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ARTICLE

"Invisible sisters, invincible brothers:" tracing masculine domination within the Turkish left

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Abstract

A Bourdieusian analysis of gender relations within political organizations is highly instructive. This kind of analysis might provide insight into the intertwinement of gender and politics by illuminating the construction process of gendered political identities. Drawing upon memoirs written by the members of the left-wing organizations in Turkey and interviews conducted with them, this article argues that the narratives of members of the Turkish left reflect the multidimensional nature of what Pierre Bourdieu called masculine domination.

Keywords: Masculine domination; Pierre Bourdieu; habitus; symbolic violence; Turkish left; gender

Introduction

Both at the cognitive level and institutional level, politics in Turkey has been viewed as a masculine field. This perception of politics is rooted in ideological and intellectual traditions that have shaped the Turkish political spectrum (Coşar 2007). Some scholars have referred to the Turkish right's masculine political language that demonizes femininity (Bora and Tol 2009; Özman and Yakın 2012) and others have particularly focused on the ruling Justice and Development Party's (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi; AKP) conservative and authoritarian gender policies (Coşar and Yeğenoğlu 2011; Güneş-Ayata and Doğangün 2017; Çavdar and Yaşar 2019; Yarar 2020; Arat 2022). However, there are only a few studies addressing the gender-based analysis of the prevailing narrative of the Turkish left (Bora 2013; Beşpınar 2019; Pekesen 2020; Drechselová 2022).

Drawing upon memoirs written by members of left-wing organizations in Turkey and interviews made with them, the current study analyzes the narratives of members of the Turkish left through Pierre Bourdieu's concept of masculine domination (Bourdieu 2001). Accordingly, while the first section of the study briefly explains the methodology used to conduct the research, the second section describes the conceptual framework. The third section focuses on the historical context to provide a background for further discussion. The final section discusses the dynamics

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of masculine domination within the narratives of the members of left-wing organizations in Turkey.

Methodology: making sense of personal narratives

A simple yet important question underpins the methodology of this study: "How can individual narratives be related to societal ones?" (Czarniawska 2005, 5). Accordingly, the study will use thematic narrative analysis that primarily addresses the nature of the narrative's content. Thematic narrative analysis focuses on what is told rather than how it is told and is particularly useful in examining interviews, biographies, autobiographies, and memoirs, as well as developing "case studies of individuals and groups, and typologies" (Riessman 2008, 53–54, 74).

While this study does not rely solely on memoirs and nor does it seek to compare memoirs written by men with those written by women in terms of narrative strategies, three particular differences can be identified between memoirs written by male members of the Turkish left and those written by female members. A major characteristic of female memoirs within the Turkish left is that they are rarely apologetic. Although female authors often criticize themselves, their texts generally do not turn into an "*apologia*," a subgenre of memoir based on a retrospective defense of the subject's actions and decisions (Couser 2012, 40). It is therefore possible to say that female narratives distinguish between self-criticism and self-defense. In contrast, male memoirs tend to be more apologetic. Accordingly, these texts use more justification-oriented language. For instance, in criticizing the "feudal understanding" of the leftist groups during the 1970s, Ali Türker Ertuncay, a member of the Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist Leninist (Türkiye Komünist Partisi/Marksist Leninist; TKP/ML) describes how "the party" was against having children and how this attitude caused "a great deal of trouble" for women. However, he says, "Even though it's been so many years and I've been isolated from many prejudices, I believe the party's stance on not allowing childbirth is correct in those circumstances" (Ertuncay 2016, 74).

Second, although sublimating the idea of struggle is a common theme within memoirs written by members of the Turkish left, the majority of male memoirs have a much stronger tendency to romanticize struggle as a physical fight. Take, for example, how İbrahim Çelik (2016, 44), a member of the Revolutionary Path (Devrimci Yol; Dev-Yol), constructs his narrative by emphasizing that "the road to revolution is steep and thorny" or how Mahmut Mehduh Uyan (2015, 147) from the same movement describes his state of mind: "Inside of me, I always had the traces of clashes with the fascists, of the slums we tried to build in a fight with the police and the gendarmerie."

Third, male narratives have more polemical language as well as more accusatory content. An example of this tendency can be found in İsmet Öztürk's memoirs. Öztürk (2015, 69–91), a member of the People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey (Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi; THKP-C), discusses in detail the "erroneous and incomplete" views about Kızıldere where the leaders of THKP-C along with some members of the People's Liberation Army of Turkey (Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu; THKO) were killed in a shout-out with the security forces in 1972. In a similar vein, Memet Kara (2015, 35–38) from the Liberation (*Kurtuluş*) movement describes how

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pro-Soviet groups sought to dominate labor unions such as the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Federasyonu; DİSK).

It also seems that, as Drechselová (2022, 132) has noted, "the norm of heterosexual masculinity mediated through the memoirs and mourning of male heroes has an impact on the possibilities of public expression of those who do not conform to the hero's identity, including women activists." In this regard, considering the number of memoirs published by the largest publishing companies in Turkey is illustrative. For instance, İletişim Yayınları has published twenty-six memoirs written by men who were members of the Turkish left, whereas it has published only five memoirs written by women affiliated with the Turkish left. Similarly, Ayrıntı Yayınları has published only three books that were directly based on the narratives of female leftist activists and militants, whereas it has published more than forty books about the lives and narratives of men from the revolutionary organizations. A Bourdieusian conceptual framework can explain this tally as a sign of the masculine atmosphere of the Turkish left.

Conceptual framework

Researchers have discussed the role of Bourdieu's sociology within gender studies (Moi 1991; McCall 1992; Järvinen 1999; Krais 1999; McNay 1999; Lovell 2000). Taking into account these discussions and scholarly contributions, the current study focuses on a Bourdieusian framework for three reasons. First and foremost, the major research question of this study (i.e. what do the narratives of members of the Turkish left suggest about gender dynamics?) necessitates focusing on the relationship between individual experiences and sociocultural dispositions. This relationship might be better understood through Bourdieu's concepts ranging from habitus to doxa. Second, a Bourdieusian analysis might go beyond dichotomies such as mechanism and finalism, which confine the meaning of individual actions and perceptions simply to "the external causes" or exaggerate the role of social agents (Bourdieu 2000, 138). Third, since narratives are subjective configurations based on classifications of events, subjects, and processes, Bourdieu's sociological perspective highlighting the complex logic of classifications might be fruitful. In a similar vein, gender as a field of power is also shaped by a set of classifications. Therefore, in order to better understand gender dynamics, it is crucial to consider how social actors legitimize and internalize these classifications.

For Bourdieu, masculine order is a concrete extension of doxa, a prevailing opinion that has been transformed into the ultimate and unquestionable truth (Bourdieu 2001). This truth has also been internalized, legitimized, naturalized, and universalized by social agents. Accordingly, masculine order is a doxic order that seeks to fix the meaning of what is masculine and what is feminine. From utterances to symbolic strategies within everyday life practices, from the gender discrimination in the labor market to that in politics, masculine order as a gigantic network constructs a cognitive hierarchy that is based on the supremacy of masculine values and signs.

This network prevails, sustains, and rationalizes itself through a complex mechanism called symbolic violence, which is a form of violence that is almost

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impossible to perceive (Bourdieu 2001). As such, symbolic violence is an instrument that serves the reconstruction of sociocultural reality by simply concealing the true nature of the given power relations and structures. Within this framework, habitus as "generative principles of distinct and distinctive practices" and "classificatory schemes, principles of classification, principles of vision and division, different tastes" (Bourdieu 1998, 8) is also shaped by this invisible instrument that functions at the level of consciousness. Symbolic violence reformulates sociocultural dispositions in a way that serves the construction of masculine domination. This is the point at which masculine domination is also transformed into a sphere of symbolic power, which Bourdieu (1991, 170) defines as a "misrecognizable, transfigured and legitimated form of the other forms of power."

Undoubtedly, the construction of masculine domination is both a historical and structural process in which practices in everyday life are also reconstructed. These practices are both constitutive elements of masculine domination and by-products of this domination since "practices are constitutive of structures as well as determined by them" (Swartz 1997, 58). The relational logic of the juxtapositioning of habitus and practice also applies to another Bourdieusian concept, field, which can be described "as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 97). Masculine domination also seeks to expand its doxic assumptions about gender roles and practices through a set of fields ranging from the artistic field to the economic one. Needless to say, politics is another field in which one can trace the effects of masculine domination.

Historical context

Although some organizations within the history of the Turkish left sought to fight against the oppression of women, such as the Progressive Women's Association (İlerici Kadınlar Derneği; İKD) founded in 1975 (Akal 2011; Selek 2017) and the Revolutionary Women's Association (Devrimci Kadınlar Derneği; DKD) founded in 1977 (Akkaya 2011, 174, 205, 263, 284–293; Çeşmecioğlu 2015, 469), these organizations were regarded as institutional extensions of leftist organizations led by men. For instance, whereas the İKD was an extension of the Communist Party of Turkey (Türkiye Komünist Partisi; TKP), the DKD was mostly composed of members who participated in Dev-Yol. Similarly, in the history of the Turkish left, there were some female political leaders such as Behice Boran who became the leader of the Workers' Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Partisi; TİP) in 1970, but in the final analysis, neither these organizations nor these leaders represent a complete departure from the dominant sociocultural tendencies and the prevailing masculine narrative of the Turkish left.

As the Turkish left evolved between the late 1960s and the late 1970s, a series of vicissitudes within gendered practices contributed to the manifestation of masculine domination. This manifestation was facilitated by a threefold sociopolitical dynamic. First, it was vital for the left movement in Turkey to address the collective emotions of the periphery in order to expand its sociopolitical base. A populist political effort to maintain an "organic tie" with the people also prompted this necessity. As a result, most left-wing organizations incorporated existing sociocultural codes related to women's status and became more conservative in terms of gender roles.

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Unsurprisingly, this conservatism led to a sublimation of masculine traits. The change in the demographic profile of university students also contributed to this conservative attitude. As opposed to the middle-class urban students of the 1960s, a new generation emerged in the 1970s who internalized the periphery's values and synthesized them with socialist ideas. This shift coincided with an increase in the number of university students and universities (Keyder 2020, 19).

Second, fragmentation in the Turkish left largely influenced the organizational horizon of left-wing groups during the 1970s. These groups competed with one another to gain popular support and expand their sphere of influence. This competition was mostly characterized by the use of political language compatible with the language of "ordinary people," whom they strongly romanticized. As part and parcel of this language, the usage of words such as "*bacı*" (sister) became prevalent (Ertuncay 2016; Okyay 2022). The changing membership profile of Turkish left-wing organizations during the 1970s facilitated the proliferation of a masculine culture.

Third, the radicalization of the Turkish left and the instrumentalization of political violence led to the emergence of a distinct organizational culture (Bozarslan 2020). This newly developed culture that was mostly based on a localized interpretation of guerrilla movements in Latin America dictated a set of organizational principles such as secrecy, discipline, and self-sacrifice. These militarist principles facilitated the construction and reconstruction of masculine cultural codes. At this point, an analysis of these codes might be fruitful to understand the dynamics of masculine domination within the Turkish left.

Dynamics of masculine domination

Narratives of the members of the left-wing organizations in Turkey are mostly based on two sources: memoirs and interviews conducted with members of the Turkish left. Among the former, the memoirs of Zileli (2011, 2013, 2015), Cemgil (2016), Kara (2015), Selek (2017), Belli (2006), and Fegan (2020) are particularly important to understand different groups within the Turkish left. Interviews can be viewed as another form of personal narratives that provide a biographical overview of their lives and roles within their organizations. The works of Yazıcıoğlu (2010), Akkaya (2011), Mater (2012), Çeşmecioğlu (2015), and Çapa (2018) are prominent examples of this kind of interview. These texts form a corpus from which a specific narrative about gender practices within left-wing organizations and masculine domination emerges.

This article focuses on six major dynamics of masculine domination teased out from this narrative: (1) the militarized habitus within the organizational structure of the Turkish left; (2) the conceptualization of love among the leftist activists and militants; (3) the articulation of marriage as an organizational and political question; (4) the experience of abortion as a biopolitical practice; (5) the construction of unequal gender division of labor; and (6) the masculinization of female subjects.

"Male commanders, female soldiers:" the militarized habitus

The narratives of members of the left-wing organizations can be read as military memoirs. Military memoirs "as the personal narratives of individuals writing about

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their experiences of participation in armed conflict" seek to construct "a culturally dominant discourse of war as a heroic, male adventure" (Woodward and Jenkings 2012, 350–351). Accordingly, the narratives that the current study draws on strongly reflect a militarized habitus. This militarized habitus that is based on the juxtaposition of a set of masculine traits creates idealized role models for "revolutionary warriors."

In line with the gendered nature of war and military issues (Enloe 2000; Altınay 2004), there is a strong emphasis on the dangers of war and struggle within the narratives of the left. These dangers facilitate the idealization of the warrior figure and the justification of war as a manly pursuit. This is the point at which masculinity and militarism are intertwined. Whereas militarist values such as hierarchy and discipline support masculine codes, in turn, masculine codes such as physical strength and courage serve the circulation of militarist values. The circulation of these values constructs certain practices and shapes the nature of the field in the Bourdieusian sense of the term. This process that accompanies the sublimation of "manly virtues" and affirmation of violence as a necessity inevitably leads to the degradation of women. In his memoir, Halil Paşa (2020, 270) from People's Liberation (Halkın Kurtuluşu; HK) notes that elements such as "physical strength" and "the ability to use firearms" render men more advantageous compared to women, and in this vein, leadership is viewed as something particular to men. It is notable that Paşa's narrative confirms the Bourdieusian account of how masculine domination persists and "legitimates a relationship of domination by embedding it in a biological nature that is itself a naturalized social construction" (Bourdieu 2001, 23).

The typical example of this tendency also appears in the narrative of Gülay Ünüvar, one of the founding members of the THKO. Ünüvar complains about other members of the THKO such as Nahit Tören and Fevzi Bal, who claimed that "a woman cannot be a guerrilla leader" (Sümer 2018, 107). This skeptical perspective towards women also appears in other parts of Ünüvar's narrative. For instance, Ünüvar describes how she went to İstanbul in 1971 to purchase guns for her organization. When she did not want to buy the Spanish-made guns, the gunrunners became angry:

> The man looked at me and said, "We shoot anyone in the forehead who had our stash opened in the midst of martial law and did not buy a gun." I said, "Are you going to shoot me?" "No", he said, "I swear I won't. Kudos to you. You *as a woman* come and challenge us" (Sümer 2018, 109).

In a similar vein, İlkay Demir, one of the most prominent female figures within the Turkish left, emphasizes the relationship between the rise of the armed struggle as part of the militarized habitus and the subordination of women (Er and Özer 2018, 41). According to Oya Baydar and Melek Ulagay (2016, 110), female revolutionary activists from the 1968 generation,[1] the militarization of revolutionary organizations led to the understanding of "revolutionary seriousness," which ultimately imposed idealized

[1] In this study, the 1968 generation refers to the youth movement in Turkey, whose members were mostly "born between 1945 and 1948." However, the current study also focused on the narratives of members of the 1978 generation, who were "born around 1958" and became influential in the Turkish left-wing movement between 1974 and 1980. See Bozarslan (2020, 117).

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patterns of behavior on women and resulted in the subordination of women. As an extension of this "revolutionary seriousness," the condemnation of love and romantic affairs became part of the militarized habitus of the left-wing movements in Turkey.

"L is for the way you look at me:" the conceptualization of love

The majority of the left-wing narratives are based on reductionist insight about romantic love that is mostly considered selfishness. This form of love is viewed as something peculiar to the world of the bourgeoisie. Therefore, it is regarded as another form of individualism. In this context, these narratives represent an attempt at redefining individualistic love through a political perspective. Love is transformed into a matter of politics.[2] This perspective is based on the tension between individualistic–romantic love and "love of the people" or love of the political cause. The limits of love are drawn by political responsibilities. The fulfilment of these responsibilities is a key that opens the gates of true love. Here, in contrast to romantic love, true love is a field of sacrifice. Both male and female actors are expected to postpone romantic love in the name of the greater cause, namely the socialist revolution. They are expected to devote themselves to the political struggle that is ultimately considered a form of war, and, in times of war, there is no room for romantic love.

At this point, it might be argued that the search for a new understanding of love that does not contradict social values or threaten the long-term political goals of left-wing organizations is, in reality, a search for what Bourdieu (1990, 160) called "socially approved love," which is defined as "the love of one's own social destiny that brings socially predestined partners together along the apparently random paths of free choice." In this instance, "socially approved love" can also be interpreted as "organizationally approved love," since this idealized form of love is integral to leftist organizations' political aspirations.

This tendency is also evident in the narrative of Paşa (2020, 277), which summarizes the mood of the revolutionary left in Turkey during the 1970s by saying, "For them [revolutionaries], love could be postponed. But the revolution could not." Whereas Şehriban Teyhani refers to the "secret and illegal" nature of romantic relationships (Sarıoğlu 2016, 242), Gaye Boralıoğlu (2020, 94–95) describes her state of mind during the end of the 1970s, saying, "We suppressed our hormones and held on to words such as freedom, equality, companionship, fraternity, responsibility, which were much more important than love." This perspective is also shared by other members of the revolutionary movement during the late 1960s and the 1970s (Alumur 2012, 144; Nuhoğlu 2012, 27; Polat 2012, 136; Sağır 2015, 149).

In terms of the nature of the illegal struggle, it is emphasized that romantic love creates a set of jeopardies. This form of love is considered an obstacle that prevents the militants from fighting against the enemy. In this vein, romantic love endangers

[2] Undoubtedly, this transformation also implies the abstraction of love from physical passion or sexual desire. This abstraction leads to a reconfiguration of love and implies an act of idealization. Through this idealization, love becomes a political tool that can only be truly legitimate when used for the right political ends. In this context, love can be easily articulated to the nationalist imagination. As Çağlayan (2014, 113) has pointed out, this dynamic makes it possible to replace "sexual love" with "patriotic love."

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the warrior image that masculine doxic order within the left seeks to impose. For instance, İsmet Öztürk (2015, 23) writes that "the people who dedicated themselves to revolutionary struggle" can only experience "female–male relationship" as the relationship between "siblings" and "comrades." According to Latife Fegan (2020, 45), a female member of the Kıvılcımlı circle led by Hikmet Kıvılcımlı (alias "The Doctor"), "during the second part of the 1970s, as the culture of village and town reigns over the [left-wing] movement, women are transformed into 'the sisters' (*bacılar*) of their friends within the organization."

This conservative culture is also emphasized by Ruhi Koç (2012, 55), secretary-general of the Federation of the Revolutionary Youth of Turkey (Türkiye Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu; Dev-Genç):

> We were not bigoted about the male–female relationship, but we used to get mad when couples kissed in the canteen. [. . .] For instance, when we were going to a village, we used to tell women, "Dress properly", "Don't put on too much make up". There was such kind of conservatism.

Jülide Aral (2012, 115) from Dev-Genç summarizes this process, saying, "First our miniskirts began to get longer; then we gave up makeup. We gradually became militants and began to be degendered." As Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu from Dev-Yol indicates, this conservative tendency was a by-product of the revolutionary understanding that sought not to contradict "the values of the society" (Bostancıoğlu 2015, 221).

Similarly, Dev-Yol member Şükrü Yılmazer (2018, 298) regards the feelings he had for "a female comrade" as "a frailty that a revolutionary should get rid of." However, escaping love is much more difficult than it seems. Accordingly, Yılmazer (2018, 294–295) describes his feelings about his "female comrade" by saying "my revolutionary responsibility was constantly warning me . . . But a joke she did, the smile on her face and her innocence were imprisoning me to herself again." Another activist from Dev-Yol, Erdinç Obuz, also highlights the importance of "the revolutionary duties" in narrating his farewell to his girlfriend Nurhan: "I had understood how a loving heart beat and how love occupied a place in mind. But the revolutionary duties had priority. Wherever love wanted to take me, the duties would determine where I was going to" (Obuz 2019, 216–217). Memet Kara (2015, 259) from the Kurtuluş movement criticizes himself by confessing that he could never express his love to his wife and concludes his memoir by saying, "My wife, I love you so much."

Accordingly, Paşa (2020, 276) writes in his memoir that romantic couples holding hands were regarded skeptically by "serious revolutionaries" who also mocked these couples by calling them "*Sev-Genç*" ("love-youth"), a wordplay on the name of organization that could be translated as "giant-youth (*Dev-Genç*)." Hikmet Bozçalı from the Revolutionary Student Association (Devrimci Öğrenci Birliği; DÖB) provides another example of this moralism: "One night [during the occupation of İstanbul University in 1968] I and Deniz [Gezmiş] saw a couple kissing among the pines and kicked them out. Deniz said, 'This is not a place of kissing but a place of protest'" (Bozçalı 2012, 106). In a similar vein, Gün Zileli (2011, 117), one of the leading members of the *Aydınlık* (Enlightenment) movement, emphasizes that within this movement "expressions of love" such as holding hands were considered "a petty

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bourgeois behavior" that contradicts "the morality of our people" and "revolutionary seriousness."

However, it seems that this ultra-moralism does not imply a break from conventional male conversations, which by nature revolve around women. Zileli (2011, 77) notes that during the early 1970s when they were imprisoned, "one of the most common jokes" the revolutionaries made was to ask their single friends whose girlfriends were also arrested whether they had "planted the flag" or not. Zileli (2011, 77) writes, "According to our logic, women were castles to be conquered and somehow 'the flag had to be planted' to this castle." This phallocentric joke testifies to the ways in which masculine domination operates: It not only shapes the relationship between men and women from a masculine perspective but also penetrates all layers of social interaction. From the understanding of politics to a joke among friends, it diffuses everywhere and sustains itself through an invisible form of power and violence that is embedded in everyday life practices. Sociocultural rituals such as marriage are also part of these practices.

"The marriage of the militants:" marriage as a political field

Marriage, as the narratives from the Turkish left indicate, is a controversial issue in which traces of masculine domination can be found. Marriage is a political field in the Bourdieusian sense of the term which is not independent of power relations, a field where sociocultural and political position-takings become visible. For instance, Zileli (2011, 114) emphasizes that as an extension of the "Maoist populism," "the marriage of the militants" was promoted as a political maneuver to "win people's confidence" and "save the young militant girls from the pressure of their families." In this context, marriage was considered a key to entering the field of what is normal and conventional according to society.

Marriage provides a secure position within the heteronormative order. It is predominantly regarded as the ultimate legitimate form of relationship between men and women. This internalized disposition is an extension of masculine doxa that exists within society. Remarkably, Jülide Aral (2012, 117) notes that when she was in custody, a police officer advised her to marry "a decent man" and "save herself." In a similar vein, Şule Perinçek from the Aydınlık movement tells an anecdote about her prison years during the early 1970s:

> In that period, I had neither a boyfriend nor a fiancé. When I was in my cell, policemen used to open the gate and say, "Look, you are pretty, and you know two languages. Why have you become a revolutionary?" (Yazıcıoğlu 2010, 188)

Oya Baydar also emphasizes how she and her boyfriend got married under the pressure of "the party [TKP]" and refers to the revolutionary organizations' tendency to intervene in the private lives of their members in the name of "the cause and revolution" (Baydar and Ulagay 2016, 298). Such an emphasis on organizational pressure is also apparent in the narrative of Gülseren Pusatlıoğlu from the Kurtuluş movement (Akkaya 2011, 326) and some members of the İKD (Akal 2011, 263). However, this does not mean that marriages among the members of the Turkish left are only a by-product of organizational necessities. There are many narratives that

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refer to "love matches" (Yazıcıoğlu 2010, 19–20, 33, 54, 87; Çeşmecioğlu 2015, 129; Baydar and Ulagay 2016, 75–76), but even in these cases, the impact of sociocultural dynamics, "political necessities," and "revolutionary seriousness" cannot be ignored. Remarkably, some female members particularly emphasize that they did not wear a wedding dress when they got married (Yazıcıoğlu 2010, 33, 43, 62, 178, 188; Akkaya 2011, 122; Çeşmecioğlu 2015, 118).

In this context, traditional rituals such as *kız isteme*, a ritual in which the groom's family visits the bride's family and asks for permission to get married, are also viewed as obsolete cultural practices. Seral Cumalı from the HK described Veli Yılmaz's kız isteme ceremony by saying,

> Kız isteme was hilarious. We bought flowers and chocolate, but none of us wanted to carry them. Teoman (Göral), me, and Veli (Yılmaz) ... We did not want to carry chocolate and flowers because it was quite feudal. [We thought] someone could see us ... Finally, we found a solution. We found a bag and put chocolate and flowers in that bag, and I carried it. We took them out at the door (Yılmaz 2020, 98–99).

In some cases, marriage was also viewed as an obstacle preventing the revolutionary organization from achieving its political goals. As an extension of this political perspective on marriage, some leaders of the left-wing organizations such as İbrahim Kaypakkaya from the Liberation Army of the Workers and Peasants of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu; TİKKO) banned marriage for the members of his organization (Akkaya 2011, 265). Needless to say, skepticism towards marriage is inseparable from skepticism towards romantic love. Within this framework, it is believed that both romantic love and marriage can cause difficulties that are likely to damage organizational activities, such as an unexpected baby.

"A traumatic experience:" the practice of abortion

Abortion has always been a controversial issue in Turkey. The debate over abortion in Turkey has a long history (Erkmen 2020). During the 1970s when the radicalization and fragmentation of the Turkish left had reached its peak, the practice of abortion was illegal. Accordingly, Zileli's memoirs indicate that following the pregnancy of Zileli's wife Feyza, the leadership of the movement asked them to have an abortion and "be more careful" (Zileli 2011, 185).[3] As Zileli (2011, 185) underlines, since abortion was not legal in the 1970s, malpractice that threatened women's health and lives was also quite common. For instance, a bill proposed by four members of parliament and Senator Nermin Abadan Unat in 1979 highlighted that an estimated 500,000 abortions occurred in Turkey every year, and approximately 25,000 of them resulted in the death of women (Erkmen 2020, 56).

In this context, it can be argued that abortion practices have led to traumatic experiences among female members of the Turkish left. On the one hand, this experience reflects an unawareness about birth control and sexual protection

[3] Doğu Perinçek, leader of the Aydınlık circle, refutes this claim, saying "it is a terrible lie" (Türel 2022, 348).

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methods. On the other hand, it demonstrates how the practice of abortion has become a biopolitical instrument of violence. In her memoir, Fegan (2020, 59) narrates how terrified she was when she first saw the physician who would abort her baby:

> Those days, abortion was illegal. There were a few physicians who could abort, and they were working illegally. [Doctor] Kıvılcımlı told me he knew a physician. Together we went to that physician. The physician was a friend of the Doctor's. [. . .] In the basement of a building around *Aksaray*, a middle-aged physician whose doctor coat was dirty and blood stained appeared in front of us. [. . .] I was terrified. I remember I immediately threw myself out.

Gülseren Pusatlıoğlu also emphasizes how terrified she was when she saw the doctor's office where she had gone for an abortion (Akkaya 2011, 334). These narratives also suggest that there is a relationship between abortion practices and political and organizational necessities. This is the point at which abortion turns into a form of symbolic violence for two main reasons. First, abortion is viewed as a medium for solving a "problem" that could potentially jeopardize the activities of "professional revolutionaries." As such, abortion reflects another attempt at idealizing how true revolutionaries should behave. This dimension of abortion practice is compatible with the Bourdieusian notion of symbolic violence since "the dominant groups endeavour to impose their own life-style" through symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1984, 511). Second, abortion can be viewed as a form of pedagogic action in this context. This action reproduces internalized dispositions to raise political awareness about what needs to be done to benefit the organization. Here, one should remember that "all pedagogic action is, objectively, symbolic violence insofar as it is the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power" (Bourdieu and Passeron 1990, 5).

In this vein, Mukaddes Erdoğdu Çelik, a defendant in the TİKKO case, correlates the practices of abortion with restrictive and authoritarian attitudes towards romantic relationships between males and females: "I remember many friends who had an abortion due to the forbidden affairs. They concealed it and, for this reason, they got severely ill. Two people were having affair, but it was women who were always paying the price" (Akkaya 2011, 266). Çelik's narrative is particularly meaningful since it refers to the inequality between men and women that lies at the heart of the gendered division of labor.

"The subordination of women:" the gendered division of labor

The unequal gender division of labor is a concrete ground in which traces of masculine domination can be seen (Bourdieu 2001, 9, 30–31). In this vein, Paşa (2020, 272) writes that women were free in "distributing leaflets, joining a rally, engaging in exciting political debates" or "writing slogans on the walls," but in the final analysis, all these activities were generally "internalized as manly activities," and men were considered more appropriate candidates for these kinds of activities. Accordingly, Paşa (2020, 272) also says, "[a] secondary role was attributed to our female friends and comrades that would support men logistically. They were our sisters. That is, we would protect them from other men."

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As the narratives of members of the revolutionary movement indicate, the "logistical" contribution of women ranges from hiding men's guns (Akkaya 2011, 125; Aral 2012, 117; Keskin 2012, 78; Kara 2015, 19) to bringing them stones that they would throw at the police (Bingöllü 2012, 33). Büşra Ersanlı summarizes the nature of this subordination process by referring to the dominant expectation that women should facilitate the lives of men (Yazıcıoğlu 2010, 41). In this framework, according to Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu, that women had secondary roles in the revolutionary struggle was an extension of "the harsh struggle against fascists" or, in other words, the necessities of war (Bostancıoğlu 2015, 219).

The emphasis on the necessities of guerrilla struggle and the understanding of masculine protectionism also prevented women from acquiring non-domestic skills and therefore served the reconstruction of the unequal gender division of labor. In this regard, Çimen Keskin Turan as a member of the 1968 generation who worked in trade union organizations highlights the dynamics behind the unequal gender division of labor:

> We [the women] used to wash tea glasses in the FKF [the Federation of Idea Clubs—Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu] and the Eminönü branch of the TİP. I clearly remember that during the occupation [of İstanbul University], [. . .] I *habitually* thought to pick up the glasses and dishes off the floor in a room of the Rectorate Building but then asked myself, "Why do we always do such kind of work?" and decided not to do this (Keskin 2012, 78; Er and Özer 2018, 94).

Here the emphasis should be placed on the word "habitually" since it signals how the unequal gender division of labor that ultimately serves the supremacy of men is internalized as a set of dispositions or habitus by women. From a Bourdieusian perspective, one can say that habits are not independent of socialization processes and cultural practices. At this point, one can remember how Latife Fegan (2020, 43) complains about her "revolutionary" husband Fuat by emphasizing that Fuat had no objections against the traditional gender division of labor within the household. Fegan's criticism also applies to her leader, Hikmet Kıvılcımlı. Fegan (2020, 57) notes how Kıvılcımlı excluded his wife Emine from the political sphere and reduced her role to household management: "Doctor was completely excluding Mrs. Emine from politics. We used to witness that when Mrs. Emine was involved in conversation, Doctor sometimes reprimanded her."

Necmiye Alpay, who had been a member of both the TİP and the TKP, also shares her own experience:

> My husband was pushing me to home. I realized I was pushed to housework. I was busy cooking meals for our friends coming to our home. [. . .] I realized I was pushed to the kitchen and out of social life (Akkaya 2011, 170).

Describing the atmosphere of the late 1960s and the 1970s, Şule Perinçek emphasizes that "men used to write; women used to type [what men wrote]. Solely for this reason, I didn't learn touch typing" (Yazıcıoğlu 2010, 186). In his memoir, Gençay Gürsoy (2021, 270) from the TİP explains the assigned roles of women as "sisters who served

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tea during the meetings." For Yüksel Selek (2017, 72–73), one of the leading members of the İKD, revolutionary men were eager to sustain the unequal gender division of labor within the household and enjoy their "privilege" that stemmed from "being revolutionary." However, Emel Akal (2011, 256), another member of the İKD, notes that the İKD did not organize any campaign against the unequal gender division of labor within the household since the division of labor between men and women was also "internalized by the women in the İKD."

Accordingly, Gülseren Pusatlıoğlu describes her feelings by saying the things she did "were not being seen" by her male comrades (Akkaya 2011, 336). This perspective provides an illustrative example of the invisibilization of women's labor. It can be argued that the invisibilization of women's labor is not independent of the invisibilization of women. This process of invisibilization is also significant as it serves the idea of masculine invincibility. This idea of masculine invincibility is part of the logic behind masculine domination, which is based on the reconstruction of "things and activities according to the opposition between the male and the female" (Bourdieu 2001, 7).

The subordination of women at the organizational level gained impetus during the early 1970s when the radicalization process of the Turkish left accelerated. Whereas there were initially some leading female members, such as Şirin Yazıcıoğlu, Dudu Körücekli, Aysel Aytan, and Elif Gönül Tolon, in the administrative committees of the FKF and Dev-Genç, the composition of these committees changed over time (Yazıcıoğlu 2010, 109; Zileli 2015, 446). In this vein, Zileli (2015, 446) notes that he could not remember any "female friend" who was the chair of any idea clubs. This perspective is also shared by Elif Gönül Tolon, who emphasized that men did not encourage women to become more visible (Er and Özer 2018, 106). There are also other narratives that refer to the lack of active female members within the decision-making processes of the revolutionary organizations (Yazıcıoğlu 2010, 43, 136, 167; Akal 2011, 171; Baydar and Ulagay 2016, 393; Selek 2017, 204; Beşpınar 2019, 480–481).

Fegan is another member of the revolutionary movement who criticizes the subordination of women. Accordingly, she notes how impressed she was when she first read *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir (1949) and then discussed the book with her female friends:

> I read the book to them. We were uncomfortable with the roles attributed to women in the left-wing movement. They were all tired of making tea and copying [texts], but we did not yet know the mechanisms behind the distribution of these roles (Fegan 2020, 68).

As can be understood from Fegan's statement, during the period between the late 1960s and the 1970s, feminism was not a well-known sociopolitical movement among women within the left-wing organizations (Yazıcıoğlu 2010, 101, 150; Akal 2011, 167–168; Akkaya 2011, 169, 336). Furthermore, for some revolutionary groups, the term "feminism" had a pejorative meaning since it was considered a gimmick that veils class struggle and "splits the working class" (Zihnioğlu 2007, 1122–1123; Akkaya 2011, 173, 263, 292) or merely "a fantasy" (Gürsoy 2021, 270).

In the final analysis, the subordination of women through the gendered division of labor is rooted in the doxic sociocultural framework. This doxic framework has a

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moralistic nature in the sense that it assigns women a set of moral duties that seek to restrict the social existence of women to a limited sphere. Furthermore, it reduces their multidimensional potential to a set of domestic roles. Symbolic power and symbolic violence expand the logic behind these domestic roles to other fields of social activity. In other words, there is no sharp line between hiding men's guns and cooking for them. In both roles, women are expected to comfort men. This expectation is based on a pragmatic perspective that aims to further the interests of the organization. What transforms this moralistic and pragmatic expectation into masculine doxa is that women internalize the values, practices, and dispositions within certain fields that produce these kinds of cultural expectations. This is the point at which they also open themselves to a process of masculinization.

"Thickening their voices:" the masculinization of the female

The juxtaposition of moralism and pragmatism is a factor that facilitated the continuation of masculine domination within left-wing organizations. Furthermore, it fostered the cognitive ground in which the given gender hierarchies are reproduced and internalized. For instance, Paşa (2020, 273) explains, "Unfortunately, in our lives, we sustained the hierarchy of gender that we wanted to change with revolution." As an extension of this hierarchy, women are expected to adopt and internalize a set of rules such as "girls do not laugh" and "no giggling in the bus" (Yazıcıoğlu 2010, 41). In this context, Oya Baydar describes how her presence as a "lonely widow" and a "militant" bothered the wives of the academics and activists attending the meetings at her house (Baydar and Ulagay 2016, 136). Practices that denote this moralist–interventionist perspective also appear in the narratives of the İKD members. One İKD member, Saadet Arıkan Özkal, mentions how the TKP warned her about women who went to trade union meetings "wearing earrings" and "caring about their hair too much" (Akal 2011, 258).

In this regard, one can argue that masculine habitus and practices that circulate within the left-wing organizations result in the masculinization of female members. This masculinization is twofold. At the level of consciousness, female members begin to naturalize and internalize masculine dispositions. This process serves the construction of masculine doxic order. As a result, these members accept masculine traits and ideals without questioning. At the level of practice, they develop a set of masculine attitudes. One can find traces of these twofold dynamics in Zileli's memoirs. In speaking of the Elazığ branch of the Worker-Peasant Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Köylü Partisi; TİKP), he writes, "Many young girls were coming to the Elazığ branch. It was pleasing. But the attitudes of the girls and the way they talk were annoyingly masculine. [...] They were speaking by thickening their voices. [...]" (Zileli 2011, 378).

This gloomy disposition of female members is based on a strategy of survival used to cope with masculine domination. "By thickening their voices," these young women sought to conceal their femininity. This strategy is an extension of how masculine domination operates. In this vein, Pusatlıoğlu explains how women emulated men and how she attempted to look "neutral" and "ungendered" by not allowing "the shape of her body" to be seen (Akkaya 2011, 323, 338). In this context, it is possible to say that masculine domination reconstructs the image of women. This reconstruction

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is heavily based on the fear of vulnerability, which is actually the fear of men within leftist groups. Their masculine gaze tends to transform women into objects of honor or, in a Bourdieusian sense, "the embodiments of the vulnerability of honour" (Bourdieu 2001, 51). However, it is women who legitimize and internalize this understanding of honor as a manifestation of the archaic masculine fear of being weak and powerless.

The dynamics of masculine domination force the female subjects to develop their own strategies and instruments of resistance, but these strategies and instruments ultimately serve the consolidation of masculine domination. The female subject begins to see her femininity through the eyes of the masculine subject. This is the point at which masculine doxa, habitus, and practice are intertwined with one another. As Bourdieu notes with reference to Lucien Bianco, "the weapons of the weak are always weak weapons;" therefore, "the symbolic strategies that women use against men remain dominated" simply because the strategies and instruments they use "are rooted in the androcentric view in the name of which they are dominated" (Bourdieu 2001, 32).

This androcentric view is also visible through the prevailing masculine practices within society. As can be seen from the memoirs of members of the 1968 generation, these practices include sexual harassment of women (Kuglin 2020, 34–35), the naturalization of heteronormative order that marginalizes homosexuality (Değertekin 2021, 44–45), and the suppression of femininity (Fegan 2020, 73). This triple mechanism is also based on the demonization of femininity. Accordingly, Şirin Cemgil's memoir provides an interesting example. Following the death of her husband Sinan Cemgil, who was a member of the THKO, Cemgil complains about rumors that how she "pacified" her husband (Cemgil 2016, 66). Cemgil's narrative provides insight into how masculinity is constructed through women. Another significance of this narrative is that it confirms the Bourdieusian perspective that describes masculinity as a "relational notion, constructed in front of and for other men and against femininity, in a kind of fear of the female" (Bourdieu 2001, 53).

Unsurprisingly, revolutionary women are not only demonized within their own political circles but also by their political enemies, namely the radical right-wing organizations on which they wage war. For instance, Melek Ulagay highlights the tense political atmosphere of the 1970s by describing how she received phone calls from a mysterious and "horrible" voice saying, "Are you home, communist bitch? Wait, I'm coming" (Baydar and Ulagay 2016, 302). Security forces of the state are also part of this demonization of women. Pusatlıoğlu narrates that at the end of the 1970s when she and her friends were in custody, policemen used to call them "bitches," and therefore, "being a revolutionary woman" is equated with being "unchaste" (Akkaya 2011, 327). Another example of this understanding appears in the narrative of Ferai Tınç, a member of the Aydınlık movement:

> [I heard] the police had first looked for me at my home. When they had seen the photograph of Che Guevera in my room, they had said to my father, "What kind of man are you? Are you a pimp? Aren't you ashamed of keeping the picture of this man with beard and moustache in your [daughter's] room?" (Yazıcıoğlu 2010, 74).

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Ultimately, this androcentric view seeks to impose its own creed about how women talk, walk, think, act, or dress. As Paşa notes, during the 1970s, the acceptable image for "a revolutionary female" was based on the internalization of a set of male practices, and therefore "a revolutionary female" was seen as more acceptable when she "dressed like a man" and "acted tough like a man" (Paşa 2020, 276). Another example of this perspective can be found in the memoir of Fegan (2020, 43). She writes, "I was feeling that I had to think and act like men to be accepted by men." Fegan's feelings reflect the true nature of masculine domination. As Bourdieu (2001, 119) pointed out, "to speak of domination or symbolic violence is to say that … the dominated tend to adopt the dominant point of view on themselves."

In his memoir, Paşa (2020, 276) notes that revolutionary organizations tended to interfere with how women dressed and rebuked young women for wearing revealing dresses. Another revolutionary member of the 1968 generation, Şermin Çetiner, refers to how the idea that "women should dress plainly and modestly" became a prevailing tendency within the organizational habitus of the left-wing movements (Yazıcıoğlu 2010, 177). In a similar vein, Oya Baydar, who was sent to Moscow by the TKP in 1981, describes how one of her male comrades named Suphi criticized her about her dress (Baydar and Ulagay 2016, 392; Çapa 2018, 160–161). Kadriye Deniz Özen is another figure from the revolutionary circles who refers to this tendency:

> While we were going to the court, we were careful about not wearing pants and skirts. Some female friends of ours used to warn those wearing miniskirts and fancy clothes. Furthermore, one of our friends was warned for wearing pants, and then her pants were torn by another friend. Everyone was seeking to oversee each other in order to prevent any behavior or clothing that could lead to criticism towards the revolutionary attitudes of women (Sağır 2015, 83).

The narrative of Mukaddes Erdoğdu Çelik verifies Özen's observation:

> I remember we first argued over plucking eyebrows. I continued plucking my eyebrows, but the majority of women who were on trial for the TİKKO case were not plucking their eyebrows. This attitude was an extension of the idea of being a guerrilla (Akkaya 2011, 264).

Based on these examples, one can argue that women mostly internalized the practices of the masculine doxic order. This masculine order is also based on the demonization of gender identities that are at odds with the heteronormative sociocultural order. An eternalized division between what is "normal" and what is not is behind this demonization. This division also reveals how oppression functions "in the form of invisibilization" (Bourdieu 2001, 119). In his memoir that illuminates the male-dominated atmosphere of the late 1960s, Tuğrul Eryılmaz (2018, 53, 61) mentions a boy whom they mocked because he used to knit with girls in the canteen of the university and emphasizes that this "boy from İstanbul" dropped out of the school "most likely because of this." Similarly, Zileli (2011, 253–254) mentions the negative attitude towards homosexuality within the revolutionary movements in Turkey during the 1970s. This negative attitude continued in the 1980s and was based on the assumption that the members of the working class would not approve of

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homosexuality and therefore could withdraw their support from the revolutionary movement (Zileli 2013, 138–139). Such an assumption that described homosexuality as a "complete taboo" (Yazıcıoğlu 2010, 65) is also a by-product of the masculine militarized habitus within the left-wing organizations.

Conclusion

Necmiye Alpay tells an anecdote about a young man who delivered a speech about Şirin Cemgil during her funeral and mistakenly called her "Elder Sister Sinan" ("*Sinan Abla*") four times (Akkaya 2011, 171). This Freudian slip might be a sign of how this young man located Şirin Cemgil in his mind: not as an independent woman but as the wife of Sinan Cemgil, who was considered a revolutionary martyr. This study has sought to reveal the dynamics behind this Freudian slip through Bourdieu's theory of masculine domination and explore the relationship between politics and gender by focusing on a relatively less examined case. The study has argued that the narratives of members of the Turkish left reflect the multidimensional nature of masculine domination and illustrate the gendered nature of Turkish politics.

It is obvious that more empirical research is needed to explore the nature of masculine domination within the political culture of Turkey. Nonetheless, due to the current lack of research, it is possible to argue that tracing masculine domination within these narratives can provide a clue about the historical dynamics of the relationship between gender and politics in Turkey. Furthermore, such an attempt can be enriched and extended through a comparative perspective. Although Turkey's political history is rife with male-dominated narratives marked by the silence of women, there are still many things one can learn from this silence.

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