Between Central State and Local Society

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Introduction

This thesis aspires to contribute to the study of change instigated by social engineering projects that were devised and executed by state elites upon targeted populations mainly through the state apparatus. These moments of social change flourished in the 19th and 20th centuries in non-western and (post)colonial environments under the catchwords of 'progress', 'modernization', nationalism and similar ideas, and have been heavily studied since the 1950s within the modernization paradigm and dependency theory. Focusing on the Turkish case of social engineering in the 1930s and 1940s, the ambition of this thesis is to study such moments of change from an alternative to and critical of the above frameworks perspective.

The need to study the 'Turkish modernization' from alternative perspectives has its origins in the growing dissatisfaction with the way this reform project has been viewed and studied hitherto. The bulk of the literature still chooses to study the Kemalist reform movement from a macro perspective, as a top-down project rather than a process of social change. This macro perspective is parallel to the literature's dependency on dualisms such as state/society or centre/periphery, which conspicuously resemble the bipolar terms with which the 'modernizing' ruling elite chose to define and represent itself and its enemies. It has been a common critique in recent works that the literature on the 'Turkish Revolution' does not leave room for the study of the 'everyday', 'micro aspects of social change' or the 'life-worlds' of social subjects;[1] that it rarely takes into focus local social and cultural contexts, the "local specificities of modernity", or reflects on issues related to the shaping of social identities, "the emergence of new identities and new forms of subjectivity";[2] that it fails "to note those spaces where fact and fiction have met, where the project of modernity and those outside its walls have intersected and transformed one another."[3]

The ambition of this thesis is to reply to these critiques and their request for alternative perspectives that would attempt to move beyond and problematize prevailing dualisms while studying such an instance of social change as a process that involved myriad moments of interplay between the reforms introduced by the ruling elite and their enactment and consumption by social subjects in concrete social settings, within local societies and power networks. My aim is to trace and situate the process of social change at the local level, within spaces where facts and fiction meet, and to study how social

[1] Şerif Mardin, "Projects as Methodology: Some Thoughts on Modern Turkish Social Science", in Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997), pp. 72- 74.
[2] Deniz Kandiyioti, "Gendering the Modern. On Missing Dimensions in the Study of the Turkish Modernity", in Bozdoğan and Kasaba, *Rethinking Modernity*, pp. 113.
[3] Joel S. Migdal, "Finding the Meeting Ground of Fact and Fiction. Some Reflections on Turkish Modernization", in Bozdoğan and Kasaba, *Rethinking Modernity*, p. 255.

actors made sense and use of the products of the project of social engineering. The broader context of this thesis can thus be defined as the social reform project written by the ruling elite, enforced and propagated mainly through the state and bureaucratic apparatus in the 1930s and 1940s in Turkey. The aim is not to assess the (extent of the) 'success' or 'failure' of such projects of social mechanics, but to study how actors 'coped' with change, how this 'coping' intersects and interrelates with power relations, local social and cultural contexts, and, ultimately, what this 'coping' entails in terms of the production of practices, discourses and representations by social agents, what it might mean in relation to the shaping of social identities, personal and collective, to the "emergence of new forms of subjectivity".[4]

Within the limited framework of this thesis these issues are addressed by focusing on the People's House, an institution that was created in 1932 with the direct aim to propagate the reforms to their targets, the population of Turkey, through the circulation, application and enactment of a variety of 'modern' practices, discourses and activities.

The study of the 'Turkish Modernization' and its discontents.

The political and social reform movement carried out in the early republican period has been extensively studied since the 1950s within the wider framework of modernization theory. Daniel Lerner's *Passing of Traditional Society* and Bernard Lewis' *Emergence of Modern Turkey* have been considered classic in that respect. Since then the modernization paradigm of the 1950s and 60s within which these two books emerged has attracted various critiques.[5] These works have been extensively criticized for their institutional, legalistic and macro-level analysis and approach inherent in the modernization paradigm works on the study of Turkey. Similar arguments have been raised in relation to Marxist (or Marxisan) interpretations of the 'Turkish revolution', mostly current in the 1970s.[6]

With its emphasis on elites and institutional structures and change, the above literature tends to favor one actor of change, 'the state', and view the

[4] Deniz Kandiyioti, "Gendering the Modern", pp. 113.

[5] For a critique of modernization theory see Dean Tipps, "Modernization Theory and the Comparative Study of Societies: A Critical Perspective", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 15, (March 1973). For a critique of Lewis' book in relation to the literature on Turkey since its publication see Erik Jan Zürcher, "The rise and Fall of 'Modern' Turkey", in http://www.let.leidenuniv.nl/tcimo/tulp/Research/Lewis.htm.

[6] Şerif Mardin, "Projects as Methodology: Some Thoughts on Modern Turkish Social Science", in Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997), p. 64. For a compact presentation of the two approaches/paradigms (modernization and dependency theory) see Atul Kohli and Vivienne Shue, "State power and social forces: on political contention and accommodation in the Third World", in Joel Migdal, Atul Kohli and Vivienne Shue (eds), *State Power and Social Forces. Domination and Transformation in the Third World* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), pp. 295 – 301. See also Meltem Ahıska, *Radyonun Sihirli Kapısı. Garbiyatçılık ve Politik Öznellik* (İstanbul: Metis, 2005), p. 35.

social change only as a top-down process. In this sense, (a rather vague notion of) 'society' or (more concrete) social actors emerge solely as the recipients of change that can only accept or reject the prescribed order in its totality, being labeled as 'Kemalist' or 'reactionary', 'modern' or 'backward'. This stance does not allow for human agency in interaction with the imposed order.

A corollary assumption is that of an uncritical and unproblematic view of a given, substantialised, a priori and omnipotent state in oppositional terms with a similarly undifferentiated, set, static and resistant society, with both parts engaged in a one-way, top-down relation between a purposeful subject with power to enforce its will, and a mute and occasionally resisting object. A clear-cut border is imagined dividing 'the state' from 'society', where the state stands for a unitary, monolithic apparatus or centre. This perspective results in an overestimation of the role, power and domination of an omniscient and omnipotent state over a passive society.

This standpoint is evident in studies within the 'modernization paradigm' but also in more recent works with a 'statist' inclination. Metin Heper's viewing of state officials as a tight, homogenous and undifferentiated corpus of men with similar background is characteristic of this trend. The 'state tradition' stance claims that "the Turkish Republic seems to have inherited from the Ottoman Empire a strong state and a weak civil society", and that there is "a tradition of a strong state and a weak periphery". This approach differentiates between a strong "arbitrary" state and an "irresponsible" periphery or civil society.[7] This 'state tradition' approach overemphasizes the state's/center's coherence, and impermeability to, or lack of 'dialogue' with, society in general, allowing only for the bureaucracy's 'arbitrariness' towards society and the society's 'irresponsibility' towards state and bureaucracy. Thus, it implies a rigid, tightly delineated border between state and society. This is reminiscent of Ottoman political theories of governance where the borders between social groups are tightly imagined and, in that sense, we can argue that this perspective takes the Ottoman state discourse and the survival of a similar deep rooted state discourse in the Turkish republic and within its bureaucracy at face value.

The assumptions inherent in studies of the 'Turkish Revolution' working within the modernization paradigm, although still present in the literature, have been criticized by many authors and from a variety of perspectives. Kasaba's recent work on sedentarization, the relations of cities with the Ottoman central state, as well as the issue of 'stasis' in Ottoman texts lays emphasis on multiple and not necessarily homogenous logics of the Ottoman State over a variety of issues and reveals the multiplicity of state practices as well as the complexity of power relations.[8] A similar critique has been recently directed towards the

[7] Metin Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Hull: Eothen Press, 1985), pp. 16, 149 – 50, and 154.
[8] Reşat Kasaba, "A time and a place for the nonstate: social change in the Ottoman Empire during the "long nineteenth century", in Joel Migdal, Atul Kohli and Vivienne Shue (eds), *State Power and Social Forces*, pp. 207 – 231. Also Reşat Kasaba, "Do States Always Favor Stasis? The

literature on the Tanzimat reforms arguing that it has been studied and conceptualized solely as a top-down and rather unsuccessful reform movement that had minimal impact on the lives of the Ottoman subjects. Milen Petrov has attempted to study the "tangible impact of the Tanzimat reforms on the cognitive and epistemological world of the non-elite Ottoman subjects", something "a large body of scholarly literature maintains that it did not exist".[9] Recent anthropological and sociological works on contemporary Turkey exploring the social actors' understanding of such categories as 'state', 'modern', 'secular', and 'Islamic' move away from monolithic definitions and unproblematic dichotomies (secular –religious, state - society) highlighting the production of these categories by various social agents.[10]

My argument is that we need to employ similar perspectives to the study of the Turkish Modernization, perspectives that would try to address the 'everyday' or the 'life-worlds' of social subjects operating within local social contexts and would reflect on issues related to the shaping of social identities;[11] perspectives that would study the 'subjects of change', the real people and their responses to the change brought by state and regime, issues not usually addressed in the relevant literature. There the subjects of change are either conspicuously silent or even mute in regards to their understanding and performance, or, even worse, assumed to react either totally for or against the implemented reform program, tendency that runs quite parallel, one might say even identical, to the regime's own discursive categories of " reactionaries" vs. "Kemalists", of 'modern' vs. 'traditional'. 'Transitional' stages are also devised for what does not fit into the neatly formed, unilinear movement from one end of the spectrum to the other, from 'tradition' to 'modernity'. This happens when a process is conceived solely in terms of a project, which in turn

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Changing Status of Tribes in the Ottoman Empire", pp. 27 – 49 and Beatrice Hibou, "Conclusion", in Joel Migdal (ed), *Boundaries and Belonging. States and Societies in the Struggle to Shape Identities and Local Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[9] Milen Petrov, "Everyday forms of Compliance: Subaltern Commentaries on Ottoman Reform, 1864 -1868", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 46, No 4, (2004). For similar works that search for and introduce human agency into the study of the same period see Yücel Terzibaşoğlu, "Eleni Hatun'un Zeytin Bahçeleri: 19. Yüzyılda Anadolu'da Mülkiyet Hakları Nasıl İnşa Edildi?", *Tarih ve Toplum*, No 4, (Fall 2006); Cengiz Kırlı, "Coffeehouses: Public Opinion in the Nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire", in Dale Eickelman and Armando Salvatore (eds.), *Public Islam* (Leiden: Brill, 2004): 75-97; Elizabeth Thompson, "Ottoman Political Reform in the Provinces: The Damascus Advisory Council in 1844-45", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 25, No 3, (1993): 457-475; Ahmet Uzun, *Tanzimat ve Sosyal Direnişler* (İstanbul: Eren Yayınları, 2002); Huri İslamoğlu, "Property as a Contested Domain: A Reevaluation of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858", in Roger Owen and Martin P. Bunton (eds.), *New Perspectives on Property and Land* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001): 3-61; Cengiz Kırlı, "Yolsuzluğun icadı: 1840 Ceza Kanunu, iktidar ve bürokrasi", *Tarih ve Toplum*, No 4, (Fall 2006).

[10] Yael Navaro-Yashin, *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Nilüfer Göle, *The Forbidden Modern. Civilization and Veiling* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1997). Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997). Deniz Kandiyoti and Ayşe Saktanber, *Fragments of Culture: The Everyday of Modern Turkey* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

[11] Mardin, "Projects as Methodology", pp. 72- 74; Kandiyioti, "Gendering the Modern", pp. 10, 113.

implies that the relation of the Turkish experiment in modernization is conceived as a 'copy' of a 'model'; the sense of failure to conform to the 'model' gives rise to notions of constant 'belatedness', as if trying to catch up with a moving train.[12]

This tendency obfuscates the capacity of the 'subjects of change' as social agents to react and respond, in numerous and various poetic, innovating and meaningful for them ways that go well beyond the 'modern' vs. 'backward' division of the modernizing discourse and its echo in the secondary literature, to the 'new' spaces, mentalities, discourse and practices inflicted upon them. Another corollary consequence of this awkward reproduction of the modernizing elite's discourse is to ignore the ability of social actors to experience in their own ways the meaning of such categories as 'modern' or 'reactionary'/'traditional', in various ways that might supersede or even challenge the official rhetoric and discourse.[13] This inability and/or indifference to study the 'Turkish Modernization/Revolution' from alternative perspectives that has been observed and criticized[14] in the literature cited above can be clearly witnessed in the works on the Halkevi institution.

The People's Houses in the literature

A conventional[15] paper about a Halkevi would more or less have the following pattern: After an introduction over the Kemalist regime and the reforms, it would explain the reasons for the establishment of the Halkevi institution as well as its structure. It would then describe the establishment of the House and present its chairmen and Committee members, based on the House's own publication, articles from the local press, and, if available, the reports compiled by the House and sent to the General Secretariat, contained in the State Archive. The paper would then turn to the House's activities presenting them in different parts corresponding to its different Sections, just as the Halkevi publication used to present their activities, upon which, no doubt, the piece would be based. The paper would then resemble a list of activities (or perhaps 'achievements'). Like entries in a dictionary or a shopping list, numerous lectures, concerts, folklore studies, courses on several subjects, speeches on anniversaries, distribution of medicine, publications and

[12] Meltem Ahıska, "Occidentalism: The Historical fantasy of the Modern, *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102, 2/3 (2003), pp. 351-379; Meltem Ahıska, *Radyonun Sihirli Kapısı*, pp. 35 – 45.
[13] These concepts are not fixed but contingent upon the meanings invested upon them and related to social contexts, power relationships, etc. Works on contemporary 'islamist' groups demonstrate how social actors in their interaction with such concepts/categories produce their own meanings that have to be conceived as authentic, not as facsimile editions of the meaning given to them by 'pure', 'modernist' or 'Islamist', discourses. Nilüfer Göle, *The Forbidden Modern*.
[14] See especially the papers in Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997).
[15] Conventional in the sense of 'usual', 'expected', following the norm of numerous works on People's Houses.

distribution of brochures to villagers, village excursions, theatrical plays, *Karagöz* and *Orta Oyun* stages, collections of folk music, artefacts and proverbs, exhibitions of local products, fests and family gatherings, all registered in detailed, would pompously parade through the article's pages, making it all to difficult not to be almost convinced that "the Kayseri Halkevi" – to state one example – "worked for the integration of state and people, for the coming together of intellectuals and people, for the strengthening of social solidarity and cooperation."[16] If we put the name of some other city, instead of Kayseri, and change the chairmen's names, the paper might even be surprisingly almost identical to a different article about a different House.[17] The majority of the works on the Houses give the impression that the Halkevi activities were the same everywhere, and that they were carried out the same way and with the same results by all Houses. In a sense, the scholarly works on the Houses act as a reflection – or even reproduction – of the way the ruling elite of the time envisaged and wanted to present the Halkevi institution and its activities – achievements. There is a logical lapse in this treatment of the subject: the endless catalogues and figures of the recorded activities in a way function as a proof that those activities were actually efficient and had the intended impact on their targets, the population. This was actually the aim of the Party and Halkevleri publications, to prove their accomplishments, and exactly the same is silently reproduced in the secondary literature.

The existing literature on the People's Houses studies them as a part of a 'project', the reform movement of the early Republican period. The literature emphasizes the 'textbook' version of the Houses, studying their organizational structure, the regime's aims;[18] situates them within the wider historical framework and the politics of the period before and during their establishment to explain the reasons behind their creation (1929 crisis, Free Party, reorganization of the Party and regime's turn towards more authoritarian policies after 1931,[19] similarities to and influence from contemporary European

[16] Şanal, Mustafa, "Türk Kültür tarihi içerisinde Kayseri Halkevi ve Faaliyetleri (1932 - 1950)", *Milli Eğitim Dergisi*, No 161, (Fall 2004). This paper follows the above pattern.

[17] Consider the similarities of a number of works: Azcan, Ibrahim, *Trabzon Halkevi: Türk modernlemesi sürecinde* (Istanbul: Serarder, 2003); Bilgin, Çelik, "Tek Parti döneminde Aydın'ın Sosyokültürel Yaşamında Halkevinin rolu", *Toplumsal Tarih*, Vol 11, No 66, (June 1999); Çolak, Melek, "Muğla Halkevi ve Çalışmaları", *Toplumsal Tarih*, Vol 13, No 73, (January 2000); Karadağ, Nurhan, *Halkevleri tiyatro çalışmalar* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı, 1998); Özmen, Müze, *The activities of the People's House of Eminönü and its review: Yeni Türk* (MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University, 1995); Öztürk, Adil Adnan, "Cumhuriyet ideolojisini Halka Yayma Girişimleri: Halkevleri ve Aydın Halkevi", *Tarih ve Toplum*, Vol. 31, No. 182, (February, 1999); Yiğit, Resul, *Mersin Halkevi (1933 - 1951)*, (MA Thesis, Mersin University, 2001); Özacun, Orhan, *Halkevlerinin kuruluşu ve Atatürklü döneminde İstanbul Halkevlerinin faaliyetleri (1932 – 1938)*, (PhD Thesis, İstanbul University, 2002).

[18] Anıl Çeçen, *Atatürk'ün kültür kurumu Halkevleri* (Ankara, 1990); Kemal Karpat, "The People's House of Turkey: establishment and growth", *Middle Eastern Journal*, 17, (1963); Ömer Türkoğlu, "Halkevlerin kuruluş amaçları, örgütsel yapısı ve bazı uygulamaları", *Kebikeç*, Vol. 2, No 3, (1996).

[19] Mete Tunçay, *T. C. 'nde tek-parti Yönetimin kurulması (1923-1931)*, (Ankara, 1981); Sefa Şimşek, *Bir ideolojik seferberlik deneyimi, Halkevleri 1932 – 1951* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2002).

authoritarian and totalitarian regimes and similar institutions[20]); places the Houses and some of their activities within the regime's and elites' policies and discourses[21] (i.e. Popular education and preceding institutions such as the Turkish Hearths, Villagist discourse,[22] evolution of folkloric studies,[23] theater,[24] regime's discourse through the study of the Houses' architecture[25] and the institution's propaganda functions[26]). A number of works dwell on the publishing activities and the journals of the People's Houses.[27] These journals after all are the sources heavily used in all the existing literature and especially in works on various provincial Houses.[28]

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[20] Cennet Ünver, *Images and Perceptions of Fascism among the mainstream Kemalist elite in Turkey, 1931 – 1943* (MA thesis, Boğaziçi University, 2001).

[21] Hakkı Uyar, "Resmi ideoloji ya da Alternatif Resmi ideoloji Oluşturma Yönelik iki Dergi: Ülkü ve Kadro mecmuaların karşılaştırmalı içerik analizi", *Toplum ve Bilim*, 74, (1997).

[22] Asım Karaömerlioğlu, "The People's Houses and the cult of the peasant in Turkey", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 34, No 4, (1998).

[23] Arzu Öztürkmen, "The role of the People's Houses in the making of national culture in Turkey", *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 11, (Fall 1994); Arzu Öztürkmen, *Türkiye'de Folklor ve milliyetçilik* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1998).

[24] Eyal Ari, "The People's Houses and the Theatre in Turkey", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 40, No 4, (2004); Nurhan Karadağ, *Halkevleri tiyatro çalışmalar* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı, 1998); Nurhan Karadağ, "Halkevleri oyun dağarcığı (1932-1951)", *Erdem*, No 13, (1989);

[25] Neşe Gurallar Yeşilkaya, *Halkevleri: ideoloji ve mimarlık* (İstanbul: İletişim, 1999).

[26] Işıl Çakal, *Konuşunuz Konuşturunuz. Tek Parti Döneminde Propagandanın Etkin Silahı: Söz* (İstanbul: Otopsi, 2004); Sefa Şimşek, *Bir ideolojik seferberlik deneyimi, Halkevleri 1932 – 1951* (Istanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2002); Ceyhun Atuf Kansu, "Kemalizm'in Halk Okulları", in *Atatürk ve Halkevleri, Atatürkçü düşünce üzerine denemeler* (Ankara: Türk tarih kurumu basimevi, 1974); Hakkı Uyar, "İnkılap ve İstiklal Konferansları. Tek Parti Yönetiminin Halkevlerinde yürüttüğü propaganda işlerini anlamakta", *Toplumsal Tarih*, Vol. 3, No 17, (May 1995).

[27] Kemal Karpat, "The impact of People's Houses on the development of communication in Turkey 1931-1951", *Die Welt des Islams*, 15, (1974); Orhan Özacun, *CHP Bibliografya denemesi* (İstanbul, 1993); Nurettin Güz, *Tek parti ideolojisinin yayın organları:Halkevleri dergileri 1932-1950* (Ankara, 1995); Mehmet Ölmez, "Ülkü ve Dil Yazıları", *Kebikeç*, Year 2, No 3, (1996); Orhan Özacun, *CHP Halkevleri yayınları bibliografyası* (İstanbul, 2001); Müze Özmen, *The activities of the People's House of Eminönü and its review: Yeni Türk* (MA thesis, Boğaziçi University, 1995); Mahmut H. Şakiroğlu, "Halkevi dergiler ve neşriyatı", *Kebikeç*, Vol. 2, No 3, (1996); Bülent Varlık, "Yozgat Halkevi Dergisi bibliografyası", *Kebikeç*, Vol. 2, No 3, (1996); Bülent Varlık, "Devrimin sesi: Bilecik Halkevi dergisi bibliografyası", *Kebikeç*, Vol. 3, No 6, (1998); Bülent Varlık, "Ülker, Niksar Halkevi Kültür dergisi", *Kebikeç*, Vol. 7, No 14, (2001); Ahmet Yüksel, "Merzifon Halkevi ve Taşan Dergisi", *Kebikeç*, Vol. 2, No 3, (1996); Sabri Zengin, "Yeni Tokat. Bir Halkevi Dergisi", *Tarihi ve Toplum*, Vol. 39, No. 232, (April 2003); Galip Alçıtepe, "Dranaz Sinop Halkevi dergisi bibliografyası", *Kebikeç*, Vol. 6, No 12, (2001); İsmet Esra Berker, *Cumhuriyet dönemi halkevi dergiciliğine bir örnek: 19 Mayıs dergisi* (MA Thesis, İstanbul University, 2002); Funda Çalık, *Halkevi dergiciliğine bir örnek Kayseri Halkevi neşriyatı: Erciyes* (MA Thesis, İstanbul University, 2003); Melda Or, *Zonguldak halkevinden izlenimler Karaelmas dergisi* (MA Thesis, İstanbul University, 2002). Kenan Olgun, *Yöresel Kalkınmada Adapazarı Halkevi* (İstanbul: Değişim Yayınları, 2008).

[28] Orhan Özacun, *Halkevlerinin kuruluşu ve Atatürklü döneminde İstanbul Halkevlerinin faaliyetleri (1932 – 1938)*, (PhD Thesis, İstanbul University, 2002); Yiğit, Resul, *Mersin Halkevi (1933 - 1951),* (MA Thesis, Mersin University, 2001); Mustafa Şanal, "Türk Kültür tarihi içerisinde Kayseri Halkevi ve Faaliyetleri (1932 - 1950)", *Milli Eğitim Dergisi*, No 161, (Fall 2004); Adil Adnan Öztürk, "Cumhuriyet ideolojisini Halka Yayma Girişimleri: Halkevleri ve Aydın Halkevi", *Tarih ve Toplum*, Vol. 31, No 182, (February, 1999); Melek Çolak, "Muğla Halkevi ve Çalışmaları", *Toplumsal Tarih*, Vol 13, No 73, (January 2000); Çelik Bilgin, "Tek Parti döneminde Aydın'ın Sosyokültürel Yaşamında Halkevinin rolu", *Toplumsal Tarih*, Vol 11, No 66, (June 1999); Ibrahim Azcan, *Trabzon Halkevi: Türk modernlemesi sürecinde* (Istanbul: Serarder,

Invaluable as they are in analyzing and describing in detail the structure and functions, the ideological roots of the Halkevleri, as well as the ruling elite's underlying ideology and discourses in relation to the People's Houses, these works do not attempt to view what the Houses and their activities meant for the people who staffed them and were engaged in the execution and reception of their activities. Without dwelling on whether this is due to a shortage of sources or vision, it is fair to argue that the secondary bibliography offers a top-down, elite-centered perspective over the Houses, viewing them in their formative and discursive quality, as a project rather than a part of a process and through the eyes and viewpoint of the people who imagined and established them as a part of a wider project of social reform.

The point made in this thesis is that, in order to have a broader picture of the process of social change that occurred in Turkey in the early republican period, we have to 'bring society back',[29] allow for these poetic,[30] innovating and meaningful ways of understanding and (re)employing, making sense as well as use of, the innovations brought upon their life to enter into our perspective and analysis in order to move away from the constrains of the above bipolarity and the literature's top-to-bottom, institutional perspective towards a more open to and inclusive of the voices of social actors point of inquiry.[31]

We thus need an approach that detects the limits of 'the state' in implementing laws, rules, and regulations as set by the interaction with and the responses of the people, as well as a framework of analysis that leaves room for the subjects' understanding, 'consuming', appropriating, or even resisting the imposed laws, discourses, policies and practices, and what these various acts and processes of interaction between social actors entail in terms of social identities.

2003); Süleyman İnan, "Denizli'deki Halkevleri ve Faaliyetleri (1932 - 1951)", Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkilap Tarihi Enstitüsü, *Atatürk Yolu*, Vol. 7, No 25 – 26, (May – November 2000), pp. 135 – 157.

[29] Reşat Kasaba, "Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities," in Sibel Bozdoğan and Reşat Kasaba, *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997), p. 30.

[30] "This 'making' ['making do' of social actors with the products of a dominant order - a state, a company, an army, etc] is a poeisis" De Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), page xii. 'Meaning' here is used not in a static/given state, but rather as a social product, reproduced as well as created/crafted in situ by social actors interacting with each other and with systems of representations/meanings (with their own inconsistencies), one of them being what we may collectively and even slightly arbitrarily term 'high-modernist/Kemalist discourse'.

[31] Oral history studies have the potential and in certain cases have tried to investigate into similar issues by focusing on specific, local social contexts and by assigning a major role in the narrative of social actors. See research note by Ayse Durakbasa and Aynur Ilyasogly, "Formation of Gender Identities in Republican Turkey and Women's Narratives as Transmitters of 'Her story' of Modernization", *Journal of Social History*, (Fall 2001); Esra Üstündağ – Selamoğlu**, "**Bir Sözlü Tarih Çalışması. Hereke'de Değişim", *Toplumsal Tarih*, Vol. 8, No 45, (September 1997). See also the local and oral history projects of the Türk Tarih Vakfı.

Our aim would be to have a clearer picture of (a) 'state and society relations' as a problematic, multidirectional and multidimensional relationship and (b) of the responses of the subjects of change and the ways these subjects consume, alter, appropriate, react, resist, avoid, manipulate, etc. the reforms introduced mainly through the state apparatus. In short we need to focus on the various, myriad ways the subjects of change interact with each other and with state actors and agencies, respond to the changes, and what these processes of interaction might entail for the formation of novel forms of subjectivities, for the (re)shaping of social, individual and collective identities. This thesis attempts to tackle these issues by focusing on the People's House, treating it as a privileged locus for the study of the responses of the 'subjects of change' to and their appropriation of the changes the ruling elite was initiating, a place wherein the 'new' practices and discourses were meeting their targets, a "meeting ground of fact and fiction".[32] Placed within the above problematic and theoretical needs, our study is informed on the one hand by a corpus of recent works in anthropology and political science related to the study of the 'state', while on the other it borrows from De Certeau's work on the 'practices on everyday life' a number of concepts and analytical tools to be employed in our study of the ways the social actors 'use' the products imposed on them by a dominant order.

Anthropology of the state, state in society.

In their introduction to *The Anthropology of the State*, Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta argue that we must think of states as "cultural artifacts, as multilayered, contradictory, translocal ensembles of institutions, practices and people."[33] Following Mitchell and other scholars (Nugent,[34] Trouillot,[35] Abrams[36]) who have "critically interrogated the assumption that 'the state' is an a priori conceptual and empirical object", Sharma and Gupta view states as "culturally embedded and discursively constructed ensembles", and call for the study of 'state construction', "how 'the state' comes into being, how 'it' is differentiated from other institutional forms, and what effect this has on the operation and diffusion of power throughout society." Moreover, the boundary between the state and (civil) society 'statist' approaches to the study of the

[32] Migdal, "Finding the Meeting Ground of Fact and Fiction.", in Bozdoğan and Kasaba, *Rethinking Modernity*, p. 255.
[33] Akhil Gupta, "Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State", in Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta, *The Anthropology of the State* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), p. 211.
[34] David Nugent, "Building the State, Making the Nation: The Bases and Limits of State Centralization in "Modern" Peru", *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 96, No 2, (1994).
[35] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "The Anthropology of the State: Close Encounters of a Deceptive Kind", *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 42, No 1, (2001).
[36] Philip Abrahams, "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State", *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 1, (1988).

state have implicitly assumed is challenged. Mitchell has forcefully argued that the appearance of 'the state' as a discrete entity with an autonomous from society status is itself a reification and 'an effect of power'.[37] This argument leads many scholars "to conceptualize "the state" within other institutional forms through which social relations are lived, such as the family, civil society, and the economy", but also to study the 'construction of the state' and its 'border' with society (a) in the "everyday practices of its bureaucracies", its agencies and actors, and (b) in the representations of the state, "in the realm of representations where the explicit discourse of the state is produced."[38]

In this thesis, we start with a broad definition of state that situates it within and not apart or in opposition to society, views it as a cultural artifact, and "state formation as a cultural revolution", to quote a work that is considered as pioneering in that aspect.[39] The state is not conceived in abstract or legalistic terms as a unitary, monolithic institution with an autonomous status standing away, independent of, or even in contrast to, society, as 'a machinery of intentions' or 'a subjective world of plans, programs, or ideas' that excludes social agency. Drawing on Joel Migdal's ideas and the 'state-in-society' approach,[40] we differentiate between what he terms the 'image of the state' and the 'actual practices of the state'.[41] In his words what we call state is "a field of power marked by the use and threat of violence and shaped by the image of a coherent, controlling organization in a territory, which is a representation of the people bounden by that territory, and the actual practices of its multiple parts". The image (discourse, representation) of the state projects "a dominant, integrated, autonomous entity that controls all rule making to make certain circumscribed rules". This image "posits an entity having two sorts of boundaries: territorial between states and social boundaries between state – its (public) actors and agencies – and those subject to its rules (private)". Routine performance of state actors and agencies, such as ceremonies, issuing of passports and visas, censuses, taxation, maintaining police and armies, tends to reinforce this image of the state.[42] In a similar way Mitchell's conceptualizes the state as a structural effect, "a powerful, metaphysical effect of practices that

[37] Timothy Mitchell, "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and their Critics", *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 85, No 1, (March 1991).
[38] Differentiation between 'practices' and 'representations' is of course analytical in nature as they are "deeply co-implicated and mutually constitutive", as Sharma and Gupta argue.
[39] Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great arch. English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985).
[40] Joel Migdal, *State in Society. Studying how states and societies transform and constitute one another* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001). See also Joel Migdal, "The state in society: an approach to struggles for domination", in *State Power and Social Forces* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), pp. 1 – 30.
[41] A distinction reminiscent of Migdal's is the one offered by Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley* (London: James Currey, 1992), pp. 5 and 11 – 39, where, commenting on the case of the colonial state of Kenya, they differentiate between 'state building' and 'state formation', the former defined as "a conscious effort at creating an apparatus of control", while the latter being "an historical process whose outcome is a largely unconscious and contradictory process of conflicts, negotiations and compromises between diverse groups whose self-serving actions and trade-offs constitute the 'vulgarization' of power."
[42] Joel Migdal, *State in Society*, pp. 15 – 7.

make such structures appear to exist".[43] The everyday practices of state bureaucracies with the population might also be contradictory to the discourse of the state.[44] It has thus been argued that there is a need to study 'state formation' in the everyday practices of bureaucracies, state agents and agencies in their interaction with social actors, as well as in the employment of the representations of the state by both bureaucrats and their clients.[45] The emphasis then should be laid on the spaces where this interaction takes place, on the 'junctures of state and society', on places where the policies and ideas of the central state are designed to reach society,[46] the citizens, social actors, and where these policies and images are enacted, practiced, negotiated, resisted or appropriated. In this thesis I chose to view the People's House exactly as a 'juncture of state and society', a space within which the 'fiction' of the elite's projects meets the 'facts' of concrete local settings and social actors.

Usage/consumption of products of a dominant order.

This move towards a different perspective over the "Turkish revolution" than the one provided by the 'modernization paradigm', entails a different level of contextualization than its 'institutional and macro-level approach', while on the other hand necessitates the employment of alternative theoretical tools and categories. More specifically, if we are to 'move society back' to the picture, on the one hand we need to zoom on local societies and actors, while on the other we have to draw our attention towards the actors' use of the 'new' laws, habits, categories, ideas, practices, and discourses the centre strove to introduce in the Turkish society and people.

This thesis attempts to tackle these two issues. I address the first issue by favoring the micro level of analysis, directing our attention towards case studies of the Halkevi 'juncture' in local societies, and towards actors and processes in local societies. I deal with the second issue by laying emphasis on the various levels and ways of interaction between the discourses and practices coming from the state centre[47] and the responses, resistance, accommodation,

[43] Timothy Mitchell, "The Limits of the State", p. 94.
[44] See Gupta's article on 'corruption' of Indian state. Akhil Gupta, "Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption".
[45] See Michael Herzfeld, *The Social Production of Indifference. Exploring the Symbolic Roots of Western Bureaucracy* (Chigaco and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992) for a similar critique and perspective in relation to an anthropological study of bureaucracy.
[46] Joel Migdal, *State in Society*, pp. 124 – 34.
[47] By centre/central state I refer to the top echelons of the ensemble of interconnected state (Ministries, State bureaucracy) and para-state (CHP Headquarters, Turkish Historical Society, Turkish Language Society) institutional organizations and structures mainly situated in the capital. I do not contend that what I term as centre, i.e. these core-state bureaucratic, educational, financial, military, judicial, ideological structures, possess the ideological and organizational integration, coherence and sophistication the 'images of the state' usually claim, or centre - periphery models (Shills) imply. In this thesis the term centre or central state is not equated with the 'state' – however conceptualized – nor is ontologically juxtaposed to an 'exterior' or to 'society', a juxtaposition that would imply a border separating these two entities, which is a perspective we have criticized above.

(re)appropriation, in short their 'usage'/'consumption' by the actors in situ. "The presence and circulation of a representation (taught by preachers, educators, and popularizers as the key to socioeconomic advancement) tells us nothing about what it is for its users."[48] De Certeau's "investigation of the ways in which users – commonly assumed to be passive and guided by established rules – operate" can offer an alternative theoretical/conceptual framework for our study of the 'Turkish Revolution'. Consumption/usage then refers to what 'consumers'/'users' make with the 'products' "imposed by a dominant economic order" and this 'making' is a production – a poiesis". "Users make innumerable and infinitesimal transformations of and within the dominant cultural economy in order to adapt it to their own interests and rules."[49] My argument is that we need to turn our attention to this secondary 'production'[50] of using/consuming, (re)appropriating the products of an imposed dominant order, in our case, the social changed initiated by the 'Kemalist' ruling elite.

I choose to study this 'secondary production' within the framework of the "technocratically constructed, written and functionalized space"[51] of the People's House. We have to keep in mind that this 'usage' does not take place in a social and political vacuum. "The procedures allowing the re-use of products are linked together in a kind of obligatory language, and their functioning is related to social situations and power relationships". In order to study the practices associated with 'consumption' while at the same time address the obvious "power relationships" that "define the networks in which they are inscribed", De Certeau moves from a 'linguistic frame' to a 'polemological' one by distinguishing between 'strategies' and 'tactics'. "Strategy refers to the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that become possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets or threats (customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research, etc.) can be managed."[52]

A tactic, on the other hand, "is a calculated action determined by the absence of a proper locus. […] The space of the tactic is the space of the other. It must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power. It operates in isolated actions, blow by blow. It takes advantage

[48] Michel de Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), p. xiii.
[49] All above extracts from de Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life*, pp. xv – xviii.
[50] "A rationalized, expansionist, centralized, spectacular and clamorous production is confronted by an entirely different kind of production, called 'consumption' and characterized by its ruses, its fragmentation (the result of the circumstances), its poaching, its clandestine nature, its tireless but quiet activity, in short by its quasi-invisibility, since it shows itself not in its own products but in an art of using those imposed on it." De Certeau, *Practices*, p. 31.
[51] De Certeau, *Practices*, p. xviii.
[52] De Certeau, *Practices*, pp. 35 – 6.

of 'opportunities' and depends on them. It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches on them. [It] is an art of the weak."[53]

The concepts developed by De Certeau are going to inform my reading of the material in relation to the Halkevi institution, through the study of which this thesis attempts to address the question of the 'consumption' by local actors of the state and regime's policies of social reform, of the ways actors understand, (re/mis)use, (re)appropriate, interact with, resist to, and absorb the policies, discourses, and practices imposed on them, and the significance these 'secondary productions' have for the actors' (self)positioning within a local context, for issues of 'identity management', and for the 'emergence of new identities and new forms of subjectivity.'

Issues of resistance/submission, strong/weak, subaltern/elite subjects.

Strategies/tactics bipolarity refers to 'weak' and 'strong' subjects, used in studies of subaltern subjects[54] and resistance to domination. Here I treat resistance in a problematic way[55], not substantialised – the same way I do not substantialise the 'state'.[56] I do not necessarily read 'metis'[57] tactics as acts of resistance, as a medium to reach 'hidden transcripts' of domination.[58] Rather this bipolarity is used not in oppositional, exclusionary terms, but as an analytical tool to view the 'consumption' in hand in its 'productivity'.

I thus view the boundary between strong/weak inherent in the strategies/tactics bipolarity as fleeting and unstable. An actor can be considered as weak or strong in different contexts and in relation to different actors and situations, the same way his actions can be seen as strategic or tactical depending on the context. Thus, it is the position of the actors within a network of power relations and local social conditions that can define their status in any circumstance as weak or strong, and their responses as strategic or tactical. There is no place for an a priori subaltern within such a conceptualization. Notwithstanding the obvious relations of power between our actors, I feel

[53] De Certeau, *Practices*, p. 37.
[54] Necmi Erdoğan, "Devleti 'İdare Etmek': Maduniyet ve Düzenbazlık", *Toplum ve Bilim*, No 83, (2000).
[55] Sherry Ortner, "Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 37, No 1, (January 1995).
[56] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998). Scott has been extensively criticized for substantializing resistance and overestimating the role and power of the state under 'high modernism'. For an example of this critique see Beatrice Hibou, "Conclusion", in Joel Migdal (ed), *Boundaries and Belonging. States and Societies in the Struggle to Shape Identities and Local Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[57] Tactical in character everyday practices and 'ways of operating': "victories of the 'weak' over the 'strong', clever tricks, knowing how to get away with things, 'hunter's cunning', maneuvers". De Certeau, *Practices*, p. xix. For a discussion of the concept metis see also James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, chapter 9 "Thin Simplifications and Practical Knowledge: Metis", pp. 309 – 341.
[58] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance. Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990).

problematic to assign an overall subaltern status to our subjects - the Halkevi inhabitants, the same way it is difficult – not to say problematic - to read their responses as conscious acts of compliance, resistance or subordination to the policies of the centre. It would be too simplistic either to assume a given, essential(ized) subaltern, or to read his/her (and our actors') responses and representations solely through the conceptual repertoire of resistance/compliance. In addition, social actors upon whose voices this thesis is based do not fall under the category of the subaltern subject as this is conceptualized in the subaltern studies literature, which is based on a distinction between elite and subaltern, i.e. between literate and thus 'source - producing' urban elites and illiterate, and thus 'source-wise silent' peasants. Most of the sources used in this thesis were produced by 'urban elites' rather than 'subaltern', peasant, or 'underclass' subjects.

Nevertheless, our sources, texts produced by the centre or by our Halkevi actors, are haunted by the presence of the 'other', usually referred to as the 'People' and/or the villagers, social actors that can easily be termed subaltern. Whether produced in the texts of the centre or, more so in the texts of our Halkevi authors, the utterances about and representations of this 'other' are saturated with seemingly conflicting but also complementary images, in the sense that can only stand dialectically: the 'real people' that is at once the 'master of this country' and in essence prepared and equipped due to his national qualities for 'modern civilization', but at the same time is 'not really ready yet' and needs to be 'educated' to that 'level'; the peasant who is at the same time considered the repository of the true, authentic and celebrated national qualities but is also feared and distrusted as the site of 'backwardness', 'tradition' and possibly opposition to the centre's reform policies. The internal other of the 'occidentalist fantasy', to use Ahıska's concept, is always present, and for those living closer to the border and in proximity with the 'other' (such as our Halkevi actors in the countryside and the provinces) even more so. Furthermore the way this internal other is conceptualized by non-western local elites points to a number of tensions in various levels that have been identified and explored by authors within the subaltern/postcolonial tradition. This tension that is inherent in the modernization discourse is revealed in the elites' internalized images of the west/modern in contrast to the internal other, the 'traditional', 'backward' to be changed; in the populist rhetoric of the nation/people portrayed as almost 'modern' and at the same time as the internal 'backward' and 'traditional' other;[59] in between these different and conflicting understandings of historical time in terms of different spaces,[60] i.e. spatialized

[59] As Mardin notes on the Kemalists' feeling of urgency: "to work for something which did not exist as if it existed and make it exist". Quoted in Ahıska, "Occidentalism", p. 367.

[60] In Ahıska, "Occidentalism", article: "the homogenizing attempt of modernization is premised upon a differentiation that [m]ust first be recognized in order to be negated, so that 'that the results of synchronic comparison are ordered diachronically to produce a scale of development. [In] this sense the linear time model is also an invisibly spatial one. The resulting paradox is that the movement of time is cancelled by the stasis of space. The essential time of the non-west is stagnant

notions of historical time and different historicities of 'west' and 'east', 'modern' and 'backward'; in between the ambiguities, experiences and representations of being 'modern' and 'national', 'global' and 'local', demonstrated in the 'not yet', the sense of belatedness, the 'waiting room',[61] the 'time lag', the image of 'running behind a train', the 'bridge metaphor', habitually used even today to express Turkey's position and quality of being a point on the map but also in time connecting east and west.[62]

To sum up, starting with a broad definition of state, not in abstract/institutional terms (independent of society), but in terms of state actors and agencies situated within society (state-in-society approach), and with a distinction between the 'image' or discourse of the state and the 'actual practices of the state', I choose to focus on processes and actors instead of 'institutional' change, through a micro-level analysis of case studies of local societies, actors and processes. My focal point of analysis is on the various levels and ways of interaction between the discourses and practices coming from the centre with the responses and acts of resistance, accommodation, (re)appropriation, in short their 'usage' or 'consumption' by social actors in situ, within local societies and a space – the People's House - operating within local politics and power relations. The People's House is the privileged site for this analysis, treated as a 'space on the border', a 'juncture of state and society',[63] where the policies, discourses and projects of the regime come into interplay with state actors and other social forces and groups in concrete social contexts, in provincial towns.

This thesis then is a study of the Halkevi, conceptualized as a space wherein the reforms were introduced and enacted in local societies. It is a (i) study of this space in its local dimensions and of the social actors inhabiting it. In other words, it is a study of the Halkevi space in relation to the society and population within which it is situated, but also of the Halkevi actors and their own voices in relation to their own self-positioning into the Halkevi space and (but also in relation to) the local society; it is also a (ii) study of the Halkevi space as an arena of power relations and local politics, a stage wherein local, state and non state actors interact and fight each other in struggles implicating various actors and agencies, state and non state, local and not; and finally it is a (iii) study of the (re)production of three social categories (women, leisure, villager) within a space as defined above (in i and ii) and by the Halkevi actor. This is accomplished by directing our focus on the Halkevi as an arena, space,

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and is defined in opposition to time and change." Also Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 7-10, where "historicism posited historical time as a measure of the cultural distance that was assumed to exist between the West and the non-West".

[61] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, pp. 6 – 11.

[62] Ahıska, "Occidentalism".

[63] Joel Migdal, "The state in society: an approach to struggles for domination", in *State Power and Social forces* (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), pp. 23 – 30.

stage and medium through, within and upon which social categories, as well as related discourses and social practices, are enforced, contested, refused, evaded, reproduced, constructed, manipulated etc.

Organization of the thesis.

The first chapter attempts to locate the Halkevi space in the center's discourse, in the realm of the centre's intentions, the 'image of the state', to quote Migdal. It thus tries to study this 'juncture of state and society' from the center's point of view, in its normative and programmatic level. In order to do so, it first turns to the prehistory of the similar institutions and their underlying discourse of 'popular education', starting roughly after the 1908 revolution and culminating in the establishment of the People's Houses in the beginning of the 1930s. The second part of the first chapter describes the People's Houses institution in its programmatic nature, as imagined by its founders and laid down in normative texts such as the Halkevi statutes.

By studying the regime's imaginary version of an institution that was created with the direct aim to introduce the reforms to the people, we also desire to highlight the center's perspective over this reform-diffusion operation, including any ambiguities and contradictions in the centre's discourse about the Houses, their aims, the people who were supposed to carry out the Houses' operations and the people who were supposed to be the targets of the Houses' activities.

The second and third chapters study the Halkevi space and its inhabitants in local contexts; situate the Halkevi into local societies and within local populaces, or else position the local society and population in relation to the Halkevi, primary drawing upon the examples of two Houses, in the provincial towns of Kayseri and Balıkesir. The idea behind these two cases studies is to remove the Halkevi space from the regime's plans and insert it in the social context of a local society, or, in another sense, to situate the imaginary and programmatic nature of the center's plans and discourse upon a local population, within local social, political and economic networks. This positioning is carried out in two moves. The first move (Chapter 2) involves the drawing of a social and human 'geography' of the Halkevi, its cadre and members in local societies of provincial towns (where the majority of the Houses were established), and among local social groups and forces.

The second move (Chapter 3) is carried out by concentrating on a number of visible in the sources Halkevi actors and embarking upon a reading of their own voices in relation to the House and its activities, the local population, and their own participation in and relation with the House, as well as the local society and people. In situating the Halkevi actors within a local society, we sketch a rather static picture of the Houses' social inclusiveness of the local population, of the position in the House and in the local society of locals and

outsiders, state and non-state, Party and non – Party actors, also in relation to other, formal or informal, social networks such as family, educational and/or occupational groups. Upon reading the voices of the Halkevi actors on the other hand, we expose a more dynamic picture of our actors in the local House and society. In this level of sources and analysis, issues of gender, power, local politics emerge, all contingent upon the actors' position (as well as self-positioning) within the local setting as locals, outsiders, Party members or not, state or non state actors, members of broader social, male or female (occupational, economic, power, educational) groups and families.

The second part of this thesis (Chapters 4 and 5) attempts to inscribe the Halkevi space and its actors in networks of power relations, concentrating on local politics, a structural phenomenon in local societies that surfaces in the Houses, involving various locals and outsiders, state and non-state actors, implicating central Party and state institutions in a dialogue with local state or non state actors and agencies. Local politics and conflicts enacted on the Halkevi stage present a novel dimension for the study of the Halkevi institution, conceived as a 'juncture of state and society', an 'intermediary space' where state policies and plans reach their target, the local population. Thus, I argue that this dimension that is missing from the literature has to be addressed and analyzed in order to contextualize more accurately the Halkevi institution and activities, to understand the process of reform-diffusion the Houses were supposed to initiate, and to explore the state's and state actors and agencies' relation with local societies and social actors. By directing our focus on a case study of conflict involving local power brokers, state actors and agencies in a local society, chapter four deals with the case of the first chairman of the Halkevi of Balikesir.

Drawing on a corpus of complaint letters sent to the Party Headquarters in Ankara from the provinces, the fifth chapter 'reads' the Halkevi as an arena or a stage for/of conflict between various individuals and/or groups, whether local elite forces and individuals between themselves and/or with outsider state actors. This chapter dwells on the at once accommodating and conflictual nature of the symbiosis of state and non-state elite actors in local societies as it emerges on the Halkevi stage. We detect instances wherein state actors and agencies combine forces with other state and/or non-state local elite actors against other individuals or groups. On the Halkevi arena, the 'state', through its local actors and their practices, appears and functions quite differently from what the image of a unitary, monolithic, distinct from society state projects. Local non-state elite actors, usually local Party power brokers, appear able to manipulate and occasionally control the way state policies are implemented.

The third part of the thesis (chapters 6, 7 and 8) investigates the 'uses' of the center's policies by local actors. In other words, the aim of this part is to study the center's and the Halkevi's programmatic aims on three rather distinctive issues from the perspective of the people who use them. More specifically, these chapters touch upon the centre's set of discourses and practices to be

realized in the House by Halkevi actors in relation to women, men's socialization and leisure time, and villagers. In all three instances of consumption I investigate the production by social actors of a wide set of tactics of accommodation, practices and discourses that attempt to alleviate the tensions that surface upon the introduction of novel practices, to 'tame' the unfamiliar and even provocative for local realities practices the center was striving to initiate. I employ the term domestication[64] to refer to these tactics of accommodation. I view domestication as an imaginative and suitable concept to express the local actors' 'turning' and 'twisting' the Halkevi space and its activities into something more agreeable to local sociopolitical and cultural realities.

Chapter six explores the ingenious inclusion into the Halkevi space by local actors of popular leisure and pastime activities that were proscribed by the centre. We come across poetic solutions enacted by local actors to tactically evade and/or domesticate the centre's policies and discourse in relation to leisure time activities, exemplified in the case of what we term 'coffeehouse activities' (card and backgammon playing, consumption of coffee and alcohol). By cunning practices and the application of 'metis' tactics in the intersection of the center's plans with local practices, the space of the Halkevi seems to be inverted: instead of functioning as a space colonizing local society and people, it becomes itself 'colonized' by local and popular practices of entertainment and leisure.

Chapter seven considers the 'usage' of the centre's policies and discourses on women by local actors in local societies. In this chapter we read a number of complaint letters about incidents related to the presence or absence of women in the Halkevi, and we come across a wide set of responses to the center's policies and ideas about women. Studying the discourses and practices of local actors in Halkevi activities such as dancing parties and theatrical plays, we discern moments of conflict and tension, resistance by local actors to the regime's intentions, accommodation of the center's policies to local practices that seemingly run contrary to and are designated as the 'other' of the centre's policies. This chapter is also about the tensions, disturbances and confusions felt and expressed by local actors in relation to 'identity management'[65] issues the enactment of such policies brought about. We attempt to read these felt and expressed moments of uneasiness as signifying a creative tension that is significant in relation to the emergence, shaping and negotiation of identities by social actors.

The last, eighth chapter, examines the 'Village Excursion', a Halkevi activity that was highly systematized, programmed, and tightly defined by the centre. A set of Village excursions carried out by the Kayseri House between 1936 and 1939/40 offer the necessary sources and local context for a case study

[64] For an earlier usage of the term see Christopher M. Hann, *Tea and the Domestication of the Turkish State* (Huntingdon: Eothern Press, 1990).
[65] Kandiyoti, "Gendering the Modern", p. 127.

of this moment of 'meeting' of the Halkevi actors (and what they stand for as state/Party agents and city dwellers) with the villagers. I read the texts the Halkevi actors produced within the scope of these excursions and relate them to the programmatic texts the centre had crafted on the 'Villagist operation'. I then try to locate the similarities and divergences between the centre's designs and the way the local Halkevi actors put them into practice. In this way the failure of local Halkevi actors to strictly conform to the state's plans for the villager, and, thus, the weakness of the state in the actual in situ practices of its various parts and agencies to impose its policies is revealed. I ultimately read this Halkevi activity as a border-setting operation, significant for crafting the mutually constitutive discursive and practical categories of villager/peasant and villagist/urbanite, as well as the border separating them. I argue that this border is constitutive of the identity of the urban, educated, modern intellectual/citizen and of the villager, as well as of the way his/her understands of each other, the 'state', the 'city', the 'countryside'.

In sum, this thesis has attempted to study social change initiated by projects of social engineering as a process choosing to view it from the local level and from the perspective of social actors consuming the products of such projects of social mechanics. It would seem that this thesis has adopted a 'bottom-up' perspective, but this would be quite misleading, because one of its basic questions is to problematize such binaries as top/bottom, state/society, centre/periphery, Europe/Orient. I rather argue that we should treat such binaries upon which the study of social change has been heavily based as fleeting and contested. I contend that the notion of the state as the fulcrum of change against the society that is treated as a silent or resistant recipient of change is a simplistic dualism that cannot easily be substantiated by fieldwork. We rather have to search for the common grounds, the meeting spaces wherein such binaries are negotiated by social actors, these in-between spaces and practices that constantly (re)shape their discursive and practical borders, their fleeting and 'blurred boundaries'.[66] It is in the everyday practices of social actors that we need to look at. Likewise social change cannot be conceived within this dualistic framework that ends up obfuscating a vast array of practices of accommodation and domestication of what the ruling elite attempted to initiate, something the study of the consumption of change by social actors reveals.

I also contend that this thesis has demonstrated that the consumption by social actors of the products of a dominant order is significant in relation to the shaping of social identities. I have attempted to study the practices and discourses produced upon this consumption and relate them to the actors' identity management, although this thesis cannot drawn any extensive

[66] Gupta, Akhil, "Blurred Boundaries: The Discourse of Corruption, the Culture of Politics, and the Imagined State", in Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta, *The Anthropology of the State* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006).

conclusion about the emergence of new forms of subjectivity. To do so we need more detailed studies of actors within a wider span of time, perhaps monographs of individuals or families situated within more rigidly studied sociopolitical and cultural contexts, something this thesis cannot contend of having done. I can only maintain that this thesis can offer an elementary context for prospective endeavors towards that direction.