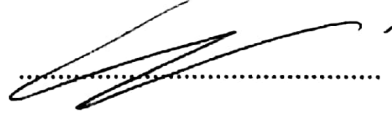
Asst. Prof. Ateş Ali Altınordu  
(Thesis Advisor)

  
.....

Assoc. Prof. Ayşe Parla

  
.....

Asst. Prof. Saygun Gökariksel

  
.....

DATE OF APPROVAL: 08.01.2018



© Ebru Özdeş

All Rights Reserved

## ABSTRACT

PATRONSUZ KAZAK, OR JUMPERS WITHOUT MASTERS: A CRITICAL  
ENGAGEMENT WITH COMMONING AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN  
TURKEY  
EBRU ÖZDEŞ

MA Thesis, January 2018

Thesis Supervisor: Assistant Professor Ateş Ali Altınordu

**Keywords:** new social movements, commoning, self-management, the Kazova Resistance, politics of commons

This thesis provides a political and sociological investigation of how the capacities of the working class to resist and organize for its collective interests as a class are shaped under neoliberal era. I analyze the intermingled forms of class struggle through one recent example of workers' resistance and self-management practice: the Kazova Resistance and the Kazova Cooperatives. Within the empirical framework of the Kazova Resistance, and based on the split within the resisting groups, I discuss the importance of labor movements in developing anti-capitalist relations, and its effects on the capitalist structures of society. The Kazova Resistance provides a significant ethnographic site to demonstrate how neoliberalism generates intra-class fragmentation through cultural, social, political and legal mechanisms. I also address Turkey's recent neoliberal history and its transforming effects on the labor movements, and compare technological and organizational structures which show underlying factors and tools provided during the process of the split in the Kazova Resistance. My aim in this work is to explore underrepresented separation in the Kazova Resistance through fieldwork and interviews. This split brings about not only two different cooperatives out of the same struggle but also entangled, and even conflicting memories of the past. The Kazova case provides promising answers to the question of how political processes operate at the intersections of working people's changing relationships to each other and to other groups as well as how these relations in turn shape collective action. Together with critical engagement with the politics of commons, and practice of commoning, I argue that the significance of anti-capitalist relations is missing within the political subjects of the commoning practices.

## ÖZET

### PATRONSUZ KAZAK: TÜRKİYE'DE YENİ SOSYAL HAREKETLER VE MÜŞTEREKLEŞMEYE ELEŞTİREL BİR YAKLAŞIM EBRU ÖZDEŞ

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ocak 2018

Tez Danışmanı: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Ateş Ali Altınordu

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** yeni sosyal hareketler, müşterekleştirme, özyönetim, Kazova Direnişi, müşterekler siyaseti

Bu tez, neoliberalizmin işçi sınıfının bir sınıf olarak direnme ve kolektif çıkarları için örgütlenme kapasitesini nasıl şekillendirdiğine dair siyasi ve sosyolojik bir araştırma sağlıyor. Tezde işçi hareketlerinin toplumun kapitalist yapıları dahilinde anti-kapitalist ilişkiler geliştirmekteki önemini tartışıyorum. Ayrıca Türkiye'nin yakın neoliberal geçmişini ve bunun işçi hareketleri üzerindeki dönüştürücü etkisini ele alıyorum. Sınıf mücadelesinin iç içe geçmiş biçimlerini, güncel bir işçi direnişi ve öz-yönetim pratiği örneği olan Kazova Direnişi ve Kazova Kooperatifleri üzerinden analiz ediyorum. Kazova Direnişi, neoliberalizmin kültürel, toplumsal ve yasal mekanizmalar aracılığıyla nasıl sınıf-içi bölünmeye yol açtığını ortaya koymak için önemli bir örnek oluşturuyor. Bu çalışmadaki amacım, Kazova Direnişi'ndeki göz ardı edilen bölünmeyi saha çalışması ve mülakatlarla incelemek. Bu ayrılık, aynı mücadeleden iki farklı kooperatif çıkarmanın ötesinde, geçmişe dair iç içe ve hatta çatışan anıları ortaya çıkartıyor. Kazova örneği, işçilerin birbirleriyle ve diğer gruplarla olan ilişkilerindeki değişimin kesişim noktasında siyasal süreçlerin nasıl işlediğini, ve bu ilişkilerin kolektif eylemi nasıl şekillendirdiği soruları cevaplandırmak için önemli fırsatlar sağlıyor. Müşterekliğin siyaseti ve müşterekleştirme pratikleri üzerine eleştirel bir diyaloga girmekle beraber, anti-kapitalist ilişkilerin siyasaldaki önemini gözardı edildiğini savunuyorum.

*everyone who feels like...*

*“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only. “*

*Charles Dickens, 1859, A Tale of Two Cities*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank to all jury members who supported me throughout this period. I thank Ayşe Parla for her valuable experience that provided me very constructive and useful feedbacks. Her support, trust and understanding helped me a great deal in the path of becoming a good researcher. I would like to thank Saygun Gökariksel who spared me his valuable time to discuss my thesis. If it was not his class and insightful questions, perhaps I would not have been able to gain different perspectives. I also thank Zeynep Yanaşmayan for her interest, time and helpful comments. I should also thank Ateş Altınordu for his academic support and solidarity.

I would like to further thank my close friends Ece Erol, Zozan Baran, Özlem Oruç, Yusuf Mert Şentürk, Yamaç Alican Işık, Elif Çıldır, Ayça Pak, Nazlı Toğuç, Emrullah Kaynar, Gizem Tonbil, Gökhan Akyavuz, Melike Merdan for their friendship, support and especially for all the fun we had. My special thanks here go to Ece for her reassurance in times of many confused and stressed moments during my writing period. I also want to thank the Ultimate Frisbee community for teaching me team spirit, fair play, passion and solidarity.

I want to say that many people supported me in all possible ways. I thank to Ekin Café, Meral and Evrim who never let me to skip a breakfast for a long study day. I also thank Sevgi and all the people in Holi Café in where I also met many valuable people whose ideas reflected in this thesis. I also want to express my gratitude to Tuğba, Murat, Sefa, and Batu for providing me enjoyable neighborhood. I am also very happy and lucky for meeting all the members of my cohort at Sabancı University. Their precious spirit, comments, and contributions nurtured me and smoothed out this journey for me.

Last but foremost I want to thank my family for their constant, unconditional support and understanding. My parents, Hatice and Ali Özdeş always helped me to create a comfortable environment within which I can develop and improve myself. My one and only brother, Galip Özdeş, who never made me feel the distance from London, and always supported me in every decision I made in my life. I specially thank to him for his love, support, and advice. I am so glad to have all these people in my life.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iv
ÖZET .....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	vii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.2 Methodology .....	6
1.3 Contributions.....	7
CHAPTER 2: THE NEOLIBERALISATION PROCESS AND THE CONDITION OF LABOR IN TURKEY .....	9
2.1 Neoliberal Transformations and Class-based Struggles in Turkey.....	9
2.2 The Importance of Factory Recuperations and Clarification of Concepts.....	15
2.3 Major Examples of Self-Management in Turkey before 1980 .....	17
2.4 Some Basic Features of Self-Managed Factories.....	21
2.5 Lessons Learned? Limits of Previous Experiences and Possibilities of Self- Management Today.....	23
CHAPTER 3: THINK OUTSIDE THE BOSS: COMMONS AND CLASS STRUGGLE.....	26
3.1 Commons Discussion.....	26
3.2 Thinking Factory Recuperation and Self-Management Practice in Neoliberal Era: The Example of Kazova Resistance.....	33
3.3 Conceptualizing the Context of Class-Based Struggle in Two Cases of Kazova .	34
3.4 Interpretation of the Split within the Kazova Resistance: Free Kazova vs Resist Kazova.....	37
3.5 The Betrayal, the Boss, and the Community.....	40
CHAPTER 4: POLITICS OF COMMONS.....	53
4.1 Commoning Özgür Kazova.....	57
4.1.1 Possibilities of Commoning Practices in Özgür Kazova Case.....	58
4.1.2 Challenges of Commoning Practices in Özgür Kazova Case .....	64
4.2 Rethinking Commoning Practices.....	66
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION .....	70
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	73



## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Kazova textile factory was operating in Bomonti, İstanbul with its 95 workers. It was one of the well-functioning textile companies that supplied products to major brands of the sector. In the end of 2012, due to financial problems, the owners stopped paying the salaries. In January 2013, the bosses put the workers on one-week leave and promised them to give their pay backs. In February 2013, after four months of not getting paid nor receiving any severance pay, the Kazova textile workers were fired and the factory was closed. The lawyer of the bosses stated that reason for collective firing as ‘unaccounted-for absence’ for three consecutive days. For over a year, the workers fought for their rights, set up tents in front of the factory and continued their resistance. In June 2013, the atmosphere of the Gezi Park protests developed into riots when the protesters were attacked by the police and the government, resulting in many anti-government demonstrations. In the climate and increasing scale of the Gezi Park protests, the Kazova workers occupied the closed factory, repaired the broken machinery and re-started production –this time without a boss.

The reasons which make the Kazova Resistance important in exploring the dynamics between resistance, neoliberalism and subjectivity are the following: (1) as workers in the capitalist system, they fought against ‘precariousness’ which was fostered in Turkey after neoliberal policies of 80s. (2) Kazova workers managed to redefine their position in the factory production with an organized resistance. (3) Kazova Resistance was one of the most discussed topics at the Gezi forums in which people gathered in public spaces and created platforms of deliberation during the resistance. Gezi forums were open to everyone under the condition of respecting to the others. They built awareness regarding the public space and developed the capacity of participants to influence decisions made for their lives. Deliberative spirit of the Gezi Forums provided

a community and transformed the Kazova struggle into a collective work of resistance. (4) Subjectivity of protesters flourished with different forms of strategies, split the struggle into two different organizations and opened up a space to think about new forms of anti-capitalist politics called the politics of commons.

At first, Kazova Resistance starts with a very familiar story of class struggle. Kazova Factory left 95 workers unemployed with no reparations or deserved wages. Factory owners Ümit Somuncu and Mustafa Umut Somuncu vanished overnight. Workers have been searching for justice since then. As in many social movements, the ways in which each worker resists in Kazova factory differs. How do their tactics change over time and why do they change; what kind of possibilities does this resistance offer; what kind of limits does it have? These questions are important in the context of the Kazova Resistance which, at the end, resulted in two different Kazova formations. I see this split reflective of how memories of class-based movements in Turkey take shape in particular contexts and it shows how different people understand the present and imagine the future differently. By looking at divergences where cultural and political identities were drawn from, reconfigured, and created in the Kazova Resistance, I aim to discover the relationship between memory and identity making in the class-based resistance, and question if this relationship can construct political subjects and institutions that are needed to produce anti-capitalist relations.

The separation of the workers during Kazova Resistance resulted in two different worker formations. One is Diren Kazova (Resist Kazova) which is a worker-owned cooperative while the other is called Özgür Kazova (Free Kazova) and, is legally an enterprise but present themselves as a collective. While conducting my research, at first I was confused to define their status in the political and economic context. Is it an occupied factory? Is it a cooperative? Is it a corporation? Is it a practice of self-governance? Is it a case of workers'-control? Is it a post-capitalist enterprise? My confusion was not only because my inability to position these two Kazova formations but also because they were referred to differently in various media outlets. One website presents them as a leftist worker cooperative, another says it is a self-government (or self-management) practice similar to the previous ones in Turkey's history such as Alpagut and YeniceItek. Yet another calls it an occupation movement, while it is also called social movement by some, and another one labels it as a factory recuperation similar to Argentine movements: 'Occupy, Resist, Produce'-a phrase the Argentines, in turn, had

borrowed from the landless movement in Brazil, the MST. Among all these confusing definitions, I wanted to explore the ways in which they define themselves, what kind of movements they refer to, and how they set their agendas in order to sustain themselves as they started against the capitalist mode of production.

To begin with, I met with the Kazova Workers during the anti-government Gezi Movements. On my first visit to the Özgür Kazova Collective, first question asked to me was “which Kazova” I was looking for. When I replied that I was looking for the Özgür Kazova; they asked me if I was a member of the Cephe Movement. I replied that I was not a member of any organizations, and know about them during the Gezi protests. Their last statement before accepting to talk to me was if I were from the Cephe Movement, they would not let me to interview with them. Aynur said: “I do not want to give any material to people from the Cephe Movement, I do not want them to take advantage of our stories anymore.” As it can be seen, the split was the most important milestone during the formation of the Özgür Kazova Resistance, their identity construction, and their relation to other people.

As a result, my main focus turned into the split of the Kazova Resistance. Thus, I also conducted interviews with the Diren Kazova Workers. In this case, first question that they asked me was if I visited the Özgür Kazova earlier, and what kind of comparison I would make after hearing the stories from their side. Thus, the split was something I could not ignore, but built my study onto this very defining feature of the Kazova Resistance. However, neither activists nor the media had enough material that makes sense of the split within the group. The Kazova Resistance was represented as either “moving resistance to another phase after the occupation of the workplace and giving way to a controversial discussion of labor organizations' new forms of struggle” (T24, 2013), or “revival of the factory recuperation” and “legacy of the Gezi Park Resistance” (bianet, 2015). Even though their dates range from 2013 to 2015, the news about Kazova represent these two formations as a single entity and largely neglect the split. Both of the Kazova Cooperatives have their own media accounts, however, they still prefer to keep their silence about the split for different reasons. My study aims to show this conflicting representation on media through workers’ own stories and different tactiques used to be a political entity.

In order to explore and understand this split in the resistance and the two resulting divergent movements coming out of it against a boss and the whole system of neoliberal

capitalism, I have carried out field research and talked to workers who are the subjects of this very resistance and the two formations. Both of these groups are viewed from different angles by different people and organizations, and they have been entangled in - sometimes conflicting- narratives about past events of the Kazova Resistance. After almost one-year of field work and interviews, I realized that the main difference between two Kazovas is found in their communities. Even though both organizations define their salient identity as worker, through communities they interact with I have observed that they position themselves differently compared to the other. With these insights coming from the field, I see that the position of Diren Kazova is a more traditional worker organization with a solid party and organization behind. On the other hand, Özgür Kazova is challenging to be situated in the traditional history of labor movements. It does not have a union nor a party behind. Their community is based on a network of various movements. As a result, the Kazova Resistance brought about both continuity (with Diren Kazova) and discontinuity (with Özgür Kazova) from the past labor movements. Accordingly, the current relationship between Diren and Özgür Kazova can be defined as being “symbolic competitors” to each other.

In the next section, I will elaborate on Diren Kazova and Özgür Kazova in order to compare and contrast their formations.

As I stated earlier Diren Kazova has a more well-defined structure compared to Özgür Kazova. This challenged me to situate Özgür Kazova’s position in labor movements. The way Özgür Kazova workers define themselves is again as worker-identity-centered as the Diren Kazova workers. Özgür Kazova’s workers are actually the ones without a political organization and they refuse to be within one. Thus, their focus seems to be less on political changes but rather only on their case for survival without having any support from anyone. However, in the field, I have observed that Özgür Kazova’s community and strategy were creating a discrepancy between what was being told and done. Consequently, the first point of comparison between these two Kazovas is their references to the stories of resistance from the past.

Since collective memory processes establish the framework that organizes the past for the present use, provide information used in the collective identity building, and help in the development of unity and continuity (Gongaware, 2010), it was the one main point that could help me to understand this split. Diren Kazova forms its present-day agenda by revisiting memories of the past conflicts and struggles. Diren Kazova describe

themselves as a “legal cooperative”—what is stressed here is that Özgür Kazova legally is not cooperative but founded as an enterprise—emerged out of a tent resistance, of factory occupation with a great help with Revolutionary Workers Movement (or Devrimci İşçi Hareketi in Turkish). On the other hand, Özgür Kazova workers’ memory of the past practices and current events were shaped largely by the Gezi process through supporters and their ways to identify with and to follow as examples. Both Kazova formations tell entangled and sometimes conflicting stories.

Secondly, their difference is observable not only in reference to the past stories but also the present aims of two Kazova Cooperatives. As an example, for Özgür Kazova success is vitally linked to being sustainable. Özgür Kazova does not refer to past experiences not because they are unaware of them. Rather than that, they consider functioning examples as successful (in Argentina, Latin America or in Turkey) compared to the past ones that represent the failure of this type of organizations. On the other hand, for Diren Kazova, success means alignment with the party strategies. The past is not a failure for them, instead they believe those past movements are the ones created the conditions for Diren Kazova struggle. It can be seen that different understandings of success are also very critical in the separation process. Özgür Kazova leaned on a network of solidarity with less precise connections and a safer political position together with any supporters in order to survive, while Diren Kazova continued their strategy to make an impact aligned with a specific political agenda.

Given that Diren Kazova belongs to a more traditional branch of the labor movement with exact connections to particular organizations, and also to their agenda; Özgür Kazova’s loose connections to any movements or organizations is one of the reasons that made me think of “politics of common” as a strategy with which similar movements form practices and relations based on diversities. Thus, for my thesis I aimed to discover and situate the Özgür Kazova Collective in comparison to Diren Kazova which is more traditional and has a politically set agenda, a defined community, and genealogy. I believe that the theoretical background of the politics of commons will help us to see the possibilities and limits of this type of transformation in a labor movement, and also explore more effective ways to build a society which is based on non-exploitative relations and to discover if two different tactics can be effective in the struggle against neoliberalism. To situate the Özgür Kazova Collective within anti-capitalist movement, I have conducted fieldwork to see what is really practiced rather than represented by

themselves or other parties. I aim to contribute and strengthen the theories of commons by looking into the split within the Kazova Resistance and understand the challenges faced.

## **1.2 Methodology**

Aside from theoretical findings, this thesis involves an ethnographic study of the both Kazova Cooperatives, as well as semi-structured and open-ended interviews with/about Kazova workers. Throughout my involvement in the field, I did not prefer to record any conversations in order to be a part of the daily routine of the workers. However, I used tape-recording when I conducted structured interviews with workers in both Kazova cooperatives. My participant observation helped me to gain valuable insights about Kazova workers and their relation to “the other Kazova” and served me as a guide to point right questions rather than taking everything said in the interviews for granted. Also, spending daily time with workers enabled me to question their representations in the media and my knowledge of them before conducting field work. Overall, I conducted a total of 15 interviews with workers 3 from Özgür Kazova, 5 from Diren Kazova and 7 supporters of the Kazova Resistance. I took consent to use real names and interview quotes of workers and supporters interviewed with. Each interview’s duration ranged between one hour to two hours depending on the flow of the conversation and the respondents were interviewed more than once, some three times if needed. From these interviews, all of them took place in Istanbul within a year from March of 2016 to July of 2017.

My interviewees included both females and males, originally from the Kazova Resistance and Kazova workers. The age peripherals ranged from early 20s to early 30s for supporters. An important note to make is that the majority of the supporters interviewed carried politically active lives in Turkey throughout the Gezi Resistance and continue to express these views in the present time.

Primarily because Kazova formations are operating today, I was able to visit both of their ateliers often. Free Kazova’s atelier is located in Rami and Diren Kazova’s is in Eyup. These places are close to each other and those regions are mostly where textile ateliers and the wholesale stores are located in Istanbul. My main interviewees were the Free and Resist Kazova workers themselves. However as Robert Stuart Weiss (1994) explains, “in a qualitative study anyone who has anything to teach us is a desirable

interviewee” (p.29). I had some other encounters who were aware of Kazova Resistance and they also highly contributed to my insights from the field.

In addition to the field work and interviews, I had some written and visual materials as textual components of my research. A film that was released very recently in Istanbul Film Festival was the main visual component of my textual reading. Called “Patronsuzlar” (or Jumpers without Masters), it was directed by young director Sidar Inan Ercelik (2015). It portrays the process of Kazova Resistance and contains many scenes from the resistance and interview videos with workers. The main written text was a book published by Resist Kazova’s workers themselves about their story of resistance. Besides these, my research also included analyses of their social media accounts.

Moreover, I believe that the way in which workers rethink about class struggle and make sense of their practices in a broader context of building anti-capitalist relations is a vital point in understanding the possibilities of these practices and their role in the transformation of capitalist relations. That is why I also analyzed online and offline articles, news, and publications to comprehend other groups’ relation to the Kazova Resistance, and compared how they were represented by different actors and how the field work can challenge these representations.

### **1.3 Contributions**

While labor has been seen as weakened in many occasions and successful labor movements are increasingly being viewed as nostalgic phenomena, it is important to understand making, unmaking, and remaking of working class in order to see dialectic relation between workers’ resistance and neoliberal capital’s effort to overcome this resistance.

In a neoliberal era, capitalism functions at the intersections of our lives. Thus this study aims to add a perspective to a very current example of Kazova Resistance from the field to understand their values, intentions, and meaning-making mechanisms rather than

taking for granted the representation of the resistance on the media. It is a proof of the complex lives of people in resistance and an evidence of recognizing these challenges. Engaging with their social lives will contribute to the working class resistance literature through an examination of the creation of political subjects. The study aims to understand the political potential they have in changing dynamics of neoliberal system.





## **CHAPTER 2: THE NEOLIBERALISATION PROCESS AND THE CONDITION OF LABOR IN TURKEY**

Capitalism has been historicized especially by Marxist social scientists to reveal imperfections of the language that naturalizes capitalism. Nevertheless, this historicizing is not one time activity, rather it is a process that constantly renews itself and incorporates current dynamics into its analysis. As capitalism evolves, new mechanisms of exploitation and control that people experienced need to be discussed. One way is to position each new concept within the historical context of capitalism, and to discuss how the old concepts can be re-conceptualized by the transformation of capitalism.

Before going into an assessment on the meaning and importance of the Kazova Resistance, I will first discuss the effect of contemporary capitalist transformations on labor movements in Turkey. For this purpose, I will make a brief evaluation on the general tendency of the neoliberal transformation, and then I will reveal the specific dynamics of Turkey's context.

The structural transformations that have begun to emerge from the 1980s – with coup d'état have not been shaped by simultaneous and similar arrangements everywhere in the world. By focusing on the effects on the labor movement, I will discuss the changing conditions of current dynamics in the working class movements in Turkey. For the purposes of this thesis, I will only be focusing on workplace-based labor movements to track the trend of workplace resistances until the Kazova Resistance.

### **2.1 Neoliberal Transformations and Class-based Struggles in Turkey**

*“Şimdi grev tehdidi olan yere biz OHAL'den istifadeyle anında müdahale ediyoruz. Diyoruz ki hayır, burada greve müsaade etmiyoruz” (R.T.Erdoğan, President of the Turkish Republic, 2017)*

*"Now, thanks to 'State of Emergency', we are intervening instantly to where the strike is a threat. We say no, we do not allow strike here. "(R. T. Erdoğan, President of the Turkish Republic, 2017)*

The period between 1961 and 1971, when welfare-state policies implemented, had witnessed years of organized movements including class protests, student movements, boycotts and political party initiatives such as *Turkish Labor Party* (TIP). Workers' and students' struggles were to be disciplined by anti-democratic practices of March 12, but had recovered after 1973 and reached their peak in 1977. It can be said that the period between 1973 and 1980, when the Turkish coup d'état happened and the capitalist crisis deprived all the workers, was the busiest years in terms of the working class movements in Turkey. Numerous workers' movements had been formed for various reasons, mainly against practices that restricted wage increase and curtailed trade union freedom. Especially with the increase in the numbers within the ranks of organized paid-labor, there had been massive struggles through a number of methods such as legal strikes, slow-downs, marches, rallies, confrontations, boycotts, workplace occupations.

The struggles that triggered these workers' movements were not limited only to the workplace, but they were also against fascism, rallies were organized against the state security courts and against the prohibition of May Day celebrations. In 1977, 260 workers' protests, such as workplace occupation, resistance, marches or rallies, took place (The Encyclopedia of Social Struggles and Socialism, 1988). Workers and trade unionists, who organized the strong resistance in these years, were widely prosecuted and punished after 1980, and the means of class struggle were either censored or prohibited. In 1980 which took place in Turkey on 12 September 1980 was the third in the history of the Republic, and ushered in a three-year period of military rule. One manifestation of this new political economy for workers' rights and movement is demonstrated by "January 24 Decisions". Workers' rights to collective bargaining and to strike were suspended, all opposing trade unions, mainly DISK (Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey), were closed down, and leaders were arrested. Only the trade unions advocating the official state ideology such as TURK-IS (Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions) were allowed, but even their right to collective bargaining was taken away. It is widely argued that after state suppression and regulations for the profit of neoliberal market, workers' resistance and unions were weakened and failed to achieve their demands. Korkut Boratav explains the decisive feature of distributional relationships of this new political structure as "...systematically controlling and regulating the fundamental contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the working classes against labor" (Boratav, 2009, p. 149-150).

However, in the neoliberal era, the way of seeing intersections, conflicts, relations, authenticity and creating a holistic political moment within classifications obliges us to get rid of the dualities as well. According to T. Bora and N. Erdogan, while the capitalism of the social welfare period included inclusive mechanics via job and income distribution, the neoliberal period of capitalism leaves distribution aside as it operates on mechanisms of exclusion. For instance, Alain Lipietz (1987), whom Bora and Erdogan refer to, speaks of "the poor as a separate race" (Bora et al., 2011, p. 16-17). Bora and Erdogan take a relational approach that can establish the connection between classes and neoliberal insecurities. Moreover, we must remember that the "normal" state of the class is not of unity but division. In the traditional sense, the proletariat does not point to a "natural" union or a spontaneously homogenous conjecture. We know that classes are established within social struggles as a relationship, and unity as a collective consciousness can only be produced in political momentum.

The phenomenon of workplace insecurity has manifested itself in different ways in Turkey's history. For example, according to Independent Social Scientists<sup>1</sup>, in the background of the miraculous "growth" story of 2010 lies "a distorted economy model that is free from the decent work conditions of human dignity, open to the merciless exploitation of the market; resilient labor army, and fragmented, dependent and subcontracted industrial structure" (ISS, 2011, p.97). All the arrangements made in the framework of neoliberal harmonization created uncertain, fragile and fragmented forms of future in working life, which had serious consequences for class struggle. The laborers lost their ability to fight and negotiate due to the threat of unemployment. Independent Social Scientists state that pressure of the capital to increase exploitation has now gone beyond the limit of legitimacy for some sectors and is based on another limit, the physiological limit of human metabolism and labor (ISS, 2011, p.98). Under these conditions, it would not be an exaggeration to call workers' resistance as a "struggle for survival". Existence of threats to unionization of workers, outsourcing and the high turnover of workers create problems in terms of class struggle and weaken the class capacities to resist.

---

<sup>1</sup> Independent Social Scientists were formed by social scientists who came together in November 2000 to raise public awareness of the neo-liberal politics that led to the collapse of the Turkish economy and the dissolution of social ties

However, we should also consider the changes within the working class and how its political power was undermined within minimal survival conditions. In her book *Forces of Labor*, Beverly Silver talks about different sources of worker power, namely, associational power and structural power. Associational power is the capacity to make gains through trade unions and political party organizations. Structural power is the power that comes from workers' strategic location within the process of production — a power that can be, and often has been, exercised in the absence of trade union organizations (Silver, 2003).

The benefit of differentiating between these two kinds of power is to see how workplace bargaining power—the ability to bring interconnected processes of production to a halt through localized work stoppages—is less emphasized, yet perhaps even more important for understanding the source of workers' power today. What is the relationship between these two sorts of power? Do workers need unions or parties to strengthen their structural power? By looking at global features of labor unrest, her answer is, not necessarily. This reveals the problem coming from contradictory dynamics between trade unions and workers on the one hand, and capitalists and states on the other. Types of trade union that capital will try to make deals with are the ones who agree to play mediating role and actually promise controlling labor. However, in order to ensure labor control, unions have to deliver something. The question arises: how and under what conditions does this contradictory relationship work to the benefit of the workers? Her conclusion is that struggles at the point of production continue to be an important component of overall global labor unrest. Following her framework, I will try to elaborate Turkish labor history presented above and how resistance takes place at the point of production practices in Turkey, and try to answer why history of labor movements in Turkey shows that there is a sudden collapse in the power of organized labor in Turkey in 1980s. How has capital succeeded in undermining and taming these organized expressions of working class interest? More importantly, do these changes demand a different form of labor organization to struggle with neoliberalism?

President Erdoğan's quote is placed as one of the insights of the latest report on workplace-based resistance compiled by Labor Studies Community (Emek Çalışmaları Topluluğu). This group has been functioning since 2014 and consists of academicians, researchers and trade union experts who produce knowledge on the working class in a more coordinated manner and prepare reports on labor movements. According to the

report, from 2015 to 2016 there was an approximately three-quarters reduction in working class protests. Turkey started a solution process also known as the Kurdish–Turkish peace process was a peace process which aimed to resolve the long-running Kurdish–Turkish conflict. With the solution process ending in 2015, the massacres taking place in the country, the coup attempt in 2016 and the following state of emergency, number of workers' protests have decreased in half. The police intervention increased with the state of emergency. From 2015 to 2016, the average duration of a protest in workplace based actions also dropped by half. When we consider the groups organizing the resistance; both the number and the proportion of actions without any organizational support have decreased in work-based resistances. The result is that the workers are hesitant without any institutional support behind them, but this does not show that the unions have become more active. The number of workers who are members of a union has remained constant and workers are afraid to members since unionization is a very common reason to get fired. As President Erdoğan pointed out, the state of emergency was actually made for businesses to operate more efficiently. Areas with dangerous strikes were secured with government interventions and the forms of sanctions enforced against strikers were aggravated. With the increase of interventions, workers' fears have been increased. The state of emergency is like "Sword of Damocles" hanging over people who are in the labor movement and seeking to protect their rights (LSC, 2016).

In Turkish history, there are number of workplace-based labor movements with different dynamics. Previous examples such as Alpagut (the first practice of factory recuperation), Günterm, Yeniçelttek show that in times of crisis, in most factories or workplaces, the owners do not pay workers' wages and declare bankruptcy. In such cases that took place in times of crisis and bankruptcy, traditional strikes or lockouts did not have much power to put pressure on bosses. I argue that this is the result of two important features of this situation. First, because of bankruptcy, workplaces are usually closed down and workers, who are not granted any rights, are forced out of the factory. Secondly, since the other owners of the factory usually cut any dialogue with the workers, workers' power to bargain for their rights or for any claim on the factory -that is now only the private property of the owner- is hindered. That is the twist of capitalism, in which you as a worker run the factory but then you are barred from the place where you produce goods and also yourself as a worker. I argue that exactly for these two basic reasons, for workers who are facing with this capitalist injustices in times of crisis, occupation and

self-management of factories becomes a very realistic and crucial option in the global neoliberal era.

By global neoliberalism I am referring to a political philosophy and practice of governance that seeks an active achievement of a laissez-faire economic system. Although neoliberalism always manifests itself differently in different historical and geographical contexts, it is generally characterized by processes such as privatization and deregulation of publicly held resources and institutions, extension of various forms of free trade agreements and discrediting government subsidies in all walks of life, from the subsidization of agriculture to systems of health, housing and employment welfare (Gill 2003; Harvey 2003; Peck and Tickell 2002). Since the Kazova Cooperatives are represented by many media outlets as standing examples of workers' resistance, my case study is meant to pose a challenge to the hegemony of neoliberal modes of governance by discussing the possibilities of forming different areas of resistance and class associations' by ensuring labor is placed against capital.

Rather than only analyzing workers' movement after 1980, what is needed is to see changing faces of class-based struggles. Dogan writes "the emergence and decline of social movements are not random incidents, indeed mass movements generally emerge as systemic phenomena following well patterned cycles. Resorting to collective action to voice social demands or political support is an essential part of the political processes that is why the analysis of the political awakening of past groups may contain clues for our own understanding of current political situations and behavior" (Dogan, 2005, p.12). Following his thoughts about the past social and labor unrest and the ways it manifests itself in current events, it is important consider how the Kazova Resistance is a systemic phenomenon which contains similar patterns with the past movements. Even though I am aware that institutional forms cannot be seen as the only legacy of working class resistance, for the purposes of this thesis, and to discuss the case of the Kazova Resistance, I will focus on the type of institution that is considered as the precedent of Kazova Cooperatives. However, this type of institution that is called 'self-management' or 'self-organization' in different historical periods has taken specific forms to promote the idea that another form of social production relations is possible for anti-capitalist movements. Nonetheless, before going into brief descriptions of historically important self-management practices in the Turkish context, I think at this point it is necessary to distinguish similar concepts that are sometimes used interchangeably in a wrong way,

and to show the differences of these concepts from self-management in order to point out what is essential to understand the concept of self-management.

## **2.2 The Importance of Factory Recuperations and Clarification of Concepts**

The concepts, methods and practices that are expressed essentially by self-government led to the emergence of a terminological confusion in many resources that I have encountered during this research. This confusion remained during the Turkishization of the concept as “özyönetim”. Because the concept that originated from the word 'Somoupravlanie' in Serbian is mainly transferred to Turkish, it is mostly influenced by the words 'Autogestion' in French and 'Self-management' in English. However, the concept of self-government in Serbian means that, in terms of their correspondence in French and English, they are administered through a collective form of employment or organization within the very given conditions of 'government'. In this sense, it is possible to observe that the last two concepts have some limitations in terms of meeting the scope concept of self-management. Among these constraints, a province's self-management calls for purely economic efficiency and treats the concept within the spatial borders. Another constraint is that what is meant by the words in question is usually participation in governance in the framework of the existing property regime rather than "self-governance" (Arvon, 1991b; Cangizbay, 2003).

Workers' participation in management, co-determination (or cogestion) or workers' control do not provide a full understanding of self-management because these are mostly limited to workplace and workers are not fully active in decision-making processes. Thus, managing is to take decisions individually, as a sovereign person or a collective, with full knowledge of all relevant facts. However, other forms of control, co-determination, and participation are the observation and examination of decisions taken by others. Another concept that stands closer to self-management is cooperative. Cooperativism has brought into the agenda different and original experiments such as distancing workers away from positions of wage, bringing them together for "equal" and "free" cooperation. In this sense, cooperativism is the first practice of self-management in real life. There are a number of positive qualities such as the administration of the will of workers, joint efforts to increase productivity, choice of governing bodies on the basis of partnership, exact equality of all partners based on the principle that everyone has a

vote, common identification of the purposes of the transaction and the rotation of the areas of responsibility (Arvon, 1991b, p.78-79).

Cooperatives are based on the principle that members have equal rights over the production and the organization should be widened to the country level in order not to be dismantled within the dominant economic system of the society and not to fall into narrow economic structures closed down within sectoral boundaries. On the other hand, they should preserve their principles and continue their existence as an 'autonomous worker creation' without any protection from the government or the capitalists. However, even if all enterprises take part in a cooperative system, self-management cannot be claimed unless the cooperative principle dominates the whole affairs of society (Cangızbay, 2003, p. 154-155). Self-management should be regarded as a system that encompasses all spheres and institutions of social life, not limited to the field of purely economic production, in spite of the fact that participation, joint administration, workers' control and cooperatives are only concerned with the field of economic commodity production. From this, it can be said that self-management is a system of social organization that will "allow all people to take their own affairs, directly and at all levels, into their hands". I think, this is why the Kazova Resistance and its outcome is conceived as a self-management practice rather than simply a production cooperative. In some parts of the media it took its place among other self-management practices born out of factory occupation such as Alpagut, Yeniceltek, Günterm, and Askale. If we accept this definition, it can be argued that self-management cannot be reduced to a formulation or model. But, besides this, it should also be acknowledged that self-management is not a self-proclaimed end or a result of an objective condition.

Self-management for workers whose labor has been commodified in the course of history means a precondition of training for a social project which we can characterize as "the union of free producers". More importantly, self-management is a prerequisite for such a social project as long as it teaches reflexes directly to the masses. In this sense, the idea of self-management is part of the program for action of the social class that wants to be liberated and it is intrinsic to working class action. So, I will focus on the possibilities of self-management and resistance based on these principles in the anti-capitalist struggle today, rather than trying to place Kazova formations into one of the descriptions.



### **2.3 Major Examples of Self-Management in Turkey before 1980**

Throughout my interviews, one of the most obvious observations was how the way Özgür and Diren Kazova refer to the past differs from each other and specifically, which movements they consider as inspiring examples. Diren Kazova mostly referred to historical factory recuperation examples and their individual participation to those events whereas Özgür Kazova mainly referred to the Gezi movement as their main inspirational case. In order to understand this detachment of Özgür Kazova from historical examples, I provide summaries of the cases referred by Diren Kazova as the most similar structures to their model. In this case, I aim to see how Özgür Kazova places itself on different position not only from Diren Kazova but also from all the movements referred by and used in writing the story of Diren Kazova. More interestingly, breaking the ties with these movements is as important component as solidarity network structures in Özgür Kazova's identity making. Thus, I briefly refer to the aims and organizational forms of some examples of Turkey's past in order to establish links with the Kazova initiatives by looking at these organizations in different sectors, their principles and what practices they have produced.

#### ***Alpagut***

The first practice known as workers' control occurred during the typesetters' strike (Mürettipler Grevi) in 1923, Istanbul. However, the first serious experience of this case was experienced at the Alpagut Lignite Works, as it has had a permanent impact and constituted an example for subsequent undertakings.

In 1969 Alpagut Lignite workers organized a forum after their struggle for months to gain their rights. In the forum decisions were made to take-over the management of the factory. Alpagut Lignite Works was a mining operation of the Private Administration (Özel İdare), which produced cement and lignite coal in the region. The crisis emerged in Alpagut which had 786 workers, hired through political nepotism. In 1969, this number was increased to 900 workers, including officers and managers. This situation created financial problems and workers had not been paid for more than two months. In addition to this, job security was also neglected. There was only one engineer in the quarry who

was responsible for job security and reporting, and who had not been to the workplace for months.

The workers engaged in protests and strikes organized by the United Mine Workers' Union. Their first demands included requests such as payment of remunerations, ending practices of nepotism and corruption, provision of work safety, transfer of the quarries to the Turkish Coal Operations for better management.

One of the important outcomes was that the support from the families living in the neighboring villages and from their relatives increased steadily. Roots of the workers' leadership strengthened the administration's endeavors. The authorities, who have been idle beforehand thinking that the workers would not be able to do it, did act. In the early days of the occupation, some former pro-government workers sabotaged production; some workers did not get a job; some did not conform to the common working order, hence nearly 40 such former workers were dismissed by the decision of all workers.

The workers' sales council established by the workers themselves extended the initiative from workplace to the sales area in the market. However, workers' self-management abolished the practices of the old administration. The coal produced in Alpagut had been previously distributed by the bosses from state enterprises to private enterprises, and it never reached to the village people or even the village schools. With workers' management, priority was given to the village schools through consultation with the people of the village which increased the social legitimacy of the self-government. Elimination of corruption, black market and exorbitant prices also boosted legitimacy with the public. As bribes were taken in the course of sales, exorbitant prices were also avoided during the distribution of the caravan villagers; in this way black market was prevented. Already fathers, brothers, wives of the villagers who worked in the mine have all been watching the mine, and these positive results of the workers' self-management affected everybody. Participation in the making of decisions strengthened support given to the self-management. It continued for 34 days until the evening of July 16, 1969. The gendarmerie unit took over the quarries and the power plant and ended the workers' rule. Alpagut left a considerable legacy of self-management in workers' history.

Alpagut is the most referred case when Diren Kazova talks about their experiences. They admired the strategies of Alpagut workers, their goals and

accomplishments. For them, it was a milestone in showing how working class can succeed if it struggles by employing organized power (Yarasır, 2002, p.547-554).

### ***Günterm***

In 1970, as a continuation of Alpagut, a self-management practice also came to life in Günterm Kazan Plant. On April 29, 1970, a crisis arose when employers vanished after not paying the salaries for March and April. To get their wages and to uphold their rights, after 40 days of resistance, the workers occupied the factory and began self-management. With 80 workers, the action is transformed into production without the boss. The workers started to operate the factory for themselves and tried to earn money for the wages they were credited with. However, due to the martial law in place, workers were removed from the factories and their action was terminated. (Yarasır, 2006, p.79-80)

Even though the experience of Günterm was much limited compared to Alpagut, it still is one of the examples given by Diren Kazova workers to describe how political context has direct influence on labor movements.

### ***Aşkale***

380 workers working in the Askale Mine Works commenced strike on 12 January 1977 due to the TKİ (Türkiye Kömür İşletmeleri) Employers' Union's failure to comply with the call for collective bargaining, but the strike was postponed by the Council of Ministers on March 21. On April 17, a collective agreement was signed. However, a short time after the signing of the collective contract, Yeraltı Maden-İş trade union declared that the employer has not complied with the provisions of collective bargaining and has not taken any measures regarding work and work security. In October, the union declared that workers had not been receiving wages for three months. On the other hand, TKİ explained that Aşkale was closed with the reason that the mine was losing money and this created an emergency situation.

Even though the mine was closed, the workers occupied it and continued production. Workers who took over all the control of the business began to run the operation through the workers' committees and councils, which was the basic form of the

union organization of the Underground Maden-İs. 380 workers produced four thousand tons of coal by December. The workers did not sell the coal they produce, they preferred to stock it for well-being of the resistance.

One of the distinctive aspects of the practice that was experienced in Aşkale is that it has been shaped by an organized trade union. From the beginning, it did conscious interventions in the light of previous experiences in terms of initiating, guiding, and carrying out the resistance as a whole from a spontaneous action. Another important differentiating point was that during this experience, the workers have established relations with about 60 villages surrounding Aşkale (Yarasır, 2002, p. 607-608). That highlighted the importance of connecting with people to gain more power for future workers' struggles.

Aşkale is related to Kazova as being an example of forming a network of struggles and trying to spread the spirit of resistance through this network established by neighboring villages.

### ***Yeniçeltek***

On April 26, 1980, after the decision to close down the mines of Yeniçeltek Mine Operation, which was a joint venture of Turkish Coal Enterprises, Turkey Sugar Factory and Merzifon Municipality, 890 workers did not leave the factory and continued production. The attitude taken by the general management of the business against the strike decision of the Underground Maden-İş trade union was considered illegal by the workers and the union. Because the attitude of the general directorate was contrary to the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement previously signed (which required giving 3-month notice to the other party before ending the business) and also did not comply with Article 92 of the Mining Act.

After 26 April, workers did not leave the workplace and continued to produce and organize marketing and sales of coal. After confiscation of the mine by the workers, the enterprise provided a profit of 2.5 million TL with the figures of the period and the union declared that all accounts were open to auditors. As a result of 33-days of workers control of business management, it turned out that the general manager's claim about lossmaking which he advocated as the reason for closing down the quarries, was unfounded. This

action of Yeni Celtek miners has been a strong proof that the producers were be able to carry out their production skills in general as well as management processes, as demonstrated by the productivity achieved.

In the last days of self-management, the Governorate and Ministry officials confiscated coal trucks, service vehicles, and cut off the operator's phones. This caused problems for job safety due to the slowing down of production and danger of a fire or explosion of gas which could lead to it. Therefore, the union, on 29 May ended the action of occupation of the workplace and began to strike. The strike in the new Çeltek Mining Operation was suppressed following the coup d'état of September 12 (Yarasır, 2002, p.630).

The Yeni Çeltek practice is important to show how workers can act not only against their bosses, or states, but also against the trade unions which do not represent their wills. This is similar to Kazova Resistance in the sense that resistance in time created intra-class fragmentations based on political subjectivities of different worker groups.

In the case of Kazova these past experiences are important to see how practice is shaped according to what is taken (or not taken) from the past practices. How memories of the past are expressed in the practice of Kazova Resistance and how these memories get included or excluded in defining the projects for the future of Kazova workers struggle?

## **2.4 Some Basic Features of Self-Managed Factories**

Based on the main experiences of workers' self-management in Turkey, I will try to draw some basic features of factory recuperations in Turkey. I believe that drawing these common points will help me to situate Kazova experience and understand the main reasons of division among workers.

Turkey's political and economic settings were crucial to lead past workers' resistances in the direction of factory occupation. The idea that collective action is embedded in the cultural context where meaning-making mechanisms function also suggests that the link between workers and collective action is in a crisis too.

Subcontractors or contract workers can only resist for their own institutions for a long time. It is seen that, the lack of common action reduces the likelihood of transformation of the workers' movements into political power. One of the reasons for this pattern is that these movements occurred during the times of crisis- often economic stagnation, bankruptcies, or political crisis. These conditions repressed any kind of action to provide justice to workers, elicited working class anger, and created a situation in which workers' were led to collective action. Secondly, Turkey's small and medium enterprise based economy does not require very large numbers of workers in the workplace compared to big production factories, and this revealed a need either to merge with other movements or to secure the support of a workers' organization to be influential.

When we analyze the previous practices we observe that the essential feature of all workers' self-management is the participation to and integration of management, production, distribution, and decision-making processes. Experiencing and succeeding in all of these processes provide confidence to workers' movement and strengthen the influence of these practices. Another feature that helped movements to gain momentum and support stems from the assurance that all collective self-reliance and aspirations will be bent on starting from its own environment. It is a unique experience for social movements that all this communicative life, in a transparent manner, is publicized by all the participation processes, that is to say, to the knowledge of the whole society and to its increasing support from the people. Moreover, for the social movements which are often against or out of law and beyond; gaining support of the people creates a ground for legitimacy and broadens the scale of the resistance. Historical examples' legitimacy rapidly expanded by providing transparency to processes of production, sale, distribution, and making their accountings open and socially debated.

Thus, deducing from the experiences I have discussed above, one can draw six main features. Firstly, this resistance process makes workers to realize their ability of management. Secondly, through transparency of all the processes workers realize how surplus value is produced by exploitation of their labor. Thirdly, sharing profits makes workers rethink about private property. Forth, the fact that the self-government is transparently presented to the knowledge of the society not only increases its legitimacy but also brings ownership to the wider group. Thus, it creates a chance for social transformation. Fifth, related to the former point, the mentality of self-management creates a space for converging with other social movements, and this creates many forms

of active participation to all processes of which concern people's own lives. Sixth, solidarity among class struggles manifests itself not only in consumption of the goods produced in self-managed factories but also in production. Following this, inter-sectoral solidarity widens the scope of the possibility of different production and market relations.

Having historical background of some major labor movements, their features and some important practices of workers' control in Turkey, it is essential to situate current cases in terms of convergences and divergences. Next section aims to focus on self-management as a historical concept that can be analyzed through practices, and questions whether it proposes a viable model that renews itself in the light of past practices, and opens up a space to rethink self-management, or whether it is an outdated model that does not offer any possibilities for the future of class struggle. Figuring out limits and possibilities of past practices will also allow us understand the rationale behind the split within the Kazova Resistance, and production of political subjects in anti-capitalist struggle.

## **2.5 Lessons Learned? Limits of Previous Experiences and Possibilities of Self-Management Today**

Even though the scale, impact, and context are different in the various experiences I presented above, I tried to show how workers organized, occupied, produced, and created a daily life in resistance, and if the past workers' struggles have allowed the worker's movement to rebuild itself against the existing forms of organization. Kazova workers' occupation was crucial for the end result of their resistance. Producing without-boss enabled them to think about cooperative rather than confining themselves to getting their legal compensations and looking for other jobs in the market. Instead they wanted to transform capitalist relations by intervening in production processes. Thus, the cooperative idea emerged as a self-defense mechanism for workers who wanted to sustain their struggle and strengthen their resistance by presenting an alternative to the society.

Cooperatives and collectives in the capitalist structure, before and after the 1980 military coup, were and are instrumental in improving working and living conditions while creating a series of democratic alternatives based on the principle of self-management and equality among workers. Cooperativism is the cornerstone of economics of solidarity, thanks to the organic ties established with different social movements. In

the '90s, both the anti-globalization movement and the occupation movement were feeding cooperatives, while at the same time these movements gave cooperatives an ideological stance.

Thus, the possibilities of self-management today can be re-thought around current practices of factory recuperations and social movements in Turkey. One important point is that Kazova Resistance offers us two entangled and sometimes conflicting stories by two different sides. Based on my field work, I situate one Kazova- Diren Kazova as more traditional organization with a status of worker cooperative with the support of a political party. It can be observed that Diren Kazova performs in continuity with previous traditional labor movements. However, Özgür Kazova Collective needed to be situated in the broader context of resistance against neoliberalism. It created a discontinuity among typical workers' resistance in the Turkish history by claiming their worker identity and struggle as different from Diren Kazova's. To situate Özgür Kazova Collective, I will establish a case again in comparison with Diren Kazova Cooperative. I discuss that their main difference stems from their strategies in maintaining production relations and resistance. Further, I will discuss these different production relations as based on four grounds: the choice of the name, their perception of community, the mind-state of being without-boss, and the concept of betrayal.

Firstly, their choice of the name is not arbitrary. "Diren" (Resist) signals a connection to leftist movements. It was widely used during Gezi Park protests with derivations of places; such as Diren ODTU and Diren Taksim etc. When I talked to Serkan from Özgür Kazova, he emphasized that the choice of "Özgür" or Free is very definitive of their movement, because they wanted to be free from not only their former boss, but also from Diren Kazova. Thus, their disidentification with traditional leftist labor movement alludes freedom for Özgür Kazova workers which led them to be a part of a "curation" of many other new social movements and their communities.

Özgür Kazova has been supported by many networks of solidarity from very different areas -LGBTs, migrants, ecological movements and neighbor-based solidarities. I argue that this solidarity network around Özgür Kazova empowers not only Kazova practice but also the other sides and helps them to institutionalize. I will discuss these connections and practices in the framework of "commoning movements". Commoning, in a nutshell, can be defined as collective empowerment that is created through the commonality provided by different personal experiences. The key argument for a new



type of politics here is that if the positioning of the class is expressed in terms of consumption as well as in the relations of production, concrete ties between the workplace and its habitats can create the material grounds for a political compilation and continuation that will bring social strides forward. I will discuss the possibilities of the commoning practice that has been applied in Özgür Kazova Collective and which can also be developed in the line of politics of commons. Rather than only looking at the history of the split, but also the kind of conflicts and contradictions which may exist in their narratives is important for me to explore. For this reason, there are some questions to be addressed: how to avoid making factory occupation a “romantic symbol” in history of the Left? How to fill the void created by workers’ control if not with the workers’ assembly or any other models of factory recuperations in Turkish history? How to form ordinary people’s collectives that will drive the transformation of capitalist mode of production? What are the tools that the neoliberal era provides along with new communication and media technologies? Could Özgür Kazova’s concept of “patronsuzluk” and its alternative way of production (separated from capitalist types but can easily be integrated into the market) serve as tools for others seeking to transform production relations that is based on exploitation of their own workplace/communities without falling into the standard exclusionary trap of radical leftist past?

I will try to answer these questions through concrete and ongoing practice of Özgür Kazova Collective. I argue that nostalgic returns to the past experiences and models were unable to develop mechanisms that could resist the state or capitalist attack against them. To what extent Özgür Kazova overcomes some problems emerged out of social forms in the past, and to what extent it is limited to offer an alternative mode of production? How would the politics of commons give us an understanding of the labor movements in Turkey?

## **CHAPTER 3: THINK OUTSIDE THE BOSS: COMMONS AND CLASS STRUGGLE**

### **3.1 Commons Discussion**

Greg Hardin's (1968) famous essay "Tragedy of Commons" is a good start to review different approaches to commons. It opened the discussion of commons and brought them up to criticize the relations of the people with the commons. In short, Hardin thinks that commons will be ruined for the all and that is why it is an unsustainable commodity. In his scenario if a resource is used commonly by a group of people it will be exhausted. For him, this is because each individual is motivated to move in his/her own direction and to increase the resource utilization by ignoring the costs that the resource and the group will bring. In other words, when it comes to the common use of a resource, if the total use needs to be restricted to protect the resource, individuals wait for this to be done by others and do not restrict their own use. If every individual behaves in such a way, it brings the inevitable end - the tragedy of the commons. He proposes two ways out, which are centralization or privatization.

This scenario has been criticized by many scholars. Mainly, Elinor Ostrom (2012), Fikret Berkes (2009), and Arun Agrawal (2014) raised questions about his conclusions: "Is the capacity of this structure sufficient to monitor compliance with the rules of use? Who will procure and establish the private property system? How do private property rights guarantee sustainability of the resource?" These researchers showed that communities are so prevalent that they can establish a set of rules and control mechanisms for the use of common assets and prevent overuse tragedy. These studies emphasize that excessive use can harm individual interests in the long run.

While designing effective and correct rules by using local knowledge of common assets, the ability of individuals to observe each other's use with the help of intra-community relations, and the ability to effectively enforce sanctions was the key to the emergence of "success" examples. Ostrom's solution is that neither state nor market but collective actions are needed to save the commons. Perhaps most noteworthy at this point is that Hardin (and most of the mainstream economists) is putting away economic individual constructs that recognize the binding nature of social norms and rules in favor of those acting with purely economic motives. In other words, the fact that individuals are social entities that can act with values, anxieties, motives and preferences (reciprocity, justice, trust, etc.) outside of their economic motivations and taking factors such as mutual trust, belonging, cooperation and assistance as key components of the discussions in commons was seen as a big step.

This discussion also builds up to Graeber and Gibson-Graham who both argue for the already plentiful existence of cooperation and anti-capitalist modes of relationality in our contemporary lives. These are types of organizations that produce subjectivities that are not based on a common identity but rather based on transforming and producing of common. However, it is still not possible to talk about relations beyond the aggregation of individuals within the framework of Ostrom's, or from the relations beyond which communities can be a source of benefit from mutual assets. Moreover, this approach does not consider how the economic-political structures, and therefore the capital processes and power relations that are situated within the mutual partners shape the partners, or make them an object of a sterile solution.

At this point going back to more historical analysis of commons and class provides more insights to think struggles against/under neoliberal conditions.

What differs in the politics of commons from other forms of politics is framed as a response to the "new enclosure processes". The Marxist concept of primitive accumulation is seen as core of the understanding of private property and ownership. For Marx (1977), capitalism needs the destruction of communal properties and relations in order to accumulate more profits. He refers to 16th and 17th century "enclosures" that expelled the peasantry from land. Marx argued that this act caused the birth of modern capitalist society and it created conditions in which there was abundant proletariat. In turn, factory system needed this proletariat to emerge and this paved the way for development of industrial cities. So the process of primitive accumulation created

changes in social and property relations. Engels (1892) picks up from there and relates to this argument the emergence of working class and factory-capitalism in 19th century. He analyzes the dynamics of class formation through the development of industrial system. He argues that the effect of industrialization can be most clearly seen in big towns which makes it important to consider urban growth, the creation of slums and understanding living experience of people who feel trapped in modern cities. Another important thinker that wrote about Marx's conceptualization of "primitive accumulation" was Rosa Luxemburg. Luxemburg (1951) shows us that capitalism, through the process of accumulation or dispossession, of exploitation of nature and of labor, is a part of an attempt to continually expand into new fields. And it continues in the history of capitalism. Thus, it can be said that Luxemburg and Marx differ in the sense that the former sees this process as intrinsic to capitalism whereas the later saw this as a stage in the development of capitalism. David Harvey (2005) continues this track and reframes primitive accumulation with the theory of "accumulation by dispossession," in which he describes the ways capitalism uses force and thievery to rob the world - both human beings and nature- of value in its insatiable hunger for profit.

By this I mean the continuation and proliferation of accumulation practices which Marx had treated as "primitive" or "original" during the rise of capitalism. These include the commodification and privatization of land and the forceful expulsion of peasant populations (compare what is described above with the cases of Mexico and of China, where 70 million peasants are thought to have been displaced in recent times); conversion of various forms of property rights (common, collective, state, etc.) into exclusive private property rights (most spectacularly represented by China); suppression of rights to the commons; commodification of labor power and the suppression of alternative (indigenous) forms of production and consumption; colonial, neo-colonial, and imperial processes of appropriation of assets (including natural resources); monetization of exchange and taxation, particularly of land; the slave trade (which continues particularly in the sex industry); and usury, the national debt and, most devastating of all, the use of the credit system as a radical means of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2005, p. 159).

For Harvey, this new type of primitive accumulation has been central to the functioning of capitalism under neoliberalism. As a result of this dialectical relation, struggles against exploitation under neoliberalism also mean struggle against

accumulation by dispossession. The concept of primitive accumulation and its interpretations explain the convergence and deepening of global capitalist exploitation mechanisms and the coexistence of political violence, and is considered one of the most controversial contributions of Marx. It is of great importance to know the constraints and possibilities provided by the primitive accumulation in determination of the tendencies of today's capitalism and in the detection of the tools of the revolutionary movement against it.

Silvia Federici (2013) also argues that this act was not a one-time affair, or was not bound to space and time, rather it is a continuous process into present. "Primitive accumulation" is not only an act but it is also the strategy that capitalist class use especially in times of crisis. Expropriating workers and making a larger labor available for exploitation have been seen as the most effective methods to reassert the power over labor and to weaken the hand of the working class in the class struggle. Federici's argument is that, in the era of neo-liberalism and globalization this which strategy had been an extreme was normalized, and primitive accumulation combined with privatization of the commons have integrated into a permanent process that extends to many aspects of our existence. Here common means something which belongs to everyone and for this very reason belongs to no one. Common is shared and governance is common. This includes the things that nature bestows (water, air, forests) as well as the products of nature (such as parks, urban infrastructure, and the internet). Thus, the associations are not limited to physical beings; languages, social traditions, cultural accumulation, and collective knowledge are also considered as commons. On the other hand, the concept of commons also refers to social relations based on co-production, reciprocity and cooperation organized around this wealth is not included in the meta-relations. (Federici, 2013). Massimo De Angelis (2003) presents the idea that there have been commons "outside" of capitalism which played an important role in class struggle by promoting utopian/radical imagination and providing food for commoners. Peter Linebaugh (2008) cautions us for taking commons as "natural resources". For him, "the commons is an activity and, if anything, it expresses relationships in society that are inseparable from relations to nature. It might be better to keep the word as a verb, an activity, rather than as a noun, a substantive" (p. 279). Similar to this, Bollier and Helfrich (2012) argue that new commons are constantly being created with the rationale of communal sharing. Examples are given from free software movement to solidarity

economies movement. The necessity of constructing commons is becoming more vital in the neoliberal era which creates permanent crises in jobs, wages, social and public spaces. Federici sees commoning practices such as urban gardens, food coops, bartering practice and information sharing as more than creating holes in the system and as “the seeds of an alternative mode of production in the make” (Federici, 2013, p.5). She takes cases such as Zapatistas and new Bolivian constitution which is based on communal property as proofs of demand coming from grassroots to create new forms of sociality that is organized by the principle of social cooperation.

As Harvey (2016) emphasized in his interview, all different forms of resistances against neoliberalism, and all different modes of production emerged out of them create “a mode of opposition as a mirror image”. Such as strong trade union movement was a mirror of Fordist mode of production. He claims that the tension occurs where *value* produced. In Marxist sense, value is produced during the production processes, but new social movements have become dominant in making claims over the quality of everyday life. Gezi Movement, which mobilizes the Kazova Resistance, had similar motives and moved the Kazova Resistance to beyond “capital versus labor” binary relation (Harvey, 2016). His analysis of realization of value, consumption, and the politics of everyday life makes clear relation to motivation of the Özgür Kazova Collective, and their ties to the community of the Gezi movement which appear easier than to their bond to the Diren Kazova Workers.

Thus, in the search for social democratic forces against neoliberal extremes to reproduce everyday life, discussions of commons and communal relations appeared as a possibility of thinking in a different political frame than solutions that focus on the state and the market. When Federici asks “How can we prevent commons from being co-opted and instead of providing an alternative to capitalism, becoming platforms on which a sinking capitalist class can reconstruct its fortunes?” she warns us that when a variety of groups sees commons as a source of security, sociality, and economic power; they encounter with consumer groups who think commons as providing better terms of purchase. Even though it is a legitimate desire, limits and dangers of these initiatives are that they can easily generate the conditions of a new enclosure movement that needed to be opposed at the beginning. Similar to Harvey’s “mirror image”, the problem to solve is that how to avoid having a mirror image of resistance which takes the shape neoliberal features that are being fought against. Keeping her warning and Harvey’s criticism over

class movements in mind, if these commons do not offer alternative social relations which are not capitalistic, what kind of commons do offer a model? Before giving Federici's model and qualifications that define anti-capitalist commons, I will try to see if the Kazova Resistance and the Özgür Kazova Cooperation can be an example of - or at least a step to anti-capitalist commons.

Federici defines anti-capitalist commons as “commons are best conceived as autonomous spaces from which to reclaim control over our life and the conditions of our reproduction, and to provide resources on the basis of sharing and equal access, but also as bases from which to counter the processes of enclosure and increasingly disentangle our lives from the market and the state” (Federici, 2013, p.10). Thus her redefinition of commons differs from Ostrom's and her colleagues. Federici dreams of a common which is a “free association of producers, self-governed and organized to ensure not an abstract equality but the satisfaction of people needs and desires”. Her emphasis here is that anti-capitalist commons should satisfy needs and desires and at the same time should avoid being restricted to abstract equality. It should have the equality in the very core of its establishment. She is aware that today we might have only fragments of this type of commons, but she also emphasizes that creating this commons is important to enhance our power against capitalism and state.

Following this track Stefo Benlisoy (2014) discusses commoning practices and commons as a part of the anti-capitalist agenda. Following Luxembourg on the idea that the process of primitive accumulation and accumulation by dispossession is intrinsic to capitalism he explains that especially since the 1980s, after the neoliberal capitalism was produced as a response to the crisis of capitalism, it is possible to consider this last 30 years as a new fence campaign of the capital. He considers this new enclosure as a period when ecological commons like earth, water and air are under the most intense attack. When we combine this with the ecological crisis, which is now frequently mentioned, he thinks that it is possible to see how intrinsically the enclosure attack against the commons, especially with the economic crisis, are connected.

Similar to this, Firat (2014) identifies the problem in the neoliberal era as the necessity of constructing the political subjects which can oppose the brutal attacks of capitalism and produce an opposing political-economic-cultural project that will overcome it. However, she argues that this cannot only be achieved neither by recomposing class nor resurrection of statist demands. For her, the way of constructing

the political subject is through the empowerment and multiplication of the existing ones, the production of concrete solidarity spaces and practices of those oppressed and under domination. She sees Özgür Kazova as one of these solidarity spaces which was empowered by other practices. Her example is the support given at individual level to Özgür Kazova in terms of organization, software, design as well as distribution network provided by Caferağa neighborhood house. For instance, Kadıköy Cooperative's cloth bags were made by Özgür Kazova Cooperative and have been sold with a slogan "to support collective production without boss." Kadıköy Cooperative define their position and being a cooperative as seeing themselves as a part of society and aim to empower and create solidarity between different sections, institutions, networks and initiatives. They develop 'practical' solidarity relations to the extent which the objectives of the cooperative and its fields of work intersect. Fırat emphasizes that the importance of institutionalization of commoning practices will mean the reversal of the political effects of fragmentation in the field of production, the opening of barriers in the field of reproduction of the marketplace, and the creation of transpositions between these two fields.

The reconstruction of the worker's lost publicity with other means, that is, the formation of 'anti-publicness', is an integral part of the reconstruction of the political capacity of the working class. Thus, she sees Özgür Kazova as a commoning practice that is able to merge different political struggles and practices that produce political subjects who will create the political capacity for anti-capitalist transformation. However, Özgür Kazova's ability to bring different political struggles together is overrated here. It is more like "movement curation" rather than genuinely bringing different identities to act in common. So, I disagree with Fırat in her analysis of the Özgür Kazova's main contribution to politics of the commons, however, even though Özgür Kazova is not promising enough to offer a transformative potential against capitalist relations, it is still possible to talk what kind of potential it has, and what kind of commoning practices have formed the structure of Özgür Kazova.



### **3.2 Thinking Factory Recuperation and Self-Management Practice in Neoliberal Era: The Example of Kazova Resistance**

Balibar (2007) criticizes the reductionism underlying the representation of the idealized "class of the subject", holding that the workers' movement must not be identified with the workers nor the class unity with the workers' movement. According to Balibar, this is what produces the contradictions of the social and political history of the class struggle. In reality, workers' organizations have never had to represent the whole of the workers' movement, and they have had to contradict it periodically: "It has always been a moment in which the worker's movement has to rebuild itself against its existing forms of organization and its practices" (Balibar, 2007, p. 206-207). Balibar's determination is of the utmost importance. It is not uncommon for class struggle and conflicts to emerge from the cracks of existing institutional structures (e.g. trade unions); even this situation can bring the resistances and the breaks which cannot be controlled by the organizations. The emergence of this situation is undoubtedly influenced by many factors but it is necessary to look for a common momentum created by many struggles against precarious work, privatization, and sexist employment.

Another important difference between Diren and Özgür Kazova can be constructed around the questions of to what extent do they refer to class-based movements in the recent history of Turkey or elsewhere and whether if these references take the form of memories. When I talked to people in Diren Kazova, they constantly referred to a number of labor movements and self-management practices in Turkey. Kaya talked about how he has been active in labor struggles since 1970s. He lectured me about the history of factory recuperations in Turkey and how he played active roles in some of them. He mainly talked about Alpagut as a very historical and inspiring factory occupation example. He named other strike examples such as Netas (1986), Altinyildiz (2013), Tarih Events (1980), Profilo, Pasabahce (1970), Kavel (1963). These are the cases of workers' strikes given as examples to show how vivid labor movements and class struggle actually are in Turkey. However, these are different from Kazova's practice of production. While I was talking to Özgür Kazova workers, none of them made any references to these practices. Their memories of resistance could go back as far as to the start of their own struggle in the factory. Some of them were not knowledgeable about the details of the past practices, but even when they knew about some of them, they chose not to refer them as inspiring examples. In their website and in interviews they often talk about the Gezi

uprising and how Gezi forums helped them to formulate their search of justice into a viable form of resistance. “I cannot forget about the atmosphere during the Gezi protests. I was not motivated and encouraged by anything but Gezi forums.” (Aynur, Kazova textile worker). When I asked them how they would describe their resistance in relation to the Gezi Park protests, they all made the point of the Gezi effect in their resistance, encouragement and gaining momentum as being a legacy of the Gezi values. Serkan says: “We learned about the other worker resistances during Gezi forums from the friends that we made. For instance, we looked into the Mondragon example because everyone was talking about that. They made us watch movies and read about other worker resistances in order to be sustainable.” Thus, the Gezi effect is undeniable among Kazova textile workers. However what is more interesting here is how two different groups of workers have motivations drawn from different memories, and how this affects their position in the labor movements in Turkey. Diren Kazova describes themselves as a “legal cooperative” (here they make a derogatory comment of Özgür Kazova not being legally cooperative but founded as corporation) that emerged out of tent resistance, of factory occupation with a great help with Revolutionary Workers Movement or Devrimci İşçi Hareketi in Turkish (DİH). Özgür Kazova workers’ memory of the past practices and current events were shaped largely by the Gezi process through supporters and their ways to identify with and to follow as examples. This point provides an insightful analysis about Özgür Kazova based on their networks of solidarity which is not that clear as Diren Kazova’s DIH connection. This loose connection to any movement or organization is one of the reasons that made me think of politics of commons as a strategy with which people form practices and relations. How could we think about different understanding of togetherness in resistance in relation to their betrayal stories of each other?

### **3.3 Conceptualizing the Context of Class-Based Struggle in Two Cases of Kazova**

JK Gibson-Graham are two scholars who explore how academic research can contribute to the creation of ‘environmentally oriented’ and ‘socially just’ economies. They offer “diverse economies framework” to expand the understanding of what constitutes the economy. They name this type of economies as community economy and state its main concerns as to meet the needs by production and distribution of social surplus and to sustain and produce commons (Gibson-Graham, Cameron and Healy

2013). What a community economy needs first is a community. Gibson-Graham take Jean-Luc Nancy's theories on community that is based on communality of being (Gibson Graham, 2006, p.81-82). Thus, community is conceptualized as the relationship of 'being-in-common', thus the key feature of community is not captured as essence of identity or model but rather as being relational. The conclusion is that what they theorize as community economies are not actually economic models but practices of co-existence (Gibson Graham, 2006, p.88).

Diverse economies framework offers a shift from a priori judgement about goodness or badness of a practice to upholding integrity in both decision-making and action. Thinking Özgür Kazova within Gibson-Graham's (2008) theoretical framework of diverse economies conceptualizes the economic realm as a diverse field that exists with different economic relations, and intervenes in this field to broaden the methods of transforming production, distribution and sharing relations in the direction of participatory formulas and solidarity.

A new mode of relativity should be formed against neoliberal ideologies that conceptualize the economic space as a non-political and technical field in which economic sphere must be constantly constructed under any condition (even by capitalist institutions and actors) and that create forms of organization based on exploitation and hierarchical power relations. A new mode of relativity should be conceived as a field of struggle that can be organized in the present, and around the participatory and egalitarian principles. In other words, the actors of class struggle who embody this concept with class positions in relation to a particular class should be no longer those but struggle of different forms of organizing labor: exploitation-based and non-exploitative (Madra and Ozselcuk, 2013).

Madra and Ozselcuk follow Gibson-Graham's framework of diverse economies on economic relations. Diverse economies means that the economic structure we live in is not only about capitalism but rather it has diverse components and relational forms. They argue about a concrete example of care labor. Researchers and activists from these traditions say that social and class relations of dominance are not limited to capitalist exploitation, such as the exploitation of in-house unpaid labor, and that this dominance is established through gender disparity and unequal division of labor (and is not reducible to capitalism). Besides redefining class with neoliberalism, this tradition is not only limited to make the area and the network of relations visible but it is also aims at making

this area politicized and transforming it into a place of class struggle and transformation. Thus, class formations are thought to be not as substantive identities but as collectivities that contain many differences. Moreover, it is seen that the classifications and class movements that emerged with the neoliberal transformation are not mythical representations of the antiquity, but on the contrary, class is shaped by labor struggle, historical and social conditions and political conjuncture. This is in line with what I observed in the Kazova Cooperatives and their basis for creating a new value. However, this is both naming and process. Thus, processes analyzing both Özgür and Diren Kazova are needed, and I will focus on the processes of these formations at the center of different community-making strategies of the Kazova Resistance in the next section.

In the light of the diverse economies framework, how can we understand why different Kazovas emerged out of the same class-based movement as conceiving two different strategies to resist, to produce and to survive? When I talked to Diren Kazova workers they said that their main goal was to be a sustainable cooperative, because a cooperative offers egalitarian and non-exploitative means to produce for the people. However, they also added that since the political context in Turkey differs from other countries such as Greece, Spain, and Argentina where cooperatives have the support of government, it is really hard to survive within capitalist world without being integrated to the market. On the other hand, Özgür Kazova workers did not form a legal cooperative. Serkan says; “I do not care if we are a legal cooperative or not. Establishing a cooperation was easier and costed less. We care about our understanding, not about our name on the paper. We are in solidarity with a number of movements like Komşu Kafe Collective, Migrant Solidarity Network, Kadın Kadına Mülteci Mutfağı, Mülteciyim Kardeşim, Kadıköy Cooperative etc. Now our name is collective on the social media, but in fact none of us care about the name.” He continued that their goal was to survive under these harsh conditions, and the only way to do that is selling their products. They do not see cooperative as a strategy to use in order to achieve their goals to be sustainable, however they do believe that people and solidarity networks can actually work:

For instance, there are thousands of people who liked our Facebook page, if they buy one pullovers we would be able to hire other workers, create an atelier where we can merge with other movements like let’s say Refugee Kitchen can work over there (showing a space) we could sell our products here, then life would be easier for all of us.

What can be seen here is that even though Kazova Resistance emerged as a class-based movement with workers, through articulation of different forms of resistances to exploitative relations, Özgür Kazova went beyond organization in production line to organizing consumption relations as well. This makes their difference in sustaining worker identity and at the same time converging with other movements by creating a structure to organize daily life of people. Serkan says “Best way to understand how production looks like without boss is to try it”. There are reasons why Özgür Kazova have expectations from the people but not from the other trade unions, organizations etc. This was shaped during the resistance and woven a network that, I think, was one of the most important tools that Gezi resistance provided to Kazova workers. Serkan says:

At the beginning we really had support from Devrimci İşçi Hareketi, there were people who kept watch with us in the tent. They took care of all print jobs etc. Another thing that I learned during this resistance is that when an organization comes to a worker strike other leftist organizations prefer not to be involve in, that is why we were alone with Devrimci İşçi Hareketi.

Their experience with Revolutionary Workers’ Movement led them to find another community to feel strong, and their solution was to create their own community that has a common point in supporting them.

### **3.4 Interpretation of the Split within the Kazova Resistance: Free Kazova vs Resist Kazova**

In my thesis, after claiming that both Kazova formations do not present sustainable economic models but rather they are creating spaces to produce political subjectivities, I am now focusing on what kind of political subjects and politics each formation offers.

What standpoints does this act of separation provide us both in terms of physical experience and memory of the resistance? The act of separation in practices, activities, relations and encounters of agents enables us to understand the separation as the

production of subjectivity. I use subjectivity to mean “the conditions of being subjected to frameworks of regulation, knowledge and discourse and constructing subjectivity in the process” (Skeggs, 1997, p.12). In this case, it stems from subjectification of workers in the production of their subjectivity. However, subjectification should not be understood as a passive process but rather in the way of Michel Foucault’s (2009) understanding which takes subjectivity as something which produces itself, seeks potentials and considers relations of others to conform or resist to position of these subjectivities. The question of subjectivity in my thesis is: could the workers have produced another subjectivity position which would not reproduce capitalist relations? In this way, production becomes not only economic production, but also producing a way of life.

There is no clear line between two Kazova formations to claim that one is based on commoning practices whereas the other is not. I think, both of them are based on commoning practices in the sense of embracing production without boss and trying to go beyond production by networking with other people -neighbors, supporters, organizations etc. However what differs in Özgür Kazova is that this network of people and movements are wider and more inclusive than in Diren Kazova. Both are trying to integrate with everyday life and produce a way of politics. Diren Kazova also tries to stand as an inclusive cooperative where other people and movements can integrate in, however, even though their narratives are in line with this understanding, all the tools that they use in order to communicate with people – the social media, magazines, brochures etc., are the tools of the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (Turkish: Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi or DHKP-C), and aligned with the party’s ideology. Thus, having a closer look into DHKP-C is important to gain an understanding about Diren Kazova.

Briefly, DHKP-C was established in 1994 by the Revolutionary Left Organization (Dev-Sol Örgütü), and it has members from various factions of Turkish radical leftist groups. The organization has two components: ‘the party’ representing the political side, and ‘the front’ standing for military side. Ideologically, it opposes imperialist and oligarchic groups and its primary goal to establish a socialist state in Turkey. Currently, it is an illegal organization and listed as a terrorist group in the USA, the UK, and Turkey. Moreover, they have been criticized mainly for their violent tactics, and rigid approaches to issues of LGBTIQ and sex workers, and also having total control in some places without allowing any other political movement in those areas of Turkey. Consequently,

another important difference in the discussion of commoning practices of the Kazova appears as their locality.

During my process of writing the thesis I met with some young people from Küçük Armutlu and I wondered if they were aware of Diren Kazova since most of the members lived in the same area. One of the young, Uğur, told me that for sure they knew about Diren Kazova, they helped them in the neighborhood by carrying some products, fixing some technical issues, and also organized lots of picnics together with all the neighbors. Uğur says “This is something that only people who were born and grew up in political neighborhoods understand. Even though you criticize them you have family-like relationships and you have to be there for them when you needed.” Encountering with teenagers from Küçük Armutlu made me think about how the way Diren Kazova is organized is different than Özgür Kazova whose members live in different places and do not have any local bonds. Even one-time Özgür Kazova worker Aynur told me that her landlady was “Cepheli” and when this separation came out they had a discussion because she was defending Diren Kazova workers and their goodwill.

It is seen that Diren Kazova is based more on neighborhood interaction. Some places especially known with high DHKP-C population in Istanbul are Küçük Armutlu, Gazi, Nurtepe, and Alibeykoy. The organization, which can operate in all the districts of Istanbul, uses certain neighborhoods distinctly depending on the establishment of those places or on ethnic, sectarian and ideological elements. These politicized places known as where urban poor is mostly mobilized and there are attempts to displace them through the government’s plans of urban transformation. As a result, when the Kazova Resistance started, it was easier to mobilize the population in these places through the Cephe connection. Residents in these politicized spaces are also supporters of Diren Kazova and through events they empower the movement and try to make new members for the Cephe movement out of the others who are deemed sympathetic. In terms of resources - human, money and space, they mostly utilize the connections of the Cephe movement.

On the other hand, Özgür Kazova is not looking for immediate protests of any sort or more street-oriented actions, but through a network of struggles, with or without notice, it empowers all the movements within the network. This is both a strength and a weakness of Özgür Kazova. It is a strength because it gains a lot of individual and organizational support from different movements, but it is also a weakness to depend so much on the network of struggles because their sustainability also depends on activities of these

movements. Besides being powerful and weak in terms of being in the social network of struggle, the way they connect to spaces and people is their essential difference from Diren Kazova. This point of difference leads us to investigate more about the social background of the activists: their free times, their privilege to afford not going to work, their flexible schedule, in short their bibliographical availability. In the case of Özgür Kazova, the activists' capacity to use the social media is a resource by itself. Similarly, although Özgür Kazova was not a product of an organization, the movement is backed by several leftist/anarchist/environmentalist organizations and their media. This is the reason that I thought about the concept of 'multitude' as community in Özgür Kazova as opposed to more precise community of Diren Kazova.

In the framework of betrayal, boss, and community I will try to highlight important components of the separation in Kazova Resistance and explore and compare the possibilities as well as limits of this type of political in the construction of anti-capitalist relations.

### **3.5 The Betrayal, the Boss, and the Community**

#### ***Betrayal***

In the beginning of the resistance recuperation of the factory was not seen as an alternative to the prospect of never-ending search for justice, it was a reaction to what the boss was doing during the legal process. They were doing weekly marches and they set up a tent, at that point Sisli Municipality and even the police force were friendly to them. Serkan says "We did not even had a proper tent and then municipality gave us a tent and even a tea pot, people were coming to chat and time was passing easier during our watch." Meanwhile, the bosses had disappeared, taking with them anything of value. They couldn't take the machines with them but they sabotaged the machines so that they wouldn't function. The bosses left the workers without their salaries and without their means of production. The workers found themselves without jobs, income, and legal rights. Thus, the occupation of the former workplace was not a strategy in their protests until they realized that bosses were taking everything in their absence and they decided to occupy the factory.



As I have pointed out earlier, the occupation decision was not an easy one especially for workers whose political subjectivities were not formed around a fierce resistant ideology. I see that even though the idea of occupation was contested by those workers, after occupation began and succeeded they also embraced this action and told me so during the interviews. However, for the ones who were defending this beforehand they were mostly organized workers and most of them were from Diren Kazova, they saw this opposition as lack of class consciousness and even as cowardice. Bülent says “but now they tell a story like they were very supportive and took part in the occupation. We would have occupied it long before if we did not have any opposition. We do all the work and if it turns out a rewarding result they take share. How easy!” When I realized that kind of competing stories about the phase of factory occupation, I thought it would be more suitable to focus on their definition of themselves as a collective or cooperative rather than placing them on a trajectory of labor movement history in Turkey. They do not narrate the stories as Diren Kazova who emphasizes Revolutionary Workers’ Movement and their stories about Alpagut which allowed them to think about self-management practice. They also add that Metin Yeğın and his stories and works on Argentina and Latin America factory occupation practices encouraged them to do so.

Furthermore, Diren Kazova published a book which tells the story of resistance, workers’ movement, including some interviews with the workers. This book was printed with the help of the Revolutionary Worker Movement. When I asked if they edited this they said they and some writers of Yürüyüş Magazine edited it. Each reference to institutions and movements are related to organized and revolutionary movements such as İdil Cultural Center, Grup Yorum, Ötekiler Kültür ve Sanat. Moreover, they organized workers’ movies screenings in the factory and noted in the book that “until this time workers’ movie festivals were happening and haven’t reached the real workers who are the subjects of these movies”. In this book, even though they spared space for interviews with Özgür Kazova workers, the way the interviews are presented still places the emphasis on Revolutionary Worker Movement’s support. For instance, the book contains Serkan’s interview where he says “DİH reminded us our worker identities, we wouldn’t think about setting tents, marching to Taksim, even we would think we wouldn’t do it” (Diren Kazova, 2016, p.200). The whole interview goes on like this, they present a unity in the narratives of the resistance. The same people who wrote this are also the ones who accused Serkan as being a coward and preventing the occupying the factory. Serkan’s

interview says “we entered in the factory, we occupied the factory” during the book and the book never gives different accounts of the occupation story. They only talk about the split in a paragraph where it says “working class in Turkey does not suffer only from bosses but also from boss-favoured unionism, the left who bailed on them - Hey textile workers can be example of this.

Kazova also went through this kind of process. When personal interests started to come to the front we had a separation. We needed to suppress the ambition to gain more and populism, because we wanted to produce without boss and by non-exploitative means. Our sample practice and resistance would be sacrificed to those who were after advertising and filling their pockets. We continued our way as Diren Kazova after this separation” (p.24). In the later pages of the book, as I have explained before, they give space to Özgür Kazova workers’ interviews but they do not specify that they are now in Özgür Kazova Cooperative. They do not name their functioning collective anywhere. The whole book glorifies worker resistance, spares a lot of space for solidarity with some selected workers movements - Grief, Bedaş, Reno etc. In addition to this, they said they did not get any support from DİSK-leftist worker union but they underlined that Nakliyat-İş (Transport Workers’ Union) within DİSK helped them a lot. In their book, the occupation and the process of resistance is told as an act of working class who gained their consciousness through the help of Revolutionary Worker Movement and past practices.

According to Andreas Huyssen, remembering that occurs by itself and without a plan does not represent the events in the past, but rather their recollection in our minds. In order to become memory for an event, it has to be retrieved to the mind (Huyssen, 2000). Svetlana Boym also writes about how we connect with memories and things with nostalgic feelings. She states that “nostalgia, in my view, is not always retrospective; it can be prospective as well. The fantasies of the past determined by the needs of the present have a direct impact on the realities of the future” (Boym, 2007, p.8). It can be said that, her approach turns ‘nostalgia’ into a tool which can transmit information. Moreover, Boym argues that the spread of nostalgia, in a way a particular information, is as related with ‘changing concept of time’ as ‘dislocation in space’ (Boym, 2007, p.12). So, ‘nostalgia’ for the left movement can also be conceptualized by Boym’s differentiation between ‘restorative nostalgia’ and ‘reflective nostalgia’. In the Kazova case, restorative nostalgia applies to Diren Kazova who attempt to make trans-historical bonds, and aim

to reconstruct “the lost resistance practice of the past”. On the other hand, Özgür Kazova’s articulation of the past can be reflective nostalgia that fears to turn back, and fosters creation of a new based on individual time (Boym, 2007). Thus, in the moments of resistance, it is important to define what you are resisting against.

In the case of the Kazova, it was for workers’ rights against their boss. This definition designated their position within the political area of the resistance. One of the important observations of mine in the field was to hear how they represented each other, how they were trying to justify their position by blaming the other side. Thus, I believe betrayal stories are important to capture the kind of identity Kazova workers creating for and against each other. The main betrayal story in the case of Kazova divided the resistance groups into two. However, there are a number of intragroup betrayal stories too. This includes not giving enough care or labor to the resistance, not being oppositional to the other party enough, and stealing money from cooperative budget and from collected solidary money. After they split up they were five people and one of them again stole some money that came from online selling. Serkan said:

“Now, we are using Aynur’s bank account. It is her turn (they laugh). We also so not accept the money coming from solidarity nights. Because when people see that money is coming they go crazy (they laugh again)”.

“We wanted to produce and earn money. Diren Kazova, however, wanted us to be on street. When we asked how we were supposed to look after our families; they were like ‘we make a call that Kazova workers need money’. This is not sustainable, this is not being worker. We are not like them”.

Moreover stories of betrayals went beyond the separation of the two groups on the basis of being organized or non-organized, but it also created somehow hostile memories of themselves as well as their convergence with other movements, struggles and organizations. It was that sharp that even Aynur stated that “What they (Diren Kazova) have done to us (Özgür Kazova) was not done by anyone. Not by the police, not the state or not even by the boss!” Moreover, when I asked Aynur what kind of movements or struggles they are close with, she answered; “We are not close to any organization (that is the reason that we are not with Diren Kazova). We are open to everyone. However, most of the time, it is the without-boss type of formations that we come closer.”

During my interview it was fascinating for me to discover; first, how they constructed a strong worker identity against their boss and his family and second, how they reconstructed this identity in relation to their opposition against Diren Kazova and their organization DHKP-C and DİH. Thus, I argue that not only the memories of old Kazova but also rejection of the memories related to Diren Kazova became decisive in their self-definition as “the Free Kazova Worker”. One can even see that interactions between two Kazovas take mythic forms in the narratives. Organized, dangerous, illegal activities are attributed to Diren Kazova workers whereas lack of class consciousness, cowardness, and greediness are to Özgür Kazova.

Özgür Kazova were critical of Diren Kazova in the sense of resource mobilization who accused them of cowardice. Özgür Kazova thought that organized workers have free time and have privilege of affording not going to work, they have more flexible schedule, in short their availability. Thus, the way Özgür Kazova responded to accusations of cowardice and greediness was through positioning Diren Kazova as exclusionary, dangerous, and illegal organization. It can be observed that each party finds a solution in creating more powerful discourse in order to claim Kazova workers identity.

Moreover, I realized how this identity-making process affected their recollections of the old Kazova. Articulation of words and recollection of memories about the old Kazova became important to analyze because of the reasonable amount of contradictory narratives observed both across the two groups and also within the groups themselves. Either as a gossip or a joke, it manifests itself in the narrations and showed me another component of the worker identity they constructed. Assmann (1995) argues that; “These “others,” however, are not just any set of people, rather they are groups who conceive their unity and peculiarity through a common image of their past” (p.127). She claims that every individual feels belonging to some groups this creates a number of the self-images and the memories. Following this argument, I also considered their description of the old Kazova and their former boss through some jokes and gossip. For instance, Aynur said:

I seriously think that they couldn't arrest me or something when I did a protest in front of our boss' home. It was because I knew a lot of things about the AKP government and the old Kazova relation. I was working at the packing segment and I remember we did

packages of sweaters to be sent to AKP government members. Now, I realize that they couldn't make anything because they didn't want me to reveal this bond. Not only this, in the customhouse, our trucks were never checked. How do you think this happened?

Özgür Kazova workers' memories about old Kazova are more individual memories of workplace. However, when I talked to Diren Kazova workers they speak about how workers of Özgür Kazova changed since the resistance. Bulent says, "We were already different people, they were making fun of Kurdish people in the workplace, they were fascists. We would not do together anyways." When I asked about if they had any trouble during the old Kazova, he continued and said "It couldn't be. There was boss and fear back then. But now, there is no boss there can only be fight". Serkan talks about how those workers actually misinformed the organization and tried to be unjust to them. "When we talked to people from Cephe, even they said that we were right. They are the ones who settle the accounts during the separation in fair sharing of money and machines"

Both groups claim that they were betrayed by the opposite party. For Diren Kazova, betrayal is more related to being unfair. Bülent says "We may be separated now but we won these machines together. Especially they (Özgür Kazova workers) did not even participated occupation. One of them said that he applied for a new job and he did not want any trouble with police to keep his record clean. Do they think I didn't have anything to lose? I had my baby and my wife in the hospital but I was still there." On the other hand, the same event of factory occupation was narrated in a very different way by that person about whom Bulent was talking. Serkan told me that "Yes I was opposed to occupation because I had been watching tents for 60 days and I did not want to lose everything, other workers were afraid of any actions. At least I had some experience in the trade union, most of the workers did not even know any trade unions. They were afraid, I did not support occupation idea because I did not want to be wrong when I had a just claim for my rights." Serkan continues: "Nevertheless they somehow organized this (he laughs). Then they called me: 'Serkan do you know where we are now?' he said 'Are you in the factory?'"

He told the rest of the story as he was against at the beginning for not individual reasons but then as soon as he heard that it happened he went and supported it with an undefinable childish joy. I was surprised at how they actually recollect and narrate the

same event of occupation in a very different, conflicting but still in detailed way. For Özgür Kazova, the issue of betrayal emerged as they claim to be diluted by lawyers of Devrimci İşçi Hareketi - who were following their case since they didn't have any money to hire someone. Aynur says "They told us that the boss did not agree on leaving the machines to us. That is why we continued more and more to resist. Those Devrimci İşçi Hareketi workers wanted us to stay on the streets and attend every strike since we already gained attention as Kazova workers. They lied to us." Thus for Özgür Kazova, some workers' prioritization of party and movement politics and agenda betrayed their resistance.

Through interviews with both sides, I realized that both of Kazova formations based their relations with the outside on a reciprocal conversation. However, they do differ in their satisfaction of reciprocity. For instance, for Özgür Kazova there needs to be a reciprocal conversation about exchange of labor and exchange of capital. This means that they do sell their product and do not accept any grants. Aynur says "If you would like to contribute us, buy our products. This is what we expect from people." On the other hand, Diren Kazova Cooperative is more interested in the bigger picture. They have a great enthusiasm about telling their stories and supporting other political activities. They even published a booklet that tells their story. I also felt this during my interviews. They gave a pullover as gift, and their main criticism about Özgür Kazova was their prices. Bülent from Diren Kazova says "I don't understand how much expensive a pullover can be! We also produce high quality product and even with profit we sell it for 30 TL whereas they sell it for 60-70 TL! If you produce for the people how is it possible for them to have those pullovers." They made a point about the market, which I think is really important to think about as an issue. When I talked back to Özgür Kazova they said "We buy our cotton from Italy through one of our supporters, she also creates designs for us. That cotton is expensive but also of very high quality. You know currency and devaluation of Turkish lira, that is why it is expensive." However, the main reason that affects the cost is, as Özgür Kazova workers also point out, low demand, the market network and narrow marketing alternatives. Being under these conditions within a capitalist network makes it even harder to be sustainable for manufacturing cooperatives.

The purchase and consumption of Kazova goods has become a political act rather than traditional shopping. The Kazova self-management economic model faces a structural contradiction. On the one hand, if the minimum price for products is high, they

may not find outlets. Sales will be low. The economic benefits to the Kazova organisation will also be negligible. On the other hand, if the minimum price of Kazova products is “competitive”, sales may increase but the impact in terms of bettering-off workers lives will be insignificant. When I talked to workers they stated that in their production they use high quality cotton imported from Italy, and when currency rates change they barely make money out of selling. I questioned their trade with Italy, they said that they have a supporter there and the quality is really high so they buy cotton from Italy. However, I think this creates a big problem of sustainability. Some suggestions come from Özgür Kazova supporters to reform the structure in order to develop more sustainable network. For instance some supporters I interviewed with stated that Özgür Kazova would have more impact if it focused on manufactured goods produced using local agricultural products. This type of model would have the advantage of generating local networks within conventional trade in Turkey. Regarding public understanding and market conditions, another limit of Özgür Kazova is their refusal to see the state as a possible partner for radical transformation or not aiming the state directly in their resistance.

Considering all these factors, I argue that Özgür Kazova model is not an alternative to the capitalist production – but the reality is that it is creating space within the conventional trading system. Once the rules of the game are laid down (financing, minimum prices, premiums, traceability), market access and prices are determined on a competitive basis, as in the case of conventional trade. This fact leads me to study Özgür Kazova not as an alternative economic model but as a social movement which has a capacity to connect people and create political subjectivities different than Diren Kazova’s political that is identity politics. Identity politics relies on sharing an essential identity such as gender, nation, political ideology, or religious. The ideal understanding of *the political* in Özgür Kazova case is not struggling over conflicting identities but creating communication between these identities. However, I argue that, this communication is not based on economic relations which undermines Özgür Kazova’s ability to offer an alternative economic model, but it still contains a possibility to open up a space in which actors can act in common while preserving certain identity differences.

Even though Diren Kazova’s prices are more reasonable and they use neighborhood bazaars as markets, they are also not an alternative economic model. First of all, their reciprocity conversation is more based on ideology, support and solidarity

bases than capital. This strategy is also understandable since their bond with the Cephe movement also affects their priorities.

Thus, Diren Kazova betrayal stories have their roots in ideology, whereas Özgür Kazova betrayal stories are rooted in actions of those individuals rather than ideology. In both Kazova cases, this transition of the memory they have about the old Kazova and each other set some values for them to remember and to reconstruct the ideal worker identity in order to continue as different (and better) from their rivals (Assmann, and John Czaplicka, 1995). After some point, they lost the ground of opposition and have become hostile to the image of each other and this poses a threat to their political potential.

### ***Patronsuzluk***

“*Patronsuzluk* means happiness while working. When you work you feel happy, this is what it means for me” says Serkan. He adds “... or for instance you have to go somewhere you do not have to ask anyone, if you have order you work if you do not have it you can meet with other people, visit other struggles you have more individual time than before, no one threatens you.”

“*Patronsuzluk* means freedom, equality, and end of exploitation somehow” says Kaya.

If we need to decide on the one thing that is common in both Kazovas, it is their situation of being *patronsuz*, producing without a boss. Quotations above present the feelings they have about the bosses from their perspective as former Kazova workers, but what about the historical context? What does *patronsuzluk* mean in the context of capitalist production and anti-capitalist struggle?

One possible answer to this is even if all businesses are involved in a cooperative system, self-management will not be discussed unless the cooperative principle does not dominate the entire functioning of society. Thus, if alternative economies are to be talked about, we need more movements to converge and widen the communities engaged in these type of practices. As Özgür Narin (2014) states, "although winning struggles against bosses one by one and doing production without a boss in few factories may not transform whole relations of production in a society", still, "the biggest contribution of self-management practices is creating possibility of organizing the social re-production again



and by the workers themselves and that can be an alternative to deadly system of production that neglects human unemployment and job security" (Narin, 2014, p.48).

Following Narin's statement, these type of practices can be seen as the reversal of the situation which is described as collective political capacity loss. These practices are characterized as commoning practices which brings different classes and struggles together and invite decomposition of class in political anti-capitalist struggle. Neither only local forms of struggle that look for creation of alternative life nor struggles to build a public movement from above without intervening in private sphere are enough. What is needed is to organize lives in between these two areas of struggles to increase possibilities of anti-capitalist struggle and as Silvia Federici and George Caffentzis discuss one needs to "keep in mind that in a world dominated by capitalist relations the common/s we create are necessarily transitional forms"(Federici and Caffentzis, 2013, p.10). For Federici, these types of "commoning practices" are not the ultimate point of the struggle against capitalism: "For a start we need to build movements that put on their agenda their own reproduction on a communal basis, which means movements whose members do not share only the space of the demonstration or the picket line but learn to put their lives in common, organizing for instance on the basis of their different needs and possibilities, and eliminating practices that can become principles of exclusion or hierarchy." I also see commoning practices in anti-capitalist struggle within the context of strategy to find a new way of doing politics which especially has importance of in thinking recomposition of class.

Diren Kazova failed to define class struggle in a neoliberal era where separation of political and social movements diminishes the power of opposition. The line cleavage of Diren Kazova was being unable to make their particular interests appear as the interests of wider collectivity (Narotzky, 2010), whereas Özgür Kazova both established relations and also seemed more open to other communities. However, the openness of Özgür Kazova should not be taken as for granted. If it creates a political potential to foster anti-capitalist relations, its position should be clarified and channeled based on experiences of the past and global labor movements. As history showed, many worker organizations and the currents that dominate the opposition in society reproduces binary relations of market/state and political/social.

Sharryn Kasmir (2013) argues that conceptualization of commoning practices in oppositional politics within neoliberalism can offer a tool to overcome binaries and

empower strategic line against neoliberal destructions. However, in the neoliberal period, there needs to be political subjects who can stand against and establish a political, economic and cultural project in anti-capitalist struggle. Kasmir exemplifies this with Mondragon cooperatives in the Basque region of Spain. This system stands as the best practice of worker owned cooperatives. It was accepted as a hope for working class to build an alternative against devastating conditions of capitalism. However, the vast literature on Mondragon presented it as ‘formal democratic governance, tied capital to place, and returned profits to a coop bank that made investments in more cooperatives and deposited a share of profits into workers’ individual accounts’ (Kasmir, 2013), there seemed a little to investigate rather than to spread this model to other places in the world. Nonetheless, she reveals that when she talked to cooperative workers she found out a great deal of discontent. It even had a progressive labor movement tied up to the communist party. She realized that socialism was still an aspiration for many workers, yet cooperative workers were not involved in working class movements outside of cooperatives, and most of the labor union saw this system as a privilege for labor class compared to the past and present conditions. Her conclusion of this ethnographic look is understanding cooperatives in relation to the history of this regional labor movement, local class formation, and experiences of struggle (Kasmir, 2013).

Wendy Brown emphasizes that the language of traditional nostalgic class struggle more often do not mitigate the modalities of subordination but conceals the basis of them. Further, she says that demand for legal and social rights naturalizes the inegalitarian relations on which contemporary capitalist societies are founded (Brown, 2002). The reason that she points this out related to the fact that unequal distribution of resources in capitalist societies renders many struggles useless. The problem is not only about gaining some rights against the capital, even when these rights or demands are formally extended to ever-broader groups of subjects, the enjoyment is not thereby guaranteed. In our case, being “without a boss” differs for the two Kazova formations. Diren Kazova conceptualized this right-based movement in which claims are made very clear for socialist workers. However, as it is shown by Brown and Kasmir’s works that neither a party connection nor a form legality such as cooperatives might guarantee the enjoyment of these rights. Thus, when Özgür Kazova refers to the condition of being “without boss”, it is more about enjoyment of freedom rather than broadened claim for the legal rights. This problematizes Özgür Kazova’s political potential compared to Diren Kazova in the

context of labor movements. However, at the same time, Özgür Kazova claims an alternative space which creates the need to formulate their practices and relations that is based on producing in common.

### *Community*

Community framework in Kazova Resistance is shaped by and as a result of both betrayal stories and their different understanding of being “without boss”. Diren Kazova has a more defined community within their political organization compared to Özgür Kazova which always refers to a less concrete community with more network-based organization. Since both of them are very reflective on the social media; one of the ways to capture the divergent points of their communities was to analyze both formations’ social media accounts.

Diren Kazova’s social media accounts are making political statements against the government more openly. For instance, they have visited Nuriye Gülmen and Semih Özakça, two academics who were detained from their jobs by KHK and started to hunger strike for more than two months. Nuriye Gülmen tweeted about this “On the 29th day of our Hunger Strike, the Revolutionary Workers Movement of Istanbul and the Diren Kazova Cooperative came to visit. Our scraps are from Kazova.” Those two academics are also from Cephe Movement. Moreover, they have many posts about Grup Yorum that is a music band consist of Cephe organized people and İdil Kültür Merkezi where these kind of art, music, and literature groups’ work. Their main magazines are Yürüyüş and Tavır magazines. These cultural organizations and formations have the purpose of using art and cultural production to spread revolutionary ideas to masses. These magazines claim that “revolutionaries conceive art and literature as a means of class struggle.” They are in solidarity with people who are close to their organization and also workers’ movement who can be organized. For instance, they also have many posts about Grief Workers and Resistance. Similar to formations they cooperated with, Diren Kazova's mission is not only to be a cooperative in textile, but also to carry out an area activity.

Beyond producing in the existing way, they aim to do politics through these developments. They function by creating their own agenda and carrying out a discussion around this agenda, along evaluating the transformational revolutionary function of it. Thus, Diren Kazova, apart from being a cooperative and producing whitout a boss, is also

a political formation. They are more political formation than economic one in this sense. They conduct politics through Diren Kazova cooperative. In that sense, they differ from many cooperatives and also from Özgür Kazova. This is why they emphasize their 'legal' cooperative status and their rationale of ownership as their key difference from Özgür Kazova. Özgür Kazova's social media use is more about their products and marketing than following recent events. When they do share or post on the social media, they mainly refer formations they are in solidarity with - events that they can be a part of. This difference also shapes Özgür Kazova marketing strategies, for instance, they use professional photos - taken by one of the supporters as a contribution, and their language is a humorous one that can also be associated with the sense of political humor during Gezi Park protests. To give an example: "As far as we can see, many people suffer from colds. Have plenty of warm water, eat tangerines, wear "jumper without master" and do not let your boss ruin your mood. :)"

To sum up Özgür and Diren Kazova differ in motivational framing. They provide different "call to arms" or rationale for engaging in collective action as well as appropriate vocabularies of motive: vocabularies of severity, urgency, efficacy, and propriety. These vocabularies provide adherents with compelling accounts for engaging in collective action and sustaining their participation. Their "Jumpers without Masters" slogan has a capacity to diagnose a social problem and to provide an umbrella for diverse interests. Similarly, the emphasis on production can be seen an example of motivational framing in order to sustain community relations.

## **CHAPTER 4: POLITICS OF COMMONS**

What is being produced in both Kazovas, the products, are not only about physical goods anymore, but also invisible forms and symbols. This transition is most responsible for the new forms of politics. When the product turns into a symbolic power than it had before, it demands a new kind of thinking as well. In the context of this thesis, I discuss Özgür Kazova formation based on its community and its potential to create a politics of commons through production cooperative. Based on my field work and theoretical framework of politics of commons; the alternative ways of hope can be featured like being small-scale, collective, local and a slow process. Now, I will look into literature of these alternatives and try to connect with politics of commons through the living example of Özgür Kazova.

Graeber's (2009) "direct action" can be one of the ways to make sense of collective action. It implies one's acting for one's self, in a fashion in which one may weigh directly the problem which is confronted, and without needing the mediation of politicians and bureaucrats. According to him, these types of actions are: blockades, pickets, sabotage, squatting, tree spiking, lockouts, occupations, slowdowns etc. All of these forms of actions derive from anarchists' idea of rejection of states and all systematic forms of inequality that states make possible. Direct action was meant in part of organizing actions against neoliberal institutions; in part, as a model of consensus-based, decentralized direct democracy. Moreover, it is distinguished from other forms of political practice by its "pre-figurative" character, its incorporation of the ideals of the revolutionary imagination into the actions we take within the present context which we ultimately seek to change. The implication, I think, is that any revolution worth having must begin not after the strategy and tactics and aspirations are worked out presumably by the "smart" people, but instead it begins in that very process of imagining revolution. This means any egalitarian society can only be created through an egalitarian process, something along the lines of the consensus process.

Another alternative way comes from Hardt and Negri (2005) as the idea of multitude. The multitude is not "the people" but rather many peoples acting in a networked concert. Because of its plurality, its "innumerable internal differences", the

multitude contains the genus of true democracy. At the same time, the multitude's ability to communicate and collaborate – often through the very capitalist networks that oppress it – allows it to produce a common body of knowledge and ideas (“the common”) that can serve as a platform for democratic resistance to Empire.

Hardt and Negri asked the question of whether it is possible to imagine a new process of legitimation that does not rely on the sovereignty of people but instead in the biopolitical productivity of the multitude. And their answer is positive, it is possible through the construction of new circuits of communication, new forms of social collaboration, and new modes of interaction. They also make an analogy of ‘swarm intelligence’ to reform the formless feature of resistance. They claim that the term can be used to name collective and distributed techniques of problem solving without centralized control or the provision of a global model. Again, they conclude that the network struggle values creativity, communication and self-organization. The main concern here is to figure out how we relate to each other, and how we produce together. As it can be seen, it implies a point of convergence. Coming together with similar concerns, creating networks by using cracks of the system without hierarchy and doing all these with slowly changing the habits of individuals. In both models, communication is key and the online media enables us to create bonds even at distance and they help building commons.

The main feature of politics of commons is creating a common ground for social struggles. Commons have been discussed at global scale in '90s and since the late 2000s we have been discussing commons in Turkey. The common means everyone's and nobody's, such as the street we walk on, the air we breathe, the water we drink. However it is not only considered as a concrete space but as a common ground for the struggle against all kinds of commodification of the physical and social areas. Another aim of politics of commons is called “commoning practices” that is to increase self-management solidarity practices and bringing them in. The Gezi movement was just a process of seeing how discussions could happen in practice in the sense of seeing how interactions between movements worked on the space. However, the commons go beyond spaces and also refer to production of social relations. What is important for us here is to think commons as constantly established by direct actions and political actions, rather than by fixed and given areas. If we talk with a few examples, what is capital doing today? At first it increases the working time, then it changes the insurance system. It is lifting a bunch of protection devices from the past. But it does not only change the practices of work and

the labor regimes, but also the areas where those who live by the end are living with them. It is increasingly intervening directly in the inner worker neighborhoods where the rent is rising. In other words, neoliberal capitalism physically distinguishes its components from each other and reintegrates the land itself into the market, thus expanding the real estate market.

The concept of commons allows us to think all these neoliberal attacks together at the same level of thought. However, a question might be asked, what does the concept, when stretched so wide, potentially lose in analytic traction? This question gives us the opportunity to discover the common points that enable forming the common strategy in the next stage. In this sense, the Kazova Resistance has the feature of creating new forms of production relations through their aim of forming a cooperative. However, the separation is also an indicator of how different people have different understandings about organizing their lives. For instance, Diren Kazova who is backed by Cephe Movement is more focused on the idea of organizing individuals who were there to support. However Özgür Kazova was backed by practices which care about organizing and communicating the experiences and problems that arose during and after Gezi, rather than taking the subjects and organizing them, so asks the question of what did different social segments create out there and what did they experience. The Kazova Resistance and their experience is an important legacy in considering the question of how are we going to organize our lives. After occupation of the factory, Kazova workers needed to ask this question. They were at the place and what now? This is a decisive question in the whole process. How do we organize ourselves, our production, our lives? Different approaches to this question caused the split within the Kazova Resistance. Then, what follows is to ask about how we can situate these two different struggles in the labor movement's context. How do they situate themselves and "the other" in the same context of struggle?

Then, what does the rationality of commoning imply? Hardt's answer to this question is: a vision. Meaning has to be formulated in a new political sphere, in a new terrain, and as a new basis of action, that defines the political as something different. Hardt's approach to commoning practices is that it needs to create a vision built upon relations within communities, localities, and inside the everyday life. For this reason, it implies that commoning practices sustains biopolitics in production of subjectivity. In

return, Hardt argues, what is left behind is pre-political form called multitude (Hardt, 2010a).

In order to find out what is the new terrain in commoning Özgür Kazova, we should analyze the traditional terrain that is working class. The "institutionalization" of such commoning practices will mean the reversal of the political effects of fragmentation in the field of production, the opening of barriers in the field of reproduction of the marketplace, and the creation of transpositions between these two fields. Provision of the material-cultural integrity of the class necessitates the commonality of experiences that intercept the field of production and reproduction. Neoliberal capitalism was first to dissolve this relative unity and to disperse the capacity of the working class to be a class, to act as a class. The direct impact of many politics differ from syndicates 'breaking' (distribution of economic organization) to urban transformation projects (distribution of vital spatial integrity, removal of the working class from the public sphere of the city), to securitization without the subcontracting (distribution of the integrity of the working space). All of these have been directly abolishing the capacity of the working class to function as a class, that is to say, the central element of its political capacity.

Begüm Özden Fırat and Fırat Genç (2014) argue that one of the important issues that distinguishes neoliberalism from other repressive regimes is that although it keeps the use of oppression at different levels functionally, it essentially makes the deactivation of the working class as a part of the capital accumulation process. How we explain the participation of different classes in resistance communities against capitalism is another question to be dealt with. There are two possible answers for this, one is insufficiency of working class institutions and solidarity networks which cause fragmentation of material-cultural integrity. Second possible reason is related to precarious conditions that are growing with the global neoliberal era. Transformations in this area, involving a wide range of freelance employees from flexible contracts to teachers, doctors and engineers, from part-time workers to plaza and call center workers, consolidate the recomposition of the working class as a whole. The inadequacy or absence of trade union organizations in this area, the prevalence and intensity of subcontracting, precarious and flexible working regimes, the process of demolishing the habitats that come together with the urban spatial transformation and which are expressed in the privatization of the public sphere especially when these social sectors are concerned, all these create a common fate for different classes. Another difference between Diren Kazova and Özgür Kazova is



found in responding these transformations and creating a space for wider economic and social classes to participate. In concrete terms, the consolidation of the efforts of the Özgür Kazova workers by the provisional distribution network of production and cooperativization initiative of the Caferağa neighborhood house and transformation into of the support given already at individual levels in design, software, accounting, and etc. organization will ensure class solidarity and strengthen class ties. In this context, it can be said that commoning practices have two decisive features: collective empowerment and having potential to transform capitalist relations. Collective empowerment means commoning different individual experiences in order to feel powerful against neoliberal project of individualism. Furthermore, it carries a transformative potential that can create freer and more egalitarian social relations.



#### **4.1 Commoning Özgür Kazova**

Recuperation was important especially in the sense that they change addressee from the government to each other and the people. However, the expected result of this practice in traditional labor movement genealogy was taking over abandoned workplaces and making them function again, getting rid of bosses and hierarchy while developing democratic assemblies, equal pay distribution, job rotation and establishing non-exploitative means in production practices. They also talk about why they see cooperative as a solution: “We observed that there have been new forms of resistances appear. We look at the history, compare these new forms with the previous ones. One of them was Halkın Esnafları Kooperatifi (People’s Trade Cooperatives). We follow them since they practice cooperativism. They needed to be organized and they did. We believe that this type of organized cooperatives couple with solidarity can be cure for the distress.” I have never heard onf any kind of reference to People’s Trade Cooperative or other worker

resistances to support. That is the main reason I see them as a commoning practice and this is main difference with Diren Kazova which is more traditional labor movement born out of Kazova factory recuperation and follows leftist labor movement genealogy and formed a legal cooperative. Diren Kazova functions in solidarity with other struggles that are mainly close to DİH and Cephe movement. However, the problem is that the Özgür Kazova workers also create their own myths in order to be heard and recognized. As it can be seen, both parties stereotype the other side and generate clichés about them. In the light of this main difference between two formations, I agree with Fırat in seeing Özgür Kazova as a commoning practice rather than workers' control. However, whether it has a potential for anti-capitalist politics as aimed by commoning practices is controversial. Based on the framework of politics of commons that I provided earlier, it can be said that commoning practices has two major pillars to be built upon: empowerment and transformative power on capitalist relations. I argue that even though Özgür Kazova is empowered by different practices and solidarity movements, they are having trouble on the latter pillar of commoning. The key reason is that they could be easily integrated in the market and reproduce pro-capitalist relations. Next section I will elaborate on produced political subjectivities of Özgür Kazova workers and Özgür Kazova Cooperative's limits as space for anti-capitalist politics.

#### **4.1.1 Possibilities of Commoning Practices in Özgür Kazova Case**

Today both functioning cooperatives are not in the same location of the old Kazova factory. They recuperated the factory, however, their boss was cunning enough to sell it before the workers occupied it. Thus legal process had become complicated when the owner of the factory changed. At the beginning, the new owner let them to stay there without paying any rents, then again with the financial help of the new owner they rented another place to use as an atelier and also kept a store which was just under the old factory. As Serkan says, another reason in addition to not willing to attend DİH political agenda was this store and factory separation. He said, "We were going to the atelier to produce and they were staying in the store. Store only needs one person, what we need was production. We couldn't get along with this unfair division of labor. Then I and my friends also stopped going to the atelier. We all went to store and then we had a discussion." After having all the process of conflict on property sharings when the split

happened, Özgür Kazova was left by more individual, unorganized, local forms of resistance and practices.

From now on, I will mostly focus on Özgür Kazova Collective, its formation and community to show what kind of political potential it offers. They gained this community during Gezi Park protests and forums especially in Abbasaga, Tatavla, and Yoğurtçu Park. Their narration of struggle is also entangled with the memories of Gezi, unlike Diren Kazova's narratives about the past labor movements. Özgür Kazova started their own story in the new terrain that the Gezi resistance provided. The principal reason is that they are formed by people who come from different classes with different motivations, and it was thanks to this creative and productive socio-political event. Their personal rage against their boss and then against the people from DİH organization, with the right encounters from different political positions, turned into a political rage. They continued their struggle to establish a new life against dehumanizing conditions of living in a capitalist system.

Özgür Kazova workers have become powerful through Gezi and its community. During Gezi, people from every sector and every layer of the society, who normally would not stand together resisted shoulder to shoulder. But Gezi was not just a protest; it was an experiment in reclaiming space, time, bodies, and identities. People participated in the protests had a chance to see how deliberation and democracy could work if they all became active political subjects. Thus, Özgür Kazova workers' political subjectivities were formed around this struggling on the common bases despite differences.

De Angelis (2003, 2014) Federici (2014), and Linebaugh (2008) discuss that through new primitive accumulation and new enclosure movement in the neoliberal era, the meaning of the commons is extended to what is produced and reproduced in common, day by day, that is not limited to physical space but more than an entity. Based on this, when we analyze Özgür Kazova Collective, our focus should not be on their products but on the network of collaboration. In De Angelis' words "the building blocks of life itself", what is "based on life and knowledge" can be taken "as commons" for they are produced within commoning practices (De Angelis, 2004, p. 81). Thus, commoning practices are strategies and mechanisms that produce knowledge, power, and subjectivities to create commons. Through the course of the occupation and with their free time workers discovered their desires, talents, self-sufficiency, and self-confidence. The cooperative

was a tool for building such a sustainable economic life and Jumpers without Masters was the name of the products of this way of life.

Another reason to see Özgür Kazova as a commoning practice is understanding the mode of production and revealing social forces that are not directly related to the capitalist mode of production but under its dominance. For the defendants of politics of commons, capitalism is defined as relations and practices. Class is also defined as being made of relations and practices that form subjectivity. When we said “right encounters” and “Gezi’s capacity to flourish new political” this encounter becomes the basis of workers’ subjectivity which make it a necessity to become political. This network of anti-capitalist struggle, despite the dominance of capitalism in the neoliberal era, showed that people think about the political in different ways. We have seen that scholars who see commoning practices as a strategy to fight against neoliberal capitalism agree on the idea that capitalism is not only about economic domain of the life but its power and control extends over non-economic domains of social life and biological existence (Foucault, 2009). What this means in the Kazova Resistance is constructing subjectivities between a sense of self and the collective, and this construction can intervene in transformation of new spaces - that I consider as workers’ non-economic domains of political existence.

I gained an insight into workers’ everyday life politics during my field work. It was March of 8th on Laborer Women’s Day, I visited their atelier and we had a chance to talk about women, world labor history and so on. This time there was another person from DİH, he also joined our conversation. We were having lunch together and then I asked about women workers of Kazova, they said most them did not join the resistance since their husbands did not let them spend the whole day in the tent or they did not take place in the occupation because it was dangerous. Bülent said “Some people did not want to enter the factory because they were afraid, some people did not want it because they are women.” Currently, there are women workers in Diren Kazova but they are male workers’ wives, sisters in law, and one woman is from the organization who heard about Diren Kazova in prison through Yürüyüş Dergisi and wanted to join them when she got out. On the other hand, there is Aynur, who is the only woman who worked in the old Kazova textile factory and still continues to be a part of Özgür Kazova workers. When I first interviewed her, I asked about being woman in the whole process of resistance and whether this affected her position in the resistant group. At the beginning, she told me that she is here with the identity of a worker, not as a woman worker. She said “There is

no separation of identities. We differ in political positions or which political party to vote or which religious sect we belong in but we are the same as workers.” Women’s struggle apparently was not a part of her identity and she did not want to prioritize it.

In addition to the gender perspective, I had a chance to gain another insight after some visits to the field. In the atelier in Rami, we were having tea and chatting with Özgür Kazova workers and then their neighbor who has a denim atelier downstairs came. He started to talk about one of his workers – a Syrian worker, and his wife who was about to give birth. He said baby should be registered that was why they needed to apply for a legal status for his worker. At that point, I remained silent to see how Özgür Kazova workers would respond to that kind of situation which was related to both their approach to migrants and illegal workers and their conditions. Their boss neighbor continued to tell his story of how he was sacrificing some time to get those permissions for his worker and he was proudly telling about his big favor for a person who was in disadvantaged condition. Nobody said anything about this issue, they implied that he has done the right thing.

These were the first times that I went to field in the early 2016 and I was expecting a more critical approach from Özgür Kazova who identify themselves as workers and nothing else. That neighbor continued to tell some stories about gambling and flirting with women. He was married but still he was telling us these flirting stories. Again, we all laughed and nobody said anything about these issues. I noticed that Aynur’s reactions were also similar to those of the male workers in Özgür Kazova. While revisiting my field notes on the interview with Aynur about gender perspectives of the resistant, I realized that even though they have really close relations with Komsu Café, Migrant Solidarity Kitchen, and other collectives who are fighting for equal status of LGBTIQ, migrants, and women, and even though Özgür Kazova themselves were empowered by these initiatives; they were not active in building upon non-economic solidarity networks. They do produce bags, t-shirts, pullovers but they were not as active as I thought they would be in spreading their struggle for those who suffer from unequal conditions of work or social life.

When I visited them after a year, I encountered with their downstairs neighbor again, and they were getting along. I do not know if their position changed but I have seen many Syrian workers working in the Rami area in textile and plastic industry. Last time when I visited Özgür Kazova, there was only one person in the atelier. Serkan said

“since we do not have much work to do Aynur and Muzaffer did not come today”. He said their financial situation was not good enough to sustain and they were having problems in their families for this very reason. “I have problems at home with my wife, Aynur is also having the same problem, and she may leave soon because we don’t make enough money to meet our family’s needs.” The rationale of self-governance appears again here in the tension between workers and their families. Ideally, if workers are reclaiming a word in the conditions that affect their lives so does their family. In Diren Kazova not only their family, but also their neighbors in Küçük Armutlu area of Istanbul where Cephe Movement is organized, are active in the process of production or solidarity. Two of the workers’ wives joined the struggle and now they are also working in Diren Kazova. For Küçük Armutlu neighborhood the process of inclusion works the same.

At the beginning we take commons as relations that can be created and shared which make everyday relations an integral part of the politics of commons as we discuss it. One of the their biggest supporter, Ezgi Bakcay, whose name was mentioned a number of times when I asked Özgür Kazova workers about artistic production, she supports them both personally and also in artistic production. She is a member of Karşı Sanat and together with her friends they contributed to Özgür Kazova workers’ organization and production. Her aim is to politicize the art in a way that its symbolic capital do not function for those in power. In her interview with Aaron Hughes, Bakcay (2016) states that “Artist run cooperatives are one of the most important tools in this struggle to create an alternative sustainable political-economic model of production. Hence, the creation of an artist cooperative should be seen as one of the greatest creative and aesthetic acts an artist can realize.

A cooperative is the antithesis of the neo-liberal consensus and the process creating a cooperative is the process of reclaiming the sensibility between humans, nature, and a society alienated by a dehumanizing economical system” (Hughes, 2016, justseeds.com). Her framing of how the Kazova cooperative should function in order to have a sustainable model for workers to survive and win their freedom is important but if a process of cooperative creation is also a process of reclaiming the sensibility between all exploited and dominated domains, I think Özgür Kazova’s process had failed to do that. I agree with Begüm Özden Fırat in seeing Özgür Kazova as a commoning practice since it definitely, and necessarily, brings different activities together and creates empowerment for each other to be more sustainable. However, the second decisive

feature of commoning practice which is having potential of transforming anti-capitalist relations is questioned for the reasons I stated above. To sum up these reasons, firstly they were integrated into the market very easily. The last time when we talked to about their worsening conditions they were saying that people look for brands even though they produce with the best cotton, ecologic one, they have to compete with those brands. “People who buy our products are doing it mostly for symbolic reasons, they prefer other brands and their varieties but we can produce anything if they demand” (Serkan).

The second reason is about community. Commoning practice requires a community which needs to reproduce commons by interacting, engaging in communication and forming concrete relations. Commoning practice needs a community and Gezi community was providing this void space in organization of Özgür Kazova. However, community has two possible risks here. One is, in time, turning into an essentialist by gathering people based on having something common or being created around a temporary feature. In the case of Özgür Kazova, I think both of them can be seen. Gezi provided a temporary community for Özgür Kazova which was focusing on commoning practices despite coming from different classes and strata of the society, but this community loosened its ties both by force of the government and by other problems. Another risk is related to this process is creating a community that excludes any organized labor unions from being included in the community. While conceptualizing commoning practices De Angelis talks about “commons communities”, thought as “social networks of mutual aid, solidarity, and practices of human exchange” (De Angelis, 2003, p.10). This provides communities to be connected to other spaces of production and networks. Thus, she calls this type of resistances not a local but a trans-local one (De Angelis, 2003, p.12) that goes beyond local. As Caffentzis and Federici (2014) also emphasize that the community commons (this community) should not be selected on the basis of any privileged identity, but rather on the basis of the care-work done to reproduce the commons and regenerate what is taken from them (p. i102).

De Angelis, Caffentzis and Federici come to conclusion that community is not fixed, similar to new enclosure movement and similar to commons they define, communities are also processes that need to be created and reproduced all the time. In the case of Özgür Kazova this community and network degraded after the Gezi movement with its political potentiality. In this way they had a chance to go beyond traditional or abstract notions of practices and create another option that might have had a greater

potential for freedom. Viewed through the lens of class struggle, however, Özgür Kazova Collective has elements of an anti-capitalist common in that it involves workers' control of some of the important decisions concerning the work process and its outcomes but when it stops the process of commoning and producing subjectivity it is also challenged to be pushed out political sphere. As Federici says, these experiences constitute an invaluable training, providing examples of how commons can be created and produced. Problem is that similar commoning practices by existence of commons produce for the market and driven by the "profit motive." Collaboration of commoning can create an alternative political which is not based on identity politics as Özgür Kazova desires for. However, Özgür Kazova Collective is not an anti-capitalist common and cannot be a model for transformative political potentiality, at least in its current situation.

#### **4.1.2 Challenges of Commoning Practices in Özgür Kazova Case**

How force and counterforce operate at the intersection of Kazova workers' changing relationships to each other and other opposition groups on the one hand, and their feelings about these transformations on the other hand, is one of the key problems to address further.

In that sense Diren Kazova's workers' rights discourse functions as the "language of contention"- that is a common language or way of talking about social relations that sets out the central terms around which and in terms of which contestation and struggle occur (Roseberry 1994, p.361). When they were deciding on which protest to attend, setting out an agenda of whose rights matter more, they fell into defining what is violence and justice in a very limited way. During 1980s; through killing, displacing, destroying networks of solidarity, and prioritizing individual cases over class, the state had been taking an active role in the unmaking of class and disruption the ability of working people to create not only institutional but also emotional relationships. The changes in political and social order gave rise to a new political subjectivity that focuses more on an individualistic, self-interested ontological view. What was decomposed here and by these policies was the capacity to perform collective politics that envisioned the state to provide justice (Grandin, 2004). The debate over what matters—profit maximization or other kinds of investments, choices, and ways of distributing income—is not so much about accounting practices, but it is a political struggle. The fight is with fellow members of the



cooperative, with and among cooperative leaders, and vis-a-vis a competitive market (Kasmir, 2013). This reminds me David Ost's (2015) claim about global capitalism that makes it harder for a citizen to identify a concrete enemy. For him, this stems from the fact that class is increasingly expressed as culture. When Özgür Kazova workers claim on their everyday life activities, the issue of control over material, social, and emotional realities that make a future also expressed as culture. In this case, Özgür Kazova turns into workers' protests and become what Beverly Silver (2003) calls a "Polanyi-type movement" in which workers try to preserve non-market benefits rather than a "Marx-type movement" in which struggles are based on seizing power in production. One advantage Özgür Kazova gains by featuring Polanyi-type is having the potential to find broad coalition of support from movements since it demands less because of the lack of class unity that has been a long process since 1980s in Turkey.

As a result, what Özgür Kazova looks for is to pursue their demands by mobilizing the resources that can lead to their advancement. A new sensibility grew out of the betrayals and divisions, from the fear that was caused by unmaking strategies of the state which silenced the working class movement. When collective politics transforms, it actually creates a fertile ground for neoliberalism to flourish itself. Commons and local forms of resistances become new forms of claims making as a political practice. Politics of commons can be seen as a by-product of narrowed visions in politics and actually not producing but rather blocking spaces of political practices. The main problem is distancing themselves from an agenda for transformative social change. However, it would be also a mistake to sharply differentiate commoning practices of the neoliberal era and self-government practices in the past. The question is what sorts of political possibilities does it open and foreclose?

The Gezi movement here can be considered as a measure of unwillingness to accept a violently unjust order. So what is at the stake in both Kazovas is how ordinary and organized people speak to each other about their lives and histories in ways that bring them together and continue to keep them together. One risk of the politics of commons is getting people not from different movements but also who disagree each other to act on the basis of what they have in common. It is less social movement than a one-group campaign. Both strength and weaknesses are illustrated. Building a new understanding of rights can form solidarity that goes beyond claim to the right to live and survive.

Even though Diren Kazova and Özgür Kazova want to break their ties, doing it entirely is not possible. What they do is transforming the past in the name and for the interest of their own groups and attachments. Their narratives compete for legitimacy over representations - some stories suppressed, forgotten or made up to win this competition. What Özgür Kazova needs to overcome in order to create more possibilities of anti-capitalist relation making, is to form an institutional model for political interaction between state and society.

#### **4.2 Rethinking Commoning Practices**

Neoliberalism does not only aim economic relations but also social and political relations to transform them into exploitative bonds in order to create contradictions for its survival. I have discussed that Özgür Kazova Collective can be considered and actually being considered as a commoning practice which opens up a new rationality of politics and production of political subjects. However the split between Kazova workers and the conditions that caused this separation led to new sensibilities growing out of the betrayals and divisions. These circumstances created either fears about being organized under worker identity, or anger for not working in solidarity as a class. In both cases, this division creates fertile ground for neoliberalism whether they claim to have a “without boss” type of organization or a worker cooperative. The power of collective politics for working class people is diminished. Both Kazovas are creating gated communities and demand either security or isolation from “the other” whereas commoning practice implies the opposite. The type of commoning practice that Özgür Kazova and its community aim to construct does not succeed or even does not intend to transform social relations by creating an alternative. Instead they diminish the effects of neoliberal destruction which can be seen as a social service. The Kazova workers reproducing exclusion and access issues based on memory, identity, organization or any other form. This desire is legitimate to some extent that they need this construction of identity and give much of their worker identity in order to be a part of this network to survive. However, equality and creating political potential seem abstract terms when we see human faces of Kazova Collective.

Through my field work, I analyzed the community, space, and relation formations that the Kazova Resistance is based on. Similar to Özgür Kazova who could easily integrate in the market, type of commoning practices that do not intent to disentangle

lives from the market and the state at least to proceed there step by step. The equality and access in both Kazovas are abstract. Thus, it might be utopic to think that those autonomous spaces make possible to reclaim control over reproduction of our lives. So it seems to me that it is possible to discuss commons only within the framework of an anti-capitalist program, within the framework of a radical social and ecological transformation. The failure of common communities in the case of Özgür Kazova is that they displace the revolutionary use of working class in transforming this capitalist relations to obtain justice. The Kazova Resistance is a measure of unwillingness to accept violently unjust social order, but if the new community and space are defined with another limited notion as opposed to the rationale of commoning it will reproduce social inequalities and even economic ones.

The Kazova resistance, Özgür Kazova Collective, and the politics of commons can be rethought within these ethnographic insights. Yıldız Silier writes that liberalism is based on three antagonistic relations and reproduces these itself. These are; individual-society, citizen-state, and public-private sphere. What liberal discourse provides for autonomy is based on the separation of individual from society as a critical thinker, replacing state with market economy and downsizing state and leaving social justice issues to NGOs and civil society. Within this framework, Özgür Kazova reproduce these binary relations with different actors. When they see themselves as autonomous individuals who achieved a victory over their boss and as an organization networking with a number of solidarity movements with different interests, in separating economic, political, social justice they failed to produce the “political” that might have had a transformative power in the society. In order to produce political subjects what is needed is that the individual and society antagonism should be overcome and rather these two should feed each other. Autonomous spaces to reclaim oneself can only be achieved by revolt. The separation between “I” and “others” is based on distrust and should be abandoned, instead “we” should be strengthened. In order to oppose Diren Kazova and organization-based class movements, Özgür Kazova produced a model that is based on subjective individual choices and claimed their autonomous beings abased on *feeling* autonomous. For them, idealist or revolutionary people’s effort to change the society is in vain. Diren Kazova, on the other hand, see autonomy as self-realization, going hand in hand. However, their limit is being backed by a too powerful actor that claims the right

way to free workers for itself. Diren Kazova's framework is based on a more rational thinking and agenda to create conditions for workers to be free.

Another model can be thought as revising the commoning practice, in the way of directing power not only to destruct the old ones but also creating concrete alternatives. The question is, how to produce political subjects to construct new social relations? I follow Marx's ideal of self-realization here. Economic changes should not aim to reduce all people into passive consumers but to create subjects with satisfied needs, who develop individualism and engage in creative acts; and the pre-condition for Marxist self-realization is developing new social relations 'together' within the process of resistance. Resistance against private property and division of labor are the core elements to start with. The aim of Özgür Kazova is producing with a good quality and for the people. All the network of solidarity, other cooperatives, and movements support and frame Özgür Kazova within this framework of self-governing manufacturing cooperative. So the relationship with the money in the self-management totally based on the needs, because the poor are organized over need. It is a great dynamism that ten percent of people turn out be militants. Not everybody can be a militant and you cannot expect any militant sacrifice. This is neither real nor fair, and you cannot ask anyone why they do not live like we do. Everyone has their own needs and they have a motivation to meet their needs. The sum of all of these is a tremendous social dynamism (Yeğin, 2015). However, when it comes to their condition of survival, when the support of other movements lessened, workers realized that they should sell their products in order to sustain themselves. When production for exchange value became more important, their potentiality in changing people's vision of seeing objects and subjects in particular decreases. Gezi inspired a number of practices that were built on free access such as library, Devrim Market, health center, open classes, concerts, and performances and so on. If these types of interactions changed the people's relations with other objects and subjects and if money becomes priority over non-commodified production in common, it prevents the way of producing new subjectivities and even new movements.

The Gezi resistance and forums showed the urgent need to construct a new politics; the Kazova Resistance and especially Özgür Kazova Collective was lucky to have this encounter that created its common community. However, the need for an alternative created new political subjects; the whole process and state created idea for Özgür Kazova that there is a trade-off between security and freedom. They might have

refused to define the relationship between these as a trade-off, however in time they leaned more on security while giving up the other by depending on the market. As I stated earlier in my field insights, I observed that most of them have troubles in their families, in their lives, and feel grief rather than joy. This kind of oppositional politics is not a step toward liberation of senses but rather towards dependence. Thus, the politics of commons and its logic are important and can have a real potential as long as it redefines itself as politics of anti-capitalist commons. Producing for use-value rather than exchange value can change subjectivities. Retiring themselves from creating these types of relations and focusing more on economic sustainability, commodification of their goods through online sales and shaping their struggle only within solidarity networks, lessen Özgür Kazova's political power.

There may be a number of common organizations and commoning attempts. There may also be some common commodities that are defined in terms of resource use sustainability or resource management, within capitalism. But the general movement of the capital, the short-term decision-oriented structure and the targeted genetics aiming at sustained growth will eventually lead to the disappearance of these structures from the center, or to the trapping of generalized commodity production within its dynamics. The Kazova Resistance and two Kazova formations teach us that we need to put together the series of practices we see around us, integrate a common discourse, a common political program, and at the same time explore the practices of mutual collaboration. In order to achieve this what is needed is the institutionalization of these commoning practices against and by cracking exploitative institutions of the system. Only with this type of realization Özgür Kazova can form a workers self-governance practice with the help of commoning community and practices, if it loses its class capacity for social transformation it will be more dependent on the relations within the network and will fail in reclaiming autonomy.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Departing from self-governance as a way to think about constitutive power in construction of new political subjects in labor movements, we came to the conclusion that neoliberalism and state neoliberal policies together with the unmaking of working class lead us to think self-governance practice as a viable solution for production of political subjects. However, self-governance does not have a fixed model and differs in every practice. Thus, I tried to see the limits and possibilities of self-governance through current examples of Diren Kazova Cooperative and Özgür Kazova Collective. Different self-definitions, relations, and presentations lead me to discuss different types of workers' formations. To some extent we see that neither cooperatives nor collectives do not guarantee enjoyment of liberation. Thus, coming out of the same resistance, we try to understand how to think about this separation between two practices of workers' self-governance. Exploring their connections and tensions can clarify and strengthen anti-capitalist politics.

One of the tensions I found was different communities. Diren Kazova's political position, participant profiles, political agenda, space, and community are defined within more traditional working class resistance. Their main bond is with Cephe movement that defines and limits the community. However, putting Özgür Kazova in the opposite direction as a commoning practice which is open to everyone and create new political subjects do not work well in practice. Betrayal stories, economic challenges, and reproducing individual-society dichotomy lessen Özgür Kazova's transformative power for a social change.

It was mentioned that the role of the classes in social change and the explanations of social theories were questioned. It is not a coincidence that this questioning emerges with the transformation in the capital accumulation regime, with the suppression of the great labor movements, with the collapse of real socialism, in short, with the neoliberal transformation that took place after 1980. The forms of organization and activity of class unity, the forms of meaning in the left / socialist politics and the workers' movement have

also been affected by this transformation and it has been difficult to find actions, means and meanings that will redeem themselves as a political collective by the wage-labor side.

Workers' movements, of course, are not passive victims of this process; but the activity of the neoliberal assault is always at work; wage cuts and etc. has broken the will of the workers who struggled with hardships. One reason for this is that not only the means of making "politics" in Turkey but it is all over the world, and the attempt to remove this idea from its subclasses itself. It can be said that Turkey has symbolized this with the case of September 12th. But if neoliberal transformation is nothing more than a historical facet of capitalism, then the transformation in class associations is a "class society"; class antagonism maintains its place in the neoliberal period. The organization of the social structure is conditioned by the class, but there are transformations in its structure and expression. When dealing with class relations, therefore, both structural elements and historical transformation must be addressed. It is then possible to ask what neoliberalism lessens in the capacity of working class and what possibilities are available to strengthen the hand of class cohesion. In my thesis, I observed that the Kazova Resistance brought into existence two different communities that turned out to be political collectives. However, I also redefine the scope of the political as expanding the importance of Özgür Kazova formation compared to Diren Kazova which needs a condition for the organization of social formation of class. In addition to this condition, Özgür Kazova emphasizes the fact that unity in a struggle cannot occur spontaneously and is not contingent but can only be established by political struggle. However, in order to fulfil political potential of the Kazova resistance, Özgür Kazova needs to create a form of network that constantly encounters with neoliberalism and needs to produce more class-conscious subjects. This creates a crisis in the form of representation in the class struggle.

In order to find out the essence of the model needed to strengthen Özgür Kazova, my main question was what forms ties between people, if the thing that brings them together is not structurally being on the same side of production relations? This question led me to find out a form of politics called "politics of commons" centered on a community that is based on differences. While the ground that brings workers together is shifting, it can be thought that the workers' movement will re-establish itself against the existing forms of organization. One of these possibilities is to understand precarious work, gendered employment, racism, xenophobia etc. which go beyond traditional forms

of representation. There may be a common / political momentum created by many counter-actions.

Classes are not descriptive identifiers and contain many different collections. In the Kazova Resistance, the differences that caused serious divisions in the social structure (political differences, ethnic differences etc.) created exclusion and enmity among the workers. Although they were not used by the political power to disrupt the coherence of action, the split of the resistance nevertheless made it possible for the workers of Özgür Kazova to explore the tools to contact with other different struggles (such as environmental, anti-authoritarian organizations). The solidarity networks formed by the different groups within the action, as well as other opposition foci, have been very effective in transforming the action into an effective political power against the power of neoliberal market. However, it needs to develop further and be inclusive in the real sense to use this political potentiality in the transformation of anti-capitalist relations.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Agrawal, A., L. Wollenberg, and L. Persha. 2014. Governing Mitigation in Agriculture-Forest Landscapes. *Global Environmental Change*. 29: 270-326.
- Anon, (1988). In: *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi*, 1st ed. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Arvon, H. (1991b). *Özyönetim*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık.
- Assmann, J. and Czaplicka, J. (1995). Collective Memory and Cultural Identity. *New German Critique*, (65), p.125.
- Bağımsız Sosyal Bilimciler (2011) *Ücretli Emek ve Sermaye: Derinleşen Küresel Kriz ve Türkiye'ye Yansımaları*. İstanbul: Yordam Kitap
- Balibar, E. and Wallerstein, I. (2011) *Race, nation, class*. London [u.a.]: Verso Publ.
- Berkes, F. (2009) "Revising the Commons Paradigm" *Journal of Natural Resources Policy Research*, Vol. 1 (3), 261-264
- Benlisoy, S. (2014). Şimdi Değilse Ne Zaman Madenler Kamulaştırılmalı?. *Başlangıç Dergisi*. [online] Available at: <http://baslangicdergi.org/simdi-degilse-ne-zaman-madenler-kamulastirilmali-stefo-benlisoy/> [Accessed 8 Dec. 2017].
- Bollier, D. and Helfrich, S. (2012). *The Wealth of the Commons: A World Beyond Market & State*. Amherst: Levellers Press.
- Bora T., Bora A., Erdoğan N., Üstün İ. (2011) *Boşuna mı Okuduk? Türkiye'de Beyaz Yakalı İşsizliği*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları
- Boratav K. (2009). *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi 1908-2007*, İstanbul: İmge Kitabevi
- Boym, S. (2007). Nostalgia and its discontents. *The Hedgehog Review*, 9(2), 7–18. [Google Scholar]
- Brown, W. (2002) "Suffering the Paradoxes of Rights." In *Left Legalism/Left Critique*, 420-434
- Diren Kazova (2016) *İşçi Sınıfı Tarihinde Bir İlk: KAZOVA*, AT İstanbul Teknik Ofset

- Caffentzis, G. and Federici, S. (2014). Commons against and beyond capitalism. *Community Development Journal*, 49(suppl 1), pp.i92-i105.
- Cangızbay, K. (2003). Sosyalizm ve Özyönetim: Reel Sosyalizmden Sosyalist Realiteye. Ankara: Ütopya Yayınevi.
- Çelik, S. (2015). *Patronsuzlar*. [video] Available at: <http://vimeo.com/4433312>.
- De Angelis, M. (2003) “Reflections on Commons and Communities”. *The Commoner*, N.6.
- Dogan, G. (2005). *Labor Resistance Against Neoliberal Challenges To The Traditional Trade Unionism In Turkey: 1986-1991*. Ph.D. Bogazici University.
- Engels, F., & Engels, F. (1892). *The condition of the working class in England in 1844: With preface written in 1892*. London: Allen and Unwin.
- Federici, S. (2010) “Feminism and the Politics of Commons”, in *Uses of a WorldWind, Movement, Movements, and Contemporary Radical Currents in the United States* (ed. by Team Collors Collective). Oakland: AK Press.
- Fırat, B.Ö. ve Genç, F. (2014) *Strateji Tartışmasına Katkı: Müşterekler Politikasının Güncelliği*. Available at <http://mustereklerimiz.org/strateji-tartismasina-katki-musterekler-politikasinin-guncelligi/>
- Foucault, M. (2009) *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977-1978* (G. Burchell, trans.). New York: St. Martin’s Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J.K. (2006) *A Postcapitalist Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gibson-Graham, J. (2008). Diverse economies: performative practices for ‘other worlds’. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(5), pp.613-632.
- Gibson-Graham, J., Cameron, J. and Healy, S. (2013). *Take back the economy*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Gill, L. (2016). *A Century of Violence in a Red City: Popular Struggle, Counterinsurgency, and Human Rights in Colombia*. Duke University Press.

- Gill, S. (2017). *Power and Resistance in the New World Order*. [ebook] New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.123-149. Available at: <http://www.palgrave.com/us/book/9780230203693#> [Accessed 8 Dec. 2017].
- Gongaware, T. (2010). Collective Memory Anchors: Collective Identity and Continuity in Social Movements. *Sociological Focus*, 43(3), pp.214-239.
- Graeber, D. (2009). *Direct Action: An Ethnography*, Oakland: AK Press.
- Granding, G. (2004). *The Last Colonial Massacre: Latin America in the Cold War* University of Chicago Press
- Hardin, G. (1968) "Tragedy of the Commons". *Science*, Vol. 162 (3859), 1243-1248
- Hardt, M. and Negri A. (2005) *Multitude*. London: Penguin Books.
- Hardt, M. (2010a) "Common in Communism". *Rethinking Marxism*, Vol. 22 (3), 346-356.
- Harvey, D. (2005) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Harvey, D. (2013). *The new imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hughes, A. (2016, June 20). On Artists, Resistance, & Worker Owned Cooperatives: An interview with Ezgi Bakcay. Retrieved from <https://justseeds.org/on-artists-resistance-worker-owned-cooperatives-an-interview-with-ezgi-bakcay/>
- Huyssen, A. (2000). Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia. *Public Culture*, 12(1), pp.21-38.
- İşçi Sınıfı Eylemleri Raporu. (2016). [online] İstanbul. Available at: <http://emekcalisma.org/Raporlar/ISCI%20EYLEMLERI%20RAPORU%202016.pdf> [Accessed 8 Dec. 2017].
- Kasmir, S. (1996) *Myth of Mondragon, The: Cooperatives, Politics, and Working Class Life in a Basque Town*, SUNY Press
- Linebaugh, P. (2008) *The Magna Carta Manifesto: Liberties and Commons For All*. London: University of California Press, LTD.
- Luxemburg, R. (1951). *The Accumulation of Capital* (tr. Agnes Schwarzschild), London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

- Marx, K. (1977). *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy: Volume 1* (S. Moore and E. Aveling, trans.). London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Narin, Ö. (2014). *Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı Tarihinde İşçi Özyönetim Deneyimleri ve Kriz Dönemlerinde Özyönetimin Olanakları*. DiSK-AR Dergisi, 3. sayı
- Narotzky, S. (2011). Memories of Conflict and Present-Day Struggles in Europe: New Tensions between Corporatism, Class, and Social Movements. *Identities*, 18(2), pp.97-112.
- Ost, David (2015) *Class And Social Order: Political Consequences Of The Move From Class To Culture* in V. Goddard and S. Narotzky, eds., *Industry and Work in Contemporary Capitalism: Global Models, Local Lives*
- Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge University Press.
- Ostrom, E. (2012). *The Future of the Commons: Beyond Market Failure and Government Regulation*. London: The Institute of Economic Affairs.
- Özselçuk, C. (2004). Yeni Baslayanlar İçin Ekonomi Politik: Kardemir'e Ne Oldu/ Mondragon Buraya Yumruk Havaya. *Express Dergisi*, 39.
- Özselçuk C. and Madra, Y.M. (2013). "Demokratik Özerkliğin Ekonomik Modelleri Nedir ve Nasıl İnşa Edilebilirler?" Retrieved from <http://www.surplusthought.net/ymadra/VanSONT.pdf>
- Peck, Jamie & Tickell, Adam. (2002). *Neoliberalizing Space*. *Antipode*. 34. 380 - 404.
- Roseberry, W. (1994) *Hegemony and the Language of Contention*. Durham: Duke University Press
- Silver, B. (2003). *Forces of labour*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Skeggs, B. (1997). *Formations of class and gender: Becoming respectable*. London: Sage Publications.
- Weiss, R. (1994). *Learning from strangers*. New York: Free Press.
- Yarasır, V. (2002). *Sokakta Politika*. İstanbul: Gendas Yayınları.

Yarasır, V. (2006). İŒi Sınıfı Üzerine: İŒal, Direnis, Grev. İstanbul: Mephisto Yayınları.

Yeđin, M. (2015). Patronsuzlar, İstanbul:Öteki Yayınevi

