MINDING THE GAP BETWEEN MILITANCY AND RADICALISM

THE CASE OF TOPKAPI PORTERS

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Thesis Abstract

Sait Öztürk, “Minding the Gap Between Militancy and Radicalism:
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This study scrutinizes the history of Topkapı porters for the sources of their class militancy and political anti-radicalism. Topkapı transport storages complex was the biggest hub of domestic land transportation in Turkey until the rise of cargo firms in the 1990s and still commands a considerable market share. The complex mostly consists of small-sized firms and had socialist union leaderships since the initial unionization in 1979. Hence their history provides a rare example of a long-lasting relationship between radical leaders and workers in small businesses which employ a significant majority of the Anatolian working class.

This thesis will argue that not only the discourses and actions of socialist unionists, but also the kinship and co-local networks and the porters’ masculinities formed through these networks were crucially influential in the formation of their militancy and the success of their struggles. On the other hand, these workers remained immune to socialist politics for decades and usually voted for center-right parties. Furthermore they punished their once-glorified union leader’s increasingly active participation into party politics by transferring to another union en masse. I will claim that the relations of production they enter present a significant factor for their inclination towards interclass cooperation. The influence of other factors like their increased social mobility thanks to the unionization and the failure of both left-wing political projects and the working class upsurge in the early 1990s will be taken into consideration.

Tez Özeti

Sait Öztürk, "Minding the Gap Between Militancy and Radicalism: The Case of Topkapı Porters"

Bu çalışma, Topkapı hamallarının sınıfsal militanlıklarının ve politik anti-radikalizmlerinin kaynaklarını incelemektedir. Topkapı nakliye ambarları sitesi, 90'lı yıllarda kargo firmalarının yükselişine kadar Türkiye'deki kara taşımacılığının en büyük merkezi konumundaydı ve hala kayda değer bir pazar payını kontrol etmektedir. Sitedeki işletmeler genelde küçük ölçeklidir ve 1979 yılındaki ilk sendikalaşmadan bu yana işçiler sosyalist liderliklere sahip sendikalarda örgütlüdür. Dolayısıyla tarihleri Anadolu işçi sınıfının büyük çoğunluğunu istihdam eden ufak işletmelerdeki işçilerle radikal liderler arasında az rastlanan bir uzun süreli ilişki örneğini teşkil etmektedir.

Bu tezde sosyalist sendikacıların söylem ve eylemlerinin yanı sıra hamalların akrabalık ve hemşerilik ilişkilerinin ve bunlar çerçevesinde şekillenen erkekliklerinin militanlıklarının oluşumunda ve mücadelelerinin başarısında belirleyici öneme sahip olduğu iddia edilecektir. Diğer yandan işçiler sosyalist siyasete bu on yıllar boyunca mesafeli durmuşlar ve genelde merkez sağ partilere oy vermişlerdir. Dahası eskiden adından övgüyle bahsettikleri bir sendika başkanının partili siyasetle gittikçe artan meşguliyetini başka bir sendikaya topluca geçerek cezalandırmışlardır. Bu noktada girdikleri üretim ilişkilerinin sınıflar arası işbirliğine eğilimlerinde önemli bir etken olduğunu savunacağım. Ayrıca sendikalaşma sayesinde artan sosyal hareketlilikleri ve hem sol siyasal projelerin iflasının hem de yükselen işçi sınıfı hareketinin 90'ların başındaki başarısızlığının etkilerini göz önüne alacağım.

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Frequently Used Abbreviations:

DİSK	Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions)
EMEP	Emeğin Partisi (Labor Party)
Nak-İş	Kara Nakliyecileri Nakliye Komisyoncuları Nakliye Müteahhitleri İşverenleri Sendikası (Employer's Union of Land Transport, Transport Consignment Agents and Transport Contractors)
Nakliyat-İş	Türkiye Devrimci Deniz ve Kara Nakliyat İşçileri Sendikası (Revolutionary Sea and Land Transportation Workers' Union of Turkey)
TÜMTİS	Türkiye Motorlu Taşıt İşçileri Sendikası (Union of Motor Vehicle Workers of Turkey)
Türk-İş	Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The subject of Topkapı porters came to me quite accidentally. As a graduate of economics studying sociology I was eager to write a masters' thesis based on ethnographic methods. Social relations in small-sized firms were my main interest, because they are an underresearched topic despite their magnitude in the working class.[1] Also the issue of masculinity appeared to me as very decisive to understand class behavior during my solidarity visits to unionization picket lines.

I got acquainted with Nakliyat-İş during these visits. Since it is today one of the biggest[2] and arguably the most active trade union with a socialist leadership, I had a lot of chance to meet with its officials. While in 2000 the union was on the verge of being expelled from DİSK, today its chairman, Ali Rıza Küçükosmanoğlu, serves in the governing body of the confederation as the organizing secretary. A paper analyzing the unionization struggles of Nakliyat-İş demonstrated to me the significance of Topkapı storages in domestic land transportation, both economically and in terms of union membership. The transfer of the Topkapı porters from TÜMTİS to Nakliyat-İş in 2002 particularly attracted my curiosity due the murder of three workers during the events and the ongoing controversy surrounding the issue.

[1] The TÜİK data from February 2010 shows that 58,6 percent of the work force is employed by firms with 1-9 employees.

[2] According to the Ministry of Work and Social Security statistics of July 2009, as the biggest union in land transportation Nakliyat-İş had 16 909 members and was followed by TÜMTİS with 14 889 members. Yet these figures are somewhat exaggerated to pass 10 percent barrier to gain authorization for collective bargaining. Since most unionization struggles in Turkey fail, only a minority of the members working in unionized workplaces have a direct link with the organization.

The Topkapı storages are the biggest of its counterparts around Turkey and due to the economic power of Istanbul, most of the goods transportation passes through this station. Its 130 firms employ about 1000 porters, 300 office workers and 200 managers. With the exception of a few dozen female secretaries all employees are male.[3] Another peculiarity of the storages is the importance of kinship and co-local[4] ties among the porters. About 80 percent of the porters came from Malatya and there is a significant minority from Adıyaman. Nearly all porters are of Kurdish origin and Kurdish is spoken especially by the middle-aged and old porters in daily life. These co-local and kin networks helped them to find this job and, as I will show in my thesis, to defeat the employers at least two times, during the unionization struggles of 1979 and 1987. Hence the storages presented to me a fruitful ground to investigate the interactions between masculinity and class.

The Topkapı storages are generally unknown to ordinary people, because of the place's gradually declining market share in the last two decades. In the summer of 2009, 300 to 450 trucks entered the storage per day. This number was 450 to 600 before the economic crisis and 800 to 1000 before 2000. The market share of the storages substantially declined after their golden decade after its foundation in 1978. It monopoly on goods transportation eroded with the rise of cargo firms beginning from the late 1980s taking the advantage of the long 1987-88 strike.

My fieldwork in the storages began in the summer of 2008. This pretty irregular field work stretched to nine months which can be divided in two quite different parts. At

[3] According to the ILO statistics in 2005 only 5,1 percent of the 972 000 non-professional employees in the land transportation sector were female. Therefore the storages represent the general rule.

[4] Following Tuğal (2009a & 2009b) I use "co-local" (*hemşehri*) to denote people coming from the same region.

the beginning I tried amateurishly to imitate the average porter from their clothing style to their mustaches. I created a shaky familiarity with the local branch officials and managed to be selected for work as a daily worker for two times. But in general I had little success and just a few stable relationships with the porters.

After a month-long break I came back with the appearance of a student, i.e. the normal me with a goatee and a t-shirt, but certainly without earrings, and with references from a friend. This second wave provided much of the data I have in this work. The porters I met through my friend were very eager to introduce me other porters, office workers and managers, who they thought to be more knowledgeable about the subjects I was interested in. While the porters were usually – at least in our first conversations – uneasy and the managers busy, the office workers were quite willing for interviews and chitchats.

Since this thesis has a strong gender component I tried to find ways to integrate the female relatives of the storage workers. However my first attempts failed due to the reluctance of the porters. Therefore I chose to focus on the relationship between masculinity and class, rather than on the interactions between patriarchy and capitalism which are not totally excluded either. The female office workers, on the other hand, were so few and on the sidelines of my subject matter that after one interview I did not move further.

It is not easy for me to specify the number of people with whom I got into contact. Thanks to the abundance of breaks due to the laboriousness of the job and the advantages of unionization, I was able to spend my afternoons conducting long interviews with constantly changing interlocutors. Several times we went to coffeehouses after work and picnicked at weekends. In the end I got 21 recorded

interviews with two managers, five office workers, six union officials of Nakliyat-İş and TÜMTİS, and eight workers as well as a plethora of notes.

I usually tried to be reluctant to express my political views without trying to look apolitical which would be absurd considering my interest in the storage workers and unfruitful taking into account men's eagerness to talk about national politics. Since nearly all workers were conservative center-right voters except for a minority voting for pro-Kurdish parties, this stance enabled me to create good relations with all people who were willing to speak with me. This restraint became particularly useful in seeing how they tried to guess my political views from my social background and speak accordingly. Most of my sense about their attitudes towards the "proper citizens of the republic" (educated middle and upper-class Turks) came from these observations.

In addition to my field work I also endeavored to apprehend the industrial structure of land transportation and the history of Istanbul porters using other means. For the former I delved into relevant economic data and read the activity reports of Nakliyat-İş and TÜMTİS in the last two decades. The only book about the history of Istanbul porters was recently published (Ertuğ, 2008) and ended its story in the early republican period. To fill the gap I surveyed the archives of the *Milliyet* newspaper from the 1950s on for relevant articles and spoke with members of the Porters' Association which represented the workers until the unionization of 1979.

This thesis will aim to analyze how the Topkapı porters became militant fighters for their rights, but embraced openly anti-radical political beliefs despite three decades of socialist union leaderships. Militancy is used here to denote their awareness of class antagonisms and their willingness to struggle for their demands. Radicalism, on the

other hand, refers to any kind of left-wing anti-capitalist project e.g. those of the socialist cadres in their unions.

I will pursue the gap between militancy and radicalism complementing historical investigation with ethnographic analysis. In spite of some very important contributions[5] two decades after Toprak's (1991) judgment of the social history approach in Turkey as embryonic, there is a slow and controversial development.[6] The few works about the contemporary working class groups usually tried to go beyond the class analyses focusing on economic data and statistics and embraced a culturalist spirit following Thompson's inspiration.[7] As a general deficiency of the recent interest in micro-struggles and resistances, even glimpses of class activism was optimistically regarded as a safe ground for radical political projects. More seriously, the reasons behind the lack of radicalism were either not systematically analyzed or easy solutions like externals impediments and ideological manipulation were presented as main causes. Therefore searching for the roots of anti-radicalism in workers' experiences would be an interesting step to move forward.

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[5] The works of Donald Quataert continue to pioneer the progress in Ottoman social history (e.g. Quataert & Zürcher, 1995; Quataert, 2001). Admiringly I found out that the Istanbul porters were also one the areas studied by him (Quataert, 1986). There is scarce progress in terms of using gender as a valuable analytical tool and even the few works considering gender as an important component of workers' history generally focused on women (e.g. Zarinebaf-Shahr, 2001).

[6] Akkaya (2002) noted the reduction of working class history to trade union histories lacking sociological depth and sharply accused the general nature of the work as miserable. The debate between Akın (2005) and Makal (2005) showed the deficiencies and achievements in social history more systematically.

[7] Nichols and Suğur's (2004) recent work as well as *Work and Occupation in Modern Turkey* edited by Kahveci, Nichols and Suğur (1996) are among the brighter lights of the studies on the Turkish working class. A recent volume edited by Buğra (2010) highlights the multiplicity of working class experiences in the conditions of growing labor market segmentation and precariousness. One of the most valuable contemporary works, Özuğurlu's (2005) book on the case of Denizli, represents a fruitful application of Thompson's debates to the Turkish context.

Considering the percentage of male workers employed in small firms in the national work force the porters are very representative of this majority of the working class. Their long history in socialist unions presents a unique combination which may teach us a lot about the difficulties and dead ends of a socialist strategy in such enterprises. The porters' distance from pro-Kurdish politics reduced the significance of their Kurdish background in their political choices. Their dependence on co-local and kinship ties, on the other hand, resembles the job-recruitment and social-support networks especially in the unskilled labor market independent from firm size.[8]

The first chapter will provide the theoretical backbone of my investigation. I will survey theories of class considering the viewpoints of Marx, Gramsci and E.P. Thompson. Then I will deal with James Scott's theory of resistance to situate kin and co-local ties in the context of a modernist state and also to explain workers' relationship to their leaders who took up the role of representing their interests before the state. Lastly, men's studies literature will be scrutinized to analyze masculinity at home, at work and in the public sphere.

The second chapter will examine their kinship and co-local networks in the historical-political context of their immigration to Istanbul and show how masculine honor stands at the crossroads of work, family and kin. The following three chapters will narrate Istanbul porters' history in three different historical contexts: The period of porters' guild and its replacement by Nakliyat-İş in 1979; the advent of TÜMTİS in the post-coup period and the consolidation of unionism with the strike of 1987; and lastly

[8] Even big companies rely on references from existing employees in recruitment mainly to avoid militant unionization e.g. the case of Bursa car workers in Parlak, 1996, p. 132 and that of Istanbul metal workers in Yıldırım, 1996, p. 152. From a broader perspective Duben (2006) pointed to the significance of family, kinship and co-locality in the urbanization of Turkey.

the contradictions between class cooperation and socialist unionism in the 1990s leading to the tragic events of 2002.

The dynamics behind Topkapı porters' militancy will be laid out in chapters 2, 3 and 4. Firstly masculine honor and the resources it can mobilize shaped the foundation of this class militancy. The examination of masculinity and kinship in chapter 2 will form the basis of my analyses in chapters 3 and 4 investigating the struggles of 1979 and 1987. It is worth noting that much of the analyses around the events of 1979 and 1987 complement each other: The investigation of how the discourses of shame were used to craft communities in 1979 can be replicated for 1987. Likewise homosocial male groups and masculine risk-taking played a crucial role not only in 1987,[9] but also in 1979.

Chapters 3 and 4 will point out two more roots of this militancy: the distinguishing characteristics of the storages in the land transportation sector and the socialist union leaderships. As I will show in chapter 3, the municipal decision to concentrate on the dispersed transport storages mostly composed of small and micro firms[10] increased the possibilities for unionization. Yet the porters' association which rested on its traditional monopoly in employment originating from the time of Ottoman guilds could not realize this potential and was even defeated as a result of the spatial change. In contrast socialist unionists fully used the structural opportunities and introduced a radical class rhetoric and a militant stance for workers' rights which resonated with the porters' appreciation of masculine independence and honor. The legal

[9] I chose to analyze these discourses for the 1979 unionization, because there was an active struggle against their old community, *bölük*s, unlike the struggle against the employers who were not very much related to them in terms of kinship, co-locality or cultural affinity. Therefore the role of shame discourse as a crafter and destroyer of collective selves was more visible

[10] Firms with less than 10 employees are generally regarded as micro, and those with less than 50 or 100 employees as small.

changes also left the socialists alone in the land transport unions: the regulations of the early 1970s categorized the workers in public transport in the general works industrial branch and diminished non-radical unionists' interest in the sector. The final blow came with the post-coup bans against holding positions in more than one union which forced these unionists to leave for their unions in the general works branch.

The fifth chapter, on the other hand, will demonstrate why socialist unionists failed to transform this militancy to political radicalism. Firstly it will refocus on the industrial structure showing why not only the workers, but also the socialist union leaders saw the need to improve the employers' economic conditions and how the employers legitimized their position in this context. The characteristics of the land transportation also dramatically slowed the pace of unionization and combined with the recess of working class upsurges in the late 1980s and early 1990s these developments diminished the possibilities of the porters' perception of working class as a potential agent of social change. On the political level the 1990s also corresponds to the global failure of the socialist project and a domestic disillusionment from social democracy. Lastly the increasing opportunity for social mobility thanks to the benefits of unionization and low capital requirements of storage ownership will slowly redound to the kinship ties between the workers and employers.

CHAPTER II

THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The multiplicity of social structures considered in this thesis required a collage of social theories. The general structure will be eclectic, but in order to avoid a theoretical mishmash I will discuss the theories nearly chronologically and on a thematic basis, ending each theory by opening a space for the new one to fill. Firstly Marxist class theories will be evaluated beginning from their classical roots and reaching to social history through Gramsci's reformulation. Secondly Scott's theory of resistance will provide a frame to scrutinize porters' social networks and culture in relation to a modernist state. Lastly the debates in men's studies literature will add a gender dimension to my analysis.

Relations of Production and Marxist Class Theories

Marx mentions in his 1859 preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* how his education in Hegelianism led him to an intellectual journey against its idealist foundations. He went against the tide of Hegelian philosophy explaining the evolution of state and law in terms of "the so-called general development of the human mind" and reversed the picture by pointing out to their roots in "the material conditions of life." Following Hegel's definition of the totality of these conditions as "civil society" Marx claimed that "the anatomy of civil society is to be sought in political economy" (Tucker, 1978, p.4). The significance of modes and relations of production in Marx's materialism was further underlined in this work by stating that,

> This mode of production must not be considered simply as being the reproduction of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite mode of life on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore,

> coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production. (ibid., p. 150)

As one of Marx's most mature and sharp defenses for an economic determinist version of materialism *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* included a clear formulation of the dichotomy of base and superstructure, in which causal links were formed from the former to the latter. While enriching social theory with an influential and surely productive emphasis, this version of materialism would cause debates for failing to appreciate the autonomy and causal power of the areas of the social piled under the concept of superstructure and ignoring the question of agency which had a promising beginning in the concept of praxis formulated in his *Theses on Feuerbach*.[11]

However his other works, notably historical ones like *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* of 1852 had a more nuanced understanding: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past" (ibid., p. 595). Thus both the existence of many sources of determination and a historically constructed capacity of agency are welcomed. Likewise Engels, in a letter written in 1890, contended that relations of production can be better defined as "the ultimately determining element in history" rather than sole determinants of each event (ibid., p. 760).

The relations of production constitute the core of Marxist class theory and other factors either impede their development or ease their operation. He understood them as

[11] Thompson (1978) argued that in the 1850s Marx was unfortunately so hypnotized by the bourgeois political economy that he went to build a socialist version of its narrowly economic theory of humanity forgetting his fruitful steps towards a historical materialism in the 1840s. In spite of his later turn to history in the 1860s, his theory did not recover from the need to articulate an immanent critique to political economy.

the conflict between non-productive capitalists and value-creating workers in each enterprise culminating to an abyss in the whole society. By teaching the antagonisms in a mode of production they were believed to engender a collective awakening from the ideologies of the superstructure. Every conceptualization of working class agency inspired by Marx, whether it is Gramsci's 'contradictory consciousness', Thompson's 'experience' or Althusserian structuralism, will ascend on this basis. The diversity of later formulations, as exemplified by these three, not only demonstrates the fruitfulness, but also the deficiencies of class theory.

Class Consciousness and Popular Culture: From Gramsci to Social History

Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) was one of the first Marxist theorists who not only appreciated the influence of popular culture and customs on class struggle, but also the need for a protracted revolutionary strategy. Gramsci (1985) advocated a cultural policy of creating a "national-popular" i.e. a popular culture from below. He had in mind two questions which isolated local Italian uprisings during the *Biennio Rosso* of 1919-1920. The first was the Southern Question, the division of Italy between an industrialized North and the agrarian South. This was reflected in the cultural hierarchy between Italian high culture emanating from the North and the "primitivism" of Southern folklore. The second problem was the exclusion of popular culture not only from the emerging elite national culture, but also from the minds of socialists themselves who were preoccupied with political and economic issues. Gramsci, on the other hand, aimed to build an alternate conception of the world from what could be found within the culture of popular classes. He was vehemently against artistic avangardism and insisted on rooting the new national-popular in the "humus of popular culture as it is, with its

tastes and tendencies and with its moral and intellectual world, even if it is backward and conventional" (p. 102).

As a revolutionary strategist, Gramsci's theoretical works aimed to analyze working class consent to capitalist structures. Although his theory of hegemony was later criticized for assuming a total ideological adherence by workers to ruling class values, in his conceptualization consent neither results in nor requires such a mental state. Every social system weaves around consent and force to the extent that they cannot be differentiated form each other (Lears, 1985, p. 568). Gramsci (1990) characterizes the working class consciousness under hegemony as possessing a "contradictory consciousness," a collage of the ruling class values and her practical activity as a worker:

> The active man-in-the-mass has a practical activity, but has no clear theoretical consciousness of his practical activity, which nonetheless involves understanding the world in so far as it transforms it. His theoretical consciousness can indeed be historically in opposition to his activity. One might almost say he has two theoretical consciousnesses (or one contradictory consciousness): one which is implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with his fellow-workers in the practical transformation of the real world: and one, superficially explicit or verbal, which he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed. (p. 51)

So for Gramsci the industrial working class is defined by the conflicts of these two consciousnesses: a good common sense stemming from their collective role in the process of production and a folk consciousness based on the unexamined accumulation of the ideas of dominant classes. Hence the real class struggle occurs in their minds between these two consciousnesses which carry the seeds of two starkly different hegemonic representations of the world.

Gramsci argued that ruling-class hegemony has an internal and an external dimension corresponding to a limited or an expansive hegemony. Limited hegemony means an intra-class hegemony gathering different ruling groups in a bloc. In this case the divisions in the top of the society were ameliorated, but the ruling bloc constantly needs to resort to violence in order to rule. A ruling-class hegemony can reach an expansive form, if it manages to articulate its subaltern in economic and cultural terms. It is worth noting that Gramsci saw expansive hegemony not only as an ideological manipulation, but a cultural and institutional formation satisfying some material interests of the lower classes as well. Nevertheless every hegemony, whether limited or expansive, is potentially unstable and both of the strategies of repression and concession can lead to challenges against the authority of 'fundamental' groups. (Jones, 2006, p. 52-53)

Gramsci's influence proved to be highly fruitful for various disciplines of social science, after his prison writings gained international acknowledgement in the 1960s. Bennett (1986) states that his work opened new horizons in at least two aspects: Firstly, the animate framework of struggles for hegemony saved the analysts from celebrating popular culture as an authentic creation of people themselves and also from reducing it to a docile servant of ruling class ideology. Secondly, its stress on the fragmented and even contradictory consciousness of people paved the way for overcoming class reductionism and the development of multi-dimensional analyses including notably race, gender and sexuality.

Gramsci's acknowledgement by international academic circles coincided with the emergence of a new group of radical historians in Britain. The British social history tradition developed the debates on class formation in line with Gramsci's cultural turn.

Originating from the Historians' Group in the Communist Party of Great Britain, most of them left the party after the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956. These social historians advocated that the history of common people was crucial to understand history as a whole. Against the orthodoxy gravitating towards diplomacy and high politics, there had always been examples of social history. The *Annales* School distinctively appreciated the introduction of quantitative methods and pursued a focus on social rather than political analysis keeping its distance with Marxism. Likewise there was a small tradition of radical English historians, e.g. G.D.H. Cole (1889–1959) and John R. Commons (1862–1945), who mainly wrote about trade unions and socialist party politics. British social history's originality was blending these different traditions and listening to voices of commoners who were even marginalized by the center or radical left-wing parties.

It can be resolutely argued that Edward P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*, published in 1963, impressed its seal on social history. This masterpiece was an attempt to "rescue" the working people of England "from the enormous condescension of posterity" and painted them as promoters of democratic values with "aspirations […] valid in terms of their own experience" (Thompson, 1968, p. 13). Its stresses on listening to 'small' people, conceptualizing class not as a purely structural position but a product of struggles in history and the role of customs and culture in the making of class set the framework of future debates as well as the distinctiveness of British social history from mainstream historiography and structuralist Marxists like Louis Althusser.

Thompson inherited the Marxist emphasis on relations of production and his weakly theorized notion of experience has these relations at its foundation: "The class

experience is largely determined by the productive relations into which men are born – or enter involuntarily." Yet he gave a totally new meaning to class consciousness: "Class-consciousness is the way in which these experiences are handled in cultural terms: embodied in traditions, value-systems, ideas, and institutional forms." While Marx mainly saw the collectivizing and politicizing effect of economic struggles as mediators between these two given categories i.e. relations of production and class consciousness, Gramsci more or less accepted their predetermined fixedness, but added in-between protracted struggles both in economic and cultural terrains. Yet Thompson, in a truly empiricist fashion, shook what was taken for granted: "If the experience appears as determined, class-consciousness does not. We can see a *logic* in the responses of similar occupation groups undergoing similar experiences, but we cannot predicate any *law*." It is noteworthy that in the next sentence he drifted away from this position to Marxism in order to find a middle way: "Consciousness of class arises in the same way in different times and places, but never in *just* the same way" (ibid. p. 10).

Attempting to hold these two potentially contradictory positions was Thompson's big dilemma as well as his attraction for a young generation of historians and activists of the New Left: solving the gap between the Marxist prescriptions and the actual existence of working classes not through the discredited vanguard party-politics, but in a libertarian way which appreciates the endeavors of common people and sees their conscious praxis, not merely their collective bodies as the building stones of a better future. Hence his dislike was not much for the analysis of material/structural effects which he elaborated at great length in his magnum opus, but hypotheses, which without having passed the test of time, can arrogantly argue what are true and what are distorted interests:

> These cultural ‘lags’ and distortions are a nuisance, so that it is easy to pass from this to some theory of substitution: the party, sect, or theorist, who disclose class-consciousness, not as it is, but as it ought to be. (ibid.)

Therefore while not totally ignoring class positions, Thompson accentuates the culture of working people to be able to enter their life world and its interaction with class struggles as the harbinger and creator of the future. Since he was avowedly Marxist, it was not very surprising that at the end of *The Making of the English Working Class* laborers reached the status of class and gained a consciousness of their separation from other classes.

Yet interestingly this fulfillment of Marxist theory does not seem to contradict the conservativism of the workers. This is actually a reappearing theme in social history, especially in the process whereby skilled artisans gain class consciousness resisting the capitalist transformation of the labor process leading to their deskilling and proletarianization (Berlanstein, 1993, p. 2). Thompson characterizes the English popular culture of the eighteenth century both as disobedient and conservative. Using the verses of a Luddite song “Custom and Law” became the banners against the attempts to “deprive honest workmen of bread,” a battle to be fought “till (the reestablishment of) full fashioned work at the old fashioned price.” In Thompson’s account, the ‘reactionary’ radicalism of Luddites, at which Marxists used to look down their nose, has more chance to be the norm of class consciousness than the revolutionary socialists.

His main metaphor, around which the industrializing English society was ordered, was the “field-of-force.” The gentry and the people positioned on the opposite points of this field and between them the middle class emerges “bound down by lines of magnetic dependency to the rulers, or on occasion hiding their faces in common action

with the crowd" (ibid., p. 151). Seemingly conflicting phenomena like frequent popular outbursts and the rioters' consistently non-revolutionary ambitions as well as the proscribed bounds of ruling class violence became meaningful when located in such a conception of society. The hegemony of the gentry, in Gramsci's terminology, either channels popular discontent to parliamentary and legal apparatuses or crushes them with force. As Thompson's lively narrative of struggles demonstrates ruling class hegemony does not mean the total subsumption of the working class, neither do popular riots mean radical transformation.

The social history tradition did not restrict itself to investigations of the interaction between popular customs and the radicalizing consequences of relations of production, but questioned the latter (e.g. Jones, 1984; Joyce, 1980; Katznelson & Zolberg, 1986; Reitman, 1991). These works analyzed how elements of industrial structure like workers' skill differences, firm's sizes and trajectories shaped working class militancy, unionization and political radicalism. Silver's (2003) recent work spanned class struggles around the globe during the last century and demonstrated that successful class movements strongly correlate with the global movements of specific industries as well as inter-class alliances during anti-colonial struggles.

As Eley and Nield (2007) noted in their appraisal of social history's trajectories, the peaking debates of the 1980s demonstrated a multiplicity of class formations and identities shaped by different capitalisms[12] and led to a discursive appreciation of

[12] A significant classic is *Working-Class formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States* edited by Katznelson and Zolberg (1986).

political history.[13] In line with these insights my analysis will attempt to read the effects of production relations in the industry through the discourses of workers and focus on the socio-political stances and life paths of leadership figures who had tremendous effect on the evolution of porters' social organization. Another more well-known development in social analysis in general was the introduction of categories like gender and race in accordance with the cultural turn. The following two headings will develop my position in these areas.

Kinship Networks and the Modernist State: Scott's Theory of Resistance

Cultural analysis cannot remain at the discursive level and ignore the social relations activated by cultural affinity. Kinship and co-local networks shape both the left- (Schüler, 1999) and the right-wing (Tuğal, 2009b) political parties in Turkey. However they are rarely admitted, because such informal networks are perceived as incompatible with the modernist project idealizing autonomous individuals as proper citizens. The power difference between the immigrant porters and the state as well as the need to hide their Kurdish background and active dependence on kinship networks resulted in a specific mode of resistance and obedience to the state. James Scott's concepts of hidden/public transcripts and fugitive politics are particularly useful in analyzing the porters' survival strategies in the city.

James Scott shifted the focus from open and explicit forms resistance to what he calls 'everyday' resistance. From *The Moral Economy of the Peasant* to *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* Thompson's formulations of field-of-force and moral economy

[13] Gareth Stedman Jones' (1983) *Languages of Class* was pioneering in this respect especially its reanalysis of Chartism as a political/discursive construct rather than an articulation of hidden working class interests.

influenced Scott's thinking, through which he theorized an "entanglement of power and resistance" (Scott, 2005). According to Scott (1985) subordinates generally have less material as well as organizational and intellectual resources to create and sustain an open struggle, and therefore they resort to veiled assaults which also provide the background for massive protest movements, but the latter are usually "flashes in the pan" (p. xvi). A larger social formation gives boundaries to this implacable conflict. As Scott notes, the "game" has a never-ending tendency to shift and change due to the strategies of the counterparts and also due to the changes in "boundary conditions" like "property relations, the law, expectations about market performance, and the political regime" (Scott, 2005).

Trained as a political scientist, Scott's intellectual trajectory experienced a shift towards anthropology in the 1970s leading to his early work on rationales of collective decision making in peasant communities (Scott, 1976). His most famous and -with regard to our analysis- most interesting works were published in the 1980s: the first concentrating of the repertoires of resistance among subordinate populations (Scott, 1985) and a second work on the public and hidden discourses employed by ruling and subaltern groups (Scott, 1990).

Scott (1990) argues that behind public performances of domination/subordination (which he names as the public transcript), groups also continue to hold disguised and covert critical discourses (in his terminology the hidden transcript). "Every subordinate group creates […] a hidden transcript that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant" (p. xii). This means the existence of at least four transcripts (two hidden and two public). However Scott later

assumes a model with one unitary public transcript heavily influenced by the discourse of the dominant side.

Therefore Scott's theory gets, in some parts, quite akin to Bourdieu's conceptualization of symbolic violence. The operation of this type of social domination requires the habitualized misrecognition of power relations in a given field. Hence it works through the complicity of the one lacking symbolic capital with her subordination. As this brief definition may suggest we can reach Scott's concept of multiple transcripts considering that a personal condition without any symbolic capital is nearly non-existent and the social consists of many fields and regulative schemes always partially open to creative combination and reformulation.

While the existence of at least two transcripts for a group necessarily brings in mind a differentiation according to their veracity, Scott (1990) is quick to point that "there is no social location or analytical position from which the truth value of a text or discourse may be judged" (p.x). Rather than independent discourses the formulation of public and hidden transcripts varies through the book depending on the concrete circumstances in question. Scott investigates the reciprocal pressures they exert on each other: the determining impact of domination on the form and content of the hidden transcript and how the hidden transcript subtly instills itself into the public transcript (p.136-182). Scott calls this concealed politics from below a "fugitive politics" (p.xii) or an "infrapolitics" (p.184): "the circumspect struggle waged daily by subordinate groups is, like infrared rays, beyond the visible end of the spectrum. That it should be invisible […] is in large part by design- a tactical choice born of a prudent awareness of the balance of power" (p.183).

Scott severely criticized the "thick" or total versions of the hegemony thesis i.e. the equation of class rule to capitalism with ideological commitment from the ruled classes. Yet the social contexts he examines are quite different from industrial capitalism: "slavery, serfdom, the caste system, colonialism, and racism" (ibid., p. xi). Later Scott (2005) admits this difference and presents it as the main reason why he used the concept of domination instead of hegemony:

> Although the authors of systems of domination also attempt to justify their rule in terms of the well-being of their subjects (e.g., paternalism, superior knowledge, security), they lack any institutions of apparent consent that are the very center of Gramsci's attention. (p. 399)

Therefore I will refrain from a discussion about the extent of working class consent in capitalism professed in these two presumably rival theories and focus on a less articulated aspect of Scott's criticism of the hegemony thesis: freeing subaltern activity from teleology. Instead of a universally given utopia which is deduced through decontextualization or by ignoring the context at all, in Scott's framework we see how people act in "experientially drawn boundaries to social transformation in action and imagination" (Sivaramakrishnan, 2005). This approach was also in line with the works on working class conservativism by his contemporary social historians (notably Jones, 1984 and Joyce, 1980).

A deficiency originating from Scott's focus on pre-capitalist contexts is the lack of an adequate framework of sources of power. Silver's (2003) analysis of bargaining powers emanating from industrial structures will be discussed and used in the third chapter. Bourdieu's theory of different types of capital, on the other hand, provides a more general system. In addition to the Marxist focus on the ownership of the means of production which correlates with financial capital, Bourdieu (1994) introduced a variety

of new types of social resources, notably social, cultural and symbolic capital (p. 19-30). Social capital is determined by the agents' personal networks based on mutual acquaintance. While both the weak and the powerful are born into networks of people, cultural capital and symbolic capital bestow authoritative power to agents and their efficacy does not necessarily require personal interaction, as Bourdieu points out criticizing social interactionism. Symbolic capital confers legitimacy and status to agents through honor and prestige accumulated by the operation of other types of capital. Cultural capital refers to the educational and intellectual aspects of personal power which closely relates to financial capital. By reasonable assumption there is no such set of universal rules of transformation of capitals or a scheme of costs since these exchanges are subject to the strategies of the agents and need to be examined considering the relations of agents and capitals in a social space at a specific historical moment (Bourdieu, 1994, p. 14-5).

Hence the discourse I will analyze cannot be easily categorized under hidden and public ones. In addition to the variety of subgroups among workers and of their sources of power I will also use many texts ranging from workers' statements to the mainstream and socialist press to our daily talks and interviews. The latter is also further complicated by our level of relationship. There were also not just unobservable, but unintelligible areas for me like their Kurdish daily talks in the teahouses or the union office. Following Scott, I will purse to determine discourses which are not articulated in front of their targets of criticism and contextualize this preference with the pertinent power relations.

Kinship as a Gendered Social Structure: Theories of Masculinity

Kinship is not just a cultural/symbolic category required to give meaning to the relations of production, because it is by itself a way to organize the world. In this sense its leftist

condemnation as “feudalism” grasps its nature better than locating it as a mere cultural category. Kinship is a way of organizing social and financial capital, a sense of morality to regulate the community and a world view creating identities. Hence a crucial part of my analysis will be about how porters’ role as family fathers and honorable kinsmen influence their organizations and struggles. The main theoretical debates in three-decades-old men’s studies literature occur around R.W. Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinity based on his pioneering works form 1980s on[14]. Evaluating these discussions I will try to formulate a synthesis applicable to my historical context.

Connell’s work utilized the Gramscian notion of hegemony to overcome the deficiencies of psychoanalytical and gender role theories. Gender role theories based on the process of socialization advocated a functionalist explanation for the difference of norms upheld for women and men. This dichotomy was seen as a result of the needs of family and child rearing or as a practical answer for the need of cognitive maps in society. On the other hand psychoanalytic object relations theories, while being not so obtuse in grasping the power relations shaping the constitution of genders, postulated an excessively unified concept of self. Connell (1987) asserted that Freud did not see the process of personal development as a set of consecutive steps leading to two stable gendered character types (p. 204-206). Due to the discrepancies between social conditions as well as various other contingencies not all boys will follow the lines of the same gender project. Even more curiously Connell pointed to the inconsistencies between championed norms and actual practices and argued that gender cannot be seen

[14] In 2006 R. W. Connell took up a transgender positioning as Raewyn Connell. However, the works I discuss in this thesis were written prior to this gender identity transition, when Connell wrote as Bob Connell. Following Beasley (2008) I choose to use male pronoun for his work before that date.

as the enactment of a prescription, but as an ongoing practice i.e. gender is not a noun but a verb (ibid., p. 140).

This understanding led Connell to develop a theory which can both account for the existence of different types of masculinities and explain the hierarchy of masculinities referring to the hierarchy between genders. He formulated "the single structural fact" of at least the Western gender order as "the global dominance of men over women" (ibid., p. 183). Hegemonic masculinity acts as a cultural ideal which does not necessarily correspond to the lives of most men and even becomes more powerful due to this fantastic quality. It represents a historically specific solution to the reproduction of patriarchy:

> Hegemonic masculinity can 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, p. 77)

As Demetriou (2001) noted following Gramsci's theory, this hegemony has its internal (domination of some men by other men) and external (domination of women by men) dimensions. Connell argued that the internal conflicts between men are far stronger than between women, because the patriarchal order grants men privileges to fight for and to sustain. Hence we have an emphasized femininity instead of a similarly hegemonic one. On the other hand the internal dimension of patriarchal hegemony consists of complicit, subordinate and marginalized masculinities besides the hegemonic one. The complicit masculinities benefit from the patriarchal dividend which comes in the form of symbolic and financial capital. Those masculinities violating the gender hierarchy like gay men are ostracized from the mainstream and masculinities of lower classes or ethnic

minorities are marginalized and do not receive the required authorization to define the hegemonic norms.

More than two decades after its initial formulation Connell's theory received many acclamations as well as criticisms. I will focus on one line of criticism focusing on the social structure of masculine domination. These criticisms mainly pointed that the theoretical requirements of Gramsci's concept of hegemony remain unfulfilled and patriarchy was easily conflated with other systems of domination without pursuing multidimensional analysis.

Using a specific example Hall (2002) problematized the relationship between domestic violence and hegemonic masculinity. Citing numerous studies on the disproportionate prevalence of domestic violence in working class families, he argues that this phenomenon cannot be explained by Connell's theory. As a performance of patriarchal masculinity this can hardly be motivated by gaining patriarchal dividend whether in symbolic or economic terms. Connell (1995) originally saw this as a marginalized masculinity, namely protest masculinity "which picks up themes of hegemonic masculinity in society at large but reworks them in a context of poverty" (p. 114). Hall opposed this framework for ignoring that this type of violence has never been a strategy to achieve social power in any real sense and gives an explanation for its existence and ongoing demise not through the dynamics of hegemonic masculinity, but the development of capitalism.

Connell (2002b) responded by defending the analytical value of the notion of patriarchal dividend and pointing to the continuum from domestic violence to various other working class male practices where hegemonic masculinity operates as a motivating factor. He also criticized Hall for stepping back from the incorporation of

gender categories into social theory and reducing the explanation of domestic violence to a theory of capitalism and class relations. As I will try to demonstrate, Connell's theory suffers from a problem of conflation which results in another type of reductionism.

In his recent work Connell (1998; 2000; 2005) aimed to integrate the issue of globalization to his theory and argued that transnational business masculinity embodied by the executives of economic and political institutions became the hegemonic masculinity of the global gender order replacing old models of bourgeois masculinities associated with local/national organizations and conservative cultures. Besides the immense power controlled by these men, the distinctive qualities of this type of masculinity are its egocentrism, conditional loyalties and a declining sense of responsibility (Connell, 2000, p. 52). Cheng (1999) gave the example of Bill Gates who as a "nerd" largely diverges from the physical ideals of masculinity, but "Gates's computer operating systems gave him knowledge-based power so that he aggressively grew into what the U.S. Justice Department's anti-trust suit alleges as a monopoly gotten by predatory capitalist practices of driving competitors out of business, which is hegemonically masculine dominance" (p. 301).

It is hard to define the aforementioned practice or other similar business practices as particularly patriarchal or formative in the constitution of mainstream masculinity. It seems to be a quick logical jump to assume that a male worker's fondness of social power in terms of financial capital (Connell seemingly privileges this among other types of capital) would lead to the acceptance of the views of socially powerful men or even going one step further to argue that the patriarchal values are originating from these aggressive corporate tactics.

Beasley (2008) makes the same point by comparing studies on the public impact of the masculinities of senior managers in a transnational corporation and workers' representations in popular culture and mass media (p. 90-91). The managers exercising a widely-accepted institutional power can hardly be considered as a cultural ideal shaping and legitimating hegemonic masculine practices or moving men's desires and aspirations. In their latest reformulation of hegemonic masculinity Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) came to the brink of accepting this important nuance (p. 838). In contrast to the managers, working class men without a similar institutional or social power can incite even inter-class solidarity by their status as purely physical men. It is the latter group which defines what counts as a man.

Taking also into consideration that Connell referred specifically to the upper echelons of the class structure and not even state or military structures, the problem can be seen as falling into the trap which Marxism fell many decades ago: conflating capitalism with patriarchy. Connell just builds the social structure from the opposite direction. Rather than contextualizing the intersections of the modes of domination, Connell theorizes all other types of domination situated in a bigger system as patriarchy ruled by a hegemonic masculinity, the main purpose of which is to sustain the domination of men over women.

Beyond this conflation problem the equation between masculinity and patriarchy is flawed. As Tosh (2004) stated, the reading of masculinity as primarily concerned with patriarchy fails historical scrutiny: "The logic of a dominant code of masculinity may be to uphold class power, or to consolidate the ascendancy of one religious denomination over another, and in these cases power over men may be more significant than power over women" (p. 53). Male homosocial groups and societies which are a widespread

phenomenon in history have used a large spectrum of practices and esteemed some masculine values which are not necessarily linked to patriarchal control. Likewise patriarchal qualities like self-reliance, independence, lack of (weakening) emotions or sexual performance were also utilized in the service of other causes (ibid., p. 54).

Positing patriarchy as so structured and so integrated with other systems of domination prevents questioning how different forms of patriarchy legitimate themselves in the internal and external dimensions of the hegemony and also how they may fail to do so. The issue of legitimation is very crucial since it necessarily introduces some non-authoritarian aspects of masculinities. As Gramsci noted, subaltern consent to hegemony requires the fulfillment of some demands. Some social theorists advocated that hegemonic types of masculinity are not necessarily linked to the domination over women and in some cases they are even necessarily not linked to patriarchal domination (Holter, 1997; Collier, 1998).

Demetriou (2001) added that the problem of legitimation exists also in the internal dimension of hegemony. As an example, Connell's account for the formation of the current Western hegemonic masculinity did not include any relations with or contributions by non-hegemonic masculinities. Formulating the internal hegemony in a purely elitist way where one masculinity dominates others disassociates the relations between masculinities from the question of legitimating patriarchy and the "non-hegemonic masculinities are subordinated in their totality independently of their pragmatic value in relation to the project of external hegemony" (ibid., p. 346). Hence the theory fails even to fulfill its main original contribution to the debates of gender i.e. "that the relationships within genders are centered on, and can be explained by, the relationships between genders" (ibid., p. 343).

Demetriou (2001) and Howson (2006, 2008) claimed that a fuller employment of Gramsci's framework can solve this problem. For Gramsci the internal dimension of hegemony grows out of a historic bloc comprised by an amalgamation of various kindred groups. While the marginalized masculinities in Connell's theory were defined by their lack of authorization, Demetriou argued that ad hoc authorizations can be seen as the basis of such an alliance. Thanks to its hybridity and historical specificity this bloc can maintain its hold on common sense. Demetriou (2001) exemplified such a formation with the incorporation of gay masculinities into the mainstream as a response to the pressures from both women's liberation movements and subordinated and marginalized male groups (p. 349-355).

Two criticisms can be made to their usage of the notion of authorization. Firstly authorization cannot be formulated as a one-way relationship as both Connell and Demetriou maintain. The dramatic power disparities between different groups of men may give the illusion of the widespread acceptance of the public transcript of the dominants, but as Scott notes, this may not hold true. Considering that Scott (2005) differentiated his theoretical framework from Gramsci's by noting the importance of the universal (male) suffrage in the rise of mass democracies, the relationship between the workers and political leaders became far more dialectical. Secondly as Tosh's (2004) criticisms suggested, the power-holding men can have other priorities than the perpetuation of patriarchy and therefore concessions or tolerance to their masculine values may be the basis of consent to be taken advantage of in other causes. Therefore the first step in analysis should be situating the analyzed group in the structure of power.

Kemalist reforms of the 1920s and 1930s displayed an example of the use of concessions to establish a modern nation-state from the remnants of a multi-

ethnic/religious empire (Diner & Toktaş, 2010). Women's emancipation had a symbolic value for the ruling elite to break away from the religious-patriarchal past. While the women obtained equality with men in issues like divorce and inheritance, the limit of their emancipation was seen as universal suffrage which was granted in 1934 and a year later the sole national women's organization, the Turkish Women's Union, was closed. These limited legal and political ameliorations surely did not end patriarchy and even violations of these were condoned due the ineffectiveness of these reforms in non-urban areas.

Another crucial aspect of my analysis will be the issue of legitimating patriarchal hegemony in internal and external dimensions. As a source of financial capital, work determines how successfully a porter justifies his authority over his wife (external) and his sons (internal). The struggle in the internal dimension will be especially visible and intense in my account, mainly due to the adoption of a hyper-masculine culture by young males against the necessarily compromising father. Men can move between these two positions for example during social struggles or use them as symbolic references to defend their domination or resistance in other types of social hierarchies.

Conclusion

In order to accomplish a social history of Topkapı porters one should integrate three analytically separable performances: as men in family and kin networks; as workers in their economic organizations and at work; and as subjects of the Turkish state. The underlying interconnections behind this appearance of separation hint of power struggles leading to silences and disguises. The conclusions I have reached from the men's studies literature will be mainly used to understand the first type of performance and its relations to the second. Following the insights of social history and world-systems

theory in the case of Silver (2003), the second area will require considering the social relations and cultures of the porters, the specific industrial relations they enter into, and how the legal framework of their social organizations and the industrial structure is shaped by the state. Since through their history the porters almost always had their labor organizations, their relations with the state rather than with their employers present a fertile ground for the application of Scott's theory of resistance.

CHAPTER III

STATE, WORK AND KIN: KURDISH MEN IN THE BIG CITY

In the last century Anatolia saw the triumph of a secular-nationalist hegemonic project over other alternatives. Aiming to prevent further disintegration of the last territories of the collapsing Ottoman Empire, the Kemalist historic bloc sought to revolutionize the social structure in favor of a modern Republic. While at the turn of the century the modernist one-party rule gave way to a multi-party regime, its power bloc was still able to set the boundaries of the proper citizen defined by urbanity, both in terms of spatial location and socio-cultural codes. For all of the older porters who came to Istanbul in the 1960s and 1970s these social conditions presented a profound challenge. This chapter will examine how they legitimized their obedience to such a political regime and maneuvered in its discourses to survive through holding on to their kinship and co-local ties which are symbolically weaved around the concept of honor. The fruits of these networks especially in terms of recruitment to a job provided the porters with a major resource in their family conflicts.

Kemalist Modernity and Immigrants

The Kemalist reforms of the 1920s and 1930s were implemented in an abrupt and harsh manner at the hands of a one-party state. These led to the suppression of especially the religious notables which were counted in the “team of the just” in the non-urban popular culture (Mardin, 1991, p. 114). Yet the republican power bloc was a heterogeneous sum with dominant and subordinate sectors, the latter of which will uphold this popular banner and name itself as the right wing of the political spectrum. As Tuğal (2009a) argued, “the rigidly secularist bureaucracy, the officially protected bourgeoisie, and rigidly secularist intellectuals and professionals [who] favored a regime of relative

exclusion and repression" were countered by inclusivist sectors like "the conservative wing of the bureaucracy, the internationally oriented bourgeoisie, merchants, mildly secularist and liberal intellectuals and professionals, and some pro-modernization provincial notables" who will mobilize popular grievances (p. 36-37).

While shaking the religious socio-political centers, the impact of these reforms on the vast rural masses was far from a success story. As Zürcher (1997) noted, the most successful advances were made with the attempts to spread modern education through Village Institutes from 1935 on, but they were marred both by the lack of resources and by their short life until the advent of Democratic Party rule in 1950 (p. 202-203). The cultural difference from the modern urban strongholds of the new republic was even less surmountable for the Kurdish peasants. First and foremost, they were traumatized by the rebellions and repressions during the early republican period. Secondly, Kurds had a language barrier which is not easily dispensable due to its importance in relating to their kin, their main social capital.

In the post-war decades these informal social networks and corresponding relations of patronage created both the pathways to the urban centers and also the resources for sustaining a new life (Erder, 2006, p. 22). Erder (2000) noted that these relations originated from two main features of this migration (p. 195-196): Firstly, partially due to its rapidity the migrants created an economic life around informal labor and housing markets outside of the supervision of public authorities. Secondly, the chain migration regional populations from different socio-economic backgrounds enabled them to reproduce their past relations. The rural population generally consisted of small-holders owning varying amounts of land and combined with the characteristically pull-

rather than push-migration dominating the pre-1980 period this created heterogeneous and not heavily polarized co-local groups around Istanbul.

The Story of Bayram

In the early 1960s Bayram, a porter in his late 50s, was sent to Istanbul at the age of ten. His father had settled in the city for a year and his family in the village thought he was no use to them in Malatya. Bayram was by no means an extrovert person or an emotional one. So he narrated the story in short descriptive sentences, but he vividly remembered the cold gaze of his grandmother when he was leaving home. He defined her as a deeply respectful woman, so respectful that in her deathbed she declined to talk to his uncle who had never heard her voice in his life. In Istanbul he would face another family reality: his father declined to host him in his house. “I can barely feed myself” he said. Thus an interlude in Bayram’s life began, sleeping at Saraçhane Park under the constant danger of being ripped off or hijacked which led to sleepless nights and dropping into alcoholism at a very young age.

Bayram’s loneliness in Istanbul was somewhat unique in a community valuing relatives so much, but his story repeated some conventions about the porters’ experiences in Istanbul. It was very hard to make him speak about the harassments of the municipal police or about the discrimination he endured for his meager proficiency in Turkish. One can only see these in clues scattered around a closed narrative about generalities embellished with joking references to what a good beating they got in the hands of the police or their inability to correctly pronounce the word “sendika” (trade union) so that they constantly referred it as “sandık” (box) in the strike of 1979. Bayram felt a deep gratitude rather than resentment to the shopkeepers who sometimes gave him something to eat or from whom he sometimes stole and who sometimes pounded him for

crime he did or did not commit. I was not fed so well at my father's, he reasoned. "Father state is bigger than my *agha* father," told another porter, "our family taught us to respect the elderly/powerful."[15]

The use of this polysemic word, *büyük*, shows how they reflected the logic of one system of social stratification to another in order to give meaning to their entrapment so that they can move further with it or, more correctly, *in* it. Scott (1990) claimed that forced subjection can only create ideological conviction under two conditions: Either the subjects should be totally atomized and supervised to prevent the emergence of a hidden transcript or the subject should have the chance to fill the positions of power oppressing them today (p. 124). The second possibility creates strong incentives for patience and imitation and channels the rage felt against the domination, which is a strong emotional motivation for hidden transcripts, to a revenge deferred to the future. As Scott added, kinship hierarchies based on age are successful performers of this type of rule.

The state as an institution can be taken to be older than the porter's father, but clearly the other meaning of *büyük* alluding to its power was meant in this sentence. Since both of the porters were very aware that the field of politics works with quite different processes than the kinship networks, I do not have much doubt that this was just a prevalent yet perfunctory transfer of legitimating discourse from one field to another. However there is no reason to believe that this was a discursive innovation emerging from their encounter with an incomparably powerful state. As Scott (1990) mentions teaching children docility in cases of oppression has always been a useful

[15] "Devlet baba benim ağa babamdan büyüktür. Ailemiz bize büyüğe saygıyı öğretti."

strategy, because despite its positive contributions courage may bring miscalculated conflicts with the powerful (p. 51).

Legitimizing state power was done in such a sloppy way that not only the old porters who suffered much as Kurdish immigrants but also those from the Turkified[16] young generation carry an intuition about the need to have good relations with the state. When I told that my surname, "Öztürk" (real Turk), was imposed on my parents, who preferred another one, by my grandfather to compete with his brother's new surname, "Türkoğlu" (Son of the Turk), a young worker in the storages totally misunderstood my grandfathers eagerness to certify his Turkishness as a response to the oppression we endured in Bulgaria. Instead he asked: "So you took it there to get along with Turkey, right?"[17]

Another cruder reasoning for obeying the state repeats the logical basis of tradition: to legitimize an act as continuous or coherent with a past one. After Bayram analyzed the current state of affairs in a framework where the AKP government and the army are on one side and the PKK and the Ergenekon organization on the other side, I wanted to question his reasons for supporting the army:

> Sait: Then you trust the army quite a lot, don't you?
> Bayram: Of course! It is the only thing heading us. I mean, if we don't trust the army… I trust the army as much as I trust the government, because my… my son is doing his military service. I sent my son there. If I don't trust it, would I send my son as a soldier?[18]

[16] A member of the closed Kurdish party, DTP, defined them including his son as Turks since they were not taught Kurdish.

[17] "Orda, Türkiye'yle iyi geçinelim diye, di mi?"

[18] Sait: Askeriyeye Sen o zaman güveniyosun bayağ?

Military service is indeed at the heart of many narratives of relating masculinity to the state. Its harsh conditions and obligatory character for all men make it an unrivalled milestone signaling a new stage of masculinity, one associated with marriage and work. A variety of rituals like feasts and convoys as well as intensive experience exchanges with and increasing care from the older relatives are attached to it before and after the event. The event itself seems like a test of endurance in which one's self-respect should be defeated in order to survive. The continuous humiliation seems to be even more devastating than the violence.

As Altınay (2004) argued, several aspects of military service like its admired discipline, nationalist indoctrination and challenge to men's limits make it one of the defining episodes entrenching nationalism and male superiority (p. 61-86). Her analysis presents absurdities, especially violent ones, as mere sources of complaint which were usually utilized to strengthen a narrative of masculine endurance (ibid., p. 83). Yet this discursive move cannot be reduced to an appropriation of an event based on meaningless pain, but the inclination of accepting it in such a positive manner is a survival strategy constituted during such events.

One can find substitutes for the social functions of military service like learning how to read and write, discipline oneself or peel potatoes. These can also not be considered as distinctively male/masculine qualities. Other reasons for its uniqueness are either novelties like meeting with a lot of new people from unseen places around the

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Bayram: Elbette başımızda olan tek şey, yani şimdi askeriyeye güvenmeyecez de… Ben hükümete güvendiğim kadar askeriyeye, çünkü benim.. çünkü benim çocuğum orda askerlik yapıyor. Ben çocuğumu gönderiyorum oraya. Eğer güvenmezsem ben çocuğumu oraya asker olarak gönderir miyim?

country or not very reasonable excuses for temporary domination summarized in sayings like "the one who knows how to be ruled rules better."[19]

By contrast examples of absurd harshness and their inescapable obligatory status both dramatically erode soldiers' self-respect and one cannot find any other social function or referent other than the soldiers' full dedication to the army. The constant humiliation, whether violent or not, shatters the self which is conditioned to perform a purely practical docility in front of an overwhelmingly powerful institution. When this hidden transcript is isolated from social support by close supervision, the reasonable differentiation between the self and the performance cannot be sustained, leading to the development of a schizophrenic nationalism: "After a point you go nuts, OK? You start to swear at the homeland and in the mornings you begin to shout slogans like "homeland, you're worth sacrificing my life!" more than anyone else."[20]

As I have said at the end of Bayram's story, this reasoning to get along with an insurmountable power gave people the chance to move on avoiding a futile resistance or a fatal depression which both Bayram and army recruits hinted at. It also paves the way for a public transcript aiming to prevent oppression by reifying the power of the dominant to the extent of being invincible. Aziz, an office worker in the storages, kindly permitted me to record a long talk with him which transformed into a political debate. Probably my reluctance to take a side led him to assume the worst and to use the pronoun "you" to refer to the Kemalist elites, forcing me to spell out my position. His

[19] "Yönetilmesini bilen daha iyi yönetir."

[20] "Bi noktadan sonra kafayı yiyosun, tamam mı? Vatana ana avrat düz gidip, sabah "vatan sana canım feda" diye en çok sen bağırmaya başlıyosun."

argumentation, on the other hand, was exemplary for maneuvers aiming to appease powerful secular elites:

> The chador is more ideological than the turban. Since the women in Iran are using the chador… Let turban enter, but not the chador. Merve Kavakçı entered your parliament. What were you able to do? You may prevent her. But she entered. Let people do whatever they desire. Don't fear from this, it would not lead to… It does not change. The regime does not change. Would it change? Of course, it would not! Your army will be in the same structure even if 500 years passes. It cannot influence your army. It cannot intervene to the army. Because its internal issues are determined. Who will come from where, who will be appointed from where to where… Everything is determined. Everything is written. It is determined who will be the Chief of General Staff. Some things are determined. Therefore it came in this shape from the Ottomans on.[21]

Kurds in Public Discourse: Feudalism and Ignorance

Yeğen (1999) suggested that the repression of Kurdish grievances came along with the creation of new discourses: the Kurdish problem was seen as a religious/monarchist reaction, a resistance of pre-modern social forms, a result of foreign countries' provocations, and a product of regional economic backwardness (p. 222). These provided the republican power bloc ways of skirting around the ethno-political content of the issue. Since the last popular Kurdish movements were suppressed in the 1930s and the remaining groups were restricted to small circles of Kurdish elites, the immigrants did not have any reason for ethnic identification and combating assimilation.

The Kurdish immigrants experienced the conflict between the cultural difference showing itself in areas like language and social organization in the context of a dramatic

[21] "Çarşaf, türbandan daha ideolojik. İran'daki kadınların çoğu çarşaflı olduğundan... Türban girsin, çarşaf girmesin. Merve Kavakçı girdi senin meclisine. Ne yapabildin? Sokmayaydın. Ama girdi. Ya bırak insan istediği gibi istediği şeyi yapsın. Ondan korkma şey gelmez. Rejim değişmez. Değişir mi? Yav değişmez. Senin ordun bi kere 500 sene geçse gene bu yapıda olur. Bir tek senin içinde orduya şey yapamaz. Müdahalede bulunamaz. Çünkü onun şeyleri bellidir. Kimin nereye geleceği, kimin nerden nereye getirileceği… Her şey bellidir. Yazılmıştır. 10 sene sonra genelkurmay başkanı kimin olacağı bellidir. Bazı şeyler belli. O yüzden Osmanlıdan bu yana bu şekilde geldi."

power differential outlined above. Hence the enormous symbolic power of the state discourse gained a commonplace acceptance. Gal (1995) criticized Scott's theory for its deficiencies in areas of language and linguistic form. After noting that Scott used many examples about how minority languages and dialects helped to shield the hidden transcript, she argues that Scott ignores the effects of linguistic homogenization through modern institutions of the nation-states like the schools or the mass media. In these cases the establishment of a monoglot standard as the ideological norm would itself impoverish the weak. Their languages will be seen as degenerate or inferior versions of the standard one. In this case the Kurdish accent also signifies the lack of proper education and ignorance (*cehalet*). A related stigma is being members of *aşiret*s which is commonly equated to "feudal" tribes in spite of its heterogeneity.

It is worth noting that these two discourses receive quite different responses. While they are at pains to explain that *aşiret*s in their area means extended kinship networks and not landlord-tenant relationships or misogynous social laws, the workers use the position of being ignorant quite strategically. The opposition between ignorance and education is one of the fundamental pillars of Turkish nation-state building and modernization: Ignorance was considered as the source of every possible problem and correspondingly education as a one-size-fits-all solution. For the porters the sole way of refusing to be named as ignorant is pointing to their life experience and contrasting it with the lifeless formality of school education.

Nonetheless in our conversations they also adopted this label for at least three purposes. One is to relate themselves to me or someone else with higher education as someone to be taught and not to be ridiculed. Hence they introduce their view on a new

subject quite shortly and finish it with a reminder of their position: “Of course we didn’t study as much as you did.”[22]

Secondly, as Scott (1990) showed in the case of black slaves in the US, “the refusal to understand is a form of class struggle” (p. 186). This was my first lesson when I was employed as a day laborer at the storages. Seeing my appetite to carry the goods with the wheelbarrow as fast as possible and constant requests to learn using the carrying pad, a middle-aged porter mocked my enthusiasm: “So much acuity takes the life of the porter”[23]. This was followed by a speech about the health problems most porters have and advice not to be so eager to learn.

In its third use the equation between education and higher character is accepted, but the modernist use of education for social change is thereby crippled. The educated person is expected to tolerate the ‘mistakes’ of the others who are and will remain ignorant. While the modernist version paralyzes the masses by devaluing their knowledge for the reforms of educated elites, this inversion paralyzes the educated ones in a position of tolerant higher personality and legitimizes their ‘mistakes’ i.e. maneuvers. This double standard is also employed to conceal hidden transcripts: “What use would it be for him (the boss) to know what they speak about? Can an ignorant man’s language be measured? He’s talking off his head. Should I say it and suffer the consequences for his (the worker’s) wrongdoing?”[24]

[22] “Tabi biz senin kadar okumadık”

[23] “Bu kadar akıl, hamalı canından eder”

[24] “Naapıcaksa onların ne konuştuğunu? Cahil adamın dilinin terazisi mi olur? Atıp tutuyo işte. Söyliyim de ben mi çekiyim vebalini?”

In contrast to the position of uneducated people from the East, the discourse of *aşiret* points to an organized premodern culture. Its social organization reshapes the image of Kurds from ignorant powerless individuals to an entrenched and powerful community causing social ills. The porters disfavor this subject position for the obvious reason that it excludes them all from the category of would-be citizen.

The common response to the criticisms centered on the work of *aşiret*s is simply to forget them and introduce the discourse of Easterners to explain issues. And when the questions continue and the interlocutor is not perceived as a threat, one can present it as a specific application of a more universal social norm. This was how Mehmet, an office worker in his late 20s, dealt with the problem during our first encounter:

> Sait: You are also from Malatya, I guess?
> Mehmet: 80 percent of the people here are from there. Here is the superiority of a certain majority. I mean Malatya. The others are also from nearby provinces: either from Adıyaman or from Elazığ. It's rare that someone from the West does this job. Essentially the job of the porter is peculiar to the Easterners. Peculiar to the Southeast… Its history comes from Sirkeci, Eminönü. Even in the present business center at these places 80 to 90 percent of the workers are from Kurdi.. from Eastern origin.
> Sait: You mean that people from other places do not work here or…
> Mehmet: No. If you came from the village and do not have a skill, that's the easiest job you can find.
> Sait: OK, but there is not even anyone from Diyarbakır.
> Mehmet: (to Sinan) Do you know anyone from Diyarbakır?
> Sinan: No.
> Sait: Instead of the east, maybe something like a relative brings another relative…
> Mehmet: That exists. It exists in the last 15 years, 20 years. It exists after the first foundation too. It's the way how thing are done here ("o işin raconu"). The world turns in this way. I mean, if a tea maker is required in a place, the municipal mayor brings his relative. As an example, I travelled back and forth around this place since my childhood. And for ten years I am a part of this place. If this place remains, maybe after 30, 20 years my child can come here. It is work after all.[25]

[25] Sait: Herhalde Malatyalısınız?

Another way to deal with this discourse to argue that it is misrepresented or that the representation is only true for a region. Bayram explained *aşiret* as a big family due to the magnitude of children: He has five uncles and his father had six (he did not mention the female sisters and my question about them remained unanswered as he continued to count the total number of male relatives). Bayram also contrasted this kinship network to the *agha* system in the east of Elazığ which arguably resembles feudal landlordism. Nevertheless after my remarks about how it is related to honor crimes, he started to talk about a uniform *aşiret* structure affirming its positive social effects:

> Bayram: They misrepresent it. Let me tell the truth. They put people in stress. What is aşiret? Aşiret is a society, a community. For example one aşiret chooses a leader among the elderly on its fields. Everybody turns around him due to his age. For example we say "you are our grandfather and you will direct this family preventing them from being set at loggerheads with each other." For example your father, they are three brothers. Everything ends at your father. If he gives advice to you and the other one. For example if he says "my son, this way is wrong, this way is correct." Is that wrong?
> Sait: You see that as directing then.
> Bayram: Yes, directing. If urging you to the correct way is wrong, then every place of Turkey is wrong.
> Sait: You know, it is usually talked with references to honor crimes, as a closed structure.
> Bayram: If you restrain yourself, if you do not wrangle with anyone, anyone would also not wrangle with you. If you do not touch anyone,

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Mehmet: Buranın yüzde 80inde şey vardır. yani belirli çoğunluğun üstünlüğü vardır. yani Malatyalı. Diğerleri de yakın zaten ya Adıyamanlıdır ya Elazığlıdır. Nadirdir batıdan gelen bu işi yapar. Esasen hamallık işi doğululara has bir şeydir. Güneydoğuya has bir şeydi. Bunun tarihi sirkeciden gelir, emin önünden gelir. Oradaki hanlarda bile şu anda çalışanların yüzde 80i, yüzde 90ı yine Kürt köken ıı doğu kökenlidir.
Sait: Yani daha başka bi yerden gelen insan burada hiç çalışmıyo mu, yoksa...
Mehmet: Yok, yani köyden buraya İstanbul'a gelmişsen bi mesleğin de yoksa en kolay iş budur..
Sait: Peki hani şey mi, Diyarbakırlı da yok aslında
Mehmet: Diyarbakırlı senin tanıdığın var mı?
Sinan: Yok
Sait: Doğudan ziyade hani böyle akraba akrabayı getiriyo gibi bişey
Mehmet: Var son 15 senedir de o var, 20 senedir. İlk kuruluştan sonra da o vardır yani, o işin raconu öyledir. Dünya o şekilde döner. Yani bi yere çaycı lazımsa belediyede belediye başkanı kendi akrabasını getirir. Misal. A burası da öyledir. Mesela benim babam sendikanın kurucularındandır. 30 küsür senedir de burada kendisi. Ben çocukluğumdan beri buraya gider gelirim. 10 senedir ben de buranın bi parçası oldum. Hani burası kalırsa belki 30 sene, 20 sene sonra benim çocuğum da gelebilir. İş sonuçta.

> no one would touch you. If you are honest, your counterpart is also honest. If you do wrong, your counterpart would also do wrong. That's the issue. In the simplest way. All of these did not simply fall from the sky. They come from one mother and one father. I mean all the world is brothers. Why are they brothers? They all came from one mother and one father. Our mother is Havva, our father is Adem. And so it goes. The prophets also came from them.[26]

Cemal, a member of the biggest and strongest families among the storage workers, strives to attain more power by being elected at least as a delegate to union congresses and thereby to get away from the shadow of his older brothers. He met with socialist politics during a unionization attempt in the food marketplaces in the 1980s and was one of the few people voting for the center-left parties. While constituting the history of his background with the same discursive strategies, he continued with a narrative about the present by differentiating himself from the *aşiret* structures governing the storages. Cemal's criticisms against the kinship networks followed this affirmation of his father: He defined his father as a rich agha ("variyetli ağa") who is characterized by his generous hospitality and contrasted him to worshipped aghas ("bitapçıl ağa"). He also criticized the prevalent use of kinship and regional networks in the union election campaigns as "broadcasting from the second channel" i.e. Kurdish. Such an openly

[26] Bayram: Onları yanlış yansıtıyorlar. Ben doğrusunu söyliyim. Milleti o şekil bi strese sokuyolar. Aşiret nedir? Aşiret bi toplumdur, bi topluluktur. Misal o aşiret arazisinde bir lider seçiyo yaşlı olanlardan. Herkes en yaşlıları olduğu için onun etrafında dönüyor. Misal diyoruz "sen bizim dedemizsin, bu aileyi birbirine düşmeden sen yönlendireceksin". Misal diyelim senin baban, üç kardeşler diyelim. Bütün her şey babanda bitiyor. Akıl verse sana da öbürüne de. Misal dese "bak oğlum bu yol yanlış bu yol doğru". Bu yanlış mı şimdi?
Sait: Yönlendirme diyosun.
Bayram: Yönlendirme sonuçta. Seni doğru yola sevk etmek yanlışsa, demek ki Türkiye'nin her yeri yanlış.
Sait: Türkiye'de hep bu böyle cinayetler falan üzerinden konuşuluyo ya, kapalı bi yapı olarak.
Bayram: Şimdi sen kendini dizginlersen, kimseyle dalaşmazsan, kimse de seninle dalaşmaz. Sen yolunda gidip kimseye dokanmazsan, kimse de sana dokanmaz. Sen dürüst oldun mu, karşındaki de dürüsttür, sen yanlış oldun mu karşındaki de yanlıştır. Olay bu. En basitinden. Bunların hepsi gökten zembille inmemiş. Bi anadan, bi babadan dünyaya geldi. Yani bütün dünya kardeştir. Niye dersin kardeştir? Hepsi bi anadan bi babadan dünyaya gelmiştir. Anamız Havva, babamız Adem. Bunun ötesi var. Peygamberler de onlardan dünyaya gelmiş.

critical attitude about the social relations of porters stems from the adoption of leftism which is a mix of socialist and developmentalist statist discourses. Therefore in order to prove the deficiency of the present union officials Cemal can on the one hand ridicule their proficiency in Turkish by pointing to one's pronunciation of "İrfan" as "Ülfan" which is the name of the present head of the employers' union, and on the other hand target their lack of political/organizational education:

> He is the head of the union branch, yet he is not at level of expressing himself at a seminar. He cannot explain Nakliyat-İş at the Labor Platform meeting. What is Nakliyat-İş? Why Nakliyat-İş? They don't know. But they have a base, they have delegates because many of his uncles and aunts are working here.[27]

Uses of Honor

As I have mentioned in the theoretical discussion, Hall (2002) criticized Connell's concept of patriarchal dividend paid by the hegemonic masculinity as useless in explaining working class patriarchy, especially in the case of domestic violence (p. 39-40). Hall argued that Connell's account for a wage differential is based on a statistical aggregation without any explanatory value for domestic patriarchy. Secondly he questions the concept in cultural terms, what Connell (1995) refers to as "in terms of honour, prestige and the right to command" (p. 82). Hall's framework highlighting the tensions between capitalist development and an outwardly violent version of patriarchy can be considered as more realistic than Connell's conflation of these two orders. Especially in the case of a modernizationist state like Turkey we should differentiate at least two types of patriarchy diverging along the lines of proper citizens and the

[27] Şube başkanı olmuş, bir seminere katılacak, kendisini ifade edecek seviyede değil. Bir Emek Platformunda Nakliyat-iş'i anlatacak kapasitede değil. Nakliyat-iş nedir, niçin Nakliyat-iş? Bilmiyorlar. Ama nedir, bir tabanı vardır, çok amcası teyzesi çalışıyor diye delegesi vardır.

common folk. However even Hall's direct comments on various sorts of violence committed around the working class areas at the fringes of state control misses how patriarchy and violence related to honor organize social life.

Tillion's (2006 *[1966]*) outstanding comparative investigation of the concept of honor in the Larger Mediterranean Basin extending to the Himalayas demonstrated how the interactions between kinship and property relations produced an economic, political and moral order around this concept. Intermarriages, especially those between cousins on the father's side, knitted the people in denser networks and an honor code based on virtue and disgrace saved the "purity" of the lineage. Thereby the properties of the family were kept undivided. Tillion related the violent aspects of honor cultures to attempts to preserve their moral order against their ongoing disintegration. By contrast, or complementarily, Cohen and Nisbett (1996) noted that violent punishment at the hands of the aggrieved side was a necessary part of these systems due to the absence of longstanding extra-communal political authorities to regulate conflicts. This density of kinship networks provided arbiters in intra-communal problems and scaled down the spread of such violence inside a community.

Therefore the typical medium for honor systems is not only rural areas, but also city slums. In the case of Turkey, the very unwillingness of the state to guide their integration to Istanbul neatly complemented the praise of masculine vigilance against institutional justice. Bayram survived under a state, which does not only neglect the issue of social services for immigrants, but also is built on discourses dispossessing them from any kind of symbolic capital, only thanks to the intervention of this subaltern culture and his kinship networks. With the help of some new friends he managed to leave this life which dragged him to homelessness, alcoholism and constant

unemployment and entered a bachelor's house (*bekar evi*). Also one of his uncles aided him to find a job and a few years later he took Bayram to a transport storage.

The male homosocial bonds provide the honor culture its real units of operation (Bird, 1996). Especially among the younger man they create an intra-group competition leading to a more aggressive masculinity and provide collective protection for group members. Kimmel (2004) argues that men's gender practice is mainly a homosocial performance which requires a male audience to watch and approve their status as a man (p. 128). On the other hand since the honor of men affiliated to a group is considered as that of the group as a whole, men could be relieved from the need to constantly perform the masculine ideal.

In these male kinship groups personal dignity is exemplified by concrete figures like their fathers or more usually successful figures which are their contemporaries and began life in similar conditions. A longstanding union official, a storage owner or a co-local merchant who began as a small seller represent the possibilities of personal achievement for the storage workers. References to these personal trajectories not only motivate people, but also curb their ambitions by presenting limits of personal advancement. These limits make daily calculations of expected values of actions and trade-offs possible. After a day in work during which I praised the taste of an alcoholic beverage – planning to buy it afterwards to create some familiarity and initiate a cycle of reciprocity – a middle-aged worker accompanying me quickly paid the bill when I was showing the beverage in front of the refrigerator. The old worker responded to my protests to save my amateurish attempt of displaying manliness with a reference to an old financial secretary of the Istanbul union branch who recently became a partner in a storage firm: "Take it easy! What would we gain by keeping the money in our pockets?

At best we would go as high as our Abdullah. Frankly, I left it to my son to be like him."[28]

Various arguments are utilized to curb financial ambitions ranging from its unattainability to the dehumanizing greed or increasingly risky decisions it leads to. Hence it is underrated in the definition of honor except for being generous especially to the male group and the family. In this moral economy, the group members' equality as men is reminded by the circulation of money and anyone who is too concerned about who paid for what is ridiculed. Of course these generous behaviors have always a double meaning: they are free gifts as well as initiators of reciprocity. This double meaning acts as a mechanism to prevent those who live at the expense of others.

Cultural capital, on the other hand, is perceived as far more alien than financial capital and this is not only because of their positioning as at best ignorant Easterners in the political field. Financial capital is mainly seen as an intermediary to realize one's desires. It accumulates in the form of money and its effects on bodily dispositions are considered to be secondary. But the accumulation of cultural capital primarily demands a rearrangement of one's self and desires. An interesting consequence of this difference is their openness for women's employment in white collar jobs i.e. among educated men. As a worker put it: "Things like that would not happen there. An educated man would not look like that to them."[29] Needless to say nobody believes that the unmanliness of these men is either achievable or desirable for them.

[28] "Amaan, parayı cepte tutucaz da noolucak? En fazla bizim Abdullah gibi oluruz. Valla öyle olmak da oğluma kalsın."

[29] "Orda böyle bişi olmaz. Okumuş adam o gözle bakmaz."

Honor and Masculinity beyond Patriarchy?

Considering women's status in male narratives I can surely say that, as expected, honor is largely related to the actions of women rather than men and patriarchal gender roles are defended both in norms and in practices. The understanding of honor as a collective endowment of homosocial male groups combined with the assumption of male superiority constitute the main causes for the objectification of women. A discursive vicious cycle is created in which the more women are discursively deprived of agency and power in order to constitute them as objects of protection, the more vulnerable they become to a violence which sees them, using the same discourse, as dehumanized bounties. Ironically enough despite the gains attained under socialist union leaderships which almost always maintained a program of gender equality, these very improvements in life conditions are used as arguments preventing women from participation into social life, especially work.

While women's voices were devalued, their consent to men's authority is still a necessary requirement for masculine hegemony. Therefore patriarchal behavior like domestic violence, cheating and addictions like alcohol and gambling are criticized using the norms of honor due to the internal and reciprocal tensions of two different male positions: the lads (*delikanlı*) and the family men (*aile babası*). Such criticisms usually stem from family men and are directed to the irresponsible lads, yet the former is a potential suspect for misusing his authority at home and the opportunities arising from the privilege of living a separate life outside of the supervision of family members.

The lads make up a temporal stage of manhood passing male childhood by increasing its dose of aggressiveness and obsessed with the new area of sexuality. Male superiority, risk-taking and objectification of women reach its peak since it is a life

without the need for a long term relationship or life plans. The male homosociality's dynamics of internal competition as well as unconditional support for each other generate a potentially devastating force. This hyper-masculine discourse of course very much continues to live after marriage especially among newly married or cheating men.

Nevertheless all of the strong displays of masculinity by the lads would not be enough to make them equals to the family men. Economically they are dependent on other men, their fathers, and all of their aggressive masculinity is articulated in the fathers' discourses as an irresponsibility lacking farsightedness which means that they will remain dependent in contrast to all their performances of masculine independence. Hasan, a porter in his early 50s, narrated how two of his three sons were dwelling in this virile lad culture:

> Sait: Are your children studying?
> Hasan: My second son in studying import and export at the University of Süleyman Demirel in Isparta. The others didn't continue their education. They are yellow-booted Mehmet Aghas[30]. They work for their pockets. They haven't experienced the adversities we endured. Their lives are based on ready money. They always rested on ready money. Although his test results were not sufficient, I registered the smaller one to the vocational school using money. He left it in the second semester. The big one is also a yellow-booted Mehmet Agha. He plied between home and school. Yet he didn't learn anything. I said to his teacher that I will register him to the secondary school again. "If you have a lot of money, make him study more, but if not give up" he replied. "He is no good. I am teaching, but his mind is somewhere else. What can I teach him! He doesn't get it, he's thickheaded!"
> Sait: Do they have no motivation to study?
> Hasan: Worse, I cannot take a grip on them anymore. Every day they are wandering around with their friends. They drink and taunt others or make indecent assaults to women. How many times did I take them from the police station! When I attempt to say something, he says "How can you know anything?" "Your life is work and sleep" says

[30] "Yellow-booted Mehmet Agha" is an expression meaning the non-existence, in this case probably the insignificance and vagabondage of his sons.

> the damned thing (*namussuz*). And they became huge, especially the smaller one. Slapping or kicking is no good anymore. I try to bring them to the storages. They say "I don't want a job making me curl up under the weight of someone." Marrying him to someone is also not a solution. What will marriage change in his character if he doesn't have a profession, if he is not able to establish a normal relationship with a woman? Recently my brother-in-law married off his son. After four months the son's wife got a report from the hospital and he ended up in the police station.[31]

Marriage represents responsibility and fertility both of which the lads lack. But it also means the dissolution of the homosocial friendship groups. The lad has to make one's farewells to his brothers and also his nearly misogynistic masculinity. Instead of this radical laddish masculinity, the family man adopts a more moderate version based on compromises at home. Hence this rearrangement of the social relations the man enters in is reflected in a shift of thematic stresses defining what masculinity is: the mechanism of patriarchal control moves from physical power to socio-economic efficacy.

The family man should be able to balance the discourse of gender complementarity and mutual respect at home with his monopoly on public life. This monopoly necessitates both providing his family's needs to legitimize his authority at home and a symbolic power struggle with the lads in many areas including the definition

[31] Sait: Senin çocuklar okuyolar mı?
Hasan: Benim ortanca oğlan Isparta Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi'nde ithalat ve ihracat okuyo. Öbürleri okumadı. Sarı çizmeli Mehmet ağa diğerleri. Kendi cebine çalışırlar. Bizim gibi ezilmediler. Onlar hazır geldi hazır gidiyor. Devamlı hazırın üstünde oturdular. Küçüğünü puanları tutmadığı halde parayla götürüp meslek lisesine yazdırdım. İkinci dönem bırakıp gitmiş. Büyüğü de sarı çizmeli Mehmet ağa. Gitti geldi, gitti geldi. Bişey öğrenemedi. Hocasına dedim ki "ben bunu tekrar ortaokula yazdıracam". Dedi "paran çoksa okut, yoksa otur oturduğun yerde". Dedi "bundan ne köy olur ne kasaba. Ben ders veriyorum kafası başka yerde. Ben buna ne öğretebilirim. Kafası almıyor, kalın kafalı" diyor, "ne dersen de" diyor.
Sait: Hiç mi okuma niyetleri yok?
Hasan: O da değil, artık söz geçiremiyorum bunlara. Her gün arkadaşlarıyla gezmelerde tozmalardalar. İçip içip elaleme sataşıyorlar, karıya kıza sarkıyorlar. Kaç defa karakoldan topladım. Laf anlatmaya çalışınca da "sen nerden bilicen" diyor. "Ömrün iş-uyku" diyor namussuz. Hayvan gibi de oldu hele küçüğü. Tekme tokat da para etmiyor artık. Ambarlara getirmeye çalışıyorum, "ben öyle milletinin yükünün altında iki büklüm iş istemem" diyorlar. Biriyle baş göz edip kurtulalım desem o da olmuyor. Bi işi güc olmayan, bir bayana doğru dürüst ilişki kuramayan adam evlense ne olur? Daha geçen benim eniştemin oğlunu böyle evlendirdiler. Eşi dört aya rapor aldı. Çocuk karakolluk oldu.

of masculinity. Hence the father is always a contradictory figure trying to fulfill many conflicting premises at the same time. The high esteem towards him due to his bread-winner status and the possibilities for his abuse of power inside and outside the family home due to this monopoly status go hand in hand.

> Hasan: Let me explain. Every home must have an order. Firstly the father should have some weight. If the home is a congregation, he is the imam. As the imam feeds his congregation spiritually, the father feeds his family materially. But this must have an order. If the father brings something home, he should bring it like a man. He shouldn't bring it at midnight his mouth smelling alcohol. Look, this money issue is important. Your goodness depends on that. Nobody would say that you are well-intentioned. Everybody looks at what you are doing. If this is perfect, if an environment of respect and love is established in the home, then there is order.
> Sait: So you are saying that if the father always works for the family, then there won't be any problems.
> Hasan: I mean, not always of course. Everybody has his own life. I told you about my sons (*keratalar*). What will change, if you work for them always? Are you the donkey of the house? The man should know how to have fun sometimes. His life should have some joy.
> Sait: Like having a drinking bout sometimes?
> Hasan: I mean, everything has a yardstick. Where is excess, there is a problem. For example here are a lot of people who pass the limit. Not much among the workers, but among the managers there are men spending their money with Russians. This depends on your wealth (*maddiyat*). I said, the issue of family does not depend on your intentions. If you're asking, I didn't do it and won't do. But in the end the issue is money.[32]

[32] Hasan: Bak şimdi. Her evin bi düzeni olucak. Bi kere babanın bi ağırlığı olucak. Ev cemaatsa o imamdır. İmam nası cemaati maneten beslerse, baba da evdekileri maddeten besler. Ama bu bi düzen içinde olucak. Baba eve bişi getiriyorsa adam gibi getirecek. Gecenin köründe ağzı alkol koka koka getirmeyecek. Bak bu para meselesi önemlidir. Senin iyiliğin buna bakar yani. Kimse sana "ne iyi niyetli adam" demez hiçbi yerde. İcraatına bakar. Bu tam oldu mu, evde bi saygı sevgi ortamı yerleşti mi, oranın düzeni oturur.
Sait: Yani baba hep ev için çalıştı mı sorun olmaz diyosun.
Hasan: Ya canım hep diyil tabi. Herkesin ayrı bi hayatı var. Bizim kerataları anlattım. Hep onlar için çalışsan ne olucak? Evin eşeği mi olucaksın? Adam arada bir eğlenmesini bilmeli. Hayatının bir neşesi olmalı.
Sait: Arada alem falan mı?
Hasan: Yani her şeyin bi ayarı var. Aşırılığın olduğu yerde sorun vardır. Burda misal onun ayarını kaçıran çok vardır. İşçiler arasında pek diyil, ama müdürler yöneticiler arasında parayı rus'a yatıran vardır. Bu maddiyatına bakan bi iştir. Dedim, aile meselesi senin iyi niyetine bakmaz. Ha yok ben yapmadım, yapmam da. Ama mesele nihayetinde paradır.

These two excerpts from my talk with Hasan present how various “excesses” of patriarchal masculinity are criticized as a result of the conflicts between men in different social positions and referring to the issue of legitimating male authority at home in particular and in the public sphere in general. Many other narratives disapprove of “excesses” like domestic violence, addiction, cheating as well as laziness and unemployment. The differences of men situated in these two positions will also be part of our analyses of unionization struggles.

Hasan’s narrative also exemplifies a paradox which generates constant legitimation crises for patriarchy. Most of the men I talked with had and preferred wives which are docile in character and less educated compared to them in order to ease the establishment of male authority at home. However this leads as in the case of Hasan to have “his own life” and to search for “joy” outside of the home opening the door to family problems like gambling or cheating. Therefore the father becomes both the most idealized and revered and also the most hated and blamed figure. The most pleased person about his marriage was a young office worker who displayed a stark contrast to the other newly married men one of whose main talk topics was warning me about marriage. This office worker married a university student he met in a wedding. Because he was a high school graduate, during their initial dates he lied to her that he also had higher education.

Conclusion

In this chapter I argued that an analysis of the Kurdish immigrants' conception of masculinity and honor requires situating them in a larger framework of power. Their experiences with the city and the state were one of repression and exclusion due to their class and ethnicity. Their docility and obedience performance was mainly motivated by

the power differential, but the absence of a strong alternative transcript or source of power meant that the domination created its bases of acceptance leading to internalization of the position of inferiority. Rather than being an end this inferior position as ignorant Easterners was reworked by them to open a zone of maneuver.

In this context the discourse of honor provided them much needed social assistance by activating the ties of kinship and region. The absence of the state services and guidance for the immigrants complemented with this honor culture's dislike for state intervention in the execution of justice. The social hegemony of honor relies on its inclusion of a multiplicity of competing principles like male superiority, reciprocity, and good morality. These are operationalized through social relations like male group dynamics or tensions between different masculine positionings like lads and family man. The question of legitimating patriarchy for women is answered through these interactions albeit not abolishing tendencies towards crisis.

CHAPTER IV

FROM A CO-LOCALS' GUILD TO A SOCIALIST-LED UNION

Porters have a long history of organization shaped by the shifts in the socio-political climate. This tradition gave them an unusual social cohesion compared to similar low-skilled vocations. This chapter will elaborate this history in the context of a modernist nation-state and a particular industrial structure. The municipal decision to concentrate the storages which were used be dispersed around the center of Istanbul changed the fate of the porters dramatically paving the way for unionization in their current location in Topkapı. Lastly the unionization struggle will be scrutinized in its gendered framework of honor and shame.

The Porters' Guild from the Empire to the Republic

Porters represented one of the largest and notably unruliest guilds in the Ottoman Empire. Sunar's (1996) study on the last two decades of Janissary corps pointed out the active participation of porters' in the rebellion of Kabakçı Mustafa and the killing of Alemdar Mustafa Pasha in the early nineteenth century (p. 113-114). Their participation in these events was mainly motivated by their high level of integration with the Janissary societies. A survey of porters in 1822 counts 2919 porters including 470 non-Muslims. While this significant minority could not have a military vocation, 2038 out of the remaining Muslim porters (83 percent of all Muslim porters) were registered as Janissaries (Ertuğ, 2008, p. 66). An edict dating from 1831 noted that most of the Janissaries exiled after the violent abolishment of these corps in 1826 were porters and boatmen who have a long affinity of working side by side at the seaports (ibid., 279).

Another reason for their aggressive participation in rebellions was their work conditions. Porters were probably the most manual and least skilled vocations organized

in guilds. The necessary skills for a porter are basically to be strong enough and to be careful about where one is stepping. Since a more meritocratic master-journeyman relationship was non-existent among the porters, hierarchies based on kinship and regionalism regulated their social world. The works lists reflect this regionalism ordering the porters firstly according to their regions and then to their religions. This arrangement probably resulted from their self-presentation to the officials in groups sharing the same region (ibid., p. 200). Most of them immigrated to Istanbul quite recently and joined it due to their lack of any kind of craftsmanship. These men resided in bachelors' houses or simply on empty fields and worked with their fathers, sons or brothers to send money to their relatives in the villages. As Ottoman state accounts usually described their human qualities with a strong contempt, there is no reason to believe that the Ottoman porters also had a high regard for their vocation or were eager to protect its dignity or reputation.

Yet in contrast to the conditions of common porters, documents listing their officials' assets prove that they enjoyed a rich life and engaged in trade (ibid., p. 165). That surely aided the porters' rebelliousness since collective petitions accusing the guild masters of embezzlement were quite ordinary (ibid., p. 40). On the other hand complaints about porters inculpated them for demanding high fees and preventing the transport of goods if the merchant was not pleased with their financial proposition (ibid., p. 261).

The Ottoman state had both organizationally and financially great power over the porters' guild. Like in all other guild officials like *başkethüda*s (head chamberlain), *kethüda*s (chamberlain), *kethüda vekilleri*s (deputy chamberlain) and *bölükbaşı*s (division heads) were appointed by the sultan. Especially after the Tanzimat Edict in

1839 the petitions for these positions dramatically increased which have been read as the increasing control of the state on the guild (ibid., p. 35). These claimants either based their claims on their being unemployed and in dire straits or proposed a payment for these positions. As I have noted before, these seats brought a good income and especially the state, probably the single biggest customer of the guild, depended on the porters for all of its goods transfers.

Quataert (1986) noted that their relationship with the Janissaries dated from very early times when the state entrusted Janissary units with the prohibition of the transfer of essential goods to other regions (p. 44). They paid dearly for their rebelliousness and this alignment with the Janissary corps during the abolishment of these military units in 1826. At least 70 percent of them registered in these corps were either massacred or exiled to their hometowns during this period. As a precautionary policy the reformist Ottoman government filled the empty positions with non-Moslem Armenians (Ertuğ, 2008, p. 120). So in 1844 Charles White wrote that two thirds of the Istanbul porters were of Armenian origin, especially from Van province (ibid., p. 203, 284).

The composition of porters changed again in the late nineteenth century after the Ottoman Bank takeover of 1896. The porters were used to carry money bags to the bank, but this time Armenian porters carried disguised explosives in bags. Therefore as Edwin Pears noted in 1911, the porters suffered greatly in the coming massacre of five to six thousand Armenians in Istanbul (ibid., p. 285). The remaining porters were sent to the police and exiled to their homes. Willy Sperco's (1989) observations in the early twentieth century lacked any references to Armenian porters and instead points to Kurdish porters. He cited from a *hamalbaşı* (head of the porters) that the strongest porters were from Pötürge (Malatya), Sivas and Erzurum.

In the aftermath of the Revolution of 1908, the new Unionist regime undertook a series of reforms in the guild system. An ordinance about the porters' guild was issued on September 6, 1909. The reform package modernized the vocation at least in appearance and by abolishing porters' monopolies it aimed to introduce market relations in the sector. The porters' society could not demand work privilege in any seaport, inn or neighborhood and could not restrict the number of porters. The sector would be open to everyone who paid the introduction tax to the municipal authority, but the measure only fully succeeded with a similarly phrased regulation after the coup of 1980.

Organizationally it maximized state control over the porters. The position of *kethüda* was abolished and all of its rights and powers were transferred to the municipal and police authorities. This decision would be complemented by another ordinance from 1912 which ordered the organization of artisans in societies and appointed an *esnaf kahyası* (guild major-domo) to each of them. *Hamalbaşı*s would be elected among one of trusted porters by the decision of the head of the municipality and the provincial council. It reaffirmed the age-old tradition of giving double wage to *hamalbaşı*s and put this as an upper limit to their incomes. The duties of *hamalbaşı* were listed as allocating the daily income equally between the porters, paying the taxes of porters regularly to the authorities, striking off the register of died porters or those who returned to their homes and bringing the injured or ill porters to hospital. The municipality would also determine their fees, but left the determination of the price in inns to merchants and porters. Lastly the local authorities acquired the right to restrict the number of porters in seaports and customs.

The regulations in the early Republican period added little to these reforms and generally either repeated or detailed previous decisions. The ordinance issued on August

1924, mainly elaborated the election system and the relief fund and increased the powers of the municipal police. It also formally abrogated the porters' guild. Minor regulations by the Provincial Councils of Istanbul and Ankara were made in the late 1930s like the prohibition of carrying goods on shoulders and baskets in Ankara or the proscriptions against using camels and donkeys for transportation in Istanbul.

The Democratization after the War

The wave of democratization after the Second World War also affected the porters. In the early 1950s porters of Istanbul started to struggle to elect their overseers freely. On January 1951 an official meeting with the Istanbul mayor was held to increase the autonomy of the porters by transforming it into an association. Two years after the formation of the association the Provincial Council took the issue seriously and established a commission for drafting a regulation about porters on November 1952. Later in this month the Association of Porters ("Yükçüler Derneği") filed a petition with three thousand signatures to the Provincial Council in an effort to earn the right to choose their *bölükbaşı*[33].

Another burning issue was the election of *kahya*s (major-domo). A news report dated February 1952 estimates that there were more than 3500 porters in Istanbul. Other reports from the second half of the 1950s note that about a thousand porters participated as delegates in each congress. The porters claim that four fifths of them are literate, but due to partisanship people without any relation to this job were appointed as *kahya*s and *katip*s (bookkeeper). A report from the congress of February 1953 in contrast to its

[33] The porters and the press continued to use traditional names of administrative positions which slightly diverged from their legal equivalents. The head of the porters was called by the porters *bölükbaşı* not *esnaf/hamal kahyası*. The heads of regional porters' groups were named as *kahya* instead of *hamalbaşı*. There were also other names for smaller positions: *kolbaşı* (arm leader), *kesedar* (treasurer), *istifçi* (stacker) etc.

headline (“The porters do not want the kahyas”) reaffirms that their demand was not to abolish this status, but the congress speaker points out that "in order not to waste this money [*kahya*s’ wages] *kahya*s should be utilized, but they neither have any knowledge about this vocation nor have any experience as porters.” The report notifies that porters of Istanbul are divided under 40 *bölü*ks, each ruled by an appointed *kahya* and their monthly wages vary between 150 and 400 liras. This can be compared with the daily wages of porters noted in a report published four years later (March 1957): 5, 8 or 10 liras. This report also notes that the *kahya*s should earn two times the porters' wage, but their current incomes are as high as field marshals.

It is also notable that mainly due to the toughness of the job, porters’ wages were quite high compared to the other options for unskilled immigrants. Peker (1996) argued that during these decades “generally speaking, the migrants successfully negotiated the urban labor market and they became exposed to a consumer economy” (p. 9). Yet probably internalizing the association of manual work with low wages Bayram claimed that their wages were not high, but that there was a general cheapness (*ucuzluk*) in this period:

> Bayram: Before the relocation of the storages to Sütlüce, the storages were on this side: Eminönü, Karaköy, Sirkeci.[34] At that time the wages were determined per ton of goods. If you loaded one ton, it made 25 or 50 kuruş in the 1970s.
> Sait: What could you buy with 25-50 kuruş?
> Bayram: At that time it was big money. The Turkish currency was valuable. It was not indexed to the dollar. Keeping dollars was punished with a jail sentence. For example I bought my 1,5-*dönüm*-big field in Malatya for six thousand liras. Today for six thousand liras you eat this desert. We used to fill our stomachs with 10 kuruş and receive 5 kuruş back.

[34] We made the interview in a cafe at Aksaray.

> Sait: Then the wages were good even before the unionization or were they generally good?
> Bayram: At that time it was cheap. There was cheapness. In this cheapness every kind of thing was included.[35]

In contrast to the unified atmosphere of the first association congresses, beginning from 1956 the news reports were marked with internal conflicts which usually turned violent. Considering that the main demand of the previous congresses was the free election of *bölükbaşı*s, the realization of this right seems to have led to internal struggles for leadership which were intensified by references to group honor discussed in the preceding chapter. The news article about the congress of 1956 designates the struggle as one between porters and *kahya*s and congratulates it for ending with the victory of the former. Surely this is an oversimplification, but the rise of a charismatic leader named Agah Güçlü is noteworthy. Güçlü presented himself as a candidate aiming to curb the privileges of *kahya*s and held several press conferences to attract attention to the problems of porters. In such a statement made a week after the congress of 1956 as the president of the Association for the Protection of Porters of Istanbul ("İstanbul Yükçüleri Koruma Derneği"), he summed up the association's aims with these words: "In summary the association wants to be better than the Animal Rights Association and hence provide eight thousand porters of Istanbul decent life standards."[36]

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[35] Bayram: Biz 78de ambarları Sütlüce'ye taşıdığımız zamanlarda o zaman ambarlar bu taraftaydı: Eminönü'ndeydi, Karaköy'de, Sirkeci'de. O dönem biz ton hesabı çalışırdık. Yani bir ton yüklediğin zaman 25 veya 50 kuruş 72lerde, 74lerde, 76larda.
Sait: 25-50 kuruşa ne alırsın?
Bayram: o zaman çok paraydı. Türk parası çok değerliydi. Dolara endeksli değildi. Üstünde dolar yakalayınca seni içeri çıkıyorlardı. Misal ben Malatya'daki 1,5 dönümlük yerimi 6 bin liraya aldım. 6 bin liraya sen şimdi şu tatlıyı yiyosun. 10 kuruşa gidiyoduk, karnımızı doyuruyoduk, üstüne üstlük de 5 kuruşumuzu geri alıyoduk.
Sait: demek sendikalaşma öncesinde de ücretler iyiymiş, ya da genel olarak mı ücretler iyiydi?
Bayram: o zaman ucuzdu, ucuzluk vardı. Bu ucuzluğun içinde her türlü şey vardı.

[36] "Kısacası, dernek, Hayvanları Koruma Derneğinden daha iyi bir duruma geçmek, böylece de İstanbul'daki 8000 hamalı hayat seviye ve garantisine kavuşturmak dileğindedir." (Milliyet, 25.03.1956)

In another conflict-ridden congress in the next year he lost the presidency to the old leadership, but was reelected at the congress in 1958 which was postponed for three months due to the fights. There are no more reports about other congresses except for two in 1963. Both were typically full of brawl and the one in February is the sole congress report mentioning a fight between three factions defined by their regional backgrounds: Pötürge (Malatya), Sivas and Erzurum. Whether Güçlü remained one of the contenders for leadership or not, his populist agenda seems not to have been implemented: the problem of wage differentials was not solved and at least in the early 1960s the *kahya*s were still not freely elected.

The municipal body's right to appoint *kahya*s probably also politicized the porters' association. For example during the congress in 1956 an interesting event was the cheering of Murat Güven who had been recently expelled from the Democratic Party and this event was reported by two observers sent by the party. Another controversial event happened after the coup of 1960: although on January 1961 the first free *kahya* elections were reported to be held in March, the porters' dreams faded again due to the decision of the National Unity Committee to appoint retired officers as *kahya*s. So 25 out of 27 porters' *bölük*s were headed by ex-officers. The municipality announced on March 14 that during the overthrown Democratic Party administrations, partisanship determined who would be appointed as *kahya*s and they exploited the porters. The announcement continued as: "After the revolution the retired officers recognized this situation and in order to defend the rights of the porters they proclaimed to voluntarily serve as *kahya*s. This application was welcomed by the Municipality and the retired

officers began their duties on March 1."[37] On March 15 the Aid Association of Retired Revolution Officers (EMİNSU) issued a statement against these appointments. The association declared that serving as porters' *kahya*s is "by no means suitable to the vocational honor"[38] of officers. Therefore it was ordered to bring the association members in question to the Honor Council and end their membership.

Two themes are striking considering the news reports about the association. The first is the eagerness of the news reporters to abolish the *kahya*s. This position was clearly not held by the association leaders who had a stake in the continuation of this position. Its reception by the state apparatuses is ambivalent since municipal power-holders used these positions to create financial rents for their associates. Yet exceptions like the announcement made by a municipal commission founded to draft a regulation about porters exist, the aim of which was summarized as "to abolish the class of *kahya*s and hand over this right to the association."[39] The reporters arguably sided with this modernizationist perspective and therefore the demand for the abolishment of old guild privileges and for equal wages had an early chance to be publicized.

The second is the invisibility of regional ties or more drastically ethnicity in congress reports. Only in one report written as late as 1963 do regional factions get a mention. Even in their most quarrelsome congresses – nearly every one of the association congresses had more or less physical conflict – the porters are represented as

[37] "İnkılabı müteakip bu durumu gören emekli subaylar hamalların haklarını korumak için idare memurluğu görevini gönüllü olarak yapacaklarını bildirmişlerdir. Bu müracaat müsbet karşılanmış ve Emekli Subaylar 1 Martta işe başlamışlardır." (Milliyet, 14.02.1961)

[38] "Emekli Subayların hamal kahyalığı vazifesini meslek şerefi ile katiyen münasip görmemiştir." (Milliyet, 15.04.1961)

[39] "Öğrendiğimize göre Daimi Komisyon hamallardan pay almak suretiyle büyük gelir temin eden kahya zümresini kaldırmak ve bu hakkı Hamallar Cemiyetine devretmek istemektedir." (Milliyet, 12.11.1952)

unintelligent/uneducated manual laborers instead of stigmatized with regional, not to mention ethnic references. This corresponds to the discourse about "ignorant Easterners" which the porters mastered in circumventing as my discussion in the preceding chapter showed.

The *Bölük* System

Stemming from the Ottoman guilds, *bölük*s[40] were structured by a changing mix of kinship and regional ties and also some degree of internal democracy. Each of the *bölük*s had a de jure and in the Republican period a de facto authority to undertake all of the work in its defined quarters. They were paid a sum of money for every day depending on the amount of carried goods weighted in tons. A *bölük* had a head called *bölükbaşı* (it literally means head of the *bölük*) who assigns *kolbaşı*s (arm leaders) to subunits and a *bölük kahyası* (major-domo of the *bölük*) to deal with the financial work. As a worker said, *Kolbaşı*s were appointed after the election among "the people related to the new leader or those who were active, who were cleverer than others, basically among those who could establish order in the *bölük*." Each *bölük* usually comprised of from 50 to 150 workers.

The internal allocation of money used to be a focal point of criticism by the workers for its injustices: *kolbaşı*s got at least the wage of the workers even if they were generally idling or ordering the workers. Likewise the *bölükbaşı* received two times the workers' wage. Since they controlled the monetary transfers, their shares could also be higher. A worker remembered how they saw these wage and power differential at that time: "I asked myself why my friend was idling while I was working. I carried goods

[40] The word *bölük* traces back to the Old Turkish spoken during the 8th-11th century in Central Asia. It connotes a group of people or animals and at least since the Ottoman period it also refers to a military unit.

until the evening, yet my friend came with a white shirt, tie, shining shoes and returned home in the evening. Maybe he even earned more than me. Because he was doing the accounting. In this business money does not disappear, but he may take two times the daily wage."[41]

*Bölük*s had a unique and probably quite variable degree of internal democracy due to the two different ways of becoming a *bölükbaşı*: one would either be a candidate in the elections held once every three years or buy the leadership of the *bölük*. Rather than mutually exclusive alternatives these were generally combined for a peaceful transition. Sometimes the elections would not be held for a decade due to the lack of an opposition at least as powerful as to mobilize support, while surviving the leadership's maneuvers against itself.

A combination these two different ways of getting the leadership could happen, if the *bölükbaşı* became aware that he would lose the elections. He could propose to sell his position to his probable successor and end the problem without electoral confrontation. This financial transfer was also important for the future survival of the *bölükbaşı*, because he could not work as a porter after having spent so many years as the leader. Several workers said that this consideration of "prestige" was "a remainder of agha rule"[42] and added: "It would shameful for him. He will say to himself: 'I was the *bölükbaşı* here. I was dealing with the police, the governor of the city and the district on

[41] "Yani ben çalışınca bu arkadaşım niye çalışmıyor. Ben akşama kadar hamallık yapıyorum, bu arkadaşım beyaz gömlekle geliyor, kravatla, boyalı ayakkabıyla eve gidiyor. Belki benden de fazla para alıyor. Çünkü para hesabı da onun elinde. Yani bu tür şeyler çok kaybolmaz da belki iki yevmiye alıyordur."

[42] "Ağalıktan kalma."

behalf of more than a hundred people. Could I drop to working as a porter?' So he would be ashamed of himself and would not do it."[43]

As this example shows, the position of the *bölükbaşı*s as a mediator between the porters and the state considerably elevated their status above the ordinary workers which had a historically troublesome relationship with the state both as porters and as Kurds. Sirman (1990) noted that in the case of villagers in western Turkey "the dual function of the household head as a representative of the state as well as of the household itself" made "representations and interpretations of the state […] part of the symbolic capital people compete with" (p. 21). The prevalence of such references to bargaining with state authorities hint that the monopoly of the *bölükbaşı*s on this mediation legitimized their privileges even more than their role as arbiters between the porters themselves and in their problems with the storage owners.

It is telling that smaller officials like *kolbaşı*s received disproportionately more criticism than *bölükbaşı*s. One reason is that the former's duty was deciding in the day-to-day conflicts among the workers. Since in all stories I have heard they are blamed for mistreating the narrator, one wonders where the stories of the allegedly favored side are. In contrast to them *bölükbaşı*s could become the authority to correct the injustice. The alternatives for *bölükbaşı*s were not restricted to accepting or reversing a past decision. They usually also knew a "respectable"[44] person related to at least the objecting side and he decided as a new referee. Interestingly in August 1979 when the storages were on strike Şemsi Ercan, the general secretary of Nakliyat-İş, admitted to the press that:

[43] "Kendinden utanır yani. Ben burada bölükbaşıydım. Yüzden fazla kişinin karakoluyla, valisiyle, kaymakamıyla istişare eden bi insandım. Bugün de hamallığa alçalayım falan. Yani kendinden utanır, yapmaz."

[44] "hatırı sayılır"

> Since we cannot propose a form of organization to replace the functions of the *bölük*s, we do not want to attack these people without mercy. They are able to solve some problems of the workers, even if we can see these solutions are deficient or wrong.[45]

Despite having a recognized trade union, even today the workers refrain from going into arguments with the bosses or managers. The spatial organization of the storage aids the work of symbolic violence: storages have only three walls to allow loaded trucks to enter it from one side. On the ground floor a small office is allocated to one or two office workers. To reach the manager a worker should ascend a narrow stairway to his office on the second floor. This organization restricts the daily interaction between them, since the manager generally comes out to supervise the activity or to give orders. Aside from the parallelism between being high above ground and having higher attributes, the narrowness of the stairway and the size of the offices either restricts collective mobilization or gives the manager a first strike chance: narrating a workplace incident a manager told me the workers "had crowded the place like a horde"[46] and they "lacked the ability to articulate their demand like a man/individual"[47].

Workers are also concerned about altercations with the managers either in his office or among other workers because of the norms of masculinity. The possibility of not being able to reply to the insults from managers in the same manner puts a heavy burden of shame on them. One worker described why he would desist from arguing with the managers: "If he (the manager) said these (offensive) words to a woman, it doesn't

[45] "Şu anda bölüklerin görevini yapacak bir örgütlenme biçimi ortaya koyamadığımız için, bu bölüklerin başındaki kişilere amansız şekilde saldırmak istemiyoruz. Çünkü bunlar eksik ya da yanlış da olsa işçilerin bazı sorunlarını çözebilmektedirler." (Milliyet, 12.08.1979)

[46] "sürü gibi doluştular"

[47] "ne söyliyceklerse adam gibi söylemeyi öğrensinler önce. Her kafadan bi ses"

matter – well, actually he won't use them, because it would be disgraceful for him (to insult a woman). But I don't want to be insulted by the manager, especially in front of so many friends and especially the wife of Selahattin. She works in the Erzurum storage (as a secretary) and comes here occasionally. You cannot walk around people after being so humiliated."[48]

Another reason facilitating the work of this symbolic violence was the porters' Kurdish background. In the preceding chapter I demonstrated that the porters are seen at best as ignorant Easterners if not vile tribesmen. As I have mentioned, the porters are trying to use the discourse of ignorance to open a discursive space of movement yet the stakes are very much against them in practice. Therefore their strategies of adopting the position of ignorance is necessarily defensive and do not aid them very much at redressing their grievances.

To sum up due to their position in disputes, *bölükbaşı*s were perceived as fulfilling a very essential function. Their higher incomes and the more urban and non-worker appearance it brings about were not just tolerated, but also seen as necessary for their success in dealing with employers or state officials. As noted before, this did not lead to a total ideological commitment to them. Such a degree of commitment was displayed just to certain *bölükbaşı*s, especially if the worker was related to his close entourage and at least indirectly benefitted from his rule. The egalitarian discourse recalling the past of the leader as someone among them elevated by their financial support provided a scheme to check for their abuses and inscribed those abuses in an

[48] "Burda bi kadına öyle laf etse, hani etmez, ayıp, etsen de nolucak? Ama ben küfür yemek istemem müdürden. Bunca arkadaşın arasında. hatta bi de Selahattin'in eşi Erzurum ambarında sekreter, buraya gidip geliyo. Böyle küçük düştün mü, bi daha insan arasına çıkamazsın."

oral history. The history of the porters' association shows that even before the emergence of the socialist-led trade unions in the sector, these accumulated histories mobilized kin and co-local groups to redress with popular grievances.

The Industrial Structure of Land Transportation

Small and micro enterprises have always been abundant in land transportation. According to the figures of 1996, half of all workers in this sector were employed in 17 486 firms with less than 10 employees. Only 6 firms (2 public and 4 private) had more than 250 workers. The public sector represented 0,5 percent of all workplaces and 2,3 percent of workers. It is worth noting that these figures do not include a whole unrecorded segment of land transportation composed of small firms and which, according to estimates made by various storage owners, employ about the half of all workers. The high levels of subcontracting by these small companies erect another barrier, since they used to close down when unionization was successful. Instead of ameliorating this problem, the new national cargo firms in the 1990s basically internalized this fragmented structure by adopting a firm organization based on autonomous local agencies. Therefore the bureau of the company in a city or even the bureaus in the same city are rented as different agencies and this create legal recognition problems for unions.

Various other obstacles against unionization attempts other than this excess of small firms exit in the sector. As I will discuss later in its historical and political context, the ambiguity of industrial branch regulations thwart drives for unionization by court rulings deciding that the union is not eligible to organize. As an example there is a slight difference between storages for land transportation and for warehousing which are defined as two different industrial branches that cannot be organized in the same trade

union. Likewise, since most transport firms engage in trade, their employees can be categorized under trade, bureau, education or fine arts branches. Another common practice is to employ bus drivers as private security personnel who do not have union rights. A recent report by an international logistic employer's association stated that even today more than three quarters of firms use their resources for transportation instead of relying on specialized transport firms which makes their industrial branch disputable (UND, 2006).

In general entering into the land transportation sector does not require a lot of capital and a transportation firm can be easily established with a place for its bureau, a weighing machine and rented trucks. If labor, which is one of the biggest expenditure categories, can be pressurized and tax obligations to the state evaded, big profits can be made with low levels of investment. Combined with the importance of the sector for supply chains, this leads to the prevalence of mafia-like businesses. Hence murders and knifings are more commonplace than in other sectors.

This low level of unionization especially in private firms can be read from the official strike figures: All strikes in the 1960s were in public sector firms which were transferred to the general works branch in the 1970s. A strike in 1975 in a private firm was followed by two strikes with 1 230 workers in 1976 which were probably public firms. In 1979 two strikes took place in the private sector, one during the unionization of the new Istanbul storages. In 1980 4 200 workers in three public firms went on strike. The silence of the post-coup period was broken by the strike in Istanbul storages in 1987 and three other private firms. As a part of the big working class upsurge in 1989-91, six strikes were recorded in 1990 and eight in 1991, but the figure dropped to zero in the subsequent years.

Before the construction of the official transport storages complex in Topkapı, the firms were scattered mainly around Eminönü, Karaköy and Taksim. Their sizes varied and were generally small with only a few like the famous Şen Izmir employing more than a hundred workers. The employers founded an association in 1947 in the context of the post-bellum democratization of Turkey. A news report from January 1957 cites the debates in an annual association meeting: the employers complained both about the porters and the public railways and seaway companies and the *bölük*s were criticized for their constant demands for wage increases. They also decided to create a transport complex in Yenikapı. Therefore as early as two decades before the opening of Topkapı complex, the employers connected the project of a storages complex with abolishing *bölük* monopoly on their work force.

On March, 1964, Nak-İş was founded as the employers' union in Istanbul. Yet it was far from a success story as can be seen from the decisions made in its next congress: the general council of April 1966 noted that the activities were limping, because its administrative board was composed of amateurs. The general council debated to join the national employer's confederation to increase professionalization. Thence they added "Turkey" before their name.

The membership of Nak-İş went up from 29 members in 1964 to 150 in 1971 and remained at 143 in 1975. In 1978 218 of 245 residents of the Topkapı complex became members. After the unionization of the workers and the success of the first strike, the membership fell to 190 in 1980 due to bankrupt or alienated members. An extraordinary general council was called in February 1980 to introduce constitutional changes. A new 7th article read that every member could leave at any time, but he should pay all of his dues calling attention Nak-İş' financial problems. In 1985, the membership remained at

192, but after the second strike it fell to 171 in 1988. After another stagnation period where its membership was 174 in 1991, it dramatically fell to 143 in 1993 due to the emergence of united transport storages. Today the number is fluctuating around 130.

Nak-İş remained a local and independent employers' union with a membership restricted to the firms in Topkapı. Other cities formed their own unions only after facing unionization struggles after the success of the 1987 strike. In January 1991 Ambar-İş[49] was founded in Ankara and it was followed by Ambar-Sen[50] of Izmir founded in the September of the same year. Ambar-İş openly claimed that its members at first contacted to Nak-İş for help, but the lack of any response led to an independent local union.

On the side of workers' organization Nakliyat-İş was founded on the 18th of June 1975 by transport workers employed at the Cibali enterprise of Tekel (Turkish Tobacco Monopoly). Therefore its first name was Istanbul Revolutionary Sea and Land Tekel Transport Workers' Union. Its first general congress was held on the 30th of November 1975 and had 470 members attending. This congress removed the specification of Tekel and replaced Istanbul with Turkey as its area of operation and also decided to apply to DİSK for membership. The application was accepted in the June of the following year. Until 1977 it organized important transport firms like Şen Izmir, Kastamonu Nakliyat, Unilever, Türk Demir Döküm, Paksoylar Kum ve Çakıl Deposu, Philips and Evsan Storage. Due to the ideological differences in the union, two separate general congresses were held in November 1977 and consequently two different administrative boards were elected. Until April 1978 a court decision was awaited to determine which congress and

[49] Nakliye Ambar Depolama Benzeri İşyerleri İşverenleri Sendikası (Employers' Union of Transport Storages or Similar Workplaces)

[50] Nakliyat Ambarları, Nakliye Müteahhitleri, Komisyoncuları Ve Kargo İşverenleri Sendikası (Employer's Union of Transport Storages, Transport Contractors, Consignment Agents and Cargos)

administration was legal. According to the court decision, Mehmet Bülbün became the president and Şemsi Ercan the general secretary. In April 1980 the next general congress accepted the uniform constitution of DİSK and chose Şemsi Ercan as the president.

The shape of the transport storage sector was dramatically transformed by a municipal decision in 1973 to relocate the storages dispersed around the center of Istanbul. Transporters used relatively big motorized vehicles as well as horse carts and these disturbed inner city traffic. Ironworking businesses shared the same fate and they reside now side by side in Topkapı which was considered outside of the city center in those days. The construction of the new site lasted a year and in 1977 at least all of the legal transport firms in Istanbul moved there. However as in the present, unrecorded firms continued to operate especially around industrial zones to reduce the intra-city transportation costs. But about 90 percent of the whole transportation was done through Topkapı.

As Silver (2003) noted, the working class has two sources of power: associational and structural bargaining power. The former refers to class organizations or sometimes inter-class solidarity networks and alliances and the latter leans upon exploiting their advantageous position in the industry. It can be based either on their market position benefitting from the scarcity of skills, low unemployment rates and non-wage sources of income or on their strategic position in the process of production, best exemplified by the semi-skilled workers in Fordist assembly lines. On the other hand the capitalist have some maneuvers or, in Silver's terminology, fixes. The crudest and in our case the most applicable one is the spatial fix which consists of relocating the place of production.

Looking from this analytical framework, the low unionization rates are easily explainable by the total lack of any bargaining power except for their associational unity through the *bölük* organization. The decision of the municipality mainly destroyed all possibility of a spatial fix which was and still is used through relocating the bureaus of the transport firms. The concentration of the business also altered the perception of the workers: for the first time not the individual firms but the whole storage complex was seen as the unit of struggle.

The forced concentration of the firms complicated their effective response to unionization drives for two reasons. Firstly, closing the firm would be withdrawing from a very vibrant market around the storages and at least legally, there was no possibility to re-open the firm at another place due to the order of the municipality. Secondly, the possibility of a sector-wide work contract emerged. In the past workers in small firms had no material gains from unionization which could only happen in big firms and the wage increases there affected the rest of the labor market only indirectly. But now if collective action enabled unionization just in big firms, some of which already had unions, thanks to the compactness of the new industrial organization, they would have the incentive to force the smaller ones to a collective work contract to keep their competitive power.

The Conditions in the New Storages Complex

In contrast to my analyses calling attention to the favorable conditions for workers' bargaining power and organization in the new complex its history actually began with a swift defeat for the porters. As the previously mentioned news report about the employers' meeting in 1957 showed, the employers always thought about the new complex, as a way of taming the *bölük*s. While in their old workplaces the weight of

tradition made the opportunities for employing non-*bölük* workers impossible, the history and traditions of the new place were to be created. The employers used this opportunity by declining to give jobs to the *bölük*s and employing other porters.

The response of the Porters' Association was an unofficial[51] strike beginning on November 6, 1978. The leaders of the association were so eager to display their good intentions that they started the resistance just before the Bayram in order to finish it as quickly as possible without harming the goods transportation through the storages. The President of the Transporters' Association of Turkey outlined to the press how the struggle was related to two different versions of tradition:

> The porters' *bölük*s want to work with us in our new work places. They say that they will do our jobs. Because in Istanbul the work was done in cooperation, they see work in the new site as their acquired right. However our General Committee decided to refuse to work with them relying on the experiences of the past.[52]

On the other side, the press announcement of the leader of Istanbul Porters' Association presented an example of how class unity was called referring to their regional commonalities:

> The porters working here are our brothers and we are the children of the same region. We are not against these people's right to work. But they have to join our association. If we could be together, we would earn our rights more regularly and give a better service.[53]

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[51] Since the Istanbul Porters' Association was not a trade union, it was not considered under and not able to take advantage of the labor laws.

[52] "Yükçü bölükleri yeni yapılan sitelerimizde bizimle iş iştiraki yapmak istiyorlar. Yani "sizin işlerinizi biz göreceğiz" diyorlar. İstanbul içinde birlikte çalışıldığı için yeni yerde de çalışmayı kendilerine müktesep hak görüyorlar. Bizim Umumi Heyetimiz de eskinin verdiği tecrübelere istinaden yük bölükleri ile çalışmama kararı aldı." (Milliyet, 07.11.1978)

[53] "Burada çalışan hamallar da bizim kardeşlerimiz ve aynı bölgenin çocuklarıyız. Biz, bizden başka kimsenin çalışmasına karşı değiliz. Ancak onların da bizim derneğimize üye olmaları gereklidir. Hep birlikte olursak haklarımızı daha düzenli elde eder, daha iyi hizmet veririz." (Milliyet, 07.11.1978)

The association's two-week-long resistance shows that all these shifts in bargaining power might have very well remained unrealized, if there were no agent willing and determined to exploit them. In fact the opposite of our analysis happened and the porters' association had to decrease the transportation fees per ton from 100 to 60 liras in order to gain the right to work in the new storages. It is noteworthy that the news report about the deal included two comments from the rejoicing storage owners, but none from the association or porters. Combined with other complaints about the *bölük*s, this was the final straw and having already unionized in some of the big companies in the storages, Nakliyat-İş seized the opportunity. Some workers said that even before the relocation, especially the unionization resistance in Şen İzmir which was one of the biggest transport firms of the time, gave a first impression of class struggle and social rights to these ex-peasants. An old union member in Topkapı named the coming 1979 strike as his second strike arguing that they had visited the striking workers at Şen İzmir to express their solidarity and also amazement.

Two of the most important grievances of the porters were the lack of social and job security. They were quite aware of the latter, but had relatively few considerations about the former until the unionization drive began. In terms of job security the workers were totally dependent on the *bölük* leaders and the recent wage cuts increased the already stark disparity between the toiling mass and the top. This dependence was also used to deal with internal opposition and maintain the authority of the leadership. The trade union in contrast presented a more formal and democratic internal structure and a socialist stress on workers' rights, the radicalism of which the porters generally did not embrace, but admired its practical consequences in the unionized workplaces.

Şemsi Ercan argued in August that about 600 out of 750 workers in the storages did not have social security. Naturally the leadership of the employers' union denied such allegations. Yet the workers, for whom the lack of social security was an established fact, were rather ambivalent about its value. In general I can say that the porters preferred social security not for retirement pensions but for health insurance. Considering the prevalence of waist injuries in this sector, they quit in late middle ages with a crippled body. The lack of any legal work record meant that these health problems would lead to immense pains.

However most workers did not see retirement as viable or necessary. Firstly, they were used to and highly praised the children's duty to take care of their elders. Therefore it was seen as not only unnecessary, but somewhat harmful to the venerated social position of provider-sons. Secondly, they could not be sure if the employer would pay the security premiums regularly and even if they began to pay, it was too late for some to fulfill the requirements related to the amount of paid working days. Therefore during the coming decade of organizational ebbs and flows, a considerable number of workers were either indifferent or even directly opposed to the introduction of social security, because they saw it as a useless financial burden lowering the wages. It was only after the landslide victory of 1987 resulting in an enormous wage increase that the trade-off between social security and high wages was abandoned.

The Struggle for Unionization

The drive for union organization began a few weeks before the strike of the porters association and strengthened with its defeat. After a 5-month-long effort, workers of the Topkapı transport storages were unionized. The negotiations for a collective work contract began on March 7, 1979, but they ended with failure in July. This led to the

strike decision taken by about 600 workers at 109 transport storages. In response, all employers including the remaining 95 firms declared a lockout.

Şemsi Ercan's press announcement in early August noted that the *bölük* organization was legally dissolved in the storages and both the Municipality and the Governorship affirmed that *bölük*s could not work in the storages anymore. On August 2 Nuh Kuşçulu, the head of the Istanbul Chamber of Industry, requested the delay of the strike due the coming of Ramazan and the harvesting season. Right before Ramazan, a deal was made between the two parties, but the employer's union did not come to the signing of the work contract on August 28. So the strike continued. According to the official declaration of Nakliyat-İş, this was the result of the internal disputes of the firm owners: 150 employers agreed with the deal, but 24 of them resisted. This led to a partial solution in which the strike ended in 150 workplaces, but was continued by 60 workers in the remaining 24. The rest of the firms left the Topkapı complex altogether. On September 10 a joint declaration of workers' and employer's union ended both the strike and the lockout.

A central component of workers' resistances have been picketing in front of the workplaces mainly in order to display the strength of the unionized workers and if possible to prevent the employment of scabs. Picketing also attracts visitors motivated from sheer solidarity to the propagation of their political beliefs. Hence a crucial factor increasing workers' awareness about modern labor rights was the visits and talks with university students who were probably affiliated with the political organization the Nakliyat-İş leadership belonged. These talks, the union's education seminars and the practice convinced more and more workers that they had the law on their side. This was not just an observation based on the union laws and the constitution of that time. It also

had an important subjective component which became more important during the second strike under the far more oppressive laws of the post-coup period. As in the case of social security, the porters had little if any idea of what the law permits and forbids. When they were convinced that the laws of the state were in favor of their cause, even the state could not stop them:

> The state was there. The army came to pressure us. They blamed people for being communists etc. They took a lot of our union leaders under custody. But we were a legal union. Even if they take them today, thanks to the lawyers they came back in two days. So nobody was guilty. They were not members of an illegal organization.[54]

Alongside such defenses based on the legality of their practice, workers pointed to the honorability of their actions:

> After our victory we were sitting for lunch. There I said to the manager: "Why did you make us crawl for months? Did we harm someone? Did we steal something from somewhere? We just wanted to unionize with our honor and dignity. We wanted to be taken seriously as men."[55]

These two different discourses of defense remain nearly unmixed as one may expect considering the foreignness of the state and the letter of its law to the norms of honor.

The unionization period had infrequent education seminars and reciprocal beatings became an important motivation for collective action. Due to the picketing in the storage site occasional conflicts with the police and also the mercenaries of the employers and/or *bölük*s were the rule. Their interaction with university students balanced this violence with an ability to articulate their aims in a more peaceful manner:

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[54] "Devlet de dahil. Askeriye de geldi baskı yaptı. Bunlar komünisttir, şudur, budur. Birçok yöneticimizi içeri aldılar falan. Ama biz yasal bir sendikaydık. Bugün götürürlerse avukatlar var falan iki güne geri geliyolardı. Yani kimsenin bi suçu yok. Herhangi bir yasadışı örgüte üye değiller."

[55] "Kazandığımızın ertesi öğle yemeğine oturmuşuz. Dedim ki bizim müdüre: "Ne diye aylarca süründürdünüz bizi? Birine zarar mı verdik? Bi yerden bişey bi çaldık? Namusumuzla şerefimizle sendikalaşmak istedik sadece. Adam yerine konalım istedik.""

> We didn't know what a trade union was. I was 18 or 19. I got in at that time. They only told us to beat that man at that place. We went and beat him. So I didn't know. I didn't know what a trade union was. When we met with students, we began to learn. If in the places we went someone was innocent or something else, it's not right to beat up everyone. We should explain them what our rights are. So being able to express ourselves showed that we were also becoming conscious. We passed such an education. In the mornings we marched like the military. We got education.[56]

The *bölük* system organized the workers across regional lines and aided their regional uniformity which, as many workers noted, became decisive. After a significant minority of leading workers joined the union as a result of their previous opposition against the *bölük* leaders and work conditions, *bölük*s lost their advantage of being more trustworthy as a result of the regional and kinship ties they rely on.

Scott (1990) pointed to a counterintuitive aspect of ideological hegemony: in contrast to a cynical submission to the social order, cracks in an ideological commitment may lead to a robust challenge to the hegemony (p. 153-4). The believers will feel betrayed, while the cynics are used to hypocrisies. This factor was at work in the struggle, especially among the youth. A porter exemplifies such awakenings:

> I was somewhat bull headed at that time. You see what you got with empty acclamations. You see that these didn't set anywhere. Sticking to your word actually benefitted the pockets of *kolbaşı*, *bölükbaşı*. When you recognize this, you start to harbor a grudge against them.[57]

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[56] "Biz sendikanın ne olduğunu bilmiyoduk. Ben 18-19 yaşındaydım. İçine girdim. Sadece diyolardı, falan yerde şu adamı dövün. Biz gidip o adamı dövüyorduk. Yani ben bilmiyordum, vallahi sendikanın ne olduğunu bilmiyodum. Ne zaman biz öğrencilerle ilişkilendik o zaman öğrenmeye başladık. Gittiğiniz yerde de bi tane insan suçsuzsa bilmene ise her gelene sopa atmak doğru değildir. Onlara izah ederek, işte bizim de haklarımız var şudur budur. Yani kendimizi ifade ederek bilinsin ki bu insanlar da demek ki bu insanlar da bilinçlenmiş. Böyle bi eğitimden de geçtik. Biz sabahlan burada askeriye gibi yürüyüş yapardık. Eğitim yapardık."

[57]"E tabi ben de biraz dediğim dedikim o zamanlar. O zamana kadar yaparsın edersinle geldiğin yere bakıyosun. Bi arpa boyu yol ileri gidememişsin. Dediğimi yaparım diye aslında kolbaşının, bölükbaşının cebine yaramış. Bunu fark edince onlara diş bilemeye başlıyosun."

Men in Struggle

A reason for a strong sense of honor among workers was the work conditions favorable for homosocial interaction. Most workers contrasted their workplaces with factories and especially textile workshops where organizational characteristics like the differentiation of work units, time schedules or high skill and corresponding wage differentials made both social interaction and socio-economic similarity harder. The job in the storages has little specialization between porters and stackers (*istifçi*). The duty of the latter was to fit the cargo to the back of the truck as effectively as possible and they earned somewhat more. Yet the heaviness as well as irregularity of the job led to many breaks during the day which were colored by small talk and bantering among the workers.

This banter sometimes reaching a very crude sexism not only relieves them from the tiresome work, but also continually reconfigures the power struggles in and between male groups simultaneously reminding them of the norms of heterosexism. Work is central to male dignity, because of its indispensible significance for an honorable way of legitimating patriarchy through the accumulation of financial and social capital. Therefore the grievances related to the family like the needs of the wife and the children or the erosion of the man's status at home illustrated in the increasing grumblings of the wife are voiced as major indicators of economic problems.

The unionization struggle jeopardizes this financial basis of patriarchal hegemony by ripping the porters from their wages. Since Nakliyat-İş was a young and poor union, financial needs were met through the more modest finances acquired by the activation of the porters' social capital i.e. networks mainly organized around kinship. The employment of women was considered as the last resort. The struggle shifted the social relations they entered as men back to organized male groups relying on their

physical power. So after a long speech about how he reordered his life by taking sane decisions and the importance of moderation and equanimity in life, Bayram whose first child was born a few years ago can jump to such a narrative reminding one of aggressive lads rather than family fathers:

> Sait: How did things develop in your *bölük*?
> Bayram: We had about 100-120 people [in our *bölük*]. We were two dozens of people opposing the yoke of the *bölük*. Then the issue of unionization came. Insurance, job security… We learned a lot of stuff. So we became a bigger nuisance [for the *bölük* leadership]. When we started to defend our rights in such a good way, our *kahya* could not bear with us anymore. We had to leave the *bölük*. We became full-time union members [We laugh]. But later we took our revenge so well. At the beginning of our resistance the *bölük*s were trying to work at the storages. In the morning after our night duty in the picket tent we saw that a group was coming to the storages. They outnumbered us at least by two. I quickly recognized our *kahya* among them. My friends were talking like "let's wait for others." I said, "let's go and try to talk with them." My intentions were different of course [He laughs]. Anyway we stopped them in front of the storages and began to talk about our cause. I mean, I pretend. I am waiting for the *kahya* to do something. I have prepared myself. Then I began to talk like "they are fooling you using epithets like brother and uncle." The *kahya* reacted by insulting me "You were a worker with a bare ass. Did you become a bully?" and attempted to push me back with his two hand. But I didn't drop back even an inch. I immediately punched him on the nose. He fell to the ground with blood on his face.
> Sait: What about the others? What did they do? They were more than you.
> Bayram: You cannot calculate if you are going to beat or get trashed after such an insult. You know how they say: The one who thinks of his end cannot become a hero. Well, thank God they were startled seeing that the *kahya* immediately licked the dust. I didn't do anything more so as to prevent an attack from anyone to save the *kahya*. But I continued to shout about our rights etc. Then they took the *kahya* away. Afterwards they couldn't challenge us in the streets. They were unable to do anything without the backing of the police. In the past they shamelessly stated that they were our fathers and they would protect us here. [58]

[58] Sait: Sizin bölükte peki nasıl gelişti olay?

As in most violent behavior, this was defended with an implicit reference to the need to prove one's strength in the face of an insult to preserve one's honor. Likewise the dependence of the other side on the state for security was seen as unmanly and shameful and thereby attracted ridicule. Among the porters, shame was generated and also people were called to shame in various instances for losing manly honor in issues ranging from not being able to provide for one's family or respect the elders to spending too much time at home or acting cowardly in the struggle.

Dealing with the Communal Division: Strategies of Shame

Shame can only be possible in the context of a social ideal and acts to preserve this ideal. As a punishment shame creates an aura of fear which protects the ideal and if the ideal is betrayed, the experience of shame makes the subject remember why the ideals should be preserved at all cost. Therefore it shows "*the affective cost of not following the scripts of normative existence*" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 107). Ahmed noted that "shared feelings are not about feeling the same feeling, or feeling-in-common" and "(suggests) that it is the objects of emotion that circulate, rather than emotion as such. […] Such

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Bayram: İşte bizde nerden baksan 100 120 kişi vardı. Biz iki düzine adamdık bu bölük sultasına karşı çıkan. Sonra sendika falan olayları. Sigortadır iş güvencesidir… Bayağ bişey öğrendik. Yani daha başa bela olduk ondan sonra. Biz hakkımızı öyle güzel savunmaya başlayınca bizim kahya hiç dayanamadı artık. Öyle bölükten yol göründü bize. Tam zamanlı sendikalı olduk. [gülüyoruz] Ama sonra çok fena çıkardık bunun acısını o kahyadan. Bu bizim ilk direniş zamanları bölükler hala işçi çalıştırmaya çalışıyo. Bi sabah işte geceden biz nöbete kalmışız çadırda. Baktık sabah bi grup geliyo ambarlara. Bizim en az iki katımız adam var. Ben bi baktım aradan bizim kahyayı seçtim. Diğerleri "bekleyelim" falan diyolar. Ben dedim "gelin bi önce konuşmaya çalışalım." Niyet öyle değil tabi [gülüyor]. Neyse öyle ambar önünde durdurduk bunları laf anlatmaya çalışıyoz. Yani işte güya. Tabi ben bi renk bekliyorum kahyadan. Hazırlamışım kendimi. Başladım sizi abi amca ayağına kullanıyolar diye. Tabi bu "ulan sen götü çıplak bi işçiydin. başımıza kabadayı mı kesildin" diye beni böyle iki elle itmeye çalıştı. Ben tabi milim geri gitmedim. bi geçirdim bunun burnuna. Kan revan yerde.
Sait: E diğerleri? Naaptılar? Çoktular ya.
Bayram: Yani şimdi öyle bi laftan sonra döverimin dövülürümün hesabını yapamazsın. Hani diyolar ya sonunu düşünen kahraman olamaz. Neyse Allah'a şükür bunlar bi afalladı kahya hemen yere serilince. Ben de daha bişi yapmıyorum kimse imdada yetişiyim diye bana dalmasın diye ama bağırıyorum haklarımız falan diye. Bunlar alıp götürdüler kahyayı. Zaten daha sonra erkek gibi alana çıkamadılar, polissiz bi iş yapamaz hale geldiler. Bi de utanmadan "biz sizin babanızın, burada sizi biz koruruz" derlerdi.

objects became sticky, or saturated with affect, as sites of personal and social tension." (ibid., p. 11) This remark is probably truer for shame which is one of the main emotional elements of morality next to a similar self-critical emotion, guilt, and other-critical emotions like contempt, anger and disgust (Turner & Stets, 2006, p. 550).

Shame leads people to hide, because the gaze of other people gives more pain to the subject. The obsession with the evaluations of the others "motivates them to hide, escape, or strike back" (ibid., p. 551). The last alternative leads to defense mechanisms like transforming "their shame into anger and direct this anger at others, with such anger giving people a sense of efficacy and control" (ibid.). Therefore it is not surprising that Bayram and other men refrained from speaking about their shame, but were eager to talk about other's shame or to call on others to feel shame. Their aim was not to admit their own shame, but to become the witness of someone else's shame and also his lack of shame. Hence these groups aim to create a social subject through shame. As Ahmed (2004) notes "the shame at the lack of the shame is linked to the desire 'to be truly proud of our country', that is, the desire to be able to identify with a national ideal" and in our case it is the new male community organized around the trade union but with similar social networks (p. 110-111).

I can speak about five strategies in which shame is utilized in struggle: Firstly the unionized porters had to forge a new community to compete with the calls of shame from the *bölük*. Secondly shame united the porters by transforming itself to pride and thirdly by presenting themselves as the underdog they can transform shame to anger. Fourthly they should prove that their old community is in decadence because it is pleased, not ashamed for its deeds. And lastly shame is used to place the leaders of

*bölük*s at the margins of the community, while their social base is accepted as a part of the community.

Bölük leaders called them to shame by pointing to their collaboration with communists i.e. “godless perverts” or to their disobedience of traditional authority figures. The unionized porters in response firstly emphasized how their status as fathers would benefit from the changes exemplified in the unionized big transport firms. They also contrasted the solidarity and egalitarianism of the new community as well as the honesty of their new leaders as dramatically more honorable than the rotting social organization of the old one. The porters specifically noted approvals of the elders e.g. the positive amazement of their fathers at the dedication of union leaders to the workers’ struggle and their advice to reciprocate that loyalty. And when the new community was powerful enough, it was also able to use its symbolic and material power.

The story of the union lawyer, Enver Nalbantoğlu, represents a paragon in this genre of ‘honest leader and true-hearted followers’ narratives. When the storages went into strike, the resources of the young union were actually exhausted after months of unionization resistance. Under these conditions Nalbantoğlu sold his car to create funds to pay the striking workers. After the victory of the strike action, the workers reciprocated by cutting their first wages to give him the money back. He is unanimously the only leading figure from the 1970s who is recalled by name by the old porters.

While shame is very effective at preserving a community, it is still a fearful and vulnerable state of being. Therefore social movements of every kind aim to transform fear and shame to anger and pride. “Shame issuing from disconnection” should be replaced by “pride from positive connection” (Goodwin & Jasper, 2006, p. 618). The

concept of honor is generally invoked to accomplish those transformations, as this speech of a worker at a teahouse shows:

> "You have been carrying these men on your back for years" he said. "The more you carried them the more did they eat. The more you carried them the fatter they got. Where is your dignity, honor? Will you go to your homes hunchbacked with their ass prints on your back or for the first time enter with your head high?"[59]

Social movements "involve an intense and passionate quest for belonging" as "individuals and groups seek to increase their pride/shame balance (ibid., p. 282, 286). Analyzing the Nazi movement, Scheff (1994) notes that the act of escaping from shame can lead to a denial of it at the expense of increasing aggression. This 'shame-rage' spiral can quickly become uncontrollable. Anger is related to the violation of socially determined borders of a subject. By presenting themselves as the underdog, the porters transferred the responsibility of shame to the *bölük* leaders and also legitimized their anger. This transmutation happened through themes like the corruption and authoritarianism in the *bölük*s and also their collaboration with and dependence on the employers and the police.

The calls for shame were not simply about changing a particular behavior or attitude. Some workers narrated the actions of their old fellows in the *bölük*s not just referring to shame, but also to disgust. And in all cases nobody was asking for reconciliation. The calls for shame were simply aimed at driving them out of the categories of people they identify with. Shame has a double-meaning which makes it a useful discourse to determine the boundaries of the social self. Shame arouses "when a

[59] "Ulan, dedi, sittin senedir sırtınızda bu adamları taşıdınız. Siz taşıdıkça onlar daha çok yediler. Siz taşıdıkça daha çok şiştiler. Nerde sizin şerefiniz, onurunuz? Evinize kambur kambur sırtınızda bu adamların göt izleriyle mi gideceksiniz yoksa bi kere başınız dik mi gideceksiniz?"

status decrease is caused by the self" and also when "an unintentional decrease" of the status of someone is caused by the self (Peterson, 2006, p. 121). The call to shame placed the *bölük* leaders at the borders of the community. On the one hand they were presented as the source of the community's demise and therefore implicitly included in it. On the other hand they were the ones who caused a decrease in the status of the porters as a whole and were pointed at as someone outside the collective self. The question of intentions plays an important, yet not determining role: whatever the intentions are "[a] decrease in one's own status caused by a partner results in anger", but "[a]n intentional decrease in a partner's status leads to satisfaction and fear […] (resulting) from successfully decreasing another's status […] while fearing potential consequences" (ibid.). While the protesters are calling the *bölük* leaders to shame, their aim is to prove that the leaders are not.

The claims of extra-communal support aided the discourse of shame which was able to place the *bölük* leaders at the grey zone of the community's borders. The clear defeat suffered by the porters association in the November 1978 strike was read in three ways: as a sell-out of the corrupt leadership, as the result of their weakness in character, and as a display of their mistrust if not contempt towards the collective power of ordinary porters. On the other hand Şemsi Ercan's statement to the press in August demonstrates how willing they were to reduce the number of unwanted *bölük* people:

> The habit to employ workers without social security leads to using gangsters and despots by the employers. During their unionization struggle in the last seven months the union had to fight against this establishment. The despots (*zorba*) are the *kahya*s, *kolbaşı*s and *kesedar*s who head the *bölük*s, appropriate what the workers earn without even working, are into smuggling and therefore prevent the workers from being unionized and insured. In the 28 porters' *bölük*s

> in Istanbul there are around 30-40 despots oppressing workers. [summarized][60]

Conclusion

As this historical introduction showed, the aggressiveness of the porters to defend their rights was shaped by their perception of their lower social position through kinship lenses and their sources of power were structured by the concerning industrial structure. From its origins in the Ottoman Empire on porters' vocation was characterized by low skill requirements, little specialization and opportunities for the development of a strong informal culture. In this environment male groups organized by a culture of honor and shame flourished. The kin and regional networks shaped the structure of their social organizations from the guild to the union period. Shame is a crucial emotional state counterposed to honor and therefore references to it craft collective subjects.

Mainly due to the porters' social organization and heavy work their wages were well compared to similarly unskilled jobs. Their leaders enjoyed a far better social standing which was seen as essential for the representation of the porters, but was also resented in its excess. The long-standing traditional role of the *bölük*s as the rightful representatives of the porters was transformed by the concentration of the storages in Topkapı. While they failed to comprehend the new structural opportunities, the newly emerging militant Nakliyat-İş union quickly replaced their defeat with a hard-won

[60] "Buradaki işyerlerinde, sigortasız işçi çalıştırma alışkanlığı öylesine gelişmiştir ki, gangsterlerle, zorba kişilerle işverenler işbirliği yapıp sigortasız işçi çalıştırmaktadır. Biz burada sendikalaşırken yedi aydır bunlarla uğraşmaktayız. Biz yedi ay sonra, yasaları uygulamak ve işçileri sigortalı yapmak, yükleme-boşaltma işçilerine baskı yapan bu zorbaları dağıtmak için grev uygulamasına çıktık. Grevin öncelikli nedeni budur. Bu zorbalar, bölüklerin başında bulunan, kendileri çalışmadığı halde işçilerin kazançlarının büyük bir kısmına el koyan, kaçakçılık benzeri işler yapan, kendilerine gayri meşru gelirler sağlayan, bunları sağlamak için işçileri sigortalı, sendikalı olmalarını engelleyen kahyalar, kol başları ve kesedarlardır. İstanbul'da 28 tane hamal bölüğü vardır. Bu bölüklerde 30-40 kadar bu tip işçiler üzerinde baskılar kuran zorbalar vardır." (Milliyet, 12.08.1979)

victory over the employers. The aggressiveness of the porters was reconstituted as class militancy thanks to their acquaintance with socialist trade unionists and their success aided by the concentration of the storages. The next chapter will further scrutinize the sources of this militancy in kinship and masculinity and demonstrate the reasons behind the more successful and durable re-emergence of socialist unionism after the coup of 1980.

CHAPTER V

THE CONSOLIDATION OF LEFT-WING UNIONISM

In the present both of the two authorized trade unions in land transportation have or recently had close ties with socialist political parties: Nakliyat-İş has a nearly parallel organization with HKP and the TÜMTİS leadership broke away with EMEP just a few years ago. In this chapter I will argue that this was not a coincidence, but a result of the interaction between legal regulations and the industrial structure of the sector which I analyzed in the previous chapter. Secondly the continuities of between *bölük*s and unions and the role of male groups and risk-taking in the strike of 1987 will be investigated.

The coup

At the time of the military coup of September 12 about 60 thousand workers were on strike and most of them were DİSK members. The first declarations of the military junta ended all strikes and lockouts and on the next Monday all workers returned to work. In the first hours of the coup the 7th declaration ordered the end of the activities of DİSK, MİSK[61] and Hak-İş.[62] Another declaration promised security for trade unionists and ordered union officials to apply to the martial law authorities. Officials of some DİSK unions hid in the countryside or fled abroad, but most of them surrendered to the authorities. While the DİSK trial lasted a decade, MİSK and Hak-İş leaders just had a relatively short period of custody. All bank accounts of these union confederations were frozen and the assets of the closed unions were handed to trustees (*kayyum*). The trustee

[61] Milliyetçi İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (Confederation of Nationalist Workers' Unions)

[62] Hak İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (Real Confederation of Workers' Unions)

management which was also implemented in the Topkapı storages seemed to be provisional at the beginning, but due to the length of the DİSK trials, it lasted more than a decade.

By contrast Turk-İş members were not directly affected by these orders except for its striking members at the time of the coup. Some branches and offices of the left-wing unions in the confederation were closed and officials were taken under custody. But in general, they were released without trial and the branches were reopened. They were also de facto forbidden to work due to the general ban against unions as well as an internal communiqué calling the union to cooperate with the state authorities i.e. accepting their supervision and applying for their approval for any kind of union work and meeting.

The new labor laws, like the requirement of having organized at least 10 percent of the workers in an industrial branch to have the authorization for collective bargaining, dramatically changed the landscape of trade unions towards concentration. The total number of unions at the time of the military coup was reported to be 828 by the Ministry of Work in response to the appeal of the National Security Council. 277 of them belonged to Türk-İş, 35 to DİSK and more than half of them were independent unions. This number declined to138 in 1984 and 81 in 1990.

The last general congress of Nakliyat-İş on April 1980 accepted the uniform constitution of DİSK and chose Şemsi Ercan, the previous general secretary, as chairman. At the time of the coup the union had not really taken root in the Topkapı storages. The work contract did not make a big change in wages and in general just saved the workers from informality. Also a lot of workers still preferred to get their

wages without the social security cuts. It was not until the second strike in 1987 that all permanent workers had their social security premiums paid.

After the coup, Nakliyat-İş was also closed as a member of DİSK. In total 1955 members of the confederation were taken into custody and 264 members received a total prison sentence of 2053 years. 35 officials and workplace representatives of Nakliyat-İş were taken into custody. These officials received prison sentences from 4 months to 4 years. The union chairman Şemsi Ercan managed to flee the country and did not return until the DİSK trial ended with the confederation's acquittal. His escape as well as the rumors about his new life in France tarnished his reputation.

TÜMTİS

The reaction of TÜMTİS went together with the general line of the confederation: they praised the military coup, their only criticism being that the coup was late by a couple of years. Its chairman, Hüseyin Pala (1926-1988), came from a rural background and began to work at the age of 14 in state railways. He became a workplace representative and in 1953 entered the General Executive Council of a municipal branch of TÜMTİS. After being elected to the central organs of the union in 1964, Pala became the chairman of TÜMTİS in 1975.

Nevertheless this pro-coup stance does not truly reflect the historical traditions of the union especially considering the life path of its previous chairman, Mehmet İnhanlı (1906-1981). His family came to Turkey with the population exchange with Greece. Until multiparty rule, he was close to the Kemalist CHP,[63] but in 1946 he joined the

[63] Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (The Republican People's Party)

newly-founded DP.[64] İnhanlı became a pivotal figure in the unionization of transport workers under TIF[65] and the establishment of Türk-İş. In the politically intense climate of 1952, the union leaders took an oath to protect the union from political partisanship and serve the holy cause of the workers in the unification congress of transport workers' unions. But soon disputes arose between the CHP and DP sympathizers, culminating in the controversial 1956 congress.

Following the resignation of three members from the steering committee of TIF, İnhanlı abdicated from his position in 1955. The Governor of Istanbul and the IETT management actively plotted against him and due to the pressures of the former he could not participate in the congress. When this was revealed to the delegates, they sent a group to bring İnhanlı back, but he was taken by the police as soon as he arrived. Nonetheless his list won the union elections and İnhanlı was reelected as chairman. Some elements of the failed CHP wing formed a splinter union which remained inactive until its disbandment in 1960.

İnhanlı, together with some union leaders, was arrested and tried after the coup of 1960 with charges like planning to sabotage the Istanbul Electricity Plant and to help the escape of DP leaders from Yassıada. During their prison days they were fired from their jobs and a new unpopular leadership was elected in the union. In the congress of 1964 he was reelected as chairman. A group favoring a centralized national union instead of the existing federation-type organization failed to garner support and left the union. Meanwhile new labor regulations decreed the restriction of the union's

[64] Demokrat Parti (The Democrat Party)

[65] Türkiye Taşıt İşçileri Sendikaları Federasyonu (Federation of Motor Vehicle Workers' Unions of Turkey)

membership to land transportation workers leading to the reformation of the union with a new name: TÜMTİS.

In the following two decades, one of the union's main problems would be these legal regulations concerning the limitations to industrial branches and unionization. This issue is also crucial to understand how the land transportation sector is at the present dominated by two leftist unions. The first regulation of industrial branches was made in 1947, because that was also the law which made unions legal. Unions could only be founded by workers in the same industry. This preference of dividing the work force by industry instead of profession abolished any possibility of craft unionism. The concept of 'related works' allowed the joint unionization of workers from different industries, if they worked in the same workplace: as an example, the cleaning workers in a textile factory could be unionized in the textile union of the factory. Similarly land transportation workers generally organized in common unions with electricity, gas and in some cases water workers. In 1957, probably as a part of their attempts to pressurize the İnhanlı leadership, the Istanbul governorship sent an appeal to the Ministry of Work objecting to TIF's inclusion of these workers, but the Ministry did not see any illegality in the trade union.

This rather vague and consequently tolerant legal division of the workforce would be clarified in the aftermath of the military coup of 1960. In 1963 this concept of 'related works' was replaced by 'related industrial branches'. In the following year, the industrial braches were legally differentiated. The workforce was divided under 36 industrial branches and six groups were defined as related industrial branches. The biggest group was transportation and consisted of these five branches: land transport, railway transport, sea transport, air transport, and warehousing. Meanwhile land

transportation workers at railways were excluded from the union as a part of this new legislation. In 1964 due to the aforementioned regulations in industrial branches, IETT employees were forced to leave TUMTIS and founded their own union EGIS.[66]

In 1970, Türk-İş proposed a reduction of the number of industrial branches to 32. In the following year their number was reduced to 33, but not along the lines of Türk-İş's proposal. The same regulation also allowed the inclusion of laborers in subsidiary work at a workplace into the union of the main work. These regulations also dramatically changed the labor force defined as land transport workers by transferring workers of municipal transport enterprises to the general works category. Its effects were disastrous, because in contrast to this scattered and lowly capitalized sector, more law-abiding public sector firms used to be secure heavens providing financial support for organizing unions.

Naturally TÜMTİS appealed to the Council of State (*Danıştay*) for its annulment and succeeded. However the industrial branches regulation of 1972 repeated this redefinition. After another appeal to the Council of the State, the ruling was again in favor of the union's objection. This battle ended with a final legal change in 1974 affirming the government's initial proposal. The loss of the union due to the new legislation amounted to 14 thousand members. Just a year before the Ministry of Work had taken TÜMTİS's authorization to enter into sectoral bargaining with the state, while its rival independent union, TUİS,[67] got this right.

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[66] Elektrik ve Gaz İşçileri Sendikası (Union of Electricity and Gas Workers)

[67] Türkiye Ulaşım İşçileri Sendikası (Transportation Workers' Union of Turkey). The abbreviation changed to Ulaş-İş in the congress of 1975.

The union blamed the CHP government and its relations with the Türk-İş affiliated Genel-İş.[68] Abdullah Baştürk, the chairman of Genel-İş, was also an MP of the CHP government and a leading figure in the social democratic wing in Türk-İş. Genel-İş was one of the unions that prepared a document widely known as the Report of the Twelve in 1971 criticizing the non-partisan policy of the confederation. After failing to change the line of Türk-İş, the dissenting unions withdrew from it and moved to found a new confederation, but soon one by one they joined DİSK. A year after Genel-İş's affiliation to DİSK in 1976, Abdullah Baştürk was elected as the chairman of the confederation.

In 1972 Hüseyin Pala, the then deputy chairman of TÜMTİS, was assigned the task of founding a new union called Türkiye Genel-İş[69] in the general services branch of industry. At its congress in 1975, considering the large number of municipal bus drivers who had to move to the new general services union, the delegates decided to grant the steering committee the right to transfer some or all of the assets of TÜMTİS to the new union and to aid this union in every way. The long-time chairman Mehmet İnhanlı resigned at this congress and was replaced by Hüseyin Pala. Pala also held this position in Genel-İş since 1974. Thanks to the laws allowing working in the administrative bodies of more than one union TÜMTİS was able to cope with the changes in labor laws just by creating new unions.

[68] Türkiye Genel Hizmetler İşçileri Sendikası (Union of General Services Workers of Turkey)

[69] Türkiye Belediye ve Genel Hizmetler İşçileri Sendikası (Union of Municipal and General Service Workers of Turkey)

The Transformation of TÜMTİS

While the policies of the TÜMTİS leadership partially saved the union from the problems accumulated in the first half of the 1970s, its rival, TUİS, was about to fall into a period of crisis. In 1975 several high-ranking union officials were charged with embezzling union funds. This paved the way for the rise of two young workers, Sabri Topçu (1946-…) and Yurdal Şenol (1942-…). Şenol was already elected as the general secretary of the union in 1972. In contrast to Şenol's experience, Topçu was a rapidly rising newcomer. He came from a rural family and studied theology in high school to please his father who was an imam. But Topçu did not continue with a religious vocation and passed the entrance exams of Ankara EGO.[70] In 1974 he defected from TÜMTİS to TUİS leading a large number of EGO workers. He became the education secretary in the extraordinary congress of 1975 and was elected to chairmanship in 1977. In this congress the name of the union was also changed to Ulaş-İş due to the prior name's association with the embezzlement scandal.

This new left-wing leadership led the union to another extraordinary congress a year later and the union members decided to affiliate to DİSK. The results of this decision were dreadful in many aspects. Firstly, this decision led to a split ending with the defection of workers in some important workplaces to TÜMTİS. Secondly, DİSK did not welcome them as an independent union and in November 1979 advised the leadership to join the newly-founded Nakliyat-İş according to the decision of the confederation for the unification of affiliate unions. Worst of all, the coup of 1980 closed Ulaş-İş for being a member of DİSK and its leadership had to go into hiding. In

[70] Ankara Elektrik, Gaz ve Otobüs Şirketi (Ankara Electricity, Gas and Autobus Company)

1975 its membership figures were 24 902 workers in total and 21 370 in its land transportation branch. The number fell to 2020 in December 1981.

The new union law of 1982 differed from previous ones by defining the industrial branches in the law itself, while until then they were defined by executive regulations. It ceased using the concept of 'related industrial branches' for creating legal controversies and reduced the number of industrial branches to 28. In 1986 a draft bill reduced it to 20, but it was not legislated. It did not bring further restrictions for land transportation branch, but its strict rules regarding the executive bodies of unions rendered the dual-union solution of TÜMTİS leadership useless. The new law proscribed holding administrative positions in more than one union.

The leadership around Hüseyin Pala transformed the general services union from a federation to a national union as the new labor laws abolished the former type of organization and Belediye-İş[71] was created. In the subsequent congresses of Belediye-İş and TÜMTİS on December 1983 his lists won the elections in both unions. Soon his situation became a subject of litigation and he had to resign TÜMTİS chairmanship in 1984. Arguing that the wealth of the union was accumulated from the dues of the municipal workers, TÜMTİS transferred most of its assets to Belediye-İş without any compensation.

Sabri Topçu and Yurdal Şenol survived the military period without receiving a prison sentence and lived off jobs like taxi driving. In 1984, they returned to their union, Ulaş-İş, which soon joined TÜMTİS. The union had to hold a new congress after the resignation of Hüseyin Pala. Sabri Topçu was elected as education secretary and Yurdal

[71] Türkiye Belediyeler ve Genel Hizmetler İşçiler Sendikası (Municipal and General Services Workers' Union of Turkey)

Şenol as the general secretary of the union, while the chairmanship went to Pala's old general secretary. Two years later the chairman of the union was dismissed from his position, charged for embezzling union dues which he collected in cash, but did not transfer to the union's bank account.

The coup had an especially devastating effect on unionization in land transportation. Of the two major unions in the sector, one was closed and its properties were confiscated and the other one was left with a few organized strongholds at middle-sized firms in a scattered sector dominated by small and micro enterprises. Additionally the new regulation deprived unions with less than 10 percent of workers in an industrial branch as their members, from the right to undertake collective bargaining. The combined effect of these conditions was closing down the sector for any new-comers who would anyway not be interested in organizing workers in such harsh conditions, if they did not have some strong motivation other than short-term success or financial security. Only the socialist cadres were willing to assume this task.

The Reorganization of the Storages

Quickly realizing the importance of Topkapı storages, Sabri Topçu took a job there in 1984 and began organizing. This initial step was mainly aimed at organizing the workers under a trade union rather pressuring the employers with assertive demands. After the closure of Nakliyat-İş the workers' organization in the Istanbul storages did not totally come to an end and under the trustee management collective work agreements continued to be made albeit with little gains for the workers. The organization drive replaced the trustee management and unionized half of the workplaces in 1985, but just like the previous unionization before the military coup, it mainly affected the bigger firms.

The biggest one was Şen İzmir with about 80 workers in Istanbul storages, but in most firms the number of employed workers was as low as 3-5. The campaign activated the stagnating employers' union which was not even able to put a collective response to the unionization drive: TÜMTİS's and big unionized employers' combined effort to come to a collective work agreement to include also the smaller workplaces without unionization. Cleverly TÜMTİS added the requirement of union membership to benefit from the agreement. Since the conditions of this first work contract did not put a heavy financial burden on the employers, it was accepted with indifference.

The new labor laws of the military regime favoring small centralized bureaucracies in the unions influenced the union's relations with workers even during this first period. As I have mentioned, the union leadership prioritized authorizing the union in the storages and did not support demands which would be strongly opposed by the employers due to their financial burden. Yet the workers, enraged by the hostility of the post-coup labor regime, wanted to fulfill the promises of the unionization of 1979 and compensate for the junta years. The union leadership tried hard to convince the workers to postpone these demands. Topçu also hinted that the TÜMTİS leaders exploited the new labor laws: since instead of the local branches, the central bodies were obligated to make the collective bargaining, the work agreement was also somewhat imposed on workers who vainly pressured the local officials.

Topçu's leadership was seen essential to the success of the second unionization. The porters included themselves to the stories on 1984 not just as a loyal standing army, but also as respectful people:

> We will go somewhere together, but he doesn't have shoes, my friend. Yeşil Kundura shoe store was near here. "It is shameful" we thought, "let's buy him a good pair of shoes." He will be our

> chairman. While we were smoking Bafra, we collected money and bought him Maltepe. "He is our chairman" we said, "he will represent us among communities." In order to prevent him from representing us in such a state we bought shoes for him. And in our backs we carried him to the level of parliament membership. We presented him to the world, to the world. Sabri Topçu is performing today as a representative in America, in international unions.[72]

These performances likened Topçu to the *bölükbaşı*s in two ways. firstly, they were reminiscent of the privileges of *bölükbaşı*s should have in order to have a good standing with state and corporate authorities. But these benefits were not in monetary terms anymore, but reduced to performances displayed in non-monetary and symbolic ways like buying him better cigarettes compared to the ordinary porters. Secondly, just like the egalitarian discourses durng the *bölük* period, the recollections of this privileging pointed to the source of the leader's greatness: the sacrifices of the workers. Therefore it was not surprising that they were deployed to blame Sabri Topçu after the union change of 2002 emphasizing that the workers are the ones who moved him up to this position. The near total amnesia about the Nakliyat-İş leaders with the notable exception of the lawyer, Enver Nalbantoğlu, and references to their struggle and the transformation of the work conditions during the Topçu period demonstrate that as a Turkish socialist coming from a religious and rural background, he was seen a blessing, as someone who was both able to deal with the employers and the state, militantly defending workers' rights and yet could also share his daily life with the porters.

[72] "Bir yere gideceğiz beraber, ayağında ayakkabısı yok arkadaşım. Burada Yeşil Kundura vardı; oraya gidip de güzel bir ayakkabı alalım, ayıptır. Bu bizim başkanımız olacak. Biz kendimiz Bafra içerken, cebimizden para topladık, ona Maltepe aldık. Dedik ki, başkandır, burada bizi temsil edecek, toplumlar içerisinde, bizi bu şekilde temsil etmesin diye ayağına ayakkabı aldık. Ve sırtımızda milletvekili düzeyine getirdik. Dünyaya tanıttık, dünyaya. Sabri Topçu bugün Amerikalarda, uluslararası sendikalarda temsilcilik yapıyor."

After the success in the unionization of the storages Topçu was elected as the chairman of the Istanbul branch of the union. In the 1986 congress he became the organizing secretary and soon the newly reelected chairman faced charges of embezzlement paving Topçu's way to replace him in the next congress. Lacking any rivals in this extremely dispersed sector, TÜMTİS succeeded to organize the old unionized workplaces like the storages and middle-sized firms in big cities slowly turning its direction to the emerging cargo firms.

The Strike of 1987

The two biggest working class mobilizations after the coup arose just before the strike at Topkapı storages. The 2 600 workers of the Netaş telephone factory in Istanbul went on strike at the end of 1986 due to the dispute at the collective contract negotiations. In the 70's the workers were unionized in a union affiliated to DISK and after the closure of the confederation they created an independent union. The strike lasted three months and ended with a defeat in spite of the enormous support it received. Nevertheless it made the headlines and proved that a mass strike in the private sector was still possible despite the oppressive laws of the new constitution. Another massive working class mobilization arose in the Kazlıçeşme leather workshops on June 1987. Unlike the Netaş strike, Kazlıçeşme leather workers ended their strike at its third month signing a successful agreement.

The storage workers' grievances had also been accumulating since the coup and they expected that TÜMTİS would be able to sign a successful work contract worth the three-years-long waiting after the second unionization. During the bargaining period of 1987 TÜMTİS proposed to increase the base wage to 140 thousand TL, a general wage

increase of 60 percent and a ban against involuntary overtime work. But the employer's union argued that it could only give 20 percent increase to the wages.

The remarkable founding figure of oral history Alessandro Portelli (1991) noted the stark contrast between the Marxist theory of class interests and workers' conceptualization of injustice (p. 127-137). He argued that symmetry in words and in work is the crucial metaphor shaping workers' narratives of struggle. The worker positions herself both against breaking a promise or telling a lie and an unjust wage at work. Rather than seeking more material reward, she mainly cares about her dignity and aims to capture the higher moral ground. This conceptualization does not ignore power relations. On the contrary injustice is more about the balance of power between workers and employers, than the amount of wages. Hence the worker Portelli interviewed argued that he supports the "unjust strikes" only if the power between the parties in not equal.

This thesis is very much in line with Scott's (1990) observation that material appropriation is secondary to the questions of justice and dignity in the hidden transcripts of subordinate groups (p. 203). While not denying that material exploitation forms one of the bases of domination, the upsurges of the mobilization are sparked usually if this material side incites a perception of indignity in the symbolic structure leading to refusals to iterate the public transcript. In this manner one of the sentences repeatedly recited by porters in their narrations of the 1987 strike is the response of a storage owner to the demands for social security: "Does a donkey need to be insured?"[73]

The negotiations ended with disagreement and TÜMTİS called a strike which began with 300 workers on September 16, 1987 at 35 firms in Istanbul and 69 in Ankara

[73] "Eşeğin sigortası mı olur"

and Izmir. Considering that there were 104 firms just in Istanbul storages this partial strike was rationalized with the strategy of dividing the employers. Thereby the storages, the workers of which were on strike, would lose their market share to working firms and forced to accept the union's demands. But this partial strike also showed that the union was not able to really organize and mobilize the workforce in the small storages. At the time of the strike just two thirds of the storages were organized by TÜMTİS.

The employer's union responded the next day with a lockout in all of the 104 workplaces. On the same day, 800 workers demonstrated against the lockout. At the end of September, 69 more firms had been included in the strike. The strategy to divide the employer and to let internal market competition do the rest of the job may not be successful at the beginning, but since the union was really able to disrupt the work, some firms were pressured by their clients and came to the edge of losing them to the new cargo firms. Even though the lockout decision of Nak-İş continued, at first 22 and then 39 employers ended the lockout in November. They reached a deal with the union and thus the strike ended at 61 workplaces.

Since the storage strike was seen as a part of a working class upsurge extending from private firms to the public sector, state bodies intervened while the employers were not able to keep their unity. A plan to relocate the storages from Topkapı to the Asian side of Istanbul was put into practice. On the day when the firms opened, Zeytiburnu municipal functionaries tried to close them with a municipal council decision claiming that these workplaces were unauthorized. Workers intervened and strife ensued. Although the riot police came, the functionaries left without locking up and affixing a seal to the firms. On December 25, they returned with a new decision of the municipal council and sealed the workplaces, but workers ripped the seal and continued their work.

TÜMTİS condemned the Mayor of Istanbul, Bedrettin Dalan, for trying to break the strike, while the vice chairman of the Zeytinburnu municipality, İlhan Hayıroğlu, announced to the press that the closure of storages was not related to the ongoing strike and lockout.

Especially the lowly capitalized small firms were not eager to continue the conflict if it would last for months and the new location was a costly solution for them. A manager of a big firm noted that the gathering places of goods to be sent to the storages were mostly located in the European side making the transport to the new site not only expensive, but also time-consuming since at that time the transportation technology was so underdeveloped that even horse carriages were still in use. The constant demand for land transportation and the high informality and dynamism in the sector meant that the storages in Topkapı could quickly lose their market share to underground firms dispersed around the city and more importantly to the new cargo firms, some of which were companies originating from the storages.

The managers' explanation for the success of the 1987 strike focusing on the economic structure is not just peculiar to storage officials. Some union officials who are uneasy with the legacy of Sabri Topçu preferred in their narratives such an economic structuralism, but with the twist of reducing it to individuals' intentions:

> Of course after our decision to strike they [the employers] called a lockout. For 4-5 months the strike continued here. The employers' union brought here to lockout. They opened a place on the other side. Bir-nakliyat, near Maltepe. They rented a place there and carried on their business. We of course continued our strike here. But after 4-5 months passed, they couldn't last there. Of course there… Here were 100-200 storages. They appointed a manager. The manager was embezzling the storage. He bankrupted that storage. There was no more money. Willy-nilly they came to deal with us again. "Whatever

> you want have as wages, let's sign the agreement" they said. They came one by one, by turns.[74]

The workers and Topçu organized their stories mainly around themes of struggle and sacrifice. First of all, they attended to the economic explanations that being able to stop the work during the strike required a lot of energy considering that the state organs were actively against the resistance. Workers should be alert for any tactics of the employers and maintain a mass participation both for a standby physical force and to be in constant connection with the struggle. The emergence of a community around the strike was narrated by the workers as an accidental yet pleasing consequence. By contrast, Topçu presented it as an intentional result determined by himself as the organizing secretary.

Sacrifices ranging from quitting smoking and spending their days waiting in front of the storages to engaging in fights with the police and night duty on cold winter days made the memories of the strike worth remembering and telling. Since the union was impoverished due to the huge asset transfer at the time of the final split with Belediye-İş, its financial funds were far from adequate to sustain such a mobilization. Therefore just like in 1979, social networks were utilized. As I have demonstrated in the previous chapter honor operates as a middle term to make sense of the class struggle in kinship networks. Yasin, a worker in his late-40s and with chronic lung problems dating from the cold he got during picketing at winter nights, narrated how his father defended their struggle against his brothers:

[74] "Tabi biz grev kararı alınca, onlar lokavt kararı aldı. Tabi burada 4-5 ay grevler devam etti. Burada işveren sendikası tuttu burayı lokavta götürdü, karşıda bi yer açtılar. Bir-nakliyat, Maltepe tarafında. Orda bi yer tuttular, orda faaliyet gösterdiler. Biz burada tabi grevimize devam ettik. 4-5 ay geçince tabi onalr orda geçinemediler.tabi orda… burada o zaman 100-200 tane ambar vardı. Bir müdür tayin etmişlerdi, müdür de parayı alıp yiyordu. O ambarı batırdı, para yok, ister istemez tuttular, geldiler "sizinle anlaşacağız" diye. "kaç para istiyorsanız, toplu sözleşmeyi getirin imzalayalım" dediler. Teke tek geldiler. Sırala geldiler."

> Sait: What did your father say about the union?
> Yasin: "My son, you know the best" he said. "Try as much as you want. If the union heading you is protecting you, didn't sold out or left you…" Thank God. The men used to give his old age pension directly to me. Also my brothers were giving me some money. Even when they implied that we would not succeed, my father responded: "He is seeking his right. They have a poor, honorable head. One should not leave such a person in the lurch."[75]

The employers also attempted to utilize such kinship networks or to initiate cycles of reciprocity, but the family connections between employers and workers were less strong than in the *bölük*s a decade ago. Sabri Topçu cited such a case where the employers were so successful that a mobilization against the union leadership emerged, which was abated by Sabri Topçu's peculiar style of management:

> Meanwhile the employers were provoking the workers against the union. They buy his coal in the winter. Old boy networks ("ahbap çavuş ilişkileri"). One day they broke into the union. 150 people. "Sign the agreement. The employers propose to give 150 liras." I was the organizing secretary. "I won't sign it" I said. The authority is in the central body. The locals are not authorized to sign. The branch leaders of the storages came. They were also under pressure. I said: "OK. I leave you to decide to convene the general congress. We would then be in congress in 15 days. We were struggling here for 5-6 months. Just continue the resistance for another 15 days. You can endure it. After 15 days you can elect the body to sign this agreement. Chairman, secretary, whatever…" This silenced them. We knew that the employers were inciting them against us. This was not the workers' demand. Since he was in a cleft stick, he tried to get along with the worker. He bought his coal or gave him pocket money. The man who yesterday called them donkeys today tries to get along with them.[76]

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[75] Sait: Babanız ne diyordu? Sendika hakkında?

Yasin: "Yani oğlum, sen bilirsin" diyordu. "Sen istediğin kadar çalış. Sizin başınızda sendika size sahip çıktıysa, satmadıysa, bırakmadıysa" diyor. Allah razı olsun. Adam üç aylık maaşını doğrudan bana veriyordu. Kardeşlerden falan da biraz para geliyordu. Hatta onlar "bu iş olmaz" demeye getirdiklerinde babam sahip çıkardı. "Hakkını arıyor. Böyle gariban, namuslu bi başları var. Yüzüstü bırakmamalı" derdi.

[76] Arada tabi işverenler işçiyi sendikaya karşı kışkırtıyor. Kışın kömürünü alıyor, ahbap çavuş ilişkileri. Bi gün sendika basıldı. 150 kişi geldiler. Sözleşmeyi bitir, işverenler 150 lira söylüyorlar. Ben de örgütlenme sekreteriyim. Dedim "Bitirmiyorum". Yetki merkezde, şubelerde yetki yok. Eskiden bizim olduğumuz ambarlardaki şubeye başkaları geldi. Onları da baskı altında bırakıyorlar. "Hemen genel kurul kararı alın"

The Masculinity of Porters' Mobilization

Analyzing the mobilization and militancy of the porters, starkly different modes of behavior can be recognized in solely male and in mixed settings. Although direct references to manliness are not more than their usual amount, a dramatic change in risky actions and degree of collective militancy occurs when women and/or children enter the story as it happened in a few events. In a male group not much concern was directed to the consequences of the narrators' or other workers' actions. Their concern for each other can at best be described as watching each other's moves, but surely not as caring for each other. When there are no women and children to be looked after, the porters more eagerly took risks like responding to police violence with stone-throwing and entering fights with groups of scabs or mercenaries,. In a sense the workers thought that they personally and collectively had nothing to lose in such instances, since even their defeats or physical injuries to themselves were either laughed off or proudly presented as signs of sacrifice. What really matters is who gave the greater damage to the other side.

By contrast the stories of mixed groups were centered about the conditions of women and children. Here the workers are on the defensive. Rather than laughed off, the attacks against women and children were described as tragedies and showcases of police brutality. The shortness and rareness of these latter stories results both from this aversion and from the lack of much action in these narratives of care and inaction.

These narratives of risky masculine behavior present a peculiar sense of intimacy arising from homosocial relations: one not based on the exchange of feelings and

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dedim "15 günde kongreye gideriz. 5-6 aydır devem ediyorsunuz. 15 gün daha devam edin. Dayanırsınız. 15 gün sonra siz de bu sözleşmeyi imzalayacak şeyi seçersiniz, başkan, sekreter neyse." Buradan gerilediler arkadaşlar. Dolduruyor işverenler biliyoruz. İşçinin talebi değil. İşveren sıkıştıkça, işçiyle iyi geçiniyor. Kömürünü alıyor, harçlığını veriyor. Dün eşek diyen adam bugün iyi geçinmeye başlıyor.

emotions, but on the closeness of doing. Even if a worker is saved by another worker, the emphasis is on the greatness of the risk rather than on the compassion felt for the other. This articulation of masculine norms in group settings does not mean lack of emotions, but a covert intimacy (Swain, 1989). Men's self-presentation as rational and independent actors without emotional weaknesses plays a crucial role in the legitimation of their status as authority figures in the family and in public. Therefore the intimacy in social relations is implied in group activity or mutual aid rather than expressed by sharing feelings (Dolgit, 2001). The homosocial groups further complicate the problem, because by definition men are pulled away from the position of self-reliance to one of interdependence between men. The image of independence is kept by constraining men's display of closeness to a thin layer of common activities and ritualized bodily gestures.

Many studies noted that such a differentiation of male and female homosociality may be misleading due to the gap between abstract norms and practice and also between practice and its narration. Walker (1994) introduced the issue of how class intersects with this gender norm. Her study on women and men in the United States demonstrated that unemployed housewives tend to have most developed intimate relations. Middle class working women, on the other hand, shared these masculine values in their social relations with men from their social class. Immersed in social networks and constantly challenged by personal problems working class men actually spend more and intimate times with their friends.

Mormon and Floyd (1998) added the layer of the private/public distinction to understand the expression of affection. They suggest that, counterintuitively, the settings perceived as public are more suitable for men to display affectionate communication

since these are coded as unromantic. Such a differentiation was visible in the gestures of the porters when we were speaking in a group. To praise someone else's bravery or success a man can hug him or clap him on the shoulder. If the gesture is done more rudely, then, the covert intimacy of the relationship is better established, invalidating any doubts about homosexuality.

Increasing intimacy and familiarity in male friendships also leads to daily parodies of homosexuality. For example to prove how developed the social relations are in a firm some porters pointed to the relatively common practice of goosing ("parmak atmak"). Homophobic jokes are mainly used among close equals who are so sure enough about each other that the expressed homosexuality is a farce. Kimmel (2004) said that "the reigning definition of masculinity is a defensive effort to prevent being emasculated" (p. 191). Kimmel continued by stating that the prevalent feeling of powerlessness among men is related to the daily masculine competition among them for superiority. Such public performances, in contrast, present male friendship as a relationship safe from fears of emasculation. The presentation is the very test of this claim. Yet to be functional rather than embarrassing as in other gestures, these also should be performed in a tough style and with a homophobic remark at least at the end.

Homophobic jokes were also used to remind them of social hierarchies between men or to challenge them. They may be articulated by socially stronger men against weaker ones especially to remind them of their inferiority. When they are used from the weaker side, this means an attempt to gain honor at the expense of the others. Mistakes in establishing the burlesque character or power relations rightly, causes deep embarrassments exemplified with this anecdote:

> About two months ago we met to play football. Our firm is one team and X firm is the other. After the exhaustion at the game we began to drink beers. Veli's home was near the game field. It was between the field and the bus stop. We were drinking during our walk. While were nearing his house, we saw Veli playing with his dick. It erected because he needed to pee. We immediately began to mock him: "Didn't you passed the time of playing with your dick? Can you cum?" etc. We were a little bit drunk and teasing him. So he got really mad. When we arrived, he quickly entered to the toilet of the coffeehouse near his home. His uncle was also in the coffeehouse sitting at a desk near the toilet. He didn't recognize it. Because he didn't come out after some time his uncle knocked the door and said: "Veli, didn't you finished?" Since he didn't see the uncle, he thought that we were teasing him again. While he was opening the door he said "it is still hard enough to be softened in your ass" and came face to face with his uncle. You should have seen their faces. Veli is red and the uncle violet. Of course we are trying hard to not laugh.[77]

The crucial element causing Veli's embarrassment is the introduction of kinship in the story. Nearly all of my observations of homophobic banters occurred between close friends who are not closely related to each other by kin. Two reasons are important to understand this difference. Firstly, the kinship hierarchies are very definite and determined by pre-given categories like age and gender. Therefore the socially egalitarian symbolisms of homophobic jokes cannot be utilized in these hierarchical settings. Secondly, these jokes always include the possibility of friendships breaking down. Veli did not speak for a while with his friends blaming them for the incident. Kinship should not be endangered with such behavior, especially considering that having fun is not one of its main attributes unlike the male friendships.

[77] "İki ay önce falan işte maç yapmaya gittik. Bizim firma bi takım, X karşı takım. Maç çıkışı o yorgunluk üstüne biz başladık biraları içmeye. Veli'ın evi de yakındı halı sahaya. Otobüs durağıyla saha arasında. Öyle içe içe yürüyoruz. Eve yaklaşırken bi baktık Hasan şeyiyle oynuyo. Çişi çok gelince kalkmış. Biz de hemen başladık makaraya. "şeyinle oynama yaşın geçmedi mi? Çeşmi bülbülüne su yürüdü mü?" falan. Öyle atışıyoz, hafif de çakırkeyif iyice kızdı bu. Varınca evinin ordaki kahvenin tuvaletine girdi bu acele. Bunun amcası da kahvede hemen tuvaletin dibindeki masadaymış. Fark etmedi. Bunun içerde işi biraz sürünce amcası kalkıp tuvaletin kapısını çalıp "Veli, daha bitmedi mi?" dedi. Hasan tabi görmedi ya amcasını yine biz giydiriyoruz sandı. Kapıyı aralarken "götünde indirilecek kadar sertliği var hala" dedi ve amcayla burun buruna geldi. Amcanın, Veli'ın suratları bi görücen. Veli kıpkırmızı, amca mosmor. Tabi biz gülmemek için kendimizi zor tutuyoz."

The quality of being dominated operates as a middle term to tie a specific sexual act to other actions which are normatively proscribed. Therefore the issues which create shame also tend to constitute the meaning of homosexuality or, as the porters are used to calling it, *ibnelik*. Pascoe's (2007) study on a high school setting demonstrated how the epithet of fag has a fluid meaning "[t]hat makes the specter of the fag such a powerful disciplinary mechanism" (p. 54). In his context words like fag and gay connote stupidity or uselessness in a person or an inanimate object. Corresponding to the centrality of honor in the storage workers' lives, *ibne* is generally used as synonymous with being dishonorable. It is used as an insult to people who sided with the bosses in the struggle or who do not fulfill their promises in general. Therefore these people are considered untrustworthy and lacking honor and dignity which powerful men possess. It is also significant that fulfilling promises and conforming to the group's general tendency in an issue is equated and amalgamated in one word.

After the Victory

TÜMTİS ended the strike with a staggering triumph. They continued to make agreements with the employers one by one and the strike decision was gradually lifted, while the employer's union's general lockout was waning. At the general council of Nak-İş on April 16-17, 1988, the administrative board was largely changed to begin new negotiations with the workers' union and to end the ongoing strike and lockout. The new administration declared its eagerness to begin negotiations once again. As a response, the strike decisions were lifted on May 2. The agreements made with different employers gave on average a 212 percent increase for the first and a 52 percent increase for the second year and also a one-time incentive premium of 900 thousand TL. It was

the first strike which was able to break a lockout decision and also to change the administration of an employer's union.

The TÜMTİS leadership moved on to unite unions with similar viewpoints in its sector and the left in general. Therefore they began talks with the old Nakliyat-İş leadership for unification. Meanwhile they included young but experienced and learned leftist figures like Ali Rıza Küçükosmanoğlu (1959-…) whom the leadership supported in the Istanbul branch elections of 1988 despite workers' criticisms based on his foreignness to the storages and lack of popular basis. But just like the work agreement of 1984, Topçu convinced the workers by hook or by crook, using his enormous prestige after the success of the strike.

In the late 1970s, Küçükosmanoğlu began to work in metal manufacturing when he was studying political science in Ankara. His choice was motivated by his political beliefs. In 1979 with a group splitting from DİSK's affiliate in the metal sector, Maden-İş,[78] he founded an independent union, Makine-İş.[79] Makine-İş remained a tiny front organization rather than a union in the proper sense. Küçükosmanoğlu was the founding chairman of the union until 1983 when he graduated. After a few months of civil service, he continued with manual work. In 1985 he moved to Istanbul and started to work in textiles. Soon he participated in the Türk-İş affiliated TEKSİF's[80] organization in his factory and was elected as the chief workplace representative. In 1988, due to a controversy with the union, he lost his position and entered the storages as a worker

[78] Büyük Anadolu Maden İşçileri Sendikası (Great Anatolia Mine Workers' Union)

[79] Metal Eşya ve Makine Endüstrisi İşçileri Sendikası (Metallic Goods and Machine Industry Workers' Union)

[80] Türkiye Tekstil Örme ve Giyim Sanayi İşçileri Sendikası (Textile, Knitting and Clothing Industry Workers' Union of Turkey)

where he attracted the attention of the TÜMTİS leadership. Because of a dispute about the tactics of the union in the Yurtiçi Kargo unionization, his relationship with the leadership soured shortly after his election to the Istanbul branch chairmanship.

The unification process with Nakliyat-İş also turned out to be a big disappointment. In 1991, the trial of DİSK ended with the acquittal of the confederation and this paved the way for the reopening of Nakliyat-İş. The union held its first general congress in the aftermath of the coup on March 1992. An extraordinary general congress on the October 1992 decided to join TÜMTİS. Yet the Nakliyat-İş leadership around the old chairman Şemsi Ercan confronted Topçu in the TÜMTİS congress instead of preparing a united list with him. After Topçu won the elections, they objected with DİSK officials to the validity of the decision of unification in the Nakliyat-İş congress by claiming that it was not taken by a two thirds majority. The court trial ended with the cancellation of the decision. Küçükosmanoğlu also joined Nakliyat-İş and in the congress of 1995 he defeated Şemsi Ercan in the race for chairmanship.

Conclusion

The consolidation of socialist trade unionists and their militant rhetoric in the 1980s resulted from the changes in the labor laws and the economic conditions of the storages. Due to the industrial characteristics of land transportation unionizing in the general mess of small-sized firms requires a lot of dedication and the success rates are meager. In the early periods of post-bellum democratization, this was compensated by vague industrial branch regulations tolerating multi-branch organization especially in the public sector. However many waves of industrial dispute beginning after the coup of 1960 and reaching their peak particularly in the early 1970s, took such opportunities away. The final stroke came after the coup of 1980 forcing the centrist leadership of TÜMTİS to

choose between its land transportation and general services union. In the mid-1980s, due to the favorable conditions in the latter, they left TÜMTİS to socialist officials. A decade later the reestablished Nakliyat-İş experienced a similar process in which the socialists defeated the moderates.

In this chapter I have furthered the analysis of gendered class activity of porters by concentrating on the internal tensions of male groups. Homosocial groups have two quite different functions: On the one hand they provide men a place of approval and enjoyment. On the other hand, the competition within groups and with other groups incites an aggressive masculinity. This contradictory appearance is a reflection of the tension between heterosexism and male solidarity. While the latter emphasizes the dependence and intimacy between men, the former calls for the self-reliant authority figure. Therefore male workers' fights were shaped by masculine bravado and risky actions and care enters the narrative only if another gender is in question.

CHAPTER VI

CLASS COOPERATION AND SOCIALIST POLITICS

The union change in the Istanbul storages and the subsequent murder of three porters generated an intense controversy in the left leading to years of fight between the two concerned political groups. In the preceding chapter I analyzed how the interplay of the industrial structure and legal changes led the union leaderships in land transportation to pass to socialists. This chapter will focus on the opposite dynamics leading to cooperation between workers and employers in the sector. The dramatic events of 2002 cannot be understood without considering people's choices on a plane shaped by these contradictory forces.

The Reasons for Class Cooperation

Istanbul storages went through the 1990s without a major incident. Even in the storages of other cities the only disturbance was a conflict in Izmir beginning with the collective bargaining period of 1995. It began with the sacking of 43 workers and lasted until the next spring with sporadic clashes with the private security of the site and the police. At the same time outside the storages, there was a very slow progress in terms of unionization. This can be seen by looking at the numbers of delegates at union congresses[81]: the number of Istanbul delegates who mostly came from the storages fell just from 148 in 1992 to 104 in 2001 out of about 260 in total. I should note that a significant number of organized workplaces in other cities were also local storages connected to Istanbul. The power of Istanbul storages could actually be very effectively

[81] The total figures are given in Appendix A.

utilized to aid the unionization of other localities just by cutting the transportation of goods.

The cargo firms remained invincible for both socialist-led unions in this industrial branch. Some cargo firms have their origins in the Topkapı complex and all flourished especially during the long 1987 strike capturing the clients of the storages. A common estimate was that the market share of the storages dropped from 90 to 30 percent in the two decades after the strike of 1987. Big struggles like the unionization of Yurtiçi Kargo in the early 1990s by TÜMTİS or Aras Kargo in the mid-1990s by Nakliyat-İş were crushed between the teeth of the employers and the new labor laws implemented by an amazingly slow legal apparatus. On the other hand, unionization could not penetrate the smaller firms due to their fragility.

The leadership of TÜMTİS also recognized that what kept many storage owners from providing decent job conditions to their workers was not just their capitalist greed, but also what Sabri Topçu and porters named as ‘unjust competition’ i.e. very low level of profits due to the intense competition which was a result of low entry requirements and the prevalence small-size businesses. Rather than ignoring this in the usual leftist fashion as a problem of the bourgeoisie, TÜMTİS formulated a policy in favor of uniting the storages working and competing on the same routes. This monopolization would not only increase the profits and therefore the gains in collective bargaining, but also provide much needed financial power to the storages to adapt to the technological developments and recapture their market share from the rising cargo firms.

Of course the employers who were used to personal control over a small work force with little technological or managerial know-how initially used the new unified storages as a way to increase prices and did not change their management style or think

about investments. However such unified firms were short-lived since increasing prices led to the loss of clients to underground storages or cargos and even to partner firms leaving the group to compete with them. On the other hand, personal control over the work process in the unified storages meant that about five bosses were giving sometimes conflicting orders to their workers and this led to problems at work as well as to personal disputes between associates. In the end most surviving unified storages had to transform their management structure to prevent such problems.

Today two decades after the issue was put on the agenda only about 30 out of 130 firms are unified storages. Even these numbers tell that this transformation is far from easy. Personal managerial habits and the uncertainty about the returns of unification are one type of counter-incentives. Another type relates to the lack of trust between firm owners: a lot of storages have problems like considerable social security premium debts to the state or troublesome relationships with usurers[82].

TÜMTİS' crucial position in this change provided it with a symbolic power to speak as an arbiter between the storages. Union officials both from the old TÜMTİS and the new Nakliyat-İş proudly noted that without the workers' union the employers were a scattered mass of micro businesses. Topçu even pointed to the position of the trade union from the 1984 organization on as the main agent which forced employers to take their ownunion seriously. As an example, in the 1990s, TÜMTİS proposed to create a common goods collection firm, the short life of which was mainly due to the internal quarrels of the employers and the turmoil of union change stroke the final blow. Today the union is still seen as a credible judge in the disagreements between employers.

[82] For example, during my fieldwork a storage owner was shot six times in his legs because of a debt problem with usurers. Five of the bullets hit his right leg and crippled him.

Obviously this close cooperation contradicts the ideological convictions of the past and present union leaders. As I have showed, the main reason for this cooperation was the industrial structure of the sector which ironically also led to the prevalence of socialist union leaderships. Among many historical examples for such a determination Riteman (1991) demonstrates how, in the early twentieth century, the political repertoire of mine unions and workers were influenced by the industrial structure and the state's attitude towards unions (p. 204). She argued that the different routes taken by the radical metal-mining Western Federation of Miners (WFM) and the moderate coal-mining United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) resulted from the higher industrial concentration in metal mining leading to fewer, bigger, oligopolistic firms and the states' higher reliance on metal mining leading to more cooperation of state agencies with metal mine owners in labor disputes.

In the lenses of Gramsci this is a bizarre situation since the relations of production are far from a dynamic operating purely against class collaboration. Workers' experiential comprehension of the economy shapes their cognitive structure of the possible. In this process not only their relations with their employer, but also a comparison to the other employer-worker relations and more crucially the relations between employers in the market is taken into consideration. As the union's unification policy has shown, the workers care a lot about the continuation of their job in this volatile sector. Bayram outlined how a union official and a porter should act in these conditions, giving the concrete example of one of his relatives:

> My uncle had been the most honest union official ever. He never took the right of the employer or the worker and gave it to the other. He had done what is right. If the worker was wrong, he would not go against him in front of the employer. OK? He would say to the employer: "You are wrong." Then he would call the worker and say:

> "Do not behave so dishonorably! You are to blame here. I won't like to hear such a thing again. If I do, I'll come and fire you personally." […] My sole thought (as a worker) is to force the boss to do what pleases me. But the representative should defend the right of both of them. You should not violate the employers' right. If the capacity of a vehicle is 15 tones, you should not fill it with just 11 tones and send it. If this institution works well, you will earn your bread from it. If not, everyone working in the storages knows what will happen. Every worker knows it. The man won't sell his real estate and bring in more money. They said an economic crisis came and our work was halved. He fired eight of our men. They retired. The accounts are open. […] Yet afterwards when he earns 20 times more, he won't say: "Come my workers! I earn so much. I'll give you 500 liras more." If I am a young man and intend to work here for 20-30 years, I should both protect the rights of the company and demand my right bravely. I should both protect the interests of their place and demand my rights more or less.[83]

In contrast we can take the use of religion in inter-class relations into account. Most workers point to the atheism of the socialist left as an important cultural difference to explain why they do not vote for them. Yet the practical benefits of voting seemingly weights heavier than the issue of religious beliefs and therefore they can vote for socialists in union elections. The employers' failed attempt to use religion to open a channel of cultural affinity with the porters is instructive: the mosque in the storages was built after the strike of 1987 with these intentions, but instead of providing closeness between two sides it gave the workers a new excuse to come late to work. The

[83] "Şimdi bizim en dürüst sendikacılığı amcam yaptı. Kimsenin ne işverenin, ne işçinin hiçbir zaman hiçbirinin hakkını bundan alıp buraya vermedi. Ortada ne varsa doğru olan neyse onu yaptı. Eğer işçi yanlışsaydı, işverenin yanında bozmazdı. Tamam mı? İşverene derdi ki "sen haksızsın". O gittikten sonra işçiyi çağırırdı, "bak şerefsizlik yapma" derdi " bütün suç senin, bi daya duymiyim. Eğer duyarsam ben gelir, kolundan tutup atarım seni". […] Benim (işçi olarak) tek düşüncem, ben ne dersem patrona onu uygula. Hâlbuki Temsilci olan hem işçinin hakkını koruyacak, hem işverenin. İşverenin hakkını da yemeyeceksin. Aracın kapasitesi 15 tonsa, 11 tonla kapatıp gitmeyeceksin. Bu müessese iyi doğru dürüst yürürse sen ordan ekmek yersin. Eğer yürümezse ne olacağını ambarlarda çalışan herkes bilir. Her işçi bilir yani. Üç ay sonra adam sana gayrimenkulünü satıp getirmez. Neticede bi kriz var dediler işlerimiz yarı yarıya düştü. Sekiz tane adamımızı işten çıkardı. Emekli oldular. Hesaplar ortada. […] Ama zamanla onun 20 katını kazandığı zaman demiyor ki: "işçilerim gelin bakın ben bu kadar kazandım. Al size 500er milyon lira fazla." Eğer ben genç bi adamsam, 20-30 sene burada çalışmaya niyetim varsa hem bu şirketin haklarını koruyacam, hem de kendi hakkımı aslan gibi isteyecem ya. Buranın çıkarlarını da koruyacam kendi çıkarlarımı da az çok isteyecem."

employers were so frustrated about the workers' eagerness to perform their religious duties that they were impelled to bring the issue to TÜMTİS. Of course the union officials' responded by laughing up their sleeves and turning them back.

On the other hand the local branch of the union which was composed of old storage workers also considered religion as a side issue compared to the economic prospects. For example during the Ramazan Bayram some workers came to the union demanding to leave work earlier to reach their homes before the end of fasting. The officials advised everyone to make his arrangement with his own boss, because that would put an extra burden on the employers especially considering the economic crisis. When the workers insisted for a collective deal about the issue, a secretary dismissed them: "You are neither practicing the compulsory religious duties nor the usually accepted ones, why are you insisting on the recommended ones?"[84]

Two other factors influenced this cooperation between classes: social mobility and the lack of persuasiveness of left-wing socio-political alternatives. The first always existed due to the low capital and skill requirements of the sector and the usefulness of kinship networks to fulfill these requirements. After the consolidation of unionization, better wages facilitated social mobility even more and therefore today about half of the storage owners came from a working class background.

In the case of left-wing alternatives, both social democracy and state socialism were discredited at the time of the union's consolidation and new alternatives were not furthered. The demise of the Soviet bloc made the already distant prospect of socialism totally unbelievable. Likewise, the early 1990s saw the rise and fall of social democracy

[84] "Farzda yoksun, sünnette yoksun, vacibiyle mi uğraşıyosun?"

and the socialist union leadership was also strongly critical about a center left project. A last hope may have been creating cooperativist ways of managing the storages. This was somewhat plausible considering the low skill and capital requirements and indeed some workers of bankrupt workplaces tried to preserve their work by owning their firms. But these small attempts were generally seen as destined to fail which was indeed their end.

Fatherly Bosses, Laddish Workers

The storage workers' consent to capitalism cannot be reduced to a calculation of the economic realities and acting accordingly. Like all perceptions, these are mediated through symbolic systems which define what can be considered as a dignified or good life. In the case of the relations between porters and employers a family imaginary enables a structure of subject positions where storage owners with fatherly duties and porters with a laddish manliness compete with and complement each other. The managers stress their capabilities in terms of firm management and leadership as well as their choice to endanger their savings in business and to create employment for the workers. Adopting an aggressive masculinity some workers both praise their social position as more manly than the workaholic managers and defend their rights, for which they contradictorily have to demonstrate their social misery as men and fathers.

In their early study about men and masculinities in organizations, Collinson and Hearn (1994) differentiated between two modes of masculine governance: authoritarianism and paternalism. The former is centered on an all-powerful man who relies solely on his own decisions to rule and does not tolerate dissent, crushing the opposition by resorting to means of violence at hand. By contrast paternalism bases itself on personal trust relations in the workplace which serve as a moral common denominator in decision-making while the head is perceived as a protective authority

figure. In order to differentiate their rule form the authoritarian one-man style, the storage employers or managers use three themes: their social ties with the workers, their managerial qualities and lastly their position as taking the risk of the business.

In terms of social ties, the employers with kinship relations to the workers are obviously more advantageous since their closeness is seen as natural by the workers. But the two waves of unionization have somewhat broken much of the aura of inter-class kinship relations. Also, as I mentioned before, kinship relations work rather in the background. Therefore other themes like helping them in need, spending most of their time together or doing the physical work with them are generally more vocally emphasized. Since physical work is considered not just appropriate but also an indispensible sign of manliness, nearly every man I encountered in the storages from the office workers to the teashop owners proudly added that he sometimes assists the porters in their work. One of the leading members of Nak-İş nicely summarized these points answering to my question about the 2002 incidents:

> We were also sad. They were also our children. In the end they were also workers. The worker and the employer are not two enemies, but two friends. We are sharing something here. We may even spend more time here until the evening with the workers than our kids or wives. We all are in this business for 25 years, [and I am a storage owner since] 9 years. I came here at the age of 23 and am now 53. I've spent my whole life here. They were also young when they came here. We grew together, aged together with these workers. Can we have any hostility with them? There is no such thing. But! Is this job something one can do willingly? It's not. Most people would not even try it. Yet they do it. What can they do? We don't despise them or look down on them for this. There is no such thing. Even us, I mean, even I grab the goods sometimes. I cannot stand doing nothing, because I'm restless. I get my hand over that bag, touch that package… So we don't walk around with our hands tied in our backs because we are the boss. We cannot do it. We work with them. […] If we haven't had our breakfast at home, we come with our pastry and

> eat it together. We drink together [tea]. If one of them is ill, we visit him. We go to their funerals and so do they.[85]

The ability to lead the work force brings these rather egalitarian emphases on mutual friendship nearer to the symbolic parenthood. Due to the fragility of the market shares of the firms and the volatility of the sector, the managers have to keep a good track of the ongoing business and constantly supervise the work. As most workers said, the managers have no chance of resting.[86] The success of unified storages also depends on the leadership ability of managers, because the partners should come to a deal to delegate the management to one person, generally from among them. Therefore the manager should not only supervise the workers and the customers, but also get along with the partners of the firm who were very much used and are still eager to control the company.

Last but certainly not least, entrepreneurial risk-taking is crucial in the definition of the employers' social position. Risk-taking is especially important to increase a firm's profits, because new and risky investments or areas frighten risk-averse competitors and lower competition enlarges the revenues. Risk-taking by employers requires independence, power and self-confidence and these qualities are considered at least

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[85] "Biz de üzüldük. Onlar da bizim evladımız. Sonunda onlar da işçi. İşçi ve işveren iki düşman değil ki iki dost. Bir şeyi paylaşıyoruz burada. Yani biz belki çoluk çocuğumuzdan daha çok eşimizden daha çok burada işçiyle akşama kadar birlikteyiz. Yani daha çok vakit geçiriyoruz. Kaldı ki hepimiz 25 senedir, 9 senedir bu işlerin içindeyiz. Ben buraya geldiğimde 23 yaşındaydım, şimdi 52 yaşındayım. Bütün ömrüm benim burada geçti. Onlar da buraya geldiklerinde gençti. Yani beraber büyüdük, beraber yaşlandık o işçilerle. Yani bizim onlarla bir düşmanlığımız olabilir mi? Yok öyle bir şey. Ama nedir? Hamallık seve seve yapılacak bi iş midir? Değildir. İnsan çağırıp getirsen yapmaz. Başka yapacağı bişeyi yok. Ne yapsın, onu yapıyor. Bunun için de ne onları küçümseriz, ne onları hor görürüz. Yok böyle bişey. Biz bile yani ben bile yük gelir ona el atarım. Ben duramam ki kıpır kıpır yani o çuvala elimiz atıcam da koliyi elliycem de… Yani biz patronuz diye öyle elimiz arkamızda dolaşmıyoruz, dolaşamayız da. Biz de onlarla beraber çalışırız. […] Onlarla bir sabah otururuz evimizden gelip kahvaltı yapmadıysak alırız poğaçamızı böreğimizi beraber yeriz, beraber içeriz. Onlarda bir hasta olsa hasta ziyaretine gideriz. Cenazelerine gideriz. Onlar da bizim gelirler."

[86] "Burada müdür öyle yan gelip yatamaz."

implicitly as masculine characteristics comparable to the risk-taking of the workers during the struggles. Their risk-taking fulfills a social responsibility instead of being a selfish pursuit of interest or an entertaining chance game. Hence one employer highlighted the social peculiarity of the risk they take and how their social responsibilities can be compared to the position of fathers at home:

> The issue is not just having capital or means. For example some if not all truck drivers in the storages own their vehicles. Are they employers? Even the name tells it: they to not employ anyone except themselves. If one day he does not want to go work, only he will face the results. If I said "I won't go to work today," then I would leave a dozen men here without bread. The issue is to take the responsibility for these. We are trying to introduce technologies which can compete with cargo firms. No one can predict what the return of them would be. This crisis already damaged us a lot. Would the union or workers accept a reduction in wages? Of course not! They do not directly experience the crisis. The job to recover the economy rests with us as it rests with the father at home. I said it: the difference of the employer is to take the responsibility for all these.[87]

The discourse legitimating managers' high incomes with the mental arduousness of their jobs complements some workers' self-representations as the real examples of manhood. The managers' job is generally contrasted with those of the workers whose sole duty is to carry weights without any contemplation about the future of the work and there the anxieties and stresses related to holding managerial positions were repeatedly expressed. Thereby the upper positions in the company hierarchy are associated with tiresome burdens rather than just better incomes. This is the very reason why the managerial

[87] "Mesele sermaye, araç sahibi olmak değildir. Misal burada hepsi olmasa da bir kısım kamyoncunun aracı kendisine aittir. O işveren midir? Adı üstünde: kendisinden başkasına iş vermez o. Bir işe girdi mi aldığı risk kendisini bağlar. Bir sabah işe gitmek istemezse canı, sadece kendisi yanar. Ben "bugün işe gitmiycem" desem burada bir düzine adamın ekmeğine çomak sokmuş olurum. Mesele bunun sorumluluğunu almaktır. Burada kargolarla kapışabilecek teknolojileri devreye sokmaya çalışıyoruz. Ha, bu bize ne kadar döner belli olmaz. Bu kriz zaten belimizi büktü. Sendika, işçi, ücretini düşürmeye yanaşır mı? Yanaşmaz. Onların kriz diye bi dertleri yok. Evde nasıl babaya düşüyosa, burada da bize düşüyo ekonomiyi toparlamak. Dedim, işverenin farkı bunların hepsinin sorumluluğunu almaktır."

positions which had to be seen as providing better conditions for manhood due to their economic benefits were in fact perceived as emasculating. Ali, a porter in his early 40s, belongs to one of the prominent kin groups and argues for the superiority of workers lives:

> You should join our activities instead of wasting your time with these managers. For example, my friends take me from Yenibosna. Our villages [in Malatya] are close to each other. We are related. We go to the cafes on the coast. Okey game was forbidden just because of me. […] I take 25 stones and order them. There is definitely an okey stone among them. In the second turn I end with throwing the okey stone on the table [which doubles the score]. "What have you done?" they ask. "This is a mind game and I got one" I reply. Every weekend they take me to beautiful places. For example Güzelce. We barbecue good meats like deer or rabbit. And sometimes they bring women [sex workers]. I benefit from them. This is an honest confession. This is how life should be. You should enjoy yourself rather than bothering money. Your mind should be at peace. [88]

While accepting managers' high salaries in return for manliness, in other instances Ali's masculine rhetoric also strongly supports class struggle. He effusively tells stories showing how he turned the tide in many minor disputes in the storages through threats and, if necessary, violence. Of course this violence is rather limited compared to the genre of vendetta stories which most porters mention as something experienced but left in the past, yet I also listened to a few recent cases. These two discourses are more coherent than it may look at the first glance. Ali is not open to political radicalism, but to working class militancy which he sees, as one of the few center-left voters among the

[88] "Sen o müdürlerle vakit kaybetmeyi bırakıp bizim ortama gelsen. Mesela arkadaşlar beni Yenibosna'dan alıyorlar. Bizim yakın köyler. Bağlarımız da var. Akrabalığımız. Gideriz. Bu sahilde kafeler var. Sırf ben gidiyorum diye okey yasaktı. […] Şimdi ben alıyodum 25 tane taş. Hepsininkinde birbirlerine uyduruyorum, tamam mı? O 25 taşın içersinde bi okey çıkıyo kesin. Birinci el dönüyo, ikinci elde okey koyuyorum. Ya diyolar "abi sen ne yaptın?" "oğlum" diyorum "bu oyun zeka oyunu, bu da bende var." Her cumartesi Pazar alırlar. Güzel yerlere gideriz. Güzelce'ye mesela. Mangala. Gideriz oraya. Geyik eti var, tavşan eti var, güzel mangal olur. Arada da hatun matun çağırıyorlar. Faydalanıyoz yani, şimdi samimi itiraf bu. Hayat dediğin böyle olucak. Paraya değil, keyfine bakıcan. Kafan rahat, gönlün hoş olucak."

porters, compatible with a social-democratic reformism. When the center of our talks shifted to the problems of storage workers, Ali started to argue nearly the reverse of his position in the passage quoted above. His new discourse resembles that of the workers who do not think that workers' masculinity as superior: he added interesting claims like the sterility of middle-aged porters among the vocational health problems and listed many family problems related to this.

Politics as 'the Way out'?

In the 1990s, TÜMTİS was one of the strongest unions with a socialist leadership. On the ground, the union organization in the storages provided the Topçu leadership a standby protest group of considerable size. Each workplace had to have a workplace representative which could have two days in a month free for union work. Considering the number of storages this nearly amounted to a group of 150 men. Nevertheless even for these active participants the protest work looked like not having any concrete goal. Şakir remembered their participation in the social struggles of the early 1990s with a mixed attitude: on the one hand he recalled the respect and power this community used to have: "When we participated in a march in the past, nobody would begin without seeing us. Everyone tailed after us when one shouted that we are on the street."[89] On the other hand Şakir resented the lack of reciprocity: "Who helped us during our strike?

[89] "Eskiden biz bir yürüyüşe katıldığımız zaman bizi görmeden kimse yola çıkmazdı. "Ambar işçileri yolda!" dedikleri an herkes peşimize takılırdı."

Why was KESK[90] our business? Walk all day around and then get a beating by the police!" [91]

The legal difficulties and the structure of the sector not only crippled the progress of unionization, but also aided the mood of class cooperation. Therefore changing the political structures was seen by the TÜMTİS leadership, especially by Sabri Topçu, as the only way forward. From its 1989 congress on, the union reversed the old positions by taking a strong stance against the military junta and the post-coup socio-political regime which a decade ago were praised by its chairman. Its leaders participated in the debates about uniting and reforming the old socialist left. Sabri Topçu's position was not one fuelled purely by political radicalism:

> You are a trade unionist and you make the best work contract in Turkey, but after a time this movement vanishes. The workers have to go into politics. The democratization of Turkey, human rights violations, the war in the Kurdish region, the attacks in the prisons at that time... We were opposing many things. Türk-İş, its administrative board, was also opposing them. I wasn't on the extremes. We should politicize the workers with struggles for concrete demands. If you are not politicizing the workers as a trade unionist, you are not doing your job. I never told anyone to come to EMEP. I told them to be interested in politics. I told them to be party members. Whatever parties you are voting for, go and question it. […] I participated in many meetings at that time, before the foundation of ÖDP.[92] Some old fashioned, narrow minded people came and used to say: "I am a communist and will die as a communist. Therefore we need a communist party." And I was in

[90] This reference to KESK (Confederation of Public Workers' Unions) is anachronistic since it was founded nearly a decade after the 1987 strike.

[91] "Biz grevdeyken bize kim yardım etti? Bize ne KESK'ten? Bütün gün yürüyüp dur, bir de üstüne polisten cop ye!"

[92] Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi (Freedom and Solidarity Party)

> constant interaction with the workers and replied: "The workers do not need a communist party." I still say it.[93]

When one of the biggest socialist organizations established EMEP in 1996, Topçu was invited for its presidency. He preferred EMEP's focus on the labor struggle and its aim to be a unified party to the coalition-type organization of ÖDP. But he declined the offer of presidency after consulting the workplace representatives of TÜMTİS in meetings around Turkey. The workers argued that Topçu was irreplaceable as a union leader. As their apathy for left-wing politics suggests, they undervalued his political career compared to his position as a historic leader of the union and more importantly some thought that this refusal would stop him from being more active in party politics.

Although Topçu declined the offer of party presidency, he joined in EMEP. In the union congress of 1998 he supported the head of the Izmir branch, Şükrü Günsili, as the candidate for organizing secretary. Günsili was unknown to the Istanbul storage workers despite the fact that Izmir had the second largest number of delegates in the congress: 50 compared to Istanbul's 106 delegates and most of these came from municipal storages. Nevertheless they would soon know him as the second EMEP member after Topçu in the central administrative board of the union.

A year later, Sabri Topçu stood up for parliament as an independent candidate supported mainly by EMEP. Again he firstly consulted the union members and

[93] "Bir sendikacısın Türkiye'de en iyi sözleşmeyi yapıyorsun, ama bir süre sonra bitiyor o hareket. Mutlaka işçilerin politika yapması lazım. Türkiye'nin demokratikleşmesi, insan hakları ihlalleri, güneydoğuda Kürt bölgesindeki savaş, cezaevlerindeki saldırı o dönemler. Bir sürü şeye karşı çıkıyorduk. Türk-İş de karşı çıkıyordu, başkanlar kurulu. Böyle çok uçta değilim. Somut talepler üzerinden yola çıkarak işçileri politikleştirmek lazım. Sen de işçileri sendikacı olarak politikleştirmediğin sürece görevini yapmıyorsun demektir. Ben hiç kimseye "EMEP'e gel" demedim. Politikleşmesini söyledim. "Partili olun" dedim. Hangi partiye oy veriyorsanız gidin o partiyi sorgulayın.[…] O dönemlerde çok toplantılara katıldım ben. ÖDP'nin kuruluşundan önce. İşte çıkıyordu […] kimi eski kafalar, tüfekler. "Ben komünist oldum, komünist öleceğim. Bunun için bir komünist partisine ihtiyaç var." Ben de işçini içindeyim. "İşçini komünist partisine ihtiyacı yok" diyordum. Hala da diyorum."

especially the Istanbul storage workers since he required their active support at least in voting and if possible in the campaign. The representatives consented to his decision and branch leaders in Istanbul both collected money for his campaign from the porters and also organized manpower for assistance. Yet the results were disastrous: the number of votes for him was so low that it was obvious that even most storage workers declined to vote for him.

The storage workers willingly helped Topçu's campaign, but in the election perceived this as a vote for EMEP's radical left politics and instead preferred their old parties which generally came from the center right. At the same time their help was problematic, because the local branch leaders seemingly insinuated that their proposal to financially aid Topçu's campaign was his implicit order. As a legacy from the past, the difference between the two was never too clear. Three years later this monetary aid would be among the list of the reasons for their split from TÜMTİS.

The Events of 2002

The storage workers hoped that this failure would force their chairman to focus on the union instead of politics. In fact just the opposite happened: disillusioned by the porters' apolitical stance, Topçu turned more to politics. The central officials of the union and especially the chairman generally work at the local branch office located in the Topkapı storages despite the fact that they should formally be in the main office of the union in Aksaray. Therefore the porters are used to bring their problems directly to the top leader, just like they preferred to tell them to the *bölükbaşı*s instead of smaller officials. So when Topçu delegated the position of workers' representative to the local officials in line with the formal division of labor in a union, the workers immediately recognized

this as a grudge against them, but this decision also increased the local leadership's sovereignty and diminished Topçu's direct supervision over their actions.

When the elections of November 2002 came, he ran again for parliament supported by a bloc of Kurdish and socialist parties including EMEP. However this time the Istanbul storage workers who elected more than a third of the union delegates opposed his candidacy, but remained a minority in the union. Topçu hoped that his candidacy from Izmit in place of Istanbul would avoid further problems.

While Topçu was busy outside the city and officially not the union chairman due to the three months' leave requirement for MP candidates, the first steps towards the split were taken. A radical young worker who was supposedly an EMEP sympathizer or just opposed to the local leadership was fired by the storage owner after he was elected as a workplace representative. The local branch condoned this act violating the taboo-like stance of the union against sacks. Şükrü Günsili reacted by sending two members of the branch to the discipline commission. Topçu heard about this issue in Izmit, but remained silent believing that they could only receive a warning from the commission. But the officials read his silence as an approval and Günsili's decision as a partisan move on behalf of EMEP members to liquidate them.

Some central cadres of the union like Yurdal Şenol, who was the general secretary of TÜMTİS since its foundation, were also critical of EMEP's growing influence. They found that the whole Istanbul branch officials were supporting them because of the change of its composition in the congress of 2001. The Özdoğan family used to have a strong influence on the local branch and its head Hüseyin Özdoğan was elected as branch secretary in 1989 and as chairman in 1995 and 1998. But in the last congress he and one other member of the family were elected to the central body leaving

the local branch to other kinship groups, which unlike him, were not so loyal to and pleased with Sabri Topçu.

Hence four of the nine officials from the central body and all the officials of the Istanbul branch went to Nakliyat-İş to propose the transfer of the storage workers to that union. The relations between these two unions were bitter since the failed unification attempt and had worsened with small legal conflicts in the 1990s. Evidently some officials had contacted Nakliyat-İş as early as September, but Nakliyat-İş declined their offer urging them to solve their problems within their union. Yet this bigger support and evidence of partisanship seems to have convinced Nakliyat-İş to the alleged bureaucratism in TÜMTİS.

The criticisms against the Topçu leadership concentrated around three themes: its links to the pro-terrorist groups, its authoritarianism and partisanship, and lastly its yellow unionism. The links of the new election alliance to the Kurdish party, DEHAP[94], frightened the storage workers even more than EMEP. In the news reports after the murders, workers were quoted criticizing the use of union funds to finance this party during its election campaign. For many reasons, despite their ethnic background, the storage workers were mostly alien and even hostile to Kurdish nationalist politics which they considered as damaging their already fragile status. A close relative of the current branch leadership who is atypical since he is a center-left voter, outlines their internal contradictions:

> There is being Kurd with an accent and being a political Kurd. There is Kurdist and Kurd. There is the governed Kurd, the directed Kurd and the Kurd who earns his bread with honor and dignity. OK? Today you believe something. You are near me. But if someone is killing

[94] Demokratik Halk Partisi (Democratic People's Party)

> my son in the mountains instead of joining to army, then I won't approve of that Kurdist. We thought about that (supporting Topçu's candidacy backed by DEHAP). We said "this is no good." […] On the side of that road is my brother-in-law's delicatessen. If they don't burn it, the police throws poisonous gas at it. And all is messed up. If he manages to escape from one, the other catches him. What is the crime of that merchant, that shopkeeper, these people? OK, Gazi is a liberated zone [*he lives in Gazi*]. Don't do these things. Then if I don't participate with my children, I'm a coward ["namert"]. I'd join them. OK, I'd join, but he will put a Molotov cocktail in my one hand and the symbolic thing, the symbolic piece of fabric in my other hand. I'll throw the Molotov cocktail there. But then the symbolic fabric has no meaning at all. Then you should write on it: "We burn cars well. We plunder well." I don't approve of this. Join and fill that street up until the police station! I'm a coward, if I don't join you with my children.[95]

The issue of authoritarianism and party influence on the union seems to have been exaggerated to a large extent. For example the officials told Nakliyat-İş that the EMEP members were selling their newspaper, *Evrensel*, in the street between the storages which was an already ordinary practice in İzmir storages. More importantly its subscription campaign was represented as imposed by the TÜMTİS leadership, just like the donations for the 1999 election campaign. Topçu was also accused of gerrymandering the elections to minimize the representation of Istanbul storage delegates.

[95] "Şu var yani bi şive sahibi Kürt olmak var, bi politik Kürt var. Bi Kürtçü var, bir Kürt var. Bi yönetilen Kürt var, bi yönlendirilen Kürt var, bi de ekmeğiyle, namusuyla, şerefiyle kazanan Kürt. Tamam mı? Sen bugün bişeye inanmışsın, sen bugün benim yanımdasın. Ama eğer dağdaki benim oğlumu öldürüyorsa askere girmeyip de öldürüyorsa ben o Kürtçüyü tasvip etmem. Biz bunun hesabını yaptık. Biz dedik ki "bu iş olmaz." […] O yolun kenarında benim eniştemin şarküteri var. Onlar yakmasa polis zehirli gaz atıyor, ortalık allak bullak. Birisinden kurtulsa öbürü yakalıyor. O tüccarın ne suçu var, o esnafın ne suçu var, o insanların ne suçu var. Tamam, Gazi kurtarılmış bölge. O işi yapma, ben de çocuklarımla katılmazsam namerdim onlara. Katılıcam onlara. Tamam, ben katılacam, bi elime Molotof kokteyli verecek, bi elime sembolik şeyi verecek, bez parçası verecek. Molotof kokteyli ni oraya atıcam. Bana verilen sembolik bezin de bi anlamı yok ki o zaman. O zaman üstüne yazacaksın: İyi araba yakılır, iyi talan yapılır. Ben buna iyi demiyorum. Katıl, o caddeyi doldur. Taa karakola kadar. Katılmasam çoluk çocuğumla şerefsizim."

On the other hand, due to the prestige of Sabri Topçu and the tendency of most workers to leave the organizational affairs to their leaders since the *bölük* period, the decision making processes in TÜMTİS did not resemble a full-fledged participatory democracy either. I have already mentioned examples like Sabri Topçu's use of his administrative position in 1984 and 1987 to appease workers' opposition against his decisions. In 2005 he came into conflict with other union officials over his attempt to leave one of them out of his election list. At that time most of the union officials were mostly EMEP members like him, but the party supported Topçu. These officials soon left EMEP and defeated Sabri Topçu in an extraordinary congress. Their criticisms likewise targeted his management style.

The last issue of yellow unionism is largely based on Topçu's change of time allocation especially after the failure of the 1999 elections. These were aided by occasional mentions of claims like the mediocrity of recent work contracts or Topçu's dirty relations with some storage owners. On the other hand Topçu argued that such a change occurred not after 1999, but after his participation in EMEP and therefore he was not resentful or vengeful against the porters. Also for years he performed the duties of the branch chairman in the storages and thought that the local officials should begin to fulfill the tasks ordered by the constitution of the union. This unilateral decision ignored the fact that for the porters, the presence of their leader was even more important than satisfactory solutions to their problems. As Topçu once said: "Solve the problem in the most backward [mediocre] ground, but solve it with the workers."[96]

[96] "En geri zeminde çöz, ama işçiyle beraber çöz."

In the beginning of November of 2002, Nakliyat-İş began to organize in the storages and backed by the networks of the local leadership, they quickly reached nearly 900 of 1000 porters in just two weeks. The process was left in the hands of the local porters and peaceful debate was probably not the ordinary path for transfer. Instead kinship reliance and known fears about the politicization of the union motivated the transfer, and physical intimidation complemented the rest of the process.

The most tense moments came after the negotiations reached a standstill at the resistance of a minority of TÜMTİS supporters headed by the Özdoğan family. Their members, as noted before, had been elected to important positions in local and central union bodies and therefore this union change dealt a major blow to their social power. At this time Sabri Topçu returned from his election campaign, but even he was attacked by the transferring group and was forced to flee from the storages. On November 19, Hüseyin Özdoğan was beaten and he immediately sent a crime report to the police. The next morning a mysterious event happened to one of the young leaders of the new Nakliyat-İş members, Oğuzhan Menek. Because I did not find enough evidence to support one of the many different alternative stories I chose to list three of the most coherent ones:

a. In the morning Oğuzhan Menek was attacked by EMEP members in front of his home, but he managed to grab an EMEP poster from their minibus and escape.

b. Suspecting that EMEP members in a minibus were spying on or waiting for him in front of his home, he called his relatives and they attacked the EMEP members who left a poster behind while driving away.

c. Oğuzhan suspected that the men sticking the posters of a Tunceli local association on the walls around his house were EMEP members secretly spying on him.

He attacked them with his relatives, but the men who did not understand the issue drove away leaving their posters behind.

Either way Oğuzhan goes to the storages instead of the police displaying an honorable vigilance and begins to wait for the arrival of Sabri Topçu who is claimed to mastermind this event. He gathers followers with the poster in his hand and the group teases the TÜMTİS members in the union building with insults. Among these people are also Ömer and Aziz Özdoğan who are vengeful for the beating of their uncle the day before and enraged by the loss of their family's social position. After a short fight several workers in Nakliyat-İş were stabbed by TÜMTİS members and three of them including Oğuzhan Menek died.

Making Sense of the Murders

The trial of the murders finished five years later and porters Hasan Doğan got a jail sentence of 36 years, Aziz Özdoğan 9 years, Kemal Karabulut 7 years and EMEP member and TÜMTS official İlker Dilcan 5 years. Ömer Özdoğan is still a fugitive. TÜMTİS blamed the incident on the "feudal" relations among the storage workers. This explanation situated the porters in one of the worst subject position they could face: tribal Kurds. They, instead, favor a conspiracy theory centered on Sabri Topçu, a theory which was already under construction during the transfer. This also fits nicely with their past union experience when he was the central figure directing the organization. An interview conducted by *Devrimci Mücadele*[97] (Revolutionary Struggle) magazine shows how the blame was transferred from the porters to Topçu using strategies based on the discourse of ignorance:

[97] The magazine belongs to Nakliyat-İş's sister political party People's Liberation Party.

Worker: Two of those who killed three of our friends were my very intimate friends whom I liked much when they were here. Two of those who shot us. They didn't do it by themselves.
Devrimci Mücadele: Who were they?
W: Ömer Özdoğan and Hasan Doğan. Ömer is still not caught.
DM: Is he the fugitive one?
W: Yes, Ömer Özdoğan. He is not caught, still outside. The other one is Hasan Doğan. We were like brothers during unionization and other events. It is not possible. If I were there I wouldn't come at him with a knife, with a stick. Because we struggled together, we are from the same region, we ate together. If I had five liras in my pocket, he was the one to whom I gave half of it. And he'd do likewise. How would I come at him with a knife? He didn't do it with his consciousness. His murderer is also Sabri Topçu. We are really ignorant people. He is cultured, different from us. He used his culture to make bad blood between us. We were like brothers to these two. One of them was not really working here: Ömer Özdoğan. He was a daily worker.
DM: So he is not a real storage worker?
W: He was not permanent.
Erdal: But he worked in the storages.
W: We were like brothers. We had a dispute with these friends. But nobody was hurt or striked. But there may be warnings, convincing. It was not possible to harm anyone. If we knew something like that, we would do differently. We didn't expect them to do something like that, our friends. They fed them with vengeance, hate.[98]

In some narratives the very culture which gave Topçu the ability to play with the porters like pawns creates his arrogance blinding his foresight about the developments:

[98] İşçi: Bizim üç arkadaşımızı vuran katillerden iki tanesi, benim çok samimi ve burada beraber olduğumuz sürece en sevdiğim arkadaşlarımdı. Bizi vuranların iki tanesi. Bunlar kendi şeyiyle vurmadılar.
Devrimci Mücadele: Kimlerdi onlar?
İşçi: Ömer Özdoğan'la, Hasan Doğan. Ömer, dışarıda yakalanmadı.
Devrimci Mücadele: Kaçak durumda bir kişi vardı, o mu?
İşçi: Evet, Ömer Özdoğan. O yakalanmadı, hâlâ dışarıda, diğeri Hasan Doğan. Bizler örgütlemede olsun, diğer olaylarda olsun, sürekli can kardeş gibiydik yani. Mümkün değildi yani, ben orda olsam yine bıçakla üstüne gitmezdim yani, gene sopayla gitmezdim. Çünkü beraber mücadele verdiğimiz, aynı yörenin insanı, beraber yemek yemişiz. Benim cebimde beş lira varsa yarısını verdiğim insan, o da aynı şekil bana yapan bir insan yani, ben üstüne nasıl bıçakla gideceğim? O da kendisinin bilinciyle yapmadı. Onun da katili Sabri Topçu. Biz gerçekten cahil insanlarız, o kültürlü, daha farklı bizden, kültürünü kullanarak bizi birbirimize düşürdü. O ikisiyle biz yani kardeş gibiydik. Bir tanesi zaten çalışmıyor burada. Gelip takılıyordu, Ömer Özdoğan. Yevmiyeci olarak.
Devrimci Mücadele: O tam Ambar İşçisi değildi yani.
İşçiler: Kadrolu değildi.
Erdal: Ama Ambarlarda işçi.
İşçi: Canciğer, kardeş gibiydik yani. Arkadaşlarla (...) tartıştık. Gene de tartıştık burada. Ama kimseye darbe, yaralama olmadı. Ama uyarma olur, ikna olur, bu şekilde olur. Kimseye zarar vermek mümkün değildi. Böyle bir şey olduğunu bilseydik, biz daha farklı şekilde giderdik. Biz öyle bir şey beklemiyorduk yani, arkadaşlarımızdan. Ama onları beslemişler; kinle, nefretle...

> I said to him: "Your honor, listen. The transfers to Nakliyat-iş will begin. There are three choices: either respect for the class, or the capital of the trade union amounting to 3-5 trillions, or the party. You have 25 years of labor here. Either your labor, or the union's wealth, or the party. You have to choose one of them." "Go to hell!" he replied. He treated us like dirt. He called us hanzo, keko.[99]

Another use of the discourse of ignorance distances itself from the original conspiracy theory and focuses on Topçu's neglect for the disputes in the union at that time. Topçu who "was not ignorant like these porters" failed to see the size of the problem and instead of voluntarily leaving the storages, he appointed a new leadership for the branch. One of the convicted murderers, Kemal Karabulut, served as the new general secretary for this short period. Therefore in this use, the adoption of the status of ignorance enlarges the porters' area of maneuver. By making them less blameful, they do not need to resort to conspiracy theories.

The police was totally ineffective during the murders despite the warnings of both the employers' union and members of TÜMTİS notably Hüseyin Özdoğan. At the same time it was willfully ignored as in the case of Oğuzhan Menek. After the events, the Chief of Police announced in a typical manner that the murders occurred due to unions' fight for financial gain ("rant kavgası"). Since it represented an authorized and therefore symbolically powerful alternative to the "feudal relations" explanation, it was appropriated by all workers. Probably aiming to highlight its authorized status nearly all workers remembered even the name of the Chief of Police. Another usefulness of this framework is that it can be used by porters critical of the local branch itself. With a

[99] Dedim ki; "Sayın Başkan, bak; Nakliyat-İş'e geçiş süreci başlayacak. Üç tane şık var: Ya sınıfa saygı, ya taşınmazların 3-5 trilyonu, sendikanın sermayesi, ya da parti. 25 senelik de emeğin var burada. Ya emeğin, ya sendikanın mal varlığı, ya da parti. Bunlardan birini tercih edeceksin." "Cehenneme kadar yolunuz var" dedi. Adam, bizi adam yerine koymuyordu ki. Bize hanzo diyordu, bize keko diyordu.

slight shift the conflict for financial gain can be situated between the leaders of the transfer and the TÜMTİS bureaucracy.

Conclusion

In this chapter I shifted the focus of analysis from the sources of militancy to those of inter-class cooperation and anti-radicalism. Land transportation has a harsh climate not only for the organizing unions, but also for the employers themselves. TÜMTİS took a responsibility which seems highly unusual for a trade union: to force the employers to unite their firms in order to transform the problematic industrial structure of the sector. Thereby its practice approved cooperation between classes which its socialist leadership supposed to fight ideologically. The traditionally conservative porters, on the other hand, were quite proud of the position of the union as a credible arbiter among the firms and enjoyed the fruits of their militant struggle in 1987-88: better working conditions and increasing social mobility. While they followed Sabri Topçu in union matters because of living with the concrete gains of his methods, they did not see the prospects of his political project promising.

Sabri Topçu's turn to party politics as an escape road from this “trap” initiated a set of events ending with the tragic murder of three porters. The workers’ kinship and co-local networks seem to have played a crucial role in this tragedy. Yet their habitualized reluctance to admit the importance of these networks for their social survival due to their caricaturized perceptions in the public discourses including those of the socialists, further complicated the controversy and the events still incite anger and hostility between people and political groups.

> Italian popular culture – as well as much political and academic culture – has always had a hard time imagining workers as persons rather than as a class, as individuals rather than as symbols. Thus, it has a hard time understanding that the workers' political plight is also deeply personal – and remembering that they still exist even when proletarian revolution is no longer immanent. Too many "workerist" ideologists of the 1960s and '70s have forgotten workers as quickly as the rich man in Youngstown. They, too, are part of this maddening silence.
> (Alessandro Portelli, 2005, p. 58)

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

During the beginning of my field work I learned by chance that a friend of mine was quite knowledgeable about the subject, because he was a member of EMEP at that period and even participated in *Evrensel* sales on the streets of the Topkapı storages. When I tried to talk with him on the porters, I saw that he was quite dismissive about them. "They couldn't face the feudals above them for decades and managed to do it only thanks to the socialists" he argued, "and during these incidents they blamed EMEP for everything in order not to face the feudals among them."

He saw the workers' "feudal relations" as parasitical antiques, just like the *bölük* leaders, which should be better left in the past. The source of the problems, then, is the inaptitude of the porters – not just socially, but necessarily personally. What kind of a person does not get rid of purely parasitical leaders for decades and prefers an archaic culture over benevolent leaders? Being very ignorant about the porters' history I could

only criticize him on theoretical grounds for comprehending the issue in a closed system of Marxist terminology, thereby probably reducing its complexity.

My friend's analysis, like the huge amount of similar or even cruder leftist diagnoses of false consciousness among the working people, neatly complements this maddening silence with maddening voices. In this thesis I tried my best to present a glimpse of the complexity of the porters' social conditions, out of which they had to forge a dignified life. There was no way to do it, other than freeing Thompson's "experience" from the sacrosanct assumptions of Marxist political economy and adopting Scott's "experientially drawn boundaries to social transformation in action and imagination."

The usual targets of accusations concerning feudalism, the kinship and co-local networks, were in fact far from a persisting barrier against class consciousness. They provided the emigrants financial support and advice to survive in Istanbul including opportunities of at least semi-stable work. This aid saved them from the traps of underclass misery, which the young Bayram was so close to fall into because of the neglect of his father, and made them wage-laborers. These social ties shaped their relations at work and gave them a socio-cultural uniformity with a framework of rights and duties. In the congresses of the porters' association mixtures of kin and class interests formed the ground for power struggles. When the association was defeated because of its incapable leadership, porters chose to leave for Nakliyat-İş following the directives of a sense of justice molded through these social ties.

These relations were organized around the concept of masculine honor. Its contempt for state intervention into private affairs neatly complemented with the conditions of the porters' immigration to Istanbul. Here it was not the state agencies, but

their co-locals and kin who embraced and helped them founding a new life. They assumed the duties of social security and justice within their own normative framework for the reason that the state either did not or did not efficiently provide these services. Thanks to the combination of mass and chain migration they were able to preserve their social networks and develop new ones in the urban setting.

By contrast the state and its citizens, even those who pitied and assisted them, looked on these immigrants with scorn because of their accents or unfamiliarity with urban culture. Just like in many other cases of immense power differentials granting a huge symbolic capital to the powerful the porters saw their inferiority as self-evident. Yet this did not mean pure obedience. Lacking any vision or capital to oppose their subordination, they rather went on bending and curving the discourses directed against them, especially that of ignorance. Such twists called for tolerance and limited their exploitation. On the other hand some workers, notably leftist ones, directed the discourse of ignorance to other workers to differentiate themselves, while the majority tried to counter the formalism of modernist education ideal with their life experience.

The dichotomy of education and ignorance also cropped up to exculpate porters as a whole in 2002: Sabri Topçu viewed himself superior to the ignorant porters and this led him to underestimate the union transfer. When the transfer began, he had to condone their mistakes considering their ignorance and to let them be as befitted an educated person. But he, nevetheless, used ignorant porters in the murders. When state officials stepped into the breach with their usual simplifications and to benefit from the symbolic capital of state, the porters pointed to the fight for financial gain between unions as an explanation for the incidents.

Another discourse directed against them, that of *aşiret*s, creates a social position far harder to be openly adopted, because, in contrast to the individualizing and debilitating ignorance discourse, *aşiret* connotes a malign social organization resisting modernity. They presented their *aşiret*s as a group of close relatives compared to other *aşiret*s which were really feudal and praised it in the form of kinship as a universal social good. Yet most of the time the porters preferred to remain silent and even forget about the social effects of these ties for good reasons.

When the issue comes to honor crimes which are one of the major reasons for the stigmatization of the *aşiret*s, most workers spoke ambivalently denouncing the deadly results while advocating the patriarchal norms behind them. Especially in its relations with the outside of the community, this patriarchal system is necessarily based on masculine violence in order to administer its justice and create deterrence. The subordination of women, as in every hegemonic order, depends on a mix of domination and concessions through financial provision for the family which highlights the significance of work in this world. The financial benefits of a good job were essential for the porters' hegemony over their wives as well as over other men like their sons or kinsmen. The fathers differentiate themselves from their laddish sons by the quality of being responsible bread-winners.

The land transport sector was scattered around the center of Istanbul and characterized by the abundance of volatile small and even micro firms with low fixed capital investments. Considering the low structural bargaining power of their job, the porters' organization in the *bölük*s mainly relied on a tradition dating from the Ottoman period. Reasons like nearly non-existent specialization, lack of skill requirements and

spatial separation made the penetration of kinship norms in the guise of a strong masculine culture possible.

The honor/shame framework created incentives for an active participation in the collective struggle and inhibited free-riding like staying away from the hardships of struggle believing that if the union succeeds, no porter can be excluded from its future benefits. The relations between porters were formed by a compromise between men's claim for individual independence and their need for solidarity. The result was a covert intimacy which was based on collective physical activities rather than an exchange of feelings. Combined with the men's eagerness for competition and risk-taking this type of male camaraderie became a powerful weapon against the employers.

As a consequence of these interconnections between their kinship relations and the historical context, the masculinities of the porters was well matched for an aggressive defense of their rights as workers. In addition to these, two transformations in the 1970s provided a modern conception of militant unionism and a power base which made it successful. According to a municipal decision, the storages were relocated to their current place in the late 1970s. This spatial concentration was experienced by the *bölük*s as a loss of the locations where they had a traditional monopoly on the employment of transport firms. Unable to mobilize the workers in innovative ways, they were swiftly defeated.

By contrast the young Nakliyat-İş with its socialist leaders brought the discourse and tactics of militant unionism into the Topkapı storages. Whether the trade unionists recognized it or not, this concentration dramatically shifted the balance of bargaining powers in favor of the workers. Their success was repeated in less than a decade by TÜMTİS after the initial unionization in 1979. Soon after the coup of 1980 the socialists

were left in the land transportation unions because of a series of legal changes making the industrial branch an unattractive place for less passionate trade unionists.

The tranquility of the 1990s hid the widening abyss between the TÜMTİS leadership and the porters. As socialists, the union leaders and especially Sabri Topçu wanted to be a catalyst for the creation of a radical leftwing political alternative. But the desires of the porters were quite different and included a strong anti-radicalism. Counter intuitively the relations of production they entered into were arguably more influential in their anti-radicalism than their conservative kin politics. Their direct and indirect experiences with badly managed and bankrupt businesses in this volatile sector convinced them of the necessity of inter-class cooperation. When the union's pragmatic realism let the adoption policies improving the economic conditions of the employers, the porters saw this as a confirmation of their beliefs and the union's new position over the employers as a social status to be proud of.

The success of the strike of 1987 largely benefitted the porters and increased their social mobility, elevating a significant amount of porters to the position of storage owners. However its effect on the porters' anti-radicalism is questionable, since the aura of kinship-based cross-class cooperation was already broken in the late 1970s when the *bölük* leaders sided with the employers against their struggling kinsmen and co-locals. Also the guidance of their socialist leaders as well as their experience in the big city educated the porters in class differences. Therefore their willingness for inter-class cooperation did not originate from a wholehearted conviction in the self-legitimation of the bosses or the financial provisions of bosses from their kin, which was insignificant compared to their largely bettered wages thanks to their radical union leaders.

While the porters were quite aware of the importance of class dynamics, their experience, structured by the relations of production in their industrial branch in particular and in the larger Turkish economy in general, curbed the possibilities of believing in the politically transformative potentials of class struggle. The industrial structure and also the legal framework made the enlargement of TÜMTİS painfully slow and the situation was even worse for the more radical Nakliyat-İş. The working class upsurge beginning from the late 1980s, which mainly stood over public or big factories and offices, abated in the in mid-1990s. This was coupled with the electoral defeat of the disappointing Turkish social democracy a few years after the demise of the Socialist Bloc.

While these social conditions increased the anti-radicalism of the workers, their effects on Sabri Topçu was exactly the opposite. He was convinced that without a political movement his already stagnating union work was useless not just for a socialist transformation, but even for ameliorating the current conditions of the larger working class. The tragic rupture of 2002 resulted from the once implicit and then explosively explicit conflict between these two diametrically opposed socio-political outlooks: the workers reluctance to vote for Topçu in the 1999 parliamentary elections and the union transfer resulting from his second candidacy in 2002.

The tragedy was surely heightened because of Topçu's belief that he could maintain his position in spite of retreating to the duties of chairmanship formally defined in the union constitution. The verbal support of all porters for his first election campaign and their contradictory unwillingness to vote for him, were the signs of a sociological hypocrisy which I tried to analyze using Scott's theory of multiple transcripts. He argued that because of the lack of nearly any symbolic power among the subalterns, the areas

where they socialize independently from their overseers could be a fertile ground for anti-systemic views. Therefore Scott's (2005) differentiation of his area of analysis from Gramsci's focus on the institutions of capitalist democracies and his analysis of how rule by force both created its own legitimacy and also helped the persistence of hidden transcripts against itself seems a more fruitful approach to the study of complex unionization struggles.

Of course an institutionalized capitalist democracy does not rely on the lack of symbolic power over the governed masses. In contrast, its institutions beginning from the parliament and elections, aim to avoid outbursts shaped by hidden transcripts and to provide mechanisms to satisfy their search for justice. Yet in the case of the Topkapı porters this was complicated by the elitist reformism and nationalism of the state. The symbolic power of the porters was diminished not just by their low socio-economic position, but also by their rusticity and Kurdish background.

The leaders of the pre-union *bölük*s were valued highly and thereby their privileges were legitimized because of their role as arbiter in the community of porters, in their relations with the storage owners and most importantly with the state officials. Yet they also reminded themselves that the leaders' power was not entirely based on their personal capabilities, but on the support of the workers. Sabri Topçu inherited this role after the second unionization in 1984-5 and gained an enormous prestige thanks to the victory of the 1987-8 strike. The porters' troubled and frosty relationship with the state extended to their attitudes towards Topçu just like to other figures dealing with or representing the state.

A few years after the events of 2002 Topçu also lost the TÜMTİS chairmanship and the union is now led by ex-members of EMEP. Nakliyat-İş, on the other hand,

advanced with the rage of the conflict to organize other storages and even to take away those affiliated with TÜMTİS. While it has far fewer concrete victories outside the storages compared to TÜMTİS, its sudden rise at the expense of its rival seems to have secured the union's shaky position in DİSK and paved the way for Ali Rıza Küçükosmanoğlu's election as the confederation's organizing secretary. The only reason why the porters do not actively oppose their new unionists' political radicalism is HKP's tininess and isolation even from the socialist left.

Since 2003, the Turkish government tries to create a land transportation law as a part of the EU integration process. The most crucial subjects of the negotiations between government officials and the storage employers are the minimum limits to the capital investments, the number of vehicles and numbers of firms' operation regions in order to increase the quality of the transport services and road safety. The unified storages are obviously the most successful ones at adapting to these coming regulations. Another issue on the agenda is to relocate the storages from Topkapı, which is considered to be in the city now, to Hadımköy. Both issues are threatening the small firms and will change the shape of the sector's structure in the next decade.

Considering these developments TÜMTİS' bold policy to reform the storages seems to be one of its most far-sighted decisions. Yet conversely, this policy only confirmed workers' beliefs for class cooperation and fell short of being suitable to the union leaders' socialist credentials. As I have noted, discussing porters' lack of trust of various leftist alternatives, attempts to manage the storages in workers' cooperative might have gone beyond leaving the management issue to the storage owners and formulated a democratic alternative. Indeed the prevalent reliance on competition and individual (owner/manager) responsibility make the capitalist economy in land

transportation and in general as the sole credible option for the porters. By contrast, the socialist alternative is seen either too utopian for the human material or is already discredited in their daily encounters with state administrations in the economy and in other spaces for good reasons.

In this thesis I tried to show that working class militancy has a variety of sources related to other social systems which we can only be analytically separated from the social relations of capitalism and workers' perceptions and success of their struggles depends on the specific industrial structures and corresponding relations of production. Class militancy does not have to lead to a left-wing political project, especially if the advocates of the project fail to appreciate how a person attempts to create a dignified life and focus just on the people's strictly economic interests as workers which are just one of the means to achieve dignity.

Furthermore, I have tried to show that a purely culturalist analysis cannot capture the reasons behind the processes for unionization, the militancy and the lack of radicalism. Rather, a detailed and careful social history, as well as close attention to the limitations and possibilities provided by the structure of the industry, needs to complement such analysis. Indeed both of these two lines of argumentation were used in Thompson's works. Yet the significance of the cultural gaps between the workers and radicals seems to be overemphasized, because, as the case of porters shows, such gaps can be condoned considering the immediate economic benefits.

Nonetheless this overemphasis led to a more rigorous and much-needed investigation of working class cultures, which is still very underdeveloped in the case of Turkey. Therefore value of this line of analysis should not be underestimated especially in the case of the Anatolian working class. This thesis rather demonstrated a fragility of

the accounts inspired by Thompson, what I named in the first chapter as the dilemma of solving the gap between the Marxist prescriptions and the actual existence of working classes in a non-vanguardist way. Attempts to ground anticapitalist projects on workers' experience in terms of culture or at production would have serious flaws, if they fail to address the sources of antiradicalism in the same manner. Working class experience, even (or especially) at work, is not a safe ground for anti-systemic movements. The existence of the conflict of interest between workers and employers is just one of the simple and self-evident facts for most workers and a worker can achieve little in life by sticking just to it.

APPENDIX

COMPOSITION OF DELEGATES IN TÜMTİS CONGRESSES ACCORDING TO LOCALITIES

	1992	1998	2001	2004	2008
Natural*	12	11	11	12	12
Adana	-	13	18	19	18
Ankara	75	25	31	28	31
Bursa	-	24	21	26	22
Gaziantep	-	35	26	56	53
Istanbul	148	106	104	28	45
Izmir	27	50	41	34	36
Black Sea Region	-	-	9	8	5
Total	262	264	261	211	222

*Natural Delegates consist of the members of the previous administration.

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