PERCEPTIONS OF TRANSFORMATION, REVOLUTION, IDEOLOGY AND GENDER AMONG MEMBERS OF THE TURKISH SOCIALIST MOVEMENT IN THE 1970s

by

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Amcam Ertan Onur ve Teyzem Emel Onur'a

To my Uncle Ertan Onur and Aunt Emel Onur

Abstract

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Keywords: leftist movement, socialism, revolution, transformation, change, ideology, gender.

This thesis attempts to examine the response of former leftist activists to the disintegration of their political movements and their integration into the rapidly liberalizing, capitalist order in Turkey after 1980. While previous research on the socialist movement in Turkey has mostly focused on the movement's historical background, internal dynamics or on memories of activists as portrayed in memoirs, an analytical approach to changes in leftists' socioeconomic status or ideology has remained either superficial or nonexistent. Based on open-ended interviews with over a dozen former activists, this thesis focuses on the "transformations" experienced by people who joined the leftist movement during the 1970s. How former activists consider their initial participation in different factions of the left; how their current socioeconomic status and quality of life affect their relationship to leftist ideology (faith in a socialist revolution, defining leftism, the idea of a capitalist society); and how they view the role of gender in the movement (feminism, intimate relationships, their manifestations and the effect of organizational structures) are some of the key questions that the thesis addresses. Throughout the thesis, the theme of "transformation", whether in society or at an individual level, is examined in terms of ideology, socio-economic status, and gender.

ÖZET

1970'LER TÜRKİYE'SİNDE SOSYALİST HAREKETE KATILANLAR ARASINDA DÖNÜŞÜM, DEVRİM, İDEOLOJİ VE TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET ALGILARI

Emel Güner

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Anahtar Kelimeler: sol hareket, sosyalizm, devrim, dönüşüm, değişim, ideoloji, toplumsal cinsiyet.

Bu tez, sol hareket içerisinde yer almış bireylerin siyasi hareketlerinden kopuşlarına ve 1980 sonrası Türkiye'sinin hızla liberalleşen kapitalist düzenine entegrasyon süreçlerine ilişkin cevaplarını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Türkiye'de sosyalist harekete dair geçmiş yıllarda gerçekleştirilen araştırmalar, konunun tarihi arka planına, iç dinamiklerine ya da aktivistlerin anı kitaplarında betimlenen kişisel hatıralarına odaklanırken, sol görüşlü bireylerin sosyoekonomik konum ve ideolojik değişimlerine ilişkin analitik bir yaklaşım ya mevcut literatürde bulunmamaktadır ya da bu konu yüzeysel olarak incelenmiştir. 1970'ler Türkiye'sinde sol aktivizme katılmış on iki kişi ile gerçekleştirilen açık uçlu görüşmelere dayanan bu tez, bu kişilerin yaşadıkları "dönüşümlere" odaklanmaktadır. Görüşmecilerin fraksiyonlarına katılımlarını nasıl ele aldıkları, şu anki sosyoekonomik konum ve yaşam standartlarının sol ideoloji (sosyalist bir devrime olan inanç, solun tanımlanışı, kapitalist topluma dair görüşler) ile olan ilişkilerini nasıl etkilediği ve harekette toplumsal cinsiyetin (feminizm, romantik ilişkiler, bu ilişkilerin tezahürleri ve örgütsel yapıların bu konulara etkisi bağlamlarında) rolünü nasıl değerlendirdikleri bu tezde üzerinde durulan anahtar sorulardan bazılarıdır. Tez boyunca "dönüşüm" teması, toplumsal ya da bireysel seviyelerde; ideoloji, sosyoekonomik konum ve toplumsal cinsiyet açılarından incelenmektedir.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

> We [on the left] have all changed. We used to say "revolution", but now we know that isn't going to happen. We used to say "classless society". In one way or another we have all experienced integration to some degree. Some of us have settled down, some of us are just scraping by. But in the end none of us stayed the same. It wouldn't even have been a good thing to stay the same, maybe. The ones who stayed the same are left stuck in leftist history. Do you understand? They didn't go anywhere. They were worn out. They didn't get over it. They couldn't be a part of the past, or a part of today, they're stuck in between. Purgatory is the worst to experience. Maybe that is why I say we've all changed. Maybe we didn't just change, we were *forced to change*. (Engin)

Listening to Engin's words, I felt they pointed to something important about the Turkish leftist activists of the 1970s that was missing in my readings on the left today. The literature on Turkish leftism today consists mostly of memoirs nostalgic for the "golden age" of leftism on the one hand and political histories on the other. In this thesis, I attempt to examine the response of former leftist activists to the (dis)integration of their political movements and their integration into liberal/capitalist order in Turkey after 1980. I mostly use open-ended interviews to examine the changes that the available

sources do not discuss. By focusing on the "transformations" these former activists underwent, this thesis will try to explain these responses to the left from the perspectives of ideology, socioeconomic status, and gender.

The first transformation that my interviewees experienced was that of their initial participation in the leftist movement in various factions. All respondents defined their joining of a leftist group as a major turning point in their lives. Regardless of their faction choice, what was common in all responses was the effect of a person's social network in adopting an activist leftist ideology. I show that joining the leftist movement was not a planned out process for my interviewees; rather, it was coincidental to a large extent, since it emerged from their interactions with the people who were already active in a leftist group. My interviewees depicted these people, whether family, friends, or acquaintance,—as the "catalysts" who initiated their introduction to their factions. Adopting a particular ideological stance was an important aspect of my respondents' transformations, yet it often came later; and did not seem to be a determining factor that contributed to my interviewees' faction choice in the first place. This transformation is the primary focus of Chapter 2.

In terms of the economic transformations that my interviewees experienced, we can classify my interviewees into two groups. While the first group is made up of the research participants who climbed the social ladder and integrated into the capitalist system, the second group consists of individuals who cannot economically succeed and therefore who define themselves as persons marginalized from the system. In both of the groups I argue that the amount of money earned and the standards of living that my interviewees now have are treated as markers of their relationship to leftism. My interviewees in the first group accepted economic transformation; however, they also underline their protection of the "leftist soul" by describing a "bad relationship with money". On the other hand, my interviewees who were in the second group emphasize their ideological stability, pointing to their economic backwardness. Their low standards are portrayed as a sign of their non-integration to the capitalist system but also the retention of their leftist values, which kept them away from earning money.

In terms of ideological transformations, my interviewees touched on two points: first, their perception of leftism and their roles in the movement; second, their faith in a

socialist revolution and changes in this faith. On the first point, most of my interviewees define their political stance as leftist, basing their definition on loyalty for the basic values of the left. While rejecting the claim that they experienced a complete ideological transformation, they underline that they have adopted revised versions of their previous ideologies. In this sense, they each present unique definitions of "being a leftist". This leftism is independent from any organizational bonds and is defined through equality, freedom and justice principles. On the second point (the faith in the materialization of the revolution), we can mention the existence of two groups. The first group is a small group that defends the preservation of their hope for the materialization of the revolution. This group is mostly made up of the interviewees who identified their socioeconomic status as "low". According to this group, economic success determines the reputation and respect they feel they have in society. As self-described "unsuccessful" climbers of the social ladder, they say they are "outliers" in a capitalist Turkey. In this framework, it can be claimed that the faith in the materialization of revolution acts as a hope that will end the feeling of exclusion. On the other hand, the second group (those who felt integrated into the system and economically developed) displays much more of a distance to socialist ideologies and says that the revolution is an impossible expectation. These interviewees mention a "change" and an "evolution" rather than a classical revolution. The changes that were experienced by my respondents in terms of economic status and ideology are the topic of Chapter 3.

Lastly, we will look at the transformations of my interviewees from a gender perspective. Despite the auxiliary position of women in the movement during the 1970s, today all my interviewees are aware of the invisibility of women in the movement and problematize this invisibility. While asserting that the secondary status of women was normal in the movement, considering the social conditions of the 1970s and the general perception in their factions, today they defend free, equal, and independent participation for women in ideological platforms and in social life. On the other hand, a skeptical approach towards the idea of "feminism" is still held by many of my interviewees, since they consider feminism a divisive, foreign, and opportunistic movement that arose out of the suppression of the leftist movement. In the context of gender roles, we will also look at intimate relationships in the movement. In contrast to the restrictive role of organizations on my interviewees' private lives, today they reject any kind of

intervention in their private lives. According to their responses, we see two reasons that caused this transformation: Firstly, none of my interviewees have connection with an organization. To put it differently, there is no organizational unit that they are loyal to in their current lives which could act as a sanctioning power in comparison to the 1970s. Secondly, while the ideal of revolution used to be the most important goal, today most of my respondents do not hold such an ideal. Therefore the perceived tradeoff between the organizational commitment/materialization of revolution and the desire for an intimate relationship does not exist anymore. My interviewees no longer support sacrificing emotions in the name of ideals. Thus, they only accept themselves as the sole authority in their private lives. This aspect of my respondents' ideas about their participation in the left will be examined in Chapter 4.

1.2. Literature Review

When we look at the current literature regarding the left in Turkey, we see two main types of sources: memoirs and academic works. Memoirs on the leftist movement are literary works depicting the leftist wave in Turkey over the generations of '68 and '78 and are based on the personal narratives of the people involved in the leftist movement[1]. These works generally reflect nostalgia for the leftist movement. The vast majority of academic works on the left, meanwhile, focus on the movement's history and ideology. I argue that the current literature discusses the historical background of the leftist movement in Turkey without questioning the transformation of the individuals involved in them. This thesis is an attempt to fill that gap. First, however, in this section, I will look at the discussions related to the Turkish left that focus on the evolution of leftism as well as the debates it faced throughout the 1970s and after the 1980 coup.

[1] Prominent works in this category of literature include Sezai Sarıoğlu (2001) *Nar Taneleri*, Nadire Mater (2009) *Sokak Güzeldir: 68'de Ne Oldu*?, Haşim Akman (2010) *Otuz Yıldır 12 Eylül Yaşayanlar Anlatıyor.*

1.2.1. A Brief History of Leftism in the 1970s

When we look at the Republican period in Turkey, we see that the first interaction between the USSR, and accordingly communism, and Turkey started during the War of Independence. In this context, the establishment of The Communist Party of Turkey [TKP, *Türkiye Komünist Partisi*] in 1920, in Baku, Azerbaijan which was a part of the Soviet Union then can be considered as a major turning point. The USSR considered the Turkish War of Independence as an anti-imperialist struggle and hence backed Atatürk and saw him as a leader who should orient the country towards socialism (Belge, 2009, p. 9).

Another important development in the early years of the Republic was the establishment of the *Kadro* movement. In the early 1930s, the journal of *Kadro* began to be published and until the ban imposed on its publication in its third year, it continued to be a significant venue for the development of the Turkish left. In the journal *Kadro*, while Turkey was portrayed as an underdeveloped country where there was no capitalist development worth mentioning and no capitalist or proletarian class in any real sense, the cadres that took part in the journal tried to develop a theory for a Kemalist project which had socialist elements in it. However, although they had a socialist vision their formulation was centered around the idea of a "democratic and national" revolution which was assumed as a necessary stepping stone in a movement towards socialism. The idea of a "democratic and national revolution" which was proposed by *Kadro* left a strong mark in intellectual and political history and constituted the basic departure point of Turkish socialism in the coming years (Belge, 2009, pp. 9-10).

After the *Kadro* movement, another important turning point in the history of the Turkish left was the establishment of the *Yön* [Direction] journal in 1961. In the 1960s, Marxist socialism spread among the more educated social strata, primarily students and the urban intelligentsia. The political freedoms guaranteed under the 1961 constitution enabled the socialists to express their views and from various political organizations. At the same time, most socialists were influenced strongly by Kemalist nationalism. In 1961, the weekly *Yön* emerged as a platform for leftist writers to advocate for a "non-capitalist way". At about the same time that *Yön* came out, TİP [*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*, The Workers' Party of Turkey] was established. TİP defined itself as a legal party that

defended legalism which meant an open support for parliamentary struggle. However, the leftist factions out of TİP claimed that the program of TİP was irrelevant with the conditions in Turkey. Thus a competition between the idea of "democratic revolution" and the socialist program of TİP came to surface (Belge, 2009, pp. 10-12).

In the second half of the 1960s, a group of former TKP members propounded the idea of National Democratic Revolution [*Milli Demokratik Devrim*, MDD] in response to the impasse on the left which they believed was created by the TİP's reaction to the occupation of Czechoslovakia[2] (Alpat, 1998, p. 178; Aydınoğlu, 2007, p. 150).

The MDD group saw the ideology of Kemalism as a starting point for action; they understood Kemalism as a revolutionary ideology which was anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, national, and independent. According to MDD, the Kemalist revolution had been interrupted, the present status of proletariat was weak, and there was political and social backwardness in the country. Therefore, according to this view, a new national revolution was an absolute necessity before socialism. Civilian and military public figures known to be Kemalists were given prominence in the movement (Şener, 2010, pp. 175-179). MDD thus seemed to be defending not a strictly socialist revolution, but an "anti-feudal" or "democratic revolution" in which it was legitimate to cooperate with the "national" segment of the bourgeoisie (Yurtseven, 2008, p.84). What MDD defended was an alliance between the youth, peasantry, proletariat, state officials, and military. The most common motto of the period was "the army and youth hand in hand" [*ordu gençlik elele*] (Belge, 2007, p. 37).

To be more precise, with the influence of MDD movement, the 1960s of Turkey was under the effect of the idea of an intervention by the military using an alliance of the "radical, patriotic and progressive officers" and the left in order to provide a top-

[2] The TİP was established in 1961 by a group of union members (Aydınoğlu, 2007, p. 93). In a short time the party became the voice of the left in Turkey and in 1965 elections TİP entered the parliament with 15 deputies. In the second half of the 1960s, TİP experienced an internal crisis. With the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union the party divided into two. General president Mehmet Ali Aybar split from Behice Boran and her friends, who supported this occupation. Later, the party experienced conflict with the MDD, ASD, PDA, and *Emek* groups. Before the coup of 1971, it was closed down by the Constitutional Court (Aykol, 2010, pp. 43-43).

down social transformation (Aydınoğlu, 2007, p. 62; Belge, 2009, p. 12). However, it was not possible to see the army and youth hand in hand; because it was not realistic to expect a peaceful relationship between the army and youth while youth was fighting against the police, another armed unit of the state (Belge, 2007, p. 37). The leftist youth needed a different platform to mobilize. In 1969 MDD supporters transformed the intellectual circles of the Federation of Idea Clubs[3][*Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu*, FKF] into an organization they called "Dev-Genç", the Turkish Revolutionary Youth Federation [*Türkiye Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu*] (Aykol, 2010, p. 52; Alpat, 1998, pp. 104-105; Aydınoğlu, 2007, p. 214). Dev-Genç thus became a youth organization that supported MDD. Although Dev-Genç existed only for two years and was closed down after the coup of 1971, its heritage continued to produce influential actors for the Turkish left throughout the 1970s.

By 1970, MDD started to face ideological challengers, and this shake-up also created a crisis in Dev-Genç (Aydınoğlu, 2007, p. 258). The cadres in Dev-Genç sought other options for the revolution, including more radical solutions. In this environment, guerilla struggle emerged as a key concept. Thus with this idea the cadres that took part in Dev-Genç later became the founders of THKP-C [*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi*], THKO [*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu*], TİİKP [*Türkiye İhtilalci İşçi Köylü Partisi*] and TKP-ML [*Türkiye Komünist Partisi-Marksist Leninist*] (Aykol, 2010, p. 52).

How did guerilla war become the main dynamic in the Turkish left? With the coup of 1971[4], the left-wing officers that aimed to organize a leftist coup were

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[3] Federation of Idea Clubs [*Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu*, FKF]: FKF was established in 1965 and with its establishment the anti-imperialist tendencies in the youth started to develop in a socialist direction. In 1969 its name was changed and it became Turkish Revolutionary Youth Federation [*Türkiye Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu*, Dev-Genç] (Alpat, 1998, pp. 104-105).

[4] The events of 1971 are also known as the memorandum of March 12 and considered a semi-coup. On March 12, 1971 the Turkish Military, claiming to be "annoyed" with the insufficient activities of the present government and worsening domestic strife, published a memorandum. As a result Süleyman Demirel (the prime minister of the government) resigned and a technocratic government was established as a body above all political parties. Thus an oppression process started in Turkey in which democracy was cut, the leaders of the youth movement were captured, imprisoned and executed, and there were attempts to restore social order by force (Alpat, 1998, p. 202).

suppressed by their superiors and leftist militants were captured and tortured by the military. As a result, the perception of 'The Army and Youth Hand in Hand' [*Ordu Gençlik Elele*] and the left's mystical faith in the junta came to an end (Samim, 1981, pp. 72-73). Also, due to the state violence after the coup of 1971, the view that Turkey would end up with a military dictatorship rather than a progressive military intervention emerged. With the termination of the dream of a progressive military intervention, the leftist movement gradually radicalized and a leftist-led guerilla struggle emerged as an option to reach the dream of revolution (Akın, 2007, p. 96).

In fact, as of 1968, the left felt that the revolution was the "only way" forward, and every means were considered as permissible to reach this ideal. Arms had already entered into the leftist movement as a defense reflex against the attacks of far-right nationalists. The perceived obligation to defend the movement legitimized the use of arms by the left, while the existence of armed organizations also rationalized the idea of an armed revolution. In addition, one segment of the youth was under the influence of the idea of guerilla war: Some Turkish revolutionaries were fascinated with the brave struggles in Latin America, Algeria, Congo, Vietnam, and Palestine, and the idea of encircling the cities from the countryside. At the same time, the dominant view among most of the leftist factions was that to support parliamentarianism was to remain passive. In this environment the struggle of the well-established Workers' Party of Turkey [*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*, TİP] for a peaceful revolution was considered impossible, since the parliamentary means were blocked by the election threshold and the removal of the national remainder system[5] [*milli bakiye sistemi*] in the 1969 elections. The removal of the national remainder system reduced the chance of the TİP to enter parliament almost to zero. This is why the many who supported the left were persuaded by the impossibility of a peaceful transition to socialism. According to this emerging

[5] The national remainder system was a system in which the votes of a party that could not get the necessary minimum quotient were pooled and then reallocated on a national basis. Thus rather than the absolute majority of a single party in the parliament, the system aimed at a proportional representation of small parties. This system was only applied in the election of 1965 (Hale, 1980, pp. 404-405).

point of view, even if the regime was "captured" by peaceful means, it could not be protected by peaceful or constitutional mechanisms. Therefore, arms would be the guardian of the newly established socialist regime. Under these circumstances, defending parliamentarianism meant to give in to passivity, and most factions resorted to armed struggle to materialize the revolution (Baydar & Ulagay, 2011, pp. 100-101; Akın, 2007, pp. 96-98; Kürkçü, 2007, pp. 496-497).

In addition to these factors that rationalized the use of arms, the ability the leftist movement to operate freely was restricted by the alliance between the state institutions and ultranationalist *ülkücü* groups. On the one hand, the 141st and 142nd articles of the Turkish criminal code, which banned the formation of communist groups [*örgütlenme*] in the country, made the continued development of the socialist struggle nearly impossible. On the other hand, police operations, arrests, attacks against students, violence, torture and the cooperation between the police and the *ülkücü* movement showed that the "powers that be" would not allow the revolution. Consequently, armed struggle emerged in the 1970s as a phase of revolution that would save the leftist movement from its existing crisis (Kürkçü, 2007, pp. 494-497).

While radicalization was escalating and violent means were gaining legitimacy, MDD encountered opposition from groups who considered MDD's approach too passive or bourgeois, including the Revolutionary Workers and Peasants Party of Turkey Turkey[*Türkiye İhtilalci İşçi Köylü Partisi*, TİİKP], founded by Doğu Perinçek and his friends in 1969. These groups broke off from MDD, tying their hopes to armed struggle and guerilla war (Aydınoğlu, 2007, p. 240; Akkaya, 2007, p. 801; Yusufoğlu & Anadol, 2007, p. 478). Two factions had arisen by 1970: The "Red Light" faction [*Kırmızı Aydınlık* or *Aydınlık Sosyalist Dergisi*, the socialist journal *Light*] and the "White Light" faction, or PDA [*Beyaz Aydınlık* or PDA, *Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık*, the journal *Proletarian Revolutionary Light*]. These would split further as the 1970s continued (Akkaya, 2007, p. 801).

1.2.2. The Major Factions of the Left in the 1970s

1.2.2.1. TKP-ML/TİKKO

Like its predecessor MDD, PDA encountered internal divisions as early as 1971. İbrahim Kaypakkaya and some of his friends criticized the ideological stand of the party and established TKP-ML/TİKKO [*Türkiye Komünist Partisi-Marksist Leninist/Türkiye İşci ve Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu*, The Communist Party of Turkey-Marxist Leninist/The Turkish Workers' and Peasants' Liberation Army] (Aydınoğlu, 2008, p. 285). TKP-ML/TİKKO was a movement which chose the poor peasantry as the target audience and formulated people's war in a Maoist line. According to TKP-ML, Turkey was a semi-feudal country and working class was weak. Therefore there was a need for a people's war organized especially around peasantry and based on siege of cities from the countryside. The basic dialectic in Turkey was defined as that between the existence both of feudalism and of masses of people [*halk yığınları*]. With the revolution, focusing on peasants and land reform but led by the proletariat, this dialectic would be resolved and imperialism would lose its base (Akkaya, 2007, p. 802; Akın, 2007, p. 99, Yurtsever, 2008, pp. 152-154). The distinguishing feature of the approach of Kaypakkaya and accordingly TKP-ML/TİKKO was their definition of Kemalism, which was considered a partial or petit bourgeoisie revolution by other revolutionary organizations. In contrast, Kaypakkaya formulized Kemalism, too, as fascism (Bora, 2007, p. 858).

1.2.2.2. THKO

THKO [*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu*, The People's Liberation Army of Turkey] was established in 1971 by Deniz Gezmiş and his friends, who broke away from Dev-Genç (Lüküslü, 2009, p.84). While they promoted a "completely independent Turkey", there are very few sources regarding the THKO's institutional perspective, because the founders of THKO considered revolution an issue that could be materialized through action rather than books, theory, or ideological journals (Atılgan, 2007, p. 701). According to THKO, armed struggle was a necessity, because there was a duality in the society: imperialism and its traitorous allies on one side, with patriotic

revolutionaries, workers, peasantry, and low-ranked state officials on the other. The basic dialectic here was between imperialism and its collaborators, and the people [*halk*] (Atılgan, 2007, p. 702).

THKO adopted guerilla tactics as their basic struggle method, since it rejected the parliamentary struggle, which it defined as a system that put "reactionaries" into power (Atılgan, 2007, p. 702). Thus the militants of THKO went to the al-Fatih camps in Palestine to train for an armed struggle that would be materialized from the countryside to the cities. In this struggle, THKO defended that people's war should be waged against imperialism and the ones who would struggle were the peasants not the workers (Akın, 2007, p. 98).

The coup of 1971 came as a severe blow to THKO. The leading cadres were either captured or killed[6]. The remaining cadres of THKO were released from prison with the amnesty of '74 and started publishing the journal *Halkın Kurtuluşu* [People's Salvation] in 1976. In the following process, *Halkın Kurtuluşu* was accepted as the legal name of the organization. Initially the *Halkın Kurtuluşu* faction analyzed such issues as "social imperialism", "three-worlds theory", and anti-fascism by adopting the Chinese model as its template for revolution. However, The Communist Party of China was later also criticized by the faction, which began to switch its support to Albania (Belge, 2007, p. 39; Aykol, 2010, pp. 74-75).

1.2.2.3. THKP-C

In 1971 MDD underwent another separation and Mahir Çayan, Yusuf Küpeli, Münir Ramazan Aktolga and Ertuğrul Kürkçü, who could not reach consensus with MDD supporters, established THKP-C [*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi*, the People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey]. Çayan and his friends saw the probability of ending up with a military dictatorship higher than a progressive coup. Therefore they

[6] Sinan Cemgil, Kadir Manga, and Alparslan Özdoğan were killed in a counter militant operation in Nurhak; Cihan Alptekin and Ömer Ayna were killed in Kızıldere; Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan, and Yusuf Aslan were executed.

supported a people's war based on the alliance between workers and peasantry. This war would be waged from the countryside to the cities where the imperialist oppression was minimal (Akın, 2007, p. 98; Atılgan, 2007, p. 696). THKP-C had defined imperialism as an internal phenomenon. There was an artificial balance [*suni denge*] between imperialism and capitalism and an armed struggle, carried out by the proletariat and led by the intellectuals, was necessary to terminate this balance (Atılgan, 2007, p. 698).

In 1972, the leading cadres of the organization, excluding Ertuğrul Kürkçü, were killed in Kızıldere during a firefight. With the killing of the leaders, the movement lost power and support. In the following years, internal criticisms and conflicts within THKP-C resulted in the emergence of two mass movements: Dev-Yol[7] [Revolutionary Way, *Devrimci Yol*] and *Kurtuluş*[8] [Liberation] (Aydınoğlu, 2007, p. 313).

1.2.3. The Inner Competition in the Left in the 1970s

While the escalating polarization between the revolutionaries [*devrimciler*] and far right nationalists [*ülkücüler*] was turning into a bloody confrontation, the number of

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[7] Dev-Yol entitled the regime in Turkey as colonial type fascism [*sömürge tipi faşizm*] and claimed that the alliance between imperialism and bourgeoisie was organizing fascism top-down with the help of the state. In this formulation the state units were identified as official fascists who enforced fascism and *ülkücü* movement which was assumed as the collaborator of the state units was named as civil fascist movement (Erdoğan, 2007, pp. 265; Pekdemir, 2007, pp. 748-752). Dev-Yol criticized the revolution understanding that was completely taken from the Soviet Union, China or Albania. It emphasized the necessity of a model that was specific to Turkey by considering the social and political conjuncture in the country rather than the copied methods (Erdoğan, 2007, p. 269). Its revolution formula was based on the Leninist theory of revolution: the capture of state mechanisms from down to top by terminating the existing units, the construction of socialism under the proletariat dictatorship from top to down. Undoubtedly in order to materialize this there was the need of an armed struggle (Pekdemir, 2007, p. 754).

[8] *Kurtuluş* was a movement that arose out THKP-C and positioned itself by criticizing the practice and theory in THKP-C. In this direction, a new course was set and the thesis of THKP-C such as Kemalism, Kurdish question, *öncü savaşı* was critically analyzed. In 1976 *Kurtuluş Sosyalist Dergi* [KSD-Socialist Journal of Liberation] was published. In 1977 the newspaper *Kurtuluş* was published. Like Dev-Yol, *Kurtuluş* also did not take stand with the Soviet Union and China rather it adopted a middle way in between those (Aydınoğlu, 2007, p. 370; Aykol, 2010, pp. 72-73).

extremist organizations also increased on the left. The emergence of an extremely high number of small organizations that adopted different revolution methods in the political arena has come to be known as "over-factionalization" (Sayarı, 2010, p. 202). These groups not only directed their hostility against the nationalist groups, but also against their fellow revolutionaries who chose different methods. There was an intra-group violence that stemmed from ideological differences, conflicting international sympathies, a struggle for the leadership of leftist militancy, and the adoption of force as a means of discipline, authority and solidarity (Sayarı, 2010, p. 202; p. 205).

When we look at the period, it can be claimed that there was also mass support [*kitlesellik*] and institutionalization with the establishment of several socialist parties. However, this was not pointing to a united power for the left, because despite the rapid growth and the visual magnitude that it had, there was also splitting that gradually reached drastic dimensions. The left was suffering from over-division such that when it was 1980, there were more than 50 factions, organizations and groups that defined themselves as leftist (Aydınoğlu, 2007, p. 278; Lipovsky, 1992, p. 164).

Inescapably, in this over-divided atmosphere, politics was practiced on the basis of conflicts rather than solidarity between different factions. The initial political discussions were mainly imprisoned in the superficial discussions of a world revolution which based either on the Soviet Union or China model. Which model one faction chose to follow in the revolution struggle determined the faction's character, its allies and enemies. Since these two models were considered as irreconcilable, the factions who chose different models excluded and worked against each other. Consequently, factions evaluated the social and political context by limited horizons which trapped in their firm belief for the rightness of the chosen method (Ünüvar, 2007, p. 886).

In addition to this, there were also problems that stemmed from the personal differences of the leaders, differences in the revolution strategies, and clash of interests between different factions. Baydar (2011) explains the existence of such problems with personal differences and asserts that the absolute infusibleness in the leftist arena was a product of personal weaknesses, mistrusts, and showdowns (Baydar & Ulagay, 2011, p. 279). The desire of leading the leftist movement was highly tempting and inevitably the people who were in the claim of leadership organized and constituted their separate

organization with their followers due to these temptations. This tendency not only led to a division in the leftist front which would block the unity of action but also caused the emergence of an intense competition between the factions that were in the same ideological line (Belge, 2007, p. 40).

As a result, the strong tendency of over-grouping led to mutual accusations among the factions and thus the energy of the left was consumed in this competition environment and wasted with the struggles and conflicts within the left (Akın, 2007, p. 103). In this environment, the differences between the factions were not leading to development of new perspectives by combining different ideas; rather they were escalating the rivalry (Silier, 2007, p. 441). The left was dominated with miscommunication, obstruction of dialogue possibilities and development of hostile attitudes between the factions which were considered each other as rival or even enemy entities. There was a constant inability in terms of reaching consensus in the left such that even the factions that were ideologically close were unable to unite and construct a front. Thus mutual disagreements could not be overcome and cooperation among factions could not be provided in the left (Lipovsky, 1992, pp. 148-152; p. 160).

1.2.4. The Coup of 1980 and Aftermath

Knowing what happened between the 1970s and today is key to understanding how my interviewees view their activist past and their position in society today. During this period, leftist organizations lost most of the influence they held in society and the prospects of carrying out their desired "revolution" collapsed. In this section, I will look at how the current literature on the topic describes the process experienced by the left in the 1980s. This process has three major prongs: political, economic and social. Therefore after a brief introduction of the coup of 1980, we will look at these three prongs.

On September 12, 1980, the military took power with the claim of ending the political instabilities, fixing the worsening economy and calming growing public fear from the terror on the streets (Akman, 2010, p. 19; Aydınlı, 2009, p. 585). Under the military rule, parties were closed down, parliament was dissolved, strikes, membership to unions and associations, union activities and political activities of all political leaders

were banned. Local governments were replaced by the military leaders and the media and political activity freedom and university autonomy were taken away. In the long run, the military weakened the organization of parties by restricting the creation of new party organizations and banning the establishment of party branches. The structure of the parliament, party system and electoral law were changed and the new regime imposed a ban on any kind of activity that it considered as detrimental to the society and to national wealth (Dall'agnoll, 2006, p. 71; Mohapatra, 2011, p. 153).

After the coup of 1980, the military government claimed to restore order and ensure stability in the country. With this aim the state oppressed the left since it was considered a detrimental element for national unity (Belge, 2009, p. 17). In this process a large number of leftists[9] underwent a harsh imprisonment and torture process that caused societal level fear which kept many of them away from politics (Ahıska & Yenal, 2006, p. 40). Thus while the left was dissolving due to the state violence and pressure that it was exposed to, there were also other changes that the left had to confront. We can look at this process from three aspects: Political, social and economic.

1.2.4.1. Political Transformations

In the post-coup period the military contributed to the rise of political Islam in Turkey by using Islam in order to combat against communism and leftist ideologies. After the coup, the junta regime promoted an understanding of Islam that could be promoted by the "secular" state. In a sense, Islam was used as a depoliticizing force and social glue which could keep people away from socialist and Marxist ideologies and

[9] According to the research results indicated by ntvmsnbc, 650.000 people were taken into custody, 230.000 people were put on trial (7.000 people were put on trial with the death penalty and 517 of them received the death penalty. Among the ones who received the death penalty, 51 were executed. One of them was a militant of ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia), 23 of them were juridical criminals [*adli suçlu*], 18 of them were leftists, and 8 of them were *ülkücü*.) During the military regime, 300 people died in "suspicious ways", 171 deaths were documented as "resulting from torture", 30.000 people got laid off from their jobs with the excuse of "being prejudicial" [*sakıncalı*], 14.000 people were expatriated, 30.000 people fled abroad as political refugees (Cömert, 2012).

movements. As a consequence of this situation, different versions of Islam emerged as alternatives to fill the gap in the sociopolitical life which came into existence due to the extinguishment of the left. While state-controlled religion entered into daily life as a part of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, the tripod of "the family, the mosque, and the barracks" became central to state practices (Arat Koç, 2007, p. 43; Rabasa and Larrabee, 2008, p. 37)

In addition to this, as a part of the state violence of the post-coup period, many Kurds who took place in the leftist movement were captured, jailed or killed. On the one hand, the violence and torture in prisons fed the anti-state feelings and contributed to the establishment of an armed organization to defend the Kurdish cause (Karakaya Polat, 2008, p. 76). On the other hand, a reaction emerged in the Kurdish community against the coup regime which wanted to assure the termination of the Kurdish insurgence by controlling and shaping Kurdish identity. The state pressure and authority backed an assimilation policy. In this environment, the Kurdish movement became more identified by ethnicity than leftist politics (Robins, 1993, p. 662).

1.2.4.2. Economic Transformations

Until the 1980s Turkey's economy was based on an economic structure called import-substitution industrialization which focused on the protection of the domestic market. State involvement, regulation of markets and protectionism were the core principles during the implementation of this economic policy. With the economic crises of the 1970s, the bourgeoisie showed their dissatisfaction and proposed freedom from the state with the adoption of the export oriented liberal economic model. The bureaucracy had to be forgone since it was an obstacle in front of the free market's procession and this perceived necessity was pointing to a reduction in the role of the state. At that point, a consensus that supported the neo-liberal transformation which was on behalf of the bourgeoisie was reached between the bourgeoisie, military rulers, international organizations, and representatives of these international organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank. Thus, instead of keeping the welfare-state understanding which gave priority to the welfare of disadvantaged classes, the state looked after the upper classes' and international creditor's interests (as cited in Şener, 2004, p. 7, p. 19).

With the adoption of export-led growth, neo-liberalism's effect started to be felt in economic life. Free market economy, deregulation, foreign trade, opening to outside, interest rate liberalization, privatization, minimization of state interventionism and social expenditures of state became the major topics during that transformation. The foundations of these transformations were laid with the introduction of the January 24 measures in 1980[10]. The military coup terminated all kinds of social and political opposition (including strikes and union organizing) and this situation enabled the transition to and implementation of neo-liberalism. There was also a social consent which was provided through the discourse of neo-liberalism as the best option to overcome the hardships of the economic crisis. This discourse was rendered more believable with the propaganda made by Turgut Özal and his government when he came to power (as cited in Şener, 2004, p .13; Arat Koç, 2007, p. 41).

If we have a closer look at the economic model adopted in the 1980s, we see that integration to the global markets was made possible partially by the liberalization of commodity trade. As a part of this liberalization, the controls on foreign capital

[10] The January 24 Measures: During the 1970s, there was a shortage in most of the consumption goods including the basic ones, as an indicator of the economic crisis. The government, which was overwhelmed with debts, encountered a serious difficulty in terms of repayments. In addition, the inflation was rising as a reflection of the economic instability. In this economic context an economic program which aimed to overcome the effects crises was introduced in the early 1980. This package which was called the January 24 measures, was aiming to empower domestic capital. It suggested leading the political life according to the necessities of the economy. Thus, according to the assumed necessities, it allowed market forces to reign freely with less governmental intervention in the economy, readjustment of the tax system, deregulation of the labor market and privatization. This economic package was a road map for a rooted change and also a list of main recommendations to suppress the class movements and solution of leadership problem in political life (Dall'agnoll, 2006, p. 68). The January 24 Measures had two dimensions: Firstly, it aimed to create a development model that was export oriented. Secondly it wanted to sustain this export oriented model with economic liberalization (as cited in Bali, 2002b, p. 26). After the coup, military rule put the January 24 Measures into effect. However, despite the claim of repayment of the foreign debts and assuring stability, decisions were basically aiming to terminate the obstacles that could hinder the transformation from the import substitute industrialization to the foreign expansion (Çay, 2006, pp. 68-69). The main goal was increasing the foreign trade and promoting foreign investment. In order to do that, Turkish lira made a convertible currency and thus, economy could follow an export led liberal path (Dall'agnoll, 2006, p.68; Kaya, 2007, p. 32).

transactions were eliminated and convertibility of the Turkish Lira was declared in 1989 in the name of "global financial competition". Along with the export revenues which increased with the export subsidization and discretionary devolution policies, foreign debt accumulation became one of the main mechanisms for financial trade liberalization (Boratav et al., 2000, pp. 3-5).

In this direction, the first step in the liberalization of the economy became the termination of the existing trade restrictions via the cancellation of the quota list, the reductions of deposit requirements on industrial imports and provision of tariff exemptions on imported intermediate products. Also, export credits and elimination of export licensing requirements were used in order to support export. However, due to the misuse of these incentives with the practice of "fictitious exports" (i.e. over invoicing), export credits left its place to direct subsidies in 1985. The boom in exports continued with the introduction of the flexible exchange rate regime. Initially the determination of exchange rates was done by the Central Bank; however, this duty was assigned to market forces through the means of newly established Foreign Exchange Market in 1988. Thus, Turkey turned into a country which was described as the "paragon of export-led growth" and an inspiring example of stabilization and liberalization (Çeçen et al., 1994, pp. 44-46).

Taking these steps, Turkey was rapidly shifting to a neo-liberal economy. Since the 1980s, neo-liberalism, as a principle of economic thought and management, has become widespread throughout the world. Neo-liberal theory propounds that "human wellbeing can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free market, free trade" (Harvey, 2005, p. 2). In this theoretical structure, the role of the state is defined as creation and preservation of an institutional framework which can enable the aforementioned practices. Thus deregulation, privatization and withdrawal of the state from many areas of social provisions have become common (Harvey, 2005, pp. 2-3).

Similar to other countries following neoliberal policies, the Turkish state has significantly cut down its social spending. If we look at the reflection of neo-liberal theory on the Turkish economic context, in a nutshell, we see that along with the

governmental support for neo-liberalism in this time period, institutions, which monitor the international capital, like the IMF and the World Bank, uttered certain recipes that included solution recommendations and insisted on the implementation of policies that aimed at decreasing social spending. As a result, the state backed away from areas such as education, health and retirement insurance, and became smaller. Privatization became widespread and many private companies filled the areas which were empty after the departure of the state. Education, health, retirement became the issues of private sector and the insurance sector was boosted (Ahıska & Yenal, 2006, p. 329; Kahraman, 2007, p. 102). Nevertheless, while the state was becoming smaller in economic and cultural aspects as the most known characteristic of the neoliberal economy, it became bigger in the military aspect (Ahıska & Yenal, 2006, p. 347). Admittedly, the adoption of a growth model based on high inflation and debt caused an increase in the incomes of the middle and upper layers of the society; however, this increase was at the expense of the lower classes (Bali, 2002b, p. 21). While one privileged segment of the society was getting rich, the rest was getting poorer. Thus, the social gap between the classes deepened as a result of the economic transformation of Turkey.

1.2.4.3. Social Transformations

While Turkey was transitioning to a liberal economy, and thus was integrating into the capitalist order with the economic changes that it experienced, the society did not stay outside of this integration (Ahıska & Yenal, 2006, p. 379).In the new social texture, the importance of money visibly increased. Success was now a concept that was measured according to the amount of money that one earned. The dominant idea of the period was clear: more money meant more success. Moreover, money was the tool to reach the happiness of buying and consuming (Bali, 2002b, p. 61; Lüküslü, 2009, p. 122; Navaro Yaşin, 2003, p. 231). Consumption was one of the main issues of the post 1980 period since it was considered not only as buying what was necessary but also as a satisfaction, pleasure, happiness and even a life-style (Ahıska & Yenal, p. 56; p. 62; p. 72, 2006; Şahin, 2005, p. 160). From this aspect the consumption hunger of the 1980s was a transition from being against waste to consuming more (Gürbilek, 2001, p. 16; Lüküslü, 2009, p. 124).

In this context where earning money turned into a basic goal, concepts like practicality [*işbitiricilik*], flexibility, and cleverness emerged as keys for achievement. These concepts were defining how to make money as well as pointing to the necessity of breaking the rules, regulations and law to some extent in the name of this goal (Bali, 2002b, pp. 206-207). With the entrance of these concepts into daily life, they began to determine how social relations were valued as well (Ahıska & Yenal, 2006, p. 62). As a result of all these changes, individualism and loss of collective bonds emerged in the society. In this environment the interaction between social classes became much less visible and the spatial and income based divergence became more visible among classes (Ahıska & Yenal, 2006, p. 316).

1.3. Methodology

1.3.1. Research Process

When I first decided to research the experiences of the former leftists who had been politicized in different factions, I started to read the history of the Turkish left and the memoirs[11] of the people who experienced leftism in various organizations in the 1970s. Unfortunately, there were not many sources that dealt with the Turkish leftist movement in international journals. This is why most of the articles that I found were in Turkish and local publications. Moreover, the sources that I encountered related with the Turkish left mostly provided an overview of the historical and political aspects of the leftist movement. The current lives of the former leftists, how they perceived, rationalized or legitimized their transformation were missing in the literature that was available. To put it differently, an analytical approach regarding the social and ideological transformation of the leftists was either superficial or non-existing. Thus, I started to conduct this research focusing on this gap.

[11] Basic memoir books that I looked at were Sezai Sarıoğlu (2001) *Nar Taneleri*, Nadire Mater (2009) *Sokak Güzeldir: 68'de Ne Oldu*?, Haşim Akman (2010) *Otuz Yıldır 12 Eylül Yaşayanlar Anlatıyor,* Oya Baydar & Melek Ulagay (2011) *Bir Dönem İki Kadın*.

Over the course of three months from March to May 2011, I conducted in-depth, open-ended, and semi-structured interviews. I asked simple and short questions and tried not to intervene or lead my research participants during our talks in order not to give harm to the uniqueness of their narratives. I designed 15 questions and directed them to 12 people (5 female, 7 male). All of the interviews were conducted according to the time and date that was set by the interviewees and lasted around two hours. Excluding four of them which were conducted in the offices of the interviewees, all of the interviews took place in the houses of my informants. All of my interviews were held in a separate room without any interruption[12]. The snowball method was used for the selection of research participants. My aunt and uncle, who had been involved in the leftist movement in the 1970s, provided the initial starting point of my research. Since I reached most of my interviewees through their personal networks, it was not difficult to establish a relationship of trust.

My research participants were usually open to talk about their past, though they still consider it a sensitive topic. However, at the same time, they were skeptical from time to time due to this sensitivity and vulnerability. At the beginning of our talks all of them asked me a set of questions which included "Why are you conducting this research? Are you an independent researcher or do you have any connections with an organization? Did your advisor tell you to examine this topic or did you find it on your own? Why are you dealing with the leftist movement?" Despite common acquaintances, these questions signaled their fear of speaking with a "spy" or undercover state agent[13]. Yet, these fears soon subsided as they became persuaded of my sincerity. The trust they had in my uncle and aunt helped facilitate this process.

Even if, in some cases, our conversation started with certain drawbacks, later they turned into sessions of sharing and empowerment for my interviewees. Often, they

[12] Only Seyhan was accompanied (by her husband) during our interview. I did not interview her husband but from time to time he also wanted add some points and shared his experiences in the left.

[13] Gönül, Murat and İlyas directly asked me my purpose before the interviews and then indicated that they have faced many people hired by intelligence services. As a part of their "old habit" they wanted to "be on the safe side."

expressed their gratitude for enabling them to share their personal feelings, opinions, interpretations and experiences. Participating in an academic research project, seeing that their past was not a forgotten memory and being the narrator of this memory filled them with pride. They appreciated my interest in history of the left in Turkey and in their personal history. Besides, I myself learned tremendously from listening to their stories and greatly admired their devout effort to change the world towards more equality and freedom. As a member of a generation who has always been criticized due to its apolitical stance, I was fascinated with their stories.

Undoubtedly, my interviewees told me only their stories to the extent that they wanted to share. Whether as a result of forgetting or through a conscious effort not to remember and narrate, they slid over certain issues. For example, my interviewees skipped over their torture and prison experiences. Also they were sometimes disturbed or became defensive when I asked about integrating into the capitalist system or the reasons for the failure of the left. Ultimately, they arranged and chose what they wanted to share. Therefore, this study is based on what my research participants chose to share.

My interviewees were from the main leftist organizations of the 1970s. At the beginning of this qualitative research project, I had set out to examine specifically one segment of the former leftists, who might be considered "bourgeois" today. However, I then decided to add people from different social strata in order to understand the multiplicity of experiences regarding the transformation from left militancy to economic and political integration into the current capitalist system, both "successful" and not. In addition, I tried to find people from different factions in order to increase the diversity of narratives, because each faction reflected a different point of view and tradition. Thus I reached people from Dev-Yol, Dev-Sol, TİİKP, *Halkın Kurtuluşu*, İGD, and *Emeğin Birliği*. Unfortunately, I could not interview anybody from the faction *Kurtuluş*, despite its status as a major movement of the 1970s. Among my interviewees, only Yağmur had taken part in *Kurtuluş* for some time, before choosing to join *Halkın Kurtuluşu*.

1.3.2. Profiles of the Interviewees

As a part of my research project, I interviewed five female and seven male participants over the course of three months from March to May 2011. My

interviewees' profiles seem to divide themselves into two groups according to their own perceptions of their economic status. While the first group consists of individuals who say their quality of life is comfortable and their economic status higher than before; the second group consists of individuals who are relatively unhappy with their quality of life and economic status. (As I will discuss in Chapter 3, this perception has an effect on how my respondents view the leftist movement.) In this section, I will briefly introduce my interviewees according to this classification, based on their own narrations:

In the first group, my first interviewee Gönül was the daughter of a middle-class Alevi family. She was born in Şanlıurfa as the first child of a family with four children. She participated in the leftist movement as a member of the Dev-Yol faction. The coup of 1980 strongly interrupted her leftist activism. She was imprisoned for four months. After she was released, she continued her education and became a teacher. While her imprisonment led to her initial withdrawal from the movement, with the influence of the violent atmosphere in the post-coup period, she completely lost her connection with her faction: "I am talking about the times when the left was dissolved. Nothing remained from the movement."

After her departure from Dev-Yol, Gönül worked as a teacher for several private educational institutions. Even as her work experience enabled her to noticeably increase her financial potential, she claims that despite her integration to the capitalist system, she protected her "soul" and remained loyal to leftist values. In this context, she bashfully defined herself as a person who belongs to "upper-middle class", but then added:

> Most probably since I know what I am, I don't see myself in a different place [i.e., far from the leftist movement]. My appearance might be different. I have a home, car, and all these things. But I know who I am inside. I do not know what it looks like. But I keep the little girl alive inside me. This is why I still respect myself.

My second interviewee Engin was born in Rize as the fourth child of a middle-class family with five children. Initially, he participated in the leftist movement by taking part in the PDA. However in this platform, he experienced some ideological conflicts and, as a result, left it. Soon after, he joined the *Halkın Kurtuluşu* [People's

Salvation] faction and struggled in this faction as an activist until his departure from the movement.

When we look at his withdrawal from the movement, he narrated this process as an "awakening from a deep dream", referring to his realization of the impossibility of the revolutionary ideal:

> I saw that the situation was getting worse. It was already apparent one year before the coup that there would be no revolution. The people who believed in the revolution were daydreaming. I had a close friend, Mete. After realizing what was going on [i.e., that there would soon be a coup], we started to study and aimed to graduate from the university as early as possible. We were not in the movement anymore when the coup happened.

After splitting ways with *Halkın Kurtuluşu*, he graduated from the university and became a dentist. Now he is still working at a medical clinic. He defines his current status as middle class, asserting that he did not undergo a significant economic change:

> You can describe my class as middle class. My family was also from middle class. There is not a significant change in my class. Maybe there was even a downgrade in comparison to my family's standards. I am a dentist and I have two children. My father was an official and had five children. I cannot afford to look after five children. But he was able to.

My third interviewee Metin was born in Mersin as the second child of a family with two children. His introduction to the leftist movement started during his university years. He moved to İstanbul from Mersin to study law, and at the university he became friends with people in leftist circles. Under the influence of his close friends as well as his belief in the validity of Maoist doctrines, he joined *Halkın Kurtuluşu* faction. However, when *Halkın Kurtuluşu* leadership began to support Albania instead of China, Metin experienced disagreements with his faction, and split ways with it. After this point he did not join any other factions, because, as he explained, similar to Engin, he became aware of the approaching coup and cut off his connection from any organizational unit: "I was outside of the organized struggle in order to protect myself."

During the post-coup process, Metin completed his education and became a successful lawyer. He continues to work in his own law office today. Considering his integration into the capitalist system, Metin defines his current class as "upper class".

However, at the same time he emphasizes the protection of his leftist essence: "I still protect my values in the 1970s. I am still a leftist. Today I am even more leftist."

In this group my fourth interviewee was Zuhal. Zuhal was born in İstanbul as an only child. When she started university, she joined the İGD[14] [Progressive Youth Association, *İlerici Gençlik Derneği*] faction under the influence of her uncle, who was a leftist: "My uncle's friends found me at the university and took me to a branch of İGD, *İlerici Tıbbıyeliler Derneği* [Association of Progressive Medical Students, İlTıpDer]".

After this introduction, Zuhal became so active in the movement that, in order to join the meetings of İGD, she confronted her parents, left her home, and lived with her uncle for some time. With the coup of 1980, which she still defines as an unforgettable and a "soul-shattering" event, she lost her connection with her faction for a short time. However, her withdrawal from the movement did not occur with the coup. She continued to take part in the movement until 1986. In this context, she explained her drifting apart from her faction as a "spontaneous" [*kendiliğinden gelişen*] process:

> Nobody from my faction called or found me. This meant that nobody remained from my unit. Our faction was dissolved. The movement collapsed. I cannot define a certain event that portrays my withdrawal from the movement. It happened on its own.

During these years Zuhal had already graduated from the university and become a doctor. In the following years, without any bonds to an organization, she led a life which she described as "living in a stable manner without confronting her leftist beliefs". She is still working as a doctor in a medical clinic and describes her social class as middle class:

> Being doctor sounds like being rich, I know. I earned money but not at a level that would cause a transformation in my values. Money is required to listen to

[14] İGD [*İlerici Gençlik Derneği*, Progressive Youth Association]: a pro-TKP association which was established in the mid-1970s.

> good music, to read good books, and to have a holiday. I could not own a home, but I could do all these things. I am an individual in the middle class.

My fifth interviewee was İlyas, the sixth and the last child of a family from Kahramanmaraş. His father was a rich industrialist, so the financial conditions in his family were quite good during his university years. His sympathies toward the leftist movement began during his high school years. However his activism and real participation in the movement occurred while he was at the university. In order to complete his university education he came to Bursa, and, after taking part in some protests there, he became a member of the Dev-Sol[15] faction. However, his participation in a leftist faction and adoption of revolutionary ideas caused reaction in his family. His father strongly objected to İlyas's leftist identity, a stance which led to confrontations between them. In the end, as a result of both the influence of his father's threat of disinheritance and the danger that stemmed from being a militant at that time, he left Dev-Sol during the second half of the 1980s. He explained his departure from the movement as follows:

> Maybe I left the movement due to my inner contradictions. In my opinion, it is harder for a bourgeois person to take part in the revolutionary movement, because if you are bourgeois, it means that you have more to lose. While I was leaving the movement, I thought about all the things I would lose. Maybe this was the main reason for my withdrawal.

After splitting ways with the movement, he first returned to the university, which he had subordinated to pursuing his ideal of revolution. He completed his education and became a doctor. He still works at a private hospital and defines his current economic status as follows:

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[15] Dev-Sol [*Devrimci Sol*, Revolutionary Left]: In 1978 a group of Dev-Yol supporters declared that they were in a conflict regarding some issues with the organization. After a while this group started to publish the journal *Devrimci Sol* [Revolutionary Left] and thus a separate organization process started (Aykol, 2010, p. 84). Dev-Sol was claiming that Dev-Yol betrayed the heritage of Mahir Çayan and shifted to a rightist line. Moreover, Dev-Sol did not agree with the determination of Dev-Yol that stated the existence of revisionist dictatorship in the Soviet Union. Also Dev-Sol blamed Dev-Yol for its weak struggle against fascism and defined it as a passive reaction. The struggle method of Dev-Sol was armed and in this sense it had adopted more radical methods in comparison to Dev-Yol. For example, it established *Faşist Teröre Karşı Silahlı Mücadele Ekipleri* [Armed Struggle Teams against the Fascist Terror] and *Silahlı Devrim Birlikleri* [Armed Revolution Units] in order to organize armed attacks towards the perceived fascist elements (Alpat, 1998, p. 72).

> I have a good job which I love. I have a family. I love my lifestyle. I do not want to give up these things. I am living comfortably. Now, what makes me happy is living like that. My conditions are well enough to sustain these standards.

Murat was born in Ankara as the fifth child of a family with seven children. He defined his family as a "traditionally leftist family" that always voted for the Republican People's Party [CHP, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*]. He portrayed his family's ideological stand as a latent reason for his sympathy towards the revolutionary ideals. However, his real introduction to the leftist movement came when he left Ankara and for İstanbul to pursue a university education. In İstanbul, under the influence of his friends, Murat joined the *Emeğin Birliği* [Union of Labor][16] faction and he struggled in this platform for three years.

With the coup of 1980 his ties with his faction gradually loosened. Nevertheless, the event that caused his final withdrawal was not the coup, but his graduation from the university. After his graduation, he completely drifted away the leftist environment and entered into business life, something which he described as the major turning point of his life. As a construction engineer he established his own business, which he still runs.

Murat defined his current social class as "petit bourgeois", explaining his current financial status as follows:

> I have never experienced financial difficulties. My family was rich. When I was a student my father financially supported me. Today I earn my own money. I have good living standards. I deal with my job. I am living in the way that I should live considering the realities of today.

Another interviewee, Seyhan, was the first child of a family with three children. She was born in the district of Samsun. Since there was no high school in her town, she

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[16] *Emeğin Birliği* [Union of Labor]: The defendants of the case of THKO [*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu*, The People's Liberation Army of Turkey] divided into two and the first group adopted the ideas of Enver Hoca and stood close to Albania. The second group opposed to this stand and defined itself in the Soviet camp. This group came together around the journal of *Emeğin Birliği.* In the leadership of Teslim Töre this formation transformed into a political body and it took the name *Türkiye Komünist Emek Partisi,* TKEP.

moved to İstanbul in order to complete her education. Thus, her introduction to the leftist movement started in İstanbul, in a boarding school. With the influence of a close friend, with whom she came to İstanbul, she joined the Dev-Yol faction. In this faction she pursued strong activism, which continued even after the coup. However in the post-coup period most of her friends fled abroad and she led an underground life in which she felt lonely and helpless due to her friends' withdrawal from the movement. This feeling of helplessness pushed her to consider her own life. Thus she decided to switch to an apolitical life:

> Everybody, everybody that I struggled together with fled abroad. I became desolate. I stayed two more years in Turkey. I continued the revolutionary struggle. However, at some point I, too, gave up. I returned to university, I found a job, I graduated. But I could not attune to life in Turkey. So I too went abroad.

In 1986 Seyhan moved to Sweden in order to start a new life and stayed there for almost 20 years. Now she lives in İstanbul and she works as an accountant in a private company.

My last interviewee in this group was Nehir who was the sixth child of a family with ten children. She was born in İstanbul. Like most of my interviewees, she joined the leftist movement during her university years, being fascinated with the mass support that Dev-Yol had. She remained active in the movement until the 1980 coup:

> I was going to be assigned to another task. However, the person who was going to contact me disappeared. Maybe s/he was captured. For 7-8 months nobody got in touch with me. The organization was dissolved. In the meantime, I graduated from the university.

Thus Nehir experienced a gradual withdrawal from the movement. Following this process, she started working at a bank. After working in various banks as a manager, now she is retired and is serving a company as a consultant. Today she describes her economic and social class as follows:

> I still think that the best option for the humanity is the left. Today I am economically in a good position. I guaranteed my life from a monetary perspective. I have a lifestyle which might be called bourgeois. But I gained all these things by working. I started from scratch.

As mentioned before, in the second group, I interviewed people who defined themselves as "economically underprivileged". In this group my first interviewee was Fatih, who was born and had grown up in İstanbul. He joined the Dev-Sol faction under the influence of his older neighborhood friends when he was in middle school. With the excitement of materializing the revolution, he dropped of school and devoted himself only to the revolution ideal, taking active role in the armed wing of his faction. His pursuit of militant leftism, described by Fatih as "rogue" and "armed", lasted almost 15 years until his departure in the second half of the 1980s. Unlike many of my interviewees, Fatih's effort to change the system in Turkey continued in the post-coup period. After 1985, though he broke his ties with illegal structures, his struggle continued three or four more years at a legal level. In the late 1980s, he completely withdrew from leftist organizations. He still independently supports a more equal and free society without defining himself a leftist: "Being a leftist is a broad category. Depending on how you define the left, everybody can be a leftist. So I cannot say that I am a leftist."

After his departure from the movement, Fatih experienced many difficulties. He explained that he became upset at witnessing his former comrades' "surrender" to money. He became lonely, which first pushed him to draw closer to some mafia groups: "I was alone and I knew nothing other than violence." However, soon after, he left this group and established a new life. In this process he worked as a cameraman for some time. Now he has a small business selling handmade jewelry. Still, he expresses dissatisfaction with his current economic status, saying, "I could not integrate into the system. I tried, but it doesn't happen. I haven't been able to develop economically."

My second interviewee in this group was Tayfun, who was born in Ankara as the second child of a low-income family. He moved to İstanbul in order to complete his university education, and it was there that he joined the Dev-Sol faction. Like many young people in the period, Tayfun was arrested after the coup of 1980 and remained imprisoned for six years. While leftist organizations were being dissolved outside the prison, his leftist struggle continued inside the prison. He told me that his belief in the revolution became a way for him to bear the difficulties of prison life. In the last year of his imprisonment he split ways with his organization due to a disagreement regarding a

protest. After this event he pursued a leftist line in the prison independent from any organizational unit.

Tayfun described Turkey that he saw after he was released from prison as an "utterly different" country:

> Everything I left was different when I returned. I experienced a shock. Only my family was the same. All my friends were in other places. They were dissolved. I had to be realistic. I completed my university education, found a job and later I got married.

Thus in the beginning of 1990s, Tayfun started a new life independent of the leftist circles. He still works as an engineer, but not at a company: "I am an independent engineer but I could not become an economically independent person. I could not develop economically. I could not liberalize economically."

Mehmet was born in Sivas as the third children of a family with four children. Mehmet's interest in the leftist ideology started in his family under the influence of his father and brothers. His father was initially a very religious man; however, after examining many books, his knowledge in religion resulted in a reaction against religion and he became an atheist, also adopting some revolutionary ideas. During these years Mehmet's two brothers had also started taking part in the leftist movement. This revolutionary wind in their home was interrupted with the killing of his brother. After mourning for two years, Mehmet's older brother became an important figure in the leftist movement. Like his brother, he too was killed. Following this painful event, Mehmet said, his father could not stand the pain of the loss of his sons and also died within a month. These events became a triggering factor for Mehmet; after which he devoted himself entirely to the movement. "My brothers did not die for nothing." he said.

Thus Mehmet participated in TİİKP [Revolutionary Workers and Peasants Party of Turkey, *Türkiye İhtilalci İşçi Köylü Partisi*] group for some time. However when I asked him about the faction he joined, he did not want to define himself as a member of any group: "I have never been someone's man. I have never been a faction's man. I have never been an organization's man. I am a man who loved the left without any organizational bonds."

Based on this definition, Mehmet still defines himself as an absolute leftist without any change. According to him, what changed was his economic conditions and social class: “I am an engineer. I do not even own a home. I am a tenant. I never earned money. In comparison to the 1970s, the only thing that has changed is that I have gotten poorer.”

My last interviewee in this group was Yağmur, who was born in İstanbul as the second child of a family with two children. She joined the movement during her high school years. With the influence of her social network, she initially joined *Kurtuluş* [Liberation] faction. However, later she experienced some disagreements with this faction and joined *Halkın Kurtuluşu*. Until the coup of 1980 she continued her revolutionary struggle in this faction. In the post-coup environment, she was arrested and sent to prison: “I stayed in prison for a short time. Within six months they released me. It was just six months, but I still bear the traces of those months.”

After her imprisonment, she lost all the connection with her faction. She explained this process as a time period during which all factions were dissolved. Thus, she started a life without any organizational bonds. Painting became her shelter to fill the gap which emerged due to the collapse of her revolutionary dreams. Now, she continues to paint, also working as a hair dresser. She explained the economic standards in her life as follows: “I worked but I never earned huge amounts of money. I never gave importance to money. This is why I could not progress economically. I was just able to save the day.”

1.4. Outline of the Thesis

Based on in depth interviews, this thesis aims to explain the ideological, socioeconomic, and gender-related “transformation” of the individuals who participated in various leftist factions by analyzing how they describe and legitimize the changes they have undergone.

In the narrations of all my interviewees, the leftist past is portrayed as a source of pride and a key point that affected their flow of life. In other words, this sense, my research participants explain their participation in the leftist movement as a major turning point. In the second chapter I will look at the “participation in different factions

of the left" which can be considered as the first transformation that my interviewees underwent. Thus I will try to understand the determining factors and underlying reasons for the faction choice of my interviewees.

Then in the third chapter I will look at transformations that my interviewees underwent as the survivors of a defeated movement. In this chapter I will also analyze the post-1980 period and combine the changes and transformations that Turkey witnessed in relation with the personal transformations that my interviewees experienced. Do my interviewees still define themselves as leftists? Do they still believe in the idea of revolution? Do they perceive a change in their lives or situate themselves as individuals still loyal and dedicated to leftist ideals? If there is a perceived transformation, to what extent is it accepted? These are some of the questions that I will try to answer in the third chapter.

In the fourth chapter, I will look at perceptions of femininity, womanhood, feminism and intimate relationships in the movement. Under these titles I will specifically focus on the sister [*bacı*] discourse, the auxiliary position of women, the attitude towards feminism, the prejudices or discriminations that stemmed from being a woman, the nature of intimate relationships in the movement, and the influence of organizational structures on these issues. Then I will discuss the transformations that my interviewees have experienced in terms of their views on gender and sexuality.

CHAPTER 2: GETTING TO KNOW THE LEFTIST MOVEMENT

2.1. Introduction

Turkey witnessed a harsh clash between the two poles, the right and the left, throughout the1970s. For most of the youth of the period, resisting this polarization and being politically neutral was almost unthinkable. This happened for two main reasons: First, in this social context, leftist revolutionary and nationalist [*ülkücü*] movements were the main struggle platforms of the period and taking side in either of them was seen as a duty of citizenship in the eyes of the many young people. Being a revolutionary meant to live and struggle for the people in order to reach a freer and more equal society. On the other hand, being an *ülkücü* meant to be a patriot who was trying to defend her/his country from the divisive element of communism. In their own way, both sides held the ideal of "rescuing" the state or the homeland. Second, with the entrance of arms to the leftist movement, violence inevitably escalated. The 1970s was a period in which neighborhoods, streets, universities and dormitories were polarized,

divided into right and left camps and pitted against one another. As it can be understood from the meanings that were attributed to each of the parties, both definitions were virtuous according to their self-interpretation (Lüküslü, 2009, p. 94; p. 99; p. 114). If so, what were the factors that made an individual to take side in either of these ideological poles?

In this chapter of my research, I will try to analyze the underlying reasons for my interviewees to join the side of the leftists in the first place. We will look at the various elements that contributed to or persuaded my interviewees in terms of membership to their factions. These included family persuasion (or dissuasion), moving, emotional reaction to events, interest in theory, and others. In this chapter, I will examine not only my respondents' choice of leftism over the nationalist right, but also their specific choice of faction within the left. These are important questions to answer, because the reasons these people joined leftist movements in the first place has continued to have an effect on how they view themselves and leftism today.

2.2. Participation in the Leftist Movement

> I learned what Dev-Yol was thinking and defending after being a part of it; but I chose the left because there was justice [*adalet*], rights [*hak*] and law [*hukuk*] in the left…Being neutral towards what was happening meant to be insensitive to the things around you. And this was impossible for me. (Gönül)

Considering the social polarization of the period, politicization was an inescapable process for most youth in the 1970s. According to Gönül, who explained her participation in Dev-Yol with the above words, guiding this process of joining the left was a belief that she was making the right choice and pursuing the right ideals: "After witnessing what they [*ülkücüler*] did, it was impossible for me to take place in the right." At this point of our conversation, she mentioned the 1978 Maraş massacres and how they affected her as an Alevi. Defining fascism as a threat to her Alevi identity, she positioned the left as a shelter to escape the massacres perpetrated by the right. In this context, the right was a mistaken ideology that in Gönül's memory represented something merciless, brutal, and capable of giving harm. This is why she asserted that there was the need of taking a stand and fighting against it. In this struggle, Gönül chose Dev-Yol and characterized the left as a knight who defended the rights of the oppressed, defenseless, and disadvantaged groups in society.

Like Gönül, Engin also emphasized the importance of the values that the left had in it as a reason for his participation to the movement. However, the major reason that explains his journey in the left was the participation of people he knew in *Halkın Kurtuluşu* (People's Salvation) faction. According to Engin, learning theoretical debates were related with personal curiosity; accordingly, it was a situation that depended on the choice of the person. This is why he underlined that the factor which attracted the individual to the movement was not the theory; rather it was the friends of the person and the existence of the people s/he knew in the movement.

Similarly, Murat who is a former supporter of *Emeğin Birliği* the main factor behind his involvement was "the influence of the social environment":

> I think the social environment of the person is very important. My friends were from the leftist factions. I adopted their ideas. Then I became a leftist. I cannot think of someone who politicized by reading and then choosing the right path. Maybe one person among one thousand. These types of things happen [participation in a social movement], because you were influenced by your environment. I mean nobody comes to the movement after reading or seeing the realities. Maybe one in thousands…

For Fatih, too, the determinant factor in the faction choice was the affect of relational proximity:

> I met with Dev-Sol when I was 15. Yes, it is early; but not very abnormal. It was normal during that period. To be honest, it is people and your love for them [that attract you]. Neither their ideas, nor their attitudes… You love people. Your choice depends on this. You do not have many options. There were three or four groups around us. I preferred them. I was closer to them. What I mean is human relationships influenced me.

In Mehmet's story we see his brothers and fathers as the catalysts who introduced him to the leftist movement. Before Mehmet participated in any faction, Mehmet's two brothers were already in the leftist movement as high-level militants. In their home, there was a relationship of comradery [*yoldaşlık*] between his father and the sons such that in Mehmet's depiction "the anarchic father" who went to demonstrations to protest unjust treatments in the country backed the struggle of his sons as much as he could. After a while Mehmet also found himself in the movement as the youngest child of an already politicized family. Initially, he helped his brothers who were in the high positions by running errands; however, after his brothers were killed, followed by the

death of his father, Mehmet became more immersed into the movement. At this point, for him, the left represented keeping the short but legendary lives of his brothers and their memories alive, and bravely embracing the ideal that his brothers had died for. Thus, he struggled in TİİKP [*Türkiye İhtilalci İşçi Köylü Partisi*, Revolutionary Workers and Peasants Party of Turke*y*] in order to defend the heritage of his brothers.

In Seyhan's family, her uncle was the first figure who introduced her to the leftist struggle. She discovered the leftist ideology by reading the books in her uncle's library. As she was questioning the world from an ideological perspective, this questioning resulted in her development of sympathy for the left with the influence of her Turkish literature teacher, who was also a leftist. Later she left her hometown of Samsun and moved to İstanbul in order to complete her education in a boarding school. There, a close friend introduced her to Dev-Yol faction:

> I went to a boarding school for high school. In fact, I mean, maybe I would not have proceed in the leftist movement. There was a friend who came with me. She was very militant. Since we came together, since we came as *hemşehri* [people from the same town], I was always with her. In terms of me joining something or being a part of something, she was influential. When we were in high school, we became a part of Dev-Genç. When I started the university there was no Dev-Genç. A separation was experienced; *Devrimci Yol* [Revolutionary Way] and *Devrimci Sol* [Revolutionary Left] emerged. When I started university, I had to choose. This year was very…We sat down and talked. Everybody [the members of Dev-Genç] was divided into groups there. I made my decision and came to İstanbul as a supporter of Dev-Yol. In my opinion, if you asked me in the 1970s I would tell you that I found their ideas [the ideas of Dev-Yol] more consistent. But after all these years when I look back I think that it [my choice] stemmed from the people. I do not say this with pride, but this is how it was.

In Tayfun's story, firstly we see the execution of Deniz Gezmiş as an incident that he could not forget. In this context, we can mention his tendency towards the left as an embodiment of his reaction to the death of Gezmiş. The event which turned this tendency to actual involvement started with the influence of his friends, similar to the stories of other interviewees:

> There (in the university) was a group of friends. The group that we were in was Dev-Genç [Revolutionary Youth]. There was no special preference here. Let me tell it like that. I think the reason was, I did not think about it very much, but the

> people whom I knew from the neighborhood were from the Dev-Genç faction. I had some conversations with them. Maybe I was affected by them.

Tayfun is one of my respondents who continues to adhere closely to a feeling of leftism (see Section 3.2). Today the left presents Tayfun with the potential for freedom in a society in which he feels captive. He defines himself as an individual who is not in peace with the capitalist system, rejected by the system due to the socialism that he kept alive in him. He feels like a member of a group that is excluded. This is why he explains his reason for still being loyal to left as follows:

> The reason why you are in the left is its being the place where you feel freer, you live more humanely, you can make decisions related to your future on your own, and you can produce something for your society and children. This is our… People are in the left ideology because of this reason or I have the left ideology because of this. The reason is not something else.

My next interviewee Metin is quite a successful lawyer who had taken place in *Halkın Kurtuluşu* and then broken his ties with this faction. He defines his relationship with the leftist movement in the 1970s as loving his faction rather than an organic tie. He defines himself as an "unusual" leftist since he always approached the left from a critical angle. Thus his claim raises a question in my mind and I ask if he was so displeased with the movement and so critical towards it why he became a part of it.

In response to this question, he propounded the rising fascist movement and the necessity to intervene the violent essence of it: "We could not say 'look people are scrambling for a better world' while fascists were attacking them. We always supported the people close to us." Metin explained this support as taking the side of the oppressed. Moreover he described being in solidarity with the oppressed as a projection of a family tradition in his narration:

> Our family had such a humane structure. One of the reasons that pushed me to revolutionism was that we had a family tradition of being close to, standing by the weak. Neither my grandfather nor my father, they never wanted leadership. But the feeling of helping other is very important.

While helping the oppressed was making Metin a part of the leftist movement, he depicted pursuing China and the doctrines of Mao as the reason for his factional choice, *Halkın Kurtuluşu*. For Metin in the 1970s Mao was a revolutionary and a

philosopher whose ideas should be followed. Different from my other interviewees, Metin presented the stance of *Halkın Kurtuluşu* towards the Soviet Union as a primary reason for his participation to the movement. The theoretical approach was the major determinant factor in the faction choice of Metin such that in later times when his faction changed its line which was close to China, he disengaged from *Halkın Kurtuluşu* and continued his struggle in the left without any bonds with an organization. He explained the reasons that were influential on his journey in *Halkın Kurtuluşu* other than the theoretical infrastructure and his withdrawal from his faction as follows:

> The people whom we loved who were older than us were there. This was very influential too. I found it to be a softer movement. They [members of *Halkın Kurtuluşu*] did not give prominence to arms; they were establishing neighborhood organizations [*mahalle örgütleri*]. They were more active at the villages. They were dealing with theory more than the others. For example I saw Dev-Genç and *Kurtuluşçular* [supporters of the Liberation movement] as the bourgeois children. Dev-Genç's attitude of finding the middle ground for everything… It was very… Later I split ways with *Halkın Kurtuluşu,* when they rejected Mao. I mean I conflicted with them when they said the words "Enver Hoca". Who is Enver Hoca? If we gathered all of the armies of Enver Hoca, it could not even be near the number of militants in *Halkın Kurtuluşu*.

İlyas, from the faction Dev-Sol, responded to my question with the claim that his elder brothers may have influenced his participation to the leftist movement. When he came to the university he found himself in a politicized environment and then chose the left. His journey within the leftist movement started with sympathetic participation in the resistance movements but developed into militancy. In response to my question, "why Dev-Sol?" he replied: "The people whom I met first were from this faction when I came to the university." Then İlyas added smiling: "It was attractive for me to be a part of a mass movement. I acted with the instinct of being on the side that I perceived as strong. Maybe that was a human weakness."

Like İlyas, Nehir also mentioned the attraction of being a member of a mass movement and the feelings that it brought along while explaining her participation to Dev-Yol:

> There was the effect of the mass movements. I mean the extensive organizational structure in the movement and the admiration it evoked… In fact the social atmosphere in Turkey was quite dynamic. My friends and I naturally found ourselves in a political circle... First of all, we felt happy. I felt like we

> were making ourselves useful. I was happy since I was a part of this movement. There was a sense of belonging. It was providing us with an identity. We always felt ourselves different from the other people. I mean our truths were the best. We degraded the rest. I do not know what we meant for the other people but it was very attractive for us to take place in that mechanism. If the state made a military coup, we would fight and win. We had that thought. We never gave importance. Even if there was a coup, we believed that we would muddle through it, it would not influence us.

The perception of immunity from everything and an indirectly uttered notion of immortality existed in most of my respondents' stories. If there was an attack they would fight against it and win, if there was a coup, they would rise up against it and win. Death was a manageable risk or a probability that was never considered. Being a part of "the left" was a virtuous stand. In this framework, the left was like an ensemble of noble struggles. My interviewee Yağmur, a former supporter of *Halkın Kurtuluşu* explained this nobility by mentioning the struggle against inequalities, protection of the weak against the strong, helping the poor, being the voice of the suppressed and representing the disadvantaged groups and their demands. Then she added: "In our faction there was a togetherness in which you never felt alone. We were great. Being a leftist was being together with honored and fair people. In our small world we lived as if the revolution was materialized."

At this point I wondered how they lived as absolute socialists in a capitalist Turkey. "We shared everything", she said. "But who paid the bills and for the tea?" I asked. "The one who had the money", she said smiling.

Finally, Zuhal's leftism experience in the İGD was seen quite negatively by her family. Since Zuhal's uncle, who influenced her participation in the leftist movement, was considered a monster that contaminated young minds, her family sought to distance her from him. The reaction of Zuhal to her parents who were worried about their daughter became much more severe. She left the house since she believed that her parents restricted her life in the name of protecting her. In this sense, her participation in İGD was in the form of a personal struggle for independence from family pressures:

> I left the house in the name of gaining the freedom of doing what I believed in. It could have been another thing. İGD was a symbol there. It was the medium of what I wanted to do. It could be something other than İGD; it could not be İGD. I

always wanted to be free. I could have used İGD as an excuse. I did not leave the house for İGD. I left the house in order to break from the pressure at home.

Zuhal was the only one of my interviewees for whom participation in a leftist organization entailed a sense of rejection by her family.

2.3. Conclusion

Van Zomeren et al. (2008) assert that the literature related with social mobilization and collective action could be organized and classified into three broad domains to explain the motives behind the participation of individuals in these processes. In line with this assertion, the authors determine these three domains as "perceived injustice, efficacy and identity" (Van Zomeren et al., 2008, p. 505).

If we closely look at these three domains, Van Zomeren et al. (2008) define perceived injustice as a powerful indicator in terms of participation in collective action. The desire to terminate the ongoing injustice and construction of a fairer system that is different from the existing one are the crucial elements that push individuals to take part in social movements. Among my interviewees, this injustice perception and struggling against inequalities were very visible in the discourses of Gönül and Yağmur.

Secondly, the authors point to perceived efficacy as a determinant factor in joining social movements. This category is based on "resource mobilization theory" and identifies people as rational actors (Van Zomeren et al., 2008, pp. 505-507). Here rationality refers to the idea that people join collective action when the expectations regarding benefits of participation in a certain action outweigh its costs. To put it in other words, people act with the instinct of maximizing the gains and minimizing the costs and therefore according to rational choice perspective individuals engage in social movements in relation with the perceived effectiveness and risks of participation. In this framework, high costs are located as barriers to participation (Klandermans, 1984, pp. 583-584; Klandermans and Oegema 1987, p. 520; p. 527; McCarthy & Zald, 1977, pp. 1216-1218; McAdam, 1986, pp. 67-70; Opp 1985, pp. 87-89, p. 93; Tilly, 1978, p. 73-75; pp.100-102).

In addition to this literature that focuses on the individual efficacy there exists a literature that emphasizes the importance of "group efficacy" or the belief in the power

and possibility of success of a group, an organization or a movement in terms of creating a drastic social change (Drury & Reicher, 2005, pp. 35-38; Mummendey et al.1999, pp. 229-230; p. 234; p. 238). What is emphasized here is the "generativity" that is the desire to contribute to future generations (Erikson, 1963). In this context, generative individuals pursue the goal of reaching a better society and act with the incentive of contributing to a better world which is more equal and just (Peterson & Duncan, 1999, pp. 108-110; Stewart & Gold-Steinberg, 1990, p. 543; p. 546).

Thirdly, Van Zomeren, et al. (2008) mention identity as another category that has a significant importance in terms of engaging in collective actions or social movements (Van Zomeren et al., 2008, p. 507). According to "social identity theory" (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), individuals attach positive meanings and emotional components to their group membership. Thus three steps occur during this identity construction process: Firstly, the individual develops awareness for her/his membership. Secondly, the individual attaches values to her/his membership and belonging. Thirdly, the individual makes a differentiation between her/his belonging and other people's belonging who are out of her/his group. In this framework, being a member of a faction, organization, movement, group or community causes positioning "group" identity as an identity above "personal" identity. This positioning inevitably leads to creation of a self-definition based on membership. While "I" is transformed into "we", personal identity turns into collective identity. Therefore being a member of a certain group and identification with this group emerges as an important factor that triggers the individual's participation in a social movement (Jenkins, 2004, pp. 103-115; Turner et al., 1987, p. 118; Hirsch, 1990, pp. 244-245). In my interviews, identity construction and attribution of positive meanings to group membership were visible in the discourses of Mehmet (after the killing of his brothers being a leftist had become the core element of his identity), Zuhal (participation in TKP was her declaration of being a free individual and thus as a stepping stone in her identity formation), Nehir and İlyas (for them being members of leftist factions were being a part of a strong and admired mass movement and thus being a part of "we" rather than "I").

When we analyze the discourses of my interviewees in order to understand the factors that influenced their participation processes, we see that the dominant tendency

is referring to the effect of social networks. In the political mobilization literature, too, the influences of social networks and interpersonal ties are described as important points in joining social movements (Klandermans and Oegema 1987; Klandermans 1997, p. 520). However, before moving to these common discourses in the narrations that defines social networks and interpersonal ties as a determinant factor in social mobilization, let's look at how my respondents consider and define their participation in their organizations and politicization processes.

Undoubtedly, the ways in which my respondents were politicized continues to have an important impact on their self-image and their view of the left. When asked about the personal transformations they had experienced, nine of my interviewees referred to their politicization in the left as one of the major events of their lives. The years they spent in the political platforms were both a source of pride and a key point that affected the flow of their lives. This is why, without hesitation most of them positioned their past in various factions of the left as one of the turning points in their lives. For example Engin defined the death of one of his closest friends, a faction leader in the 1970s, as the most important turning point of his life. In his story, his friend's death emerged as a triggering factor that pushed him to the revolutionary struggle:

> I became very angry after my friend's death. He was killed. We were very close. After his death my rancor against the existing system increased. I started to struggle for only the revolution. I devoted all my energy to the revolution. I did not betray our dream after his death.

In most of the narrations the years spent in the factions were defined as inescapable destinies. While Fatih explained this destiny as "experiencing what should be experienced", Seyhan described this inescapability with the feeling of social responsibility:

> It was not like today. The atmosphere was different. Turkey was changing and we could not stay away from this change. We had to be a part of this change. You cannot be insensitive towards the things that happened around you. I was a sensitive person and with my all sensitivity, the left was the only place that I could be in.

In this direction Yağmur explained her being a revolutionary as the only way forward and the sole option in her politicization process:

> I could not do anything other than being a leftist. I would certainly join the leftist movement. I even cannot think of not joining. If you ask me the turning points in my life I can tell my participation in the left, my disastrous marriage and the coup of 1980. These three are the major events of my life.

A life lived without a leftist perspective was considered as an unthinkable option for Nehir, too. She portrayed her experience in her faction as an important event that developed her personality:

> Of course the most important turning point in my life was taking part in the leftistmovement. It became the main determinant factor of my life; because, my stand, my ideas that shaped in the movement affected the rest of my life. I never deny my past. I mean I am so happy to have a past like that.

Mehmet described the relationship between joining the leftist movement and his identity as follows:

> If I am Mehmet today, the reason for it is definitely the years I spent in the left. The thing that made me Mehmet is that period. I learned everything there. My life changed in the left. My brothers died in the leftist struggle. How can I deny the centrality and significance of the left in my life?

Like Mehmet, according to Zuhal, too, her past in her faction İGD was a transformative and life-changing experience:

> I am a brave person. I am stubborn. I always do what I believe in. How did I learn all these things? I learned to be like that in the left. The revolutionary years educated me. Of course one of the most important events, the event that affected me the most is my participation in the left.

As much as their participation in the leftist movement can be considered one of the important turning points in respondents' lives, when we specifically look at their participation process in the factions, we see that this process was not a process that developed as part of a plan. Rather, it was a coincidental process to a very large extent. Almost all of my interviewees pointed to their social network as the primary reason for their faction choice. In this sense, they defined the process in which they took part in the leftist circles as a process which emerged mainly with the influence of the people they knew and already politicized in the left. Most of them did not base their involvement on an ideological factor. In most of their stories, there was a family member, friend or someone from their social network who facilitated their introduction to the leftist

movement. In this context, they uttered that they had the tendency to act together with the familiar people and adopt their political stand. Thus by the help of these "catalyst" people who accelerated their politicization, my interviewees explained that they found themselves in the leftist circles. In this context, adopting the ideological stance of a particular faction emerged later because ideology was represented as an issue that was examined, discussed and accordingly understood after participation had begun. In the next chapter, I will examine how the more flexible idea of ideology interacted with the more fundamental idea of leftist identity.

CHAPTER 3: IDEOLOGICAL AND ECONOMICAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE FORMER LEFTISTS

3.1. Introduction

Perhaps the word used most reluctantly by my interviewees was "transformation". When the issue at stake was a transformation in their lives since the 1970s, interviewees generally raised an objection, followed by either a correction or an explanation to prove that their current, relatively well-off status was not a betrayal of or a conflict with their activist past. In my interviewees' minds, the word "transformation" implied "being unable to be like who I was in the past" or "choosing not to be like who I was in the past". For that reason, the word "transformation" [*dönüşüm*] was considered with suspicion, even revilement. Ever anxious about losing the "soul" of militant leftism in the 1970s, my informants sometimes took a defensive position. Rather than using this visibly irritating word, they strongly emphasized a feeling of gradual "change" [*değişim*]. As a result of the guilt and the subsequent defense against this guilt, they used a common discourse: "The only thing that changed in me is my outward

appearance; my soul and self are still the same". (This is articulated most explicitly in Engin and Mehmet's stories below.)

When we look at the narratives of my interviewees regarding their life after the coup of 1980 and their class positions (as they identify them), it is possible to observe two different groups. The first group consists of those who integrated into the post-1980 environment relatively easily, making choices that resulted in climbing the social ladder, rather than maintaining an absolute belief in revolutionary ideals. Second was a group who did not succeed economically in the liberal capitalist system; their ideology remained closer to what it had been forty years ago and they emphasized their chosen noncompliance with the norms of a liberal capitalist economy. Looking at the main tendencies in the first group's discourse, we see that economic change, for instance, was an area in which they showed minimum resistance. For some interviewees, a higher material quality of life and new white-collar occupations were visible indicators of their increased social standing, even if they were reluctant to come to terms with this "transformation" in their lives. In addition to economic changes, another area in which my interviewees made some concessions on the word "transformation" was in discussing their belief in a socialist revolution. As a matter of fact, the only point in our interviews at which the word "transformation" was used comfortably and without hesitation was when we discussed the issue of revolution. From today's perspective, most interviewees said, materializing the revolution was impossible; a gradual, broad transformation or change was considered more feasible. (There was, however, also a smaller group of two respondents who still supported revolutionary ideals by preserving their hope in the revolution, totally rejecting the notion of gradual transformation.)

In this chapter, I argue that these two groups' relationship with their activist past and their present ideological stances are a result of concrete factors and follow predictable patterns. These factors are varied and affect each interviewee in different ways, but include the suppression of the left after the coup of 1980, the rise of consumerism, my interviewees' relationship with money, their current political ideology, political participation, their perception of the capitalist system. The economic transformation that took place in the first group's lives positively affected their feelings of integration into society, even if they felt more of a distance to their old socialist

ideals. Voluntarily or involuntarily, most of my interviewees had managed to integrate into a liberal, capitalist system by accepting the ownership of property, the principle of "fair pay for fair work", and support for individualism. The second group of interviewees, who could not complete or manage to provide their integration into the capitalist system, the level of economic transformation also determined the reputation and respect they felt they had won in society. Therefore, according to this group that resisted integration, economic conditions after 1980 also affected their social relationships.

The fact that this second group said they tried to integrate into the capitalist system but could not succeed has had an effect on both their psychology and ideology. These interviewees say they are sick of being considered "outliers" [*tutunamayanlar*], but they nevertheless live in constant conflict with the system they live in. Their perceived "disconnect" from society means being unable to be a successful capitalist, while, according their discourse, it is worthless to be an anti-capitalist in a capitalist world. Moreover, being anti-capitalist is not an ideology they can simply choose; they say it was imposed on them since the left was suppressed by the coup, regardless of whether they feel their ideals have a chance of success. The collapse of their old activist groups and their inability to reach their old goals remain like a scar, always reminding them of their failure, that is, the death of their ideal. On the other hand, some maintain that the revolution is still not a lost war. In this context, there is no real "failure", but an ongoing "war" that should never be ceased. Those who acknowledge the collapse of activist organizational structures accept that such a struggle ought to take place at a safer, more personal level.

In this chapter I will examine the transformations that my interviewees' underwent under two headings. First, I will examine in detail my interviewees' responses to questions about the economic and ideological changes they have experienced since the height of their activism in the 1970s. These two dimensions have been considered in tandem; to be more precise, economical transformations act together with the ideological changes since economic changes seem to have created an ideology among my respondents that reflects their changing level of welfare. The social and economic transformations that Turkey underwent as a whole are discussed in relation to

my interviewees' responses. Second, I will look at the changes and deviations in the faith of revolution and then our next topic will be integration to the capitalist system with an analysis of economical and ideological transformations that my interviewees experienced.

3.2. Integration into the Capitalist System: Economical and Ideological Transformations

3.2.1. Economical and Ideological Transformations in Turkey in the 1980s

Undoubtedly, the coup of 1980 was a traumatic experience for many people. From 1980 to 1983, democratic rights could not be exercised and in this undemocratic atmosphere, the state was exalted and sacralized. In order to legitimize this intervention, the military government produced an "illness" discourse, according to which the system was not robust anymore since it was infected with ideological viruses. The main reason for the chaotic and anarchic environment of the country was considered to be the young population. The public believed university youth in particular was under the effect of the "harmful" foreign ideologies and due to this rapidly spreading and socially poisonous illness, basic institutions could not function. Thus, military intervention was analogized as a precaution or even an operation to save the life of the patient. Here, the patient was the state and the source of viral illness that would kill the patient was the ideologies in the young brains. Therefore, the military started a policy of finding and destroying "the guilty" as a part of the process of treatment. Based on this diagnosis, students and all social institutions that were considered as the responsible actors of the environment of conflict were taken under the military's control and "disciplined". While the illness metaphor had diagnosed the "feebleness" in society and determined the elements that subverted the social order, at the same time it was used to legitimize and underline the necessity of the intervention. To be more precise, the illness discourse gave Kenan Evren (The Chief of General Staff and the leader of the coup of 1980) an opportunity to pretend to serve as a responsible doctor who was focused on the life of

his patient and thus, he highlighted the so-called socially sensitive character of the intervention in order to purge the coup of its cruel and violent political character[17] (Gürbilek, 1992, pp. 70-71; Ahıska & Yenal, 2006, p. 43, p. 336). Aside from this traumatic and critical interpretation of the post-coup period, others view this period as a time during which democracy is built, human rights developed, civil society organizations proliferated, and integration to the global markets was achieved. According to this viewpoint, while the military intervention is legitimized by referring to the violence in the streets, unstable economic structure, and polarization in the political arena; to a large extent the coup is seen as a necessity to restructure the political and economic system. Thus the post-1983 period is considered as a period of demilitarization and transition to a new system in which the regime is civilized and democracy is consolidated under the neo-liberal policies (Kılıç, 1998, p.92).

Throughout the 1980s, there was a conscious erasure of memory and breaking of connections with the revolutionary political atmosphere of the 1970s. The 1970s were located as an anarchic period which opposed the liberal and individualist discourse of the 1980s and terms such as labor, worker, and exploitation were one by one erased from social discourse and memory (Ahıska & Yenal, 2006, p. 379). After the coup, political parties were closed down, the politicians were banned from political activities, curfews were applied, social life was interrupted due to the harsh precautions that were taken in order to assure stability, and an absolute insecurity and a traumatic anxiety emerged in society. Many people underwent a grueling and inhumane imprisonment process which caused deaths, psychological disorders and societal level fear. While this fear was fed by organized state violence and suppression, it deepened with the

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[17] In the first notice of the National Security Council, the military intervention of 1980 was explained as follows:

> Turkish Republic has been exposed to ideological and physical attacks in the last few years due to with the provocation by of the enemies inside and outside of the country… The destructive and divisive elements focuses increased their activities at a drastic level… Instead of Kemalism, reactionary [*irticai*] and perverted [*sapık*] ideologies were produced and, in a systematic and traitorous way, all education institutions, administrative system, judicial bodies, organization of security, institutions of workers, political parties and lastly our citizens were exposed to attacks and come within an ace of division and civil war.

economic crisis and uncertainty in the social life that stemmed from existing ambiguity even for the near future (Ahıska & Yenal, 2006, p. 40). Undoubtedly, the 1970s were the years of high social and political sensitivity. However, this culture was considered dangerous both by the public and the state. The public had paid the price of social and political sensitivity with severe losses and therefore was in fear. In other words, the violent memories and experiences of pre and post-coup period had created a collective memory in the public that would support the depolitization process. On the other hand, the state also did not want to face a second ideological threat which would challenge its authority. Therefore, after the coup of 1980, the main aim was raising an apolitical generation and creating an apolitical society. While politics was taken out of daily life, popular culture was used to fill the gap which was emerged due to the departure of politics from daily life. Popular culture not only prompted the popularity of certain products and activities but also prompted certain behavior patterns, point of views and thinking styles. As a part of this shift in society, success became the rising value and the measure for the level of success was measured around material capital, making "money" central to all interactions and (self)evaluations. In this framework, money represented the happiness of buying and consuming. While earning money was idealized as the main target; as a reflection of this ideal, the society aimed to earn more, spend more and consume better (Bali, 2002b, p. 61; Lüküslü, 2009, p. 122; Navaro Yaşin, 2003, p. 231). (This is seen very strongly in my interview with Yağmur, among others.)

Consumption emerged as a central issue in the post 1980. After the coup period consumption was not only spending money anymore; at the same time it was a satisfaction, pleasure, happiness and even a life-style. In this formulation while people were buying something, they were also obtaining the attached meanings which were the prescriptions for reaching aforementioned feelings (Ahıska & Yenal, p. 56; p. 62; p. 72, 2006; Şahin, 2005, p. 160). Money was not an object that brought along status in the 1970s; however, this belief did not last for too long. The culture of saving which had shaped the 1970s left its place to the culture of consumption that tempted people's passions in the 1980s. From this aspect, the consumption hunger of the 1980s was a transition from being against waste to consuming more and thus producing more waste (Gürbilek, 2001, p. 16; Lüküslü, 2009, p. 124).

Moreover, by means of the technological advances; cheap, fast, easily spreadable and distributable mass production was possible. This situation created an increase in the number of available products and a market which was in search of the consumption of these goods. In this equation, people had to be transformed into consumers who were persuaded with the belief of the consumption need in order to sustain the production and consumption cycle. In order to stimulate that need, cities became giant open air shopping malls with thousands of shop-windows, cafes and avenues that exhibited these products. However; that transformation was not enough unless consumption was a cycle which promoted re-consumption. Due to that reason, the concept of fashion came to the forefront and shortened the life time of the consumption products with the promise of being in line with contemporary fashion (Ahıska & Yenal, 2006, p. 370; as cited in Şahin, 2005, p. 159). That situation paved the way for the emergence of a capitalist trade industry which devoted itself to the organization of people's weaknesses for consumption.

How did this industry organize people's weaknesses? At this point media played a major role by gaining another function: it taught the masses how to be a consumer and kept the consumption stimulation alive through advertisements (Bali, 2002b, p. 58).Why was this consumption necessary? Transition to free market economy was considered as a necessity as a part of Turkey's articulation to the world economy. The sustainability of the market economy depended on consumption. Therefore, consumption was promoted by the market in order to be able to be fed by people's expenses. In the process of consumption, the media was the catalyst that internalized this process for the masses with its wide accessibility and availability to audiences. On the one hand, the media made people feel that they had the choice to consume what they wanted; on the other hand, it created a perception of selection freedom among multiple options determined by market dynamics (Şahin, 2005, p. 160; p. 167; Wuthrich, 2010, p. 225). Thus, new consumption patterns spread with discourses provided by the media. Mass medium had the power of enabling cultural transformations and the creation of popular culture. While the media informed and educated people in order to consume by broadcasting; it also produced a discourse that supported the global capitalist market structure in order to sustain consumption. In a sense, the media swayed masses by combining the product, service and ideology (Şahin, 2005, p. 159).

3.2.2. The Interviewees

Gönül: The Search for "Non-Ideological Leftism"

When Gönül looks at what she inherited from the left, even if she is happy about what she learned from the movement, she also harbors some regrets about the movement and even criticizes it. In our interview, she said that the leftist movement changed the course of her life, making her into another person. On the positive side, she made new friends and had new experiences. Her final calculation is that her participation in the movement was negative: "Since I had a criminal record, I could not even more forward in my career. I always wanted to be a professor, but I could not. I quit a master's program and only completed it later on." Even if she had the opportunity to accomplish her dreams in later years, her career was irreparably scarred, and she could not find the courage to pursue her academic ideals. Through all her regret, I cannot determine whether she finds the leftist movement or herself responsible for the failure of her career goals. As she asked me, rhetorically:

> Can you please tell me what the chance was of me finding a job as a philosophy graduate? I could either be a teacher or an academician. During those years I could be neither of them. Okay, I accept that I could not be at the point where I should in my career. But this was what I could do.

One can sense here a feeling of guilt, an attempt to rationalize her integration to the capitalist system. In this context, Gönül justifies her participation in a system that she tried to change with the message that "there was no other way". When I asked her directly if she considered making an effort to change her life rather than (more passively) accepting the changes to her life, Gönül told me about the background behind her transformation:

> The rules of the game changed in a single day. The day the rule changed was September 12, and the incident that changed the game was the military coup of 1980. The movement dispersed. Nothing remained. While being honest, courageous, sharing, kindhearted, and defiant was important before, now the amount of money in your pocket suddenly became important.

She also underlined the realities of daily life, saying that one needed a home and a job to survive. Then she made a clarification: "This was not related to the changed priorities, this was related to the conditions of Turkey in the 1980s." In her story, when

the rules changed, she had to become a part of the system in order to adjust to these changes.

The necessity to adjust to new rules, meanwhile, derived from the trauma of the event: Gönül defined the post-coup period as one in which all her hopes, loved ones, faith, and comrades disappeared. It was a time which she described as "losing everything and everybody you know. A time period in which you give up your comrades in order to protect them". The fears of arrest by the police and of causing her friends' arrest prevented Gönül from meeting with her friends. In order to continue with her life, she said, she wiped the slate clean and did not see her friends for 30 years. Here, the coup emerges as the reason for the rupture of friendships and the terminator of strong ties. Thus, she summarized the reality behind her transformation as follows:

> You are left alone with absolutely nothing left to your name. It is so painful because you are not ready to face all these realities. You have to live a life you had wanted to change. Unfortunately, when you cannot change it, it changes you.

Gönül's change involved her integration into the capitalist system. Though, in our discussions on ideology, Gönül still described herself as a leftist, she also adds that she lost her faith in the ability of mere "good will" to save the world. She and her colleagues' dreams of revolution in the 1970s included an armed struggle, something about which she now has significant doubts. She expressed a simultaneous loss in her motivation to chase after ideals deriving from a strong sense of their futility:

> You can think that you are pursuing a great thing. However, 'they' [i.e., the state, foreign powers and intelligence services] manipulate you. Technological advances enable them to watch your every step. I do not want to be considered as paranoiac or as conspiracy theorist. [She stops here and thinks for a couple of seconds] Also this should not be perceived as a kind of "learned helplessness.

Here Gönül implies that she and her comrades tried but were unsuccessful in bringing about change, something which led her to believe that powerful actors in society would never allow people an opportunity to change the system. Nevertheless, she still insisted that there will be a transformation in the world system, something she said was independent from all ideologies. Gönül said she no longer trusted any "–isms", saying no movement could be free of egos and careerist concerns. Ideology could be

perfect on paper, she said, but people are the actors who would actually have to carry it to fruition.

For her own part, Gönül defined herself simply as an "anti-racist leftist" (a phrase which in Turkish, unlike English, does not include the suffix "-ism"). Gönül did not believe that she went through a major ideological and social transformation: "I am still a leftist because I do not evaluate being a leftist as doing certain things." She does not have to be active to be a leftist, merely to feel sympathy with its ideas. She described herself as a wiser person, less idealistic but more sensitive, developed, and aware of what can actually be done. Moreover, her field of struggle changed, too. Gönül said that she realized many things that she disregarded during the 1970s, like protecting the environment, were more worthy of attention today.

When I asked about the economic changes and her process of integration into the capitalist system, Gönül said that even if people "became capitalist", they preserved their socialist aspect as well. She said she does not view her career development and earning money as a deviation from her former ideals. Rather, the way profit is used is important; Gönül even considered a transition to capitalism as a force for good that could enable one to contribute to the development of young generations with financial and social capital it had provided. Here, she said that there was no need to exalt the past and transform it into an untouchable or an incontestable taboo. Settling an account with the past, criticizing it, and accepting the inevitable change, feelings and beliefs were normal for her. In this context, we could say that Gönül viewed the acceptance of a transformation natural; what was abnormal would be a disregard of experience.

From this aspect, Gönül considers her transformation as an inevitable and nonhazardous type of change. She asserts that she still protects the soul she had during the 1970s and defines her luxurious house, car, and life style only as physical appearance: "This is what you see from the surface; but, I know what I have inside me. I am still the same free girl. She is still alive. This is why I still respect myself." After this comment I ask whether her present job conflicts with the ideals and viewpoint of the Gönül of the 1970s. Suddenly she becomes sad and reluctantly accepts the existence of the contradiction in her life. However, then she legitimizes this contradiction saying that she quit her job when she was in a very good position. She claims that she protested the

system in a way that was peculiar to her. “I have always criticized the system. I have never behaved in a classical way. I told the bad parts of the system to my students and then we tried to find a solution altogether.” At this point she implies that if you become a part of the system without losing the awareness about what it is like, your actions may be regarded as a struggle against the system.

Engin: “Justice, Not Leftism”

Another one of my interviewees, Engin, did not want to categorize his current ideological stand, since he said his ideology did not fit any of the classical definitions. His main principles are being libertarian, egalitarian, and just. He defines his justice concept as opposing the enslavement, exploitation, and homogenization [*kimliksizleştirme*] of the people. However, apart from all these, he cannot identify himself as a leftist since the definition of the left is relative. According to Engin, a coup officer, a revolutionist, a nationalist, and a liberal can also define themselves as leftists based on their perceptions of the left. Due to that reason, he does not want to stick to the “-isms”. He says that he has conflicting ideas with every ideology but if one evaluates him by taking the main concepts of the left into the consideration, he sees himself as a person who can be defined by the left.

At this point of our conversation I ask about his process of integration to the system. He accepts that Engin of the 1970s does not support the status of Engin today: “I had never thought of a life in which I had a family and children.” There is an Engin in front of me who had always dreamed of himself as a warrior who would change the world. His current life is safe and stable whereas he was in an absolute adventure, action and danger during the 1970s. In this context, Engin confesses that he lives a life that young Engin could never visualize. Then he adds: “Engin in the 1970’s cannot accept this new lifestyle; because this one is out of his imagination.” Here I ask him if he feels uncomfortable about his integration to the capitalist system or not. He says no and claims that he has never been “mentally” integrated to the system. This statement immediately reminds me of a quotation from the movie Robin Hood: “You might take my body, but you can never take my soul.” Unfortunately, I think aloud and mistakenly say this sentence; but rather than get angry with me, Engin starts laughing. He says that

my quotation was a perfect explanation for his situation. Then he starts explaining his rejection of mental integration:

> My relationship with money is a bad one. I do not value money and do not care about the ownership of property. Money only makes sense since I have children. Only for their future or to ensure their safety, I care about money.

Whatever the reason, we see the axial shift in terms of the position of money in his life. He legitimizes the position of money through his children's needs. He does not earn for himself and he still does not give importance to money but it does not change the result: He makes a good living through his integration to the capitalist system.

Engin informs me that he has changed in many aspects. For example today, he does not believe in armed struggle anymore and considers it as a last option when there is no option for self-defense. In his framework, if one uses violence to make people accept something for a reason apart from defense, it does not work:

> Violence does not solve anything; rather it makes everything more complicated. I also forwent the idea of forcing the society to do something through a top-down or bottom-up pressure. It was wrong to try to impose the system in our mind to all social strata regardless of their class. I advocated a proletarian dictatorship without considering it as a dictatorship or maybe I believed in the necessity of this dictatorship in order to reach the absolute freedom.

He implies that at these years he lived in a dream world or in a wonderland that lacked objectivity. According to him, what made him change was the years passed. When he was in the leftist movement, he was a young boy of 16 who was trying to materialize the revolution, now he is a mature family man with different priorities.

Fatih: A "Modern Dervish"

Similar to Engin, Fatih does not label himself as a leftist. Being a leftist is a very general identification for him that depends on how the left is defined. In this context, he is a "freelance leftist" who still rejects ownership of private property: "I live with a luggage as a tourist: always ready to leave and without personal attachment to any particular place." I ask if this independent and non-attached person is a lovable man for the Fatih in the 1970s or not. He smiles and sincerely wishes: "I wish he would have met someone like me". He does not consider himself as someone who conflicts with his

political convictions in the 1970s. He does not deny changes in beliefs and faith in the revolution and the deviations from the target of the 1970s. However, now he is in another platform of struggle. He believes in something different in comparison to the 1970s and pursues it. What he chases is not a socialist revolution anymore. It is a nameless struggle. In his own words, it is an orphan struggle without any past, future, dependence, and relation. He says that when you are inside a movement it is both an emotional and a physical entrapment. For this reason, in order to protect his objectivity, he wants to be independent. If this is a story of struggle, he as a "modern dervish" (his terminology) is the hero.

As a modern dervish, he tries to keep his disconnectedness to the capitalist system. He defines this process as a conscious preference and then admits, smiling like a little boy: "I tried to integrate at some point, it did not happen. Definitely, it does not happen". By a trial and error method, he decides that even if he wants to be a part of the system, the system does not accept him. Even if he criticizes his friends because of their integration he also confesses that he attempted to do the thing he criticized.

Tayfun: The Trauma of Reintegration into Capitalist Society

The following two stories are closely related to the competing visions of the post-1980 period described in the introduction. Among my interviewees Tayfun is the first interviewee who openly indicated that he still supports the use of armed struggle. In his opinion, if you want to change something, you cannot do it without guns. In his story of the 1970s, the use of armed struggle was a defense tool against the counter-guerilla and fascist attacks. He explains why he preserves his logic for today as follows: "If you want to rebel against something, on the one hand you have to defend yourself and on the other hand you have to struggle against the state." Therefore, to provide the sustainability of this process the use of arms has a huge importance in his narration. However, we should not think Tayfun as a person who is still loyal to the same ideals at the same level. Tayfun has also undergone through many transformations during his leftism journey. For example, he does not believe in organized struggle anymore. The hierarchical organizational structure and discretionary decisions made by the central committee of the organization undermined his belief in terms of continuing the struggle within an organization. Nevertheless, he underlines that the belief and ideology was

right but sustaining the struggle under an organizational structure was wrong since the organizations "got stuck on primitive issues" (egos, careerist concerns, hierarchy, authoritarianism, discipline obsession and so on). He argues that the main struggle should have been against imperialism not towards the personal interests and ego based concerns which he considers as the zones of impasse for the movement.

Tayfun defines his reintegration process as a traumatic experience. After his imprisonment, when he returned to İstanbul, he encountered a drastic change. Nothing was the same; the people and the streets were different. The old friend groups were fragmented; the city was more crowded and full of new buildings. There was almost nothing which had remained the same at the end of five years that he spent in prison. It was not the world that he knew and this unfamiliarity caused a shock. At that point, he decided to be realist and positioned the revolution as a far probability for Turkey in his mind. As a part of his new ideological framework, he returned to the university and finished his studies. Then, he completed his military service and married a woman who did not have connections with the leftist circles. Here his emphasis for his wife's being an apolitical woman attracted my attention and I wondered why he chose an apolitical person to marry. However, he gave an evasive answer:

> My wife loves me a lot, I know that and I love her too. But it is… I mean I did not think about our marriage a lot. Of course I thought. I thought a lot. I decided by thinking. It was not a swift decision.

He made these confusing remarks and stopped. Even if I could not understand what he meant I could not insist for an answer because apparently, he did not want to talk about this topic. At the same time, it was an emotional moment that he was talking about his feeling of failure in terms of integration to the capitalist system. Thus, I let him continue with what he wanted to talk about and he kept on telling his story where he resumed:

> I could not keep up with the process. I see my situation as an economical recession. I still could not get rid of the residues of that period [the 1970s]. Indeed, in order to develop economically you have to sacrifice some of your values. I cannot integrate into the capitalist system. You have to cut and throw your past away. Then, you can integrate. You should easily tell lies, you should flatter, and you should reject personal relationships with the poor in order to earn money. I am an engineer. I have the knowledge and I should put my knowledge

> into someone's service. I have to tell lies. I should say "if he does it for three liras, I can do it for two liras". People are doing this but this is against my non-competitive nature so I cannot develop economically. When you cannot develop economically, it reflects on your personal relationships. You have to sacrifice some of your interests since you do not have the budget for them. You cannot go to cinema, you cannot eat out. This has a negative effect on your life; because, you have to share this deprivation with your family.

Here we see his guilt feelings stemming from feeling of imprisoning his family to share the consequences of his choices. His perceived inability to integrate into system or his rejection decision in terms of integrating to the system is binding also for the people around him. He implies that he suffers because of this feeling. This situation sounds like a burden that preoccupies him as he tells his story.

Along with introducing the preservation of the values as an obstacle for integrating into the capitalist system, Tayfun at the same time explains why he could not integrate into capitalism in relation with the transformations that the world underwent during those years. In his narration, after 1980, a new era started and capitalism cruelly attacked freedoms. Tayfun regards this process as "normal" since it was impossible to create a new world concept without narrowing down the rights and freedoms of the classes and groups. As a result, a new world order was created by ruining the balance in the world. Under the domination of the capital concept instead of communities, individuals came to the forefront. However; "the individual" could not come to the forefront with arbitrary characteristics:

> Specific characteristics were exalted and imposed on the individuals. Then, the individual acted in accordance with the format that was installed to her/him. The prescription was simple: Unless you behave like that, you cannot be like this. The individual absorbed these directions and transformed into another person.

Tayfun sees himself unsuccessful in terms of behaving compatible with the "format" that was the key for integration. However, he also accepts that he and his comrades had a format during the 1970s. I say "the format of Deniz Gezmiş" and he smiles and says yes. This format which sounds like a program uploaded to a system is the responsible actor of his disintegration. Even if there are some minor changes in his viewpoints, he underlines that his core ideologies are still the same. This is why he defines his present-day self as a person who could be loved by the Tayfun of the 1970s. He does not deny that he wanted to be a part of the system but even if he had tried, his

integration could not occur in the post 1980 process: "Even if I tried to be a capitalist from time to time I failed. This is true, I failed. In fact, I could have done it, but it did not work."

Metin: Rational Acceptance of the System

Metin approaches the post-1980 period more positively, telling the story of a successful integration without denying the privileges of his present condition. He defines himself as a successful lawyer who went through an integration process in terms of being a part of the capitalist system. Moreover, he considers this transformation as a rational transformation or being in accordance with the requirements of the era. He defines himself as a free market advocate but not as an absolute liberal. Social policies are an important part of his ideology. He does not have any problems with the capitalism as long as competition is kept under control through anti-monopoly laws. Within this framework, he evaluates the developments in the post 1980 period very positively. Nevertheless, he too rejects having gone through an ideological transformation. Since integration with capitalist system is an inevitable necessity for him; he does not think that it is an obstacle in front of sharing leftist ideals. This is why; despite his integration he emphasizes his stand as "leftist".

When Metin sums up his ideas, he explains that he has a unique leftist ideology which cannot be imprisoned to any of the existing political parties. However, he still defines himself as a leftist without any change from the 1970s, even more leftist since he keeps his revolutionist soul, equality and justice values. According to him, what changed is only the method he defends to reach the ideal: "Getting stuck in the solutions that prescribe "one way" is like foundering in quicksand. To go one step further there is a need to make a clean break with the past and stop discussing it." In this formulation, discussing the past keeps it alive and focusing on further glories to make a deep change is impossible without forgoing past glories. Here we see how Metin rationalizes his erasure of the leftist past. He is aware of the fact that in order to integrate into the system that he rejected, first he should transform the ideology that forces him to reject it. Therefore, he develops a unique ideology that will not conflict with present day Metin.

He defines this ideology as a struggle for the democracy independent from class relations. He dreams of political parties that can represent all kinds of interests and defends parliamentary struggle alongside active and non-violent street struggles. In this context, what he proposes is a dynamic struggle process that has both parliamentary and civil dimensions. Today he is completely against illegal organizations. The rejection of armed struggle and carrying on struggle in the illegal platforms are two issues that he accepts as changes in his perspective. However, he rejects a drastic ideological change and does not consider his economic transformation as significant. In his narration, economic transformations resemble acting according to the requirements of today. Moreover, he thinks that the socialist determinations of the 1970s related with economical issues were wrong or incomplete:

> Sharing something according to everybody's needs is problematic since needs are unlimited. In addition, competition is a necessity to push the society. The Soviet type of socialism became unsuccessful because it demanded people earn nothing and work for someone else rather than their personal interests.

Metin expresses that he does not find this approach and the application of it to today's world practical, pauses for a second, and then continues with a smile: "I know they will call me a liberal and a capitalist when they read my sentences."

At this point, he does not reject his capitalist stand today. He is just uncomfortable with using the word capitalist as an insult. In fact, even if he calls himself a capitalist, he assumes that he has the same "soul" as before, with modified ideas. The metaphor of "the same soul" emerges in different parts of our conversation as a port he approaches to rationalize (or minimize) his transformation. To put it in other words, he always uses the "same-Metin assertion" to prove that there is no intra-personal conflict. Therefore, he alleges that he is compatible with his past.

Despite his claims to have adopted a "humane capitalist" worldview, Metin still considers today a transition period on the way to an ideal classless society. In order to reach it there are "one hundred steps" and today presents "the tenth step". However, this view of history as a constant, one-way transition conflicts with his previous claims regarding his notion of the past and history as a "completed stage". In the beginning of our interview, he proposed considering the past as a completed, expired event. He even

used the expression "taking a clear break from the past and looking forward in order to proceed" but in the discourse above, he spoke as a person who still believes in the revolution. Also, there is the guilt feeling of living according to capitalist standards. He considers today as a transition period where the concepts of money and class are preserved. However, this is a temporary preservation; at the end of the transition these notions will disappear. This is why he explains that his current stand does not betray his leftist past. His integration into the capitalist system represents a pragmatic acceptance of the current situation while awaiting the fulfillment of an "inevitable" classless society.

Mehmet: The Continued Necessity of an Armed Struggle

Mehmet is the only interviewee who rejects any kind of transformation and defines the changes in his ideas as the "strengthened versions" of his previous thoughts. In this context, Mehmet's ideas about armed struggle are still more or less the same: arms are a necessity since they are the only tool that can create a change at the social level. As a part of this idea, he asserts that none of the movements can be successful unless they include armed struggle. Also, he does not display any ideological change in his political stand. He still clings to his past and rejects the notion of his becoming different. Therefore, if Mehmet in the past is a leftist who deserves five out of five in a scale that measures the volume of the leftism, today he evaluates himself as a leftist who deserves 25 since he developed his worldview during the past years.

He is proud of his past and keeping his leftist part alive despite the people who see the participation in the movement as only a part of being a student: "After completing your education, what is expected is giving up the faith in the leftist movement and directing your life in another path." He explains that he did not do this, and according to his framework, the ones who did this became successful if the determinant factor of success was earning money. Here seeing leftism as a student's hobby and then continuing life in an apolitical platform emerge as factors that enable a soft integration into the capitalist system. However, as I said previously Mehmet did not or could not do this, and he explains the consequence of this situation with his own words as follows: "If you do not or cannot give up your faith in the left, they start labeling you as a traumatized individual."

Mehmet frames continuing the leftist struggle as a trauma in the eyes of the people; because, it refers to living together with a perceived failure. Moreover, continuing the struggle means the protection of the leftist values; hence, the rejection of being capitalist by exploiting people in order to earn money. He claims that due to his values, he could not and cannot be successful in business life. He says that being successful requires being cruel, competitive, and shrewd, but he is a person who had absorbed the values of equality, justice and communality of the leftist movement. He believes that since he prefers his values to integration into the capitalist system, he cannot earn money and says, smiling: "This is my reputation [*nam*]: the best engineer with no money." His leftist pride controls his life and he is sad because of people's criticisms and sarcastic words:

> Everybody mocks me. The question is why a person like me becomes like this. I would have been a boss or the biggest name in the sector. But I could not. I am like a worker and they also say I am like this. Nobody sees me as normal. They approach me with pity [*acıma*], what a pity that I am like that.

Murat: Pragmatic Passivity

Interestingly, Mehmet's stereotype of students who would give up leftism with their graduation corresponds to Murat's own story. In Murat's story, his leftism emerged as a part of the studentship and ended with graduation. However, even if Murat confesses the lack of his political activism after graduation, he displays a significant rejection in terms of accepting the capitalist tendencies in his current life. When I directly ask about his transformation, he does not accept that he underwent a capitalist change. Moreover, he insists on defining himself as a socialist. The only criticism he has for himself is his lack of activism today. He explains that what led him to "passivity" was graduation from the university, getting married, and taking the responsibility of his wife and children:

> You have to earn your own money. During the university years there is no need to think about these issues since your family supported you. However, after graduation you have to direct your energy towards earning money rather than struggling for the revolution. In addition, there was the fear that stemmed from the coup regime and its harsh policies in those years.

Linking his withdrawal from active support of the leftist movement to graduation signals the association of leftism with university and studentship. Marriage

refers to a rupture in his life; because, it represents an increase in his responsibilities and marks his transformation from a "student" to a "family man." With the increase in the responsibilities on his shoulders, he rationalizes his effort to earn money. "Violence" in his story refers to state terror in the post 1980 period. The risk of dying or undergoing severe tortures emerges as deterrent factors and they cause continuous fear and anxiety. However, even if Murat addresses fear as a reason for severing ties with the movement, he also frames this fear as a noble fear, which relates to his anxieties about what would happen to his family and their future if something bad happened to him.

Even if Murat counts these reasons for his withdrawal from the leftist movement, he does not link them to any ideological shift that he has experienced. In fact, he does not believe that he has experienced ideological shifts. Since he strongly believes in his commitment to socialist values, he ignores the conflict in his ideas and his life style. When I ask him what would be the reaction of Murat in the 1970s if he saw that Murat today constructs buildings with the workforce of the laborers, he says that it is not an unexpected thing for Murat in the 1970s to do these things as a construction engineer: "It should not be a shock for Murat, he knew what I was studying. I am not doing something irrelevant." At that point I intervene and ask about the apparent contradiction between the socialist values that he claims to preserve and his employment of workers; in other words his contribution to class-based social relations. He asserts that there is no contradiction here and adds that the important thing is paying the workers what they deserve in return for what they produce.

Yağmur: The Rejection of Consumerism

My interviewee Yağmur drew attention to society's desire to consume, calling it the opium that silences society. She based this idea on her own transformation: "After prison, my friends who were not involved in politics did not want to see me and ran away from me not to label themselves as a leftist in the eyes of the police. I turned into a feared person." This situation caused social isolation for Yağmur and under these conditions she assumed the best strategy for survival as transformation. However, she defines this transformation not as a total change, rather transforming in some aspects in order to fit into the social context. According to Yağmur, these transformations were not incidents that were independent from the changes in the post-1980 period. She sees a

correlation that she defined as non-coincidental between the social changes and the state led changes. This is why in her framing what we live today, is what is planned by the state and wanted from us to live 30 years ago. In this framing, while the state paved the way for the conditions of today; people were transformed into individuals who became addicted to the system by overconsumption and hence lost their ability to raise their voice under the effect of artificial pursuits.

Yağmur sees herself as outside of the consumption trend in society; as a matter of fact she does not have the required money to be a part this trend. She considers her integration as a necessity which could not be successfully completed. Therefore she calls her situation as an "imperfect" integration:

> My relationship with money is not strong. I still deny money being the central focus of the life. I never aimed to earn big money. I did not make any concessions to earn money. It is enough to have money that would enable me to buy this cigarette.

As an extension of this observation, she thinks that Yağmur of the 1970s would not reject her; even if there is a reduction in the level of her political activism. She is a passive left sympathizer today in comparison to the militant Yağmur of the 1970s. At the same time, she sees her integration, even if it is imperfect, as a reason for the reduction in her activism: "I am a part of the system too. Being totally out of the circle is impossible. I cannot be an outsider. I have two children inside the system."

However, after uttering these sentences, Yağmur feels guilty and changes her discourse towards defending her current political performance. Even if she confirms that she is not an intensely politicized person anymore; she is reluctant to accept the ongoing passivity in her life: "Okay, maybe I am not in the streets. But there are tons of ways. Today I paint and draw pictures. My rebellion is hidden in these paintings." Thus, we see a Yağmur who reflects her ideology to art and uses art to express herself, instead of street demonstrations.

At this point of our interview, I ask her how she defines herself ideologically. She calls herself as a socialist whose line is uncertain [*çizgisi belirsiz sosyalist*] and continues to explain the changes in her view of life:

> During the 1970s there was a standard way of dressing which consisted of boots, *parka* [coat] and jeans and you were categorized based on what you wore. The old Yağmur was a person who got stuck in appearances or images but today's Yağmur is aware of what is important is what you have in your head rather than how you look. Also I am more realistic and consistent today. I am not a dreamer who chases an ideal anymore. To be honest, I also do not have the courage to chase a dream anymore.

Here we see that she codes the revolution as unrealistic and pursuing the revolution ideal as an inconsistent action. In this context, pursuing the revolution ideal conflicts with her pseudo-capitalist life; because, although she does not accept full integration, she lives in this system as a part of it. At the same time, she does not see herself in a brave position that could resist against the system by tying hopes to the dream of revolution. What killed her courage was her prison experience and what silenced her was the torture that she was exposed to:

> I learned how to be silent in the prison. Resisting talking is the best strategy when you are in prison. You had to stay silent. There was faith in the movement and we were conscious. The ones who did not talk got out of prison early; the ones who talked stayed in prison and received longer sentences. Because, if you talk, the things you say comes back to you. You have to say "I did not do anything." "Then who did?" they [the military officers and the police) ask. You can say "I was alone." or "I was with this person." If you tell the person's name, then s/he says that Yağmur already had done these things.

Zuhal: A "Petit Bourgeois" Lifestyle

Like Yağmur, Zuhal also says that she does not chase ideals anymore. However this sentence is not a confirmation of an ideological shift. While defining her social class as "petit bourgeois" and describing her ideology as "left"; Zuhal does not accept any transformations in terms of her leftist values; such that she introduces herself as a person who has lived in a consistent manner without conflicting with her beliefs. In this framework, what has changed is her personal development. She indicates that she has made cultural investments to herself and has developed herself intellectually throughout the years. This is why, Zuhal in 2011 is a wiser, more realistic, more selective and rational individual who does not chase after dreams. Here the word "dream" represents the revolution ideal and she does not reject that she does not pursue this ideal anymore. However, by emphasizing her commitment to leftist values, she stresses that what she gave up is only the revolution ideal.

In Zuhal's story too, the preserved leftist values are located as a hindering element in terms of her relationship with money. Undoubtedly, this does not mean that she rejects the necessity of money to survive. What she underlines is keeping money at the periphery of life as a secondary issue. Notwithstanding, she also supports using money as a tool to fulfill personal tastes and interests. In her life, there is a living standard in which she can engage in her hobbies. Here there is a contradiction: She uses money to satisfy her desires and claims that she keeps money in the periphery of her life. However, she also implies that her living standards are at the core of her life, then how can the medium that provides the materialization of these standards be positioned at the periphery?

Among my interviewees, there is a general tendency to reject the importance of money in their life and Zuhal's story is in line with this common orientation. Protection of the leftist values always emerges as an element that is used in order to vindicate their present relationships with money. Developing relationship with money and valuing money is considered as surrendering to the capitalist system and since my interviewees resist accepting their integration to the capitalist world, they always rationalize and legitimize their current positions. The protection of the leftist values and soul and preservation of the sensitivity towards the issues in the world are the topics that are underlined and repeated in order to prove their non-compatibility with the system.

İlyas: "I Am Not a Leftist Anymore"

In contrast to this general tendency, İlyas openly declared his close relationship with money at the beginning of our interview. In conjunction with this confession he did not deny the change in his privileges:

> I still believe that there is a constant inequality in the society. But I make this assessment independent from any right or left ideologies. This is a determination made by a bourgeois person which is me. I am not a leftist anymore. I do not think that I am a leftist or socialist. However I also do not think that the things I believed in and wanted in the past were wrong. I mean we wanted the right things. I still say I wish it could have happened. However for today I cannot know to what extent I can relinquish my life standards for a struggle or to take place in a struggle.

İlyas sees the inequalities as undesired but inevitable consequences of the current system; however, he does not fight to terminate these inequalities anymore. He is already unsure as to what extent he can sacrifice what he has. Today he is a well-to-do doctor with high standards of living. Undoubtedly, the present state of İlyas's luxurious life is beyond the imagination of İlyas of the 1970s. He states that if it was possible, his past self would criticize him for transforming into another person and scrutinize what happened to him. However, he says that it is hard to protect loyalty to the same values, after quitting the movement. That's why he criticizes the people who continue the struggle on a soft platform without organizational ties. According to İlyas, this is an easy and a joyful way of "saving the county while drinking beer". Sarcastically, he assesses this event as lying to oneself or deceiving oneself and defines the people in these kinds of softer struggles as "intellectual masturbators, non-revolutionaries or pseudo-freedom fighters" far away from society.

İlyas implies that at least he is honest enough to confess that he is not leftist and revolutionary anymore. He does not attend any protests or demonstrations; and his new relationships are independent from any ideologies. The only thing he does as a political act is voting "with zero leftism" and he underlines that he is happy with his new life. While he is courageous enough to admit his transformation, what he criticizes in other former leftists is salvaging their conscience without the required devotion to revolutionist values. According to İlyas, if revolution is a circle, you have to be at the center. If you occupy the periphery and contend that you are still leftist, this is hypocrisy, insincerity, and nothing more than self-satisfaction.

Seyhan: "Pretend Like Nothing Happened"

Like İlyas, Seyhan also admits her capitalist transformation and ideological shifts without hesitation and resistance. First of all she defines today's Seyhan as a person who is more aware of her personal needs and desires, unlike Seyhan of the 1970s. She explains her participation to the leftist movement as a social status problem. Today she does not see any means in being a part of this type of movements since she is purified from collectivist understanding that disregards individuality. She feels like part of a small unit in a world in which she looks through an individualistic window. What she sees is a Seyhan at a certain standard of living in a peaceful mood and enjoying

what she is doing. She confesses that she has completely isolated herself from politics. In her current life which has no relation with any ideologies or political ideas, she seeks happiness independent from any kind of political institution.

Why did she forgo the process of seeking collective happiness and start running after personal happiness? What forced her to review her ideology and to shift from extreme activism to extreme passivism? Seyhan says that she was one of the few people who took an active role in the movement after the 1980 coup. However, when the movement dissolved, her comrades fled abroad and she was left alone. Since she was a part of the illegal branch of the faction she belonged to, she lived an underground life in which she only chased the revolution ideal in absolute isolation. Due to illegality, secrecy and security concerns, she did not have any connections with her relatives and friends. Therefore after her comrades' departure to other countries, she confides that she felt abandoned to her fate. She describes this feeling as "lonely helplessness". At this lonely stage, she thought about what she had risked her life for and thus the integration process began. She decided to withdraw from the movement, turned back to a legal and apolitical life, and found a job.

Her integration to a life that was far away from ideological struggles was a traumatic experience. She started her journey with the aim of materializing the revolution and ended it in a small accounting office with disappointment and few expectations. Living a life that she never dreamed was a painful process. She explains that she felt like she was a standard and ordinary person. This is why her survival strategy was forgetting her disappointments and restarting everything as if nothing had happened: "You have to draw a line to the revolutionary past. You have to pretend like nothing happened related with it. You try not to think about these things. In fact, this is not a conscious thing." In order to draw that line with her past, Seyhan tried hard to adjust to the system and then went abroad to make a softer transition. She aimed to restart everything in an environment where she was a complete stranger. At that point being a stranger was an advantage that prevented other people from judging her and made it easy for her to forget everything.

However, after a while the relief that stemmed from her being in a foreign country left its place to other feelings. The first sentence in her diary when she went to

Sweden was feeling like a newborn baby, but after a couple of months she wrote "wherever you go, you carry what you have in your mind with you". She explains that it was a hard, traumatic process in which she experienced many fleeting emotions: "I left Turkey with the feeling of escape under the instinct of saving my life."

When she turned back after almost 20 years later, she was neither a leftist nor a revolutionary. She admits that Seyhan in the 1970s would not support her stand today; the old Seyhan might even blame the new Seyhan for being a part of the bourgeoisie. Today's Seyhan finds the movement and the actions it took wrong. She sees a mistake in the nature of the movement and articulates this as follows:

> My uncle was a former leftist when I was an active militant so we were in conflict all the time. One day he said: Seyhan you try to materialize a revolution but your mother and aunt did not know how to read and write. First materialize the revolution at home, teach them how to read and write. First free these people, rather than Turkey.

Today she believes that while trying to liberate the society; she and her comrades ignored the captivity in their own circles. With her current perspective, she criticizes the methodology that they adopted in order to materialize the revolution and finds it primitive and deficient. In the 1970s, while her uncle regarded her participation in the movement as a youth adventure or a misdirected passion, she objected to him. However, today, she agrees with her uncle's insights and confesses that she even does not have a political ideology.

Then we come to the "why" part of our conversation. I ask why she lacks a political ideology and she says that there is no political organization in today's Turkey that can represent her ideas. I ask why she finds all organizations as unrepresentative institutions. Seyhan explains that there is no political organization that reveals her aspiration in terms of being a part of it. Her political activity is limited to voting for CHP [*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi,* Republican People's Party]. Here, voting CHP is framed as a social responsibility since she does not have any better options even if it does not completely match with her worldview. It is more of a matter of taking a stand against the rising religious wind in Turkey. Although she claims that she lacks a political ideology, she has a worldview that she qualifies as utopian. In this view she dreams of a world of fair representation in which nothing is forbidden. She still

preserves her equality and justice values; however, she also adds that she cannot and does not devote herself to an organization and there is already no organization that would be worth her devotion even if she considered devoting herself.

Nehir: The Trauma of Breaking Bonds

Like most of the interviewees, my last interviewee, Nehir, asserts that she looks at the world from a leftist perspective and therefore, based on this presumably unchanged reality, she does not see any ideological transformations in herself. In her view, what she has experienced are ideological modifications by sticking to her leftist essence, rather than absolute transformations: "I did not change my beliefs, but I changed the way I utter and defend my beliefs. I still believe that the left is the best for humanity." She explains this methodological change in her beliefs by experience and knowledge accumulation:

> I learned to see the whole picture. I always step out of the frame. While evaluating an incident I always think about the "who, why and how" aspects of the issue. I also consider the invisible players so I do not accept the things as they are presented.

While considering today's Nehir as an actor who is more critical and rational in her evaluations; she believes that she does not conflict with her values in the 1970s. Nevertheless, she also admits that her present lifestyle is out of the imagination of Nehir in the 1970s: "This status, this life style… I had never thought about it. I could have died in the struggle. Death was a part of what we were doing. That's why I did not make any long term plans." Here she defensively links her new life's being out of the imagination of the old Nehir, to the death risk that blocks doing long term plans rather than possible conflicts between her new life and the values of Nehir in the 1970s. This is why she does not think that Nehir in the 1970s would judge her for living a bourgeois life in the first place. However, when I directly ask, she admits that there is contradiction between how she lives today and how she dreamed to live 30 years ago.

Economically Nehir is a person who can be considered in the upper middle class. Already she does not deny that she feels economically independent and secure. While defining how she reached this welfare level by working hard, but without exploiting and dominating people or currying favor with someone; also she emphasizes

that her educational background and her integration to business life as part of the rising financial sector has made her adaptation easier. At that point she makes a clarification: "I do not want to be considered as a person who reached this economical level by sacrificing her values in the 1970s." Due to this concern, she underlines that she preserved her values and basic principles, and by doing so she remained at a certain position in business life. Then she adds: "If I had given up my values, I would have reached higher positions."

With this sentence she implies that she integrated to the capitalist system to some extent by sticking to her principles. The integration is a painful process in Nehir's story even if it is a successful one. She says that during her integration she had to witness the cruel structure of the capitalist system that she attempted to change with revolutionist ideals: "Even if you have a good position in business life; you cannot stand the rottenness in the environment." This situation causes a desire to abandon everything. In fact, this is the feeling which leads to transformation in order to survive. Here the logic is attuning to new rules in order to preserve the existence in the system. Then in this cycle one considers the positions as the means, not as the aim. Since a position is a means, thus, one does not feel guilty while receiving the salary that the system pays her/him in return for one's service.

Even if Nehir identifies the integration process as a painful experience, she also tells that despite this reality her transformation was a soft one. After the dissolution of the movement with the coup, there was a recovery attempt. In that period, the organization assigned her to a key position with the aim of reuniting the old cadres. However, she rejected taking this responsibility, since she did not find struggling with this organization and structure viable. Thus, her negative answer already caused the breaking of the ties with her faction. Undoubtedly, losing the ties with the organization at this point meant losing her reason to live and the social environment she had. In this context, it was a traumatic experience to a very large extent but since she had no connection with the organizational structure, this situation also made her integration easier. She counts the factors that hastened her integration as follows:

> I had lost my belief in the organizations so I was aware of the fact that I had no other option other than integration. So I started my career in the finance sector.

> This became a catalyst for my integration. I prepared for the exams, passed them and started working in a bank. This preparation and studying process filled the gap that had emerged as a result of the passive life after the coup. Also, I continued my relationships with some of my friends from the faction in this traumatic process. We supported each other and shared our pains.

Post-coup period represents three things for Nehir: Firstly it is the breaking of bonds with the organizational structure and movement, secondly it is the integration to the capitalist system, and thirdly it is a traumatic experience. I have already discussed the first two aspects of this period for Nehir; here I would like to look at the traumatic aspect of the post-coup period. Nehir defines this period as traumatic not only because she lost her social setting and the institution that she felt self-belonging; but also because of an absolute guilt that caused huge pains in her life. In an environment where almost everybody was experiencing torture in prisons and under custody, Nehir felt the burden of not getting caught. She suffered for being out of prison even if none of her comrades blamed her for this: "I felt as if I was incomplete. As if I am out of the events. Everybody got caught. Not to get caught was like guilt." From this aspect, integration to the capitalist system and building up a new life emerges as a lifesaving defense mechanism because it helps to forget. In the new system her new identity was independent from that of "comrade Nehir". She views this new identity as a necessity because she got stuck between embracing a dead ideal and its revolutionary ghosts and staying alive by accepting the new conditions. Thus, in order to survive, she chose the second option and her story of change began.

3.3. Transformations in the Revolutionary Ideal and the Media

In accordance with the discourses of my interviewees, the faith in revolution appears to have been preserved for most of the interviewees, even if they do not call it a "revolution" anymore. Undoubtedly, there is an undeniable and visible change in the idea of revolution. In most of my interviewees' narration, there is the emphasis of "social change" rather than a revolution; because, revolution is framed as an old dream or a notion that belongs to adventurous old times. They believe in transformation or change and find their occurrence inevitable. However, the method for changing society that they foresee today is different from the revolutionist ideal of the 1970s.

The change in my interviewees' perceptions of revolution occurred after the suppression of the leftist movement after 1980 and took place because of several elements in society. The media was one of the strongest elements used to create a sense that the left was on the "losing side". The press had been dominated by the dead bodies of the youngsters who were punished since they were revolutionary; and hence the projection of being revolutionary in the collective memory was coded as dying. The price of believing in the revolution and pursuing the revolution dream was death and this price served as a factor that mobilized the end of the leftist adventure by the militants to some extent (Gürbilek, 2001, pp. 26-32).

Undoubtedly, the state was carefully underlining the prospect of death and had substantial control over the media to convey this message. The 1982 constitution made the Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) totally dependent on the state. During this state-run media period, regulation and control were the main concerns in order to follow the flow of information. Since the only medium, TRT, was kept under full control of the state, there were no other actors that could report alternative news. Therefore, without any obstacle, the state acted as the absolute authority that could, for the sake of the individual, determine what the individual should and should not know, filtering all the news with an overlapped strategy of censorship and official ideology propaganda (Gürbilek, 1992, p. 53; Kahraman, 2007, p. 133; Wuthrich, 2010, p. 225).

If we look at the media during the 1980s, Gürbilek (2001) has pointed out an explosion in the number of losses of life shown in the media. Photos of the dead were presented with a subtext of a morality lesson and to instill fear. This presentation depicted what one would find if s/he did not follow the rules of the state. Death thus was a deserved tragic end with the message of "the state and police capture you; there is no place to hide." Death punished those who opposed the unbreakable rules of the state and what should be drawn from this lesson was death's being a disaster that stemmed from being on the extreme political sides or deviations from the social norms and rules. Therefore, death was presented the bitter end and the cost of doing the wrong thing, rather than the inescapability of mortality (Gürbilek, 2001, pp.26-27; pp. 30-32).

To be more precise, in the early 1980s, television news was preoccupied with the capture of youth activists and militants, the invasion of organization houses, and the

execution of organization members. From that perspective, the junta government used the media as a propaganda and legitimization tool. The media also created fear and anxiety due to its violence based content in the news (Ahıska & Yenal, 2006, p. 253). The dead bodies on the screen were the proof of the result that one could encounter if s/he behaved against the state's will. Therefore, "the public will" was the loser against "the state's will" and the attempted message was the superiority and strength of the military. Combined with the image of violent defeat in the media, the actual instances of imprisonment, executions, and torture made political apathy the safest option (Ahıska & Yenal, 2006, p. 40).

Change, Not Revolution

As noted in the introduction, two groups of respondents were of two different opinions on the potential for revolutionary success. For example, my interviewee Engin, who can be placed in the first group, explains his current understanding of revolution with the discourse of "international change." He states that social change can only be materialized when the larger masses are persuaded to change the existing system with the dissatisfaction that stems from the rottenness of the existing system. Persuasion emerges as a key concept in Engin's discourse because he sees this step as a prerequisite of social change. Only after the majority of people are convinced of the need for transformation, the required will, effort, and determination can be brought together in order to create "voluntary change" on a large scale. He sees this voluntary change as an evolutionary process which can be defined as the result of the structural malfunction and destruction of the existing system. According to Engin, not only Turkey but the entire world will realize the necessity of a change. Thus, Engin believes in the revised form of the world revolution and calls it as an international transformation that results from the constant consumption, destruction, and exploitation in the system.

Fatih, a low-income handicraftsman, definitely agrees with Engin and explains the inevitability of a change in the world order as follows:

> We look as if we try to end all life on this planet. If there was an outsider s/he would write a certificate of insanity to the world. We are living in madness and it cannot continue like that. There has to be a change.

However, this change that Fatih defines is no longer a socialist revolution. He asserts that he does not believe in revolution that he dreamed of in the 1970s but at the same time he repeats the ideals of the revolutionary ideal of the 1970s: "I cannot name this change, but the world has to get rid of nationality, race, and class." He asserts that his previous faith in revolution was a blind faith that did not take into account other competing ideologies. Therefore, he considers the revolution as an extremist and radical dream of the 1970s. According to his discourse, today is not the age of revolutions anymore. He still hopes for change but not at a local or national level. His dream is an international change that is not imprisoned on any ideology or religion cell. While dreaming of a new world order, he defines it as nationless, stateless, raceless, and borderless.

In Fatih's discourse, we also see that he tries to be careful while talking about the revolution. By experience he asserts that revolution can also be a dangerous concept. Therefore, he does not support the classical revolution anymore and as a reflection of this situation, he does not want to entitle the order of the world in his mind:

> Names are always noble and bright. And the revolution is also a noble word. But good intentions always have the risk of causing evil things too. I witnessed that good will and the idea of liberation of the peasants and workers sometimes came along with killing in the name of revolution. If the revolution is materialized it will provide an uncontrollable power to the revolutionaries. Look at Cambodia. Look at Stalin; he was no different than Hitler. These are terrible. I no longer identify with any –ism.

With these sentences he underlines the risk of exploitation of power, the blindness that stems from over commitment to the revolution dream, paranoia and skepticism that consider all other ideologies as usual suspects. In this frame, the revolution accompanies various risks. There can be violence in the name of revolution and the reason for it can be ensuring the new system's stability, oppression of the opposition, cleansing of the residues of the old system, or creation of submission. Therefore for Fatih, the age of revolutions is over and now it is the time of transformation and change at the global level.

Like Fatih, Metin defines today as a time where classical revolutions are no longer possible. When I ask Metin what caused the changes in his belief in the

revolution, he explains that he never supported a radical revolutionary method and has always been a non-classical revolutionary. This is why he claims that his transition from advocating armed struggle to a parliamentary struggle was a soft change. Then he said something that made us both laugh: "Factors like getting older, rise in the blood sugar and increase in blood pressure made this process easier." Here we see that he considers the armed leftist struggle as a youthful adventure in which you can risk your life. Now he is a mature individual and advocates safer and more conventional methods of political struggle. In addition, we see that not only his ideas related with the method of struggle but also his ideas about the old enemy, the capitalists, have changed significantly. Metin indicates that his determinations related with the capitalists were wrong: "Me, who was against the agreements done by the capitalists, today thinks that the capitalists were more intelligent and more aware of the importance of a warless and armless society."

At that point I cannot understand what Metin means; because even if I try to keep it secret, my expectation is hearing something against the capitalists. I experience a small shock without showing him and I ask why he considers the capitalists to be more intelligent. Then he clarifies his point as follows:

> An armless and warless society was a society of no exploitation. This society was defined in the socialist international and the political system of it was named as communism. Today all of the international agreements start with this armless and warless society concept. Therefore; I believe that some change is achieved at the societal level. The world came closer to communism; however, the communists did not come close to the capitalists.

In this framework, which suggests that capitalists come close to socialists; social transformation will be realized by the upper classes. He does not consider the working class as the catalyst of the revolutionary process anymore and positions the bourgeoisie as the initiator of a possible change. Without answering the question how, he claims that the differences in the world will be eliminated; as a result of this process, the leaders, ethnicities, religions, and classes will disappear. The classless society which was aimed by the socialist revolution is still viable for him. However, in his narration the feasibility of this idealized structure will not be reached with a socialist revolution but with a bourgeois democratic revolution.

I find his transition from the workers' socialist revolution idea of the 1970s to the bourgeois democratic revolution idea of today confusing: Why would he openly claim to advocate something he once rejected? However, he does not accept my criticism and restates that he had always been a non-classical revolutionary who approached the leftist movement with a critical lens even in the 1970s. While explaining that he supported the universal rules of the democracy without getting stuck in the proletarian dictatorship; Metin depicts himself as a person who always criticized and rejected the dogmatic concepts of Lenin and Stalin: "Accepting these concepts with absolute commitments were quicksand. My revolution motto was 'everything can change' and I still support this motto independent from any movement." I was neither persuaded nor satisfied with the answer he gave me; moreover I could not exactly understand what he meant but I did not want to hurt him by insisting on talking about this topic. Insistence could sound as blaming, yet my intention was learning his current viewpoint without judging him.

Seyhan was a very open person in terms of describing her political stand. As a part of this openness, she explained her distance from politics without hesitation. Today she defines herself as an apolitical individual who wants to focus on her life rather than social concerns. In the absence of the belief for the left, she does not have the dream of changing the world anymore:

> I have no energy and time to devote to pursuing the dream of revolution. I am now 49 years old and I have a limited lifetime. I want to spend rest of my life in a meaningful way and away from adventurous dreams. I even do not go the May 1st demonstrations. My withdrawal from the leftist movement is at that level and I openly say it.

When I directly ask Seyhan if the revolution will happen one day or not, she vacillates for a couple of seconds and suggests that she believes that the system will continue as the way it is. In this framework, there would be technological revolutions but no classical revolutions even if the capitalist system transformed into something else. What Seyhan believes in is change; however, this will not be a change through a socialist or communist revolution; rather it will be the result of an evolution. In this change, the determinant factor will not be the Marxist and Leninist ideologies or

prescriptions. However, Seyhan does not have insights about the nature of the new system after such a change; she only defends the inevitability of evolution.

Like Seyhan, İlyas also does not hesitate to define himself as a capitalist today. When I ask what he thinks about the revolution from his current perspective, İlyas confesses that he does not believe in the materialization of a revolution with armed struggle in the near future. According to him, the revolutionaries, that is, the socialists lost their power and the advances in technology enabled the sovereign powers to ensure their security with more modern methods. This is why even the attempt of revolution is a distant dream in today's world since the revolution was a technologically lost war. İlyas does not see a struggle like that of the past as feasible anymore, and he does not have any predictions for the fate of the revolution in the long run. What he expects is evolution. However, he also admits that it is possible that he cannot dream a revolution since he went through a severe ideological and economic transformation. He explains his loss of belief as follows: "Individuals create the psychology and ideology of the situation they are in. Probably I am doing the same thing."

When I ask how he gave up the idea of the revolution, he says that first of all he lost his belief in the indestructibility of his organization. The police decoded the members from the most protected castle of the organization: the central committee. After witnessing that even the people in the core of the movement could not sustain their struggle, İlyas lost his faith in the revolution. He thinks that the movement could not protect its supporters. At that point, he confesses that he personally felt the existence of a life in danger; however, the movement did not care about his concerns. This was a breaking point for him where he questioned his sense of belonging and perception of considering the movement as a family. When the family concept that he had attached to the movement collapsed, so did the image of revolution.

Secondly, he mentions his father's influence on his withdrawal from the leftist struggle. His father was a rich industrialist who was extremely opposed his son's participation in the socialist movement. Therefore, his father tried all ways to dissuade him from the leftist struggle. In the end, after seeing all talks were futile, instead of shouting out, his father tells İlyas this sentence in a calm way: "You cannot be a revolutionary with your father's money. You cannot make a revolution with my money.

This is why I will disinherit you if you continue to be in the movement." This was an influential threat for him and even if he got extremely angry due to his father's reaction in the past, today İlyas confesses that his father was right. From that aspect, the left and leftist ideology was an adventure that was financed by his father. It seems that İlyas's social class made it difficult to truly internalize the dream of classless society.

However, as we talk, İlyas gradually falls under the influence of the old days and gives up his position of defending the impossibility of the revolution. He asserts that the world cannot continue like that because if the situation continued as it is, the world would turn into a science fiction studio that consisted of only slaves and masters. Suddenly, he says "…or the revolution should be materialized". İlyas who has recently talked about how he lost his belief in the revolution suddenly starts talking about the materialization of the revolution. Moreover, he does not only mention the revolution as a probability but expresses the inevitability of the revolution. It is as if the İlyas of the 1970s has come to our interview for a few minutes and defends the revolution again. He lights up a cigarette and says: "Capitalism will terminate itself. The deadlock that stems from not being able to sell what you produce will end capitalism. When the system cannot solve its impasses there will be a shift towards a worldwide socialism."

Here, İlyas contradicts himself and speaks as a person who still preserves the ideals of the 1970s and we discuss revolution, socialism, and war against capitalism with the excitement of the 1970s. However, after all this talk, his final point is: "I give 0 point to my leftism out of five. I am not a leftist anymore."

Among my interviewees, the most unexpected answer regarding the issue of revolution comes from Zuhal. I ask whether a revolution is possible or not in today's world and in fact I mean a socialist revolution. In response to my question Zuhal says "Yes, I still believe that five percent of the population can change the society with armed struggle or without armed struggle. My expectation would always be a socialist revolution. Unfortunately, now I also expect an Islamic revolution." Zuhal still believes in the revolutionary ideal but this is a scary ideal for her right now, because she foresees the risk of an Islamic revolution. She utters her fear for an Islamic revolution and states that if this five percent which attempts social change is composed of radical Islamists. While socialist revolution is not a feasible expectation for her since there is no five

percent in Turkey willing to devote itself to the revolution ideal, in her conceptualization, the revolution has become a negative word associated with an Islamic revolution.

A Possible Socialist Revolution?

In contrast to those who do not believe in the possibility of a revolution, there is a second group among my interviewees who still stick to the revolutionary ideal. They still claim the feasibility of a revolution. If we generalize, they are the ones who define themselves as the "disconnected" individuals, except for one interviewee. Here disconnectedness refers to the inability of integration with the capitalist system and their low income level. Among this group only Fatih rejects the possibility of a revolution due to his disappointment with the movement. The rest claim that one day the revolution will happen and still consider it attainable.

Mehmet, who defines himself as "an engineer who does not earn money", is still loyal to the revolutionary soul of the 1970s. In his story, the 1970s represent bright memories, excitement of changing the world, and being a part of the adventure. He evaluates his current life as unsuccessful according to capitalist paradigms. Maybe because of this reason, the revolution is still a tempting and real ideal for him. If the revolution materializes, this will terminate the factors that make him unsuccessful in a capitalist world. He still believes that one day the revolution will happen even if it does not take place in his lifetime.

> The revolution should not have to be instant. It is a process that happens every single second, step by step. This is why; in fact we are in a dynamic revolutionary process and one day, when the revolution is materialized, there will be a brotherhood/sisterhood [*kardeşlik*] of the people in an equal and just society.

In line with Mehmet, Tayfun also asserts that we are in the age of revolutions. He expects to see the creation of a classless society, because he believes that cruelty in society can only be overcome through the termination of relations of exploitation among classes. This is why he emphasizes the need for a socialist change. Tayfun believes in the power of the revised proletarian ideology and thinks that if it can be the common denominator of the classes, socialism can be a reachable dream. His

prescription is materializing a revolution by inverting the existing system and destroying the power supplies of the capitalists. I ask if this is an easy thing to do or not. He answers: "It is an ideologically easy but a practically hard goal. We should not lose our hope. If everybody believes in it, then the revolution can come true. Continuing with the existing system will end in an absolute disaster."

3.4. Conclusion

> Broken lives… All I see is broken lives. All my friends in the movement, they could not find good jobs. We could not mend our ways. We could not be the people we hoped we could be or that other people expected we would be. We are 50 years old and we could not become anything. We lived just for the revolution. It was our aim and ideal, so you live the most efficient years by chasing this ideal. Then you go to prison and lose years. You have a criminal record. When you get out of prison you are 30, you have nothing and you can never have something later.

Undoubtedly, these sentences are quite dramatic. With these sentences, Yağmur summarizes a kind of disconnectedness from life, an inability to create attachment with life. She defines a vicious cycle in which one feels noncompliant with capitalist society: Being a real part of the system that you had wanted to terminate is impossible in her narration because on the one side she defines conscience and socialist values and on the other side she underlines obstacles created by the system that prevent integration. In this formulation, there is a system that does not embrace you and also you are already too unsuccessful (in your career) to embrace the system.

I have shown in this chapter that there were concrete aspects of the social and economic transformations in Turkey after 1980 that both prevented some (former) socialists from integrating fully in a capitalist economic system and resulted in psychological consequences like alienation. Relationships in the post-coup era were largely defined according to financial standing. Özal period's neo-liberal political and economic reconstruction policies initiated the era of opportunities in which one could take opportunity through free market. While the idea of "striking it rich" became popular and spread among the society, this new trend also brought the notions of individualism and the individual's free will to define her/his own path. Individualism and self-centeredness were idealized. Earning a lot of money with the least effort was adopted as the motto of the period. In this view, success was equated with the amount of

money you earned and spent. Kozanoğlu (1992) defines individuals in this period as those who existed with their fears. While in the 1970s there was the fear of getting shot and dying; in the 1980s this fear was replaced by the fear of not being able to be rich and consume (Bali, 2002b, p. 34-35; Ahıska & Yenal, 2006, p. 43, p. 56; Kozanoğlu, 1992, p. 17).

At the same time, the 1980s were the reaction years to the poverty, starvation, and social and economic crisis of the 1970s. The transition to the liberal economy and free circulation of foreign goods not only signaled a change in economic policy but also a change in lifestyles. After the market's occupation with goods that symbolized high civilization, technology, and welfare, in a sense, consumption was a way to reach all these standards. Earning money had been the ultimate goal that determined one's success. Therefore, one had to know how to make money with practical means if s/he wanted to be successful. In this context, this "practicality" [*işbitiricilik*] was referring to the necessity of breaking the rules, regulations and law to some extent in order to get what one wanted. As a part of this mindset, personal relationships with fellow townspeople [*hemşehri*], deputies, fellows, relatives, and communities gained importance as the catalysts of the practicality. The main motto of the period was "having an eye to the main chance" [*işini bilmek*] and the value loss that came into view due to this motto was naturalized and legitimized by positive but superficial concepts like success, practicality, broadmindedness, courage, and cleverness (Bali, 2002a, pp. 206-207).

As a part of this perception change, values and priorities in the society changed shape as well. Competitiveness, entrepreneurship, risk taking, individualism, openness, flexibility and attuning yourself to the instable market conditions were the rising values of the new period. Business life progressed with the increased investments and entrance of multinational companies to the market. A job market that needed a worker class that could fulfill the demands of the private sector with the aforementioned values and qualifications emerged. Thus, in relation with the market's need, a worker class came into existence and constituted a middle class that transformed its cultural and intellectual capital into economic capital (Ahıska & Yenal, 2006, p. 62). The new middle class was made up of capitalist entrepreneurs and professionals of the new

economic system. These professionals and entrepreneurs adopted similar life styles and consumption patterns in order to create class cohesion and thus the members of this new class came closer with a class consciousness. While the adoption of similar tastes and sharing of the same life styles among the members of the new class were pointing towards togetherness under the common denominator of class unity; at the same time it was leading this emerging class to introversion. Since each class was trapped in its own borders without having contact with the rest, spatial segregation and income gap between classes became more visible (Ahıska & Yenal, 2006, p. 316).

This changing historical framework affected my interviewees' perceptions of the past and of themselves. While those who achieved membership in these introverted [*dışa kapalı*] classes enjoyed their integration into the system, those who fell out of this structure were left with the feeling of isolation and exclusion. Thus, a traumatic reality emerged: the cost of being political can be higher than one expects. All of my interviewees, even if they were integrated into the system or not, still live with that paranoia, as a result, nobody for example wants to see their children as a part of any ideological movement similar to the one in the 1970s. Their current belief in revolution can thus be considered more superficial in comparison to the past, despite their claim of commitment to the ideals of the 1970s. The revolution is now a dream that was expected to be materialized by other groups, the ones who do not belong to their family, since the idea of revolution still represents lost friends, personalities, hopes and futures. In other words, there is a collective memory that coded rebelling against the state and attempting to change the existing system as a dangerous and fatal adventure. Therefore, joining a movement today was considered as a retrial of a lost war and a struggle simply to be lost again. This mindset creates a protective instinct among parents who do not want to see their children as a part of any ideological struggles. They are not against political activism; however, they definitely oppose illegal activities beyond legal borders.

For some of my interviewees, the heavy prices they paid for participation in socialist organizations had become a reason for rejecting the revolution notion while for some; these prices are the reason for still believing in the revolution. According to the first group, if the revolution could not be materialized despite the soul of the 1970s, it is

impossible to materialize it with today's realities. For the second group, there is still the feasibility of the revolution with the hope of seeing it after all sacrifices and losses. This expectation is like an emotional entrapment. Since they invested a lot to the revolution ideal and lost much in the name of this ideal, they want it to come true. However, at that point a contradiction also exists because they cannot provide a concrete reply to the question of "who will materialize the revolution". They do not want to see their children in a political struggle; hence, the expectation is the materialization of the revolution by the children of others. If we look at my informants' potential to materialize a revolution, we see that the ones who still have connections with political structures do not have a revolutionary dream anymore and the ones who claim to preserve the revolution dream have already given up active political struggle as part of an organizational structure. They are like "freelance leftists" who are independent from any kind of illegal or legal unit. Even if they utter their ideas regarding the revolution as something that might eventually happen one day; belief in the revolution is questionable and blurry. Therefore, rather than a belief, the revolution concept sounds as a dream in their stories.

For example when I asked my interviewee Gönül if she would supports her son's active involvement in a movement like hers, she said, "Certainly not." Gönül explained she believes that the world is not the same world in the 1970s:

> I know the technological advances. Every step you take is known by them (the state, intelligence services and foreign powers). I am a mother and it is really different to be a mother. I do not want him to be a part of all these things.

She said that she becomes happy when her son behaves "extraordinarily" [*sıradışı*] however; this extraordinariness comes along with a concern for legality. Her son cannot be a member in a leftist organization because she says that she knows the consequence which is the termination of all hopes. She accepts that this could be a learned helplessness; nonetheless, she prefers a less dangerous struggle for her son. He can play an instrument, compose a song, sing, construct a building or draw a picture but he cannot be in the streets to change the system. Now she supports silent and safe demonstrations, therefore, she attends legal protests and is concerned mostly with environmental issues.

Engin who believes in a transformation rather than a revolution, opposes violent forms of struggle when the issue came to the involvement of his children to an ideological struggle. Like Gönül, Engin states that he does not want his loved ones to be harmed. His children can be in any of the legal movements as activists, but not as militants. He remembers the processes that he underwent and life-threatening dangers that he averted. He wants to protect his children from all these things. According to Engin, on the one hand participation in such movements is very instructive; on the other hand, these environments are very risky. He told me that in this kind of chaotic environments, the place where you should stop can be blurry and one can stand alone only with her/his conscience at some point. Due to that reason; there is a huge risk of doing wrong things that one can regret later. He ends the conversation like a typical father: "I trust my children but what if the people around them are not as honest as my children."

Even Tayfun, who speaks openly about his loyalty and faith in revolution, does not want to see his children in the movement. Interestingly, in his discourse, being leftist and in active struggle can now only be a hobby since Turkey is not the same Turkey it was in the 1970s. He is a leftist who paid the price of his ideals by spending five years in the prison. He does not want to see his children suffering or undergoing the same processes. According to his current perspective, dealing with politics is dangerous. Undoubtedly, he does not advocate an absolute insensitivity towards world events. The other way round; he underlines his faith in revolution and the necessity of its materialization. However, now he dreams of a revolution that will be materialized by other people not by the people for whom he cared. He feels the pressure of wasting his life because of an ideal; he therefore wants his children to prioritize constituting a comfortable life and doing their job well. After that point, his children are free to do what they want. He just wants to be sure that they do not risk their lives and futures. In Tayfun's narration, we see regret. He devoted his life to a movement and the result was staying in a prison for five years. Therefore, he wants his children to guarantee their life and then decide whether to be a part of a social struggle or not.

Like Tayfun, for some of my interviewees, there is still a certain claim which asserts the continued feasibility of the revolution. If we categorize these people we can

identify the common feature of this group as the feeling of inability to create meaningful bonds (either in a career or in a social organization) within the capitalist system. Financial standing and perceptions of welfare play a key role in their feelings of integration into the system; those with a low income level live with a constant feeling of exclusion. In these stories, there is continued hope of taking revenge against the capitalist system which has condemned them to be outliers. The prospect of revolution (the victory of the socialist "victims" of Turkish capitalist society) offers them a hope that the perception of failure in their lives will be transformed into success.

Most of my interviewees, however, do not use the word revolution with the typical meaning of capturing state power. That kind of revolution refers to an extreme and dangerous attempt and thus emerges as a notion that belongs to the adventurous years of youth. My interviewees retain sensitivity towards injustices in the world, and thus they underline the continuation of the "leftist soul" and leftist values in their political stance even today. However, now any call for change is for one on a more conventional platform: Legal protests or environmental struggles appear as new social concerns in their stories. While explaining this shift in their struggle understanding, my interviewees mentioned moments of personal enlightenment experienced since the 1980s, and how they learned to be critical and skeptical about utopian ideals. Many of interviewees were proud of this new "wisdom" and "maturity", claiming that they are now more competent in terms of understanding and evaluating their own leftist past. With this maturity, they criticize the revolutionist soul of the 1970s and question the purity of the dream of the revolution that they believed in.

In their discourse, interviewees resisted making the claim that their ideology had been "transformed" by their changed economic and social condition. Their reluctance took the form of defense, legitimization, and rationalization when they confessed their attempts at integration into the capitalist system. Why do they need to defend and legitimize their integration? Undoubtedly, here the preservation of the past and keeping it alive is associated with the respect that one has towards her/himself. Since an acceptance of capitalist economic structures might be considered by (former) socialists to be a betrayal of their ideological past, we often observe explanatory sentences which try to show the innocence and rightness of the current stand of my interviewees in life.

As a part of this discourse, my interviewees present "being a part of the system without losing the awareness about the nature of it" or "being mentally distanced from the system" to keep their leftist soul pure as strategies or even as resistance points. Moreover, there are also interviewees who accept their integration and call it a rational choice or in accordance with the conditions of the era. They do not see integration as an obstacle to leftism and claim the existence of the same "soul" sympathetic to claims of economic injustice. Therefore, what many of my interviewees assert is that they have experienced an economic integration in the capitalist system rather than an ideological one.

When I directly asked my interviewees to name their ideology, most of my interviewees hesitated to call themselves leftists. With their accumulated experience, many of them confessed that they oppose any kind of "-isms". Here, leftism and being leftist emerge as a general definition beyond membership in a specific organization, and even if they define themselves in the left, the exact coordinates are blurry. To be more precise, they see themselves within the boundaries of the left as a general framework; however, they do not talk about a rigid and solid definition for their ideology. The flexibility in defining the left has an important function here because it leaves room for an interpretation of leftism in which they still can play a role.

In all of the stories, an uncomfortable relationship with money is presented as a sign of rejection of the capitalist system. Even those who achieved integration with the system use negative relations with money as an evidence of their distance from the system, not in the sense of rejecting a career, but in the sense of "not liking" or "hating money to some extent". In addition to a general discomfort with the concept of money and property, interviewees who described themselves as outliers also emphasized their inability to earn money because of their continued belief in leftist values. In the stories of those that had difficulty establishing careers, earning money emerges as a betrayal of leftism, a finding which establishes a correlation between the preserved leftist values and relationship with money.

Lastly, we can mention the loss of belief in the organizational structures of 1970s leftism and references to the egos and careerist concerns of their leaders as reasons for the abandonment of ideological struggles and the emergence of the idea of

the impossibility of the revolution. In this perceptual framework, many of my interviewees pointed to integration into the capitalist system, while perhaps continuing an individual struggle, as the only feasible way to stay true to their old values. In their narratives, exiting the socialist movement and breaking organizational ties emerge as a turning point. In addition, many of my interviewees claimed that life events like marriage and responsibility for children also forced them to accept a non-activist lifestyle.

In each story, we see an attempt to replace the disappointment in the failure of the revolution after 1980 with attempts to transition to a new life. While some of my interviewees see their integration into post-coup society as successful and satisfactory, others find their stories incomplete and failed. The determining factor behind the group my interviewees belonged to was their relative economic success after the 1980 coup. Those who could not establish a successful career after the revolutionary years define their position as being disconnected or excluded from the system; their faith in a coming revolution is therefore stronger. On the other hand, in the stories of successful integration, interviewees most often felt the need to justify "being a part of the system without forgetting leftist principles".

CHAPTER 4: WOMEN, THEIR STATUS, FEMINISM AND INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS IN LEFTIST MOVEMENTS

4.1. Introduction

In addition to questions of ideology, practical and daily aspects of participation in the leftist movement were also an important part of how my respondents continued to think of the movement today. In an environment full of young people of both genders, for instance, questions of gender roles, relationships, sexuality, and feminism arose constantly. In this chapter, I will look at the leftist movement's rise in the 1970s from three different aspects, with specific focus on women:

1. The place of women and womanhood in the leftist movement

2. Perception of feminism in the movement

3. Intimate relationships in the movement

Based on my interviews, in the first part of this chapter, I aim to problematize the stereotypical image of women in the movement, suppression of the sexuality of

women with the discourse of sister/*bacı* and the secondary position of women as an errant service provider or a service provider of complementary tasks. In this direction, I will look at the definitions that are used for a woman (a weak, fragile or dependent actor who should be protected), the meanings that are attributed to being a woman in the movement (a peaceful, tolerant, reconciliatory, sacrificing, and renunciative comrade) and where women are placed in the discourses of sister [*bacı*] and the mother [*ana*] (a sexless comrade who is purified from her femininity).

In the second section, I will analyze the perception of feminism in the movement. None of my interviewees approached feminism positively; in fact, most of them openly uttered their discomfort. In this section I will specifically look at their reaction and the reasons for discomfort in relation to feminism.

In the third part of this chapter, I will examine the intimate relationships in the leftist movement, the influence of the organizational structures on the relationships, their sanction power and deterrence on the militants. Thus, I will analyze the concept of "love" and its manifestations in the movement. Lastly, in the conclusion section, I will look at these issues under the light of my interviewees' "transformation" and try to reflect the transformations that my informants displayed regarding the issues I discussed in each section.

4.2. Women's Status and the Perception of Woman and Womanhood in the Movement

When we look at the perception of the woman in the leftist movement, we see that the left was also an entity which was ruled by men in a similar manner in which they controlled many parts of society. Contrary to what was believed, the left was not a rebel zone that was independent from all socially accepted norms, codes and roles. If it was a kingdom, this was a kingdom where the rules were defined by men. Men were the rule makers and the determinants of the norms and behaviors (Berktay, 2010, p. 280). The image of woman was largely weak and fragile and therefore she was assumingly incapable of doing many things. As Baydar and Ulagay claim, we see the reflections of this image in the leftist movement with the mentality of women's incapacity to develop ideas (Baydar & Ulagay, 2011, p. 110). Gönül Dinçer (in Akal, 2011) expresses this mentality as follows based on her experience in the left:

> It is a well-known fact that women abstained from taking the floor in a meeting or an organization in which there were men. Even if they took the floor; it is known that they swallowed the quizzical smiles and belittling. Important duties like drawing up a proclamation, publishing a newspaper or training had been monopolized by men. (Akal, 2011, p. 171)

In one sense, while the political arena was dominated by men, at the same time there was the notion of "emancipation for women" as an auxiliary ideal in the movement; women and their problems remained as a patch, which could not be sewed to any place in the movement. Rather than terminating the inequalities woman faced, the movement contributed to the reproduction of these inequalities through the adoption of the traditional social roles. For example, despite the revolutionist soul in the movement, the division of labor at home continued to carry a traditional soul. According to Akal, revolutionist husbands expected from their revolutionist wives to do the domestic work and this point of view was rationalized by women with the idea of serving a comrade instead of serving a husband (Akal, 2011, p. 207).

Admittedly, there is clear evidence that men in the different factions gained certain privileges over the secondary status of women. The woman was a complementary element for man, submissive coworker, devoted sister and secretary of the movement with the paper works assigned to her as part of her natural responsibilities. Women activists could not raise criticism over this division of labor as they would face condemnations for not being truly revolutionary. The citation in Akal's book (2011) from Hatice Yaşar's article defines this position of "silenced woman" on the left: She is the perfect collaborator of men who paves the way for them. She is the one who undergoes tortures with her revolutionist identity and gets out of prison with her female identity as the actor who has to support her male comrades as a requirement of her natural duty. She is the sister, the mother, the server of the old comrade-new senior, and the faithful follower of her husband who has to support him unconditionally to make him think the independence of the country better, while she is dependent (Akal, 2011, pp. 251-252).

When we take a closer look at the movement, in addition to the weak, fragile, and hence useless (or useful under a strict division of labor) woman image, we encounter with the sexless and harsh representations of women or a woman figure that

holds the characteristics which are defined as “manly”, such as strength, fearlessness and courage. Besides, women mostly constituted the sympathizer base rather than that of high-level militants. The number of women activists in all factions was less than men. For some of my interviewees, the low numbers of women were related with the number of female students in the universities during these years. Since the number of women who were enrolled in university programs was not as high as that of men, the interviewees considered the relative absence of women in the movement as normal. For some, the existence or the non-existence of women was not an issue that they paid attention to since they focused on the ideology of the revolution. These interviewees were only aware of the numerical underrepresentation of women participants in the movement. When I asked questions to pursue this issue, they criticized the secondary position of the women in the movement with their current viewpoints. However, they underlined that their mind set in the 1970s lacked this critical lens, and rationalized the position that was assigned to women without questioning.

Women interviewees also confessed that, as activists, they had not questioned this auxiliary position. Strikes, worker movements, studentship, organizing the public to support the leftist movement, demonstrations and protests occupied their daily lives and left no room to think about the problems of being a woman in a male dominated society. While the focus was on these issues, demanding freedom for women was considered as too personal or as a bourgeois concern.

According to Fatih, women were usually at the sympathizer level, their numbers in the movement were low, and usually they were not in key positions. While saying this, there is a visible embarrassment which tries to justify the unfair conditions that women came across. Fatih and some of the other male interviewees emphasized the positive effect of women on the movement. Yet, statements such as “They were very good girls.” and “They always made good decisions.” were usually followed by a “but”: “They were also very harsh.” Fatih explained that it was very scary for him to witness women using violence as he perceived them to be “naïve”: “I always dated girls outside the movement. I always hated the aggressive and violent women. Therefore, I distanced the struggler and the attacker woman model in the movement from myself. They were scary for me.” Even when I reminded him that women were pressured to behave like

that, it was a futile attempt such that his answer signaled the traditional role that is expected from a woman: “I have always expected complaisance and politeness. They should smooth down the sharp and provocative ideas. When I could not see this, I was disappointed.” In this narration, we see the woman as a buffer zone that terminates possible conflicts among the men. Easing men’s lives is considered as a mission of women and the expectation from the woman is her absolute devotion, with submission and softness.

Tayfun also drew attention to the small number of women in the movement. However, he defended the movement against the criticisms regarding women’s low status. He admitted that the leftist movement could not develop or even attempt to develop a policy related to the subordination of women; nonetheless he did not blame the movement:

> It was a different process. In fact, we did not consider women as secondary actors in the movement. We had no time to think about these issues. The movement was not developed enough to think about these things. It was primitive. We took action before deepening.

Tayfun became nervous and sad when he started talking about these things. He took a defensive position and wanted to prove that disregarding the oppression of women was not on purpose. He emphasized that there was superficiality in lots of subjects and underlined that the ‘woman issue’ was one of them: “What we wanted the most was the revolution and we even could not develop sufficient policies to accomplish it.” He drew attention to the childish and impatient nature of the movement. Their priority was a revolution which would set everybody. When there is such a great mission, gender inequalities had to remain as a taboo. The problems of women were mostly associated with the exploitative nature of the capitalist system. Thus, it was believed that with the introduction of socialism everything would be peaceful. According to this formulation, all deviations and discussions from the main target had to be postponed to a time after the revolution.

With Zuhal’s words we look at the situation from a woman’s perspective and her words validate the existence of the woman comrade whose gender and individuality is suppressed. During our interview, she defined the woman’s status in The Progressive

Youth Association [İGD-*İlerici Gençlik Derneği*] faction as being the "sexless sister". She suggested that all her discomforts related with her faction were related to her private life. The movement had changed her life style and physical appearance, even if she was uncomfortable with getting stuck in the sister concept. Nevertheless, she offered the impression of obedience. In order to fit into the sister concept, she changed the way of her dressing, had her long hair cut and limited her behaviors:

> It was told to me not to wear skirts. I asked why. They claimed that I could not fight if I wore a skirt. I was very beautiful and attractive with my long hair but I had my hair cut too short.

Thus, Zuhal implied that there was pressure from the movement to make women adopt a certain clothing style. She explained this style as "the only costume" that consisted of pants, parkas, and boots.

Metin mentioned that he and his comrades tried to improve the position of women in their faction; however, he also added that all these attempts had not gone far beyond putting words together and making stylish sentences. Nevertheless, he did not regard this process as paying lip service. He claimed that they never ignored women since their problems represented an issue which was embedded in real life. However, his narration resembles an endowment for women: "We wanted women to have higher status, we said let's improve their status. We made sentences like we wanted to do this not because they were women, but because they were human." He summarized this process as a theoretically debated but a practically unconcluded issue.

Even though Metin admitted the superior position of men and the male domination in the movement; he did not find the betterment of women's position realistic. He gave examples from the women deputies in the parliament. He classified two types of women in the political arena: masculine women and bootlicker women, whom he defined as dysfunctional. He continued with the Tansu Çiller period, the first woman prime minister of Turkey, to show the violent behavior patterns of women who become politically active. Çiller period is a period which is famous for its violent character and harsh measures against the Kurdish issue. While showing Prime Minister Çiller as an example, Metin generalizes the mistakes in Çiller period to all women and underlines the aggressive nature of the female politicians. Like Faruk, he wants women

to bring their naive reconciliatory womanhood into politics. Women represent a fragile, peaceful, tolerant and warm assistant to men. Therefore, we can claim that according to his narration the role of women in the political movements had to be relaxing the extremes by creating a conciliatory buffer zone. In this narration we see that what is meant by betterment of women's position is actually a new imprisonment in another cell, which is the leftist discourse.

Metin identifies the status of women in the movement in ownership relationships. According to that formulation, women are positioned as possessions of men, which means, the women are defined as wives or girlfriends of a man. Women did not even have a name in the movement. She was the girlfriend of one man and she was the aunt [*yenge*] of hundreds. Metin explains that the responsibilities and duties she had taken through her connections with the men in the movement were not due to her personal skills or successes. He attributes this situation to the feudal and peasant-like understanding in the movement and calls it as one of the major impasses which still could not be solved.

When I ask Mehmet about the women's status in the movement, his answer is a reaffirmation of the secondary role of women even if he tries to reject it. He explains that there was a woman they sold newspapers with and starting from that statement he comes to the conclusion that the movement had a sufficient number. When I insisted on the ratio of women, he explains that there were a lot of women, 10 or 15 women, whom he knew and respected. This situation reveals the rationalization of the rarity of women in the movement. He believes that 10 women versus 100 men is a normal ratio. Like many other interviewees, his perception of women's role in the movement is articulated through the "sister" discourse:

> We used to share everything. We were always together. If we were planning to stay in the same house, we did not sleep in the same room. Even if they were our sisters, we did not stay in the same room with them.

The main message here is the protection of women's honor which is the movement's honor and what is underlined is not having sexual intercourse with sisters. In this viewpoint, brothers of the movement are the virtuous soldiers who never surrender to their personal desires.

In contrast to many interviewees, İlyas rejects the idea of woman as a second class citizen in the movement. He categorizes the movement between the legal and the illegal level. While the legal level symbolized the level that sympathizers were in, the illegal level represented the dangerous underground organization composed of "real militants". He argues that at the legal level, approximately 30 percent of the members were made up of women. In İlyas's classification, the illegal level was not suitable for women due to its dangerous and underground nature; therefore, women mostly showed up in the legal level. However, he explains that this did not pose an obstacle in terms of the women moving up and switching between the levels in the movement. His observations regarding the high positioned women militants were as "conflictual, radical, reckless and fearless".

While presenting the legal level as the suitable sphere for a woman in the organization structure with these determinations, İlyas's words refer to the image of women as "fragile" and "in need of protection". In this framework, being a woman in the movement is either taking place at the legal level and practicing leftism in a safe zone or taking place at the illegal level as a sexless but "manly equipped comrade" in the eyes of İlyas.

When I ask what it was like to be a woman in the movement, Seyhan thinks for a couple of seconds and then confesses that she had never considered herself as a woman. Rather she saw herself as being a part of the movement, a part of a great ideal which would be fulfilled. Here we see that her identity is shaped through the membership to the Dev-Yol faction. Therefore, she is not a woman, student or Turk anymore; she is solely a leftist. Interestingly, she underlines that being sexless was not just the problem of the women. While saying that they were neither woman nor man, she defines men also as sexless. She does not consider this situation as a sacrifice or a renunciation. Then, she suddenly asks me: "These things have never been brought to the table. Is this renunciation? I really do not know."

Nehir explains the status of women in the movement as being the service provider of complementary tasks. She links that situation with the peasant nature of the movement's development:

> The movement was not only limited to the cities, it was spread in all of Anatolia. Consequently, many of the people in the movement had grown up in the feudal culture. They tried to apply what they had seen as right in this new environment. I mean, if a man who had grown up in Anatolia sees a woman as second class citizen, he thinks that woman has to be in the second order in the movement. This mind-set did not change even if he had gone to university. These unintentional framings rationalized the passive situation of woman in the movement.

Nehir portrays women in the movement as submissive comrades who were not aware of their rights. She links this lack of awareness to the underdeveloped woman rights movement. She defines these times as the years of silence: "It was not like now; it was not common to put your discomforts and expectations into words as a woman". This silence comes along with the forgetting of identity. According to Nehir, neither in her mind nor in others' mind there was a woman identity that was associated with womanhood. Undoubtedly, this is the result of femininity's being erased by the discourse of the sister.

Yağmur structures the years she devoted to the leftist movement as a "partially stolen maidenhood". She does not direct any anger or reproach to her faction. In contrast, it is a remembering moment in which she is self-critical. She differentiates her generation from today's generation and explains that nothing, neither possession nor fashion, was tempting them. However, she claims that this was a voluntarily renunciation. She also mentions the stereotyped physical appearance in the movement and puts the blame of this stereotypical appearance on the wrong and distorted ideas created by the people in the movement: "First of all we were judging people according to their appearance. We were not aware of what bourgeoisie was. Being well-groomed was being a bourgeoisie wannabe." In this process, the simple and modest clothing style was positioned in order to struggle against the exaggerated bourgeoisie way of dressing. However, this time they create their own uniform, which is another type of standardization. She confesses that after many years she realized that not the clothes, but the ideas made sense. I ask why she complied with the movement's unwritten rules. She notices a contradiction and speaks in a low voice: "We were against standardization. We protested. We did hunger strikes against standardized clothing in prisons. Now what I see is we were also standard. We were the same, standard as well."

4.3. Perception of Feminism

The relationship between Marxism and feminism debated a lot in the past century and interpreted differently in different places of the world. According to Hartman, for the Marxist analysis that takes the relations with the economic system as the core of the social problems, laying emphasis on woman-man relations was dealing with unimportant issues. Therefore, it can be claimed that this approach in which classes were the basic unit of analysis and the woman was a part of the working class was suffering from gender blindness since it evaluated the relations between the woman and man within the narrow context of the "capitalist-worker" relations. According to that point of view, the emancipation of women depended on women's being paid workers like men and their participation together with men in the revolutionist movement against capitalism. The main struggle should be towards the common enemy which was capitalism and all the energy should be consumed to fight against it. However, this opinion was quite problematic. This formulation could not bring emancipation to women since the oppression of women did not emerge only due to capitalism. Therefore, the transition to socialism that was based on traditional male sovereignty would not end the problems of women. A society could have been a socialist society, but could sustain remaining as a patriarchal society (Hartmann, 2006, pp. 2-8; p. 36).

When I asked my interviewees what they thought about feminism I saw that they disregard this critical approach and problematize feminism from the angle of classical Marxism. As a reflection of this situation, the attitude towards feminism among both my female and male interviewees is quite negative. They either do not care or are not interested in feminism or do not like the idea of feminism. Very few of them support the feminist movement in Turkey (and only to some extent), and even the female participants are skeptical towards the feminism. For example, Zuhal was a woman from İGD faction and she was at the same time a member of İKD [*İlerici Kadınlar Derneği*, Progressive Women's Association]. She defines her membership to İKD as a complementary task of being a member of İGD which was an organization of TKP (*Türkiye Komünist Partisi*, The Communist Party of Turkey). Therefore, her membership to İKD just aimed at supporting another faction of the TKP. She states that she found İKD as an "association of housewives" and because of that reason she did not go to its meetings very much:

> Their problems [the problems of women in İKD] did not interest me. I was a student, maybe I did not think of being oppressed as a woman one day. Also İKD was politically behind İGD. While we were trying to fulfill the revolution, İKD was talking about other things.

She presents her membership to İKD as a contribution to increasing the number of people in İKD. In other words, she supported İKD just to keep it alive: "I just became a member to increase their membership numbers. I have never worked there and had no activity there." I ask whether she wanted to do something for women when she was in İKD. Here, she makes a clear distinction between her membership story and her ideas about the problems of women at that time. She implies that she became a member as a result of the pressure from TKP; therefore, this involuntary membership did not cause the development of sensitivity for gender issue. She explains that she did not care about the issues concerning women, since she did not feel as she had fallen behind men:

> I was going to be doctor; nobody would be able to suppress me. I did not care about the other women. Also, it was a very active period and we were thinking that the revolution was very soon. We were going to do it and it was going to happen. Impossible was nothing.

She speaks with the confidence of a guaranteed high social status as a doctor. She thinks that her occupational identity made her safe as a woman. Most probably under this discourse there are the traces of the traditional perception which says that the oppressed woman is the woman who is economically dependent on man. In addition, the dream of revolution and the belief that it will happen very soon, serve to block the focus on any other issues. Moreover, the leftist movement's obsession with the revolution creates hatred for the second wave feminist movement in the 1980s. Zuhal asserts her anger at the feminist movement in the following: "The feminist movement never concerned me. First they suppressed the left and then they allowed the rise of feminist and homosexual movement as a decoration or accessory." She blames the feminist movement for replacing the leftist movement with the discourse of being against the patriarchal sovereignty. In her framing, while the feminist movement touched on harmless issues which would not make the state angry like domestic violence, abortion, sexual abuse and harassment, it became visible over the oppression of the leftist movement and grew gradually. She explains that they were ready to die for the sake of the society and most of her friends died. In contrast to the leftist movement,

feminist movement is neither a wave that one would die for, nor a wave that is worth dying for. Due to her perception that positions the feminism as a movement that took the advantage of the oppression of the left and enjoyed the absence of ideologies, she does not believe in the sincerity of the feminism. Therefore, both in the past and now she considers the feminist movement as a "Septemberist"[18] movement which came out of the suppression of their struggle by the coup and because of that reason she acts reactively towards the feminism.

Contrary to Zuhal, Metin states that he supports the feminist movement and links this situation to having close connections with feminist women. He explains this situation with a cliché sentence: "I have feminist friends as well." Having feminist friends emphasizes his stand of not opposing the feminist movement. However, his approach towards feminism is neutral rather than supportive. He admits that there was a negative perception during the late 1970s and explains why he and his friends in *Halkın Kurtuluşu* faction were skeptical about the feminist movement: "We read the books written by the CIA agents and we were influenced by them. We read that when the opposition emerged in the US, the CIA inserted Islam and feminism in the leftist movements." Here, feminism is framed as a divisive ideology or a movement that has been previously used by foreign powers in order to defeat the left. This is why he had not trusted feminism which he believed a poisonous movement, was produced by the state. He confesses that he and his friends feared that the sovereign powers would continue their domination through splitting the struggle.

Nevertheless, when Metin presents his ideas about today's feminism, he wants to underline his relatively changed perception of feminism. He advocates the need for a feminist movement and defines its existence as a necessity and a natural outcome of women's rights. He thinks that women need enlightenment since they think that they

[18] While the left and right were suppressed by the state, the feminist movement found a ground to grow freely and this situation brought the collaboration accusations due to the believed collaboration between the movement and the September 12 coup. Therefore, in order to emphasize the perceived relationship between the junta regime and the movement, the feminist movement was called as a "Septemberist" movement inspiring from the date of the coup (Koçak, 2007).

will be nobody if they lose their sexuality. In this framing, he still exhibits patriarchal ideas. Feminism functions as a mediator to create this enlightenment. According to Metin, first women have to change their mind and then men should accept the difference in women's mindset and change their mind. We see in Metin's ideas that feminism refers mostly to the problems related to woman's sexuality. Therefore, he frames feminism as an enlightening movement that will assist the sexual liberation of women.

Yağmur evaluates the evolution of the feminist movement negatively. She directly says without hesitation: "I do not lean towards feminist things, woman things."I ask why and she gives an answer which makes both of us laugh: "Most probably because I love men." After this unexpected comment, I try to explain the feminist movement by telling her that the feminist movement is not based on hatred against men. However, she interrupts and switches to a serious mode. While explaining her ideas about feminism and feminists, she starts with feminism's being on the extreme edges: "They have always been on the extremes of everything. They talked about women's rights but they have always been in the cities. What about the ones in the Eastern Anatolia?" She also presents the movement as an urban movement which got stuck in the discourses of power and freedom. In a sense, she finds feminism as exclusionist and questions to what extent feminism has reached women in all social strata. At that point I compare the leftist movements and feminism, reminding her that the left also had the claim of protecting the worker and the peasantry but the boundaries of the question "to what extent" was unclear for its efforts as well. Thus, I ask if it is not the impasse of all movements that have transformative concerns or that try to influence the society; she thinks for a couple of seconds and says: "I never thought like that, I do not know."

4.4. Intimate Relationships

Romantic relationships are one of the most controversial areas in this research. Some of my interviewees suggested that they faced no restrictions in their romantic relationships as activists; others expressed a huge sanctioning power of the organization over the militants and sympathizers. However, the general trend shows that the organization presents a restrictive determinism in intimate relationships. According to Akal (2003) romantic love is a concept that is kept as a taboo based on two factors:

secrecy of the movement for the sake of the revolution and feudality and traditionalism embedded in the movement (Akal, 2003, p. 209). As a consequence of this framework, the private lives are far from being personal, rather they are communal and so there are lots of interventions in the private life from the movement which are legitimated in the name of the revolution (Baydar & Ulagay, 2011, p. 298).

When we look at the narrations of my interviewees' regarding romantic relationships, we see that it is not supported to build-up relationships with the people who are outside of the movement. Mostly, romantic relationships occur between individuals in the same faction. Most probably this commonality stems from the fear of encountering a threat to the unity of the movement or stems from a pride that positions one's faction as the one which is the best among all. To be precise, if we think about the main aim of different factions, we see that all of them pursue the idea of the revolution. What distinguishes the factions from one another is the method they adopt. Here, we see the tendency of coding your faction as the one that chose the best feasible method. According to that formulation, if you know the best method to reach the ultimate goal, the rest of the factions have to be mistaken. Thus, people from the different factions lose their attraction since they are incapable of being a part of the best method you perceived. Therefore, if a relationship emerges, it usually happens between the members of the same movement.

In addition, based on the discourses of my interviewees, we can mention the dominance of heterosexual normativity in the movement. None of my interviewees referred to homosexuality while they talked about intimate relationships. All of them defined their perception of romantic love with reference to the opposite sex. While homosexuality was never uttered as a sexual orientation, my interviewees narrated their history over a woman-man relationship dichotomy as if homosexual orientations were non-existing in the movement. Therefore, in this study, the approach toward homosexuality and the stand which organizations took against same sex relationships are missing.

According to Gönül, she and her comrades in her faction even did not look at the faces of other people outside of the movement. The outsiders were being coded as "unaware" [*farkında olamayan/farkındalıksız*] and to some extent abnormal people;

thus, the politicized ones did not perceive the apolitical ones as the people with whom they could get into contact. Besides, the people from other factions were as well not considered possible relationship partners. Gönül emphasizes that she received date proposals also from men in other movements but for her, these were unacceptable. She tells that she eliminated the people by taking into consideration only political and ideological things. Moreover, even her faction friends were able to reject the invitation of a man from other factions, since they were sure that she would also reject this proposal. Here we see that the faction acts as a mechanism that takes the initiative of decision-making instead of the individual. However, Gönül did not complain about it in order not to betray the memories of the good old days. For her, they were "the children of impatient times who were running after their dreams". This is why; she says: "It [the intervention of the faction] was normal in those times. We never questioned or never raised our voice, so I cannot blame my comrades." Nevertheless, she admits that becoming a part of the movement influenced her relationships and her decision to marry, and even played a determinant role in the flow of her life.

Fatih validates this influence and determinant role by referring to the perception of relationships in his faction. He is from the Dev-Sol faction and he explains that they considered the woman-man relationships as "*lümpen*"[19] relationships. Left ideologies and his faction constituted his whole world. As a result, he confesses that he degraded the rest of the factions and did not like them because of their political stand. Fatih underlines that the major goal was to realize the revolution. In this formulation, his faction focused on the revolution obsessively such that everything was ambiguous for them other than the revolution. Woman-man relationships were framed as a tradeoff between liberating the world and satisfying primitive sexual desires. According to this perception, loving a woman or a man is a deviation from the main goal. However, Fatih says that he had many girlfriends. He links this "luxury" to his faction's being local or being like a village far away from the city. At the same time, being a member of the organization's armed force increased his immunity to the organization's criticisms

[19] In the Marxist discourse *lümpen* means the one who does not have the social class consciousness or points to the lack of intellectuality.

about him having a girlfriend. He had the gun so the power and this gave him freedom to some extent. Nevertheless, he says that he also suffered due to criticisms related with his personal life: “My friends always told me: Brother, this is not you.”

In an environment where love is considered as a behavior that does not fit the intrinsic codes of the movement, romantic relationships were treated as crimes. In order to have a relationship one needed the permission of the organization, and therefore the organization was able to direct one’s private life since it was over one’s personality and emotions. In a sense, it is a reflection of the revolutionary ideal in real life, therefore; as the representative of the perfect dream you believed, it has the authority of affecting your life. For Fatih, relationships among different factions were not permitted. He says: “You need to give up one of them, either your faction or your girlfriend. In fact, you can also persuade your girlfriend to join your faction. However, it is a very problematic thing as well.” Here the word problematic refers to the risk of including a stranger to the movement: One’s girlfriend can have adaptation problems after the transfer, she can be treated as a spy, she can face discrimination as a member who is from the rival faction, or she can really be a spy who secretly collects information. Therefore, inviting a new member to the movement is a problematic issue.

Similar to what Gönül and Fatih say, Tayfun supports the invisible nature of love in the movement: “We always hid our love. We kept our feelings inside of ourselves.” What is different in Tayfun’s narration is the organization’s sanctioning power. He explains this suppression of feelings as voluntarily obedience to the invisible rules through personal choices. When I ask about the influence of the organization in this process, he defends the legitimacy of the organization’s expectations in terms of putting love in an auxiliary position:

> If I have a girlfriend I will try to spend more time with her. I will try to take her wherever I go... I cannot take her everywhere; there will be places that she cannot come. Therefore, you keep yourself under control. It is like an auto-control. You think that it will not go on like that, it will end very soon.

Here again we can see that there was the expectation for an impending independence, the revolution. The faith in revolution enables them to direct all their hopes and energy into the movement. All plans refer to the post-revolution period.

According to this framework, there is a short period of time left to reach the ideal; so love is an issue that can be postponed. The effort and devotion that is put in the revolution ideal is considered like working hours in an office. The main mission is the revolution; therefore, after the main mission is completed there will be office hours for falling in love. Everything is systematized, scheduled and sterilized from personal emotions. Revolution needs strong people and in order to be strong they shut down their feelings.

Zuhal, explains the restrictive influence of the movement on the romantic relationships from a different angle: The domination of villagers in the movement. What she means here by referring to the domination of villagers is the conservativeness of the movement and traditional mind set regarding woman-man relationships.

> There was the domination of the villagers in the movement. Our leaders were the puzzled villagers new to the city life. It was forbidden to be hand in hand and as lovers. When we dated with someone, in a sense we were stigmatized.

She emphasizes the rural nature of the movement and the leaders' shock when they came to the city due to their unfamiliarity with urban life. According to her, the leaders continued their relationships in the form that they had in their villages in order to protect their beliefs and values. That's why the movement adopted distant relationships between sexes which were formed under the sisterhood discourse. She explains the effect of the sister/*bacı* discourse through a tragicomic memory:

> One of our friends went to prison. He did not stay very long. He came out of prison one month later. He was also engaged with one of our friends. When he came, his fiancé was in the room as well. She saw him and said "Welcome İrfan fellow [*arkadaş*]." I started laughing. If he had been my fiancé, I would stand up, run and kiss him.

This narrative draws attention to the embrace of certain behavior patterns by the faction members. According to Zuhal, this stems from both the shyness of the leaders and loyalty to the rural social codes in the framing of the woman-man relationships. As a result, she compares the movement's rural, primitive and naive relational representation versus her urban, advanced and conversant representation. Her conclusion is that the main revolution should have been materialized in the minds of the people.

Zuhal also mentions the superiority and the privilege of the movement vis-à-vis private lives. The sanctioning power of the movement is based on the sense of responsibility that it imposed on the sympathizers and militants. Non-participation due to a personal excuse was considered as pacification. Therefore, in order not to be labeled as a soft and pacifist person, members actively took part in all actions. She explains that she hurt her boyfriend plenty of times to preserve the image of the good leftist, preferring a protest to meeting with her boyfriend. Then she adds:

> There was no time for other things. We used to go to either a funeral or a demonstration every day. They were very hard times. I did not go to school for years. We hardly had time to breathe so we even could not realize the lack of boyfriends.

Metin sees the pressure on romantic relationships as one of the obstacles in front of the movement's development. He believes that oppression of the feelings led to lots of improper sexual explosions since it disregarded the natural flow of feelings through sexual abstinence. From that aspect, he is the first person who criticizes the movement for encouraging, even if it was unintentional or indirectly, open relationships: "It was excessive freedom, it was not clear who was with whom." He classifies two edges in the movement as the ones that support sexual abstinence and the ones that support sexual freedom. The existence of these antipodal edges leads him to define the movement as "childish". He alleges that there was not a grounded and an extensive knowledge in the base of the movement. However, he does not generalize this criticism since he thinks that he makes an unjust criticism. As a result of his hesitation, he adds that the general tendency was conservativeness and restricting the romantic relationships in the leftist movement.

To some extent İlyas supports Metin's ideas and criticisms. İlyas defines the general framework as being against opportunism in relationships. What opportunism refers to here is interesting. The use of this word shows that having a relationship was coded as "exploitation" or "taking advantage of women" that's why; dating was viewed as an opportunistic behavior. He harshly criticizes the movements that support having sexual intercourse and indicates his discomfort stemming from the open declaration of these ideas in the left: "We always made fun of them. They were backslide revolutionaries, corrupted leftists. They were not the real revolutionaries." As we can

see, falling in love or making love is considered as the behavior of fake leftists. This is why, the implication here is that a real revolutionist does not flirt and love, s/he breathes only for the revolution.

İlyas defends the partial restrictions in the Dev-Sol faction, since he finds them relevant to his personal definition of "honor" [*namus*]. He says: "Life is not all beer and skittles. If you date one girl, you cannot date the second one in the following month. If you do this, the movement discharges you." He points out the severity of punishment through an incident he witnessed. He tells that one of his high positioned revolutionist fellows cheats on his wife during a secret task given by the organization in which he has to pretend as if he is married to another woman. Then, this role playing comes true and they become real lovers. In the end, his wife informs the organization about the adultery and the organization committee finds him guilty due to his malpractice. The story ends with his dismissal from the movement. Here we see the influence of organizational ethic codes and unwritten rules on the members. The organization is treated as an authorized court that one can utter her/his complaints. İlyas claims that even death penalty was practiced within the movement. However, then he indicates that he did not witness it but heard from his other fellows. Here the line between reality and fiction becomes blurry, since the story is based on deterrent urban legends. However, there is clear evidence that the movement was promoting monogamy and using psychological deterrent tools to keep militants away from love and romantic affair.

Seyhan's narrative also supports the negative attitude of the movement towards love. She defines her faction as the authorized institution, which holds the power of permitting or forbidding romantic relationships: "I heard stories about the rejection of relationships by the organization. That is why people were hiding their relationships. We were secretly in love." Thus, she emphasizes the underground nature of relationships. Nevertheless, Seyhan does not find this situation bizarre. She states that the organizational structure that they were in was a paramilitary constitution. She believes that there has to be discipline in military units: "There cannot be normal or cozy relationships. In a sense we were soldiers." She rationalizes the obedient soldier concept through referring to movement's being her whole life. She tells the movement was both her family and shelter: "At home, in the dorm. We were always in this

structure. We had no place to go out of this structure." Unconsciously, she gives up on her sexuality and downplays her female identity under the soldier image. She defines the social atmosphere in the movement as martial law. This is why; due to the extreme conditions of being in a war, feelings are suppressed. She also acknowledges that she and her friends never considered these things as oppression or problematic issues, since they devoted their energy to a very high ideal which was revolution. In comparison to the revolution ideal love emerges as a bourgeois practice in Seyhan's narrative.

At that point Seyhan's husband Osman intervenes to our interview and starts talking about his ideas regarding woman-man relationships. After explaining his intervention as a clarification which was needed since his wife did not explain properly; he starts with the sanctioning power of the organization:

> If you do something improper, they dismiss you. Why do we obey these rules? We do not want to destitute of our organization. It is our belief. We live for our people. We are ready to do everything for them and these are the rules to be in the game.

He defines the probability of dismissal as being excommunicated or an absolute loneliness. Osman's claims in terms of love relationships in the movement are harsher than the other people. He explains the absolute isolation of the woman and man from each other in public as the following: "If you want to touch the woman you love, there is folk dance; you can touch her shoulder during the dance. You can dance. That's all. There is nothing more."

Osman agrees with the criticisms regarding the feudal nature of the movement. He confesses that his rural background shaped his attitudes towards women and states that the movement's approach was similar to his set of mind: "Where we came from, we were walking on separate sides of the street with our female friends." Here he implies the match between the pre-existing prejudices, the system in their mind and the dominant ideology in the movement. However, he finds this match very problematic since it prevented them from identifying different needs and expectations: "We even could not understand each other, but we tried to change the society without understanding people."

Mehmet has a classical story in terms of intimate relationships. He says that he never had a girlfriend in the movement: "All of the women were our sisters. It was not forbidden to have a relationship; but, they were our sisters and you cannot fall in love with your sister." The sister discourse includes a strong deterrence that is indisputable due to its reference to incest and thus creates an auto-control in terms of oppressing feelings. Consequently, the relationships with women are mostly coded as sexless and emotionless struggle friendships.

In these sexless and emotionless struggles, women are regarded as the sisters of the revolutionary males. Starting from this point, Nehir criticizes the sister discourse and discusses the movement's restrictive mechanisms in terms of romantic relationships. She considers the pressure on these types of relationships as a reflection of putting private life on the back burner. All commitment was for the revolution and the revolution ideal was very demanding. While the people in the movement went after the ideal of revolution, their priorities shaped around the goal of changing the system. Then, they seemed to assimilate their identities, needs, and desires under this ideal, they rationalized and normalized the situation and they could not imagine an alternative way of life.

Yağmur approaches the woman-man relationships in the movement from a different perspective. She tells that she left from *Kurtuluş* faction as a result of her discomfort that stemmed from over romance in the movement: "I found *Kurtuluş* movement as a marriage office. Everybody was in love with each other. I found them frivolous." After her departure, she joins *Halkın Kurtuluşu* faction. This is why; with the thought of finding a person who had the chance to experience the two different factions closely, I ask her about the inter-organizational relationships. She says that there was a wrong belief which states that the relationships between different factions were forbidden. She shows herself as an example which validates this belief's wrongness. As a woman who was married to a man from another faction she explains that there were not any punishments from the organization unless the person who wanted to leave was in a key position:

> If you know the secrets of the organization you cannot leave. If you are a simple militant like me, nothing happens. The organization wants you to submit your

self-criticism. You talk with them and leave. If one of the heads tries to leave, the situation will be different.

Therefore according to Yağmur's explanation, the people who are at the top of the movement cannot leave since they have the potential to put the movement in danger through the things that s/he knew.

4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analyzed how leftist activists of the 1970s view the status of women and perception of women, feminism, and intimate relationships in the movement. Based on my interviews, I first noticed that despite the egalitarian and libertarian discourse of socialism, women in fact continued to be the carrier of "classical social roles" in the movement. As mothers [*ana*], for example, they were responsible for the upbringing and education of new socialist generations; if they were not mothers; meanwhile, they were to serve as an identical reflection of their partners' ideology. Women could be seen as errand-runners, sexless comrades [*yoldaş*], and self-sacrificing sisters [*bacı*].

Nevertheless, the identities held by women within the socialist movement were more complicated than they first appeared to me. On the one hand, women could be perceived as "stereotypically feminine", fragile and in need of protection; therefore, for men to have a relationship with a woman was understood as exploiting her and as being opportunistic. On the other hand, women could be perceived as sly and dangerous enough to lead a male comrade astray. From this perspective, the role attributed to women in the leftist movement of the 1970s resembles the image of women in Islamic sources. The leftist version of this connotation, which was updated and adapted to the socialist ideology, also considered women to be an evil element with the capacity of disrupting the collaboration and solidarity in the movement (Berktay, 2010, p. 282).

Moreover, when women complained about difficulties in the movement or in daily life, these problems were seen as simple and sassy sophistries that aimed to challenge the integrity of the movement. To be precise, the main issue of the leftist wave in Turkey was to materialize the revolution. As a result, a woman's desires and demands regarding her female identity were recognized as a challenge to the grand

ideal, which was the revolution. Any demand to recognize "special" rights for women was considered dangerous, a threat to the inner cohesion of the movement and solidarity between the classes. Gender references -even uttering the word "woman"- was considered an attempt to replace more important class inequalities with secondary and divisive gender issues. In order to avert this division, women were forced to erase their identity as a woman and became sexless; femininity thus took a back seat to the discourse of avoiding bourgeois deviations from gender roles (Kadıoğlu, 1998, p. 97).

Here the bourgeoisie was framed as a group that could easily influence women; in this worldview, the woman was susceptible and viewed with suspicion by her male comrades. This resulted in a process that my respondents also described: First she was to wait patiently in the movement in order to show that she was immune against the inborn risk of deviation. Thus, throughout this process of "purification from weaknesses" the woman in the movement remained a suspicious sister until she proved her sincerity to her male comrades. If she could pass every "test" in the monitoring phase, she could be promoted to "comrade" status. This was problematic in the sense that this monitoring dictated woman how to behave and what to do. However, the woman could not rebel against this treatment; because such behavioral control was both legitimate in the society and corresponded with social norms. This was also made easier because women did not have the required authority and power in the movement. Moreover, many women had already rationalized these restrictions as the necessities and a part of their revolutionary duties (Berktay, 2010, p. 281; p. 283).

Pressure from society at large also had an impact on the way women were treated in the movement. The leftist movement sought to bring about a radical social transformation; doing this required at least some support from the wider public. In an environment where the biggest fear was isolation from the public, the focus for both men and women was on doing appropriate things that were in line with the social codes and norms with the aim of reaching the whole society. The public was seen by the movement as being tied to feudal ethic codes and a conservative discourse (Akal, 2011, p. 261). Therefore, it was understood that too much social deviance could distance outsiders from the movement. In Akal's (2011) book, Dinçer describes this period as a

process in which the people in the movement embraced a puritanical revolutionism with conservative bonds (Akal, 2011, p. 262).

Looking specifically at the discourse of my interviewees, we see that in a social environment where the factions were strongly devoted to the ideal of revolution, the secondary position of women emerged as an unquestioned issue. In any case, factions were dominated by men, and few women participated in their political structures, especially in higher ranks. Thus militants did not criticize women's "invisibility" or their assignment to less important duties.

Speaking decades later, however, most of my interviewees now found this approach towards women problematic. They said that since their analysis and perception of the world in the 1970s was defined more by their belief in a class struggle, they disregarded gender inequality within their factions. Even women interviewees described themselves as being unaware of this issue in the 1970s. For example, Zuhal explained her emerging awareness as follows:

> I am aware of the fact that I am not just somebody's "sister" now. It was wrong to be someone's sister. My comrades interfered in my clothes, hair, attitudes but I restricted this on my own, too. I was trying to fulfill the requirements of being truly revolutionary. This was very wrong. In some way, we adopted our secondary roles and took them for granted.

Tayfun agreed with Zuhal's criticism but found this situation normal given the conditions of the 1970s:

> We could not produce policies regarding women. As I said we were superficial on many issues. But we did everything we could. Expecting more was futile. It was not like today. Of course if there had been more women or if we had integrated more women into the movement with stronger ties, it could have been great. But we could not do it with the social capital we had.

Today, after changes and developments in Turkey, my interviewees defend the free, equal, and independent participation of women in ideological platforms and in social life. In this sense, Seyhan explained this shift in her perspective, to one which rejected any past oppression, by explaining that she no longer had an "ideological identity":

> I do not define myself from an ideological perspective anymore. Today first of all I am a woman. Not a leftist, not a militant, not a revolutionary. My priority is myself. In the 1970s, the priority was on the revolution; so we did not question the restrictions that organizations imposed on us. As women maybe we were in secondary positions but nobody was aware of it. Of course I am for freedom of women today. I am an independent woman and inevitably I want total independence in life for all women.

For Yağmur, similar to Seyhan, what made her question and see the secondary position of women was gaining more independence:

> We were not able to see what was happening in the past. We were young. Now I think that the voice of women should be louder everywhere. But we were used to caring a lot about what others thought for us at those times. So silence and obedience was normal. Now I earn my own money. I make my decisions on my own. I am a free individual. There is nobody that I refrain from. I became wiser enough not to let a man, an organization or a movement put me in secondary positions.

Like Yağmur, Fatih also mentioned the secondary status of women in the movement and explained how he changed his mind as follows:

> I have a girlfriend who actively participates in one of the leftist factions. I definitely do not approach these issues as I approached them in the past. The world changed, Turkey changed, we changed. Women also changed. Today I say I wish there had been more women but we had other concerns like revolution at these times.

On the other hand, my interviewees İlyas and Mehmet argued that the women in their factions were not in secondary positions at all. They also stressed the necessity of involvement of women in social and ideological movements today: “There cannot be a movement or revolution without women. Women were in the movement in the 1970s. They have to be in any movements also today”, says Mehmet. For İlyas women must participate in aspects of life:

> Half of this society is women. How one can expect not to see them in a social movement? Of course they have to participate. Even discussing this is nonsense. If women want to politicize they should be free. And I do not think that there are obstacles to their participation. Even in the past they were in the factions, so today it should be easier to be in a movement.

While women’s auxiliary roles in the left prohibited the development of an independent and free women’s movement, the critical atmosphere in the left, at the

same time, helped to bring about an awakening among some women. By questioning their status and importance and also the hierarchical structure in the movement, women saw the meaning that was attached to their identity and presence in the left. Consequently, the general prejudice and gender-based discriminations of the movement eventually created a generation that cared about the problems of women, emerging as the feminist movement in the 1980s. Akal (2003) links the emergence of the feminist movement after the 1980s to the development of the required political and environmental factors in that period by referring to the political and ideological rivals silenced by the September 12 coup. In addition, she underlines the importance of women's independence, expertise, and gender and sexuality awareness. According to that formulation, the base for the second wave feminism which would gain visibility after the 1980s was created by the emergence of these conditions (Akal, 2003, p. 197).

Related with these arguments, Düzkan (2010) describes "facing some realities" in the post-1980s as another factor that contributed to the emergence of an independent women's movement. According to her, after the coup, when women who had integrated into the socialist struggle returned from prison to their homes, what was waiting for them was routine domestic work. Women faced a reality at that point: They aimed to change the order and the system in Turkey, they could not change it, and when they turned back to their life out of politics, the expectation that was directed to them was telling them to wash the dishes and clean the house. Thus, with this realization they saw the missing part of the puzzle. The socialist revolution would not free women; there was the need for a separate women's movement in order to ensure their complete emancipation. Thus, the necessity to create a separate women's movement was understood in order not to repeat the mistakes in the leftist movement (Düzkan in Akman, 2010, pp. 254-255).

However, since the women's movement emerged as a movement which was critical of the leftist movement, it was disregarded and not respected in some leftist circles and blamed for replacing the more "mainstream" ideologies (Koçak, 2007). Moreover, as discussed before, since it emerged after the coup, feminism was accused of being aligned with the coup regime. As a reflection of this negative perception in the interviews I conducted, I received answers that pointed either anger and suspicion or

ambivalence towards the feminist movement. According to the new social order of leftist movement, the liberation of women would be attained through the revolution along with all liberations. In this struggle, the left was aiming to remove all types of slavery. However, in the eyes of the former organization members, feminism only focused on the slavery of the woman and rejected the rest. Therefore, my interviewees found feminism insincere and as a rival ideology that arose out of the heritage of the suppressed left. They displayed anger towards feminism; because, they considered feminism as an opportunist movement that came to surface with the imprisonment of the left. From this aspect, feminism was a divisive movement that had foreign origins and was produced in order to terminate their struggle. This is why most of my interviewees did not want to talk about feminism and openly said that they were never interested in or thought about feminism.

When asked, only three of my interviewees shared their ideas regarding feminism in the 1980s and today. If we analyze their discourse, it can be claimed that there were not many changes in their approaches. In the 1980s, when the movement emerged, they said that they remained uninterested. Today only one of my interviewees, Metin, claimed that he supported feminism. While explaining his support as a consequence of his interactions with feminist women; he explained that his perspective regarding the feminist movement changed. However, despite his discourse which asserted a changed view, his approach towards feminism was narrower, only related with the sexuality of women. He positioned the movement as an enlightening one that would free the woman from the imprisonment that stemmed from her sexuality.

My other interviewees, Yağmur and Zuhal, described feminism as a divisive movement or even an ideology that had a foreign origin and that emerged after the suppression of the left. While Yağmur labeled feminism as an elitist and exclusionary movement, Zuhal likened it to an accessory or ornament that tried to replace the leftist ideals. Therefore it can be claimed that their reactive approach towards feminism was still visible.

In last section of this chapter, I analyzed the intimate relationships in the movement. Intimate relationships were one of the taboo concepts in the movement since romantic affairs were restricted by the organizational structures. Only two of my

interviewees rejected the sanctioning power of the organization towards the intimate relationships to some extent. Tayfun accepted the sanction power of the organization but did not define it as a deterrence that was imposed by the organization; rather, he described keeping away from romantic love as a voluntary renunciation. For Yağmur, there was freedom in terms of entering into romantic relationships if the person was not in a key position in the movement. She claimed that the restriction of the organization in terms of love issues was more binding for the high-level militants than for ordinary comrades. On the other hand, the other interviewees asserted that there was pressure from the organization that led to hidden and secret affairs. In these narrations, they portrayed love as an issue that should be postponed to a date that was after the revolution with the aim of blocking any deviations that could give harm to the ideal of revolution. Since love was considered as a risk element that could ruin the unity of the movement, the organizations kept militants under control with the threat of dismissal. This threat had an important sanction power because the organization was the home or the family in the eyes of the militants. Therefore with this strong sense of belongings and personal attachments, my interviewees uttered that they did not want to lose the bond between them and their factions. With this instinct, they asserted that they inevitably acted in accordance with the expected behavior patterns.

When we look at the shift in their approaches towards intimate relationships, most of my interviewees found the control of the organizational bodies over their private lives problematic. However, they also claimed that it was a necessity under the conditions of the 1970s. For example, while confessing that he found romantic relationships as *lümpen* (although he said he had affairs), today Fatih supported freedom to have relationships and to choose a partner without the intervention of a superior. However, along with this idea he also introduced having similar political ideologies as an influential factor on the partner choice:

> Even if you do not have the same ideologies, you find the ones who have similar ideologies more attractive. I think a politicized person cannot be very happy with an apolitical person. But if s/he thinks that s/he is happy with this person, s/he should be the one who is making this decision. I mean the organization or any other structures should not intervene in their relationship.

Similar to what Fatih said, Mehmet also underlined the importance of similar political stands and explained it as follows. “I did not marry a person who was ideologically far removed from me. It was impossible for me to marry someone different from me.” In addition, Mehmet finds the binding influence of organizations on the relationships as normal by taking the environment of the 1970s into consideration: “While we were in the movement women were our sisters. They had to be our sisters. Otherwise how one would control the movement? We were trying to materialize a revolution. We were not trying to find girlfriends.”

Today we see that the old, perceived tradeoff between organizational commitment and “primitive sexual desires” does not exist. Firstly, none of my interviewees were in an organizational structure. There was not a restrictive and binding entity in their lives which they were loyal to; therefore, they supported free and independent ideas related with intimate relationships. Secondly, the belief in revolution had disappeared for most of them, leaving them no reason to sacrifice personal emotions for a greater cause. For example Metin explains this situation as follows: “Love is good. I am against any kind of restriction. Therefore there should be freedom in everywhere, also in love.” On the other hand, Zuhal firstly criticizes the privilege of her organization in comparison to private lives then adds “I find it nonsense to let an authority control on your life. I am married. I love this man. I decided to love him. None of the organizations can tell me not to love someone today.”

To put it differently, while in the 1970s, organizations represented an authority that can direct their lives legitimately, today this influential structure is not a unit that is sovereign to their personal decisions. This duality can clearly be seen in Seyhan’s discourse. As she talked about the past, on the one hand Seyhan rationalized the intervention of the organization in her life by considering concerns about secrecy and the importance of discipline in paramilitary structures. On the other hand, she openly explained that she did not support any intervention in her life today:

> Love was underground to a very large extent in the movement. Today I am 49 years old and I do not want to hide my feelings. I am not a child anymore. An organization, a structure, a unit, whatever it is, cannot tell me how to live love and my life. But in the 1970s we were like soldiers. Under military discipline

there has to be restrictions. Everybody cannot live as the way s/he desired. So it was normal when we were in the movement.

Similar to Seyhan, İlyas also rejected the imposition of any authority on his life. After explaining that he had thought of intimate relationships as opportunistic behaviors that belonged to the fake revolutionaries in the 1970s; he underlined his changed ideas by referring to his marriage:

> I left my organization, fell in love and married. Maybe I would not have chance to do these things if I continued to be in my faction. I am supporting independent decision making processes now. When I looked back, yes, there was too much discipline and control but I do not know if there was any other way. We believed in the revolution and were persuaded by the necessity of our feelings' suppression for a successful revolution. It was normal then.

When she was analyzing the movement from today's perspective, Nehir explained her discomfort regarding the restrictive role of the organizational structures. In her narration, this restrictive intervention of organizations was rationalized by the need to assimilate identities and desires. Today, she is of the opinion that there was no need for these limitations:

> Social movements are not platforms that are totally disconnected from life. They are a part of life. But we lived like it was not a part of life that at these times. We repressed our feelings. Today there is no need for such a pressure. Love is a part of life and it should be lived as the way it is. People should love each other without hiding.

As it can be seen from these narrations, in terms of intimate relationships, many of my interviewees defended freedom and independence for the issues regarding their private lives. While doing this, on the one hand, they criticized the strict organizational structures in the 1970s; on the other hand, they defined rigid and disciplined organizations as a necessity of their time. Nevertheless, today as individuals who lost their connections with organizational units and who lost their belief in revolution understanding, they rejected the sanctioning power of any kind of structure in their lives.

In this chapter I looked at the status of women, the perception of women and womanhood, the perception of feminism, and intimate relationships in the leftist movement by focusing on the transformations that my interviewees experienced along

these axes. In this context, approach to feminism appears to be the mere area where my interviewees underwent minimum transformation. Although the interviewees claimed to have changed their views on the status of woman, perception of womanhood, as well as intimate relationships and social manifestations, when it came to feminism, they do not perceive any change in their views or attitudes. In other words, they seem to retain their negative point of view of the 1970s against feminism, which positioned it as the collaborator of the coup regime. In the narratives of my interviewees, feminism continues to be an issue that is either avoided to talk about or is openly evaluated as a divisive and opportunistic movement.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This thesis consisted of four chapters that tried to give a picture of the left during the 1970s and aimed to explain the ideological, socioeconomic, and gender-related "transformation" of the individuals who participated in various leftist factions by analyzing how they describe and legitimize the changes they underwent.

In the introduction chapter, I first discussed the history of the leftist currents in Turkey throughout the 1970s to understand the background of my interviewees' initial transformation, i.e., how they joined the leftist factions. Second, I briefly introduced the coup of September 12 as a rupture in the history of the Turkish left. In this context, the coup of 1980 can be considered important for two reasons: First, it represents the date when the physical dissolution of the left began; second, it represents the date when major transformations in the "social, political, and economic" make-up of Turkey had begun. I looked at the changes in Turkey in the post-coup period under these three categories in order to relate them with the personal transformations that my interviewees experienced.

In the second chapter, I specifically focused on my interviewees' participation in their factions. Based on their stories, in which they explained this process as a major turning point in their lives, I showed that there were many similarities in the ways they joined the leftist movement. Regardless of their faction choice, what was common in all discourses was the effect of a person from their social network in adopting leftist ideologies. In this respect, we can claim that their decisions regarding their factions did not emerge as a consequence of a conscious process but coincidental. My interviewees said that they had tendency to act together with acquaintances, who acted as catalysts for their politicization. While the influence of these catalyst figures acted as a determining factor in their faction choice, each respondents' factional ideology emerged later, since ideology was described as something that was examined only after participation had begun.

In the third chapter I analyzed the economical and ideological changes that my interviewees experienced since 1980. Most of them rejected the idea that they underwent an essential "transformation", preferring to define their current status as a change, in an attempt to prove that they did not betray their past. Therefore during our interviews they mostly took a defensive stance and gave the message that they may have experienced a change on the surface but continued to protect their leftist "soul" and values inside.

Only economic transformations and the transformation in the faith of revolution were conceded without hesitation. Economic transformations were represented by the visible changes in respondents' standards of living. Those who were financially successful did not try to hide or deny the increase in their social status. Meanwhile, those who could not create a drastic change in their quality of life linked their low status to their "incompatibility" with the capitalist system and the protection of their leftism and leftist values. In this context, economic transformations were regarded as a "capitulation" or as integration to the capitalist world. Therefore low income levels were the signs of disintegration and being disconnected from the system. In a society where the parameter of success was measured with earning money, this group who defined themselves as "outliers" displayed symptoms of resentment and a constant feeling of exclusion from the system due to their presumed "failure".

Including this resentful group, all of my interviewees continued to present their relationship with money as a problematic one. In the narratives, there was a presumed correlation between preserved leftist values and the relationship with money. Bad relations with money (a discourse of "not liking" money) were the indicators of the rejection of the capitalist means. By underlying their negative feelings related with money, my interviewees wanted to prove that they did not lose their leftist essence which had been opposed to private property relations and financial speculation.

If we look at the changes in the dream of revolution, analyzed as a part of their ideological transformations, we see that there were two main approaches. The first group defined revolution as a concept that was abandoned, as a dream of adventurous and excited youth. As individuals who were going through their maturity period now, they stated that they did not find the dream of revolution realistic. They were skeptical about "bright ideas" and questioned the purity of socialism ideal they had held in the 1970s. What they found was the left's also being a platform in which there were weaknesses and defects. Therefore by accepting the change in their ideas they stated that they expected to see societal evolution and development rather than a socialist revolution based on the capture of state power. Also, in these narratives, the revolutionary struggle was replaced with more conventional struggles like environmental sensitivities or legal protests and demonstrations.

On the other hand the second group continued to say that one day the revolution would be materialized and socialism would win the war against capitalism. These people were the ones who considered themselves as individuals who could not be at peace with capitalism, as "economically backward" and "outliers". They hoped that a revolution would put an end to the unfairness in the existing society that they were exposed to. In this narrative, the hope for revolution emerged as a cure to heal the wound of feeling disconnected and excluded.

However, despite this group's assertion of commitment to the ideals of the 1970s or protection of their belief in revolution by stressing their socialist essence, the revolution was now an ambiguous issue in all narratives. They could not answer the question of "who will materialize the revolution". There was a reference to a mysterious group who would take the noble responsibility of the materialization of the revolution.

However, this group had no connections with my interviewees. As individuals who had no organizational ties with a leftist structure today they could not be a part of the struggle for the revolution but the new generation could do some sacrifices. Then, who were the ones that took place in this new generation? Their children? Apparently, the answer was no. This new generation was a community of the strangers. All of my interviewees openly stated that they did not want to see their children in an ideological struggle. If a revolution would come true, it should be materialized by the children of others and other people rather than my interviewees and those in their social environment. Therefore in contrast to their claim of continuation of the ideal of revolution, even this group's belief in the revolution today was a more superficial and passive faith in comparison to the past.

Apart from the changes in their faith in a socialist revolution, ideological transformations were generally the main resistance point in my interviews. Most interviewees did not want to accept the existence of any ideological transformations, since they associated them with their (undesired) integration to the capitalist system. Being an insider in a system that they tried to change 40 years ago irritated them. They demonstrated three kinds of responses to questions about ideological transformation: defense (a claim of being mentally disintegrated with the system), legitimization (a claim of being a part of the system without losing the awareness about the nature of it or having the same leftist "soul" or values) and rationalization (a claim of making the rational or pragmatic choice, given the conditions of the day, like jobs and families), while talking about the transformations they underwent. Consequently, what they defended was the existence of an economic transformation rather than an ideological one.

Related to that argument, most interviewees still defined themselves as leftists. However they re-defined what it meant to be a leftist for them. The main values associated with the left, like social justice and freedom for all, were listed as values they retained. However, interviewees also asserted that they did not try to fit into the concept of a concrete and solid leftism that had one definition. What they claimed was having a unique and "personal" leftism that they formulated according to their own outlook on life. Moreover, they refrained from making concrete definitions of their new leftism

understanding, rather explained it as a flexible but also a blurry concept in which main values of the left were protected but the other ingredients of leftism, like organizational mobilization and leadership, were uncertain.

In the last chapter, I looked at the image of women and the perception of feminism and intimate relationships in the movement. Based on my interviewees' responses, I first saw that women were described as weak, dependent, and sexless comrades in the movement who had to adopt codes that assumed as masculine in order to gain acceptance or prove that they were not taking advantage of their sexuality or femininity. By being purified from any sexual reference, they were to be transformed into "sisters" or "mothers" in the movement. Like all mothers and sisters, they were supposed to be peaceful, tolerant, naïve, and reconciliatory. They were to act as a "buffer" capable of resolving possible conflicts. However, at the same time, women were still mostly invisible in the movement. Despite the exalted and holy meanings attributed to women, they were kept in the periphery and rarely rose in organizations' hierarchical structures. This structure was also supported by a certain kind of conservative world view in which women were supposed to take supporting roles to some degree.

This secondary and dependent position of the woman was described by almost all of my interviewees. My interviewees generally described women's roles by referring to men. In their narratives, a woman in a sister or mother role was a dependent actor that could not exist independent of her male comrades. This view had many effects on women's participation in the movement. Women and their problems were not perceived as an area of concern. Even if their problems were brought to the table, they were analyzed with the classical Marxist approach in which the stress was on class and women's liberation was linked to the liberation of the working class. Second, when we look at the numerical distribution of women in the movement, we see that there were not many women in the organizational structures, especially in the upper ranks. In the specific context of my interviewees' narrative, they asserted that women in the movement were sympathizers rather than active militants. Women were subjected to two contradictory pressures: While women were generally described as sensitive and fragile actors, "militarized" women were described as conflictual, radical, and harsh. At

the same time, adopting codes that perceived as masculine emerged as a virtue in comparison with femininity, which was perceived as a potentially dangerous influence on the men in the movement. As a reflection of this situation, even my women interviewees confessed that they never thought of themselves as women. Instead of being a woman they had become a militant, comrade, leftist and revolutionary. They mentioned only one identity construction, and it was ideological. However, also my interviewees stated that this was not a conscious renunciation, it was natural when they were in a strict organizational structure.

Today, meanwhile, all of my interviewees criticized and problematized the secondary status of woman in their factions. While the invisibility of women in the leftist movement was portrayed as an inevitable situation given the social conditions of the 1970s and the general perception in their factions, my interviewees wished for a fairer society in which there was freedom, equality and independence for women. In this sense they defended the continuous [*kesintisiz*] participation of women in ideological platforms and social life.

In the second section of this chapter I looked at the perception of feminism in the movement. My interviewees generally displayed a negative attitude towards feminism. In comparison to the ideal of revolution, feminism was degraded and labeled as a divisive ideology that aimed to split the power of the socialist movement. Moreover, my interviewees still expressed anger that while the left was suppressed and silenced, feminism found an opportunity to grow up without competing with strong ideologies. Feminism was also perceived as being in collaboration with the state, since there was an assumption that feminism emerged with the state's approval rather than confront it. Unlike interviewees' changing attitudes towards women's participation, in terms of approach towards feminism, it can be claimed that there was not a significant transformation since the 1980s. Whereas only three of my interviewees uttered their ideas regarding feminism, the rest openly indicated that they were never interested in feminism and rejected talking about it. If we look at these narratives, we see that the skeptical approach towards feminism which positioned it as a divisive, foreign, and opportunistic movement was still held by most of my interviewees.

In the last part of this chapter, I examined the perception of intimate relationships in the movement. Most of my interviewees stated that while considering relationships, they made decisions based on ideological and political criteria. Organizations emerged as influential actors that played a determinant role on the private lives of my interviewees. Firstly, organizations that had the sanction power stemming from extreme commitment to the movement and the ideal of revolution. Thus, romantic relationships in between factions and different organizational structures were not promoted, since there was the fear of splitting. Secondly, even relationships within the same organizational units were not welcomed since love had the power of confusing a comrade and distancing (him) from the struggle of revolution. Inevitably, in this high-pressure environment, love largely remained invisible or secret.

At the same time, some of my interviewees also said that pushing love to a secondary position was a voluntary decision rather than simple submission to organizational pressure. In this context, in order to be a devoted comrade it was necessary to put love into an auxiliary position. The focus was on revolution, so love could be postponed to a time after the revolution. Others argued that the organization's sanctioning power on daily life was not equal for all activists. According to Yağmur, for instance, organizations were more eager to restrict relationships for people in positions that were key to materializing the revolution. However, for the ordinary comrades there were no restrictions on private life. Moreover, two of my interviewees (Metin and İlyas) noted the existence of leftist factions where sexual freedom and open relationships did take place, though they nevertheless underlined that the common orientation in the left was to promote monogamy or celibacy.

In terms of intimate relationships, we see a drastic transformation in the discourse of my interviewees. In contrast to the restrictive role of organizations on my interviewees' private lives, today they rejected any kind of intervention regarding their "personal space". They presented two reasons for this transformation: loss of organizational loyalty, and loss of the faith in the revolution. Today none of my interviewees had emotional and ideological bonds to any organizational unit. No authority held sanctioning power that could force them to make emotional sacrifices in their lives. Secondly, the perceived tradeoff between the materialization of revolution

and the satisfaction of sexual desires in the 1970s no longer existed. In this context, my interviewees defended "free" intimate relationships without sacrificing emotions in the name of ideals.

Thus, they emphasized that they could only accept themselves as the absolute authority in their lives regarding their decisions. Changes in the private lives of my respondents, combined with transformations in Turkish society as a whole, made my respondents' perceptions of the left more individualistic over time. Organizations were rejected, even if support for a vague and personally defined idea of the left still existed. Regardless of the specific ways in which their perceptions of the left changed or remained the same, interviewees' responses were clearly related to changes in their own socioeconomic status and major events in their personal lives.

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