“NEW WORKERS CONFRONTING THE OLD RULES OF INDUSTRIAL VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN A NEW ERA: WORKING CLASS EXPERIENCE IN ALİBEYKÖY SCHOOL”

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Thesis Abstract

Ilgın Erdem, "New Workers Confronting the Old Rules of Industrial Vocational Education in a New Era: Working Class Experience in Alibeyköy School"

This thesis examines the material and cultural production of the working class industrial vocational education in the context of neo-liberalism and de-industrialization. My analysis claims that industrial vocational high schools have become places for only young people who have lower-class-backgrounds after the introduction of neoliberal policies and the settlement of flexibly-organized and dispersed production regime. The ethnographic research made in a single school (Alibeyköy Industrial Vocational and Technical High School) specifies the case for the search of working class experience in a marginalized neighborhood in Istanbul. As a working class residential and industrial suburb of Istanbul from 1950s to 1990s, and currently as the landscape of de-industrialization and re-organization, Alibeyköy offers an opportunity to observe the latest trends in the industrial work experience. In the school's and the neighborhood's current worsened position, students do not have motivation for social mobility and rather, shaped distinctive forms of cultural identification, belonging, inclusion and exclusion practices in the school space. They formed an informal counter-school culture in the school by adopting hegemonic masculinity which relied on violence, mockery and exclusionary practices. This study argues that such practices have parallels with the informal sector work relations that they had an effect in preparing the young labor force not only materially but also culturally for their future work life.

Tez Özeti

Ilgın Erdem, “Yeni Çağ’da Endüstri Mesleki Eğitimle Üretilen Yeni İşçiler: Alibeyköy Okulu’nda İşçi Sınıfı Deneyimi”

Bu tez neoliberalizm ve sanayisizleşme bağlamında işçi sınıfının material ve kültürel olarak üretimini konu edinmektedir. Analizim, neoliberal politikaların takdimi ve esnek ve dağınık biçimde örgütlenmiş üretim rejiminin yerleşmesinin ardından Endüstri Meslek Liselerinin yalnızca alt sınıf mensubu gençlere yönelik hale geldiğini iddia edecektir. Alibeyköy Endüstri Meslek ve Teknik Lisesi’nde yapılan etnografik çalışma, işçi sınıfı deneyimini İstanbul’un yoksul bir mahallesinde inceleyecektir. 1950’lerden 1990’lı yıllara kadar işçi sınıfının yerleşim alanı ve endüstriyel bölgesi olarak bilinen; bugün ise sanayisizleşme alanı olarak yeniden örgütlenen Alibeyköy, endüstriyel ilişkilerdeki değişimleri gözlemlemek için uygun bir örnek olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Hem mahallenin hem de okulun güncel sorunlarının varlığı altında, öğrencilerin eğitimle sağlanabilecek mobiliteyi dikkate almak yerine okul alanında kendine özgü özelliklere sahip olan kültürel kimlikler, ilişkiler, içerme ve dışlama pratikleri gerçekleştirdikleri görülmektedir. Bu çalışma, öğrencilerin geliştirdiği bu pratiklerin enformal sektördeki çalışma ilişkileri ile paralellikler taşıdığını iddia etmenin yanı sıra, bu genç işgücünün hem materyal hem de kültürel olarak gelecekteki çalışma yaşamlarına hazırlandığını iddia etmektedir.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study concerns the (re)production of the working class subjectivities through vocational and technical education in the particular case of Alibeyköy Industrial Vocational and Technical High School students. My research builds on the examination of recent transformations in the production regime and the neoliberal government policies imposed on industrial vocational education, as well as the literature on the cultural production of new subjectivities in schools (Willis, 1981, 2003 and 2004; Apple, 1995; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) and working class debates (Thompson, 1980; Gorz, 1982; Sennett, 1998; Comaroff and Comaroff, 2001; Skeggs, 1997).

Vocational and technical education has always been a controversial issue in Turkey both in terms of its relation to industrial capital and labor market, and also in terms of questions of social mobility attained through education. Vocational and technical high schools are considered as inferior in comparison to general high schools in terms of the quality of education, investments done in these schools, the profile of the students and the work opportunities after graduation. Furthermore, vocational education debates have only been made in the shadow of the industrial sector's interest in labor power obtained from these schools, and this pointed out a great gap between the vocational education debates of the government and private sector, and the experiences of the vocational education students as well as the graduates. With this insight, I will investigate these schools' current material conditions and vocational education students' experiences in an effort to

conceptualize how vocational schools and the students of them are trapped into a "vicious circle". By further observing the school culture growing out of formal and informal relations in the school place, I argue that one can observe the vestiges of the working class experience in these schools as places consisting of children of the working class back-grounded families who are prepared to become industrial workers.

In order to situate my arguments in an appropriate context, in the first chapter I will discuss the current transformations on vocational education which were introduced following the changes in the production regime as well as following the new neoliberal state policies that occurred in 1980s. Throughout the history of modern Turkey, vocational education has been considered by policy makers as the only viable means for preparing young populations without higher education for the job market. Especially, the premise of industrial vocational education has been to train skilled labor who will become technicians with high-skills. However, both the interest groups and the students in the area of vocational education recount that this promise could not be maintained. There have been lots of policy arrangements especially over the last 25 years that deteriorated the conditions of vocational and technical education students. The change of Turkey's economic policies from a developmentalist approach to a neo-liberal one and the global change in the production regime, i.e. the shift from Fordist type of production to the Post-Fordist evidently had an effect on this process. With the increasing settlement of Post-Fordist production regime and de-industrialization (Sennett, 1998; Lipietz, 1987; Munck, 2002), work opportunities for the graduates have shifted away from well to reasonably paid skilled or semi-skilled work to much lower paid service and out-of-reach white-collar work. The conditions of graduates also worsened due to the

emergent forms of urban relegation, and the incessant introduction of n,eo-liberal policies that created new axes of inequalities (Harvey, 1990; Brenner and Glick 1991). In result, the relation between the industry and these schools became such that neither the graduates could obtain secure work conditions as skilled labor in their transition to work nor did the industry credit the formations attained in these schools.

The change in the production regime and the rise of neoliberal policies also interacted to re-organize and differentiate experiences as well as the perceptions of being a member of the "working class". Working class debate considerably lost the importance it occupied in the economic and sociological literature until the 1980s. Some scholars chose to concentrate on the "cultural turn" by forgetting about the importance of class relations while others aimed at suitably conceptualizing the modern forms of class experience; i.e. class alliance, and class antinomies. In this divide, my work also tries to conceptualize "class" through which current transitions can be comprehended.

The definition of "class" that I choose to use comes into fore "when people share the same interests as a result of common experiences which differ from those of the other men with different experiences" (Thompson, 1980: 10) and when they become the agents of dynamic processes with both objective and subjective manifestations and practices. Such a definition will not undermine the classic Marxian definition of "relationship to the means of production" (Braverman, 1998: 25), but rather will bring subjective content (e.g. experiences, tactics, strategies, practices and fantasies of collectivities in all spheres of life) into play. According to this conceptualization, Thompson (1980: 194) argued that "the making of the working class is a fact of political and cultural, as much as of economic, history".

According to this perspective, I argue that the present issue is not one of the "objective" disappearance of class, but one of the disappearance of the once relatively clear lines of connection between class positions, class cultures, and class identities (Skeggs, 1997). Working classes whose members depend upon "selling their labor-power to a capitalist for their livelihood" (Marx, 1976: 38), are claimed to be experiencing the world no more in classic proletarian terms with the change of production regime (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2001: 12, Willis, 2003: 398). In a way, flexible accumulation, decentralized and demand-side production regime, which has increased the vulnerability of the working class, also deconstructed the working class culture that took shape in the Fordist era. In many places, there has already been an obvious erosion of conventional bases of worker identity which had once been collectively experienced in the realm of informal, customary values and rules which mediated the formal authority structure (Bourke, 1994; Hoggart, 1970). The new working class is more and more defined by its diversity and mobility, and gains a position in the social ladder in terms of gendered and racialized identities (Sassen, 2000).

Vocational and technical high schools in Turkey play a role in social and cultural shaping of the young people as members of the working class. Vocational education involves itself with these young people from two perspectives, one in relation with preparing them to work-life and two in terms of providing general education as part of the formal education system. Hence, I find it crucial to focus on the effect of vocational school for the construction of class positions and subjectivities/identities in search for altering working class experiences of the youth (Apple, 1983; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990).

There exist diverse theoretical approaches that conceptualize the school's role in the creation of youth subjectivities as well as its effect in reproducing the dominant ideology of the state and the society. In the second chapter, I will adopt the literature on the ethnography of education which focuses on the school's effect in actively shaping the cultural and material formation of the young people. This approach sees the school as "a place of cultural production as well as material" (Mac an Ghaill, 1994: 12). It is the material arrangements, social organization and educational paradigm of the schools that help to form the specific dynamics within these social spaces. Hence, as social institutions which are arranged for specialization in working class jobs and which proved to be underprivileged in terms of state support, vocational high schools are fertile grounds for the analysis of new forms of working class culture as experienced in the case of lower class youth.

Throughout my investigation of the working class culture lived in industrial vocational high schools, my emphasis will be on a unique school since I find it crucial to situate the effects of families, neighborhood and/or popular culture in a well-defined context. The concept of class that I chose further necessitates studying a distinct "locality"[1] in order to situate the experiences of the vocational education students. Class as a locational idea is practiced in neighborhoods when people perform in actual localities at specific times and "fill these localities with bodies, images, goods, and logics" (Liechty, 2003: 257). Class practice also locates people and creates locations, conceptual and material spaces of, for and by class. It is through everyday practice – by deployment of language, goods, ideas, values, and embodied culture – that people produces the cultural spaces of class.

[1] By locality, I refer to the conceptualization of Arjun Appadurai which is "primarily relational and contextual, rather than scalar or spatial" (Appadurai, 1996: 178). Locality expresses itself in certain kinds of agency, sociality and reproducibility (Turton, 2004: 22; Üstündağ, 2005: 42-43).

With the help of the above conceptualization, I will try to decipher how future working class members experience the vocational school in the distinct locality of Alibeyköy neighborhood through diverse techniques and strategies; and how this experience becomes "inextricably bound up" with their social and personal identity.

Alibeyköy had been a working class residential and industrial suburb of Istanbul from 1950s to 1990s with dwellers that consisted mostly of first-wave emigrants coming from various rural parts of Turkey. Comprising a lower-class migrant-population from heterogeneous backgrounds, this neighborhood offers scarce cultural resources to its residents and makes their integration to urban life harder. Also, the neighborhood has been largely affected by the global de-industrialization process. Under the banner of "urban planning", large factories and workshops were removed out of Alibeyköy after the second half of 1980s. This also affected the future job market positions of the graduates of Alibeyköy Industrial Vocational and Technical High School. The graduates of this school are said to lose the job opportunities that existed for the previous workers in this neighborhood, hence they began to articulate with the labor market following new paths and relations. Until the mid-1980s, the school had provided the students with superior technical formation as well as various channels to industry and thus allowed the students to expect to work as middle-level technicians in large factories. However, in the current situation, its graduates mostly take part in informal labor markets under insecure job conditions.

Alibeyköy is also a marked place in Istanbul with increasing levels of extra-legal relations, violent conflicts over land and water, and with criminal events among the youth living there. While it was seen as a working class suburb where the industrial workers had similar life styles until the 1980s, the experience of the current

population has become much more diversified in terms of national attachments of the residents, poverty level and occupational profile of the people as well as crime levels. The immediate social class experience of students at Alibeyköy School is unquestionably and strongly dependent on the new defining features of the Alibeyköy neighborhood.

Field Entry

Schools have not been at the center of attention for sociological research in Turkey except for the studies that consisted of research made with the administrative staffs of schools (e.g. the studies made by the students of vocational higher education departments[2]). There are no ethnographic studies made in schools and schools are not familiar with the culture of research making. Predictably, I have been an unexpected guest in the stagnant and desolate (*köhne*) atmosphere of Alibeyköy Industrial Vocational and Technical High School, and no one (the deputy headmasters, teachers, students, the gate-keeper of the school, etc.) could give a meaning to my presence for the first time I visited the place. "Why was I doing such a study? Why was I there and not in any other school? What would my research aim at? Why would I plan to talk to the students? Why not to the authorities of the vocational education? Who would read my study?" These were the questions asked by different teachers in my first visits to the school, and they made it clear that I was a suspect in many people's eyes. Besides, my presence as "a young woman researcher" has been very remarkable in the place as most of the school staff as well as the students in the school were males, and actually it was hard for me and strange for them. Hence, I

[2] The students of vocational higher education departments of universities – *Meslek Yüksek Okulları* are generally expected to conduct a research on vocational education at the end of their two-year education.

tried to become more conscious of the possible effects that this might have on my research since answers to my questions will inescapably reflect the gender factor and as the people's relations with me will also be formative about the gender relations as they are constructed in the school.

During my first visit, I vigilantly explained my position and purpose to the deputy headmaster of the school and he accepted to get interviewed. But he did not let me tape-record our interviews before I took a written permission from the Ministry of Education's related department. In the following two months in which I was waiting for the permission from the Ministry of Education's "Education Unit", I visited school for more than five times and tried to interview the teachers in the school. At first times, the deputy headmaster seemed reluctant to introduce me to the teachers or the staff. But when it became clear to him that I would not give up and that the bureaucratic procedures would last longer, he became more accustomed and luckily, he began to be interested in my study. He insisted on not giving me the permission to interview with the students in the school, but we began to have long conversations in his room with other teachers present.

After passing through the bureaucratic steps put by the Ministry of Education's Istanbul Head Office and after getting my documents signed by the school administration and the Alibeyköy Directorate of Education, I finally had the right to interact with any students in any place of the school. During my first visit to the school with my permission letter in my hand, I was really fortunate that I met a very popular girl of the school in the small canteen. Eda was curious about my presence in every way and tried to learn every detail about me during these first visits. Her self-confident femininity in the obviously masculine atmosphere of the school and her intimate manners helped me a lot to become part of these young

people's life in the school to some extent. I let Eda decide and arrange everything for me after telling her that I wanted to learn how their days passed in the school, and what they thought about getting vocational education, about the school, their future, their families and neighborhood, etc. For the next days, Eda would already have made appointments with some of the kids she knew. Thanks to her presence, my adventure with the kids started in a much easier way than I expected.

Eda's interest in me also helped me to evolve my status from a "young woman" to "an elder sister" of the boys as she was quick to tell the boys about my personal background as a 26-year-old still unmarried student "girl". According to their perceptions, I did not look like in that age as some of the kids' elder sisters in my age had two children already. The boys' conversations about my background and personal identity sometimes carried the hints of mockery; but more than that proved to be the signs of their controversial reactions for such middle or upper class customs.

After getting an unwritten approval for entering in the kids' world, it was both easy and also a joyful experience both for me to enter into their classes (both the general ones and the technical courses), to meet with them outside of the school, etc. I started to be seen as fun for them as well, since they were also curious about me and also my presence sometimes meant them a possible opportunity to cut the their class. While in my first weeks I tried to meet as many kids as possible, after some time I began to spend most of my time with a class of 10 people who were senior year technical school students and I also kept my close relationship with Eda and her female friends. Still, trying to decide with which people to have a close contact was another important decision to make for the consistency and functioning of such a research. Before starting my field work, I had put great importance to be in contact

with senior year students who were not in the school during three days of the week for doing their internship obligations since internship was a very significant period in their preparation for work-lives. I had the idea that the stories of trainee students would give me better insights about the working class question in my head as I thought work-place relations of vocational education students would enlighten me about "working" class experience in the best way. But after spending some time with both trainees and the regular students, my opinion has gradually changed as I realized concentrating on different internship stories that occurred in different work-places under different contexts was confining my attention only to the narratives and discourses to the students while alternatively I had the chance to observe the so-called "cultural production of working class" through students' daily practices in the school place. Hence, concentrating on the schooling experience became also meaningful for the reason that I adhere to the concept of class not only in its objective meaning referring to the economic relations of a social group but also in its subjective meaning which brings a wealth of questions in understanding the social and cultural experience of class.

My participant observations and the stories I listened in the interviews indeed gave me signs of a tight informal culture in the school which is the precursor of a particular class experience. Gradually, I began to realize in the field that culture has been the active process of "meaning making" of social agents. For my case, the student's making of an informal counter-school culture was a product of their working class positions which would render them to have less expectation for social mobility through education and thus which would lead them to find other ways to struggle with this uneasy fact of still staying at school. As the subject-matter of the Chapter 2, the culture of these young people in the school has been lived in a distinct

form which has similarities with the adult culture in their family or work lives. This youth culture comprised of resisting elements in it as expected to be practiced among most of the youth of all classes in different temporalities and different conditions (Brown, 1987; Corrigan, 1976; Connell, 1995). Young people often have sharp discourses and anti-disciplinary attitudes against the realities of their lives and of the world. The kids in the Alibeyköy School were of the same kind. But I consider them to be different from their peers in some respects because their opposition to disciplinary function of the school was actively and strongly experienced each day and was not seen as something extraordinary for any parties engaged in the school life. It was an admissible fact that many of the students totally denied to invest on any educational aims or that they were not bothered by taking risks of losing any possible mobilization opportunities for their future lives. Such manners of theirs seemed to me both a cause and a result for their marginalization in the formal educational area and also among the qualified working class job market.

Sequential Order

As Thompson argued, "working class made itself as well as it was made" (1980: 194). Holding to this conceptualization, the first chapter of this thesis will try to delineate how young people in the vocational education sphere who have already belonged to the lower segments of the society "are made" into working classes. This will necessitate a general look at the conditions of the vocational education in the restructuring of the neo-liberal economy and the state in Turkey. Considering the changes in the production regime and policy transformations on vocational education, I will argue that vocational education has become an inferior sphere in the

educational system and that it resulted in the withdrawal of the middle and higher class people from the vocational schools.

The second and third chapters will focus on how working class youth "made" itself in the particular place of Alibeyköy Industrial Vocational and Technical High School in the persistence of current structural conditions. As a guide to how I approached the subjectivity of the students, in the beginning of Chapter 2, I will present the method I will employ after giving a general overview of the studies in the anthropology of education literature. Then, I will try to reveal the cultural production of the vocational education students as working classes and the features of this working class experience in the case of male students. I will argue that the counter-school culture which the male students created outside of the formal relations lends itself to the preparation of the specific working class culture of the Post-Fordist era.

The third chapter will present the exclusions performed by the male students in the school to some distinct groups. I will argue that the exclusions towards girls, middle classes and the Kurdish students both inside and outside of the school will contribute to the identity formation process of the male students in the school. In other words, the exclusionary practices by male students will help to form the Turkish young working class community which is performed through marginalization and "otherization" of some groups. This search for the class identity in the subjective and relational realm will complete the understanding of class as a process and will hopefully reflect the experiences of those who are subjected to industrial vocational education in the neoliberal era.

CHAPTER TWO

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOLS: REGULATION OF THE LOWER CLASS YOUNG

My aim in this chapter is to situate the recent transformations that occur in industrial vocational education in the context of the increasingly institutionalizing neo-liberal economy of Turkey. I argue that industrial vocational and technical high schools have become places where people from the lower segments of the population are confined for several years and where they are (re)constructed as the new members of the changing working class. Neo-liberal state policies on vocational education and the insecure working conditions of the Post-Fordist production regime have left young people in vocational and technical schools underprivileged in comparison to other educated young people. This is especially true in marginalized localities. In order to explain how these young people "are made" into the new members of the working class; first, I will focus on policy transformations related to vocational education; second, on changes in the production regime; and then, on the current changes in the formation of the working class. In the last part of this chapter, by comparing Alibeyköy with other sites, I will present the differential ways in which the articulation between neoliberalism, the education system and class relations within urban spaces occur.

The Political Economic Context of Vocational Education

Vocational and technical education offers both training and technical education in industrial and service sector occupations, and aims to accomplish an efficient transition from school to work. These high schools are also tied to the formal education system. They offer instruction and on-the-job-training experience in mechanics, electricity, construction, or in services such as tourism, secretarial work, nursing, etc. Formal education in vocational and technical schools begins when a student finishes her/his eight-year primary compulsory education, and it takes four years. There are three types of such schools in Turkey (Industrial Vocational High Schools, Technical High Schools and Anatolian Technical High Schools) each of which had 378, 250, and 159 thousand students respectively in the school year of 2003-2004 (Ministry of Education, 2003-2004).[3]

General Profile of Vocational Education and the Recent Neo-liberal Trend in Policies

Vocational and technical education has been one of the primary policy areas of governments since the Republican Era and it has also attracted the attention of the private sector. As industrial vocational schools are places where skilled labor power for industry is produced by the support and financing of the state, they inescapably constitute an area of struggle among the industrial sector, the state, trade unions and the young people who receive education from these schools (Allmendinger, 1989; Bren et al., 1995; Şimşek et al., 2000).

[3] In the industrial vocational high schools, students are provided with general and vocational education including theoretical and practical knowledge about a specific occupation. Students in industrial vocational high schools, who had succeeded in math, science and language courses, will be transferred to technical high schools after the first year and they will graduate as "technicians". Lastly, the students of Anatolian Technical High Schools (like those of some other schools such as vocational schools on health, commerce, etc.) are selected by the Central Examination for High Schools (*Ortaöğretim Kurumlarını Seçme Sınavı* – OKS). One could expect that as these admit only successful students, the quality of education will naturally be higher in them.

In Turkey's context, vocational and technical education has been considered by policy makers as an important way to integrate some of the younger populations to the job market right after their education. Until the 1980's, these schools were given a great deal of importance as part of the national industrialization that aimed at creating a sustainable labor market (Akpınar, 2004: 6).[4] Such emphasis seems to have decreased when one considers the policy proposals and the government budget allocated to vocational education in the two last decades following the abandonment of the ideal of planned industrialization and the shift to neo-liberal rules and regulations. This can be clearly observed from the five-year development plans and their outcomes. In the period between 1973-1977, within the Five-Year Development Plans, the proportion of vocational-technical education in all high school education was expected to be 65%; however, it had dropped to 42.3% by the 1994-95 term and finally decreased to 31.4% by the year of 2004 (Ministry of Education, 1973-2004). Such scaling-down in the budget has also reverberated to the total numbers of students. The number of vocational schools and their students had always been higher than that of general high schools until the year of 1976[5], but it started to drop since then. In the last years, the discrepancy in ratio continued to climb against the vocational schools. By the year 2004, the number of general high school students was 2.5 millions while all vocational high school students totaled up to 1.2 millions (Ministry of Education, 2005). Moreover between 1990 and 2004, the number of

[4] Especially the vocational art schools (*meslek sanat okulları*) have been very prestigious and popular among middle class people during the developmentalist era of modern Turkey. See further: İ. Tekeli, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndan Günümüze Eğitim Kurumlarının Gelişimi," in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, pp. 114-116.

[5] See the numbers in *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türkiye Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 1983, p. 110.

students in general high schools increased by 228.5% while the increase was 108% in vocational and technical high schools (*Ibid.*, 1990-2004).

Plans for restructuring vocational and technical education came about after the 1980's accompanying the strong wave of neo-liberal state policies applied by the Özal government.[6] The reforms had the purpose of founding systematic linkages between industry and the labor market (Şimşek et al., 2000). For this aim, the law of "Apprenticeship and Vocational Education Act" (Law No. 3308) was enacted in 1986 borrowing from the German dual model which combined mainly work-based apprenticeship training with some school-based general education. Before 1986, vocational education had been carried out within the school. With this law, the education acquired a "dual" character whereby students are required to spend three days a week in industrial settings for practical training and two days in school for academic and theoretical training. With this regulation the relationship between industry and vocational schools was expected to intensify in terms of internship, teacher and resource exchange, teacher training and technology transfer (*Ibid*: 331-332). However, these expectations were not realized because of inadequate financial investment in these schools and the lack of standardization in the assessment and certification systems.

Another regulation that strongly affected vocational schools was the introduction of a negative scoring system in the central university entrance exam (*Öğrenci Seçme Sınavı* - ÖSS) that demanded better results from vocational school graduates who wanted to pursue a different career than the one they started. This decreased the chance of vocational education students to enter the four-year

[6] As prime minister, and later president throughout 1980s, Turgut Özal was the person who introduced a multitude of neo-liberal state policies to Turkey. During his reign, the economy of Turkey was subject to waves of privatization of many state sectors, export-oriented industrialization plans, free market regulations, etc.

programs of universities and has lead to the immense deterioration of the conditions of vocational education students after 1997. Policy makers promoted this regulation by providing another opportunity for vocational and technical schools' graduates: The graduates of these schools could directly transfer to vocational higher education departments of universities – *Meslek Yüksek Okulları* – that give two-year education, without entering the ÖSS.[7] Even so, the percentage of vocational technical high school graduates who take the ÖSS still continued to increase after 1997. For example, in the school year of 2000-2001, 72% of the final year students from these schools applied to the exam, while it was 42.2% for the school year of 1998-1999 (Akpınar, 2004: 22). But the increase in the ÖSS applications did not result in a parallel increase in graduates' success in this examination. Predictably, due to the introduction of this negative scoring system in ÖSS, the number of those who could pursue four-year higher education among vocational school graduates decreased to a considerable degree. [8]

The above statistics alone are a good proof for vocational education's failure to fulfill its goal of transferring some of the younger population to direct employment without receiving higher education. As no meaningful step is taken for either improving the conditions of education or eliminating the university barrier, I argue that these schools became places of confinement for lower classes rather than places for preparing the young population to the formal job market as

[7] The main reason behind such a regulation was the unwillingness of the secular state elite to see the graduates of *Imam Hatip* (religious) high schools pursuing carrers other than religious. It is important to note that hese schools constitute only 7% of the total of vocational and technical schools. See further: "Tekniker Karaborsada", Aksiyon, 19.12.2005.

[8] Although no reliable data on higher education levels of all vocational and technical education graduates is available, there are various research on this issue which indicate a downward trend in graduates' success in pursuing higher education since the 1997 Regulation. See further: M. Şen, "Türk Gençliği Konuşuyor" Milliyet, 2005; and A. Akpınar, "Türkiye'de Temel Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim", Ankara: Türkiye İş Kurumu, 2004.

skilled workers after high school education.[9] In Alibeyköy School for example, many of the students complain about their inferior position in comparison with their contemporaries in general high schools. Further, all of the teachers with whom I conducted interviews considered the 1997 regulation to be the basic factor in building the current underprivileged position of vocational and technical schools and their students. As claimed by Mesut bey, one of the technical teachers of the school:

> "In our times, these schools meant something. You could either become a good technician after graduation or choose to be a doctor or a lawyer. Thus, people had the chance to realize their aspirations in some way if they tried. No law was interrupting their future. Nowadays, unfortunately, the students are not lucky. Anyway, our school is now preferred only by children of lower-income families, most of whose fathers are workers as well. In the end, they will perform dirty manual jobs no one wants to do!" [10] (Mesut bey, technician teacher)

When the profile of the students of vocational and technical high schools is examined, one can say that children from middle-class families ceased to attend these schools (Şen, 2005).[11] Rather, vocational or technical education has become an option only for the children of low-income families who have to use their wage-labor earlier in their life and who have no expectation of or no financial means for higher education. Most of the students enter vocational and technical

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[9] Indeed, there are debates among the policy makers concerning the restructuring of vocational technical education and its curriculum in the last years. The European Union's project "Strengthening the Vocational Education and Training System in Turkey (Mesleki Eğitimi Geliştirme Programı)" MEGEP is designed to restructure vocational technical education in line with changes in the labor market and from a lifelong learning perspective. MEGEP will be discussed in the last part of this chapter as it deserves more attention in terms of the implications it carried for the establishment of the current neo-liberal order.

[10] *"Bizim zamanımızda bu okulların bir anlamı vardı. Mezun olduktan sonra iyi bir teknisyen olurdunuz ya da doctor veya savcı olmayı seçebilirdiniz. Yani, insanlar bir şekilde isteklerini gerçekleştirme şansı bulabilirlerdi, eğer uğraşırlarsa. Onları engelleyen bu tür yasalar yoktu. Ne yazık ki öğrencilerimiz pek şanslı değil bugünlerde. Zaten artık yalnızca alt sınıftan ailelerin çocukları geliyor okulumuza, babaları da işçi mesela bu çocukların. Kimsenin yapmak istemediği kol gücüne dayalı pis işleri yapacaklar sonuçta! (Mesut bey, teknik bölüm öğretmeni).*

[11] I have observed the same trend in Alibeyköy EML.

schools as a result of their parents' pressure. The families have two main reasons for sending their children to those schools according to the deputy headmaster of the school:

> "Some [of the parents] are too oblivious: They send their children to the nearest school in the neighborhood. On the other hand, some others wish their children to start working immediately due to their economic concerns"[12] (Hasan bey, the deputy headmaster)

Indeed, numerous students in the school asserted that they are in Alibeyköy Vocational School only because it is situated in their neighborhood and because their families could offer no other options to them other than that. Some of them stated the reason to be the easiness of education in vocational schools while some others' motive has only been to be with a friend who was already attending the school. Such narratives reveal the ways in which education is viewed by lower classes: While the school is seen as necessary for a secure transition from school to work by economically deprived families, it does not evoke any further expectation. They do no more perceive the role of education as providing them with cultural capital and as enabling any social mobility.

The New Production Regime and the Changing Conditions in Transition to Work

The falling demand for industrial vocational and technical education and the decreasing emphasis given to it by policy makers are closely related to certain global trends. From the 1970s onwards, Fordist type of accumulation in the

[12] *"[Anne babaların] bazıları çok bilinçsiz. En yakın okul neresiyse oraya gönderiyor. Bazıları da ekonomik kaygılardan dolayı bir an önce iş hayatına atılsın istiyor.„ (Hasan bey, müdür baş muavini).*

industrialized countries was transformed into a new form which is characterized by "flexible accumulation", decentralized and demand-side production, by the weakening of trade unions and work-securities, and finally, by the increasing vulnerability of the working class in such conditions (Harvey, 1990; Lipietz, 1987; Brenner and Glick, 1991). Turkey's manufacturing and industrial sectors followed a similar path after the 1980's (Köse and Öncü, 2000). Flexible accumulation brought with it processes of de-industrialization in some parts of urban centers and downsizing in production through which manufacturing and industry based economy declined or unraveled into many smaller production sites. From the point of view of the working class, such unraveling of industrial production changed the character of industrial work by promoting flexibility, which has brought a sense of responsible autonomy and multi-skilling to a privileged cluster of workers and an uncertainty, unpredictability and insecurity to the remaining majority (Munck 2002: 97). The objective probabilities of achieving a reliable and decent wage through manual work have radically decreased for this remaining part of the working class and the threat of one's losing his/her job has become a permanent condition for all workers (Sennett, 1998; Gorz, 1982). Moreover, the key features of desirable workers for the contemporary production regime have become their capacity for mobility, flexibility (they must be prepared to work in any mode, at any time, for any pay), increased expertise (they must have more technical than manual knowledge and skill), and increased social and cultural capital. Loyalty to tradition, locality and social class are perceived as obstacles to productivity.

The current profile of Turkey's industrial worker is also affected by the change in the production regime as various research revealed (Koray, 1999: 183-

190).[13] The majority of industrial workers work mostly in small-enterprises most of which employ less than 15-20 people.[14] The average age of the workers is 33-34 among skilled laborers and less than 25 among the unskilled ones. Three out of four is below the age of 40, only 5 per cent of the workers are over the age of 40 and the working life generally terminates by the age of 40 for both skilled and unskilled workers. While industrial workers were mostly graduates of primary schools before, in the last years, the young labor force began to consist of high school and even higher school graduates. Most of their families have either working class or peasant origins. The working conditions are heavier for the younger workers as they are most of the times obliged to do over-time work and also as they are fired frequently and more easily. All these prove the generational disadvantages of the new working classes who are required to be flexibly-organized in the Post-Fordist era.

The graduates of industrial vocational and technical high schools are also re-shaped by these new conditions. In a research which is referred to by Koray and which utilizes data available at the trade unions *Birleşik Metal*, *Türk Metal* and *Kristal-İş*, industrial vocational education graduates comprise 18.2 per cent of industrial sector workers (Koray, 1999: 184). In theory, most vocational school graduates have the option of either becoming self-employed in basic industrial work or of becoming high-skilled workers in industrial settings. Nevertheless, self-employment is not easy since the majority has no adequate capital at hand. On the other hand, it is evident that the big industrial companies still need qualified workers who would act as intermediaries between the engineer and the unskilled labor; and

[13] Koray quotes from the research made by Boratav, Petrol-Is, Birlesik Metal, Turk Metal.
[14] Since the industrialization in Turkey has followed a comparatively slow pace and also because of the inadequacy of capital, industrial areas are mostly made up of small-enterprises most of which continue to be family enterprises.

the vocational education students should have been the most suitable candidate for such work. However, such employment opportunities in the labor market are available only to workers who gained experience at younger ages, and/or had qualifications consonant with the current needs of the industry and technology. In these conditions, the poor-quality education attained in vocational schools has detrimental rather than positive effects for the majority of such schools' graduates. As often claimed by the private sector producers, in the classical industries, where there is still need for qualified labor that is not easy to be found due to information asymmetries in the labor market, laborers from the apprenticeship centers are now preferred instead of vocational school graduates.[15] Vocational and technical high schools have weaker labor market linkages since the dual character of the vocational high school education brings about a lack of concentration on practical training and education in comparison to apprenticeship centers. Vocational education further began not to appeal to the needs of the current labor market when the quality of technical education deteriorated with the decreasing emphasis given to such type of education in the government budget. As a result, most of the graduates are currently bound to work in the in the informal sector as semi- or unskilled workers[16].

Many recent vocational school graduates are experiencing unemployment for long periods of time or they are unable to find jobs related to their educational

[15] Apprenticeship centers provide vocational and technical training to the young people who are working in industrial settings and who have finished at least their compulsory education. The law No. 3308 ensures that young people who want to begin getting apprenticeship education should find a relevant work-place in private industries for themselves and sign an "apprenticeship contract" to set trained in an occupational branch. They will receive an apprenticeship certificate after finishing their education. The apprentices, then, can continue to take further education to become charge-hands (*kalfa*) and craftsmen (*usta*).

[16] It is here important to distinguish between the "unskilled labor" that the vocational education graduates engage in and the dirtiest and least advantageous working class jobs such as those in the construction or textile sectors. Compared to the latter sectors, the types of work performed in the industrial sector generally necessitate some sort of specialization in a certain skill, i.e. the workers in the industrial sector can comparatively said to be less de-skilled than those workers in the other sectors.

formations (Alkan et al., 2001; Akpınar, 2004). The rising unemployment rates in those schools' graduates in comparison to all other categories after the 1990s denote this fact (Table 1).

Table 1 – Unemployment Rate by Education Levels and by Gender, 1990 and 2004

	% of unemployment											
	Pre-high School			General High School			Vocational and Technical high School			Post-high School		
	Total	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*
1990	7,6	7,5	7,9	18,2	12,7	31,8	12,7	9,9	21,1	7,0	5,6	10,7
2004	9,1	10,0	6,1	14,6	12,3	22,9	15,8	13,1	26,1	12,4	10,1	17,0

Source: TURKSTAT Household Survey, 1990 and 2004.

According to these figures, highest unemployment is among vocational high school level graduates. It is 15 per cent in 2004– exceeding the unemployment levels for general high school graduates. The levels are worse for girls at all education levels. The remarks made by Hasan bey, the deputy headmaster of the Alibeyköy School support these findings:

> "The ones coming to these schools think that their jobs will be ready after graduation. But the situation has not been like that for several years. Technology has improved, the production regime has changed; there remained almost no work opportunities in this neighborhood. In the past, these schools had been favorable at least in comparison to general high schools. Our generation used that opportunity. […] But we now fill this space with people who have no skills, who cannot pursue higher education. Trouble makers, macho-lads, the ones fired from school, handicapped, etc. all come here… The parents who find their children unsuitable for normal education bring their children to this school. The result is that one third of the students repeat their semester. […] Girls have no chance whatsoever; there are in fact not many girls in this school. Most of them pursue their education in *makine ressamlığı*

department. If they have important acquaintances, they have a chance to find a job; however, most sit at home after graduation."[17]

Marx (1967: 635) observed that capitalism conduced the cumulative replacement of "skilled laborers by less skilled, mature laborers by immature, male by female" – also 'living' labor by 'dead'." Today, capitalism continues to utilize different identities, subjectivities and social hierarchies existing in the social and cultural structure to segregate the labor force and to create a hierarchy between different segments of classes (Munck, 2002; Sassen, 2002: 6). I claim that besides well-known ethnic, gendered and age-based axes (Wolf, 1982: 359; Braverman, 1998), vocational education in its current form has become another stratification line for working classes in Turkey because government policies and changes in the production regime seriously wounded the graduates. So, while "youth" is a subordinate category in the flexibly organized labor market in Turkey; "vocational high school youth" is a further subordinate identity which is formed of people who are rendered "redundant" and "useless". I will argue in the second chapter that the counter-school culture produced in these schools strengthens rather than weakens this identity.

No matter how much industry insists on the "need for qualified labor of vocational education students", as pointed out by one of the teachers in Alibeyköy School, "the majority among them is treated as low wage workers of the reserve army of labor rather than skilled laborers who have educational formation".

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[17] *"Meslek liselerine gelenler işim garanti diye geliyorlar ama son yıllardaki durum hiç de bu değil. Teknoloji değişti, üretim sistemi değişti, artık burada bir iş güç imkanı kalmadı. Şimdi; eskiden en azından düz liselere göre avantajlı bir yerdi. Zamanında biz faydasını görmüştük. […] Ama artık hiç bir işi beceremeyeceklerle, üniversiteye gidemeyeceklerle dolduruyoruz artık burayı. Düz liseden atılanlar, topluma birşey katamayacaklar, bıçkın delikanlılar… sakatlar bize geliyor. 'bu çocuk belli okumaya yatkın değil, bari bir mesleği, bir ünvanı olsun' diyen çocuğunu buraya getiriyor. Sonra burada bir dönemin mezunlarının üçte birinin sınıfta kaldığını görüyoruz yıl sonunda […[Kız öğrencilerin zaten hiç şansı yok, az kız var zaten burda. Çoğu makine ressamlığı bölümüne gidiyor. Torpili olana var belki iş, ama mezun olduktan sonra çoğu evlerinde oturuyor…"*

Marginalized and devoid of required social and cultural capital, they will never be equipped with qualities demanded by the industry; i.e. which are "mobility, readiness to reap opportunities, deftness in appropriating new possibilities as soon as they arise, etc." (Bauman, 1995: 32). Rather, as will be argued in the second chapter, they become part of the unskilled laborers who are fired and hired frequently and who try to optimize their short-term opportunities, rather than investing in long-term plans.

Formation of Working Class and Marginality in Alibeyköy Locality

The industrial vocational and technical high school in Alibeyköy was founded in 1970 in Karadolap district – when vocational education was promoted due to the industrialization plans of the government and when the neighborhood was among the most distinguished industrial production areas in Istanbul.

Alibeyköy is currently a place of de-industrialization and re-locationing. Now, in this part, I want to investigate the specific conditions of the district that were shaped by the transitions in the production regime and the residential policies of the governments in order to better understand the current experiences of Alibeyköy Industrial Vocational and Technical High School students. This experience is "inextricably bound up" with the social and personal identities that vocational education students acquire. Class, as something that is both a structural position (where you stand in the unequal processes of power, control and production) and something lived (Apple, 1995: 84) acquires its specific meaning inescapably in particular localities (Liechty, 2003: 257). Hence, without understanding the wider context in which these students find themselves, it is

difficult to appreciate the cultural work they put into the making of their identity which I will discuss in the second chapter.

I believe that Alibeyköy is a particularly suitable locality for studying the formation and transformation of working class youth culture since it has a working class history since the 1970's and also since it has been heavily affected by the residential policies of neoliberal restructuring.

The neighborhood is located inside the Istanbul peninsula and is one of the oldest residence areas of Istanbul. It was founded by the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century as a pleasure ground village with grand gardens and remained a rural place until the 1950s. The migration from rural Turkey to Alibeyköy began in the 1950s, when industries located around the Haliç coasts "pulled" the rural populations to the district due to the need for labor in these industries. During the 1950s, Turkish immigrants from Yugoslavia also arrived in Alibeyköy. The migration continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s at an accelerating rate, and reached its peak in the 1980's. The population rose from 2.150 in 1950 to 35.000 in the year of 1975 and totaled up to 136.000 people by the year 2000 (Erdener et al., 2003; Hatman, 2005).

The highest proportion of the population originates from the Eastern parts of Turkey – specifically from Erzurum, Tunceli, and Kars. Alibeyköy also attracted people from the Black Sea region (Ordu, Artvin, Giresun, Trabzon) during the first migration wave. Both the Alevis and Sunnis reside in the district; however the two communities by and large separated their living areas as Karadolap muhtarı Sami Bey with whom I conducted an interview has claimed. For instance, Karadolap neighborhood, where the vocational high school is also located, is mostly made up of Kurdish Alevi population and has a *Cemevi* on the

most visible sight of the neighborhood. Yeşilpınar, on the other hand, welcomes the Sunnis coming from Black Sea Region and embodies distinct symbols of Islamism and nationalism.

Life in Alibeyköy was shaped by industrial production until the 1980's. In those times, industries proliferated around the Haliç district and the Alibeyköy Lake. There emerged a total of 2020 ateliers, and 696 among them were either small or big industrial enterprises. Alibeyköy, in the last twenty years, became a working class district due to the existence of different sectors' large-scale factories such as *Demirdöküm, Sungurlar, Teklas, Kelebek Mobilya, Bahariye* and *Aydın Tekstil*. (heating systems, domestic appliances and textile factories) in the region. The workers amounted to approximately 32,600 around the district (Erdener et al., 2003: 12).

Migrant population's settlement to the area was crucial for the efficiency of the industries. Thus, the government and the private sector tolerated migrants' land appropriation and informal housing construction which initiated the process of making Alibeyköy a *gecekondu* (houses "built over night") settlement (Karpat, 1976, Keyder, 1987).[18] The presence of public and *vakıf* land in the district speeded up this process and raised the amount of people living there after the 1960s. For a long time, migrant people living in *gecekondus* around the industrial zone met the labor deficit with their cheap labor that was necessary for industrialization and national development.

[18] After the initial years of *gecekondu* development which had witnessed the spectacles of demolition by the police and repressive policies by the state, with the Law No. 775 passed in 1966 legalization of *gecekondu* areas started (Erman, 2001). Starting with this law, governments passed successive laws on *gecekondus* (i.e. "forgiveness laws") before each since they regarded these places to be a reservoir of votes. These laws and regulations aimed at bringing welfare to the inhabitants of the *gecekondus* by providing infrastructure and education in the manners of urban citizenship (Keleş, 2002).

The acquisition of a house in the district was the definition of becoming a "local" for the inhabitants. It provided the possibility for social integration and endowed people with networks both in and beyond the workplace. As Baydar puts (1999), in those years, strikes and demonstrations were widespread in Alibeyköy like in other *gecekondu* areas, and resistance was actually not only limited to the factories and the workers, but they spread to the whole neighborhood. The *muhtar* of Karadolap district, Sami Bey, who worked in *Demirdöküm* (heating and water heating) factory in the 1970s after the *15-16 Haziran direnişi (15-16 June 1970 Workers' Movements)*[19] took place, told me about those days in the following way:

> "Before, this neighborhood was an active neighborhood in terms of political movements. Why? Because, in those days, people were close to each other. As they shared the same faith, people here trusted each other… They were going to *kahve*s together after work. When they faced injustice, they knew that they had friends who would help them. Everybody would come together in case of an injustice. Both women and men; they would form alliance… The infrastructure demands from the municipality… This was also [handled] collectively. […] The people of the neighborhood protected each other in the factory as well; they would fight for their rights collectively. All those [Haziran] events could be organized due to such conditions. Our friends, albeit knowing nothing would ever change, had been participating in those movements. At least this is the story they tell to us…" [20] (Sami bey, Karadolap muhtarı).

[19] The dates of 15-16 June 1970 are counted as the first wide-spread working class movement in the history of the Republic of Turkey. The attempts by the government to close DİSK (Revolutionary Workers' Unions Confederation – *Devrimci İşçi Sendikası Konfederasyonu*) and the attempt to roll-back the workers' rights gained in 1963 resulted in the strong resistance of workers in big factories in Istanbul, Izmit and Gebze. When the movement spread to the streets at the end of the first day, two people were killed by the police fire and the second day was announced to be the state of emergency in two cities, Istanbul and Izmit.

[20] *"Eskiden bu bölge siyasi olarak en hareketli bölgeydi. Neden? Çünkü eskiden burada insanlar birbirine tutunurlardı. Aynı kaderi paylaşan insanlardı ya, güvenirdi insanlar burda birbirine… İşten çıkar beraber kahveye giderlerdi. Haksızlığa uğradıklarında arkasında dostları olduğunu bilirlerdi. Haksızlığa karşı çoluk çocuk birlik olunurdu. Kadını erkeği birlik olurdu yani... Belediyeden altyapı istekleri mesela… bu da beraber [halledilirdi]. […] Mahallede birbirini tanıyan insan fabrikaya gittiğinde de birbirini kollardı hep; hakkını birlikte ararlardı. Böyle örülmüş o günlerde o fabrikalardaki onca olay. Bir şey değişmeyeceğini bilse de o yürüyüşlere katılmışlarmış bizim arkadaşlar filan hep. Öyle anlatıyorlar yani…" (Sami bey, Karadolap muhtarı)*

As it is clear from the quoted remark, the concentration of the workers within the factories and the neighborhood raised a sense of solidarity and common culture among the workers in that period – compatible with the Marxian theories of class consciousness. However, one should add to this situation the further effect of the increasing bargaining power of the working classes of this generation due to the temporary consensus of conflicting parties (i.e. state, private sector and working classes) in the Fordist type of production regime (Harvey, 2003: 177). The typical industrial worker in the district – including the graduates of the school – had employment in one of the mass-production factories and was under the legal protection of government laws and regulations (Erdener et al., 2003). As was the case with the Fordist worker of 1970s, he/she was expected to attain some kind of skill during his/her working life which strengthened his/her position in the industry.

The foundation of a vocational school in Alibeyköy by the year of 1970 is also narrated by the school teachers as an outcome of the need to industrialize and develop Turkey's economy:

> "This school had been founded here as a result of industrial demands. The enterprises of those days had been the ones to decide how many students there would be in each department. Look, all the factories were here; they were located on the central road. The students were beginning to work in Demirdöküm, Teklas, Aydın textile as soon as they graduated. This school was founded as a result of such a need. Look, such a need has gone astray in these days."[21] (Ali bey, technician teacher)

[21] *"Bu okul burada sanayinin istekleri doğrultusunda açıldı. Tek tek hangi bölümde kaç öğrenci gelmesi gerektiğine karar veren o zaman burada yerleşik olan firmalar olmuştu. Bak, buralarda, merkeze giden yol üzerindeydi fabrikaların hepsi. Öğrenciler mezun olur olmaz burdaki Demirdöküm, Teklas, Aydın tekstilde filan işe başlarlardı. Bu okul, işte, bir ihtiyacın sonucu olarak doğdu yani. Bak, bugün bu ihtiyaç ortadan kalktı…" (Ali bey, teknik bölüm öğretmeni)*

The "need" for this young labor force has currently diminished as he stated, and today the neighborhood has completely different working conditions and a completely different socio-cultural life. The process of change is said to begin with the efforts to reorganize the space when Mayor Bedrettin Dalan was in office after 1985. Dalan followed the global trends of de-industrialization and re-location (Harvey, 2001). The Haliç Project applied by him planned to get rid of the industrial waste accumulated for years as well as the industry itself from the center of the global(izing) city (Keyder et al., 1994). The reconstruction of Istanbul has ended up with the closing of almost all large-scale factories in the center of the city before the 1990s. The de-industrialization wave had inevitably great effects on the lives of Alibeyköy residents. Some of them (mostly the qualified workers as stated by Sami bey) had to migrate to a place close to the new factories (e.g. Tuzla, Edirnekapı, Hadımköy, İkitelli, Sultançiftliği) and the majority had to struggle with the new conditions in the neighborhood and develop new strategies to cope with these transformations. [22]

Unemployment and/or insecure employment became a widespread condition in the district from then on. When most of the large and small factories were closed, many small-scale spare-parts and textile workshops were opened in the 1990s, in most of which very few workers (15-20 people) are employed. The wages of the new "flexible workers" fell sharply and the high proportion of

[22] Added to the above hardships faced by the old residents, Alibeyköy residents have also experienced numbers of inundations which almost totally damaged their living conditions in the last five years. To "solve" the infrastructural problem in the neighborhood, the municipality decided to demolish some of the *gecekondu* buildings. This gave rise to further struggles by the inhabitants against the state.

Another housing problem in the neighborhood stemmed from the chaos created by the change in municipal regulations. As told by Karadolap muhtarı, the urban renewal efforts of the municipality consisted of a process of expropriation of *vakıf* land and selling those to the inhabitants of the district with a mortgage-type system. People who bought this land were paying their money to Alibeyköy municipality. However, when Alibeyköy municipality had been repealed after the 1980 coup d'etat, people for a long time were not oriented to any other institution for continuing their payments. As a result, today, the residents of approximately 3.000 houses are considered as illegal residents in spite of their efforts to "legalize" their conditions.

unemployment made them easily replaceable with one another. The new norm became lack of social security. When the total exclusion of some people (mostly the youth) from the opportunities of city-life is added to this portrait, Alibeyköy district became a place of uncertainty and marginality. Such conditions, as I will argue in the second chapter, have effects in the formation of subjectivities of the Alibeyköy School students as well.

When developmentalism failed in rescuing *gecekondu* people out of poverty and when it was replaced by neoliberal state policies, not only did the experiences of people who live here changed but also the ways in which they are represented (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu, 2001; Erman, 2001).[23] *Varoş* is a new term invented in the 1990s to refer to these places replacing the term *gecekondu*. According to public imagination *varoş* are places that embrace the "others" who failed to adapt to the city (Yonucu, 2005). Within the new discourses developing around the term *varoş*, places like Alibeyköy are no more considered by the state or society as places that are capable of modernization. Instead, they are seen as places where the "under-classes" live and pose a continuing threat to the "normality of the society".

As discussed by the mass media and as the narratives of people I conducted interviews with confirmed, the youth in Alibeyköy (especially in Karadolap district) increasingly associate themselves with codes of violence, drug use, theft, petty crime and participation in criminal gangs. Indeed, there seems to develop a new youth culture[24] in the district due to the inferior material conditions and people's exclusion from city life. This new "threatening" youth (Aksoy, 2001)

[23] The *gecekondus* signified the failure of the Turkish experiment with producing modern spaces and homogenous subjects who can operate as cultured citizens within these spaces (Üstündağ, 2005 and Yonucu, 2005).
[24] For a different research about the new youth culture, see: Gulten Kazgan (eds.), 2002. *Kuştepe Gençlik Araştırması*. Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları: İstanbul.

became the object of disgust and they are constructed to be dangerous, dirty, immoral and violent. As will be explained in the second chapter, most of the Alibeyköy School students are also seen as members of this youth culture in the district and themselves contribute to the production of such views. However, the third chapter will reveal a further fact. Many of the youngsters themselves also approached this new culture derogatorily and attributed its characteristics to the Kurds.

Young Workers in the Sphere of Education

In the light of what I discussed until now, in this section, I want to consider how the students of Alibeyköy School are prepared to become members of the working class through vocational education. I argue that the current structure of vocational education greatly determine young people's relations to the means of production. Thus, leaving the question of how a specific working class culture develops in the school to chapter two, in this part, I will examine students' encounters with the world of work both in the school and also outside during their internship or work experiences. Nevertheless, this experience greatly shapes their understanding of their structural conditions and hence the way they respond and attribute meaning to them. As argued, it is this two way process – their structural position and the way this structural position is actively mediated by culture and other power relations – that make these people into a class with distinctive qualities and concerns.

The school is definitely a masculine place. Only 90 among the total number of 1200 students are girls, most of whom are in their first year.[25] There are almost no senior year girls as many of them are transferred to other schools or drop out of school after their first year or the second year. The girls are said to leave after a while mostly because they begin to consider the educational formation and credentials attained in school as too masculine.[26]

There are five technical departments in the school (electricity, electronics, metal work, furniture and lathe) each of which have their own laboratories and workshops. One can detect even at first glance how the school is affected by the marginalizing and detached conditions of the district. The situation of buildings, technical equipments in the workshops and classes in the school are in extremely poor condition. No cultural activities and almost no social spaces are offered to the students inside the school place.

All three diverse types of schools, i.e. Industrial Vocational High School, Technical High School and Anatolian Technical High School are combined in the single space of the school. Their functioning is different in terms of curriculum, school-days in the senior year, duration of internship duty, specialization areas, technical equipment and infrastructure, space occupied by each of them, etc. All of these undoubtedly bring some sort of segregation to the school in favor of some groups (i.e. the Anatolian technical education students) and cause discrimination

[25] In the meantime, I leave the question of gender division and its effects to the second and third chapter since almost all the narratives that I collected about the work-life and laboring belonged to male students.

[26] As claimed by the technical teachers of the school, they make use of their formation only if graduated from the *makine ressamlığı* department, i.e. by engaging in the ornamentation or design of the woodwork, etc. Otherwise, they do office work or just stay unemployed.

against some others inside the school in any regular school-day.[27] On the other hand, a single administration and faculty are responsible for all. Also, all students are obliged to take four-year schooling since 2005[28] and all of them can transfer to the two-year vocational higher education departments of universities without sitting the central examination after graduation.

First year students make up the largest group among the school population and they are the most disassociated ones with the technical aspects of the school. Their curriculum more or less covers the same courses as that of the general high schools and consists of only introductory technical education courses. They have no contact with technical concepts, with the teachers in the technical departments or, with the places where different sorts of technical education are undertaken. Generally, the quality of their education is poorer than that of general high schools as argued by many teachers and students. Because of this, there is a high turn over rate in these schools, specifically in recent years. Many students transfer to general high schools once they finish their first year. On the other hand, "the most unsuccessful ones and the trouble-makers of the general high schools are brought to the school as if this place is a '*ıslahhane'* (house of correction) or *'iş bulma kurumu'* (employment agency)'", claimed Hasan bey, the deputy headmaster of the school.[29] One third of the first year students had to repeat a year by the 2006-2007 educational year and the first year classes became too crowded because of these repeating students. Also, lots of people (approximately 70-75 first year

[27] However, this can be counted of secondary importance as Alibeyköy School is pronounced by many as unsuccessful and deteriorating without singling out any one of these three schools. See the next part.

[28] Before 2005, only the technical and Anatolian technical education students were getting a four-year education as they were said to be given superior technical formation compared to the industrial vocational school and as they were being graduated with the degree of "technicians". Industrial vocational education students were graduating in three years.

[29] Also, other metaphors such as *'rehabilitasyon merkezi'* (rehabilitation center) and *'kışla' (*casern, i.e. refering to the place's masculine construction) were widely used among various students and teachers to define the school.

repeating students) leave school after this first year. Such inferior status of the first year education and its totally separate character from technical education seems to add to the students' failure in their achievement.

With the beginning of the second year, students are introduced to the basic elements of vocational education and workshop (*atölye*) courses begin to take place. Students are separated according to their areas (electrics, electronics, metal work and lathe, furniture or technical drawing) in this second year and they encounter a different curriculum and conditions. Since the year 2005[30], third year education has been arranged such that the students are expected to specialize in the areas they choose. For example, a student in the electrics area may choose to specialize in coil winding (*bobinaj*), assemblage systems (*montaj sistemleri*), etc. These students learn to use machines related to their specializations in the related workshops of electricity, electronics, metal work, and furniture which are situated side by side in the furthest part of the school. The second and third year students do approximately three or four hours of work several days of the week in these workshops. In their last year, most industrial vocational high school students carry out three-day internship and two-day school obligation while some others come to school only four days as they complete their internship duties in their summer holidays.

As the Anatolian Technical High School is the most distinguished and the least populated department in the school, its selected students are provided with unique opportunities in the school place and in terms of curriculum. They are

[30] The rules and regulations for choosing specialization areas have been changed by a new project called "MEGEP", which will be discussed in detail in the last part of this chapter.

particularly considered as privileged because of their knowledge of English.[31] On the other hand, the students who have been successful in their first year are chosen for the technical high school and thus, given a guarantee to graduate with the degree of "technician". The least successful remaining students get industrial vocational education beginning from their second year. In theory, these students (beginning from the most successful ones) are given the opportunity to choose their own specialization. However, in practice, the school administration has been avoiding the organizational burden of giving students such options and instead, has been performing the whole process of dividing students centrally. According to the deputy headmaster of the school, it was because "the students who were given options always preferred to get education in electrics or electronics department, and the remaining are obliged to get in the manual work branches". I observed that his statement was in fact reflecting students' choices truly, and that students' choices pointed out the current trend of escaping the "dirty" manual work among the youth (which will be discussed in the next chapter).

One would expect that the outcomes of the above-mentioned diverse hierarchical mechanisms applied to three different types of students in the school would have reflections on work-life. However, it was not the case for this school: Better credentials could not be converted to parallel superior job opportunities by the students.

[31] The specialty areas of Anatolian Technical School students are determined before they begin school as they have chosen their branches in the central examination for entrance into high schools (*Ortaöğretim Kurumları Sınavı –OKS*) they entered.

Encountering the Unfair Rules of New Vocationalism

The "new vocationalism", which is developed in order to remedy the mismatch between the needs of the industry and the products of the school, has been a great invention of the neo-liberal era that is characterized by unemployment and flexible labor markets.[32] Brown (1987: 2) argues that, this new vocationalism is "motivated by an attempt to maintain (indeed extend) educational and social inequalities than to equip pupils for adult life". It is obvious that, the task of schooling becomes increasingly subject to the logic of industrial production and market competition (Ball, 1990; Halsey et al., 1997). In the same vein, the neo-liberal policies on vocational education in Turkey, rather than dealing with the content of education, concentrated on supplying the needs of industry especially for the last 10 years which, in effect, decreased the importance of the credentials received from these schools. The decreasing importance given to the quality of education and to the credentials obtained in the schools is also evident in Alibeyköy School. Despite the fact that the technical education students accomplish a superior education and graduate with a more privileged status than the industrial vocational education students, the former are not necessarily preferred by the industries as expected. This is because the one-month full-time summer internship period of the technical education students is not a sufficient and effective way of becoming familiar with the industry. Ekrem, one of these students of technical education explains:

[32] Developed in Great Britain, new vocationalism refers to the attempt of the Thatcher government to restructure the educational system to meet the demands of the industry. According to Brown, this approach in education has manifested itself in a number of recent programs such as the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative, the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE) and City Technology Colleges. See P. Brown, *Schooling Ordinary Kids: Inequality, Unemployment, and the New Vocationalism* (London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1987), pp.108-117.

> "For example, I have forgotten what I learned in the summer internship period. If I go today, I have to re-learn everything. What we do here teaches us something; but in real work, all machines are different, they are high-tech… And you do sensitive work. Here, you do nothing, learn nothing! Here, there is only one per cent of the components of the machinery, this is nothing!"[33]

Industrial vocational education students, on the other hand, meet the "real" working conditions earlier and have deeper relations with industry because of the Apprenticeship and Vocational Education Law No. 3308. This law requires that the industrial employers should pay at least one third of the minimum wage (approximately 170 YTL) to the trainees they have hired. Students' social security and security for work-related injuries is provided by the state. Although the managerial-staff claims to be helpful in finding suitable places for the students to fulfill their internship duties, the students say that they mostly arranged their internship places by themselves in the small workshops around Alibeyköy, Bayrampaşa or Edirnekapı, which are mostly part of the dispersed production chains. Only very few of the students find opportunities in bigger factories and it is always by the help of people they know outside of school.

Furthermore, trainee students often face poor working conditions, low stipends and sometimes they are not paid the fees they should be given. Although this period is believed to be important for experiencing work life, such an institutional order which provides a cheap and relatively skilled labor force for the industrial sector is evidently unfair for not only trainees but also the regular workers:

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[33] *"Mesela ben yaptıklarımı unuttum yazınki stajda. Bugün gitsem herseyi yeniden ogrenmem gerekir. Burda yaptıklarımız bişeyler öğretiyo; ama gerçek iş yaparken bütün makineler farklı, ileri teknoloji yani... Ve hassas iş yapiyosun. Burda hicbisey yapmiyosun, öğrenmiyosun ki... Burda bi makine parçasının sadece yüzde biri var, bu hiçbişey değil ki."*

> "Our students are preferred by the market. But when? During their last years. Everyone knows this. The workshop pays only one third of the minimum wage, and has a very important advantage as the school is responsible for the students' health insurance. Thus, the graduates stay unemployed as there is no need for the regular worker… Anyway, the others [trainees] are obliged to do the work so you can easily get rid of the normal workers..." (Halil bey, the metal works teacher)"[34]

As claimed also by other teachers and students, in these conditions some of the industries began to prefer hiring part-time workers from vocational schools over their regular workers. Thus, the presence of vocational school trainees in the labor market comprised a threat for the socially protected workers as they are replaced easily by these vulnerable young laborers. In Halil bey's opinion, this was the effect of Apprenticeship and Vocational Education Law being a direct import from the German system. However, the German system does not fit the labor conditions in Turkey. The collaboration encouraged by the system between the industry and the schools could only be possible in a corporatist system like Germany where there are strong and secure bonds between the two sides. However, this law arrived to Turkey during the growth of neoliberal policies, and therefore, resulted in a one-sided advantage on behalf of the industry at the expense of disrupting the previously protected labor market.[35]

On the other hand, big factories or companies do not generally prefer to hire apprentices from these schools since they do not consider part-time labor force as efficient and productive. As claimed by a technician teacher who works as

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[34] *"Piyasada bizim öğrenciler tercih ediliyor, ama ne zaman? Lise 3'te. Herkes bunu bilir. İşyeri asgari ücretin üçte birini ödemek zorunda yalnızca, sigortayı da devlet yaptıgı icin müthiş kazançlı çıkıyor işyerleri. Böylece bitiren kisi açıkta kalıyor, yani düzenli işçiye ihtiyac kalmadığından... Nasılsa diğeri gelecek çalışacak yerine daha ucuza mecburi..."(Halil bey, metal işleri öğretmeni)*

[35] The trade unions are not sensitive to the exploitation of these students' labor-power. Only the private sector industrialists discuss the working conditions of vocational education students but they take the issue to their agenda only in terms of the gains they could bring to them.

the observer of trainees working in the industries, even if they do, the students are very carefully selected according to their talents and "docility (*uysallık*)":

> "Look, the industry always wants something from us! What do we do here? We actually *sell* our children while they are still being educated. Yes, we do sell actually! They hire the ones they like and fire those they don't. (Mehmet bey, technician teacher)"[36]

In support of these statements, I heard several stories of trainees who were fired from the factories because they did not know how to behave in disciplined working environments – e.g. they smoked in the work-place, did not accomplish the necessary work given to them or were seen as trouble-makers. On the other hand, the remaining trainees participated in the training seminars and had only the right to observe the production process. They were not given permission to partake in the actual work processes since even a minor fault would slow down the whole process of production. It is for this reason that young workers are thought to be learning much more in small-scale workshops where they can actually do hands-on work.

The current exploitation mechanism which is institutionally organized by the internship system does not take into consideration the conditions of technical education students who need to work before graduation. Like the trainees in the school, many of the technical education students whom I got into close contact with were also working part-time in the factories which are situated close to their neighborhood. However, unlike the former who are secured by the state, these technical education students worked without any social security. Hence, their situation in the informal sector industrial setting was worse than the socially secure

[36] *"Sanayi bizden hep istemeyi biliyor aslında sadece bak. Biz napıyoruz burada, resmen bu çocukları satıyoruz onlara daha eğitim alırlarken. Evet satıyoruz hakkaten. Beğendiklerini kendilerine alıyorlar, beğenmediklerini geri yolluyorlar." (Mehmet bey, technician teacher)*

trainees. They were generally doing 10 hours of work a day on foot including the weekends and were taking daily wages of 15 YTL. If they did 2 hours over-time work, they earned an extra 5 YTL, which they found very valuable. They claimed that what they did was mostly unrelated with the training they got in the technical courses, yet they were chosen among the other young workers due to their partial familiarity with the conditions of heavy industry.

The Graduates

The job opportunities available to the graduates have also changed seriously in the last couple of years. As told by the technical teachers and the managerial staff of the school, many of the graduates who had before worked in the factories around the neighborhood were obliged to go outside of Alibeyköy for work due to de-industrialization and re-locationing of production. However, there are still graduates who prefer to work in the technical services[37] around the Alibeyköy district, that are very different in structure (i.e. small in scale and with basic technology) in comparison to large industrial factories of the 1970s. There are only a few people, who could be hired as qualified workers by the big factories with high-tech like Uzel or Beko, but these are the ones with a higher school diploma and/or who have acquaintances. However, as the higher school diploma means getting 2 further years of education, it is hard to attain for most of the students coming from economically deprived families.

Finding a job with social security has also begun to be a problem for the recent graduates:

[37] Technical services are generally situated in the residential areas of cities for doing overhaul, check over or repair of products of a particular trademark. In these small-scale work-places, usually few workers are employed each of which are specialized in a certain work type.

> "We are content if the student could find a regular job before his military service. How could we entertain the idea of security! We search jobs for them in order to make them develop their skills before military service. Anyway, jobs with social security are impossible to attain. Of course, there were more opportunities in the past, and they decreased at the moment. The number of graduates employed by the factories is too small. We cannot even pronounce the necessity of social security to the factory owners or managers. They only say: 'no sir, it is not possible!' For example, Fatih [*the graduate student who came to see him during our interview to explain his current situation and asking for help*] could not even get his wage which he has deserved, how could he think of security in such an environment! There are other examples as well, examples, in which the factory owners had to pay because of the pressures of the community in the neighborhood. For instance, you know the factory owner's acquaintances, and he ought to pay not to harm his public credit. Otherwise, he just doesn't pay!"[38] (Halil bey, metal works teacher)

In heavy industry, this creates more problems due to the fact that the workers are open to work injuries and health problems. Here, workers are obliged to choose between social security and additional income in return for no social security. As stated by my interviewees, the wages of graduates as semi- or un-skilled workers are only about the minimum wage (400 YTL) while it would increase by 200 YTL if they accept to be hired without security. Most graduates choose the latter option and disregard the possible risks they would face in the workplace. In addition, the quotation above shows that in Alibeyköy, informal ties and communal bonds have gained a renewed importance in shaping the form of access to the labor market (See also Beneria, 2001).

[38] *"Öğrencinin askerden once iş bulmasına razıyız zaten, sigorta nerdeee! Hic degilse askere kadar meslekte biraz daha pişsin ilerlesin diye saga sola iş bakıyoruz. Yoksa zaten sigortalı, güvenceli is hemen hemen imkansız birsey. Eskiden daha fazla idi tabi imkanlar, şimdi azaldı...Fabrikaların istihdam ettigi ogrenci sayısı cok az. Biz isyeri sahibine, işyeri yönetimine 'sigortalı olması lazım bu ogrencilerin' bile diyemiyoruz; 'hocam olmaz' diyor geciyor. Mesela Fatih [durumunu anlatmak ve yardım istemek için gelen yanındaki mezun öğrenci] bırakın sigortayı, hakkı olan maası bile alamamıs. Baska orneklerde de mesela cevre baskılarıyla odemek zorunda kalanlar oluyor; kapı komsusunu tanıyorsun, ticari itibari zedelenmesin diye odemek zorunda kalanlar...Yoksa vermiyor adam..." (Halil bey, metal işleri öğretmeni)*

Another very significant stratification line which resulted in graduates' differential employment conditions is the division between mental and manual work opportunities. This division is also a reason for the current inconsistencies in matching the educational outcomes and the jobs. In the current situation, manual work branches are said to offer more employment opportunities for their graduates than the mental work branches. This is also the result of the expectations formed in the school. Graduates from manual branches accept to do "dirty" work that would not be done by most high school graduates other than vocational education.[39] On the other hand, even though the students of the electronics and electrics departments gain better credentials and were more successful in the school in comparison with the students of metal work, furniture and lathe departments, they have less chance for employment since they lack the cultural and linguistic capital to express and articulate themselves in the service sector market and to adapt to the flexible work conditions as opposed to the middle classes who obviously attain more cultural capital and various credentials.

Adapting to the Neoliberal Order or Becoming Marginalized? : Restructuring of the Vocational Education

In the last years, policy makers increasingly began to prepare proposals to remedy the above mentioned problems of vocational schools, such as the ineffectiveness of the curriculum, the lack of coordination between industry and these schools, and the lack of entrepreneurial skills among the students. In this part, I will extend my observations to another industrial vocational high school in a neighborhood close to

[39] General high school graduates coming from lower classes are mostly in the service sector jobs in the urban centers (TURKSTAT, 2005).

Alibeyköy in order to better analyze how neoliberal policies on vocational education created different conditions and adoption strategies in different school regimes. The government project "Strengthening the Vocational Education and Training System in Turkey (*Mesleki Eğitimi Geliştirme Programı* - MEGEP)" is recently the most important attempt at restructuring vocational education[40], and a closer look at its various implementations may give us important clues about the new patterns of state, school, industry and civil society relations.

MEGEP, which is a five-year project agreement signed between the European Commission and the Government of Turkey, aims to strengthen Turkey's vocational education in accordance with European Union (EU) strategies. The general objective of MEGEP is to develop a "modern", flexible and high-quality vocational education with a lifelong learning perspective that can respond to the socio-economic needs of the country (Labor Market Team MEGEP Project, 2006). Along with this aim, something called a "modular system" is adopted. This system foresees the creation of a flexible curriculum which will allow a student to leave school at any time with a certificate showing that s/he finished a particular module provided in the school. [41] The school administrations, rather than applying rules and regulations of a central system, will formulate their own solutions to the existing problems and create individual projects for the success of the schools and students. Thus, they can add new and flexible modules and discard the knowledge that is irrelevant in the

[40] Indeed, there were other such efforts in the history of vocational education policies. Among them are the "The Education Project for School–Industry Collaboration (1979)" (*Okul-Sanayi Ortaklaşa Eğitim Projesi* - OSANOR) which was initiated for only some of the schools in a number of cities; and "The Project for the Development of Vocational and technical Education (1993)" (*Mesleki Eğitim ve Teknik Eğitim Geliştirme Projesi* – METGE) which was implemented only in *kız meslek liseleri* (vocational high schools for girls) with an aim to provide the women graduates with suitable employment opportunities. However, there have never been a project like MEGEP that encapsulated the whole vocational education sphere.

[41] From now on, students are free to get in and out of the system, and they will acquire a formal education diploma when they complete the modules. (For further information see http://www.megep.meb.gov.tr/ February 22, 2007).

curriculum. In addition to this relative autonomy granted to them in deciding their specialization areas, the schools are expected to put into practice strong private and civil society partnerships.

In Alibeyköy Industrial Vocational and Technical High School, MEGEP or its effects for the school were not an issue of debate at all. The students had meager information about the new system and the teachers did not promote the project as they believed it alone would not solve the problems. However, the situation was totally different in Küçükköy Industrial Vocational and Technical High School which is situated in Gaziosmanpaşa district and where poverty and marginality is similar to that of Alibeyköy.[42]

By the year of 2004, Küçükköy School was chosen as one of the 114 pilot schools for implementing the new rules and regulations of MEGEP. Although the school building and its environment has poor conditions like that of Alibeyköy School, the interior space has been rearranged by using MEGEP funds and private sector partnerships. Private sector partnerships with companies like Mercedes, Adopen, Beko, and Bosh dominated the school area. Three new workshops in the school were founded by these companies in the last few years. These partnerships were formulated by the school's concerned employees (i.e. mostly by the technician teachers) and these employees had full belief and commitment to MEGEP which according to them brought the school a new hope for improvement. During our interviews, they incessantly emphasized the necessity for such private initiatives so that educational objectives can be rearranged in line with the needs of industry. According to them, students gained a more flexible schooling agenda, they

[42] Gaziosmanpaşa had a similar migration trend with Alibeyköy in the 1970s. It has also similar poor socio-economic conditions and it is currently one of the biggest "varoş" districts of Istanbul. However, the two neighborhoods differ in their composition of population: Gaziosmanpaşa welcomes predominantly the Kurdish population unlike Alibeyköy neighborhood.

specialized better in their future occupations and obtained more opportunities in terms of training and employment as a result of MEGEP:

> "For example, last year we signed a protocol with Mercedes on the subject of application techniques for industrial painting. This is about painting Mercedes automobiles. Industrial painting students began to go to Mercedes in their 10th class (second year). While in other schools the internship period is carried out in the 11th class, our students of the 10th class are taught their workshop courses in Mercedes' Education Unit.[43] In addition, they are taken with the shuttles of Mercedes and given lunch in the factory. Besides, there is guarantee of work for most of them... Our students are very pleased to have these conditions."[44] (Habib bey, deputy headmaster)

The above-mentioned relative success in providing students with suitable occupations is also due to the advantageous geographical location of the school with lots of big factories with "Education Units" situated nearby. As these factories are obliged to hire trainees from vocational high schools[45], the technician teachers of Küçükköy School arranged various protocols with them for students' internship duties. They told me that, as technical department heads were in a key position for school-industry relations, they searched available internship positions in those factories during the months of April and May, and they gained the power to negotiate for the benefit of the school and the students with these big factories. For example, the department heads could arrange a protocol where it is agreed upon that an

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[43] The Apprenticeship and Vocational Education Act (Law No: 3308) gives permission to the 10th classes (third year students) to do part of their internship duties in this year.

[44] *"Mercedes ile sanayi boyacılığı uygulama teknikleri konusunda bir proje başlattık mesela geçen yıl. Mercedes otolarının boyanması üzerine bu. Sanayi boyacılığı öğrencileri 10. sınıfta gitmeye başladı Mercedes'e. Normalde yalnızca 11. sınıfta staj yapilirken bizim 10. sınıf öğrencilerimiz Mercedes'teki eğitim biriminde atölye dersini de görüyorlar. Ayrıca, stajyerler servisle alınıyor, öğle yemeği veriliyor. Ayrıca bir çoğu için iş garantisi de var sonrasında… Öğrencilerimiz bu durumdan çok memnunlar." (Habib bey, müdür muavini)*

[45] With the 2001 Law of No: 4702 (which was initiated to re-organize some of the regulations of the Law No: 3308), those enterprises which employed 20 or more personnel have become required to open "Education Units" and to give internship to students.

enterprise which hires their students as trainees become obliged to employ 60 per cent of the trainees after their graduation. Such industry-school relationship has inevitably ameliorated the conditions of some students in the school.

However, another teacher in the Küçükköy School, who was responsible for recording the graduates' current employment positions, did not talk so optimistically about the current situation of the graduates. He asserted that, in statistical terms, the effect of MEGEP seemed to have only been meager for students:

> "Ahmet Bey: It does not matter whether MEGEP comes or goes; it does not change that much. Indeed, there are not many changes here as well. Because there are good occupations and bad occupations today. Okay, our graduates who perform manual labor can find jobs. However, for office work, the situation is desperate. For example, for MEGEP, we have been recording the situations of our graduates for 2 years; we have last learnt the situations of 2001 graduates.
> Ilgın: What is the ratio of finding work among graduates?
> Ahmet Bey: 10–15 per cent of them go to the higher vocational education schools – in order to find superior jobs after graduation… Among the remaining, 60–70 per cent of the manual labor workers have found jobs whereas this proportion is only 20–30 for the workers who will do office work. That is, it has come out that the graduates of electronics and computer programs are doing unrelated jobs.
> Ilgın: What kind of jobs are these?
> Ahmet Bey: For example, he/she works in his father's place – in a grocer, a haberdasher or a small repair shop… Or he/she accepts doing unqualified work; being an apprentice or an assistant in a technical service. The situation of graduates is in fact not good… […] For example, there has also been such a thing in the project that Habib bey told you about. The factory fired lots of its workers who had been working with them in Mercedes for years and who had been getting 1200-1300 [YTL] wages. And they hired our graduates in their place! Such things happen as well. Anyway, only 20 or 30 out of 400 trainees managed to be hired by them… Under current conditions, we can't do anything. The private sector shapes everything according to its own interests; when it is done with the child, we have no legitimate claims left…" [46] (Ahmet bey, technician teacher)

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[46] *"Ahmet Bey: MEGEP gelse de gitse de çok bir şey değişmez aslında. Burda da çok değişmedi yani aslında. Çünkü bugün iş yapan meslek var, yapmayan var. Bizim mezunlarda bedensel iş yapanlar tamam iş buluyor. Diğer kesimler, yani ofis işleri içinse durum vahim. İşte biz mesela MEGEP için mezunların durumunu tutuyoruz burda 2 yıldır; en son 2001 mezunlarına kadar ulaştık.*
Ilgın: İş bulma oranları nedir mezun olanların?
Ahmet bey: Yüzde 10-15 oranında meslek yüksek okuluna gidiyorlar. Mezun olunca daha iyi işler bulabilmek için. Geriye kalanlarda bedensel iş yapanların yüzde 60-70'i iş bulmuş, ama bu oran

According to him, the teachers who were responsible for the execution of MEGEP were exaggerating the project's positive effects as they made private use of this money-generating project. He claimed that huge amounts of EU funds that came with MEGEP to create better conditions in the school had been used for improving the comfort of the teachers rather than that of the students. For example, more funds were allocated for renewing the bureaus of headmasters and teachers than for improving workshops arranged for training, or founding new PC labs for students. In fact, it was evident that "the culture" of the managerial staff in the Küçükköy School was transforming as they began to appropriate the new language of the neoliberal era by putting emphasis on the qualities of "flexibility", "skill management", "cost effectiveness", "efficiency" and "market demand" for the educational success of students. Especially, two deputy headmasters ceaselessly underlined their newly acquired power due to MEGEP which gained a more entrepreneurial character and thus, according to them, provided the most successful students with new internship and employment opportunities. Their increased affiliation with these projects and with the private sector made them "feel as if they were businessmen" as they said contentedly. [47] The situation of the majority and the failure stories, on the other hand,

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masa başı iş yapanlarda anca yüzde 20 yüzde 30. Elektronik, bilgisayar mezunları genelde başka işler yapıyor çıktı yani…
Ilgın: Ne gibi işler bunlar?
Ahmet bey: Mesela ya babasının işinde çalışıyor, bakkal olur tuhafiyeci olur, küçük tamirci olur… Ya daha vasıfsız işleri kabul ediyor, teknik serviste kalfalık, yardımcılık gibi. Mezunların durumları gerçekten iyi değil aslında… […] Habib beyin anlattığı projede de şöyle bir şey de oldu mesela: Kaç yıldır Mercedes'te çalışan, 1200-1300 alan bir sürü işçisini işten çıkardı fabrika geçen yıl. Yerine de 500'e bizimkileri alıyor mesela! Bunlar da oluyor yani. E zaten 400 stajyer öğrencimizin 20'si 30'u orada çalışabiliyor… Bu durumda bizim yapabileceğimiz birşey yok. Özel sektör herşeyi kendi keyfine göre ayarlıyor; çocukla işi bittikten sonra bize söz hakkı bırakmıyor ki…"

[47] For example, they often referred to a trip they arranged to Belgium which was part of a Leonardo da Vinci project that they implemented. This project arranged an internship for the most succesful 15 students of the school. As project managers, these two deputy headmasters included this trip inside the project' budget.

were totally absent in their narratives. They simply ignored the enduring exclusionary dynamics faced by the majority of students.

Unlike Küçükköy School which could set up a strong pattern of articulation with the neo-liberal rules on education, Alibeyköy is a site where the failure of adapting to neo-liberal capitalism could be detected and led to a feeling of marginality. Alibeyköy School remained "stagnant *(durağan)*" as claimed by Mahmut bey in Küçükköy:

> "Alibeyköy School remained a stagnant school. They could not be dynamic like us. Today, lots of projects are carried out here. We implement these together with the private sector; our department heads perform this very well. MEGEP, indeed, tells the schools to be more active. Alibeyköy should also be like us; but the school has no relationship with the industries as far as I know: Maybe, because they are far from the industrial settings or maybe, because of the situation of the staff…"[48] (Mahmut bey, the technican teacher)

In spite of the extreme confidence in and promotion of MEGEP in Küçükköy School, neither the students nor many of the teachers in Alibeyköy were aware of the reforms coming with MEGEP. Teachers discredited the project's effect with a few words and claimed that the education in school would not become effective without essential reforms. Most students, on the other hand, did not even have an idea about the new system except the fact that they would now be more "flexible" in choosing their departments and in dropping out of school with certificates in their hands:

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[48] *"Alibeyköy durağan bir okul olarak kaldı. Bizim gibi atılımcı olamadı. Bugün burada birsürü proje yapılıyor. Biz bunları özel sektörle yapıyoruz, bölüm şeflerimiz bu işleri iyi beceriyorlar. MEGEP zaten artık daha aktif olun diyor okullara... Alibeyköy'ün de bizim gibi olması lazım ama sanayiye uzak kaldıklarından mıdır, kadronun durumundan mıdır, orada okulun işletmelerle pek ilgisi yoktur diye biliyorum."*

> "Yunus: Things became harder when the school has become four years. You are only introduced to the basic areas in the 10th class. The specialized areas that you choose by the 11th class were easier in the old system. But now, it has become more difficult, they say.
> Ilgın: Is it this modular system that made it more difficult?
> Yunus: I don't know; it has happened when the school became four years, they say. I don't know; they talk about something like *modul* or *modül*…
> Ilgın: Do they give information about these to you?
> Yunus: They don't, no, no.
> Burak: We are backwards in terms of the technology, the workshops, etc. It is said to be better in other schools. If the teachers asked for things from MEB [Ministry of Education], there could be some opportunities. But also, there is the problem of place. When one of our workshops [of lathe] was ruined after the earthquake; the workshop of the lathe department had to unite with the workshop of metal works students."[49]

The stagnant and desolate (*köhne*) atmosphere which was prevalent in the school had been most apparent in such conversations with students. They were thinking that they had lost their chance from the beginning by attending *this* school and that MEGEP did not have the power to improve their future relations with industry. They were aware that the school did not have the capacity to correspond to the flexible needs of the labor market. The old rigid management techniques, the teachers' lack of entrepreneurial skills and the lack of necessary resources (which were available in Küçükköy School) are, in fact, serious obstacles against any improvement in the Alibeyköy School.

However, the pattern in Alibeyköy is possibly the "rule" for most of the vocational and technical high schools as opposed to the exception of Küçükköy

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[49] *"Yunus: Lise 4 sene olunca cok zorlasti isler diye anlatıyorlar. 10. sınıfa gecince ana dallarla tanışıyosun. Şimdi 11. sınıfta seçtiğin alt dallar da eski sistemde daha kolaymis. Ama simdi zorlasmis, oyle diyolar."*
Ilgın: Bu moduler sistem mi zorlaştıran?
Yunus: Bilmiyorum, 4 seneye çıktı böyle oldu diyolar. Bilmiyorum; modul, mödül öyle bişey diyolar…
Ilgın: Size anlatiyolar mi bunlari?
Yunus: Anlatmiyolar, yok ya."
Burak: Teknoloji bakımından geriyiz biz; atölyeler filan. Diğer okullarda bizden daha yüksekmiş. Hocalar istese imkan olabilir, MEB'den isteseler. Bi de yer sıkıntısı var. Bi atölyemiz [torna atölyesi] deprem nedeniyle yıkıldı, tornacılarin atolyesi ile metacilerinkisi birleşmek zorunda kaldı."

School which has been designed as a sample model for articulation with neoliberal policies. People whom I got into contact with in other vocational and technical high schools all found the effect of MEGEP as negligible in terms of its advantages for the students.[50] So, it seems that MEGEP cannot offer anything more than personal salvation in the face of the persistence of rigid stratification lines drawn by vocational education policies since the 1980s, and in the resulting stagnant and isolated atmosphere of most vocational high schools.

Overall, all the above mentioned school-industry relations and new regulations such as MEGEP seemed to point out the conditions of the new flexible production regime where there is almost no hope for the majority of students to attain the privilege of being employed in well-paid and high-prestige jobs at the end of their educational process. Only a minority has a chance to match their skilled labor with suitable skilled jobs. However, the majority is marginalized due to the content of vocational education as well as the new segmentation of the job market. This inadequacy has blocked the students' potential movement into middle-class and left them as a "localized" labor force that does not seek any further educational credentials. In the case of Alibeyköy School in addition to all of these, the students of the school are not even provided with individualized chances offered by MEGEP due to the inadequate infrastructure of the school (i.e. insufficient number of classrooms, workshops, teachers, etc.), the lack of skills in management for collaborating with industry and the lack of motivation prevalent in the school. The consequence of all the above mentioned disadvantages has been a total confinement of vocational education students and their reconstruction as

[50] During my research, I found the opportunity to talk informally to a few number of students who are new graduates and to some teachers of diverse schools such as Sultan Ahmet EML, Şişli EML, and Zeytinburnu EML.

future industrial workers belonging to the new marginalized working class of our era.

But the students do not of course respond to the above-mentioned reproductive forces in an uncomplicated and passive way. They develop a specific counter-school culture which again unifies them as a collective group with similar inclinations. As will be shown in the next chapter, the above-mentioned marginalizing factors indeed are actively countered by the students and it is in school where they fashion new working class identities that simultaneously obey and disobey, fit and unfit, internalize and resist the structural positions offered to them.

CHAPTER THREE

SCHOOL AS A SITE OF IDENTITY FORMATION AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION

In this chapter, I will present the "cultural production" of Alibeyköy Industrial Vocational and Technical High School students by looking at their daily experiences in the school place as well as the specific social and cultural context within which these experiences are lived. What I particularly emphasize will be how these students make themselves into working class members by developing resisting attitudes and strategies towards education. In the first part of this chapter I will discuss the anthropology of education in order to situate the perspective I develop in approaching these questions. Then, I will explain how the male students construct their working class positions. In order to do this I will both outline their aspirations for the world of work as they expressed it to me in the interviews I conducted, and second, I will focus on certain aspects of their identity whereby ideals of masculinity operate as a tool for resisting the disciplinary content of schooling. Hence, the attention in this chapter will be merely on the boys' experiences; a discussion of girls' situation will be left to Chapter 3. After an investigation of the male students' counter-school culture and the expressive styles that they develop, in the last part of this chapter I will conclude by showing that boys' understanding of fun, their job selection process and dislike for mental labor, prepare them to take their place among the de-skilled manual laborers and re-construct/re-produce them as working classes.

By the end of the 1970s, critical scholars developed the "reproduction theory" to explain how schools served to "reproduce" rather than transform existing social inequalities. In these scholars' view, schooling responded less to popular impulses for advancement and empowerment, and more to the requirements of discipline and conformity demanded by capitalist production and the nation-state (Young, 1971; Bernstein, 1973; Bowles and Gintis, 1976). However, the most pre-eminent work among these, the social reproduction theory of Bowles and Gintis was considered as over-simplified and over-determined in terms of its lack of consideration of the role of agency, and was criticized for not acknowledging student non-conformity and oppositional behaviors (MacLeod, 1987: 11).

Bourdieu's work shifted the attention of educational studies from the sphere of economic reproduction to the cultural one. In particular, Bourdieu's notion of "cultural capital", which refers to "a kind of symbolic credit acquired by one through learning to embody and enact signs of social standing" (Levinson and Holland, 1996: 6) was very useful to think through the potential role of the schools in establishing new forms of cultural capital while displacing old ones. However, this cultural reproduction theory also could not escape from relying on highly schematic and deterministic models of structure and culture, as well as simplistic models of schools as instruments of control.

The concept of "cultural production" in educational studies developed further by the introduction of an ethnographic approach while theories focusing on economic reproduction became considerably less important in shaping the literature. Beginning with Willis' (1981) "Learning to Labor", these ethnographic

studies forced scholars to move beyond the more deterministic formulations of Marxist analysis. Willis' ethnographic accounts of the working class "lads" challenged "the image of the passive, malleable student implicit in reproduction theory" (Levinson and Holland, 1996: 9). In the context of Willis' work, the "lad" was the self-elected title of those who developed a counter-school culture by opposing the authority and meritocratic ideology of the school.[51] The lads were vital, active participants who shaped life in the school, resisting its repressive characteristics, and largely constructing, through the forms they produced, their own subjectivities. The important point in Willis' work was that the school itself was not socializing the lads to conform to their working class positions; on the contrary, the lads were part of a much more dynamic process. Numerous ethnographic studies were pursued (also by theorists who had earlier adopted a simpler reproduction model) which sought to understand how "reproduction" could be both contested and accelerated by students (Brown, 1987; Apple and Weis, 1983).

Although "Learning to Labor" moved significantly beyond social and cultural reproduction theory by paying attention to the cultural productions of the working class lads, it also became a target of strong feminist critiques such as those by McRobbie (1996), Skeggs (1992) and Arnot (2004), who questioned whether Willis had really moved beyond a structuralist Marxist position. According to these critiques, Willis neglected to explore fully the empirical data that demonstrated precisely the complex interaction between masculinity and femininity and its harsh consequences for working class women. By dignifying the racist, sexist, and homophobic attitudes of the lads, McRobbie (1996) and Skeggs

[51] In opposition to the lads, what the lads called "ear'oles" made considerable investment in schooling. "The term "ear'ole" itself connoted the passivity and absurdity of the school conformists for the lads. It seemed that they are always listening, never *doing"* (Willis, 1981: 14).

(1992) argued that Willis's project failed to understand the articulation of male power and domination. The result has been the reduction of patriarchal relations to class relations.

Formal and Informal School Culture

As Thompson argued (1980), "class eventuates as men and women *live* their productive relations and as they *experience* their determinate conditions within 'the *ensemble* of the social relations', with their inherited culture and expectations, and as they handle these experiences in cultural ways." For example, family, neighborhood, education, gender roles, sex, political inclinations and how people spend their leisure time are all essential elements in the social formation of classes. School, as an ideological state apparatus (SIA – referring to Althusser, 2003) which inherently embodies class inequalities, in fact, is a fertile ground to analyze how working classes form themselves in their daily experience and also how they are formed by the restraints and probabilities imposed on them by structural factors. Following Willis (1981), I consider the school as a site in which knowledge, skills, education or expectations of youth are articulated as "cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1983: 243) in a collective way and form collective identity about certain issues and further, in which dissident cultural attitudes can flourish in relation to material conditions. Thus, a study of working class experience in the school should not only cover the analysis of labor relations and material conditions achieved with educational credentials, but also include the working class students' gendered and racialized identities. This means that my work will need to focus not

just on class specificity but also on a study of masculinity since in practice vocational technical high schools are mostly male-dominated.

A common sense understanding of the culture of industrial vocational and technical high schools emerged in Turkey in recent years. These schools are seen as places consisting of lower-class kids who exhibit aggressive masculine behavior and who remain outside the mobility schemes that education might offer. Although there is no extensive study on these schools, research carried on different types of high schools (e.g. Şen, 2005) proved that there are particular elements differentiating the profile of vocational high school students from others. A research by Şen asserts that vocational schools are preferred mostly by children of lower-income families who have to use their wage-labor in earlier life. In the school place, most of the students use cigarettes and alcohol, and exhibit aggressive behavior against the school authority. Illiteracy among families of vocational school students is widespread compared to others'. Conservative attitudes towards the issues of family and gender are noticeable among them. Also, a significant proportion of vocational education students identified themselves as idealists (*"ülkücü")* and they are said to have prejudices towards other identities such as Kurds, Armenians or atheists.

In the school that I studied, one can observe similar trends to those of most vocational and technical high schools. Situated in a marginalized neighborhood, Alibeyköy School welcomes working class families' children who are mostly Turks coming from the Black Sea region of the country.[52] Thus, besides sharing similar class conditions, many students shared the bonds of "*hemşerilik"*

[52] There are also an important number of students who have families from Yugoslavia and Albania. As some of the students in the school asserted, the Kurdish families living in the neighborhood do not prefer sending their children to this school since the school is known for its *ülkücü* (nationalistic) tendencies.

(localism) which has been a constitutive element in their identity formations (Erder, 2000; Duben, 2002). Further, the supremacy of Turkish students over other ethnicities made the issue of ethnicity an area of struggle in the school. Lastly, 90 per cent male population of the school created atypical conditions for gender relations in comparison to other schools. In the following sections of this chapter, I will delineate how these factors of identity formation among students are mediated both in the formal culture of the school and also in the informal culture where critical attitudes to schooling are performed.

In the Alibeyköy School, the young people adopted a counter-school culture which is in many ways similar to those of Willis' lads. But, there are some obvious differences as well. For example, while Willis's lads came across and defined some distinctive students as conformists (i.e. "ear'oles"), the striking fact in Alibeyköy School has been the meager numbers of the kids who choose to conform to the rules of the school in a desire for a good future and well-paid jobs and thus, for social mobility.[53] So, to react against schooling rather than to conform to its rules is the *norm* among the students of Alibeyköy School (except among the most privileged cluster of the Anatolian Technical High School students). With reference to the main thesis of Chapter 1, the presence of only a minority who heeded the credentials attained in the school has (i.e. the "ear'oles"), in fact, been a good indicator for the distrust felt against the quality of education given in the vocational and technical schools. And unsurprisingly, the lack of successful and dedicated students furthers these schools' current marginalized positions.

[53] Such a fact is also consistent with the findings of Mac an Ghaill (1994) who claimed that "laddishness" expanded to some extent also to middle class children in the neoliberal schooling system as the new culture of competition, standards, performance and exclusions generated insecurity and pressure over the students.

Formal Culture in the School: "Learning to Labor" or Ridiculing Labor?

The school is the zone of the "formal" with a precise structure: "the school building, school rules, a rigid curriculum, a staff hierarchy with power, the majesty of the law, etc." (Willis, 1981: 22). However, only a few students choose to invest in this formal structure in the Alibeyköy School. These, who were rather marginal, complained about the negative scoring system of the 1997 regulation or the disadvantages of the curriculum both of which are seen to be important obstacles for achieving success in the university exam. I met only three students who were actually preparing to enter the university exams; but these guys who wanted to become engineers had only a minor chance exactly for the reasons they cited. Moreover, they did not attend the private education centers (*dershaneler*) which proved themselves to be necessary for attaining success in the ÖSS for years.[54] In addition to all those, their social milieu, which was devoid of cultural capital and which developed no relations with or interest in education, did not support any motivation they showed for such mobility and left them unequipped for the competitive environment of ÖSS.

Among the remaining majority, the quality of education given in the school has been rarely an issue of interest or complaint. Many of the working class students saw the school to be out of touch with the current necessities of the labor market and with their future lives. They did not believe in the logic of vocational education, and mostly embodied an indifferent attitude towards the formal codes of schooling. School seemed to be a place where they waited impatiently and

[54] Actually, it is more accurate to say that they *could not* attend a private class because of the financial burden it would cause to their families.

invested in alternative laddish behavior until they could legally leave the school and enter into the world of work.

Most students with whom I conducted interviews did not consider their education as a way of improving their knowledge, skills, expectations, etc. A deep seated skepticism was present in almost all students' narratives about the value of such qualifications. They thought that acquiring these qualifications was a waste of time for the sort of jobs they would get at the end. The possibility of real upward mobility seemed so remote as to be meaningless. For the boys, success meant going into an apprenticeship work at most. They believed that "who you know" not "what you know" is more important after graduation since even semi-skilled work opportunities were scarce these days.

> "Today, it's important who you know. There are students who are really successful in the school; but as they don't know anyone, they cannot get a job. For example, some guy leaves school without any qualifications, but his father or uncle knows someone. This guy goes up to the workplace and then they fix him up. It's who you know not what you know." (Ali, second year Industrial Vocational High School student)[55]

Moreover, there was also an acknowledgement that the qualifications they could possibly obtain would not very much help them:

> "I know I would not pass the class this year again. Actually, it is not worth staying until June. I can leave earlier. Everyone says that it's more advantageous to get a job near a craftsman when you are younger and

[55] *"Bugün önemli olan kimi tanıdığın. Okulda hakkaten başarılı olan öğrenciler var; ama kimseyi tanımadıklarından iş bulamıyorlar. Mesela başka bir çocuk ise okuldan ayrılıyor hiçbir vasfı olmadan, ama babası veya amcası birini tanıyor mesela. Bu çocuk bahsedilen işyerine gidiyor ve onu bir yere yerleştiriyorlar.Bugünlerde ne bildiğinden çok kimi bildiğin önemli artık." (Ali, Endüstri Meslek Lisesi 2. sınıf öğrencisi)*

learn the job earlier…" (Salih, second year Industrial Vocational High School student)[56]

However, most of the boys did not leave school. There were various reasons for the male students to stay in school. One of such reasoning has been the insistence of their families since there was no alternative to obtaining a credential of some sort in these days. They also recounted that their diploma acted as a hedge against their otherwise uncertain futures with possible long-term unemployment and provided an access to semi- or unskilled type of industrial work which was characterized by flexible modes of production. But it seemed to me that such reasons have been stated by many kids as a need to create a rational narrative for their paradoxical behavior of still staying in school, and that these answers seemed to serve a legitimizing function. However, as will be contextualized in the next part, I think that the primary reason for their stay in school has been their creation of a counter-culture in this space where they could form distinctive personalities and could escape from earlier exploitation in the workplace and also from the control of their families.

In response to my questions concerning the technical courses and the technical work they were taught in schools, students developed two different discourses, which I believe provides us with clues about the ways they perceived the role of the school in constructing their class positions. The first discourse simply "ridiculed" the technical work and manual labor produced in vocational and technical schools. The approval of technical training as a last resort for subsistence was the second basic discourse and I think that its adoption by those

[56] *"Bu sene yine sınıfı geçemeyeceğimi biliyorum. Hazirana kadar burda kalmanın bir anlamı yok aslında. Daha erken ayrılabilirim. Gençken bi ustanın yanında işe girip meslek öğrenmek daha avantajlı diyor herkes"*

who also rejected the importance of credentials attained by the vocational courses meant that they were trying to legitimize their stay in school.

The first category of "ridiculing kids" consists mainly of the first year students whose experiences stood separate from the world of industrial work and workers since they had no contact with technical concepts, the teachers in the technical departments or the spaces where different sorts of technical education are accomplished. As I observed, these first year students often disdained manual work and characteristics associated with working classes. Their narratives did not include the technical or vocational aspects of their formation even when I insisted on talking about this issue. For example, Bekir and Selim by whom I was accompanied from the first day of my research onwards had no idea about what they could do with their diploma, or where generally the graduates of the school found jobs, or how they built their lives. They were interested neither in the curriculum of the school nor in technical concepts. They explained that they had decided to attend a vocational school because they had heard that classes in these schools were easy. Furthermore, they did not perceive manual labor as something to be respected and in fact ridiculed the senior year trainees of the school by describing them with the word "*amele*" whose connotations are rather negative:[57]

> "Bekir: [*By showing the mass of metal and wood components in the school garden*] The senior year students prepared our desks by using those. They do manual labor [*amelelik*] while we read and write!
> Ilgın: Which department are they from?

[57] In the last decades, the word *amele* in Turkish gained an additional and in fact extensive meaning which is used to insult anyone (not only the members of the working class) for his/her outmoded behaviors or outlook. This new use was accepted and is still used by many. In Turkey's context, it was inescapably dependent on the loss of respect towards manual labor in the period of de-industrialization as well as on the reaction of the middle classes to the cultural mess the immigrant manual workers brought to the before-homogeneous urban setting.

Selim: Students from metal works department have done those. Poor students, they were made to work as if they were not students!"[58]

These statements express a loss of respect towards manual work among the new working class generations, as Willis argued (2003). Indeed, these kids behaved as if they would never enter the world of such work, and their desires and aspirations for their future lives were devoid of any relations with the manual work obligations of the working classes. For example, when asked about their future plans, some of them stated their wish to become clerks, engineers, or executive officers in industrial kind of work-places while some others talked about totally different aspirations (e.g. university dreams, becoming a famous football player, being a coffee-shop owner, etc) and about strategies by the help of which they could obtain higher living standards.

As they cannot continue to exclude themselves from the world of technical work by their second year, these ridiculers do not generally remain as such. So, I consider this group as experiencing a transitory stage whose disdaining attitudes towards manual labor will be replaced by an unwilling acceptance of their fate in the following years. In fact, when the dual focus (on general and technical education) in the curriculum is considered, I observed that if anything attracted the attention of the students about the education given beyond their first year, that would be the workshop courses. Especially the boys told me that they liked the technical stuff at school, but not the "paper-work" which seemed effeminate to

[58] *"Bekir: [Okul bahçesine yığılı metal ve tahta kısımlarından oluşan yığını göstererek] Son sınıf öğrencileri bizim okul sıralarını hazırladılar, bunlardan. Valla biz okuyup yazıyoruz, onlar amelelik yapıyor!*
Ilgın: Hangi bölümdeki öğrenciler peki bunlar?
Selim: Metal bölümündeki öğrenciler yaptı bunları. Yazık valla, sanki öğrenci değilmiş gibi çalıştırıldılar burda!"

some and childish to some others. Most of them didn't even consider such work as "real work." For example, the senior year students of the electrics class (consisting of 10 male students) in the technical high school, whom I had been in contact almost all along my research, had been given a metals course of 8 hours from which all of them felt they benefited. They thought that they learnt much more in this course than what they learnt in the paper-work courses. In their explanation of how the metal is molded and then shaped in the injection machine before becoming a Toys'r'Us toy, both an interest in what they engaged in and also a respect for manual work were noticeable.

But still it would be wrong to say that these kids were feeling a whole-hearted commitment towards the school because of this single course they enjoyed. They often developed disorderly attitudes even in this course, and they justified their attitudes by saying that there was no reason for taking the school's education seriously. On the other hand, the real work-life experience made them feel more integrated to the world of adults and thus, it was more respected and defended. Seçkin said 4 out of the 10 guys in their class were working in different factories:

> "Kenan and I do molding work in a factory for 5 months, we make automobile components. Kenan's family arranged this job for us; the wage provides for almost all our expenses. Anyway, family support is not good and not available after a certain age! Hasan and Onur also do part-time work; they are doing furniture spare parts. […] Our work is really heavy: In the factory you have to work in different shifts so, we have to do the night shift once a week. I work 3 days in one week and 2 in another. My legs, my body all ache! Last year for example, I was coming to school during the day and going to work in the night. Then of course, I could not listen to the teachers in the courses. After all, the courses don't mean anything!" (Seçkin, senior year Technical High School student).[59]

[59] *"Kenan'la ben Bayrampasa'da bi fabrikada kalıp işi yapıyoruz, araba parçaları icin. Kenan'ın ailesi buldu bu işi bize, epey geçimimizi sağlıyor. Belli bi yaştan sonra aileden yardım alınmıyor, alınamıyor zaten. Burdan Hasan'la Onur da çalışıyor zaten. Onlar da yedek parça işinde – mobilya*

As the quotation above suggests, courses are paid even less attention once students enter the world of work. Instead, the students began to acquire traditional working-class habits and adult masculine styles. Once they start working outside the school, they get the feeling that they left the world of "the school kids". I argue that their adoption of semi- or unskilled jobs which they consider to be a manly activity and their feeling that they are doing "real" work in return for real wages lead them to de-value the mental credential attained in the school. Thus, masculine pride and disdain for effeminate mental work form the basis of their working class counter-school culture. This anti-school culture is such that, similar to the lads of "Learning to Labor", these young males "penetrate"[60] the individualism and meritocracy enforced by the school with a group logic which is aware of the fact that certification, internship (Willis, 2004: 173) or regulation efforts such as MEGEP will never help to lift the whole working class. As these working class students realize that they would probably not get "good" jobs and that "job satisfaction" is an over-rated goal, they "reject, ignore, invert, make fun of, or transform most of what they are [sic] given in career lessons" (Willis, 1981: 92). As will be explained in the next section, these resisting acts are mostly performed by the male students in the form of exaggerated and externalized masculinity.

Masculine Counter-School Culture

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ek parçaları üretiyorlar. […] Çok yoğun çalışıyoruz biz, gece vardiyası yapıyoruz hafta içleri birgün. Bizim fabrika 2 vardiya calisiyor; bi hafta 3 gun, bi hafta 2 gun calisiyorum o yuzden. Artık tabanlar, buralar [showing his legs] ağrıyor! Geçen yıl gündüz okula akşam işe gidiyordum mesela. Tabi sonra gelince dersi dinleyemiyoruz. Bir anlamı yok ki derslerin!" (Seçkin, Teknik Lise son sınıf öğrencisi)

[60] By penetrations, Willis meant the lads' cultural tendencies to reveal social inequalities and crucial social factors they faced in their lives as working classes.

Alibeyköy School is a place of disorder in terms of students' deviance from the prescribed rules. The discipline of the school is undoubtedly contested by many students. As educational capital is neither effective nor popularly respected in the specific case of industrial vocational and technical high schools, these reactionary attitudes against the discipline of the school form a distinctive counter-school culture which has its own legitimizing discourse and a sound material basis. As Willis stated "it [informal school culture] is lived out in countless small ways which are special to the school institution, instantly recognized by the teachers, and almost ritualistic part of the daily fabric of life for the kids" (*Ibid.*: 12) In spite of the absence of public rules, physical structures, recognized hierarchies or institutionalized sanctions in the counter-school attitudes (*Ibid.*: 22), the presence of informal student social groups makes possible the emergence of elements that can indeed be called a distinctive "culture."

The meaning of laboring and labor power for these young people can only be understood in the context of the social divisions they experience in terms of gender, ethnicity, and generation. When Willis explored the counter-school culture of the lads, he suggested that the lads mobilized a certain type of masculinity valued in a working class context. Incontestably, schools are sites in which multiple masculinities are generated, often in opposition to school authority relations, curriculum structures, and forms of discipline (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Willis, 1981; Brown, 1987; Arnot, 2004). Some of these masculinities reproduce the schooling system while others unsettle it. In the above-mentioned context where credentials attained in the school are looked upon with disdain, I argue that one of the most important determinants in constructing the subjectivities of vocational high school students that remake them as working class men in

Alibeyköy is the effect of "hegemonic masculinity." Although the fact that I call this hegemonic might suggest that such masculinity would contribute to the reproduction of the system as it is imagined in the school, this is not the case. On the contrary, while the formal structure of the school operates on an assumption that it ensures social mobility, the informal culture of the school disregards the possibility of social mobility through education and values a patriarchal understanding of hierarchy, mobility and status. Indeed, as I explained in the first chapter, this has a material basis and becomes meaningful when one considers the fact that opportunities to be employed as skilled workers in Alibeyköy or to pursue higher education in the university for these students are shrinking. Hence, hegemonic masculinity as it is constructed in the school does not reproduce the school system as much as it reproduces the conditions that marginalize vocational schools at the first place. Moreover, it also contributes to the maintenance of a gendered and ethnic order in Alibeyköy as I will show more in detail in the third chapter.

A particular form of masculinity is "hegemonic" as far as its implicit superiority stabilizes a structure of dominance and oppression in the gender order as a whole (Connell, 1987 and 1995).[61] Characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinity have been aggressiveness, strength, drive, ambition, and self-reliance. It is indeed constructed and reconstructed in the intersections of class structures, social relations of ethnicity and gender (Donaldson, 1983: 648). In the same vein, by their everyday behavior, the male students in the Alibeyköy School shape

[61] Connell used the concept of "hegemony", derived from Antonio Gramsci's analysis of class relations, to refer to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life. At any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted. Hegemonic masculinity can thus be defined as "the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women." (Connell, 1995: 73).

gender relations as much as social class relations and construct their masculinity within the fluid relations of class, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality.

The prevalence of masculine practice in the school is undoubtedly related to the abundance of male students who got there to be trained in "male jobs". Forms of oppositional behavior can circulate in such a male-dominant environment much more easily as symbols of hegemonic masculinity help the boys to acquire an axis of power over women, and a "basis for feeling at least some ambiguous superiority over middle class males, such as teachers and successful students" (Willis, 2004: 180). In the next section, I will uncover the elements of the masculine counter-school culture of the male students. These practices are basically shaped around the male students' tendency for violence, use of alcohol, and cigarettes in the school space, aggressive opposition to teachers' authority and also the expressiveness in the adoption of popular culture images and nationalist inclinations. In examining those in the next section, I should note that I will not assume the counter-school male student behavior to be simply a product of resistance, but I will also try to uncover its role in the legitimation and articulation of male power and subordination following McRobbie's (2000) argument.

Excitement Forever: Fighting, Laughing and Pisstaking

The students strive to "create a visible, differentiated and reputable self" as a primary activity in school (Luttrell, 1996: 132). They are trying to "become somebody", a real and presentable self, secured in the eyes of friends. Their central activity in the school is to establish at least an image of an identity, and the kids

build their identity basically upon the opposition to authority. This opposition is expressed mainly as "style". Style is the active organization of modes of symbolic meaning construction between objects and activities and outlooks, which produce an organized group-identity in the form and shape of a coherent and distinctive way of "being-in-the-world" (Hall et al., 1976: 42). [62]

The most widespread commonsense belief about vocational and technical high schools is that they are places for the stylization of "macho masculinity". Conforming with this belief, the Alibeyköy School can be best represented as a space producing an informal culture and style whose most explicit and prevailing characteristics are the opposition to school authority and an associated excitement derived from breaking the law.

Passing time or "doing nothing" (Corrigan, 1976: 84) is the most common and intense activity engaged in by the male students. They talk about football, girls or each other. Most of their talk aims at arousing interest rather than claiming to be representing truth, or even touching anybody's material and daily reality. A great deal of joking accompanies this talking. All these activities come under the label of "doing nothing" and they represent the largest and most complex part of their counter-school culture. However, it is some other more extreme activities which mark them off, both from their contemporaries and the girls in the school. In fact,

[62] I should carefully note that I adopted a concept of style here which differs than that prevailing in subcultural analysis. In his analysis of styles and subcultures of the working class youth in 1970s England, Hebdige (1979) approached youth subcultures as shields of counter-hegemony and resistance to the social injustices of the working class world. Clarke (1976: 151) interprets these youth subcultures "as a vehicle of collective self-defense for working-class teenagers". Subcultures are formed in communal and symbolic engagements with the larger system of late industrial culture; they are organized around, but not wholly determined by, age and class, and are expressed in the creation of styles. In the 1970s, the studies of youth subcultures were very popular among the scholars who investigated the counter-cultures of the working class youth. However, as such analysis of style only concentrated upon the leisure activities of the youth and did not consider the effect of family, school, job experiences, etc in the formation of subcultures, it lost its importance after a while. See further: D. Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, London ; New York : Routledge, 1979; J. Clarke "Style" in *Resistance through Rituals*: *Youth Subcultures in post-war Britain* (eds.) London : Hutchinson, 1976.

the particular excitement of belonging to these macho kids comes from their antisocial practices. They are keen on exerting their bodily power, fighting, and adopting physically aggressive attitudes among themselves.

I was told about and I also encountered lots of fighting occasions which turned into special ceremonies both in the school and also outside. There was no apparent reason for the commencement of most of the fights which occurred during a regular school day. Sometimes a crude look or a joke was enough to fire up a fight between two groups while at other times the "issues of girls" or conflicts on political thoughts could cause such fighting. While these ceremonies could be terminated without serious outcomes and without the involvement of the school staff, the fights that occurred outside the school – with "Karadolap youth" or the students of the school nearby – mostly ended up with serious police interventions. Also, tales of different fighting affairs which happened during their collective attendance to basketball matches, while hitchhiking in front of the school or during their football matches with Karadolap youth were frequently told by the macho kids. Despite the high risk of getting hurt badly, the kids definitely enjoyed such performances and their narrations of all those fighting ceremonies were harmonized with a sense of humor. For example, Koray and Tayfun, who were among the 10 students with whom I spent my time together most of the time[63], were constructing their school-identities around fights and over the joy they got from these fights:

> "Koray: We are bored at school, what then? The best thing to do is fight!
> Tayfun: There are many ways and methods to start a fight. If those did not exist, we wouldn't really have fun…
> Ilgın: How do you start a fight for example?

[63] In the 2nd month of my research, 5 of those 10 kids were fired from the school because they fought with the neighboring school's students as a result of which two boys got hurt very seriously.

> Koray: For example, you'll smash bottles while walking across the corridor, then, you'll come close and say: 'why do you touch, ha?' Or you will provoke someone by contending that he is staring at you. It is very easy to start a fight – if also your friend is together with you.
> Tayfun: There is another thing; we fight with our opponents with the 'fist law', not with the penknife! If we confront anyone with penknives, we scuttle as soon as possible…"[64]

As the quoted conversation makes evident, the boredom of the school is reduced to a great extent by the joy they get from fighting, from causing fights by intimidating others, from talking about fighting and from the tactics one employs in a fight situation. The solidarity of the group is also strengthened during these fights:

> "The more friends they bring, the more delicious the fight is! Because we – our class – are a privileged group here and we hold on to each other; we participate in any fight anyone is in for. For example, we, 10 of us have once beaten a class of 60 persons from the Anatolian Technical School. So, here everyone knows about us, no one can attempt to fight with us easily."[65] (Seçkin, senior year Technical High School student)

Violence is the most basic axis for the boys to distinguish themselves from all "the others" who are at peace with the rules of the school. As Willis (1981: 34) suggested, violence regulates a kind of honor among working class youth, and is

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[64] *"Koray: Ilgın abla, canımız sıkılıyor okulda ne yapalım? En eğlencelisi kavga!*
Tayfun: Böyle türlü türlü yollar, metodlar var kavga çıkarmak için. Onlar olmasa eğlenemeyeceğiz valla…
Ilgın: Nasıl çıkarıyorsunuz mesela?
Koray: Mesela koridorda geçerken omuz atacaksın, sonra da 'niye dokunuyosun kardeşim!' diye yaklaşacaksın. Ya da dik dik baktığını iddia edip zıtlaşacaksın. Çok kolay oluyor arkadaşın da yanındayken kavga çıkarması.
Tayfun: Bi de biz rakiplerimizle 'bilek gücü' ile savaşıyoruz; bıçak, çakı değil. Dışarıda çakılılar çıksa, o zaman önden önden koşarız valla…."

[65] *"Tüm sınıfı toplayıp getirseler kavganın tadından yenmiyor valla! Çünkü biz bizim sınıf olarak burda ayrıcalıklı bi grubuz, biz birbirimize çok bağlıyız; ne zaman birinin başına bir şey gelse koşarız hepimiz katılırız kavgaya. Bi kere mesela biz 10 kişi 60 kişilik bir sınıfı dövmüştük Anadolu Tekniklerden. Herkes tanır bizi o yüzden, kolay kolay kimse yeltenemez bizle kavgaya"(Seçkin, Teknik Lise son sınıf öğrencisi)*

"the fullest if unspecified commitment to a blind or distorted form of revolt". It is a kind of opposition to "the rule". When they fight, boredom and petty detail disappear according to these macho kids. However, it should be noted that despite its destructiveness, anti-social nature and apparent irrationality, violence is not completely random or in any sense aims at the absolute overthrow of the social order (Giroux, 1983). This exertion of male power seems to become an issue of necessity for some of the boys rather than an option:

> "Fights occur with no reason in the school. Looking at someone is a reason for fighting. In the world, one can look at someone, so what?! For example, one is angry at something, he is inclined to burst at someone, he starts a fight in the earliest possible moment. Then, it's not possible to say: 'I won't get involved in any fight'" (Yusuf, senior year Anatolian Technical High School student)[66]

Boys are also very physical and rough to each other in their usual interactions – with kicks, punches, karate blows, arm-twisting, and pushing going on for long periods of time. During this period they might be directed against particular individuals often almost to the point of tears. In fact, the physicality of all these interactions imitate the real fighting situations and make the connotations of masculinity spread through the whole culture of the school. These are the moments when they are tested in the norms of an alternative culture. Hence, it is disastrous for their informal status and masculine reputation if they refuse to participate, or perform amateurishly:

> "There were such jokes that, for example, he comes close from your behind, gets his arms through your fork, then to the fore! He presses then

[66] *"En sebepsiz yere okulun içinde kavga çıkıyor. 'Ne bakıyosun' diye kavga çıkıyor. Adam adama bakar yaa! Adam mesela sinirli oluyor, birisine çatmak icin en ufak şeyde adamla kavga çıkartıyor. 'Bulaşmıycam ben kavgaya' desen de olmuyor yani...'" (Yusuf, Anadolu Teknik Lisesi son sınıf öğrencisi)*

> with all his effort… Then it is laughed at as a joke… Or he paws at you; lots of jokes leading to harassment. Because people try to prove their masculinity in such an environment. And you can never stay out of it. Because you are not regarded as a man if you don't do such things."[67] (Soner, a graduate of Anatolian Technical High School)

In this atmosphere, interactions and conversations among the macho boys frequently take the form of joking or "pisstaking". Humor serves as an informal resource in the culture of manhood and "wind ups, joke telling, funny stories, spontaneous gags, mimicry" become the "unseen forms of communication, validating male forms of behavior" (Arnot, 2004: 31). As Willis suggested (1981: 29), the space that kids usurp from the formal structure of the school and break its laws produce hast its own rules and cultural skills summarized by the expression "having a laff".

The school is generally a fertile ground for laughing and for having fun. In the classrooms and everywhere, "having a laff" or having fun and the means by which this is done can get students labeled as trouble-makers and is enough to send them down a slippery slope. Except for the case of the first year students who are exposed to a harsher discipline as new-comers, it is the rule rather than the exception to disrupt the school order. Specifically, as senior year students are considered to be almost graduates, they have an easier curriculum and their presence in the school becomes routinized. Furthermore, their classes are not regularly held most of the time and they gain a relative autonomy in the school and in the courses as well. Hence, they engage in disruptive jokes in the courses such

[67] *"Öyle şakalar oluyordu ki, koridorda mesela arkandan yaklaşıyor, apışarandan kolunu geciriyor, sonra da öne! İşte sıkıyor tüm gücüyle filan... Sonra da buna şaka diye gülünüyor. Ya da oranı buranı elliyor; tacize varan bir sürü şaka. Yani bir sürü insan bunlar üzerinden erkekliğini ispatliyor o ortamda. Ve sen de hiç bir zaman bunun dışında kalamıyorsun. Yapmazsan sen de bu tür şeyler, erkekten sayılmıyorsun çünkü." (Soner, Anadolu Teknik Lisesi Mezunu)*

as throwing other students' belongings out of the window, or doing something to disrupt the teacher with an inappropriate comment. In most of the classes, a group of macho kids continually disturb the teacher by coming late to class, chatting during the lesson, getting out of the class without any explanation, acting cool by not answering the teacher, pretending not to hear him/her, trying to get him/her mad with constant interference, etc. The kids do not disturb only the teachers or ridicule only their attitudes. Obvious stupidity of any one of the students is penalized more heavily among the kids than by staff and it becomes an issue of pisstaking among these kids both in and outside the classes. The macho boys constantly make fun of the others who they consider as powerless because of their unmanly bodily styles, conformist or shy attitudes.

The use of slang is a distinctive way to form unity within the informal group of macho boys. These boys combine several forms according to a "secret" language or code, to which only the members of the group possessed the key. They pay special attention to employ words and meanings which are different than those used by other kids or teachers. Also they choose the slang that reflected their macho and oppositional manners against the school authority and the girls. The most circulated among those are sexist slang which further encouraged their aggressive and homophobic masculinity.

Smoking in the school grounds has been another practice which significantly helped to create a distinctive style and to distinguish the macho boys in their self-making process. The majority of the students smoke and more importantly are eager to be "seen" smoking. A great deal of time is typically spent by the boys planning their next smoke. There are secret places inside the school garden which are known to be used only for smoking or drinking (and rarely for

drug-use[68]). The school canteen and the places around the workshop buildings are the private places of the students where they can freely talk about or sometimes outrage such banning of smoking and drinking. Drinking is also undertaken openly – even in the classes – because it is the most decisive signal to staff that the individual is separate from the school and has a presence in an alternative, superior and more mature mode of social being.

But on the other hand, being at school is simply the most convenient venue for the macho boys to socialize. Staying at home is often boring; the home is seen by boys as a place where there is nothing to do apart from lying in bed, or watching television. Thus, rather than meeting in cafes or going to cinemas or theatres, they prefer to be at school where they do not regularly attend the lessons. Indeed, they are banned from many lessons, finding refuge in certain parts (especially around the workshops) of the school where they are beyond regular staff supervision or where they find a teacher who is willing to take them into their class. At those times, they drink in the classrooms, prepare basic food for lunch in the workshop places and smoke or wander around in the garden with their girlfriends, etc. Thus, the rule is to be at school but not to participate in its formal structure. Truancy seemed to be only a very imprecise – even meaningless – measure of rejection of school by the macho kids (like Willis' lads: *Ibid*.: 27) since most of the male students constructed virtually their own day and their identity from what is offered by the school. Absence from school is relatively unimportant in comparison to the many other diverse activities performed at school such as being out of class, being in class and doing no work, being in the wrong class,

[68] Although many kids told me that drug-use was prevalent among most of the trouble-makers of the school and the kids who had relations with the varoş people in Karadolap neighborhood; no one openly told that he/she was using drugs. But yet, interesting stories about drug-users and dealers were in circulation among the school kids. Such stories had to be concealed carefully in order not to become the target of the school staff.

roaming the corridors looking for excitement, being asleep in private. The core skill thus that one has to have in order to become part of the counter-school culture beyond showing violence is the preservation of personal mobility.

Teachers' Responses to Kids' Attitudes

The school tries to form a kind of totalitarian regime against the students' indisciplinary behaviors. There is relatively little direct coercion or oppression in the school regime (in the form of beating, for example), but an enormous constriction of the range of moral possibilities (Brown, 1987: 66). As a response to the macho kids' above-mentioned counter-school practices, the primary function of the teachers have become that of policing, which aim at the construction and moral regulation of student subjectivities. The administrative staff who became "experts at decoding the communication of contestation and resistance" (Mac an Ghaill, 1994: 57), initiates new control and surveillance mechanisms for these kids. Consequently, the preoccupation of most of the teachers has become students' clothes, footwear, hairstyles, earrings, etc. The essence of the struggles between students and staff are best illustrated by the programmatic statements made in what is widely regarded as a key ritual of the school institution: "the morning assembly". The morning assembly is held almost everyday. In these assemblies the deputy headmaster gathers the school and makes a speech. As far as I observed, these speeches often try to appeal to the kids on the basis of the moral benefits of the school, rather than the formal "educational" objectives of it:

> "As established in the legal regulations, the aim of this school is to create modern citizens who are in favor of Turkish traditions and unwritten laws,

> and Atatürk doctrines and revolutions. It seems that today young students totally forgot about those traditions and unwritten laws. We are not adequately respecting our elders and each other anymore. We are not as decent as we should be. Let's pay attention to these matters. Let's not forget you are talking to *the* teachers or to your elders." (Mesut bey, deputy headmaster)[69]

Such speeches generally aimed at reminding the students of the "values of the society" and disciplining them by showing the institutional limits of tolerance. The morning assemblies were accompanied by an extensive surveillance of students' bodies. You could hear the constant demands of teachers such as: "Look at me when I'm talking to you", "sit up straight", and "walk properly down the corridor". But even in the presence of such disciplining efforts, alternative standards and the counter-school culture constructed by the macho boys were recognized by teachers in an obscure manner – at least in the private. For example, although the policing of students' dresses and footwear was the most apparent cause of disagreement between the staff and the students, the teachers gave an unspoken consent to the boys' alternative clothes except for the most exaggerated styles. The constant struggles on smoking in the school grounds apparently had also resulted in the victory of the boys and they enjoyed a relative freedom in their smoking practices in certain places of the school garden.

Teachers know very well that being a teacher is essentially a relationship between potential competitors for supremacy. Each conversation with the students may make the teacher feel like "winning or losing" (Rival, 1996: 164). In an

[69] *"Bu okulun amacı mevzuatla belirlenmiş, Türk örf ve adetleri konusunda, Atatürk ilke ve inkılapları doğrultusunda çağdaş vatandaşlar yaratmaktır. Bugünkü görüntü öğrencilerin örf ve adetleri tamamen terk ettikleri yolundadır. Büyüklere saygı konusunda sınıfta kalıyoruz, birbirimize saygı konusunda sınıfta kalıyoruz, ar namus konusunda sınıfta kalıyoruz. Bu konulara dikkat edelim. Öğretmenlerinizle, büyüklerinizle konuşurken onların öğretmen olduklarını unutmayalım." (Mesut bey, müdür muavini)*

atmosphere which continuously evades the teacher's authority by the "guerilla warfare in the classrooms" (Foley, 1996: 83), the teachers ought to develop new techniques for making the lessons more tolerable for the kids:

> "I say: 'ok, I won't do a 40-minute lesson. We do 10 minutes but we do it in the proper way.' You see the displeasure in their eyes immediately. It's only 10 minutes, hallo! They can't even listen to that. What's the meaning of that? There is no perception. He/she doesn't acquire it in the primary school. He/she thinks 'I won't go on studying anyway'… Now, we'll communicate with these kids and we'll integrate them into the society. And they will hold the country's industry in their hands. Now; it's required to make contact with those people. Then, it's necessary to speak the same language with them. For example, it's sometimes necessary to use slang. I say "shut up you buster!" I see that he/she is crazy and I see that I won't get him/her if I behave sanely. But if I behaved insanely, he/she would come to me. Your job gets easer with him/her after a while." (Halil bey, technician teacher)[70]

> "The students respect me very much. I know that there are kids who think: 'let's listen to the teacher in class at least out of respect. You cannot win them by frightening them. For example, while he is indifferent to the hazing, he feels bad hearing you say 'I don't like you'. If you hurt someone physically, he keeps a hold of you; then, you keep waiting for his forgiveness." (Kerim bey, technician teacher)[71]

Teachers must therefore win and maintain their authority on moral but not on coercive grounds (Willis, 1981: 64). The consent of the students must be ensured.

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[70] *"'40 dakika ders işlemiyorum tamam' diyorum; '10 dakika işliycez ama tam ders işliycez' diyorum. Gözler bir anda ölüyor. Sadece 10 dakika yahu! Yani onu bile dinleyemiyorlar vallahi. Nedir?; 'algı yok'. Ortaokulda zaten bunu almamıs. 'Zaten okumayacagım' diyor… Simdi biz bu cocuklarla iletisim kuracaz ve bunları topluma kazandıracagız. Ve bunlar toplumun sanayisini elinde tutacaklar. Simdi, bu insanlarla mutlaka kontak kurmak lazım. O zaman onların dilinden konusmak gerekiyor. Mesela baazen lan'lı lun'lu konusmak gerekiyor. 'Kes lan!' diyorum. Bakıyorum bu deli, ben buna akıllıca davranırsam bunu elde edemeyecegim, bunu goruyorum. Ama delice davranırsam bi muddet sonra bana gelicek. Bi muddet sonra da isiniz kolaylasir onunla. …" (Halil bey, teknik öğretmen)*

[71] *"Öğrencinin saygısı çok fazladır bana. 'Hocaya ayıp olmasın dersi dinleyelim' diye düşünen olduğunu biliyorum. Korkutarak yapamıyorsunuz. Örneğin dayaktan etkilenmez de 'seni sevmiyorum'dan çok etkilenir. Dayak atarsanız bir kişiye, ipler onun eline geçmistir; öğrencinin sizi affetmesini beklersiniz artık." (Kerim bey, teknik öğretmen)*

However, the permanent battle to assert and legitimate a personal supremacy, especially with limited personal power, is tiring and not a really viable strategy in the long run. Teachers are also aware that the vocational schools have a disinterested student profile in the issues of schooling and that their dual interest in both general and technical education cannot be performed efficiently in these schools. As a matter of fact, teachers have often very low expectations, leading them to yield ground to the kids, and to gradually give up the idea of teaching them. This leads them to believe that they can do nothing, and they adopt a pessimistic outlook in relation to the fate of the working classes:

> "When the student is in his senior year, he becomes more and more undisciplined and gets used to breaking the rules. Forget about him studying 5 minutes at home; we praise if he comes with a pen here. He doesn't even have a pen! He gets through a term without putting a word on paper. We say 'you'll come with the school's trousers'; he says 'I come from work' as if saying 'be satisfied because I came here'! That is, it is as if we are struggling to give them a diploma by force. Think of that, you're trying to give such people an ideal." (Halil bey, technician teacher)[72]

The quoted remark very well denotes the fact that teachers cannot be very effective or cannot improve the conditions of the students in the school where the conditions of the labor market as well as the informal cultural processes of the macho kids prepare them to a certain type of labor market. In other words, teachers end up realizing that these kids are going to end up in working class occupations whatever they do. It is not just personal attitudes but something collective, social and contextual through which the kids deny the meaningfulness of the knowledge they acquire in the school. Thus, a consciousness of class position informs kids' rejection

[72] *"Son sınıfa gelince öğrenci iyice dağıtıyor; kurallara uymuyor. Evde 5 dakika çalışmayı bırakın; buraya kalemle gelmişse şükredersiniz. Bir kalemi yoktur yav! Deftere kalem sürmeden dönemi geçirir. 'Okul pantalonuyla geleceksiniz' diyoruz, 'ben işten geldim' diyor; 'şükret işte buraya geldiğime' der gibi! Yani diplomayı zorla verelim halindeyiz sanki. Düşünün yani, Bu tür insanlara ideal vermeye çalışıyorsunuz" (Halil bey, teknik öğretmen)*

of the school and the teachers' acceptance of the kids' penetrations into the teaching paradigm.

Distinctive Embodiment of Popular Culture and Nationalist Inclinations

Leisure activities of the macho kids are also shaped according to the everyday masculinity produced in popular culture and commodity forms (Mac an Ghaill: 1994, 97). This specifically manifested itself in terms of strong identification with and involvement in the male social world of football, computer games, internet activities and by the mimicry of masculine heroes. However, I argue that their "acculturation" (Willis, 2003: 404) in the everyday globalized forms of commodity culture and the icons of the popular culture differ from that of the middle or higher classes in two ways.

First, their material conditions prevent them to fully commit themselves to the marketized forms of commodities, brands and hobbies. They are materially able to play football only outside of the school (since they have to pay for the school's carpeted football ground), to wear only fake brands, to follow up internet in the internet cafes rather than at homes, to meet new girls in the MSN-messenger (an internet instant messaging program) without going out with them – all of which entailed a different relation to the commodity culture than that of the middle class youth. In short, rather than excluding themselves from these practices, these working class young people seem to appropriate such materials of the commodity culture according to their own inherited social categories and working class positions and further, try to create new strategies to integrate themselves in such global forms of youth culture.

Second, they choose to identify themselves with famous and rich football players or with overtly macho types of heroes both of whom have been exemplars of their will to display their masculinity and also of their desire to adopt to the corporate marketing culture. As Donaldson argued (1993: 647), "to be culturally exalted, the pattern of hegemonic masculinity must have exemplars who are celebrated as heroes." Talking about the popular football players and imitating their hair or clothing styles covered a great deal of time in the boys' lives. In my opinion, the boys identified themselves with those footballers much more easily than any other people because such characters achieved public recognition and money by relying merely on bodily power and because the presence of such characters acted as a proof for their belief in the uselessness of education for a successful future.

The other heroes imitated by the boys have been the two TV serials' principal characters: "Polat Alemdar" and "Deli Yürek" (i.e. Brave-Heart). Both of their founding characteristics have been their tough and aggressive masculine behaviors and their adoption of nationalistic and conservative inclinations while trying to defeat the secret enemies of the *nation* and the *country* as public heroes. Both serials' scenarios were written in dialogue with the current socio-political problems in Turkey and in fact, both openly promoted some kind of chauvinistic stance for example best demonstrated in the principal actors' engagement in paramilitary activities during their struggles with the drug-dealers' gangs or American or Kurdish "terrorists", etc. The boys in the school were greatly affected by these two characters and their mimicry of these actors' styles have reached such a point that "many Polats and Deli Yüreks wander around the corridors of the school" as one of the female students asserted. Some of the informal groups of

macho kids even constructed their unity as a group completely on the embodiment and keeping of the same symbols and outer images of these characters, and further, declared their future goals to be behaving as idealistic as them in the service of the nation and the country.

In addition to the boys' informal masculine culture, their nationalistic inclinations also find a fertile ground to flourish both in the Alibeyköy locality as mentioned before and in the formal school culture as well. Due to the similarity in their backgrounds and life paths, students are significantly affected by the conservative and nationalistic inclinations which reigned in the neighborhood. Moreover, the formal culture of the school also encourages an idealization of nationalist heroes. Pictures of the "ancestors of Turks" on the walls of the school building, the bodily/ linguistic symbols of the teachers, or the masjid (*mescit*) founded just across the school canteen all strengthen a similar ideological stance and imply the presence of a conservative formal culture in the school. As Alonso (1994: 388) argued it is basically through such epic representations, that "the nation is particularized and centered, imagined as eternal and primordial, and that nationalist love becomes sacralized and sublime sentiment, indeed, a form of piety".

Actually, such representations of nationalistic and conservative belief were the very elements by which the boys accepted to invest in the school environment. The members of the informal groups, who had been keen on making fun of everything or opposing the school authority, were surprisingly striking a serious attitude when it came to nationalism or Islam. Most of them had chauvinistic ideas especially on the prevalent Turkish-Kurdish conflict and some declared that they were aspiring to bear arms just for that reason. Many students had a relationship

with the *"ülkü ocakları"* [the meeting places of the young supporters of the Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi – MHP)] that was situated just across the school place, and these were unsurprisingly the ones who were most affected by the above-mentioned TV serials' characters and who carried their styles to the school place. Furthermore, some of these students also prayed in the school's masjid and in the mosques on Fridays:

> "Uğur: We pray together with the teachers at midday. I think it's a good thing that the students know and exercise their religion. Then, you also love and respect your country and your nation.
> Kadir: Everyone doesn't have love and respect for the nation and country. I think these have to be taught to everyone in the schools."[73]

It was a striking fact that the active display of disrespect towards teachers was contrasted by the love and respect that the macho kids felt for their religion and nation. In my opinion, this can be interpreted by their need to develop new allegiances and solidarity and to imagine new communal attachments (i.e. nation and religion) (both of which become increasingly aggressive and devoid of content) in an era which wore down and denounced the solidarity of working classes.

The Cultural Production of the New Generation of Working Class Youth in the Era of De-industrialization

Working class culture is a stock of commonly available cultural resources which people in the same class location use in different ways to organize their

[73] *"Uğur: Hocalarla filan birlikte namazımızı kılıyoruz öğlenleri. İyi bişey bence öğrencilerin dinini bilmesi, uygulaması. O zaman vatanını milletini de seviyosun yani.*
Kadir: Vatan millet sevgisi, saygısı herkeste yok valla. Okullarda öğretmek lazım bence bunları herkese."

social conduct and make sense of their changing life histories and social situations. As mentioned above, the boys in Alibeyköy School adopted and developed in their school a counter culture grounded in masculine styles: resistance; subversion of authority; informal penetration of the weaknesses of the formal; and an independent ability to create diversion and enjoyment. The kids' indifference to the particular form of work they enter, their assumption of the inherent meaninglessness of education, and their general sense of the similarity of all work they might be able to do are all informed by their real conditions of existence as members of the working class.

Unlike some scholars who argued that forms of commodity culture became more important in the identity making processes of the new youth generations in the era of globalization and de-industrialization (Willis, 2003; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Brown, 1987), I observed that the working class youth in Alibeyköy Industrial Vocational High School have still been eager to define themselves by their neighborhood and family ties more than by these new relations of global commodity culture. In terms of kinship, friendship networks, the informal culture of the neighborhood and the work opportunities after graduation, one can say that the working class boys of the Alibeyköy School are indeed located in the "parent and neighborhood culture" which is reinforced by the nationalist media culture, and in which gender roles and the social role of ethnicity have an important place. Even where working class youth culture seemed most distinctive and different from their parent culture because of the dominant popular culture elements that the youth embodied, the youth still developed a distinctive outlook which has been structured by the working class parent culture. For example, the kids in the Alibeyköy School still stressed the importance of collective activities (e.g. eating

together, sharing the money they had, doing collective revolts against teachers, etc.); particular conceptions of hegemonic masculinity and male dominance (e.g. the exertion of aggressiveness, fighting, showing off in front of the girls, suppressing the girls in the school, etc.) or of territoriality (e.g. their sense of commitment to the Alibeyköy locality where their families lived).

But rather than depending on the old conceptualizations of class, I argue that the students are in need to feel some kind of privilege in their self-formation as well. This privilege entails the formation of sensibilities that mark them culturally as a certain kind of person. Rather than simply being passive "carriers" of traditional markers of class, gender and race, they choose to belong to these categories "in distinctive, mannered, celebratory or self-conscious ways" (Willis, 2003: 404). They take part in self-formation on relatively autonomous expressive grounds, rather than being formed from outside on automatically ascribed grounds. This change in the formation of new expressive identities is greatly related to "the crisis in working class forms of masculinity" (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Willis, 2004) which accompanies de-industrialization. The (re)production of working class masculinity has been ruptured in this new era of loss of manufacture jobs, the collapse of the youth labor market, and the replacement of factory work with new technologies. In the same vein, the response of the boys to the vocational schooling involved celebrating alternative sources of gender power as well as sustaining some elements of the older types.

First, as they can no more find social respect in doing manual labor, they tried alternative ways of constructing their masculinity. Inverting the values of the school system and retaining highly traditional gender values, as mentioned above, the kids choose to celebrate fighting, drinking and suppressing the girls. In short,

these kids cope with the uncertainties of their position by promoting an exaggerated concept of hegemonic masculinity. In other words, by "behaving badly", they try to regain control over their lives. But their solidarity leads to a cult of "machismo" in the end, which is often tied up with racism and misogyny too – as will be explained in a more detailed way in Chapter 3.

Second, while being disdained by others in the new era, manual labor still has to remain constitutive in the self-formation of the boys as they are prepared for industrial sector jobs. It is beyond doubt that engaging in manual work is not attractive for the Alibeyköy School students and is considered as "lower status". Yet, they have no other options other than getting manual work occupations and it is for this reason that they seemed to legitimize their inferior occupational positions by adopting an anti-mental attitude towards paper-work and by penetrating the demands of the school through aggressive masculinity. Actually, while rejecting and disdaining the credentials attained by the mental work, they seemed to create a sense of agency: It is as if they are themselves choosing their future manual jobs willingly. In this process, patriarchy still helped to fill the concept of manual work with meaning for those people.

What is remarkable in these young people's identity formation process has been their embodiment of the characteristics of both the old and also the current working classes: On the one hand, they are prepared to remain as "old workers" who are exposed to the rules of the old Fordist production regime, while on the other hand, they define themselves with new distinctive styles as they would otherwise feel miserable in the face of the oppressive influences of the Post-Fordist production relations and the commodity culture prepared for the current youth generation. That is, while the socialization of youth into a class identity

happens in the school with forms which are reminder of working class resistance, the terms of working class resistance are also transformed with the current transformations in capitalism and working class experience. In the new Post-Fordist era defined by flexibility, competitiveness, insecurity, and mobility, the old ways of negotiation or resistance ought to take new forms and to be defined with new struggles (especially in the case of the informal sector). Rather than the old search for collective solidarity attained during work relations (e.g. attained by membership of trade unions, or of a workers' party), the new worker of the Post-Fordist era is called to find acquaintances to get a job, not to claim anything other than wages, optimize his/her own interest and personalize his/her own grievance.

In these conditions, the kids in the Alibeyköy School experience the feeling of marginality which is typical of their neighborhood and further, find no value in education or no hope for social mobility by work, and will confront the harsher exploitation mechanisms in their future lives. As a response to these oppressive conditions that surrounded their whole social milieu, they created a masculine counter-culture in the school whereby they developed a distinctive personality by the adoption of violence and personal mobility, by the celebration of manual labor and also by attachment to racial and gender segregations. Such a counter-school culture prepared the kids' place within new capitalistic relations and hierarchies as well as providing them with the means for questioning and contesting its inequalities. Hence, the style of boys' opposition to the school, which has grown out of their perceived structural position, carried also the features of the new working class resistance especially observed in the informal sector jobs (Yörük, 2005: 129). Within the new informal workplace relations where the workers are differentiated and left alone with respect to gender, ethnicity, skill level, and level

of intimacy with employers; the workers of the Post-Fordist era are said to resist the unequal conditions of the workplace relations in individualized ways, through using the distinctions of gender or ethnicity and/or through employing disobedient and aggressive attitudes opposing the work discipline. Similar to the new relation patterns in the informal work places, the macho kids of the school seem to employ a different working class attitude which emphasizes sovereignty, masculinity, gender oppression, and increased attachment to racial and cultural segregation. As will be shown in the coming chapter, while preparing the macho kids for their future work-lives, these same features will also be appropriated by these kids in the school to marginalize some "others" as part of the active production process of their working class positions.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES TOWARDS GIRLS, MIDDLE-CLASSES AND ETHNIC OTHERS

In this chapter, I will investigate how formal schooling, a major site of cultural production in contemporary societies, creates the conditions for dominant identities to suppress the experiences of "other" identities. Specifically, I will concentrate on how the macho students in the Alibeyköy Industrial Vocational and Technical High School constructed themselves as a closed community entrance to which is strictly controlled through the hegemonic masculinity they exerted and through the exclusionary practices they applied to other identities. The half of this chapter will recount the experiences of the girls in the school who are seen as outsiders and temporary guests in the place. Not only the boys' perceptions about these girls but also girls' experiences will reveal a general understanding on the making of masculinities in the school. Second, I will discuss the meanings that the male working class attaches to the different experiences and opportunities that the middle class teachers and students of other schools have. Last, I will uncover the boys' attitudes towards the Kurds who often become the object of derogatory comments and behaviors among the students. I will argue that, marginalizing these groups is an important aspect of Turkish working class formation. This marginalization helps the youth in the school to imagine themselves as autonomous agents and also provides them with terms by which they distinguish themselves as a superior group in their future work life.

Marginalization of Others through Gender, Class and Ethnic Relations

Class is a material, discursive and historically specific construct that includes categorizations of material inequalities and cultural differences (Skeggs, 1997: 6). In the same way, the gender regime and ethnicity categorize different identities in a hierarchical order within prevailing power relations and struggles. School as an institution consisting of people of the same age welcomes these different classes and identities with heterogeneous backgrounds and different cultural destinies. Despite the lower class and masculine profile of most of the vocational and technical high schools, there still exist conflicts between different identities and classes in the complex structure of the school space. Conflicts between groups with different identities shape the everyday experiences in the school, and are especially influential in the re-construction of the working class positions and masculinities in the Alibeyköy School. As explained in Chapter 2, the Alibeyköy School is dominated by the counter-school informal culture that male students produce and adhere to. In this chapter, I will argue that this group comes to recognize themselves as homogenous, special and coherent through the exclusions they exercise against girls, middle class students and teachers as well as the Kurdish youth both in and out of the school. This chapter will hopefully also highlight some of the experiences of these excluded groups who have been largely ignored in the previous chapters.

Gender Relations and the Exclusion of Girls

As suggested earlier, there are only a few girls in the Alibeyköy School which leads to a dominance of male culture in every aspect of life. Accordingly, the everyday interaction of the girls with the school and their construction of their femininity occur within the constraints of hegemonic masculinities. The formal school system is engineered in favor of the boys and the curriculum favors male students' school-to work transition more than theirs. Obviously, the counter-school culture of the macho kids and the discourses of predominantly male teachers also suppressed them in various ways. Scrutinizing all these inequalities and exclusionary practices they faced will reveal how their presence is constantly made invisible at the school and what kind of "femininity" they could form in opposition to dominant masculinity.

Suppression by the Macho Boys

Given the complexity of gender relations, in order to emerge as a dominant form of identification that can appeal to different male groups, hegemonic masculinity (similar to other hegemonies) is never completely consistent and is rather unfinished and always changing, and encompasses a certain level of incoherence. For example, hegemonic masculinity can contain domesticity, violence, misogyny and heterosexual attraction simultaneously without giving rise to serious questioning (*Ibid*.: 186). In fact, the boys' language of aggressive hegemonic masculinity is intermingled with references to utmost brutality against these girls which otherize them, as well as with images of sexual demands. When I

talked to these boys about sexuality and girls, what emerged is a picture of inner-thoughts of individual insecurity accompanied by a feeling of superiority over girls. Many of the boys seemed to be developing relations with the girls in contradictory forms including pursuit, disinterest, fear, and fixation. In our interviews, most of them tried to avoid talking about their relations with the girls, or expressed themselves in highly defensive ways when they chose to talk:

> "Ekrem: The girls in this school are not beautiful.
> Ali: There are already a few girls, and they look like nothing. Yet, they have such arrogance, you have to see…
> Ekrem: We find girlfriends outside. For example, 400 girls are currently registered in my msn[74]. I hang out even with girls who are 3-4 years older than me.
> Ilgın: Well, do you ever meet with those girls?
> Ekrem: We write to each other at msn. We don't see each other generally. If we meet, it costs the earth! You take her to the café for example and at least 20 YTL goes for this. Girls aren't worth spending so much."[75]

Courtship and flirting with the girls through MSN-Messenger helped the macho boys to feel experienced with women. On the other hand, most of the boys see the girls they can easily interact with as "easy girls" who are ready to become sexual partners. They talked about these girls as passive objects of their sexual urges, needs and desires in opposition to the way they imagined "girlfriends" to be

[74] *MSN messenger* is the most popular among the chat programs in the internet. The kids used *msn* also for communicating with each other but mostly they were trying to find some girls to chat with via this means.

[75] *"Ekrem: "Bu okuldaki kızlar güzel değil ya.*
Ali: Zaten azıcık kız var, onlar da bişeye benzemiyo. Bi de havalarını görsen…
Ekrem: Dışardan buluyoruz kız arkadaşları biz. Mesela benim msn'de 400 kız kayıtlı şu anda. Kendimden 3-4 yaş büyüklerle bile takılıyorum.
Ilgın: Hiç görüşüyor musunuz peki o kızlarla?
Ekrem: Yazışıyoruz işte msn'den. Görüşmüyoruz genelde. Görüşsek pahalıya patlıyor valla! Kafeye götürüyosun mesela, 20 milyon gidiyo en az. Kızlar için değmez ki o kadar para harcamaya"

who were distinguished by their loyalty and domesticity. Girls seemed to be situated in a controversial position as they were expected "to be sexy and inviting as well as pure and monogamous" (Willis, 1981: 146). All these male fictions in the end appeared to be crucial elements in setting the parameters of the prescriptive sex/gender boundaries that served to police schoolboys' performance by their peers (Mac an Ghaill, 1994: 92).

Despite an abundance of talk on girls by all, only a few of the macho boys had girlfriends. The remaining majority remained inexperienced in terms of relations with the opposite sex, and their lack of knowledge on women's worlds and feelings also increased their tendency to spend more time together with each other while pretending to be disinterested in girls:

> "Is it normal that all the boys of a school go to the toilette in the break and brush their hair towards the back? Who are you doing it for? There are almost no women in the place. All this is performed in order to become attractive to the existing ones. On the other hand, you must pretend as if you have nothing to do with women. Another kind of masculinity is actually formed out there…" (Serkan[76], graduate of Anatolian Technical High School)[77]

In my opinion, the above quotation gives hints about the boys' desire and fear for approval by the opposite sex. I argue that these feelings become socially experienced in the school and give rise to a unique type of hegemonic masculinity

[76] I met Serkan by the help of a friend who is a student in Istanbul University.Serkan has been among the minority in the school who could achieve to enter into a university's four-year department and thus, who could make use of the education's opportunity for social mobility by surpassing the negative effect of vocational education. He has been educated to become a mathematics teacher but also he had a great interest in reading books and claimed to have an intellectual style which differentiated him from the other people in Alibeyköy School.

[77] *"Teneffüste bir okulun bütün erkekleri mi tuvalete gider de saçlarını arkaya doğru tarar? Kime tarıyorsun ki? Ortamda hic kadın yok nerdeyse. Olan üç beş taneye kendini beğendirmek için yapılıyor bunlar. Bi yandan da alakan yokmuş kadınlarla gibi yapılıyor ama… Hakikaten baska bir erkeklik kuruluyor orada..." (Serkan, Anadolu Teknik Lisesi mezunu).*

and also encourage “boasting of exploits, aggression, homophobia, racism and the general subordination of women” (Holland and Ramazanoğlu, 1993: 2), as young men set out to prove themselves.

The boys also subordinated the girls by explicitly considering them as less strong and less able for vocational education and for industrial jobs which they will be the candidates of. In the general courses, girls have been more successful than the boys as recounted by the teachers. But the boys were unquestionably more pretentious in the workshop courses where they molded and shaped the iron, designed electric circuits or learnt to use the lathe. Although the girls were in few numbers in such courses and were not themselves interested in the above activities, the boys claimed a superiority of their sex in doing such work without considering the girls’ own choices. Some of these boys also defended that the industrial vocational education be only given to the boys.

Such opinions made themselves evident in some of the boys’ and the technician teachers’ exclusionary practices towards the girls in technical courses. In a second-year lathe class of Industrial Vocational High School, the only girl, Esma in the class was generally left alone in the workshop courses if not exempted from the regular duties by the teacher. As she recounted, she was given the easiest part in a group work and was expected not to interrupt the rest while the other boys have done the work given to them collectively. Esma and also some other girls told me about the generality of such exclusions towards them and added that such exemptions were presented as if they have been gifts given to them.

The above examples prove the fact that boys are more favored than girls in consideration of the education given since male students were provided with a freer discursive and practical sphere to act. But the suppression of the girls is not

only promoted through the formal school culture, actually it is also strengthened in the informal culture of the school through the administrative policies adopted by teachers and by the administrative staff. For example, girls become the target of the disciplining methods of the school much more frequently than boys, and they are often treated as passive recipients of the school's formal agendas. If they disobey rules and regulations, the school staff immediately categorize them as girls with "distorted sexuality" (as "slags" – Mac an Ghill, 1994: 122), who are inadequately socialized in "appropriate femininity" of which they were expected to be the carriers. Thus, any reaction of the girls against authority might be condemned unlike that of the boys which are interpreted more sympathetically.

For example, Eda, as a junior student, was in constant conflict with the school staff because of her "inappropriate" behaviors. Eda and her friends were keen on talking about their leisure time activities which they spent by engaging in commercial commodity culture, their expressive consumption styles, or popular culture images they adopted, etc. Eda was one of the most immersed girls in this culture. She explained to me that she spent most of her time in an internet café over the MSN almost everyday, changed boyfriends every week and sent about 25 mobile phone messages a day to her friends:

> "I actually change my boyfriend everyday… Female teachers don't say anything, even support us at times. They sometimes ask about what happened after we broke up. But the male teachers aren't generally happy about it. I attract too much attention in this school, I feel – also because of my looks. For example, the head or the deputy headmaster searched for me during each flag ceremony[78] and forces me to carry the flag although I try really hard to escape…"[79]

[78] In the beginning and at the end of every school week, morning assemblies are terminated with a special ceremony in which the national anthem is sang while a student stands in front of the whole school with the national flag in his/her hand.

[79] *"Benim erkek arkadaşım değişiyor her hafta valla… Kadın hocalar bişey demiyolar, destekçi bile oluyolar bize bazen. Hatta ayrıldıktan sonra sorular da soruyolar n'oldu diye. Ama erkek hocalar*

She was also smoking and drinking in school with boys around her and was often truanting or just wandering around the school garden. Her undisciplined manners seriously disturbed the "masculine contract" which has been attained between men of different ages in the school. I believe this to be the reason why I heard her story from many other boys and many of the male teachers in the school. As mentioned, the school staff was not tolerable of such relative freedom and counter-school type attitudes among girls. This was an explicit rather than an implicit politics of the school, and girls were targeted during the morning assemblies warnings addressed specifically to them:

> "I don't understand why my girls are like that; they have overtaken the boys in pranks and indiscipline. You come and instead of attending the classes, you wander around in the backyard. … I am warning my girls: you should be careful. You shouldn't forget that this is an institution where you come to get an education." (Mesut bey, deputy headmaster)[80]

The above quotation proves that sex/gender boundaries are strongly defended by the teachers. Proscriptive expressions commanding to girls not to act like boys or to be more mature than boys are frequently uttered in the school. In the next part, I will try to delineate the experiences of the girls in the school in a more detailed manner in order to understand what kind of femininity is formed in the school in relation to male working class youth's practices and institutional discrimination.

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genelde rahatsız. Çok dikkat çekiyorum ben okulda galiba - görünüşümle filan da. Yani hatta örnegin ne kadar kaçmaya çalışsam da müdür ya da muavinler her bayrak töreninde buluyolar beni; bayrağı bana taşıtıyolar mutlaka"

[80] *"Kızlarım hele neden böyleler hiç anlamıyorum; yaramazlıkta, disiplinsizlikte erkekleri geçmişler. Okula gelip dersinize girmeyip, bahçede arka taraflarda takılıyorsunuz. ... Kızlarımı uyarıyorum: dikkatli olmalısınız. Buranın eğitim almak için geldiğiniz bir kurum olduğunu unutmamalısınız" (Mesut bey, müdür yardımcısı)*

Girls' Experience of Formal and Informal Culture of the Vocational School

One aspect of hegemonic masculinity is "the belief that women do not count in big matters" (Donaldson, 1993: 654). The issue of girls' education has always been of secondary importance in vocational and technical high schools because of the prevalence of the above belief as well as because of gender-biased understanding of manual work.

As explained in the former part, the curriculum of the vocational and technical high schools favors the male students and is a key element which legitimizes the male dominance in these schools. Had not it been the discrimination against them, the majority of girls still stated that they would anyway not perceive education (of any kind) to be related to their future plans, and their expectations and aspirations have been only meager for the vocational education they got. Nearly all of the girls with whom I met argued that they have chosen vocational education only because the curriculum was easy. As stated in Chapter 1, most of them leave school at the end of their first years after recognizing that this is not a "suitable" place for them. The remaining girls usually prefer to be educated in the *makine ressamlığı* department since this branch is regarded to be the most suitable for girls. However, the decreasing demand for graduates of this branch causes serious obstacles for their transition to work-life.

In the presence of such negative conditions, most of the girls adhere to other dreams and aspirations for their future. Sometimes these aspirations are

related to other branches of vocational education (such as becoming a hairdresser or a nurse after graduating the vocational schools for girls) and sometimes they are altogether unrelated with the opportunities or qualifications they would have after graduating. They are aware that the school is mainly designed to prepare students for the sexual division of labor at home and in the workplace. But as far as I observed, the attitudes of girls vary in response to this design. Especially as far as the double burden of wage and family labor they will face in their future is concerned, most of the girls resist the "proper" female subject positions constructed for them. They are willing to work in tough jobs demanding manual labor, to have a freedom in deciding on their jobs, and to share the burden of the family responsibilities with their husbands in the future. These girls at the same time considered the high rates of female drop-out as a sign of a willingness to accept a feminine identity which necessitates submitting one's self to one's husband and housework. These drop-outs were said to often work in a textile atelier or in a shop as a saleswoman until they married and then to leave the world of work after having babies.

The girls' responses to schooling were mostly invisible in the presence of the teachers' discourses and the macho kids' representations of them. Female students were aware of the masculine form of the curriculum and responded in different ways to their being "locked out" in the school's failure zone. Like the boys, most of the girls also stayed disinterested in the curriculum and in the authoritarian manners of the staff. In fact, there existed a group of working class girls who adopted a more "masculine" counter-school culture to schooling. Whatever their department or branch is, this group of girls in the school displayed a highly visible group identity, but their culture was not recognized in the same

fashion as that of the boys and indeed, they were the worst behaved female student group in the school. In other words, they have neither fit into the stereotype of a girl as expected from them nor were their anti-school attitudes recognized by the macho boys:

> "Zehra: We're only a few girls in classes anyway. What can you do; we are also bored; we want to skip the boring classes. The girls', but not the boys' who have done that, attract the attention.
> Elif: For example, there was a girl; she left the school right now. She'd been caught with her boyfriend in the backyard of the school. Nothing has happened to the guy, but the staff called the girl's family to the school, for example. Then, the girl had to leave the school. I don't know whether the family took her or the staff wanted her out.
> Fatma: The staff has a real pressure on us. In fact, the boys, as well! That is, they oppress us. Okay, there are some who get along with us. - but I don't know if it is because we're girls – they just don't want us to be like them. They either call the girls as *inek* or they look at some of them as perverted…"[81]

As mentioned by Fatma, the macho boys' attitudes towards them were two-fold and none of these attitudes recognized the girls' identities as they were. Rather, those boys only recognized the girls' being the "opposite sex" whose identities should inescapably be defective and inadequate in comparison to theirs. The girls in the school distinguished the effect of such suppressive masculine attitudes in their lives, but still did not miss most of the flirting opportunities. As they recounted, they felt valuable whenever and however they were appreciated in such a male-dominant atmosphere. There even occurred fights between the girls

[81] *"Zehra: Zaten sınıflarda azıcık kızız biz. Ne yapalım; bizim de canımız sıkılıyor, sıkıcı derslerden kaytarmak istiyoruz. Erkeklerin yapması göze batmıyor da bizimki batıyor.*
Elif: Mesela bir kız vardı, yani şimdi okuldan ayrıldı o. Erkek arkadaşıyla okulun arkasındaki yerde yakalanmıştı bunlar. Çocuğa bişey olmadı da kızın ailesini çağırdı idare mesela. Sonra da o kız okuldan ayrıldı. Artık ailesi mi aldı, ayrılmasını mı istediler bilmiyorum…
Fatma: İdare bize daha çok baskı kuruyor yani. Aslında erkekler de öyle! Baskıcı yani. Yani çok iyi olduklarımız da var - ama biz kızız diye mi artık, - yani onlar gibi olmamızı istemiyolar. Kızlara ya inek diyolar ya da yoldan çıkmış gibi bakıyolar bazılarına…"

over their boyfriends in the school. These fights and some of the girls' going out with the trouble-maker boys have strengthened the teachers' and some of the boys' pejorative images and perceptions of the female students, and their classification of these girls into a crude "good girls" and "slags" dichotomy.

It was most of the time the first year female students who were mostly susceptible to such pejorative perceptions since they were the most popular and most "available" for flirting in the school. On the other hand, the girls who were in their second and third year claimed that coping with male students and teachers became easier after a while – in comparison to the earlier years when they experienced more teasing. They felt that they became more mature than boys in the passing years, and they learnt to look after themselves in the school:

> "Esra: It's better with the boys in the class. Because we can have fun with them. Boys are more fun than girls.
> Seda: Ok, a lot of the boys are still horrible to us but it still has changed a lot recently. Since we have grown up, we can handle them better.
> Ayşegül: Some girls say that boys are loud and mess about too much. It's really like that. But a lot of the boys in our class would be afraid of Esra. She'd batter them. So, it's okay for us. If they get on my nerves, I give them a bad stare or cuss them down. They know they can only go so far."[82]

Feeling of boredom in the school was prevalent among the girls in opposition to boys who defined the school as a place of excitement. The boys mostly perceived the girls' boredom as a sing of their endorsement of the formal culture of the school which was according to the boys really boring. On the other

[82] *"Esra: Sınıfta erkeklerin olması daha iyi bence. Onlarla eğlenebiliyoruz çünkü. Kızlardan daha eğlenceli erkekler.*
Seda: Bir sürü erkek hala bize kötü davranıyor tamam ama bu bayağı değişti son zamanlarda. Büyüdüğümüz için, erkeklerle başedebiliyoruz artık.
Ayşegül: Bazı kızlar erkeklerin gürültücü olduğunu ve aptal aptal konuştuğunu söylüyolar. Hakkaten de öyle. Ama mesela bizim sınıftaki oğlanların çoğu Esra'dan korkuyolar. O yüzden biz çözdük olayı. Eğer sinirime dokunurlarsa, ben de onlara ters ters bakarım ya da direk küfrederim. Sadece bi yere kadar gidebileceklerini biliyor onlar da artık."

hand, as far as I observed, most of the time the girls did not feel comfortable with the formal rules of the school either. It was only their means of struggling with their discontent and boredom which differentiated them from the boys. For example, girls chose to have more intimate relations both between themselves and with the outside world compared to the boys, and popular culture images and expressive consumption played a more important role in these girls' lives. The demonstration of the possession of highly desired commodities served as an index of high-status femininity among the girls. They were very keen on showing off their styles with their clothes, footwear and hair, and they thought wearing smart and modern clothes made them more attractive to the opposite sex. Sexual attractiveness has been what valorized dress and clothes as something more than an artificial code within which to express a cultural identity (Willis, 1981; Brown, 1987).

Apart from consumption and clothing styles; girls also gave a lot of emphasis on having outside activities. It was probably for this reason that the girls truanted more frequently than the boys, often so that they could escape male dominancy and the ceaseless disciplinary acts of the school. As a matter of fact, they mostly had boyfriends outside of school, from their neighborhood. Some others worked in textile shops or in the service sector which proved the fact that that they tried to find other ways of "making themselves" instead of relying on the credentials attained in the school or, investing in the informal culture of the school.

As a result, the structure of the curriculum, the discourses and practices of male students and of the teachers all add up to the unquestioned inferior status of girls in the school. The masculine cultural codes, which reminds the occupational segregation mechanisms faced by the women workers especially in the informal

sector, leaves the girls in the school desperate and lessens their participation to both the formal and informal culture of the school. Hence, girls mostly give up their expectations about vocational education and instead, try to establish new social relations outside of the school. In the end, they probably get jobs unrelated to their educational formation or just leave the world of work for the family labor.

Encountering the Middle Classes with Opposition: Envy or Respect

One cannot fully understand contemporary youth cultures without looking critically at the issue of how these cultures are constituted "relationally". While doing this, it is necessary not to just focus on the working class youth but also to discuss how other cultural groups relate to them, that is, how subjectivities with different cultural histories intersect with each other to produce new subjectivities.

Middle classes have historically been the ones who distanced themselves from the "others" to consolidate their identity and power and they came to recognize themselves through difference which they produced by representing the working classes in opposition to themselves (Skeggs, 1997: 5). On the other hand, working classes who are in worse conditions in terms of access to economic resources, education and cultural capital historically responded to this in various ways. In the industrial period, the working class identity brought a sense of pride to those who belonged to it in the case of Great Britain (Thompson, 1980; Hoggart, 1970; Bourke, 1994). However, this collective working class identity lost its importance for the members of the class with the dismantling of manufacturing jobs in the Post-Fordist period (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001; Bauman, 1997; Apple, 1995). Thus, in different localities and temporalities, working classes at

times felt dedicated towards their identities or at other times tried to conceal their culture which was charged with middle classes' pejorative judgments. Likewise, for the working class male youth in Alibeyköy School, the experience of class differentials has a complicated form in which feelings of aggressive opposition, envy, unconscious defense or respect to the middle classes are mixed.

Opposition and Envy towards Middle Class Students

As narrated by many students in the school, students of the Industrial Vocational School and Anatolian Technical School have been in conflict for years. The former school's students are said to exert aggressive attitudes, initiate fights without any reason and scoff at the latter group all the time. In fact, the most visible exclusionary attitudes among the trouble-maker boys have been towards the students of Anatolian Technical High School who were seen by the boys as having privileges without deserving them. "They are always kept apart from the majority", as Kenan, one of the students from the former school asserted:

> "Their buildings are separate from ours; their classrooms have televisions, videos, tapes, etc. They learn English by those; by watching films and listening to music in the courses. Their ties are in different colors. … They are always seen separate from us as more hard-working and clever. But I don't know if they really deserve the privileges given to them. They don't even get a workshop course of heavy duty; I don't know if they have any idea what performing heavy work means. They only know reading and writing."[83] (Kenan, senior year Industrial Vocational High School student)

[83] *"Onların binaları bizimkilerden ayrı; sınıflarında televizyon, video ve teyp filan var. İngilizceyi bunlardan öğreniyolar; derste film izleyip ve müzik dinleyip. Sonra, kravatları farklı. ... Daha çalışkanlar ve daha akıllılar denerek hep bizden ayrı tutuluyorlar. Aslında bu kadar ayrıcalıkları hakediyorlar mı gerçekten bilmiyorum ya. Ağır yükü olan bir atölye dersi bile almıyorlar onlar; ağır bir iş nasıl yürütülür bir fikirleri var mıdır bilmiyorum valla. Anca okumayı yazmayı biliyolar." (Kenan, Endüstri Meslek Lisesi son sınıf öğrencisi)*

Such segregations which were strengthened by the regulations of the administrative staff provoked the boys greatly. As they also found the members of this privileged group eager to conform to rules and regulations of the school, they blamed those for devaluing the strength of their oppositional behaviors in the school space. As a reaction, macho boys constantly charged this minority as being more effeminate or childish, and showed off and mocked them. I consider the macho boys' aggressive hostility against these "conformists" to have its roots in their "hidden injury" (Sennett and Cobb, 1972), in other words, in these successful students' casting them as stupid and inferior, and also in their enviousness towards the students of Anatolian Technical High School who have middle class advantages in their lives.[84]

The members of this small privileged cluster of the school were indeed belonging to middle or lower-middle classes. For example, the Anatolian Technical High School student Semih with whom I met after his graduation was disliked by most of the boys. According to him, this was because he was standing out due to his high-status. He also felt like an outsider in the space himself and in fact, he was actively differentiating himself from the boys who belonged to the lower sets of the society:

> "Anyway, I came here by mistake. I'm not from here; my family does not live here. Actually, we reside in Levent. I didn't know which school to attend after the secondary school. We have an acquaintance here who is a

[84] The kids also felt envy towards the general high school students out of the school. They complained about the unjustness of the 1997 regulation (i.e. introduction of negative scoring system) which favored the general high school students to become an engineer instead of them – as who were trained in the technical and mechanical concepts much more than any person in their age. In order to deal with this feeling of envy, they de-contextualized the whole meaning of getting higher education and celebrated the manual work they would do in their future work-lives.

> teacher. I assume he suggested this school to my father. But we couldn't imagine that it would be *such* a place. Of course, I have not hung out with the guys in here. I had only a few friends in the school. The remaining look like they are jealous of me." [85]

Giving me the message that he did not belong here throughout our conversation, Semih clearly tried to distinguish himself from all those people who belonged to the lower classes. His parents planned on sending Semih to a university in Bulgaria to study electronics engineering after his graduation. This has been definitely the most important marker that revealed his distinction as a student from middle class background:

> "All of this school's graduates work in the factories if they don't go to the vocational higher schools. There is no other option after graduation from here apart from that. It was heard in the school that I'd be an engineer and there have been even the ones who scolded by asking 'Will you study with your father's money?' It is none of their business, is it? It's because of their jealousy. It's really because there is no university thing in the vocational schools… For example, even I could not prepare for ÖSS for this reason. I didn't even attend any private class." [86]

Despite the fact that Semih was pointing out those who could never approach his living standards and the opportunities he had as opposed to the "others," he was the real "other" in the school according to the working class boys due to his distance

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[85] *"Ben buraya yanlışlıkla ile geldim gibi olmuştu zaten. Buralı değilim ben; ailem burada oturmuyor. Biz Levent'te oturuyoruz aslında. Benim gideceğim okul belli değildi ortaokuldan sonra. Bizim burda bi tanıdığımız var öğretmen olan. O tavsiye etmiş babamlara galiba. Ama hiç böyle bir yer çıkacağını bilemedik mesela. Benim buradaki insanlarla da pek takıldığım olmadı aslında. Birkaç arkadaşım oldu okulda sadece. Gerisi de beni çekemiyor galiba."*

[86] *"Bu okuldan mezun olan herkes fabrikada çalışıyor eğer meslek yüksek okuluna gitmezlerse. Onun dışında başka bir seçenek yok burdan mezun olunca. Benim mühendis olacağım duyuldu okulda. 'Babanın parasıyla mı okuyacaksın' diye sataşanlar bile oldu. Onlara neyse neyle okuyacağım? Kıskançlıklarından yani. Hani yani öyle bi üniversite olayı yok yani meslek liselerinde ya ondan hakkaten... Mesela ben bile bunun yüzünden burdaki ÖSS'ye hazırlanmamıştım. Dershaneye bile gitmedim yani."*

to the "collective" counter-culture manifested in the kids' rejection of the school as well as in their critique of the middle and higher classes' questionless endorsement of the commodity culture. In fact, the boys in the Alibeyköy School found such contemporaries' behaviors as haughty and even miserable:

> "Ekrem: We don't deal with wearing brand products at all. There is no reason in wearing so expensive clothes, in showing off. Of course, there are those who like that, but they are only a minority here. There was Semih for example, he was coming from Etiler or somewhere; you had to see his show-off!
> Orhan: Yeah, he was coming and talking about Etiler all the time in the canteen or elsewhere – about the famous person he saw, whom he talked with. The kids in Etiler seem to do nothing other than showing-off! Okay, what can I do if you wear the famous brands? They can't have fun because of watching each other and envying each other in my opinion. That is, because of trying to attract the girls… I don't think that they have fun like we have"[87]

Respected Middle Class Teachers

The encounters with the middle class teachers have been another important experience in male students' recognition of themselves as members of the working class. The middle class teachers carry the cultural symbols and practices of their class to the school space where working class experience reigns. For this reason and for others, the teachers are always at the center of these students' attention.

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[87] *"Ekrem: Biz öyle marka filan giyinmekle uğraşmayız Ilgın abla. Gerek yok ki o kadar pahalı giyinmeye, kendimizi göstermeye. Tabi öyleleri de var ama az burda. Semih vardı mesela, Etiler'den mi ne geliyomuş, görseydin bi havasını!*
Orhan: Yaa, gelip Etiler şöyle böyle, şu ünlüyü gördüm bununla konuştum diye anlatıyordu kantinde filan hep. Etiler'deki çocuklar hava atmaktan başka bişey yapmıyolar ki! Yaa ne yapayım giyiniyosan markayı, Onlar birbirlerine bakmaktan, birbirlerini kıskanmaktan yani, eğlenemiyorlar yani bence. Kızlara beğendirmeye çalışmaktan kendilerini yani… Bizim kadar eğlendiklerini hiç sanmıyorum..."

Teachers' outlooks and material belongings are strictly scrutinized by the lads. For example, they know the models of all teachers' cars and call some of these teachers with nicknames that connote their possession of such precious commodities (e.g. "*Lagunalı Kerim Hoca*", "*Palio'lu Mehmet Hoca*", etc.). They distinguish the nicest looking, the fittest, the most affluent, and the most sophisticated teachers and signal their differences from themselves. They develop different attitudes towards these teachers according to the degree of sympathy they feel to them. For example, if a male teacher behaves towards his students roughly, then he could easily be devalued by the macho kids and labeled with slang which carried connotations of homosexuality[88] or which implied his sucking up the administrative staff for his interest. On the other hand, if the kids liked the style of a teacher (which actually happened only rarely), they developed caring attitudes and showed their appreciation towards him/her. In fact, two male teachers in the school were shown respect because they were friendly towards the kids and because they were paying attention to the experiences of the kids. One of these middle class teachers was often commented on by the kids just because he was wearing polished shoes everyday. The lads were actually noticing every detail in this teacher's style and attitudes:

> "Kerim Hoca's shoes are always spit and polished every time. He wears different shoes each day. He's a literature teacher. He's a real gentleman; he's among the minority who respect the students. He's very cultured and enlightened as well. He's the greatest teacher in the school."[89] (Ahmet, third year Industrial Vocational High School student)

[88] As homosexuality is associated with effeminacy and is considered as subversive by the macho lads, hostility to homosexuality is fundamental to the lads' heterosexuality.

[89] *"Kerim hocanın ayakkabıları hep tertemiz olur. Hatta her gün baska ayakkabi giyer. Edebiyat hocasi kendisi. Çok beyefendi bi adam valla, öğrencilere saygı duyan nadir hocalardandır. Çok görgülü bilgili bir adam ayrıca. Okulumuzun en kral hocasıdır valla" (Ahmet, 3. sınıf Endüstri Meslek Lisesi öğrencisi)*

The macho kids' respect for this teacher introduced them to the experiences of other middle classes – especially of their contemporaries who took their education seriously since Kerim Bey had relations with a private education center which prepared students for ÖSS and also had two successful children going to private high schools. This and some other teachers constantly gave the students the examples of how some young people could achieve social mobility through education, told their own success stories, or stories promoting the ideology of meritocracy. Although students listened to these stories, they did never attempt to identify themselves with those cases, and openly uttered that they found no originality in these stories. In fact, it can be said that such stories did not work in any other way than reiterating the worthlessness of the kids. Hence, the kids were critical of those who were insistent in motivating them for education even though they knew that their intentions were innocent:

> "I like Kerim Hoca very much, but he's always talking about how successful children he has. Okay, he doesn't call us 'stupid' like other teachers, but when all is said, he considers success more important than anything in life. As if he can motivate us by always saying the same thing. But in the end we cannot get the education that his children got…"[90] (Salih, third year Industrial Vocational High School student)

It was acceptable for the macho kids if they were exposed to middle-class stories and they often appreciated them. But they were greatly disturbed if their experiences were compared with those of the middle classes. That was maybe because in those times they were reminded of the wounds and miseries of their working class

[90] *"Kerim hocayı çok seviyorum mesela ama o da yani sürekli ne kadar başarılı çocukları olduğundan bahsediyor. Tamam başka hocalar gibi bize 'aptalsınız siz' demiyor ama sonuçta o da bazen başarıyı herşeyden önemli görüyor. Güya bizi motive edecekmiş, hep aynı şeyi diyor. Ama biz sonuçta bu okula geldikten sonra onun çocuklarının okuduğu eğitimi alamayacağız ki. Yani, bu belli ki yani…" (Salih, 3. sınıf Endüstri Meslek Lisesi öğrencisi)*

experiences which stimulated aggressiveness and an urge to establish superiority over teachers. Hence, the middle classes were often agents in the kids' lives that made them conscious of their real existence as working classes.

Totally Excluded: The Kurdish Community

The school is one of the means by which the state gains access to populations and imposes its dominant ideology. As explained in Chapter 2, the nationalist hegemony of the kids found a perfect ground to flourish in the school. Their nationalist hostility targeted most of the time the Kurdish community. In this part, I will focus on how the macho Turkish kids' community is constructed and imagined in the presence of a primary "ethnic other". I think that the representation of the Kurdish youth and also the whole Kurdish community by these kids deserves a special attention in the hegemonic nationalist milieu of the Alibeyköy School. As Willis argued (1981: 154), racial division in the school provided the lads with "an ideological object for feelings about the degeneracy of others and superiority of the self". The macho kids of the school also exhibited disdaining and excluding attitudes towards their "ethnic others". I argue that by this way they racialized their own identity and the identity of their victims. Indeed, the very construction of a national identity is based on a self/other framework where the "self" always emerges as superior to the "other". It is a kind of logic that seeks to define the "self" in terms of the "other," but in this process both self and other emerge as two polarized opposites that cannot exist in detached forms but only in relation to one another.

Indeed, such polarized understandings of self and other were often being constructed in the classroom. As far as I observed Kurds in the school are mainly

otherized by the Turkish macho kids as criminal and dangerous. The former was announced to be responsible for the entire burden of violence and criminality that has piled up in their locality:

> "Hasan: Kardolap area is too degenerated. They call the place "the hill", and "pitch steep"… You can find all kinds of things there: drugs, extortion, everything… Kurds live in that neighbourhood, it is like a slum, and even busses don't dare to pass by there after a certain hour in the evening. Every day either a robbery or an extortion incident takes place. Ask the shopkeepers of the neighbourhood… They complain all the time. Just a few days ago they have broken into muhtar's office and taken everything including muhtar's armchair. They are not afraid of robbing even that place. Burak: Now we have police here, watching; but who knows on which drugs they are while doing this stuff. In my opinion this is all about the way those kids are brought up. I mean, all these things have been going on since past times. It is like hereditary [for these people]."[91] (Hasan, second year Industrial Vocational High School student)

The above was not the unique example that constructed "the Kurds" to have an inferior "essence". Indeed, some other kids also considered them to carry hereditary features which derived from their ethnic identity. Further, these kids held representations that depicted the Kurds as destroying the integrity and peace of the society with their un-modern and deviant behaviors:

> "Those folks of Alibeyköy are rotten, especially in Karadolap, there are congenital defects, if you like. Open up cafes like the ones in Taksim here, you will see how the places will degenerate. These people will take them as pavyons[92], for instance, which is all they know. Sure there are also neat

[91] *"Karadolap tarafı zaten çok pis. Tepe derler oraya. Saha yokuşu bi de... Oralarda her türlü şey var: uyuşturucu, gasp, hepsi… Orası zaten Kürtlerin oturduğu gecekondu mahallesi gibi bi yer, otobüsler bile giremiyo oraya artık belli bi saatten sonra. Sürekli hırsızlık ve gasp oluyo oralarda. Esnaf zaten çok şikayetçi. Daha geçende de muhtarlığa girmiş bunlar ve muhtarın koltuğuna kadar herşeyi alıp götürmüşler. Yani oraya girmeye bile korkmuyorlar.*
Burak: Burda polis de var artık ama ne çekip yapıyolarsa artık bu işleri! Bence bu yetişim tarzıyla ilgili bişey. Yani tüm bu yapılanlar eskiden beri gelen şeyler. Irsilik gibi bişey" (Hasan, 2. sınıf Endüstri Meslek Lisesi öğrencisi)

[92] Pavyons are certain kind of bars devoted to male entertainment, where women are available for social company.

ones among them; but these people from the East really degenerate here… As they degenerate everywhere, I mean."[93] (Selim, third year Technical Vocational High School student)

The choice of Kurds as the group responsible for the breakdown of society was certainly not accidental. Their understanding of Kurds was greatly informed by the larger cultural discourses to which they were exposed. In the process of growing up in a society where they are constantly warned of Kurdish "terror" (i.e. the unrest caused by the low-intensity war between the Kurdish guerilla and the Turkish army[94] since 1984, the death of Turkish soldiers in the South-East region due to this continuing war, the "uninvited mass" compiled in the urban centers which appeared after Kurds' forced migration from their own places, the slow process of development in the country, or etc), they learnt that Kurds stood as the major obstacle to the peace, tranquility and economic stability of the "Turkish country".

Such Turkish public imaginary has indeed been quite powerful in sustaining and legitimizing the socially inferior positions of Kurds. The school in Alibeyköy provides a fertile ground to investigate how this imaginary and the nationalist ideology operates at the everyday level shaping the identities of the youth. For example, in the past there have been frequent clashes between the Kurdish and Turkish students in the school. As told by the senior year kids, extremely rough fights were taking place among antagonistic groups who were also affiliated with some Kurdish or nationalist Turkish parties. The senior year kids referred to a

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[93] *"Alibeyköy'ün insanı bozuk, hele Karadolap'ta ırsi bozukluklar var. Buraya Taksimdeki gibi kafeler açsanız, hemen bozulur orası, pavyon sanar bu insanlar mesela. Yani düzgünleri de var ama Doğu'dan gelenler hakikaten bozuyorlar buraları…Her yeri olduğu gibi yani." (Selim, 3. sınıf Teknik Lise öğrencisi)*

[94] Since 1984, it is estimated that approximately thirty thousand people were killed including the guerilla and the soldiers in this low-intensity war which still lasts in the South-Eastern region of Turkey.

particular day which marked the end of such serious oppositions: It was after a fight between the Kurdish and Turkish students, which ended with the interference of enormous numbers of people from *ülkü ocakları* and from leftist parties situated in the neighborhood who entered the school from outside and who caused a violent scene in the school. These conflicts were said to finish thereafter when the administrative staff fired lots of students from the school. As the school staff was at odds with the Kurdish students as well, those fired ones consisted mostly of the Kurdish ones. As recounted by most macho kids, Kurdish families in the neighborhood began to send their children to the neighboring schools thereafter – probably because a strong Turkish nationalist hegemony settled in the school after that event.

Hence, the stories about Kurds in the school are often recreated memories referring to past times since today only a few Kurds are said to attend the school. In the current situation, the most disdained group among the kids is the students of the Küçükköy Industrial Vocational and Technical High School. They often talked about this school in Küçükköy as a place where violence, oppression and conflict have been abundant. It is because Gaziosmanpaşa neighborhood where the school was situated had direct connotations in these kids' minds as it occupied an important space in the public agendas of the 1990s with the Alevi and leftist Kurdish populations performing oppositionary politics there. The Turkish kids' hostility to the Gaziosmanpaşa neighborhood, presumably having its roots in their families' assessments, made the students of another vocational and technical school in this neighborhood into the rivals or enemies of those I studied. The macho kids recounted different stories of violence, criminality and oppositions that the students of the Küçükköy School performed in and outside of the school. In general, it was

interesting that the kids' celebration of violent and aggressive masculinity turned into a reason for disdain and vilification when similar attitudes had been performed by the Kurdish kids. The attitudes of the students in Küçükköy may not have been different from theirs too much indeed. But as they needed to differentiate themselves from this Kurdish group, they made use of additional ethnic or political stereotypes that served for the legitimation of their pejorative reflections:

> "Just like everybody supports each other in the East, it is as such also there. Anyway, the people who reside in the Gazi[osmanpaşa] neighborhood are mostly relatives. The teachers also cannot do anything to such kids. Once a teacher shouted at one of his students and fifty people gathered together at the school exit and attempted to stab the man. He is said to hardly escape. I swear to God, children of murderers go to that school..."[95]

The kids' such stereotypical representations of Kurds, along with the symbolic representations and the discourses of the powerful dominant ideology in the school space (which are explained in Chapter 2) served a function. Like other kinds of stereotypes, "ethnic stereotype" helped them to simplify their worlds by reducing the complexity of information they were confronted on the subject of the Kurdish people's social and political existence. The stereotype of the "Kurd" has appeared in the kids' mind (like the dominant public's) with drug-dealing, the tendency for violence and criminality, the ties with the extended family; and in short, with the signs of modernization ideal's failure in the urban space.

If we are to understand how this "stereotyping" worked so well in the context of Alibeyköy School; there is a need for further analysis which would grasp the

[95] *"Doğuda nasıl herkes birbirini tutuyor, orda da oyle. Zaten Gazi mahallesinde oturan Doğu'luların çoğu da birbirinin akrabası. Böyle tiplere hocalar da kılını kıpırdatamıyor. Hoca çocuğun birine bağırdığı icin adamı çıkışta elli kişi toplanıp bıçaklamaya kalktılar. Zor kurtulmuş adam ellerinden. Katil çocukları okuyor orda hep valla."*

intersections of class, masculinity and ethnic segregation. Characterizing the Kurdish youth as a "problem" provided the kids with a reassuring feeling of their identity as "regulars" and by this way they felt higher in the social hierarchy. In other words, this active and deliberate process of vilification and criminalization of Kurds restored a feeling of power to those Turkish macho kids who were also at the lower ranks of the society.

The boys' differentiation of themselves also became manifest in their reasoning of the current unemployment threats they faced. On the one hand, there existed a commonsense belief among them that "the Kurds have taken their jobs after they arrived to the urban city". On the other hand, the kids did not want to happily associate themselves with the dirty, messy and unsocial jobs that the Kurdish workers are performing in the current labor market:

> "Those industries in our area, they do not need so much labor now, because of all these technological changes. Then there is also that: the jobs that continue to exist are bad and irregular, like those with spare parts workshops. The employers look to getting their work done for the minimum possible cost, they prefer to give jobs to people who are willing to work informally. For example, there are many car spare parts shops here, same in Bayrampaşa and Sultançiftliği. You will see they only employ newly arrived Easterners. Most of them accept very low wages for extremely hard work. Me, if I worked as a garbage man, I would at least get tired less. I would rather be a garbage man than working in those jobs, after having studied this much."[96] (Ekrem, senior year Technical Vocational High School student)

[96] *"Hem sanayinin insan talebi azaldi teknoloji değişmeler artınca, bi de hem de şey var: Geriye kalan işler de kötü ve düzensiz, küçük atölyelerde yedek parça işi mesela. Onu da en ucuz ücrete yaptırmak için güvencesiz çalışacak olanı alıyor sadece adam. Mesela burda bissürü araba yedek parçacı dükkanı var, burayla birlikte Bayrampaşa ve Sultançiftliği'nde mesela. Oralarda hep yeni gelmiş Doğuluları çalıştırıyolar. O kadar ağır çalışmaya daha az ücrete razı oluyormuş onların çoğu. Çöpçülük yapsam daha az yorulurum yani, çöpçü olurum daha iyi o işi yapacağıma bu kadar okuduktan sonra…" (Ekrem, son sınıf Teknik Lise öğrencisi)*

Such separation of themselves from the Kurds indeed has a material basis. Their attitudes should be understood with respect to the complex social definition of labor power under capitalism rather than in terms of any pure and inevitable ethnic hostility felt against the Kurds. As the labor market in the Post-Fordist era is regulated by making use of the segregations of gender and race axes, the presence of Kurds meant for the Turkish macho kids an evident under-class which is more heavily exploited than the Turkish kids' themselves. In this vein, they also began to consider the heaviest and most uncompromising work as not necessarily masculine, and instead marked down those as dirty and unacceptable through leaving it to the under-classes. While racism divided the working class both materially and ideologically, such presence of an underclass lessened the Turkish kids' exploitation to some extent and it has been accepted happily by them.

Concluding Remarks: Inclusion through Exclusion

As this chapter aimed to demonstrate, the Turkish working class young males in the Alibeyköy Industrial Vocational and Technical High School constructed their class, gendered and racial identities in relation to encounters with the "others" of each category. While exclusion of girls served to reclaim the boys' gender superiority in the school place, at the same time, it resulted in the throwing out of the girls from the working class industrial type of jobs which could be taken by them after graduation. Hence, vocational education area, just like the informal sector workplaces, made use of the diversity of labor by positively discriminating the boys and leaving aside the girls who were also given the same credentials. Considering the conditions of Post-Fordist production relations where diversity and fragmentation of labor is

appreciated in terms of breaking the totality of "Worker", gender relations in the Alibeyköy School also seems to contribute to the foundation of current class relations through these exclusions.

The encounters with middle classes, on the other hand, gave the future workers of the school the opportunity to become "aware"[97] of their conditions as lower or working classes. Although their confinement in the school area, the workplace or the marginalized neighborhood most of the time seemed to create single similar narratives for most of the issues for the kids, the effect of the popular culture and their diverse encounters with the middle class helped them to understand who their others are as well as who they are.

In the process of the construction of racialized identities, nationalistic inclinations of Turkish kids not only attacked the kids' Kurdish peers but at the same time comprised all other inferior connotations that the word "Kurd" carried overall in their social environment. Their exclusion of the Kurds unified the kids in the school as a moral community as well as contributed to the meanings they attributed to their works and their class positions. For example, the derogatory perception of the manual works which they were prepared for in the school became much more bearable in their discourse when they compared those with the service sector works which were done under much more heavier and dirtier conditions by the Kurdish under-classes. More importantly, this can be said to enable them to feel still "superior" while being at the lower ranks of the society and to contribute to their voluntary appropriation of male industrial working class identities.

[97] I am deliberately not using the word "conscious" here as the class as a process does not entail the "consciousness" in the way the word connotes itself to the class-consciousness that the structuralist Marxism defines. In fact, it is also true with such encounters, the boys became consciousness of their class positions. But they do not "gain" this consciousness, rather, I prefer to say that they "attain" the consciousness throughout their daily lives.

CONCLUSION

Having an interest in the role industrial vocational education and locality play in the production of working class positions and subjectivities, this study investigated the articulation between neo-liberalism, vocational education system and class relations within urban spaces. By concentrating on a school situated in a marginalized neighborhood, the aim has been to focus on the current problems of vocational education at a particular space where the problems of vocational education were more visible deriving the poor and isolated conditions of the neighborhood.

Delineating the history of government policies on vocational education in Turkey, this study made evident that the emphasis on vocational education decreased after the transition from developmentalism to neo-liberal state formation in the 1980s. The decline of the formal industrial sector after the shift to Post-Fordist production regime also prepared the conditions for this as vocational education prepares skilled labor to the mass producing industrial sector which was predominant in the Fordist era. The introduction of enormous policy changes one after the other after 1980s also did not help for a recovery of the vocational education. The decrease in the proportion of government budget allocated to vocational education, the lack of productive school-industry collaborations, and the obstacles against higher education due to the negative scoring problem all rendered vocational high schools as undesirable places for the middle or higher classes. Almost only the working class people who needed a job guarantee ended up filling these schools as vocational education diploma was perceived to serve this aim. As a result, vocational education, rather than providing young people with credentials related to the needs of the

current industry, became such a sphere that the economic advantage heavily shifted towards the side of the industrial sector with no planned school to work transition. Even if the last reform efforts seemed to enhance conditions for various graduates of some schools, in general, skilled workers who worked as mediators between engineers and unskilled workers in big industrial companies constituted only a minority and besides, those have mostly taken higher vocational education after graduating from vocational high schools. The majority of vocational education graduates become stuck with jobs which are just one level higher in position from those of the most unskilled workers' and which are not compatible to the skills they attained in their schools at all. In addition to that, the practice of internship after the introduction of "Apprenticeship and Vocational Education Act" serve to the institutionalization of an informal and insecure work regime as the law had the consequence of replacing the old and more protected workers by vocational students who are paid less and whose social security premiums are paid by the state.

All those structural changes affect the cultural atmosphere of these schools as well. Albeit few in number, the research made on vocational education (Şen, 2005; Akpınar, 2004; Sakaoğlu, 2003) proved that there is in fact a prototype vocational education student who can be defined as coming from the lower strata of the society, who appropriates nationalistic and patriarchal attitudes, and who has a tendency to use violence in the school environment. To question this prototype as well as to learn about the student responses to these structural inequalities in the sphere of vocational education, I made an ethnographic research in Alibeyköy Industrial Vocational and Technical High School. The results of this study suggested that, the students were aware that only a few would have the chance to benefit from the current regime. Generally, there was an obvious skepticism among students towards the

qualifications that would be gained through vocational education. In fact, this awareness seemed to constitute the most important reason for not investing in the school regime that was imposed on them. Instead of this, they engaged in anti-school practices in the time they spent in school. I found that the informal culture of the school was dominated by a rejection and mockery of the formal schooling system that in turn also affected the formal structure itself.

This counter-school culture is shaped by "hegemonic masculinity" (Connell, 1987 and 1995) which glorifies aggressiveness, strength, drive and the practices of fighting, laughing and pisstaking in the school environment. Constructed and reconstructed in the intersections of class structures, and social relations of gender and ethnicity, I have observed that this hegemonic masculinity provided male students in the school with distinct personalities which legitimized the celebration of manual labor and which attached them to racial and gender segregations. The collective counter-school culture prepared the kids' place within the new capitalistic relations and hierarchies and provided them with the means for questioning and contesting its inequalities. In fact, boys' styles of opposition to school resembled those found in informal sector jobs which rely on the personalization of struggle rather than on finding ways to build a collective worker identity.

The structural constraints around vocational education as well as the subjective experiences of students proved that in the current situation, vocational education lost its function after the demise of developmentalist government policies and the dissolution of Fordist production relations in the 1980s. This is no surprise since they were designed to meet the need for a Fordist type of organization. In other words, preparing mass numbers of industrial workers through education in an era in

which industry has dispersed and in which values of individuality, efficiency, and fragmentation at each sphere of life flourish seems not possible.

As discussed in Chapter 1, reform efforts aiming at the recovery of vocational education did not have an extensive impact in amending vocational education in terms of obtaining mobility opportunities and school to work transition. But at the same time, it is not surprising that MEGEP is valorized by most parties involved. Projects like MEGEP build their success story by elaborating on few success stories in the expense of new structural inequalities and new forms of exploitation. Thus, my analysis suggested that reform efforts like MEGEP could not be expected to result in creating a mass effect in the whole vocational education area in contrast to the arguments of the industry and government. That was also the very reason why I considered the new push promoted by the industrial powers and the government, which came to existence under the slogan "The matter of vocational high schools is the matter of the nation[98]" as unreliable and artificial. This new discussion is artificial in the sense that although the project primarily supports information science and service sector departments rather than industrial-sector-related ones, it is presented as if they are for the benefit of all vocational education. It is obvious that the spread of this discourse once again leaves the majority of the vocational education students (i.e. industrial vocational education recipients) all alone.

Rather than leaving the discursive power of neoliberal ideology unquestioned, in this thesis, I tried to elaborate the effect of it since it has the capability to hide the stories of people who experience vocational education. This led me to focus on the experiences of the subjects who faced the inequalities and new conditions of vocational education and who responded to those in complicated ways. Following

[98] The statement is by Koç Grubu as "Meslek Lisesi Memleket Meselesi". (See: www.mesleklisesimemleketmeselesi.com December, 28 2006).

Thompson (1980), this perspective also allowed for looking for the working class *experience* which has developed in a space where work and labor relations are learned within an educational setting. It is not a novel thing to say that vocational education reproduces the working classes of the society. This study did not question the validity of this statement. Rather, holding to the concept of class as process and experience, it tried to focus on the current construction of young working classes through vocational schooling as well as on the strategies that members of this class could develop against the disciplinary mechanism of schooling. I argued that ethnic segregation and masculine performances are the axis by which the youngsters in the school prepared themselves to become new workers in the neo-liberal era and yet also retain a sense of agency in the face of decreasing opportunities and ambiguous futures awaiting them.

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