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The radicalization of the left in Turkey and Iran in the 1970s and a comparative analysis of activist women's experiences

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The Radicalization of the Left in Turkey and Iran in the 1970s

and

a Comparative Analysis of Activist Women's Experiences

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The Radicalization of the Left in Turkey and Iran in the 1970s and a Comparative Analysis of Activist Women's Experiences

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To Deniz Taner Kılınçoğlu

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A Note on Transliteration and Translation

The transliteration of Persian words and names follows the system suggested by the Iranian Studies Journal and all the translations from Turkish and Persian are the author's unless it is stated otherwise.

Tables

Table 1: The Former Revolutionary Women from Turkey and Iran (p. 251-252)

Abbreviations

AIOC	Anglo-Iranian Oil Company
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CISNU	Confederation of Iranian Students - National Union
CTP	Communist Party of Turkey (*Türkiye Komünist Partisi*)
DİSK	Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (*Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu*)
Dev-Genç	Revolutionary Yourth (*Devrimci Gençlik* or *Türkiye Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu*)
DP	Democrat Party
FKF	Federation of Idea Clubs (*Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu*)
ISA-US	Iranian Student Association in the US
JP	Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*)
MİT	National Intelligence Organization (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı*)
NAP	Nationalist Action Party (NAP- *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCS	National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Konseyi*)
NF	National Front (*Jebe'eh-e Melli*)
NDR	National Democratic Revolution
OIPFG	The Organization of Iranian People's Fadai Guerrillas *(Sazman-e Cherikha-ye Fadai-ye Kalq-e Iran*)
OTUS	Organization of Tehran University Students
PDA	Revolutionary Proletarian Enlightenment (*Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık*)
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
ROTPI	Revolutionary Organization of the Tudeh Party of Iran
RPP	Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*)
SAVAK	Intelligence Agency of Iran *(Sazeman Amniat va Ettelaat Keshvar)*
SMS/SMO	Social Movement Studies/Social Movement Organization
SR	Socialist Revolution
TİP/TLP	Turkish Labor Party (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi)*
TİİKP	Revolutionary Workers and Peasants Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İhtilalci İşci Köylü* THKP-C People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey (*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi Cephesi)*
TİKKO	Liberation Army of the Workers and Peasants of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu*)
THKO	People's Liberation Army of Turkey (*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu*) *Partisi*)
TKP/ML	Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist
Tudeh	Party of the Masses (*Hezb-e Tudeh*)

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INTRODUCTION

1.1. Subject of the Study and Objectives

The long 1970s, which can be traced from the events leading to the 1968 uprisings until the mid-1980s, was marked by a unique sort of activism experienced almost globally. This global contention occurring concomitantly in different parts of the world has been labeled variously, usually in accordance with theoretical and ideological perspectives of those defining it, namely: political violence, terrorism, radical or extreme left, armed insurgency, guerrilla warfare, illegal or underground revolutionary activism, so on and so forth.[1] The inconsistency in usage of the terms describing the insurgent groups and their activities engaged in political violence to achieve social and political change in their societies throughout the period could also be attributed to the differences in their discourses, methods or the contexts in which they have occurred. However, what is more important than the characteristics distinguishing them from each other, at least for the purpose of this study, is what they had in common: contemporaneity, universality, and similarity of objectives, discourses, origins, and trajectories, more importantly the repertoires of contention they adopted, in other words, assumption of political violence as a form of protest.

Inspired by the contemporaneous anti-imperialist and liberation movements around the world such as the guerrilla movements in Latin America, many young people in Turkey and Iran too were mobilized and organized around revolutionary ideals in order to put an end to what they perceived as authoritarian or 'puppet regimes' in their countries. From the very beginning, women from the middle and lower classes supported and actively participated in the leftist movements in the forms of student or workers' movements. Despite the fact that women from upper, middle and lower classes were drawn to revolutionary and radical left-wing movements and participated in various degrees during the 1960s and 1970s, both the

[1] Patricia Steinhoff and Gilda Zwerman, "Introduction to the Special Issue on Political Violence," *Qualitative Sociology* 31, no. 3 (July 17, 2008): 213.

national and leftist historiographies have largely ignored their presence and experiences. Iran and Turkey have not been exceptions in this sense.

Women's involvement in the radical leftist movements is significant for a number of reasons. First, the means they resorted to, namely, urban guerrilla war or armed struggle, is peculiar, especially when the theories like 'weapons of the weak' are taken into consideration. Second, women's participation in the radical leftist movements in these countries and their experiences, for example in the safe houses, obviously defied traditional gender roles in their societies. Third, women's activism in the ranks of revolutionary or guerrilla groups also challenges traditional approaches and perspectives on the role and place of women especially in the Muslim societies, as well as the public-private dichotomy with regard to gender roles. The conventional perspectives on and approaches to women in these societies have assigned almost no agency to them and restricted our understanding of them to the obsolete concepts that are overused and abused like 'oppressed,' 'confined,' and 'submissive'. Therefore, women's active involvement in the radical leftist movements in these societies presents us with both challenges and opportunities that can be benefitted only through right approaches and methods.

My objectives are threefold. First, I intend to understand how and why so many Turkish and Iranian women participated and remained committed in the radical leftist movements during the 1960s and 1970s; as well as what kind of experiences they had in this specific sort of high-risk activism. To this purpose, I study the experiences of these women through oral history interviews focusing specifically on their everyday lives. Thereby, I examine how their relationship with these leftist movements was established in the first place, what sort of organizational tasks they undertook, and how their everyday lives were organized during this high-risk activism. Second, through the comparison of experiences of Iranian and Turkish revolutionary women, I identify similarities and differences in their experiences in these underground revolutionary organizations against the backdrop of dominant patriarchal social and cultural values. Finally, in order to explain the reasons for the similarities and

differences in the women's experiences, especially given the similarities in the political, social and cultural structures in the two countries, I specifically look into the dynamics of the radicalization process that the left-wing contention went through during the end of the 1960s and 1970s.

Since its conception, this dissertation is meant to be an interdisciplinary study, which relies on a number of methods and approaches from oral history, social movements, history of everyday life, and gender studies in order to investigate, in a comparative way, the experiences of women as well as gender dynamics within the radical leftist groups in Turkey and Iran in the afore-mentioned period. The general theoretical background of this study is a sociological approach based on a combination of social-constructionism[2] and relational approach.[3] It also draws on several methodologies widely used and benefitted by scholars working on women's and gender history, such as oral history, history of everyday life, as well as social movements studies. Especially during the oral history interviews with the former activist women, this study benefitted from the Grounded Theory methodology.[4] Finally, it is a comparative study in which the experiences of Turkish and Iranian women in the radical leftist organizations are compared against the historical backdrop of the radical leftist movements which were widespread all around the world in the same period taking various forms from rural guerrilla struggles to urban armed groups, in order to understand whether we can talk about a common gendered experience for women in underground revolutionary movements. To this end, this study critically examines the *radicalization* processes of the leftist organizations in the two countries and investigates the relationship

2 Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Penguin UK, 1991).
3 Charles Tilly, *Stories, Identities. and Political Change* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002)., Mustafa Emirbayer, "Manifesto for a Relational Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 103, no. 2 (September 1, 1997): 281–317.
4 Barney G Glaser and Anselm L Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968).

between these processes and the similarities and differences between the experiences of the women in the two cases.

I consider and conceptualize the emergence and growth of radical leftist movements and organizations in Iran and Turkey in the 1970s as a part of above-mentioned global phenomenon, but particularly in line with the appearance of new radical left such as Red Army Fraction (RAF) in Germany, Red Brigades (BR) in Italy, Direct Action (AD) in France; as well as Weather Underground in the United States and Japanese Red Army in Japan. Despite the inspirational influence of other contemporaneous revolutionary or liberation movements such as Latin American guerrilla organizations, Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria, or National Liberation Front in Vietnam on their ideological formation, radical leftist organizations in Turkey and Iran had more in common with their Western counterparts, namely having their origins in student movements, following trajectories leading to political violence, recruitment patterns and pools, repertoires of contention and organizational features. Most importantly, it is a particular *process* that they all went through —which is referred as *radicalization* by the scholars of social movements—,[5] that allows me to group them in the same category.

Radicalization is a term used by some social movement scholars in order to describe the transition, which certain social movement organizations experience, from moderate to violent repertoires of collective action as a result of a number of *mechanisms* recurring in various arenas of interaction between social movement activists and other political and social actors.[6] It has been mostly used to describe the emergence and evolution of left-wing radical organizations in Western countries,[7] but recently it has also been put into use to describe the

[5] For the line of scholars conceptualizing and using the term of radicalization in a consistent and similar way see Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Charles Tilly and Sidney G. Tarrow, *Contentious Politics* (Oxford University Press, 2015).
[6] McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, 69.
[7] For example, see Donatella Della Porta, *Social movements, political violence, and the state: a comparative analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge: University Press, 1995), Isabelle Sommier, "Revolutionary Groups after

emergence of radical Islamist and right-wing armed groups.[8] In these lines, I adopt a multi-level and *relational* approach to the process of radicalization which in turn lets me explain the emergence and mobilization of radical leftist organizations in their political, social, cultural as well as ideological context on three main levels of analysis: 1) macro: which is larger international and national cultural, social and political context in which these social movements emerged and operated; 2) meso: which is organizational level that concerns the characteristics, structures, and ideologies of the organizations in question; and finally 3) micro: which deals mostly with individuals who were involved in these organizations, such as members and leaders, as well as their influence and role in every process of social movement activism.

In the following parts, I give a detailed explanation of what each part of this study aims to do and why each and every one of them is indispensable for the unity of the study. In the introduction, I am going to provide a brief account of the wider and narrow contexts of the 1960s and 1970s; a literature review of the previous studies on the left and women in Turkey and Iran; and finally, the outline of the chapters of the dissertation. What follows next is the discussion of the theoretical and methodological framework the study.

Last but not least, a couple of words must also be made about the reasons for my selection of Turkey and Iran for this comparative study. From the methodological point of view, they would qualify as the most similar cases for a comparative analysis for the purposes of this study. For example, historically they are the only two countries in the Middle East which have not been formally colonized by the Western powers. Consequently, they have also stood out in the Middle East for having unique relationships with the West and Western influence. Furthermore, Iran and Turkey followed very similar trajectories of authoritarian modernization in the beginning of the

1968: Some Lessons Drawn from a Comparative Analysis," *Twentieth Century Communism* 2, no. 1 (May 28, 2010): 66–91.

[8] See Eitan Y Alimi, Lorenzo Bosi, and Chares Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization: A Relational and Comparative Perspective* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), Donatella Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

20th century which also determined the political culture in the two countries in the following periods, especially with the formation of strong central states in both countries. Therefore, the difference in the political systems, Turkey being a republic whereas Iran a monarchy, did not set them apart to a significant extent especially until the end of the 1970s. Additionally, they have come to share common customs and traditions as long-time neighbors with similar religious affiliations and socio-cultural characteristics.

On the other hand, being able to speak the languages of both countries has also motivated me to conduct this comparative study between Turkey and Iran. However, it is not always methodological and practical concerns letting scholars make their decisions concerning research questions as well as geographical areas of interest. As a woman researcher from Turkey who has always had a personal and academic interest in women's activism and the left-wing politics, I was drawn to this topic as a result of a number of decisions and developments which would be too long to account for here. Instead, I would like to note that the above-mentioned and also other similarities between the two countries, including the history of the left and the women's movements, have always been a common knowledge and source of interest to the scholars and intellectuals of both countries. I hope this study will quench some of the curiosity in this field.

a) A Brief Historical Background and Literature Review

The forces letting a young woman in Turkey or Iran forsake her family home and join an underground movement to fight against the state for a revolutionary cause and the experiences she had during this high-risk activism can neither be understood nor explained without having a good understanding of the global 1960s and 1970s which overwhelmingly determined the political and cultural context in their countries as well as the rebellious mood, at local and global levels, in which they came of age.

International, regional and national historical contexts are all essential to understand the leftist movements of the 1960s and 1970s in Turkey and Iran; but the main intention of this study is neither understanding nor analyzing the formation and mobilization of the leftist

movements in general. Instead, this study aims mostly to present the *Zeitgeist* in which the activists of the period came of age in order to have a better understanding of their view of the world around them which motivated them to participate and stay in these movements. This is the reason for the coverage of all three levels of contexts, not to be able to analyze the ideological, political or strategic maneuvers of the leftist organizations of the time. Therefore, it does not deal with whether the proponents of armed struggle were right or not when, for example, they accused Tudeh of not supporting Mosaddegh and held it responsible for the defeat of the left at the period in Iran. Neither does it aim to examine the reasons for the high number of the revolutionary organizations that came into existence in that period in Turkey, or their ideological stances, or their particular positions concerning the type of armed struggle or revolutionary path that would best fit to the case of Turkey. What really matters for the purpose of this study, and actually for the majority of the activists of the period as they made it clear in their accounts, is the general *framing* that emerged as a result of a set of international and national developments and dominated the popular leftist discourse at the time almost all around the world: *the revolutionary armed struggle against the authoritarian, repressive and comprador regimes was just and meant to be successful.* Consequently, the events and developments were only significant for the activists as long as they were complying with this assumption. There were a large number of anti-imperialist, liberationist, anti-colonialist uprisings as well as political and economic developments on the regional and international levels that shaped the worldview of the activists of the period; however, they are only mentioned in the framework of this study to the extent that they were referred by the activists as having an influence on their actions and motivations; independently from their social, political or economic implications on a more objective level.[9]

[9] Needless to say, this approach of mine is completely compatible with the social constructivist school of thought that I subscribe to.

b) The Global Rise of the Left and Social Movement Activism

No doubt that every decade carries the legacy of its predecessors; however, 1960s is a precursor of the 1970s in a very unique sense. The non-violent student movements and popular uprisings of the 1960s began to resort to violent means or to adopt more radical agendas in the 1970s. The dynamics of this radicalization of means and objectives play a very significant and unique role in the experience of the 1970s by the activists of the period in each country. Surprisingly overlooked by both the popular culture and academic circles, the 1970s is a peculiar period of the world history for many reasons. The decade was marked by the revolutions, wars, oil crisis, coup d'états, and conflicts. Obviously, it was experienced differently in various parts of the world; however, it has several characteristics in common that would allow us to talk about a *Zeitgeist* of the period. Overall, it was the period coming right after the plethora of mass protest movements throughout the world against imperialist wars, capitalists, military or authoritarian rulers; and this very fact influenced its character deeply.

In the Global North, the 1960s had been marked by mass demonstrations, student movements, general strikes, the rise of the socialists, communists and other dissident groups with their left-wing progressive ideas and hippie culture. Civil Rights Movement, in the United State, which aimed at ending segregation and discrimination against African Americans, and Anti-War Movement against the war in Vietnam were the most prominent social movements of the period. In Europe, it was the May 1968 protests in Paris that became the symbol of the growing dissent among the students, civilians and workers. However, after the social movements of the 1960s were demobilized as a result of different policies depending on how each country handled them—in Western democracies mostly through institutionalization or selective repression, whereas in more authoritarian regimes through harsh repression, — the 1970s witnessed the emergence of far left and urban guerrilla movements. The militant groups like Baader-Meinhof, Red Army Fraction, Red Brigades, IRA, Black Liberation Army were formed one by one at the beginning of the 1970s as an

obvious sign of radicalization of protest movements of the previous decade. There was also a rise in the use of violence by these militant organizations which eventually undertook numerous bombings, kidnappings and killings.

Meanwhile, in the Eastern Bloc, the Prague Spring represented the climax of the reactions against the influence and domination of the Soviets; however, Soviets had suppressed the reform attempts and reinforced its sphere of influence immediately. The socialist bloc was shaken by the Soviet invasion of Prague but was not damaged; yet, its implications were to have a long-lasting effect for the revolutionary movements in other parts of the world.

In the Global South,[10] the 1970s was more about revolutions, military coups and guerrilla warfare, along with the post-colonial thinking and Third Worldism as the popular perspectives flourishing in the intellectual circles. Social movements in the forms of student uprisings, working-class strikes, and anti-imperialist demonstrations were also common. Inspired by the Mao Zedong, Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, the young intellectuals and students in these countries resorted to military means to initiate revolution in their home countries. They formed rural or urban guerrilla groups and tried to radicalize workers, the countryside and peasants into leading the revolution.

On the other hand, particularly in Latin America, but also in many other Global South countries, in the Cold War environment, any popular leftist movement or tendency was considered a serious communist threat and the activities and operations of the leftist guerrillas provided much needed excuses for military interventions. Chile, Bolivia, Brazil, Uruguay were but a few of many countries experiencing military take-overs mostly supported by the United States. Most prominent example of the CIA backed coups of the

[10] I prefer to use the Global South to describe the same region which was called in that period the Third World. Hobsbawm talks about how the concept of Third World already began to crumble in the 1970s as the development levels of the countries in this group started to change dramatically due to "'great leap forward' of the (capitalist) world economy, and its growing globalization". Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994), 361–64.

period was the one of Augusto Pinochet who rose to power in Chile overthrowing democratically elected Socialist president Salvador Allende in 1973.

Overall, if we are to talk about the *Zeitgeist* of the 1970s it would be the revolutionary struggle in the form of guerrilla warfare by wide range of groups from a dedicated minority of ethnic or intellectual groups to Left-wing military staffs. The consequences of the revolutionary uprisings and the forces used by the state apparatus to repress them had been hitherto unprecedented and have determined the fate of the people of these countries for the coming decades.

Maybe the most significant change in the social life in a typical Global South country in the period since the 1950s was the migration of masses from rural areas to the cities and its consequences, most important of which was the ways in which these immigrants engaged in the economic and social life of the city. This new form of engagement resulted in the emergence of the 'informal economy' and the new middle and lower-middle classes. 'Great city' emerged as the main system of settlements both in the North and the South even though taking entirely different forms. As opposed to the central area of the Western cities, which is linked with the periphery through a very well-established public transportation system, scattered slums and shantytowns of the Global South cities could only be reached through the routes of private collective minibuses and had a completely different effect on the lives of city dwellers. Inhabitants of those cities had to spent hours on the transportation and lacked basic infrastructure which made their lives harder than where they had come from. Despite the desperate conditions they lived in they were significant because of the mare fact that they constituted the new constituency and also the base of support for the prevailing social movements.

Starting in the 1960s, the rise in the level of education was another important phenomenon in the Global South. Education was considered to be the only and almost guaranteed way to

climb the social ladder in the developing world.[11] Unprecedentedly high numbers of students throughout the world was commonly accounted for the great amount of student activism. Last but not least, more and more women in this period began to receive high education and joined in the work force; thereby, increasing their numbers in social movements. In terms of the sociopolitical character of the era, the increase in the presence of women in almost every area of public life was of great significance and going to have more lasting effects for upcoming periods.[12]

c) The Revolutionary Left and the Political Violence in Turkey in the 1970s

The late 1960s and 1970s in Turkey is a period in which political violence made the headlines and influenced not only daily politics in the country but also political and social life to an extent that it polarized the society and bring the entire political system to the verge of collapse. "The yeas of anarchy and violence" is how the period has been referred by ordinary people and mainstream media. In addition to frequent skirmishes between right-wing and left-wing groups usually resulting in deaths and severe injuries, university occupations, bank robberies, and armed attacks occurred on a regular basis. The period resulted in two military interventions, 12 March 1971 and 12 September 1980, and numerous coalition governments. Moreover, approximately 5000 people lost their lives during the conflicts between right-wing and left-wing groups, as well as with the security forces[13] and many more were imprisoned; majority of which had not even been involved in violence.

The two decades from 1960 to 1980 marked a unique period for the leftist movement in Turkey, especially "considering that prior to 1960 […] a legal socialist movement actually did not exist, and that after 1980 it was again forbidden to operate within the law."[14] From the first military

[11] Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, 297.
[12] Nikki Keddie, *Women in the Middle East: Past and Present*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007, 102-166.
[13] Ertuğrul Kürkçü, "Türkiye Sosyalist Hareketine Silahlı Mücadelenin Girişi (The Entry of Armed Struggle to Turkish Socialist Movement)," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce: Sol* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayınları, 2007), 508.
[14] Igor P Lipovsky, *The Socialist Movement in Turkey 1960-1980* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 2.

intervention in 1960 until the one in 1980, which crushed down the left ruthlessly, Turkey experienced cycles of left-wing contention diffusing, escalating and representing the most serious challenge to the state authority in Turkey's modern history until the PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê - the Kurdistan's Worker's Party) have taken over from the 1980s on.

Naturally, this period aroused a good deal of intellectual interests from various fields. However, the existing studies on the 1960s and 1970s in Turkey suffer from several shortcomings. The conventional perspectives define the period as one of terrorism and chaos, and strive to find the reasons for the gradual increase of violence by looking into the structural, institutional, ideological, legal, cultural, social characteristics and changes in the country individually and most of the time in isolation from each other. Unable to move beyond a narrative account of the period and mostly suffering from a retrospective point of view, majority of the accounts of the period engage in a sort of blaming game for the intense violence; rather than systemic analyses of this contentious period in its global, historical and social context.

Mainstream accounts of political violence and the radical left in Turkey during the 1970s focus on questions such as: "why did political violence emerge and escalate in the first place?" or "why did radical leftist organization resort to violence?" rather than on how and when political violence becomes the dominant performance of repertoire of action for these activists. Therefore, they look for the root causes and essentialist reasons for adoption of violence. Similar to the early approaches of social movement studies, these studies point to grievances, institutions or even cultural or traditional features that are allegedly prone to violence in the society in explaining the reasons for political violence. This was also a natural result of exceptionalism they assume for the Turkish case in their studies. However, similar processes of radicalization taking place at the same time in other parts of the world with different cultural, political and economic characteristics would necessitate a new approach to this episode of contention in Turkey.

Previous studies usually focus on one or two factors to offer an explanation. Sometimes it is 1) the 'unduly liberal' constitution of 1961, and the infant democracy of Turkey,[15] or 2) the rapid structural changes, and nonconforming 'feudal culture'[16] accounting for the political violence; at other times 3) the incapability and authoritarianism of politicians,[17] or 4) the extremist ideas and ideals of the revolutionary leaders and groups.[18] Despite playing somewhat significant roles at some point in the process, none of these factors could solely provide a satisfactory explanation for the emergence and persistence of left-wing political violence in Turkey during 'the years of anarchy and terror'.

Not only the focus but also the approach of these studies could be misleading. For example, some view the left-wing opposition in 1970s as a law and order issue causing social and political instability.[19] This line of studies defines political violence of the 1970s as a case of terrorism and tries to analyze it as an isolated case from its historical, social and political context. They pay limited or no attention to the causal dynamics such as state repression, excessive and unfair police violence or contra-guerrilla attacks as push factors.[20]According to this perception, the 1961 constitution had given either 'all the rights' that a legal left-wing opposition might demand,[21] or rather 'too much rights' for the current state of Turkish democracy that they were

[15] Michael M. Gunter, "Political Instability in Turkey during the 1970s," *Journal of Conflict Studies* 9, no. 1 (1989), https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/JCS/article/viewArticle/14835.
[16] Şerif Mardin, "Youth and Violence in Turkey," *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 19, no. 02 (November 1978): 229–254, Dogu Ergil, *Türkiye'de Terör ve Şiddet (Terror and Violence in Turkey)* (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 1980), Ruşen Keleş and Artun Ünsal, *Kent ve Siyasal Şiddet (City and Political Violence)* (A.Ü.S.B.F. basın ve yayın yüksek okulu basımevi, 1982), Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, The Making of the Middle East Series (London: Routledge, 1993).
[17] Sabri Sayari, "Political Violence and Terrorism in Turkey, 1976–80: A Retrospective Analysis," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22, no. 2 (2010): 198–215, Ihsan Bal and Sedat Laciner, "The Challenge of Revolutionary Terrorism to Turkish Democracy 1960-80," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13, no. 4 (2001): 90–115.
[18] Lipovsky, *The Socialist Movement in Turkey 1960-1980*, Ergil, *Türkiye'de Terör ve Şiddet (Terror and Violence in Turkey)*, Mardin, "Youth and Violence in Turkey." Bal and Laciner, "The Challenge of Revolutionary Terrorism to Turkish Democracy 1960-80."
[19] Sayari, "Political Violence and Terrorism in Turkey, 1976–80.", Sabri Sayari, "The Terrorist Movement in Turkey: Social Composition and Generational Changes," *Journal of Conflict Studies* 7, no. 1 (1987), https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/JCS/article/viewFile/14744/15813, Gunter, "Political Instability in Turkey during the 1970s.", Bal and Laciner, "The Challenge of Revolutionary Terrorism to Turkish Democracy 1960-80."
[20] Sayari, "Political Violence and Terrorism in Turkey, 1976–80.", Sayari, "The Terrorist Movement in Turkey."
[21] Bal and Laciner, "The Challenge of Revolutionary Terrorism to Turkish Democracy 1960-80."

doomed to be abused by the oppositional movements.[22] The law on autonomy of universities or the right to unionize and strike guaranteed by the 1961 Constitution are presented as excessive freedom allowing extremist groups to organize and mobilize. Some even blamed amnesty in 1974 for the increased violence.

For example, Şerif Mardin (1978) and Doğu Ergil (1980) are among those trying to find the reasons for and origins of the violence in the cultural and traditional features of the Turkish society. Mardin views the increase of student violence as a result of rapid structural transition of Turkey, from a traditional peasant society to an 'urbanized but not civilized' one, in the previous decades and the economic, social and cultural stresses it created for the people but especially the youth. Mardin calls this transformation "ruralization of the city" and claims that those migrants brought the 'feudal culture', such as blood feuds and respect for authority —particularly that of elders, — to the cities they dwell know. With the influence of populist policies of right-wing governments this violent and authoritarian culture could spread and contributed to a great extent, if not caused it in the first place, to the violence among the youth.[23] While Ergil acknowledges the presence of other left-wing organizations in the world resorting to violence as a strategy, they both do not see Turkish case as a part of a global phenomenon.

Indeed, the omission of the global contexts is a common shortcoming in the literature. Neither the successes of revolutionary movements and the popularity of the writings of revolutionary leaders and intellectuals, which proved to be inspirational for the youth all around the world, nor the widespread diffusion of violent repertoire of actions as successful methods in revolutionary struggles have been credited while providing explanations for the motivations of the youth engaging in political violence. But it is one of the first things one hears from the activists of the period regarding the factors pulling them to the left-wing movement. Their unmistakable belief in the possibility of revolution, righteousness of their anti-imperialist cause and methods could not be comprehended without an understanding of the global revolutionary sprit of this

[22] Gunter, "Political Instability in Turkey during the 1970s."
[23] Mardin, "Youth and Violence in Turkey," 245.

generation of activists. This is a shortcoming most common in the conventional perspectives which do not take into account the social movement actors and their subjective perception of the world around them as an influential and important factor in the mobilization and organization of social movements.

Bozarslan (2004), however, does not agree with above-mentioned positions. He claims the level of violence witnessed in Turkey during the 1970s cannot be explained through historical legacy, culture or religion either. First of all, from 1923 to 1968, with the exception of the Kurdish regions, violence in Turkish society occupied a marginal place. Other than couple of exceptional cases, such as Menemen incident, even the 1960 military coup did not bring about massive violence.[24] Instead, he argues, the power relations and subjective perceptions of leaders and activists about the surrounding world could better "explain the resort to violence". I adopt a similar but more complex approach to study the political violence experienced in Turkey in the 1970s.

Closely related to the above-mentioned lack of interest in the perceptions, feelings, and motivations of activists, none of the studies actually ask and try to answer why fairly well-educated young women and men with bright prospects all of a sudden in late 1960s decided to risk their education, future, even their lives and joined such a high-risk activism. Instead, most of the attention is paid in objectively observable grievances such as frustrations that might be caused by unemployment, high-inflation, economic inequality, or what Ted Gurr called 'relative deprivation'[25] as the main reasons for the contentious activism of the youth. This quite old approach, which is even refuted by Gurr himself, has already been dismissed by many social movement scholars who have demonstrated the absence of social movement mobilizations in each and every case in which relative deprivation is a pressing issue. So, even though playing a

[24] Hamit Bozarslan, *Violence in the Middle East: From Political Struggle to Self-Sacrifice* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener, 2004), 62.
[25] Ted Robert Gurr, *Why men rebel* (Princeton: Pricenton University Press, 1970).

part, the grievances alone cannot account for the emergence of collective action, let alone a high-risk activism.

Finally, the causal mechanisms, which I discuss below, have been pointed out by the scholars of political violence as playing a significant role in the radicalization process of not only the left-wing but also, right-wing, ethnic or Islamist militant organizations, are still missing in the studies on the Turkish case in the 1970s. Not a single study has so far analytically examined the causal mechanisms operating in dynamic and interactive arenas between different actors of the left-wing contentious politics such as deadly clashes with counter-movement organizations, competition amongst the left-wing groups and organizers, 'tough repressive' policing of especially leftist protests, state's unrelenting repression of legal and parliamentarian left, contributing to the left's radicalization process. This study aims to fill this gap and contribute to political violence literature flourishing in social movement studies.

I refrain from lengthy narrations and descriptions of the events and actors of this contentious episode in modern history of Turkey. Those can be found in the above-mentioned relevant studies. What is conspicuously missing in the accounts of the contentious episode of the 1960s and 1970s, however, is women's participation and experiences. Since social movements literature is limited in the analysis of the gender dynamics in the context of contentious politics, I turn to other disciplines for better methods and approaches to examine this phenomenon which I explain below.

d) The Left and Guerrilla Struggle before the Revolution in Iran

In addition to what I have already mentioned about the shortcomings of the studies on the political violence in the case of Turkey, the scholarly literature on the 1960s and 1970s in Iran has further been shaped under the weight of the 1979 Revolution. Consequently, the activism of the left and its consequences are mostly studied and evaluated vis-à-vis the role they played during and aftermath of the Revolution. Therefore, as the editor of the *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran* points out, most studies on the Iranian left focuses on its

failures, and dismisses or forgets the challenges it faced,[26] let alone its successes. This approach is so common in the studies on the Left that one can even talk about a 'literature of failure'.

The Iranian Revolution which took place in 1979 and the Islamic Regime which emerged as a result of it still, even 40 years later, serve as a source of inspiration for scholarly production as well as controversy among the scholars of Iran; especially with regards to the reasons and conditions that had paved the way for it in the two decades preceding: the 1960s and 1970s. Numerous books and articles, from various theoretical and methodological perspectives, were devoted to analyzing the period in particular and Pahlavi era in general to illustrate the factors preparing the ground for one of the most unexpected and but successful social revolutions of the 20th century. While some have come to emphasize the structural conditions,[27] or political and economic[28] factors, others focused on social,[29] cultural and ideological[30] aspects paving the way for the revolution. Yet, regardless of one's method and perspective, what is particularly challenging seems to be able to study the pre-revolution period independently from the inevitability of the revolution.

In the same vein, theories of revolution tend to dismiss the actors and factors in the previous periods if they did not become victorious or influential after the revolution. That is in part why the left in Iran in the 1960s and 1970s has been ignored except couple of limited studies.[31] For example, Foran's *A Century of Revolution: Social Movements in Iran* does not have a section

[26] Stephanie Cronin, ed. *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran: New Perspectives on the Iranian Left* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 5.
[27] Ervand Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1982).
[28] Robert E. Looney, *Economic Origins of the Iranian Revolution* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982), Homa Katouzian, *Political Economy of Modern Iran: Despotism and Pseudo-Modernism, 19261979.* (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
[29] Misagh Parsa, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989), Nikki R Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2006).
[30] Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism* (Syracuse University Press, 1996), Ali Mirsepassi, *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization Negotiating Modernity in Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
[31] Cronin, *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran*.

on the leftist movements in the 70s like many others.[32] Despite the lack of sufficient studies employing the methods and approaches of social movement studies, compared to other methods and approaches they are less teleological and help us better examine the movements in their historical context. Therefore, rather than focusing on the Islamist movement led by the politically active clergy and its social, political and cultural bases; this study draws attention to a course of socio-political mobilization with a longer historical legacy and a more established intellectual heritage in Iran: the secular left. In the case of Iran too, I do not seek the answers to questions like why did the left fail to own the revolution. Instead, to be able to historicize and contextualize the emergence, mobilization and radicalization of the leftist organizations in Iran during the 1960s, I aim to analyze the evolution of the secular leftist opposition having the greatest influence on, or even paving the way for the Marxist-Leninist guerrilla groups in the 1960s and 1970s.

One of the most well-known studies on the subject is *Rebels with a Cause: The Failure of the Left in Iran*. The title indeed summarizes the author's perspective. Like many others, Behrooz views the history of the left from the perspective of a success / failure dichotomy.[33] Therefore, even though he acknowledges that "Iranian communism has played a notable, sometimes determining, role in the country's history", in the bulk of the study what is most emphasized are the mistakes, miscalculations, and misunderstandings of the left rather than the reasons, context, and analysis of the so-called mistakes, let alone the contributions of the Left. Also, by "the Left" Behrooz mostly means the Tudeh Party as he allocates more space for the discussion of not only the Tudeh's policies and activities but also inner conflicts and speculations, even during the 1970s when the guerrilla groups played a more important role than the Tudeh did. Just like his counterparts working on the leftist groups in the 1960s and

[32] Also see Stephen C Poulson, *Social Movements in Twentieth-Century Iran: Culture, Ideology, and Mobilizing Frameworks* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2005).
[33] Maziar Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause: The Failure of the Left in Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999).

1970s, Behrooz emphasizes the role and rising influence of international Marxism: guerrilla or otherwise, and the Soviets.

Behrooz uses the term 'Stalinist' too 'liberally' without providing a definition, and bases the undemocratic, secretive and strict structure of the guerrilla groups on their Stalinism without emphasizing enough on the unique conditions in which they were organizing and operating in Iran. In this sense, Vahabzadeh[34] does a better job of defining inner workings of these groups; and tries to explain the reasons for this type of a structuring in that period by referring to the other factors, such as the severe repression applied by the regime through SAVAK. Furthermore, the reasons Behrooz points out for the "failure" of the left seem more relevant to understand and explain the ways in which they organized, operated and formed their organization rather than why they failed to seize the power after the revolution. For example, repression of the state that concentrated on the leftist groups while leaving the Islamist opposition relatively free could be considered in this regard.

Also, as a contradiction to the claims about the Marxists' inability to create a strong base among the working class of Iran, it is documented in many studies how both the Tudeh and then Fadayian was popular not only among intelligentsia but also among working classes. They showed their support in the demonstrations both during and after the revolution by taking to the streets in hundreds of thousands.[35]

The works on the period and the left differ from each other on the methodological and theoretical grounds. For example, Abrahamian uses a neo-Marxist methodology; therefore, not only does he analyze socio-economic grounds of the rise and fall of the left and its ideals in Iran, he also takes into account the ethnic and regional differences and concerns in Iran in this period. Vahabzadeh, on the other hand, focuses more on the discourse analysis of the

[34] Peyman Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey: Modernization, Secularism, Democracy, and the Fadai Period of National Liberation in Iran, 1971-1979*, 1st ed (Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press, 2010).
[35] Behrooz mentions that right before the revolution just Fadaiyan had over a half million supporters. See Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 105.

writings and publications of the leading figures of the Fadaiyan in specific, and the left in general. His conclusion is that the ways in which "revolutionaries" of the period think, perceive and project, as well as the instruments they resorted to, did not differ much from those of the rulers. Thus, Vahabzadeh detects the "mistakes" of the Fadaiyan not in its failure to understand the Iranian society, but in its inability to catch up with the fast-changing demands of the newly emerging groups in socio-political arena, such as women, students, and ethnic minorities. This is why, Vahabzadeh argues, the left could not present a more democratic and inclusive alternative to the regime of the Shah.

Vahabzadeh also rejects the premise that seizing the state power should be the sole target for social movements or means to measure their success. Even though the Left could not come to power per se, for Vahabzadeh, its ideals and critiques paved the way for many future social changes and intellectual expansions in Iranian society. It is in this perspective that, I argue, the Left in general and the revolutionary guerrilla organizations in particular, like Fadaiyan, should be analyzed. Furthermore, as I stated earlier, other political actors and their actions should also be taken into account; and thereby, the reasons and characteristics of the Left's activism could be understood better.

e) Women in the Leftist Movements in Turkey and Iran

Women in Turkey and Iran have always been active in the popular movements in their countries since the 19th century. Their activism in the ranks of the constitutionalist, nationalist, and women's movements have been documented by the scholars of both countries.[36] Despite being barred from pursuing their agenda on various grounds from

[36] Yaprak Zihnioğlu, *Kadınsız İnkılap: Nezihe Muhiddin, Kadınlar Halk Fırkası, Kadın Birliği (Revolution without Woman: Nezihe Muhiddin, Women's People Party, Woman Association)* (Istanbul: Metis, 2003); Drude Dahlerup, *The New Women's Movement: Feminism and Political Power in Europe and the USA* (London: Sage, 1990); Şirin Tekeli, "Emergence of Feminism in Turkey," in *The New Women's Movement: Feminism and Political Power in Europe and the USA*, ed. Drude Dahlerup (Sage, 1986), 179–99; Şirin Tekeli, "Türkiye'de Kadının Siyasal Hayattaki Yeri (Women's Position in Political Life in Turkey)," in *Türk Toplumunda Kadın*, ed. Nermin Abadan-Unat and Deniz Kandiyoti (Türk Sosyal Bilimler Derneği, 1979), 393–413; Nükhet Sirman, "Feminism in Turkey: A Short History," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 3 (1989): 1–34; Eliz Sanasarian, *The Women's Rights Movement in Iran: Mutiny, Appeasement, and Repression from 1900 to Khomeini* (New York, N.Y.: Praeger, 1982); Parvin

religious to nationalist and patriarchal, women in both Turkey and Iran have found ways defend their grounds and claim a space in the political, social and cultural spheres through at times patriarchal bargains.[37] However, their independent movement and active participation in political life of their countries was ended, through either institutionalization or suppression, by the authoritarian regimes of Atatürk and Reza Shah with the establishment of the central nation states in Turkey and Iran during the first half of 20th century. Therefore, it is hard to observe an independent women's movement activism both in Turkey and Iran until the 1980s.[38] This, of course, does not mean that women were idle and did not participate in popular movements at all during this period. On the contrary, starting from the beginning of the student demonstrations in the 1960s, women joined the new social movements of the 20th century in vast numbers. Even though they were faced with similar attitudes, this time not from the religious leaders or nationalists but the leftists of their countries, they were equipped with new negotiation skills.

Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in the Twentieth-Century Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Authority and Agency: Revisiting Women's Activism during Reza Shah's Period'," *The State and the Subaltern: Modernisation, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*, 2007, 159–179; Aynur Demirdirek, "In Pursuit of the Ottoman Women's Movement," *Deconstructing the Images of '"The Turkish Woman,"'Ed. Zehra Arat (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998)*, 1997, 66–71; Serpil Çakır, *Osmanlı Kadın Hareketi (Ottoman Women's Movement)* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1996); Camron Michael Amin, "Globalizing Iranian Feminism, 1910–1950," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 4, no. 1 (2008): 6–30; Janet Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution, 1906-1911: Grassroots Democracy, Social Democracy, & the Origins of Feminism.* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Deniz Kandiyoti, "Emancipated but Unliberated? Reflections on the Turkish Case," *Feminist Studies* 13, no. 2 (1987): 317–338; Ali Akbar Mahdi, "The Iranian Women's Movement: A Century Long Struggle," *The Muslim World* 94, no. 4 (2004): 427–48.

[37] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Bargaining with Patriarchy," *Gender & Society* 2, no. 3 (September 1, 1988): 274–90.

[38] There were no women's movement or women's organizations in Turkey and Iran during the 1960s and 1970s except the women's branches of revolutionary organizations in Turkey, the most famous of which was İlerici Kadınlar Derneği (Association for Progressive Women - IKD) of Communist Party of Turkey. However, like its counterparts not only in Turkey but also in other countries, IKD, as a women's branch of a communist party did not identify itself as feminist and subscribed to the dominant discourse arguing that all the problems of women would be solved after the revolution, like those of others suffering under capitalist system. See Muazzez Pervan and İlerici Kadınlar Derneği, *İlerici Kadınlar Derneği (1975-1980): kırmızı çatkılı kadınlar'ın tarihi (Association for Progressive Women (1975-1980): the history of women with red headband)*, 2013, Emel Akal, *Kızıl Feministler: Bir Sözlü Tarih Çalışması (Red Feminists: An Oral History Study)* (Istanbul: Türkiye Sosyal Tarih Araştırma Vakfı, 2003).

As it has always been the case with women's history, the historical resources concerning women's activism in the ranks of leftist movements are very limited. It is even more so when it comes to the everyday lives and experiences of women in the underground organizations. A limited number of testimonies along with the studies on the clandestine revolutionary organizations in the period are written mostly by men, and usually in the form of organizational histories or memoirs revolving around 'more important' issues such as ideological differences of the revolutionary organizations, male revolutionary leaders, their sacrifices and heroism, operations, training, and so forth. Even in the memoirs of male activists, personal dimension and their everyday life is hard to find.[39]

So far only a few works on the participation and experiences of women in the radical left have been published by scholars of Iran and Turkey namely Hamid Shahidian, Heideh Moghissi, Fatmagül Berktay, and Yaprak Zihnioğlu.[40] Almost all of them are former activists involved in the leftist activism in one way or another, and in a sense, insiders writing on the subject with various motivations. However, their works are limited because the main focus in these studies has been mostly either the Left's approach to female participants or its perspective on women's issues in general. Testimonies from former activist women, on the other hand, are even fewer if not nonexistent. The very few books written by the former activist women have come to focus only on their experiences after the end of activism and are mostly about either the prison period or difficulties with adaptation to the society after being released from the prison. What can be categorized as prison literature has been

[39] For an exception see Gün Zileli, *Yarılma: 1954-1972 (The Split: 1954-1972)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), Gün Zileli, *Havariler: 1972-1983 (The Disciples: 1972-1983)*, (Cağaloğlu, Istanbul: İletişim, 2002).
[40] Haideh Moghissi, *Populism and Feminism in Iran: Women's Struggle in a Male-Defined Revolutionary Movement* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1996). Fatmagül Berktay, "Has Anything Changed in the Outlook of the Turkish Left on Women?," in *Women in Modern Turkish Society: A Reader*, ed. Şirin Tekeli (Zed, 1995), Hammed Shahidian, "The Iranian Left and the 'Woman Question' in the Revolution of 1978–79," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26, no. 02 (1994): 223–47, Yaprak Zihnioğlu, "Türkiye'de Solun Feminizme Yaklaşımı (The Approach of the Left to Feminism in Turkey)," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce. 8, Sol* (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayınları, 2007).

especially common among the Iranian activists,[41] whereas the memoirs or novels became more popular in Turkey creating their own genre.[42] Notwithstanding these individual endeavors to record their history, we still lack a great amount of information and insight concerning many aspects of women's experiences in radical leftist activism.[43]

Almost all the recent studies written on the topic of women and the Left in Turkey and Iran are critical of both the Left's lack of genuine interest in women's issues in society and women's

[41]Ashraf Dehqani, *Torture and Resistance in Iran: Memories of the Women Guerillas*, 1973; Vida Hajebi Tabrizi, *Dad-e bidad: nakhostin zendan-e zanan-e siyasi (Memoir of Iranian Women Fedai Guerrillas)*, vol. 1 (Tehran: Enteshrat- e Baztab- Negar, 2003), Azadeh Agah, *We Lived to Tell: Political Prison Memoirs of Iranian Women* (Toronto: McGilligan Books, 2007), Parvaneh Alizadeh, *Khub Negah Konid, Rasteki Ast: Guzarish-e Zendan (Look Carefully: This is Real: Prison Report)* (Paris: Antesharat-e Khaveran, 1987), Parvin Khosravi, *Yadha va didgah-ha: Khaterati az zendan-ha-ye jomhowre-ye eslami der dehe-ye 60 (Memories and perspectives: The Memoirs of Prison under the Islamic Republic in the 1970s)* (Köln: Furugh, 2008).

[42] Those written after and about the second coup in 1971 are called 'Novels of March 12'; whereas those after the coup in 1980 "Novels of September 12" referring to the exact dates of the coups as they are remembered in the collective memory. Some of the most famous ones are: Oya Baydar, *Sıcak Külleri Kaldı (What Is Left Is Its Warm Ashes)*, 3. basım. (Istanbul: Can Yayınları, 2001); Sevgi Soysal, *Yıldırım Bölge Kadınlar Koğuşu (Yildirim Region Women's Prison)*, 1. basım. (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1976); Füruzan, *47'liler (The 47ers)* (İstanbul: Milliyet, 1979); Sevgi Soysal, *Şafak (Dawn)* (Ankara: Bilgi, 1985); Pinar Kür, *Yarin ... yarin ... (Tomorrow...tomorrow)* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayinlari, 1976); Adalet Ağaoğlu, *Bir düğün gecesi (A wedding night)* (İstanbul: Remzi kitabevi, 1980).

[43] Examples of some insightful testimonies directly about the activism and experiences of women from Turkey must also be mentioned: Ayşe Yazıcıoğlu, *68'in Kadınları (Women of 68)*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2010); Mukaddes Çelik, *Üç Dönem Üç Kuşak Kadınlar : Demir Parmaklıklar Ortak Düşler (Women in Three Periods Three Generations: Iron Bars, Common Dreams)*, (Sirkeci Istanbul: Ceylan Yayınları, 2005); Oya Baydar and Melek Ulagay, *Bir Dönem Iki Kadın : Birbirimizin Aynasında (One Period Two Women: On the Mirrow of Each Other)*, 1. basım. (Istanbul: Can, 2011); Gülfer Akkaya, *Sanki Eşittik : 1960-70'li Yıllarda Devrimci Mücadelenin Feminist Sorgusu (As If We Were Equal: A Feminist Inquiry of the Revolutionary Struggle in the 1960-70s)* (Istanbul: Kumbara Sanat Atolyesi ve Toplumsal Dayanisma Dernegi, 2011). From the Iranian women there is almost nothing, with the exception of Tabrizi's oral history book with former activists which still revolves mostly around the prison experience rather than the activism years. See Hajebi Tabrizi, *Dad-e bidad: nakhostin zendan-e zanan-e siyasi (Memoir of Iranian Women Fedai Guerrillas)*.; and a couple of articles written by women and published on BBC's Persian web site on the anniversary of Siahkal. See Meliheh Zehtab, "Yad mandeh-ha-ye az zendegi-ye cheriki (Memories from the guerrilla life)," BBC News Farsi, accessed August 1, 2018, http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2011/04/110411_siahkal_malihe_zahtab; Maryam Satvat, "Der khane-ye timi: ya'ni vaqt-e an ettefaq-e bad rasideh? (In the Safe House: So, has the time arrived for that bad incident?)," BBC News Farsi, accessed August 1, 2018, http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2011/02/110207_l42_siahhak_30_maryam_satvat; Nahed Qajar, "Zenan va sazman-e cherik-ha-ye fadai-ye khalq (Women and the Organization of People's Fadai Guerrillas)," BBC News Farsi, accessed August 1, 2018, http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2011/02/110204_l13_siahkal_nahid_qajar; Mastureh Ahmadzadeh, "Az Seyahkel ta enqelab: pishzemineh-ha va peyamed-ha (From Siyalkal to Revolution: the background and the consequences)," BBC News Farsi, accessed August 1, 2018, http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/iran/2011/02/110203_l42_siahkal_part_four.

positions in the leftist organizations.[44] Actually, these critics are quite in line with and very much similar to what has been described as the role and experiences of women and the approach to women's issues in similar movements, from the nationalist liberation movements of the turn of the 20th century to the guerrilla movements in Latin America. Accordingly, women in the revolutionary activism both in Turkey and Iran, were expected either to comply with their traditional roles and responsibilities while active in the organizations, or forgo everything reminding their female identity and sexuality and act like "one of the men".[45] Yet, these undoubtedly true but at times overgeneralizing accounts of women's revolutionary activism underestimate the agency of women as well as the multiplicity and diversity of their experiences.

Indeed, almost none of the revolutionary organizations of the period prioritized women's issues or considered them independently from the revolutionary struggle. For example, the Iranian revolutionary organization, Fadaiyan, never took a strong position concerning the women's rights from its inception in 1971 until the Revolution.[46] It is almost impossible to find a specific document published by any of the Turkish revolutionary organizations of the time on the women's rights, issues, position in society or simply their policies regarding women, other than paying lip service here and there to arguments of generic Marxist literature assuring women of freedom and equality after the revolution.[47] Like their counterparts in other parts of the world, in other words, they never viewed women's oppression as a separate issue from the general

[44] Berktay, "Has Anything Changed in the Outlook of the Turkish Left on Women?", Zihnioğlu, "Türkiye'de Solun Feminizme Yaklaşımı (The Approach of the Left to Feminism in Turkey).", Moghissi, *Populism and Feminism in Iran*, Hammed Shahidian, "The Iranian Left and the 'Woman Question' in the Revolution of 1978-79," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26, no. 2 (May 1, 1994): 223–47, Parvin Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in the Twentieth-Century Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 169–72.
[45] Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in the Twentieth-Century Iran*, 1997, 172, Janet Afary, *Sexual Politics in Modern Iran*, 2015, 248, Berktay, "Has Anything Changed in the Outlook of the Turkish Left on Women?," 251.
[46] The OIPFG has been criticized for not taking a stance against the obligatory veiling after the Revolution on various occasions. Even though the organization did not endorse the policies of Islamic government regarding women, the leadership advised its "female members to dress moderately and wear a scarf as a sign of respect to the masses and for their own protection." Eliz Sanasarian, "An Analysis of Fida'i and Mujahidin Positions on Women's Rights," in *Women and Revolution in Iran* (Westview Press, 1983), 100.
[47] Berktay, "Has Anything Changed in the Outlook of the Turkish Left on Women?", Zihnioğlu, "Türkiye'de Solun Feminizme Yaklaşımı (The Approach of the Left to Feminism in Turkey)."

oppression of lower classes. As a rule, it was accepted that women's oppression was to be overcome automatically after the socialist revolution which would destruct the class system and give women equal rights. Pursuit of a separate women's rights activism, let alone feminism, was seen as a petit-bourgeois venture and so dangerous that it would potentially harm the revolutionary struggle.[48]

The revolutionary organizations in Turkey and Iran were more of a middle-class phenomenon like their counterparts in the other parts of the world, including Europe, Japan and the US.[49] So, what marks the perception of and approach to gender and sexuality of these radical leftist organizations in the period in general? Aside from the left's common perception of feminism as a threat to class unity and revolution at the time, many leftists coming from the middle classes were more than willing to adopt the values of 'the oppressed toiling masses', also with regard to gender roles, in an effort to look and be more like them. Thereby, gender relations in an Italian Maoist revolutionary organization could be as discriminatory and conservative as those in its counterparts in Turkey.[50] Obviously, practical repercussions of this distorted perception could be very oppressive on the lives of activist women in these organizations. For example, one Italian Maoist organization forbade miniskirts and shorthair for women for being immoral, and prescribed "the prohibition of masturbation, anal intercourse and, partially, of oral sex." There was also a "stigma against those who were 'excessively' attracted by the opposite sex" for being the "symptoms of a

[48] Haideh Moghissi compiles the examples of anti-feminist quotes from even the communist women of the period from Clara Zetkin to Kollontai, warning communist men and women against the danger of feminism and some of its demands. See Moghissi, *Populism and Feminism in Iran*, 88–93.
[49] For the discussion of the rise and characteristics of the radical revolutionary organizations after 1968 in other parts of the world see Sommier, "Revolutionary Groups after 1968.", Donatella Della Porta and Sidney Tarrow, "Unwanted Children: Political Violence and the Cycle of Protest in Italy, 1966–1973," *European Journal of Political Research* 14, no. 5–6 (1986): 607–632, Gilda Zwerman, Patricia Steinhoff, and Donatella Della Porta, "Disappearing Social Movements: Clandestinity in The Cycle of New Left Protest in The U.S., Japan, Germany, and Italy," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (March 1, 2000): 85–104.
[50] Eros Francescangeli, "The Bride in Red: Morality and Private Relationships in the Italian Revolutionary Left – the Case of the Maoist Group Servire Il Popolo," *European Review of History: Revue Européenne d'histoire* 22, no. 1 (January 2, 2015): 101–19.

petty-bourgeois lifestyle."[51] In the same vein, as we will see later in the following chapters, a number of women from both Turkish and Iranian sides mentioned similar examples of objections and accusations from the leadership of their organizations to their demands to improve some aspects of their living conditions under the pretext of being bourgeois affectations. Therefore, there is no doubt that the orthodoxy in the ideological stance of these organizations played an important role in their approach to gender and women's issues. Aside from its schism and factionalism, discrimination against women and regulation of sexuality seem to be what leftist and revolutionary activists had in common all around the world. Yet, it should still be the responsibility of a researcher working on any period and aspect of women's history to ask if it is the whole story.

Indeed, as I have mentioned above, despite all the challenges, women were very much present and active in the revolutionary movements of the period: In Iran, "[w]omen participated in peaceful and violent mass demonstrations; they dug trenches and fought in street battles; they joined strikes, boycotts and stoppages at work; they participated in the activities of local militia groups, and took part in guerrilla attacks against government installations."[52] Furthermore, they registered their presence in every sphere of militant activism as well including armed operations. "Constituting 11 percent of the dead [guerrillas], [… these women] scored a number of firsts in Iranian history—the first woman to face a firing squad, die under torture, take cyanide to evade capture, lose her life in a street shootout, and write her prison memoirs."[53] In Turkey too, despite being ridiculed, shamed in the media, arrested and tortured in prisons, and even raped, for their participation in the ranks of revolutionary organizations, women stayed present and kept playing critical roles in all the crucial events and periods in the history of the left in the 1960s and 1970s.[54]

[51] Francescangeli, 108.
[52] Sanasarian, *The Women's Rights Movement in Iran*, 117.
[53] Ervand Abrahamian, *Tortured Confessions Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 103, 104.
[54] Gülfer Akkaya, *Sanki Eşittik : 1960-70'li Yıllarda Devrimci Mücadelenin Feminist Sorgusu (As If We Were Equal: A Feminist Inquiry of the Revolutionary Struggle in the 1960-70s)*, Baydar and Ulagay, *Bir Dönem Iki Kadın*,

All in all, in order to go beyond the mainstream representation of women's participation in the leftist and revolutionary movements in the literature in general and in Turkey and Iran in particular, which is almost always one of discrimination and repression, and to do justice to their agency especially under these hard conditions, I prioritize and focus, in this study, on their individual accounts through their life histories in these revolutionary organizations. As a matter of fact, they tell a different story.

1.2. The Outline of the Chapters

The first chapter presents the methodological and theoretical framework of this study. For the analysis of the dynamics of the contentious politics in the 1960s and 1970s in Turkey and Iran, which involved the use of political violence, I employ the methods and theories of the Social Movement Studies (SMS) in general. For this, I heavily rely on the approach and the concepts developed by the prominent scholars of the SMS, such as Charles Tilly, Doug McAdam and Sidney Tarrow. Since I conceptualize the period as a process of radicalization of the left-wing movements in the two countries, I explain the details of the 'processes and mechanisms' approach in the first part of this chapter. In the second part, I present the methods and the specific approaches that I employ in order to analyze micro-mobilization of the women in the radical leftist organizations, namely oral history, history of everyday life and gender.

In the second chapter, I briefly describe the general features of the political regimes in Turkey and Iran from their foundations early in the 20th century on with a particular focus on the ways in which they were seen and interpreted by the leftist activists of the period in order to better explain the reasons for the emergence, mobilization, radicalization and diffusion of the left-wing contention in the 1960s and 1970s in the following chapters. In addition to the analyses of formation of political actors, identities and institutions, I explain the historical relationship between the state, other relevant political actors and institutions, as well as challengers to make a

Bedri Baykam, *68'li Yıllar : Eylemciler (The Years of 1968: The Activists)*, (Kızılay Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 1998), 373–403, Çelik, *Üç Dönem Üç Kuşak Kadınlar*, Yazıcıoğlu, *68'in Kadınları (Women of 68)*,

better sense of the political regimes and initial conditions in which the armed struggle became a viable option for a number of dissidents in the two countries.

The contending political actors of the period, however, are mainly presented in the third chapter. I discuss the political, economic and social structural changes in Turkey and Iran, — a new constitution, rapid industrialization, urbanization, and land reform, rapid development, institutionalization respectively— as well as the opportunities and threats that paved the way for the emergence of a new left-wing opposition. The mobilization networks on which the left wing activism relied to organize during the 1960s, and also before when it is relevant, constitute the framework of the chapter. It is followed by the fourth chapter, which covers the framing processes through which the activists perceived and made sense of these threats and opportunities. Following Tarrow and Tilly[55] I conceptualize this period as the 'new coordination process' which was composed of three main mechanisms: *brokerage*, *coordinated* action, and *diffusion* in Turkey; and *repression*, *institutionalization* and *disillusionment* in Iran. In order to explain each mechanism, I identify the political actors who played critical roles for each mechanism, emerging collective identities that created solidarity among the activists, and finally the repertoire of action that they adopted to challenge their regimes. In the second part of this chapter, I focus on the ways in which a number of activists in both countries resorted to violence as a result of certain events and dynamics in the domestic politics.

In the fifth chapter, I move on to take a closer look at the 1970s and conceptualize the period as the radicalization and persistence of the armed struggle as an outcome of both the contention during the 1960s and the causal mechanisms influencing the process during the 1970s. Following its emergence, growth and diffusion, the outcome by the end of the 1960s was an escalation, or better put, radicalization of left-wing contention in Turkey and Iran, rather than a demobilization through possible means conventionally used by states such as

[55] Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*.

institutionalization, co-optation, selective or indiscriminate repression to end contentious mobilization. During the 1970s, the armed contention either diffused among the students or at least sustained in the face of police repression or right-wing attacks. This period of the leftist contention in Turkey was characterized mainly by two developments: the clashes with the right-wing radical groups and an acute form of competition between the radical leftist organizations in Turkey; whereas, in Iran the armed struggle ironically both diffused and dissociated further from the masses due to extreme repression of the SAVAK.

The next two chapters are devoted to the individual life histories of women who joined and had various experiences in the ranks of the radical leftist organizations and groups in Iran and Turkey during the late 1960s and 1970s. The first chapter deals mostly with their life stories and the recruitment processes as a result of which they first became involved in the radical leftist activism. The following chapter concerns their everyday life in the semi or full-clandestine conditions with a special focus on their gendered experiences from division of labor to relations between male and female members.

In these chapters, I focus on a number of fundamental questions: What were the socio-political backgrounds of the women participating in the radical leftist organizations? What were the formal and informal networks through which these women participated in the radical leftist organizations? What were the emotional, social and political factors determining their motivations to join the revolutionary activism? How did the high-risk activism affect their emotions, perceptions, and commitments? And finally, in what ways did various mechanisms of radicalization of the leftist organizations have an influence on the experiences of women in revolutionary activism?

In the last chapter on "Heroic Life vs. Everyday Life" I focus on the women's everyday lives, which revolved around organizational activities, daily chores, and responsibilities for disguising the house, analyzing the characteristics of gender roles and relations between men and women along with the sexual relations. With a comparison of Iranian and Turkish cases, I question if we can talk about a common gendered experience for women in clandestine

oppositional organizations in the countries which have certain characteristics in common, such as religious, cultural, political or regional. Thereby, I also aim to shed light on the differences in their experiences as a result of the causal relational mechanisms I discussed in the earlier chapters.

2. Methodological and Theoretical Framework of the Study

This dissertation is a comparative study of the experiences of women who were involved in the radical leftist organizations during the late 1960s and 1970s in Turkey and Iran. For the collection and the analysis of the data, I followed the oral history method and approach which allow me to focus on the least-covered aspects of their activism, namely everyday life, in order to focus on the gendered aspects of their experiences. Yet these women's everyday life took place in and was shaped by not only the socio-cultural context of Turkey and Iran but also and in fact mostly the unique circumstances of the left-wing contentious politics of the period. Therefore, for the analysis of the dynamics of the contentious politics, which involved the use of political violence, and thereby, influenced their everyday lives, I have employed the relevant methods and approaches of the Social Movement Studies (SMS). In short, the complex character of my research question has entailed the use of a number of methods and approaches from various disciplines. The following parts explain the unique blend of methods and approaches that I used in this study.

2.1. Social Movements, Political Violence and Radicalization of Repertoires

Most of the theories and approaches attempting to explain social movements, be it from a structuralist or a constructivist perspective, have focused on the local conditions, such as socio-economic structures, political context, characteristics of organizations, and the social background of activists. There are some basic questions that these studies ask as a starting point: Under what conditions does a specific movement emerge? What factors give rise or facilitate the emergence and development of the movement? Who are more likely to join the movement? While there is nothing wrong with these questions, since they are fixated on understanding why a movement

emerges in the first place they over emphasize predetermined and static conditions and structures. However, the initial conditions sparking a mobilization do not suffice to explain the subsequent processes in which a movement grows, transforms, succeeds or demises in the following periods. Even when the initial conditions and structures stay more or less the same, the movements continue to operate in a dynamic environment having interactions with other actors. Therefore, a more interactive approach is necessary to understand not only the emergence but also the following processes, which a movement goes through, emphasizing how and when those different processes occur and evolve in a contextual framework. This is particularly crucial for studying a period in a movement's career well after its emergence, such as the radicalization of the left-wing activism in the 1970s, and a performance of collective action, like political violence, it adopts at a later period.

This study adopts a social-constructionist approach to the comparative analysis of the radical left-wing organizations in Iran and Turkey during the 1960s and 1970s and women's participation and experiences in these organizations. It offers a three-level (macro, meso, and micro) analysis with a particular focus on the relational and cognitive dynamics of radicalization processes of some of the organizations in the leftist movement family and their influence on the experience of the women. Social constructionism as it is developed by Berger and Luckmann (1966) advocates for the centrality of social interactions in the creation of knowledge, including that of everyday life, as well as the world views of individuals, which in turn determine their actions. The centrality of dialectical interactions between not only the society and the individuals but also all the other actors involved in a societal context concerns my analysis at all levels. Social Constructionist approach to social movement activism emphasizes emotions, perceptions and the meanings for the actors engaged in contention; while the structuralist approaches to Political Opportunity Structures (POS) tent to have rigid and objectivist understanding of the contexts.[56] It is this line of thought which determined my methodological and theoretical choices

[56] Joel Beinin and Frédéric Vairel, *Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 5.

studying the women in the radical leftist organizations in Turkey and Iran in the 1960s and 1970s.

The main "link between individual motivations, at the micro-level, and environmental conditions, at the macro-level" is the perception of the activists as well as organizational dynamics, at the meso-level.[57] Since my main objective is to understand the motivations and experiences of women who were involved in the radical leftist organizations, and since I subscribe to the recent studies advocating the role of perceptions and emotions of the activists in decision making processes, this study focuses mostly on the relational and cognitive dynamics of the radicalization processes of these organizations. As I will discuss later, these dynamics also have the most distinguished influence on the character of the everyday life of women in the radical left.

McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly (2001) have proposed a new "relational" perspective in their seminal work *Dynamics of Contention,* which prioritizes "interpersonal networks" for a dynamic model of mobilization. They have emphasized challengers' "perception of opportunities and threats" and this approached has since been advanced by other scholars of social movements such as Charles Kurzman.[58] They have put forward "'active appropriation of sites for mobilization' rather than preexisting mobilizing structures, dynamic construction of framing among challengers; innovation in repertoires of contention; the description and analysis of "contentious performances" rather than stable repertoires of collective action; and a broad processual understanding of mobilization and linkages of mechanisms rather than a search for the precise origins of contentious episodes."[59]

Additionally, I agree with Beinin and Vairel (2011) that: "Tilly's notion of a repertoire of collective action links best the logics of action and the logics of context."[60] Therefore, analyzing

[57] Della Porta, *Social movements, political violence, and the state*, 136.
[58] Charles Kurzman, "Structural Opportunity and Perceived Opportunity in Social-Movement Theory: The Iranian Revolution of 1979," *American Sociological Review* 61, no. 1 (February 1996): 153–70.
[59] Beinin and Vairel, *Social Movements, Mobilization, and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa*, 6.
[60] Beinin and Vairel , 13.

the repertoires of a social movement, let us examine the perceptions and self-conceptions of its actors. Their practices are strongly related to the way they define the political situation. Moreover, "a shared contentious practice allows the reformulation of actors' interests and values in relation to their political stance."[61] In other words, armed struggle and urban guerrilla tactics as a part of the repertoire of collective action, which were adopted by the radical leftist organizations in Turkey and Iran in this period, tell us more than what has been anticipated so far. Their repertoire does not only point out to the ways in which they viewed the situation in their country as well as their role and potential in a political activism, but also reinforces dialectically their commitments to the cause and its organizations along the way. Finally, since "traditions, activist legacies, and political histories" all play a role in the formation of repertoires, they in turn let us "observe at the same time forces that are too often separated: authorities and contentious actors, structures and calculations, immediate actions and histories of methods of protests."[62]

a) Political Violence

Political or collective violence had long been one of the taboo subjects in social sciences and neglected by social scientists. Hamit Bozaslan (2004) rightly reminds us Hannah Arendt's (1970) take on violence: "No one engaged in thought about history and politics can remain unaware of the enormous role violence has always played in human affairs, and it is at first glance rather surprising that violence has been singled out so seldom for special consideration".[63] Even though the violent uprisings of political, ethnic, and religious groups since her book is published have brought about more attention and therefore research on violence, it has still not received the attention and discussion it deserves. Rather, it is still studied in relation to or under the framework of other social phenomena such as wars and revolutions, or recently terrorism and security studies.

[61] Beinin and Vairel , 14.
[62] Beinin and Vairel , 15.
[63] Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1970), 8.

A very general description of political violence concerns a broad range of actions which involves inflicting a degree of physical damage with an aim of achieving political objectives. "The same events may be called by many other names: terrorism, insurgency, guerrilla warfare, counter-insurgency, self-defense, retribution, security policing, national defense, national liberation, state sponsored terrorism, or even genocide, depending on the circumstances and who is doing the naming".[64] Political violence is the most neutral term to be employed for a scientifically plausible objective approach aiming to focus on the context and dynamics of the violence.

Donatella Della Porta defines political violence as "the use of physical force to damage a political adversary. If we leave aside state or state-sponsored violence, oppositional political violence therefore consists of 'collective attacks within a political community against a political regime'"[65] to achieve political aims. In its current form this definition is too general, so she suggests a fourfold typology in her comparative study of German and Italian radical leftist movements between the 1960s and 1980s. Accordingly, political violence can be categorized as follows: 1) unspecified violence, 2) semi-military violence, 3) autonomous violence, 4) clandestine violence.[66] The categorization depends on the intensity and the organizational form of violence. The form of targets, which might be civil or political individuals, determines the intensity of violence; whereas, the form of organizations, open vs. underground, using violence determines the form of it. As could be guessed, clandestine political violence, adopted by radical left-wing organizations throughout the world during late 1960s and 1970s, is the most extreme sort of violence by the groups organizing underground "for the explicit purpose of engaging in the most radical forms of collective action".[67]

[64] Steinhoff and Zwerman, "Introduction to the Special Issue on Political Violence," 213.
[65] Della Porta, Clandestine Political Violence, 6.
[66] Della Porta, *Social movements, political violence, and the state*, 4.
[67] Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 7.

"The reality of violence reveals that the frontiers between fundamental categories of social sciences -individual, private, and public spheres - can be totally destroyed; and that people can prefer death, regression, or destruction to life, progress, and material wealth."[68] Keeping Bozaslan's statement in mind, I argue that political violence can be best analyzed and understood through a relational approach to contentious politics. Political violence can be better explained by a combination of various actors and factors that influence each other in an interactive relationship. The current state of art of SMS provide us with the concepts and approaches to do so with some minor adaptations for the cases of Iran and Turkey in the 1970s. A brief summary of the evolution of the SMS and its take on violence would give us a better understanding of the current state of art on the phenomenon of violence.

b) Social Movements and Political Violence

The relationship between SMS and political violence has been a complex one since the emergence of SMS as a separate subfield of study under political science and sociology. SMS in its contemporary sense began with the civil rights movement activism in the United States and their contemporaneous counterparts in Europe in the 1950 and 1960s. The emphasis on the nonviolent means and tactics of the American civil rights movement, which had been heavily influenced by Gandhi's nonviolent resistance strategy, created an inadvertent bias towards the legitimacy of nonviolent tactics both in the social movement activism culture and social movements literature. This trend has only dispersed with the course of the time by a mutual strengthening of this perception in both areas, thereby, in a way marginalizing or in some cases delegitimizing all sorts of violent tactics and strategies of collective action. Also, this bias towards reform oriented and non-violent movements as the main subject of study resulted in leaving various forms of insurgencies, particularly armed ones, out to be covered by other fields such as terrorism or security studies.

[68] Bozarslan, *Violence in the Middle East*, 3.

The focus and bias in social movements theories towards non-violent means and organizations could also be related to the origins of the modern social movement studies which emerged as a reaction to the collective behavior theories following the tradition of studies on crowd behavior and mob psychology.[69] Collective behavior theorists attributed an irrational and violent character to the masses acting collectively and looked for the reasons deriving from psychological as well as social marginalization. The theories of relative deprivation[70], and other approaches based on the grievances as a result of rapid social and economic changes, determined the initial perception of collective action, and collective violence for that matter, as an anomaly rather than a rational form of a political participation.

One of the first systemic attempts, research mobilization theory[71] emerged in reaction to collective behavior theories; and suggested that some sort of institutionalization is necessary and inevitable by focusing on Social Movement Organizations (SMOs) as primary actors whose most important task is seen as obtaining and mobilizing resources. Based solely on the examples from the Western world, resource mobilization theory has since been criticized for fixating on rational choice perspective and thereby ignoring social psychological, cultural and emotional factors. Despite the recent attempts to include aforementioned factors in their analyses, resource mobilization approach has inherently remained a reform oriented and pragmatic approach. So, the first two decades of modern social movements studies were mostly dominated by a shift from one extreme, irrationality of contenders, to another, only rationally motivated actors.

Political Process Model (PPM) emerged, in a sense, as a middle way focusing on the structural conditions in order to explain the occurrence of contentious actions.[72] In this change of approach, the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s played an important role with their participants coming from relatively affluent families who did not have pressing grievances and

[69] Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind. 1952 Reprint,* 1896.
[70] Gurr, *Why men rebel*.
[71] John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory," *American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 6 (1977): 1212–41.
[72] Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

could not simply be categorized as socially or psychologically marginal. Unable to resort to the old theories to explain the timing and location of protests and revolutions, scholars shifted their attention to the structural conditions instead and pointed at 'opportunities' described as the openings in political and social system allowing social movements to emerge. In the PPM, grievances were taken for granted in every society, instead it was the political opportunity structures (POSs) occurring at certain times and allowing organizers of social movements to be able to mobilize. With an exclusive focus on structural conditions, PPM theoreticians paid very little attention to the role of other factors and actors namely ideologies, strategies and individuals.

Through only the "cultural turn" in social sciences in general in the 1990s scholars of social movements began systematically to take into account the influence of culture, ideas, emotions and perceptions in social change. While New Social Movements (NSM), which were based on identity and solidarity rather than economic and social classes, emerged in Europe as a new kind of activism as well as a new area of study; revolution studies began to emphasize the role of ideologies, leaders, identity, as well as the subjective perceptions of individuals.[73]

The variety of social movements, as well as the approaches to analyze them have multiplied in the course of time since the 1960s; still, the topic of and studies on the groups resorting to violence have remained at the margins of the field. Given the ethical and practical considerations involved in studying armed groups[74] and moral difficulties associated with the legitimization of the use of violence, it is to some extent understandable that scholars of social movements shied away from this area of study. Only with the emergence and

[73] John Foran, *Taking Power: On the Origins of Third World Revolutions* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), Kurzman, "Structural Opportunity and Perceived Opportunity in Social-Movement Theory.", Misagh Parsa, *States, Ideologies, and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of Iran, Nicaragua and the Philippines* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2000), Eric Selbin, *Revolution, Rebellion, Resistance: The Power of Story* (London; New York; New York: Zed ; Distributed in the USA by Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
[74] Gay Seidman, "Guerrillas in Their Midst: Armed Struggle in the South African Anti-Apartheid Movement," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 6, no. 2 (2001): 111–127.

successes of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist national liberation movements in the Third World countries the legitimacy of resorting to violence by contentious actors had been recognized. Yet, even this change of perception has been rendered constrained to very specific forms of movements, namely national liberation movements against a Western colonial or imperial power. Whereas, other groups and movements resorting to violent means continued to be marginalized and left to be studied by other fields of study such as terrorism, security or revolution studies. Separatist, ethno-nationalist, and armed insurgencies were among the most common examples in the latter group. I will mention the problems associated with leaving the study of all the movements resorting to violence to the scope of these fields below.

While there has never been a shortage of radical groups resorting to political violence in the history of Western Countries, radicalism of that sort has been marginalized in SMS. One of the seemingly exceptional studies in the field is Fitzgerald and Rogers' attempt to theorize radical social movement organizations. They take radical second-wave feminist organizations, SNCC or Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) as exemplary cases. They utilize ideal type characteristics for the internal structure, ideology, tactics, methods of communication, and measures of success that they claim differentiate radical organizations from the moderate and reformist ones. They might be right to point out "that most moderate SMOs operate with a reform bias that views incorporation into the current political/economic system as the desired goal"[75] limiting radical social movement organizations to "left-wing RSMOs with egalitarian practices and emancipatory goals" is not doing justice to the other radical organizations that are more revolutionary, aim to achieve more radical goals and use violent means. They adopt a very limited definition of radicalism which is radical for and from the perspective of mainstream social movement theories and approaches they critique for normalizing and even idealizing the moderate SMOs requesting "reform of, and incorporation into, the existing system"[76]. Even

[75] Kathleen J. Fitzgerald and Diane M. Rodgers, "Radical Social Movement Organizations: A Theoretical Model," Sociological Quarterly 41, no. 4 (September 1, 2000): 573–92.
[76] Fitzgerald and Rodgers, 575.

though they portray the radical organizations they analyze as not likely or even willing to achieve a "recognized position within the larger society" and attribute to them a revolutionary character, they are far from being 'radical' compared to the 'other' radical organizations in other parts of the world such as those I am focusing on and comparing in this study. As a conclusion, their study at least exhibits that radicalism is a contingent concept and what they define as the ideal type characteristics of the radical organizations, such as nonhierarchical leadership, democratic organization, flexible ideology, nonviolent direct action, cannot be applied to most of the other radical organizations in the same period in other parts of the world.

There are a few more studies focusing on radicalism and radicals; however, they confine themselves mostly to the question and the influence of radical flanks on the general social movement or its moderate organizations[77]. Even though they are important in terms of acknowledging the role of radical organizations in the success or failure of movements in various areas of mobilization, they do not provide us with the reasons for or dynamics of their emergence and development. Meanwhile, truly comprehensive and analytical approaches to political violence have appeared in Europe, mostly countries like Italy, Germany and France.[78] The reason for the lack of literature might be the historical, political and cultural marginalization of radical movements, especially political violence, to a much greater extent in the U.S. than they have been in Europe. Yet, this should not imply that there have not been any radical movements in the US since 1960s; Black Panthers and Weather Underground being the most famous ones; there are just fewer studies on those organizations from a SMS perspective.[79]

[77] Herbert H. Haines, "Black Radicalization and the Funding of Civil Rights: 1957-1970," *Social Problems* 32, no. 1 (1984): 31–43, John Bradford Braithwaite, "Rethinking Radical Flank Theory: South Africa," *SSRN Journal SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2014.
[78] For example see Della Porta and Tarrow, "Unwanted Children.", Della Porta, *Social movements, political violence, and the state*, Lorenzo Bosi and Donatella Della Porta, "Micro-Mobilization into Armed Groups: Ideological, Instrumental and Solidaristic Paths," *Qualitative Sociology* 35, no. 4 (December 1, 2012): 361–83, Isabelle Sommier, *La violence révolutionnaire* (Paris: Sciences Po, les Presses, 2008).
[79] For exceptions see Zwerman, Steinhoff, and Della Porta, "Disappearing Social Movements.", Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

The recognition of armed struggle as a legitimate means of collective action in the international and intellectual arena, which was achieved by the anti-colonial and liberationist movements, was not automatically granted to the other social movements resorting to similar means. Of course, this lack of legitimacy did not stop numerous groups and activists all around the world adopting violent tactics and strategies that were proposed by the revolutionary leaders of the period such as Che Guevara, Mao Zedong, Regis Debray, Carlos Marighella. The emergence and flourishing of the radical organizations around the ideology of the New Left at the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s resulted instead in the emergence of the discourse of terrorism, which was substantiated with the terrorism studies, in the United States. The trend gained impetus in the following years and developed into a separate field in social sciences and dominated most of the discussions on political violence. The most prominent examples of these insurgencies in the international scale in the period were the Irish Republican Army, Basque Liberation Front, and Palestinian Liberation Organization; and they were too mostly considered and analyzed within the limits of terrorism and security studies.

I refrain from using the term terrorism for several reasons in this study. First and foremost, there is no lack of a better term for the cases I am working on, one of which is political violence. Second, there is no consensus, nor it seems to be in the foreseeable future, on a definition of terrorism. While there are more than 100 definitions of terrorism (Meisels 2009), some scholars reserve the term for violence against noncombatants and other political violence strategies such as sabotage or guerrilla warfare are not considered as terrorism. “Terrorism may be further differentiated between violence targeted at specific noncombatants (e.g., politicians, political leaders, judges, and journalists) and “indiscriminate” violence directed at whole categories of noncombatants (e.g., ethnic groups, nationalities, social classes)”[80]. Third, I think for a term to be used for and serve a scientific purpose terrorism is too much contested, vague and politically

[80] Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts (John Wiley & Sons, 2009), 392.

charged. It is a term generally used by governments of various sorts to define the activities of those that are against their policies or they do not agree with. Thereby, it presupposes and attributes an unnecessary load of charges to groups or people who have been involved in one way or another in violent activism. Finally, "[t]he invocation of the term 'terrorism' might allow us to express indignation or to reinforce our normative and ethical positions, but it does not help us understand the aims, motives, and minds of the people who have embraced violence".[81]

Another field of study working on uprisings against the state is the revolution studies and their influence is unique among various approaches to violent contention. The state-centered approaches to social contention, including revolutions, are still the most influential and accepted theories today since the structural theories of revolution, pioneered by Theda Skocpol,[82] became popular in the 1970s. Focusing on the state as the main actor and denominator of the plausibility of any revolution, the revolution studies have come to be concerned mostly the questions such as: why revolutions occur in the countries they do? What are the reasons for the emergence of revolutionary movements? Which revolutionary movements are more likely to succeed? However, those questions are limited and irrelevant in explaining the contentious episode of the 1970s in Iran and Turkey because by adopting a strictly structuralist perspective scholars of revolution have mostly dismissed other factors and actors. For example, the most prominent studies on Iranian Revolution have rarely mentioned the role of leftist guerrilla groups during the 1970s. Also, famous for being teleological, revolution studies in the Iranian case have come to focus predominantly on the Islamist movements and their mobilization in the previous period, leaving the more active and equally important secular groups aside even though they had played a major role before and during the course of the revolution. From this perspective, left-wing opposition has been viewed as an actor who failed to take over the state power at the end of the

[81] Bozarslan, Violence in the Middle East, 4.
[82] Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

revolution and even accused of not being able to play a more active role to stop Islamists by some.

Only with the 1990s, with the 'cultural turn' in social sciences these structural theories began to be challenged by scholars who set up to examine the influence of culture, ideas, as well as individuals, in addition to structural conditions, on social processes. In this vein, scholars such as John Foran[83] and Charles Kurzman[84] began to emphasize subjective experiences and perceptions of individuals playing a much greater role in the mobilization process than the structural conditions or rational calculations. Their contribution was very significant in terms of including previously neglected factors and actors into social process. However, a more revolutionary approach to the study of contentious mobilization in the new millennium is offered by the school of relational approach or 'process-and-mechanism approach' as they would call it.[85] According to this approach, social movements, as well as the contentious politics in which they are an actor of, emerge and evolve as a result of interactive relationships between various actors, such as governments, elites, other movements or counter-movements, through certain mechanisms which combine and operate similarly in different contexts. I will go into to the details of the relational approach to contentious politics and its take on political violence in the following sections.

Before concluding this part, however, I have to note that, in addition to adopting a relational approach to political contention, I conceptualize and analyze political violence as a form of performance in the *repertoire of contention*[86] of the radical left-wing mobilization in Iran and Turkey in 1960s and 70s, -rather than a pathological, cultural, or a security issue, - emerging and evolving in relation to and as a result of interactions with other actors. While relational approach claims that actions and reactions of all social actors, including the use of violence, are determined in a dynamic interactive process, the concept of repertoire of contention contributes

[83] Foran, *Taking Power*.
[84] Kurzman, "Structural Opportunity and Perceived Opportunity in Social-Movement Theory."
[85] McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*.
[86] Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (New York: Random House, 1978).

to this approach by conceptualizing what is available and acceptable to the activists. In the next section, I explain how and why I conceptualize political violence as a repertoire of contention; and then what I mean by "radicalization as a process" which is shaped by a number of relational mechanisms.

c) Political Violence as a Repertoire of Contention

Charles Tilly mentions polarization and competitive display as some of the violent rituals.[87] Then, he discusses the relationship between regimes and rituals. First, he breaks regimes into four categories: high-capacity undemocratic, low-capacity undemocratic, low capacity democratic, and high-capacity democratic.[88] The relationship between the regime types and collective violence, however, is not as straightforward as his reasoning which goes as follows: "the greatest variety and frequency of violent rituals […] appear in low-capacity undemocratic regimes, the least in high-capacity democratic regimes".[89] We need a better conceptualization beyond this relationship at least to explain the political violence experienced in the 1960s and 1970s in a similar fashion in a wide range of regimes including low-capacity democratic regime of Italy, high-capacity democratic regime of Germany, and high-capacity undemocratic and semi-democratic regimes of Iran and Turkey respectively. Luckily, we do not need to look far for a concept which would explain this phenomenon. The explanatory power and capacity of Tilly's own conception of *repertoire of collective action* has more potential than it seems to offer at first sight.

The concept of *repertoire of contention* was first coined by Charles Tilly[90] and has been benefitted widely in explaining spatial and temporal diffusion of and changes in tactics and strategies, in other words repertoire of collective action, used by social movement activists. Thereby, scholars of social movements have been able to make better sense of why the organizers and activists have come to adopt certain tactics and strategies rather than others at

[87] Tilly, The Politics of Collective Violence, 84.
[88] Tilly, 49.
[89] Tilly, 92.
[90] Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*.

different times and in different parts of the world. Tilly suggests that activists can only employ tactics and strategies that are made available to them by the previous or contemporaneous social movements and that are considered culturally acceptable and legitimate, at least by some parts of the society. These two characteristics of the concept of the repertoire of collective action allows us to explain not only the larger global context conditioning the emergence of radical left-wing organizations in Iran and Turkey but also the local context, including cultural, perceptional and emotional, leading to adoption of political violence. Considering a tactic legitimate might have cultural, perceptional, and ideological bases; but it has less to do with structural conditions. Also, the concept of "cultural diffusion of tactical repertoires"[91] prioritizes the role of tactics and strategies, especially when they are adopted extensively at a specific period of time in diverse geographies, rather than structural features of each and every context in the formation and mobilization of social movements. Therefore, given the extent and popularity of radical leftist and revolutionary movements throughout the world in the 1960s and1970s, Tilly's concept, which allows me to focus on ideological, perceptional and contextual aspects predominantly, is very useful to make sense of Turkish and Iranian left-wing organizations' adoption of violence at a certain stage of their mobilization.

Arab Spring was Arabic as much as the 1968 uprisings were European or guerrilla resistance movements were Latin American. The cultural borrowings between the societies throughout the history is nothing new to (historians and) social scientists. Societies and cultures, like people, rely and thrive on the experiences of others. They learn from each other's successes and failures, take as a model and advance the successful methods. It is also true of people acting collectively. The gradual advancement of the technologies enabling and increasing the means and levels of influence and inspiration among people caused a steady increase in the spread and adoption of tactics and strategies of collective contentious action. Therefore,

[91] Timothy Wickham-Crowley, "Two 'Waves' of Guerrilla-Movement Organizing in Latin America, 1956–1990," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56, no. 01 (January 2014): 215–242.

armed struggle or urban guerrilla warfare adopted by the far left in Iran and Turkey by the end of the 1960s cannot be viewed only as intrinsic to the conditions of two countries or as peculiar to those groups; but, instead, can be better understood through the concept of diffusion of repertoire of contention.

What the activists of the period were presented with on a global scale for the formation of their repertoire of collective action in both practical and theoretical senses consisted of two aspects: first, the availability and popularity of strategies and tactics which were adopted extensively throughout the world by various revolutionary movements and proved to be successful like in the case of Cuban revolution. Second, a revolutionary anti-imperialist spirit proposed and propagated by the writings of popular revolutionary leaders and intellectuals such as Che Guavera, Mao Zedong, Francis Fanon, Regis Debray, Carlos Marigella was being disseminated in an unprecedented degree by the 1960s via translations and liberal borrowings by national intellectuals or leaders.[92] These two developments contributed to the formation of their repertoires more than the contextual and pragmatic concerns.

The writings of these revolutionaries and intellectuals focus very much on the issues of organization and their various forms that might be deployed in rebellions. What is more interesting is that there has been a notable consensus about the strategies that should be used and those strategies "have diffused widely across territories and across groups with different motivations"[93]. The influence of Mao's and Guevara's proposed strategies for rebellion on the revolutionary leaders and activists of the period can hardly be exaggerated as they took the form of general conventions of collective action across the Global South's insurgents. With some variations the most common tactic promoted by revolutionaries and employed by insurgent groups of the period was guerrilla warfare. The guerrilla struggle has four main

[92] Jeremy M. Weinstein, Inside Rebellion: The Politics of Insurgent Violence (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 32.
[93] Weinstein, 28.

distinguishing characteristics: First, insurgents "rely on irregular forces […] without heavy weaponry." Second, "assassination, sabotage, and hit-and-run attacks" does not aim to defeat enemy but rather cause material damage and ruin its reputation in the eyes of people. Third, they "operate in territories that are under the control of their military opponents. And fourth, they depend on the resources of local populations.[94]

While this was the case among the majority of the Global South's revolutionaries staging a guerrilla warfare against the regimes they were fighting, what we see in Iran and Turkey had some nuances. It is because even though familiarity and popularity play an important role, as Tilly suggests, in protestors' decisions to adopt certain repertoires, they may still need to adapt those repertoires to the local and structural conditions in which they are operating. So even if the structural and local conditions do not play the major role in the emergence of radical leftist organizations in Iran and Turkey, as I argued above, they still have an influence on their character and formation. But even then, we do not observe a unique social movement mobilization in these two countries but a variation of popular repertoires of contention of the era. In other words, urban guerrilla warfare[95], as a variation of popular guerrilla war, was the repertoire of contention adopted by Iranian and Turkish activists. I deal with the reasons for this adaptation and use of violence and gradual radicalization in the following sections, for now it is important that we locate Turkish and Iranian cases in a larger context to make better sense of their mobilization and strategies. For this I offer a rough categorization of insurgent groups throughout the world in this period.

The widespread emergence and expansion of SMOs resorting to political violence in this period of time all around the world in different countries and under different conditions can be analyzed in four main categories: 1) civil rights and anti-war movements in the US; 2) radical left-wing and ethnic separatist movements in Europe; 3) guerrilla movements in Latin

[94] Weinstein, 29.
[95] Note that the very groups adopting urban guerrilla warfare, or their predecessors in some cases, had already tried guerrilla struggle from rural areas and only after failing to stage a successful uprising they had decided to turn to urban guerrilla tactics. For more on this see the following part.

America; 4) anti-colonial movements in the Third World. I claim that the radical left-wing organizations in Turkey and Iran have many more similarities and therefore should be juxtaposed with the radical left-wing organizations in Europe for several reasons. I will discuss these reasons in detail in the following sections but it is worth to mention them briefly for an introduction. First of all, they all originated in some sort of a non-violent student activism. Second, they adopted violence in the course of contention as a result of certain dynamic interactions with various actors, in other words, violence was not their first choice of repertoire of action. Finally, they all went through a process, called radicalization, during the contentious episodes in which they mobilized, organized and operated. Therefore, I focus on this process of radicalization in the next part.

d) Radicalization of the Repertoires of Contention

There are of course different definitions and understandings of radicalization, yet I use it in a very specific way in the context of contentious politics. As the most comprehensive and analytical definition of radicalization, for the purpose of this comparative study, I adopt the one suggested by Alimi et al. (2015): "the process through which a social movement organization (SMO) shifts from predominantly nonviolent tactics of contention to tactics that include violent means, as well as the subsequent process of contention maintaining and possibly intensifying the newly introduced violence."[96] The central point in their approach is that they see radicalization "as a process emerging out of contentious interaction between various parties and actors."[97] This is a relational approach and focuses on relational mechanisms in order to explain how and when radicalization takes place rather than solely asking why it happens. Another central point in their definition of radicalization is that it "involves an actual engagement in political violence". Thereby, it is clearly different from other understandings of radicalism which consists of a wide range of activism which does not

[96] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, The Dynamics of Radicalization, 11.
[97] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, 11.

engage in “violence, risk, or illegality” instead embraces radical goals and ideas to change society and social trends.[98]

The use of political violence by SMOs is crucial according to this perspective because it helps determine the emergence of radicalization, as well as the different stages of it. Also, political violence is seen as one of many forms of repertoires of collective actions and categorized according to its targets namely violence against state actors and property, as well as selective, collateral, categorical and indiscriminate violence. The first type of violence is usually seen in the initial stages of radicalization and it accompanies other repertoires of collective action including legal and illegal forms such as demonstrations, vigils, boycotts, occupation of public buildings, strikes, and so forth. As I mentioned before, what categories of violence a SMO assumes, for example, self-defensive, propaganda, or resistance purposes, during the course of its radicalization gives an idea about its ideological as well as tactical evolution and is significant in understanding the dynamics of the contentious politics in which they are engaged.

I take on an approach which regards political violence as a complex phenomenon occurring and intensifying as a result of socio-political relations between parties and actors including political and social institutions, elites, various movement and counter-movement organizations. Thereby, I hope to avoid a static approach to political violence like those of terrorism and security studies focusing on radical or militant groups as the sole source and reason for the use of violence. Instead, I offer a “relational, conjunctural and contingent” understanding of the political violence.[99]

Radicalization as a process implies that the emergence of radical movements is a result of certain dynamics during the course of a contentious episode. What makes analyzing this period, the 1970s, in Turkey and Iran as a process of radicalization a relevant approach is,

[98] Colin J Beck, Radicals, Revolutionaries, and Terrorists. (John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 19.
[99] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization* , 13.

first, that it implies a stage with a gradual progression and presupposes a period before itself creating the conditions for the emergence of radical groups. For example, it suggests that radical organizations usually emerge either 1) by splitting from their moderate predecessors as a reaction to their allegedly unsuccessful policies; or 2) by evolving from non-violent moderation to radicalism as a reaction to state repression. Second, the process is comprised of certain dynamics, or mechanisms,[100] which are experienced by the actors of contentious politics and result in more or less the same way. For instance, competition among the organizations or actors of a movement usually intensifies the radicalization process. Last but not least, breaking down of the process into mechanisms which might be combined differently in sequence and number in each context makes it easy to compare and contrast different cases of radicalization taking place in different space and time. For example, this way various, even a left-wing revolutionary group and a fundamentalist Islamist militant organization can be compared and contrasted in terms of their radicalization process.[101]

e) Comparing different cycles of contention

The relational approach to radicalization may sound too complex or even confusing at first, especially to an outsider to SMS, but with a little bit of a break down it does not only make perfect sense but also provide researchers of social movements with the toolkit to systemically analyze as well as compare different cases of contention. The first step in the line of works to build an analytical framework which would enable researchers to compare social movements was made by McAdam et al. through their book *Comparative Perspectives*

[100] Processes and Mechanisms approach to contentious politics has been developed and adopted by scholars like: Lorenzo Bosi, Chares Demetriou, and Stefan Malthaner, *Dynamics of Political Violence a Process-Oriented Perspective on Radicalization and the Escalation of Political Conflict* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2014), Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings* (Cambridge University Press, 1996); McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*; Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*; Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*.

[101] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*; Bosi, Demetriou, and Malthaner, *Dynamics of Political Violence a Process-Oriented Perspective on Radicalization and the Escalation of Political Conflict*; Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*.

on Social Movements.[102] McAdam, McCarthy and Zald laid the groundwork for a comparative study of social movements through their formulation of three common conceptualizations of social movements or any cycles of contention for that matter. It consisted of three concepts: 1. Political Opportunities; 2. Mobilizing Structures; 3. Framing Processes.

A fair amount of consensus had already been built around the use of these concepts in individual studies by scholars in the western world.[103] However, their book was, hitherto, the first attempt to formulate those concepts to constitute a framework, which could be used to study and compare cross-national cases. Their effort was soon taken up and advanced by other scholars[104] with a sauce of critique, especially with regard to the dynamic, interactive and contextual character of these concepts.

McAdam et al. (2001) in their pioneering book *Dynamics of Contention* offered a new way of thinking about the social movements and their contextual analysis which they call relational.[105] In accordance with this relational approach, instead of focusing on social movements, they shift their attention to a larger context and try to observe social movement actors in a dynamic interaction with other actors such as the state, elites, security forces, other SMOs and counter-organizations. In the same vein, they use the term *contentious politics* to include not only social movement mobilizations but also other forms of contention, such as "revolutions, strike waves, nationalism, democratization and more". The reason for such a broad coverage is, they claim, that all sorts of contention "result from

[102] McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*.
[103] McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, McCarthy and Zald, "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements.", Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment," *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 611–39; David A. Snow and Robert D. Benford, "Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization," *International Social Movement Research* 1, no. 1 (1988): 197–217.
[104] McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, Sidney G Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Quintan Wiktorowicz, *Islamic Activism: A Social Movement Theory Approach* (Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press, 2012).
[105] McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*.

similar mechanisms and processes".[106] Since its first advent by McAdam et al. in 2001, the relational approach making use of combination of these recurring casual mechanisms to explain various cases of contention occurring in different space and time has been adopted and improved by leading scholars of social movements especially through comparative methods.[107]

The focus on processes and mechanisms has to do with their aim to move further from static analyses, basically most of the hitherto theories and models of SMS, to a dynamic one. Neither processes nor mechanisms are newly invented notions but McAdam et al. formulated an approach for the first time to systematically employ them in various cases. *Processes*, such as democratization, polarization, radicalization, mobilization, represent particular periods in the course of political contention, and more importantly, "consist of sequences and combinations of casual *mechanisms".*[108] Mechanisms, on the other hand, are "delimited sort of events that change relations among specified sets of elements in identical or closely similar ways over a variety of situations"[109], and combined to form a specific process. So, in order to explain a process of a contentious episode, one needs to identify the recurrent casual mechanisms pertinent to that process, and then, the unique combination and sequence that these mechanisms constitute within the context of varying historical, social and political settings.

Just as mechanisms combine and constitute varied processes, combination of several processes constitutes an episode of contention. In other words, every episode of contention, from 1789 French revolution to the rise of the New Left in the 1970s, consists of several processes and is usually a combination of mobilization, identity shift and polarization. A

[106] McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, 4.
[107] Bosi, Demetriou, and Malthaner, *Dynamics of Political Violence a Process-Oriented Perspective on Radicalization and the Escalation of Political Conflict*, Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence*, Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, Sidney Tarrow, *Strangers at the Gates: Movements and States in Contentious Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).
[108] McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, 12, 13.
[109] McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, 25.

relational approach starts with identifying a contentious episode, and then continues with determining the processes that it is composed of, and finally, it looks for the casual mechanisms forming each specific process.

In parallel to, and somewhat simultaneously with, the efforts of North American scholars mentioned above, it was Donatella Della Porta's book, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State,* (1995) which paved the way for comparative study of social movements. Her pioneering book has not only more comprehensive in its scope covering micro-, meso-, and macro-levels of analysis, but also preceded the relational approach by pointing out the significance of interactions between political actors such as security forces and activists and among SMOs. Furthermore, her focus on the process of radicalization and social and organizational dynamics contributing to it during a span of 30 years from 1960s until 1990 in the new left organizations in Italy and Germany had also preceded the mechanism-and-process approach of McAdam et al. (2001).

Another study from Europe was conducted by Isabelle Sommier in 2008, *La Violence Revolutionare,* in which she compared and analyzed radical left-wing organizations using political violence during the 1960s and 1970s in various countries including Japan, the US, Germany, Italy and France. Apart from adopting political violence as a strategy, these organizations, operating in various states, had a lot in common resulting from their relationship with the state, their constituency-including larger society, other organizations in the movement or counter-movements. Sommier particularly emphasized certain dynamics playing significant roles in the process leading to the adoption of violence by these groups such as disillusionment with the old left, factionalism, schizogenesis, militant identity, repression by the state and propagation.

The above-mentioned studies have shown extensive interest in the field of comparative study of social movements from a relational perspective which prioritizes mechanisms, processes, networks, perceptions and dynamic meaning making without of course denying the benefits of, static structures and conditionality, pre-existing organizations, and stable collective action

frames paving the way for mobilization. However, as appealing as it may sound, the application of this approach is difficult to practice. Since it would be, in the best-case scenario, the closest representation of reality on the ground, there has always been a need for in-depth understanding of various actors involved, their perceptions, and relations, as well as the factors constituting social, political and cultural context. This is something which could be best achieved through an extensive ethnographic study, but in the lack of that sort of studies, more has to depend on textual analysis, memoirs, interviews, as well as educated guess of an informed and conscientious researcher.

A case for Turkey and Iran

For the cases of the Left in Turkey and Iran, I focus predominantly on the period and process of radicalization –corresponding roughly most of the 1970s–, which is a mid-term process occurring only after a certain level of a mobilization has taken place as a result of environmental and cognitive mechanisms. It is usually the relational mechanisms which play the most important role during the radicalization process. I do not mean to imply that other mechanisms do not have any influence on this process; some might even be critically significant and the due attention will be paid in such cases. However, for the sake of brevity and achieving an analytical comparison between two cases, I mainly focus on the major relational mechanisms. After a brief review of the influence of the other groups of mechanisms, namely environmental and cognitive, I will describe the characteristics of most common relational mechanisms recurring in different contexts of radicalization and the way they influence the radicalization of Turkish and Iranian left-wing contention in the 1970s. And then in conclusion, I will compare and contrast the combination and sequence of these mechanisms for the cases of Iran and Turkey with the reasons for and possible consequences of the similarities and differences in their formation.

Studying the leftist contention in the 1960s and 1970s in Turkey from a relational approach has promising prospects. First of all, the relational approach to contentious politics is developed mostly as a result of comparative studies of different social movements, thereby overcoming the

limiting scope of exceptionalism.[110] Second, it is based on the most contemporary and comprehensive approaches and methods of SMS taking into account the role of various actors (not only the states, elites or leaders), emotions (namely subjective perceptions of the activists of the world around them and other actors), and interactive and dynamic relations between them. Third, engagement in violence is seen as a component of a more complex strategy and a result of a process unfolding under specific conditions, rather than an outcome of rational calculations, psychological or cultural tendencies. As a performance in the repertoire of collective action, violence can be used for different purposes; and understanding these purposes gives us a better idea about dynamics of political violence emerging and escalating in various contexts.[111]

In line with this approach, I conceptualize political violence experienced in the 1970s in Iran and Turkey as a radicalization process; and employ three sets of mechanisms for the analysis and comparison of the two cases: environmental, cognitive and relational. 1) *Environmental mechanisms* resulting from the changes mostly in economic, political and cultural milieu such as economic transformation, industrialization, urbanization, are most helpful in explaining the emergence of the left-wing opposition movements and subsequent organizations throughout, and even before, the 1960s in Iran and Turkey as well as in many other Global South countries.[112] 2) *Cognitive mechanisms* stemming from the political, ideological and cultural *Zeitgeist* of the period, such as the successes of revolutionary and liberation movements resorting to violence around the world, propagation of armed struggle by prominent intellectuals and revolutionary leaders, spread of anti-colonial, anti-war, anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist ideas help explain particularly the processes of identity formation, actor constitution, and framing. 3) Finally, relational mechanisms, such as competition with other revolutionary organizations, encounters with security forces, conflict with counter-movements and isolation from the constituency

[110] See Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating, *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 5"One thing that nearly all countries do have in common is the notion that they are exceptional."
[111] Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution.*
[112] Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, 344–72.

concern the relationship between all kinds of political actors and are most helpful in illustrating the dynamics of radicalization process. Not all the causal mechanisms that are mentioned are directly relevant for each case under scrutiny, and the degree of their relevance tells something about the similarities and dissimilarities between the two cases.

Put simply, the contentions in question are the left-wing oppositions that took place in Turkey and Iran from the 1960s until 1980, very much parallel to the global 1968 episode starting with the student movements in campuses and evolving in some cases into more militant form of activisms. The dynamics that shaped the left-wing activism during the 1970s, on the other hand, point out to a process of radicalization. In order to compare and analyze the processes of radicalization in both countries I will focus on the most common and influential mechanisms at play during this period.

f) The Mechanisms of Radicalization

What are the most common mechanisms constituting the process of radicalization in various contentious episodes? In their book titled *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, Alimi et al. (2015) point out five specific mechanisms occurring in five different areas of interaction. Of course, some of these mechanisms have also been pointed out for their roles in the escalation of contentious politics and use of political violence by other scholars of social movements.[113] I follow the categorization of Alimi et al. (2015) for mostly comparative purposes.

The first and foremost mechanism is called *upward spiral of political opportunities*[114] that takes place in the arena between movement actors and the political environment in which they operate. Very much similar to what has been offered by political process model (PPM) as political opportunity structure (POS), this mechanism explains the influence of changes in the political environment on the actions and strategies of movement actors. However, what distinguishes it from POS is its relational and cognitive character; that is to say, those

[113] Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, Tarrow, *Strangers at the Gates*, Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*.
[114] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, 41.

changes are evaluated from the stand point of movement actors either as a new possibility, constraint or threat.

In order of importance, the second mechanism is called *outbidding*[115] and takes place in the arena between movement activists and security forces. It is considered as a different arena of interaction from the one between political environment and activists because the relationship between security forces, namely police, and activists has its own action and counter-action dynamics and determined by perceptions, attitudes and prejudices of both sides towards each other. Outbidding mechanism "develops exactly when either a newly self-identified political actor enters the scene and/or at least one party employs innovative action or repression"[116].

The third mechanism is *competition for power*[117] and it takes place in the arena between movement actors. The role of competition between SMOs and actors of the same movement has been identified and discussed before by several scholars of SMS.[118] Almost all social movements consist of various organizations and actors with different opinions about the strategy and tactics that should be adopted, in addition to possible differences in ideology and goals. Even if these differences are not salient initially and all actors come together based on similar beliefs and interests, differences tend eventually to surface in the course of contention especially as a result of power relations. What makes this mechanism especially significant is that it might lead to "higher pressure for conformity and stronger sanctions for in-group challengers, which triggers further radicalization."[119]

The fourth mechanism is *dissociation*[120] and takes place in the arena between the movement and the public. It refers to the increase in the disengagement of movement organizations from its supporters and constituency. As a result, their influence on the movement,

[115] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, 43, 44.
[116] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, 45.
[117] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, 45, 46.
[118] Sommier, "Revolutionary Groups after 1968.", Zwerman, Steinhoff, and Della Porta, "Disappearing Social Movements."
[119] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, 46.
[120] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, 46, 47.

encouraging pluralism and moderation, also weakens, thereby triggering further isolation and radicalization

The last but not least is the mechanism called *object shift*[121] and it takes place in the arena between the movement and the counter-movement. It refers to changes "full or partial, temporary or permanent, in the object of claims and targets of attacks". This usually happens when a counter-movement emerges with an aim of "inflicting damage on the movement and undermining its struggle and goals."[122] By opening up a new front for contention and diverging the attention and objectives of the movement activists, such counter-movements significantly influence the process of radicalization.

These briefly defined relational mechanisms will help me analyze and compare Iranian and Turkish cases of left-wing radicalization during the 1960s and 1970s in the third and fourth chapters. In the following sections, I present the methodological aspects of my analyses of the everyday lives and oral histories of former activist women in the radical leftist organizations.

2.2. Micro-Mobilization of Women and Oral History

Why do I focus on micro-mobilization of women activists in the radical leftist organizations in Iran and Turkey during the 1960s and 1970s? There are several answers to this question and all are related to each other. First of all, as stated before, this study is based on the premise that micro, meso and macro levels concerning a social contention are not isolated but closely interrelated and have an interactive interdependence on each other. Thus, for a complete understanding of a contentious period or a comprehensive analysis of one of the three levels, it is imperative to include all levels of analysis into account. There is a scarcity of micro-level analysis of the period both in Turkey and Iran; so, one of my objectives has been to fill this gap. Besides, the gendered experiences of micro-mobilization processes in these organizations, enable

[121] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, 48, 49.
[122] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, 48, 49.

us to see the interaction and interrelation between the three levels of analyses from a different angle, and provides valuable insights into the intersectionality of high-risk activism for women. Not only women had different experiences from men in the same organizations, but also their educational level, socio-cultural and class background, and generational differences impacted their experiences.

Unlike many European countries in which the 1960s student movements led to the emergence of women's movements, we cannot talk about an independent women's movement in Turkey and Iran until after 1980. Instead women were present and active in the ranks of all kinds of leftist organizations beginning with the student movements in the 1960s, yet their presence was either ignored or forgotten for several reasons but mostly due to patriarchal historiography practices in both countries. Thus, one of my main objectives is to uncover their presence and role in this contentious period; however, to avoid a romantic and mythical representation of their activism, which dominates the narratives around the revolutionary activists of the period, I contextualize and historicize their experiences from relational and social constructionist perspectives as I have mentioned in the previous parts.

The characteristics of micro-mobilization depend not only on the macro-level conditions, from the type of the political regime to the political opportunity structure present at the time; but also, on those of the meso-level from the structure and the form of organizations to the processes and mechanisms at play. The micro-mobilization for our cases concerns the women's participation into high-risk activism and their experiences in full or semi-clandestine conditions. So, it is a different and very peculiar type of micro-mobilization from regular recruitment and participation practices into a low or no risk social movements. As I will explain in detail in the following chapters, the clandestinity that was adopted by the radical leftist organizations in question was partially the result of the macro-level conditions due to the repressive policies of authoritarian and high-capacity regimes of Iran and Turkey, and turned their activism into a risky one. However, the ways in which macro-level conditions impact micro-mobilization are usually mediated through meso-level processes and mechanisms. Therefore, the mechanisms of

radicalization, as explained in the previous parts, had a great influence on the experiences of rank-and-file members among which women were mostly active. Furthermore, I claim, these mechanisms, did not only they determine the character of the radicalization of the left in each country or affect the activists' perception of reality which in turn led to further radicalization in some cases. These mechanisms, I argue, had also a great impact on the gendered experience of women in these organizations.

Both in Turkey and Iran, the emerging radical leftist organizations, which were eventually organized around semi or full-clandestine cells, adopted not only the tactics and strategies that they deemed relevant for their fight, but also the rules and regulations to govern micro-mobilization procedures including participation of their members, their theoretical and military training as well as everyday life of the revolutionary activists. Obviously, the structural formation of these organizations, as well as the rules and regulations governing their micro-mobilization were closely related to their ideology in general and the way they framed their struggle: such as a Marxist-Leninist or a Maoist revolutionary guerrilla struggle. Yet, the relational and cognitive mechanisms of the radicalization processes of these organizations also heavily influenced the micro-mobilization processes. By establishing the links between the mechanisms of radicalization and women's micro-mobilization in these organizations, the chapters on women's experiences contribute to our understanding of the two cases through a comparative analysis.

a) Women's Participation in Popular Militant Movements

Women's participation and activism in the armed movements and organizations all over the world has of course drawn a scholarly attention from a wide range of fields of study.[123] Even

[123] For some examples on the cases from other parts of the word, see Chris Coulter, *Young Female Fighters in African Wars : Conflict and Its Consequences* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2008), Mia Bloom, *Bombshell: Women and Terrorism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), M. J. Diamond, *Women and Revolution : Global Expressions* (Dordrecht, Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998), Paige Eager, *From Freedom Fighters to Terrorists : Women and Political Violence* (Aldershot Hants England: Ashgate, 2008), Ruth Glynn, *Women, Terrorism and Trauma in Italian Culture* (New York, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), Tanya Lyons, *Guns and Guerilla Girls : Women in the Zimbabwean National Liberation Struggle* (Trenton NJ: Africa

though the image of Latin American guerrilla women might be one of the first evoked by the notion of women in armed struggle, there has always been a curiosity around the concept of 'female militancy' or 'female fighter' in the context of other nationalist, anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist insurgencies. The studies on the subject show that women fight alongside men and use all sorts of political violence, even in most challenging circumstances in a wide range of militant organizations: the Basque radical nationalist organization ETA,[124] the IRA in Northern Ireland,[125] the Red Army Fraction (RAF) in Germany,[126] Naxalbari movement in India,[127] liberation struggles in Africa,[128] and various guerrilla movements in Latin American countries including Nicaragua, Chiapas, Al Salvador.[129]

The level of scholarly curiosity, however, is still limited when the extent of women's mobilization is considered. Women have been active in the ranks of all the critical popular

World Press, 2004), Caroline O. N Moser, *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors?: Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, ed. Fiona Clark (London: Zed Books, 2001), Laura Sjoberg and Caron E. Gentry, eds, *Women, Gender, and Terrorism* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011), Amanda Third, *Gender and the Political: Deconstructing the Female Terrorist* (Palgrave Macmillan US, 2014)..

124 Carrie Hamilton, "The Gender Politics of Political Violence: Women Armed Activists in ETA," *Feminist Review* 86, no. 1 (2007): 132–148.

125 Miranda Alison, "Women as Agents of Political Violence: Gendering Security," *Security Dialogue* 35, no. 4 (2004): 447–463.

126 Patricia Melzer, *Death in the Shape of a Young Girl: Women's Political Violence in the Red Army Faction*, 2015.

127 Srila Roy, *Remembering Revolution: Gender, Violence, and Subjectivity in India's Naxalbari Movement* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), Mallarika Sinha Roy, *Gender and Radical Politics in India: Magic Moments of Naxalbari (1967-1975)* (Taylor & Francis, 2010).

128 Harry G. West, "Girls with Guns: Narrating the Experience of War of Frelimo's 'Female Detachment,'" *Anthropological Quarterly* 73, no. 4 (2000): 180–94, Josephine Nhongo-Simbanegavi, *For Better or Worse?: Women and ZANLA in Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle* (Avondale, Harare; Oxford: Weaver Press ; African Book Collective, the Jam Factory (distributor), 2000), Nhongo-Simbanegavi.

129 Jocelyn Viterna, *Women in War: The Micro-Processes of Mobilization in El Salvador*, 2013, Karen Kampwirth, *Women & Guerrilla Movements : Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas, Cuba* (University Park Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), Jane S. Jaquette, "Women in Revolutionary Movements in Latin America," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 35, no. 2 (May 1, 1973): 344–54, Victoria González-Rivera and Karen Kampwirth, *Radical Women in Latin America Left and Right* (University Park : Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), Linda L. Reif, "Women in Latin American Guerrilla Movements: A Comparative Perspective," *Comparative Politics* 18, no. 2 (1986): 147–169, Naval Postgraduate School, *Women in Insurgent Groups in Latin America* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014), Maxine Molyneux, "Mobilization without Emancipation? Women's Interests, the State, and Revolution in Nicaragua," *Feminist Studies* 11, no. 2 (1985): 227–54.

movements throughout the twentieth century present at all levels of mobilization from grass-root to armed operations. Despite that, the studies show, they almost always have had to endure an identical fate: the lack of representation in the leadership cadres, assignment to always secondary tasks, and withdrawal to the traditional gender roles and spheres after the end of the struggle when the politics as usual resumes its activity.[130] Furthermore, the day of salvation for women which has always been promised but also always postponed until after the triumph —either national liberation or revolution— never seems come. Even today, there are a number of so-called socialist movements in the West and East alike which dare to advice women to wait until after 'the revolution' for the solution of all their problems.[131]

Women in the Middle East too, like their counterparts in other parts of the world, have participated in violent politics in extensive and complex ways throughout the modern history. However, their direct participation as fully committed activist has usually been marked by sexual division of labor and their hindrance from leadership positions. For example, in Palestinian guerrilla organizations or the National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria discrimination based on gender could be seen both in the distribution of organizational responsibilities and power.[132] Women were typically expected to transport items like organizational publications or weapons and work as a teammate rather than lead or command.[133] However, the discriminatory treatment of women in popular movements was

[130] The discriminatory policies against women in popular movements in general and armed movements in particular had been documented by scholars from all around the world. See for example: Sandra Danforth, "The Social and Political Implications of Muslim Middle Eastern Women's Participation in Violent Political Conflict," *Women & Politics* 4, no. 1 (1984): 35–54.

[131] Once I was approached by a Finnish academic woman after a presentation of mine on the women's experiences in the leftist organizations in the 1970s in Iran and Turkey. She was surprised that both Turkish and Iranian women have now refuted the revolutionary discourse of the period regarding women's rights. She told me that this is still the mainstream socialist discourse in her country. To my surprise, it was only the beginning and I was to hear similar comments from many women from other Western countries regarding the present-day socialist or leftist organizations.

[132] Natalya Vince, "Colonial and Post-Colonial Identities: Women Veterans of the 'Battle of Algiers,'" *French History and Civilization* 2 (2009): 153–68.

[133] Danforth, "The Social and Political Implications of Muslim Middle Eastern Women's Participation in Violent Political Conflict."

not something specific to the Muslim world either; "a traditional division of labor based on gender is a common phenomenon in revolutionary movements around the world".[134] For example, in Latin American guerrilla movements a division of labor based on gender was usually a common place in varying degrees. Women were either assigned traditionally supporting roles or actively acted as bridges.[135] They were also used to gain legitimacy in the eyes of public.[136] For the cases women achieved equality during the battle they lost it in the following political processes.[137]

Despite these widespread observations in the studies regarding women's participation and experiences in the popular movements, our knowledge is still very limited about their motivations, agency, and indirect repercussions of the activism in their lives. So far, the studies focusing on women's participation in the armed groups have usually used quantitative methods; dealt with the reasons for their participation focusing on the pull and push factors such as their socio-economic backgrounds, grievances, and the characteristic of the contending organizations;[138] and finally, revolved around the issues regarding the tasks they undertook and roles they played in these organizations.[139] Although it is not easy to conduct ethnographic studies with the members of the armed and underground movements in general, there is a need for more qualitative works on the mobilization of women in these groups, which rely more on their own accounts if we would like to better understand the

134 Hammed Shahidian, "Women and Clandestine Politics in Iran, 1970-1985," *Feminist Studies* 23, no. 1 (April 1, 1997): 8. For other examples see Carol Berkin and Clara Maria Lovett, eds, *Women, War, and Revolution* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1980), Diamond, *Women and Revolution*.
135 Julia Denise Shayne, "Gendered Revolutionary Bridges: Women in the Salvadoran Resistance Movement (1979-1992)," *Latin American Perspectives*, 1999, 85–102.
136 Jocelyn Viterna, "Radical or Righteous? Using Gender to Shape Public Perceptions of Political Violence," *Bosi L, Demetriou C, Malthaner S Dynamics of Political Violence: A Process-Oriented Perspective on Radicalization and the Escalation of Political Conflict. Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing*, 2014, 189–216.
137 Kampwirth, *Women & Guerrilla Movements*.
138 Reif, "Women in Latin American Guerrilla Movements.", Jocelyn Viterna, "Pulled, Pushed and Persuaded: Explaining Women's Mobilization into the Salvadoran Guerrilla Army," *American Journal of Sociology* 112 (2006): 1–45.
139 Danforth, "The Social and Political Implications of Muslim Middle Eastern Women's Participation in Violent Political Conflict."

issues above an. Given the fact that only very few of the women participating into the armed movements and organizations have written their memoirs,[140] and popular works are limited in scope and analysis,[141] the burden falls on the shoulders of the researchers.

b) Oral History and Women's History

> Oral history, defined by Ronald Grele as 'the interviewing of eyewitness participants in the events of the past for the purposes of historical reconstruction', is an invaluable and compelling research method for twentieth-century history. It provides access to undocumented experience, […] the 'hidden histories' of people on the margins: workers, women, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities and members of other oppressed or marginalised groups. Oral history interviews also provide opportunities to explore particular aspects of historical experience that are rarely recorded, such as personal relationships, domestic life, and the nature of clandestine organisations. They offer rich evidence about the subjective or personal meanings of past events: what it felt like to get married, to be under fire, to face death in a concentration camp.[142]

History of the Left in Iran and Turkey was written predominantly by the activist men of the period in which the leftist movements played an important role in politics and society. Despite women's participation in large numbers in these movements, radical or otherwise, their presence was mostly forgotten due to the negligence of their male comrades and usual indifference to women's presence and activities in national historiographies. Thus, there is a significant gap in our understanding of the history of women in revolutionary (guerrilla) organizations in particular and women's experiences in social movements in general in Iran and Turkey.

[140] María Vásquez Perdomo, *My Life as a Colombian Revolutionary: Reflections of a Former Guerrillera* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005).
[141] Margaret Randall, *Sandino's Daughters: Testimonies of Nicaraguan Women in Struggle* (Rutgers University Press, 1981), Sarah Irving, *Leila Khaled: Icon of Palestinian Liberation* (London: Pluto Press, 2012).
[142] Alistair Thomson, "Making the Most of Memories: The Empirical and Subjective Value of Oral History," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 9 (December 1999): 291.

I used oral history technique[143] conducting interviews with the revolutionary or guerrilla women[144] from Turkey and Iran respectively, who were activists in the ranks of radical leftist organizations in the 1970s. Through these interviews, I have sought to answer several questions that have been rarely raised previously in the studies on the leftist movements in Iran and Turkey, such as: Why did so many women choose to take part in the radical leftist movements? What were their socio-economic backgrounds? How did they establish contact with these organizations? What kind of duties and activities did they undertake in these movements? How did gender shape their experience? Did they have a gender or feminist consciousness? What kind of strategies did they adopt in the face of discrimination or other patriarchal practices? Can we talk about a common gendered experience for women in underground revolutionary movements?

Despite the significance of the 1970s for Iran and Turkey, the history of the period is far from being fully written for a number of reasons. For example, the police in Turkey has not released its records and other documents yet, or the indictments prepared by the military prosecutors against the radical leftist organizations after the 1971 and 1980 coups in Turkey

[143] I use the term oral history for its flexibility and popularity but life history can also be used in its stead in this context. Even though several technical differences distinguishing each from the other may appear significant in particular contexts, for the present study they are insignificant and I have benefitted from both methods liberally. For the differences between the two methods see Kathleen M. Blee and Verta Taylor, "Semi-Structured Interviewing in Social Movement Research," in *Methods of Social Movement Research*, ed. Bert Klandermans and Suzanne Staggenborg, vol. 16, 2002, 92–117.

[144] In Turkey women and men who were involved in the activities of the radical leftist and revolutionary organizations have been called 'revolutionaries' (*devrimciler*), or 'leftists' (*solcular*) regardless of the period or the organization they were a part of. A more specific term also used by the the activist women and men to describe themselves was 'professional revolutionary' (*profesyonel devrimci*), which is to say that they were full-time activists. However, in Iran, the term 'guerrillas' (*cherikha*) is specifically used to describe the female and male members of the radical leftist armed organizations who were active in the 1970s. Even though the term leftist (*chapi*) has also been used in certain contexts to describe the members and supporters of the leftist movements in Iran, even those of Tudeh, for example, has commonly been called '*Tudehii*'. Therefore, referring to the Iranian women who were the members of these armed organizations I sometimes use the term guerrilla women, but never to the women from Turkey as the term guerrilla has never been adopted by the radical leftist organizations in Turkey. When used in the context of Turkey, it refers to the PKK guerrillas who began to operate in the 1980s. Throughout the study, as a general term to describe both parties, I usually prefer 'activist' or 'revolutionary', yet I also make use of other terms like 'militant', or 'radical leftist' to describe the same women. I do not prefer to use the expression of 'professional revolutionary women' since it is too long and too vague of a term outside of the Turkish context.

are still not easily accessible.[145] The situation of the archives or official documents in Iran is not better if not worse. However, even if this was not the case, in other words if all the archival documents were available and the period could have been studied free from restrictions, the history of women, especially of those belonging to lower classes, would have still been missing for the reasons not specific to Iran and Turkey but commonplace all around the world. This is what motivated feminists and other scholars working on marginalized groups like women, to use oral history method to give voice to and write their history in recent past. This is one of the main reasons, I have decided to keep oral history as the main method of this study and conducted interviews with Turkish and Iranian women who were active members of radical leftist and revolutionary guerrilla organizations in the 1970s.

As a form of in-depth interview method, oral history has been used in a limited number of fields of study including anthropology, history, sociology, and psychology. It has gradually become popular since the 1980s with the growing dissatisfaction with quantitative and structuralist approaches. Since then, oral history has especially been preferred by scholars working on marginal groups in a society, such as prostitutes, professional thieves, transsexuals, and youth gangs,[146] in addition to its more conventional usage in studies on famous figures. Also, oral history has been adopted particularly by researchers studying groups whose agency and voice is missing in the historical records because of their subaltern status on political, class, gender, religious, or ethnic grounds. It has also been used to study social movements such as the 1968 movements,[147] the Black Civil Rights Movement,[148] the

[145] I could only obtain a couple of them from different bibliopoles in Turkey.
[146] Donatella Della Porta, "Life Histories," in *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*, ed. Donatella Della Porta (Oxford University Press, 2014), 263.
[147] Ronald Fraser, *1968: A Student Generation in Revolt* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), Robert Gildea, James Mark, and Anette Warring, *Europe's 1968: Voices of Revolt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), Luisa Passerini, "Lacerations in the Memory: Women in the Italian Underground Organizations," *International Social Movement Research* 4 (1992): 161–212.
[148] Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer, *Voices of Freedom: An Oral History of the Civil Rights Movement from the 1950s Through the 1980s* (Random House Publishing Group, 2011).

feminist movement,[149] and LGBT activism.[150] In this vein, the use of oral history in the analysis of militants of underground organizations in several prominent studies[151] has been inspirational for this study.

Several important characteristics distinguish oral history from other ethnographic research methods. For instance, unlike structured interview methods,[152] it is not based on a questionnaire prepared in advance but rather relies on a rough template consisting of a set of queries focusing on a specific topic or a period of life depending on the subject of the study. Thereby, it provides researcher with enough flexibility to adapt to the individual stories of each interviewee. It is also different from participant observation research technique which requires researcher to spend extended period of time with subjects in their natural environment to be able to observe them and their activities in real time. However, oral history allows researcher collect information on events, including those that have taken place in the past, in a relatively short period of time through the narratives of those having taken a part.

Oral history is especially suitable for a qualitative analysis of social movements as it provides in-depth, detailed information about complex social events from a wide range of perspectives; thereby allowing investigation of themes of increasing importance such as collective mentality, perceptions, emotions, beliefs, identities, and motives. In other words, it presents how participants make sense of their participation in a movement or world around

[149] Sherna Gluck and Daphne Patai, *Women's Words : The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
[150] Lorenzo Bosi and Herbert Reiter, "Historical Methodologies : Archival Research and Oral History in Social Movement Research," in *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*, ed. Donatella Della Porta (Oxford University Press, 2014), 130.
[151] Della Porta, *Social movements, political violence, and the state*, María José Moyano, *Argentina's Lost Patrol: Armed Struggle, 1969-1979* (New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), Frank Schubert, "'Guerrillas Don't Die Easily': Everyday Life in Wartime and the Guerrilla Myth in the National Resistance Army in Uganda, 1981–1986," *International Review of Social History* 51, no. 1 (2006): 93–111, Gilda Zwerman, "Conservative and Feminist Images of Women Associated with Armed, Clandestine Organizations in the United States," *International Social Movement Research* 4, no. 151 (1992): 133–59.
[152] For example, polls, surveys and other interviews based on a questionnaire.

them in general. Having access to this sort of subjective perceptions and beliefs on an individual and collective level is important because what participants believed to be the case plays as an important role as do the facts on the ground. Therefore, increasing number of social movement researchers have begun to benefit from oral history method in order to understand the aspects of social movement mobilization that had for long been dismissed.

It is these meanings and beliefs of participants determining their visions, motivations, perceptions of the present, and expectations from the future which eventually do or do not lead to the formation, perseverance or dissolution of a social movement. In other words, oral history allows comprehension of various questions related to "cognitive mechanisms for making sense of the external reality and acting on it".[153] For example, through oral histories, Passerini could reveal crucial, but intangible, motivations of women participating in Italian revolutionary organizations in their expressions such as "illusion of a free and adventurous life" in the movement and feeling "worthless, unable to exist, outside the group".[154]

Oral history also "bring[s] human agency to the center of movement analysis" by letting interviewee "to generate, challenge, clarify, elaborate, or recontextualize [the] understandings"[155] that are pre-established by the official or mainstream approaches. This aspect of it is all the more important for small and secretive organizations.[156] By "opening a window onto daily life" in-depth interviews "allow us to detect human agency … in the puzzle of insurgent collective action".[157]

In the same vein, oral history provides significant information about the political culture of social movements that cannot be detected through other sources namely the official documents of state authorities, newspapers, and the organizational publications as I

[153] Della Porta, "Life Histories," 264.
[154] Passerini, "Lacerations in the Memory," 170. quoted in Blee and Taylor, "Semi-Structured Interviewing in Social Movement Research," 95.
[155] Blee and Taylor, "Semi-Structured Interviewing in Social Movement Research," 94.
[156] Blee and Taylor, "Semi-Structured Interviewing in Social Movement Research", 93.
[157] Donatella Della Porta, "In-Depth Interviews," in *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research*, ed. Donatella Della Porta (Oxford University Press, 2014), 231, 232.

mentioned before. However, not only the political culture of the movement but also imaginary, mentality and collective representations of the period under scrutiny can be better recollected and understood through oral history method. It is a particularly significant for understanding "societies undergoing rapid transformations that sweep away consolidated subcultures and acquired values"[158] such as Iran and Turkey in the beginning of 1980s.

Moreover, oral history method unearths some hitherto undiscovered aspects of the social movement under scrutiny thanks to the open-ended character of its questions by allowing interviewee to take the lead and tell what could be overlooked so far and would stay so in the context of any other conventional study. In other words, through oral history, researcher could reach to the answers of the questions that she/he could not think of asking.

What is maybe the most important benefit of oral history technique in the interviews with activists is that it presents us with a processual picture by covering all stages of micro-mobilization from participation to withdrawal, as well as the lives and experiences of activists before and afterwards. Thereby, it allows researcher to examine whether activists used to hold beliefs consistent with the movement before their involvement; how participation has affected their preceding beliefs; and what sort of an influence has activism had on their lives in the aftermath of movement. In-depth analyses of three stages of activism, before, during and after, let researcher to focus on various aspects of micro-mobilization such as reasons for and consequences of participation, role of social networks, identity formation, role of emotions, commitment, solidarity.

Yet, in addition to these direct advantages, oral history method requires researcher to be aware of and cautious about the workings of memory, subjectivity, and intersubjectivity. Without dismissing the suspicions and critiques it initially received from the traditional historians regarding the unreliability of memory and subjectivity of the information gathered out of an interview, oral history was able to turn these possible weaknesses into its major

[158] Della Porta, "Life Histories," 264.

strengths by turning them into separate fields of study. Research on collective, individual, cultural memories has developed as result of such an endeavor and produced important insights into the role and influence of memory in the way people remember and make sense of their past. In the same vein, the focus on the intersubjectivity of interviews provided valuable information on dynamics of interview and relationship between interviewee and interviewer. Consequently, "subjective interpretation in the definition of reality, and against the scholar's monopoly of knowledge"[159] gained recognition and popularity. As Portelli points out, "oral sources tell us not just what people did, what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what now they think they did.[160]

Despite its focus on subjective interpretations and perceptions,

> "doing oral history does not amount to delegitimising national or official history and simply replacing it with an alternative, subaltern account. Ordinary people are tremendously influenced by such macro discourses, and tend to internalise and incorporate them in their accounts. At the same time, individuals and communities also develop their own syncretic accounts of the past, which may differ, conflict with, and coexist with hegemonic accounts. This is why the contexts within which narratives are recounted are central, and a strength of oral history is its ability to shed light on the contexts within which narratives are shaped."[161]

Therefore, oral history, with its emphasis on collective memory, agency, and subjectivity "is an excellent tool for situating the experiences of social movement activists within a cultural context".[162]

[159] Bosi and Reiter, "Historical Methodologies : Archival Research and Oral History in Social Movement Research," 131.
[160] Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 50.
[161] Leyla Neyzi, "Oral History and Memory Studies in Turkey," in *Turkey's Engagement with Modernity: The Twentieth Century*, ed. Philip Robins, Celia Kerslake, and Kerem Öktem (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2009), 454, http://research.sabanciuniv.edu/8648/.
[162] Bosi and Reiter, "Historical Methodologies : Archival Research and Oral History in Social Movement Research," 131.

Oral history method, as a means of reinterpreting and restructuring the recent past, has the potential to change the way history is studied and represented. It has been used, mostly since the 1960s, especially by those who works on the marginal, subaltern, silenced and powerless groups in society, namely women, minorities, peasants, workers, and immigrants. Oral history as a method has a particular interest in everyday life and ordinary people making it the ideal methodology for what I intent to do. However, as accepted by most of the oral historians, oral history alone cannot provide the researcher with all the necessary information and insight to analyze the time and phenomenon that she studies. Therefore, as the recent discussions, which revolved around the oral history methodology and memory studies, emphasize other sources such as newspapers, novels, autobiographies, memoirs, and so forth, should also be incorporated into the oral history studies. The reason for the emphasis has been due to the recent wide usage of the oral history method by various NGOs from ethnic, religious, gender minorities to political groups, which resort to oral history interviews with its members in order to record its history and compensate the lack of documents. However, interviews and transcriptions done and published by unprofessional voluntaries with very limited or no historical and contextual analyses have done some harm to the disciplinary quality of the field.[163]

This minor issue —an involuntary shortcoming so to speak— however, should not lead to a misconception of the value and capacity of the oral history as a method and a field of study. Maybe more than ever, with the latest development in technology and theoretical and methodological contributions of its practitioners, oral history is an unrivaled method to study the recent past from the perspectives that no other method can provide. In other words, it provides the women's and other subaltern groups' interpretation of history and historical events that have exclusively been presented from privileged, elite, and male perspectives.

[163] Neyzi, "Oral History and Memory Studies in Turkey."

Finally, I argue that, it is only natural to adopt a feminist approach when working with a methodology that prioritizes the experiences of the marginalized, and doing women's history with a special focus on their experiences from a social constructionist perspective. But of course, a reverse logic is also true: a feminist standpoint in academic research prioritizes women's lived experiences and perspectives by means of relevant theories and research methods. Furthermore, a feminist researcher has not only to be vigilant about her practice of the method and reclaim it when necessary.[164]

c) Everyday Life and Gender

> The history of gender as the history of everyday life thus refers to gender-specific historical experience, in the sense of perception and interpretation, biographical and historical desires and goals, everyday strategies and actions, the negotiating of a concrete relation between the sexes.[165]

At the intersection of conflicting identities, namely guerrilla or revolutionary, woman, and worker or housewife — depending on their disguised identity—, the banality of everyday life points at what remains unseen and unchanged or unchallenged in the particular high-risk activism that the revolutionary women in Turkey and Iran undertook. Despite excessively regulated quality of their everyday life, not all the women had similar experiences, or perceived them in the same way. The diversity of women's experiences within and between the two countries demands a detailed look into not only their socio-cultural and economic backgrounds or the recruitment paths into the organizations but also the management of everyday life in these organizations which were extremely hierarchical, centralistic, and militaristic. This is especially true given the similarities in the macro-level socio-cultural and political settings in Turkey and Iran.

[164] Lila Abu-Lughod, "Can There Be A Feminist Ethnography?," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 5, no. 1 (1990): 7–27, Abigail Brooks, "Feminist Standpoint Epistemology: Building Knowledge and Empowerment through Women's Lived Experience," in *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*, ed. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, 2007, 53–82.
[165] Dorothee Wierling, "The History of Everyday Life and Gender Relations: On Historical and Historiographical Relationships," in *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experiences and Ways of Life*, ed. Alf Rütke, 1995, 157.

The everyday life in underground organizations is especially significant when it comes to women's high-risk activism because gender roles were felt most saliently in this sphere of their activism. Despite the extraordinary and heroic character of their undertakings and activities, the necessities of daily life surreptitiously reminded them of their traditional roles and sociocultural expectations proving at times hard to challenge even for a revolutionary woman. Therefore, my focus on the everyday life under these unique circumstances can be explained under a number of points.

First, everyday life is conventionally regarded as the sphere of women, private and mundane in which the role and experiences of women in these organizations can be best observed. Second, juxtaposition and divergence of everyday life and heroic life in the context of radical leftist organizations whose members forego everything and devote their life to the revolutionary cause presents us with a great opportunity to understand the complexity of gender roles, as well as the function of political and ideological settings on the everyday experiences of women in such organizations. Third, everyday life relates to and is shaped by macro and —in our case even more by— meso-level settings and events making it an ideal sphere to study several aspects of these unique movements and women's activism in them. Finally, the importance of studying everyday life for women's and gender history has long been established[166] and I think that, experience of everyday life under extraordinary circumstances as well would provide us with invaluable information about the depth and breadth of gender roles, the role of macro politics, and the origin of social change.

While I follow a relational approach on the meso level to understand the dynamics at play in the radicalization of the leftist organization; in order to analyze the micro mobilization of women in the radical leftist movements in Turkey and Iran in this period I rely more on feminist approaches to women's history which accept gender as an analytical category[167] and

[166] Wierling, "The History of Everyday Life and Gender Relations."
[167] Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1, 1986): 1053–75.

emphasize women's agency. Still, my comparative analyses of the everyday lives of these activist women are based on the significance of interactive relations, emotions and subjective perceptions of individuals, as well as socially constructed nature of everyday reality, but the two are not mutually exclusive.

Sociopolitical contention and space cannot be thought independently; every contention takes place in a spatial setting: it can be a workplace such as a factory, governmental building, or a public place such as a street or a square, or even in private houses.[168] The interactive relationship between the space and the contention influencing each other mutually has also been argued in the literature.[169] In this vein, I argue, the spatial context of the radical leftist movements in Turkey and Iran in the 1970s, besides the streets they demonstrated, the university campuses and dormitories they mobilized, was also and mostly the houses in which the activists lived, meet, discussed. The retreat into the underground and private sphere for the social movements is a sign of repression by the political and security authorities as the history of social movements clearly illustrates. This was also the case for the radical leftist organizations in question and had curious repercussions for the women's activism in the ranks of these organizations.

The hypothesis of Lefebvre regarding social space is consistent with the social constructionist approach that I adopt in general in the whole of this study: "(Social) space is a (social) product. […] it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power; yet that, as such, it escapes in part from those who would make use of it."[170] The space of the

[168] As an example to the last category, one can remember the popular "lights off" movement in Turkey in 1997 in which people turned the lights of their houses for a minute every night to demonstrate against the state corruption scandal; or the violent repression of the Green Movement in Iran during the summer of 2009 has finally resulted in people's chantings of "Allah-u Akbar" at the rooftops to protest the rigged-results of the presidential elections.
[169] Deborah Martin and Byron Miller, "Space And Contentious Politics," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (June 1, 2003): 143–56, Christoph Haug, "Organizing Spaces: Meeting Arenas as a Social Movement Infrastructure between Organization, Network, and Institution," *Organization Studies* 34, no. 5–6 (May 1, 2013): 705–32\, Walter Nicholls, Justin Beaumont, and Byron A Miller, *Spaces of Contention: Spatialities and Social Movements* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2013).
[170] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 26.

"safe house" for the underground organizations of the radical left should be considered in the light of this hypothesis. It was formed in the face of the state repression, became almost the main organizational unit for the organizations, took on a life of its own, and eventually turned into a setting in which social rules and norms were both reproduced and challenged. The complicated, hybrid character of the safe house is very interesting to observe gender relations at the intersection of ordinary and extraordinary, mundane and revolutionary.

In a similar vein, Dorothy Wierling defines everyday life "as the dimension that is delimited by (soft) boundaries which result from the modest scope of everyday action, although open for an unlimited variety of experiences, depending on the complexity of the given society and the tempo of its change. *Alltag* (everyday) is the domain in which people exercise a direct influence— via their behavior—on their immediate circumstances. To a substantial degree, that everyday world is determined by others. Everyday action takes place under a set of overall conditions that are not subject to its influence."[171]

I adopt a gendered approach to the everyday lives of the revolutionary women in Turkey and Iran in order to be able to evaluate and examine the relations between women and men, gender-based division of labor in their organizations, discrimination based on sex, role of sexuality, and other factors that are likely to impact women's participation and experiences in these organizations. However, the centerpiece of everyday life for the women's activism in question is that it allows us to see their agency in the organizations that were led overwhelmingly by men, and adopted militaristic means of action in which women were sidelined. The centrality of the safe house in the organization of everyday life for the full-time revolutionary activists created the conditions in which women had to play a central role

[171] Wierling, "The History of Everyday Life and Gender Relations", 151.

and presented women with a unique opportunity to insert their influence. Because women are not only present and easily identifiable in everyday life, but they also organize and rule it.[172]

Finally, it is also worthwhile to study the everyday life in the underground radical leftist organizations, because it stands at the intersection of a number of contradictions where many conflicting concepts and phenomena were juxtaposed together: idealism and realism, novelties and traditions, revolution and continuity, suppression and rebellion, discrimination and solidarity. It is a challenge which may let one to feel at times lost; but it also pushes for more clarification and explanation at each intersection. After all, it is impossible not to expect to deal with the contradictions working on women especially when they are underground rebels in two Middle Eastern countries in a period like the 1970s.

[172] As Umut stated in her interview: "women always organize everyday life, we were the same, men used to stand somewhere around and pretend to monitor our activities. We did everything and it was mostly the way we wanted it."

3. Turkish and Iranian Political Regimes

In this chapter, I briefly describe the general features of the political regimes in Turkey and Iran from their foundations early in the 20th century on with a particular focus on the ways in which they were seen and interpreted by the leftist activists of the period in order to better explain the reasons for the emergence, mobilization, radicalization and diffusion of the left-wing contention in the 1960s and 1970s in the following chapters. In addition to the analyses of formation of political actors, identities and institutions, I explain the historical relationship between the state, other relevant political actors and institutions, as well as challengers to make a better sense of the political regimes and initial conditions in which the armed struggle became a viable option for a number of dissidents in the two countries. Then, the following chapter will account for the emergence of contentious sites in detail.

3.1. Turkish Political Regime: An Authoritarian Republic

The Turkish Republic, which was established as a nation state in 1923 under the charismatic leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, had been ruled by a single party, the Republican People's Party (RPP– *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*), until after the World War II, and only in 1945 adopted multiparty politics. With the adoption of multiparty system based on free elections, politics in Turkey began to be characterized by the competition and conflict between right-wing parties of the time and the RPP for the decades to come; resulting mostly in victory of the former. Smaller parties could also play significant roles entering into coalitions with major parties during the 1960s and 1970s. The other most and ever influential political actor in Turkey has been the army, which had played a constitutive role since the republic's foundation. However, its role has taken a new form with the consecutive interventions into the politics from 1960 on each time when an opposition movement grew enough to challenge and destabilize the regime in part due to the conflict between the main political parties. From the 1950s on, but especially in the 1960s and 1970s, other political actors as well began to occupy an important place in Turkish politics mostly as challengers to the regime; namely the trade unions, leftist intellectuals and the youth.

Until the1950s, in other words, before an industrial bourgeoisie consolidated its position, Turkey can be defined as a peasant society in its majority, with its economy based on agricultural production and population concentrated in rural areas. State-led industrialization of the 1930s had been ended by the WWII; and with the Democrat Party's laissez-faire economic policies based on private enterprise and liberal foreign trade, Turkey experienced a temporary economic boom until 1954. However, economic crises followed as "the economy was crippled by foreign exchange shortages, economic growth and per capita income declined, inflation increased, and trade deficits surged", as a result of which political opposition and repressive response to it became commonplace in Turkey's politics[173]. The 1960 military intervention has changed not only the political character of the Republic but also its economic orientation to import-substitution industrialization; letting the period between 1960-1980 to be called as "second republic".[174]

Despite interruptions by military interventions and short-lived coalition governments, the right-wing parties governed Turkey in the second half of the 20th century. The single ruling party throughout the 1950s was the Democrat Party (DP), which was established soon after the transition to multi-party system by dissidents from the RPP. It was supported by a set of groups from very different backgrounds: large landowners, peasants, the emerging commercial and industrial elite, conservative and religious circles. After years of hardship due to massive economic and social reform projects of the new republic and the World War II, electorate in Turkey overwhelmingly supported the DP in the elections throughout 1950s. The DP not only undertook an alternative economic development model to the *étatism* of the RPP; it also proposed an opposing, more religious and conservative, socio-cultural image for the society against the secular and modernist version of RPP.

[173] Fikret Ceyhun, "The Politics of Industrialization in Turkey," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 18, no. 3 (January 1, 1988), 334.
[174] Erik Jan Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 3rd ed. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013).

The consecutive electoral victories by the DP vis-à-vis the RPP paved the way for Adnan Menderes, the DP leader and prime minister from 1950 until 1960 to become over-confident and arrogant. The DP owed its economic and consecutively political success in part to the US's financial aid, which it used to fund ambitious agricultural development project, and in part to growing industry as a result of new roads and increasing hydroelectric power[175]. He gradually turned into an authoritarian and oppressive political leader in the face of deteriorating socio-economic situation, his party's decreasing popularity and growing popular opposition towards the end of 1950s. The authoritarian, repressive and combatant approach of the DP regime eventually led to the military intervention on May 27, 1960.

The RPP, also known popularly as Atatürk's party, consisted of various groups from different social and political backgrounds with sometimes conflicting economic and political interests. İnönü, who was Atatürk's longtime ally and friend, was elected as the President of the RPP after Atatürk's death in 1938 and stayed in post until 1972. Ever since the 1950 elections, Turkey's first free general elections, the RPP has never been able to form a majority government or gain parliamentary majority. Except the one in 1961, it lost all elections in the 1950s and 1960s to its right-wing rivals. Despite coming first in the elections during the 1970s by winning for example 33 per cent of the vote in 1973 and 41 in 1977, mostly thanks to social democratic, populist discourse of Bülent Ecevit, who succeeded İnönü in 1972 and defined the Party's identity as the center of the left, the RPP had to form coalition governments with right-wing parties whose combined vote added up to more than 60 per cent. In the meantime, however, especially Demirel's Justice Party (JP) and Türkeş's Nationalist Action Party (NAP) did everything possible to delegitimize Ecevit's RPP, such as blaming the RPP for repressive policies under one-party rule, the execution of Adnan Menderes after 1960 military coup, and the raise of the political violence in the 1970s. What is especially noteworthy is that the collusion between the right-wingers in the parliament

[175] Jacob M Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey*, Social, Economic, and Political Studies of the Middle East, v. 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 3.

during the 1970s, materialized as the first and second Nationalist Front coalition governments, did not only inhibit Ecevit to form a government despite its majority in the parliament, something he had guaranteed after his successful intervention in Cyprus, but also encouraged right-wing militants in the streets who were responsible for majority of violence in this period.

The Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*, –JP) was established in 1961 and implicitly acted as the successor of the DP by reestablishing the local organizations of the DP, enjoying the support of the same circles that had supported the DP, including ex-DP members into its cadres, sometimes even in prominent positions, and most importantly adopting a similar political ideology to that of the DP.[176] Just like the DP, "[t]he JP was a coalition of industrialist, small traders and artisans, peasants and large landowners, religious reactionaries and Wester-oriented liberals. It had very little ideological coherence".[177] Following the footsteps of the DP, the JP was eventually able to get an absolute majority in the Parliament by 1965; also implemented similar economic policies; however not so cleverly made similar mistakes; thereby, in a sense contributing to another military intervention just 10 years later from the previous one. The economic policies of the JP, like those of the DP, caused rising inflation, growing unemployment, rapid urbanization and other sorts of socio-economic problems associated with these developments. It was especially the rapid growth of shanty-towns put up by immigrants from villages around the big cities which brought about a host of social and cultural tensions and played an important role in the contentious mobilization in the following periods. Anti-communist and Islamist discourse of the party was followed by repressive policies against the left: the intellectuals, writers and artists with leftist leanings were targeted and prosecuted[178].

[176] Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey*, 16.
[177] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*.
[178] Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Democracy, 1950-1975* (Boulder Colo.: Westview Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs London, 1977),197.

From the 1971 coup to 1980, Turkey had ten coalition governments. While there were two major political parties in the parliament—center-right JP and center-left RPP—neither of them could achieve a majority position. The other two small right-wing parties—Islamist National Salvation Party (NSP) and far-right Nationalist Action Party (NAP-*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*)—could play an important role in politics during the decade. Especially, the youth organization of the NAP, the 'Idealist Hearths' (*Ülkü Ocakları*) or as the members called themselves Grey Wolves (*Bozkurtlar*) or Idealists (*Ülkücüler*), acted as a counter-movement against the leftist movement after 1968 as a part of the suppression tactics of the state.

Couple of other smaller parties have also been established and operated during the 1960s, namely the New Turkey Party, the Nation Party, the Reliance Party, the Unity Party and the Turkish Labor Party (TLP—*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*, popularly known as *TİP—)*. The most important of them was the TLP which will be analyzed in detail below for its role as the most important political actor as well as a broker for the emergence of leftist opposition in the period. Even though the 1960s was marked by the rivalry between the RPP and the JP, the TLP played a crucial and a bigger role for a party of its size. Despite it could never get more than %3 of the votes, the TLP was supported by all strands of the Turkish left until the end of 1960s, after which the left split up into numerous factions. What makes the TLP a significant political actor was also related to its open leftist ideological stance which pushed other parties as well to define their positions vis-a-vis the growing labor and student movements.

Last but not least is the Communist Party of Turkey (CPT–*Türkiye Komünist Partisi*). Founded in 1920, the CPT had never been a legal party in Turkey, and its activities were practically halted until the 1970s with the imprisonment of its members in 1951. From 1973 on, with the change of its leadership, the CPT increased its propaganda activities especially in the labor unions. The activities and ideas promoted by the CPT played a significant role on the emergence, development, and radicalization of the left during the 1960s and 1970s. The presence of the left-wing currents of various sorts in Turkey dates back to the late Ottoman

Empire. However, since its inception, the relationship between the Turkish Republic and the left-wing movements has been characterized by a repressive and intolerant approach by the former. A widespread assumption in Turkey has been that the anti-imperialist rhetoric of Kemalism had a heavy influence on the leftist thinking in Turkey in the following periods; however, the opposite should also be true that it had been the socialist and communist ideas and movements flourishing worldwide after World War I which played an important role in the establishment and consolidation of new Turkish Republic and its ideological currents. What was obvious, however, that Atatürk had pursued a pragmatic approach to counter the communist tendencies from very early on in his political career. Once even established a nominal Communist Party to ensure his domination in this brand of political activity too, Atatürk successfully co-opted growing communist movement in the 1930s by incorporating the members of *Kadro* Movement[179] into the RPP[180]. As a result of his repressive one-party regime he was able to suppress any legal opposition, including communists, throughout his lifetime. After he closed down the Turkish Worker and Peasant Party in 1925, the Turkish communists had to continue their activities clandestinely under the banner of Moscow-oriented CPT. Due to these successful repressive policies of Turkish state, communism could never attract a mass following, but gained a genuine support among some intellectuals; the most popular of whom was internationally well-known Turkish poet Nazım Hikmet. As an ardent communist, Hikmet had a major influence on numerous young Turks in later periods and his passionate poems eased their way into the leftist activism.

Despite the small numbers it could mobilize, the CPT's influence on the intellectuals was immense and perpetuated through the reformulation of its ideology by various strands of the left. The CPT reached this level of influence thanks to its 1945 program, in which through 26

[179]Kadro was a monthly journal published between 1932 and 1934, and well-known for its leftist ideas and non-capitalist policy suggestions for the newly establish Turkish Republic. See for example: Mustafa Türkeş, "A Patriotic Leftist Development-Strategy Proposal in Turkey in the 1930s: The Case of the Kadro (Cadre) Movement," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33, no. 1 (2001): 91–114.
[180]İlhan Tekeli and Selim İlkin, *Bir cumhuriyet öyküsü: Kadroculari ve Kadro'yu anlamak (A Story of the Republic: Understanding Kadro and Kadro People)* (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2003), 424.

points the Party addressed all the pressing issues in political, economic, social and cultural areas in Turkey from land reform, economic regulations, education, freedom of press, to the rights of women, minorities and workers. In addition to 26 points, the program mentions 9 qualities under the title: "What kind of a Turkey are we fighting for?": independent, democratic, progressive, just, secure, peace-loving, powerful, revolutionary, popular and prosperous[181]. The nationalist undertone of the program with references to Ataturk's reforms seem to be picked up by the left of the following periods but not so much its focus on the rights and freedoms.

The CPT began to be influential in the popular politics in Turkey from the end of 1960s onwards as a result of increased influence and popularity of its members, like Mihri Belli and Hikmet Kıvılcımlı, and the idea of 'national democratic revolution', among the leftists and the youth. Almost all the radical leftist organizations established in the 1970s originated in the lines of 'national democratic revolution'. The CPT was also active through legal organizations such as Progressive Women's Association and Progressive Youth Association, as well as its dominant position in the ranks of influential Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey, (*Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu - DİSK*) from the mid-1970s on.

Last but not least, as another influential actor in Turkey's politics, the army deserves a special mention especially for its role from 1960 until 1980. Even though played a constitutive role in the establishment of the Republic, the Turkish military was barred from politics through consciously enforced rules and regulations by Atatürk and his successor İnönü. The army offices had to resign from the army to be able to enter into politics and the soldiers was precluded from voting. Under the DP rule, "the civil and military bureaucrats suffered material and psychic losses because their salaries failed to keep up with rapidly rising costs. Thus, the military felt they had lost access, not only to the pinnacle of power,

[181] Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey*, 101–3.

but to social status and prestige as well".[182] Ironically though, it was Adnan Mederes and his DP who "drew the military towards politics" by trying to use it against its political rivals; for example, he ordered the army, not the police, to disperse ever growing student demonstrations against the government in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir; thereby, in a sense starting an irreversible process in Turkish politics.[183]

The ever-increasing influence of the army in the Turkish politics from the 1960 intervention on cannot be easily exaggerated as the recurring interventions in 1971 and 1980, as well as several other intermittent threats and warnings on political issues clearly demonstrated. Even though the political stances of the officers carrying out each intervention varied, as well as their objectives and outcomes, the military in general was seen as the guardian of the regime by the Turkish public and even attributed a progressive revolutionary role by some left leaning intellectuals and the oppositional youth during the 1960s. What contributed to this perception, in addition to victorious role of the military in so-called the 'War of Independence' of Turkey after the WWI, was the character of the 1960 intervention and the new constitution it brought about, which will be detailed below. The positive outlook of the military at least in the eyes of some of the revolutionaries was soon to be destroyed with the 1971 coup but not the capacity and eagerness of the military to insert its influence into politics for decades to come after 1960 intervention.

Welcomed by everybody who was discontent with the DP rule, May 27, 1960 coup was carried out by the thirty-eight military officials. It was made by lower rank military officers, unlike the 1971 and 1980 coups, which were the work of the High Command of armed forces. They immediately formed a National Unity Committee in order to achieve a speedy transition back to civilian rule. In the next fifteen moths more than four hundred DP leaders were tried and sentenced severely, and three former members of the DP cabinets—Adnan

[182] Frank Tachau and Metin Heper, "The State, Politics, and the Military in Turkey," *Comparative Politics* 16, no. 1 (1983): 21.
[183] Landau, Radical Politics in Modern Turkey, 7.

Menderes, Hasan Polatkan and Fatin Rüştü Zorlu—were executed. Meanwhile, the committee also undertook some reformative actions such as relieving the censorship on press, controlling food prices and decreeing an eight-hour work day.[184]

The 1961 constitution has created an institution, the National Security Council (NSC), to work with the cabinet, especially on issues related to national security. But the definition of national security was so broad that it enabled the army to intervene into politics regularly. The Council was actually established by the High Command and aimed also to inhibit the lower rank army officials from attempting a similar intervention, in which they have been successful.[185]

In addition to its secured place in politics thanks to the NSC, the Army has also claimed its share in the economy of the country, especially with the creation of the Army Mutual Assistance Association (*Ordu Yardımlaşma Kurumu - OYAK*) in 1961. By 1972, OYAK's assets were estimated at 300 million dollars, earning the army the title of "the 'third sector' of the economy along with the state and private sectors".[186] Its influence in the economy and politics of the country continued until decades after the 1980 coup.

The features and the consequences of the following two interventions of the military in 1971 and 1980 differ immensely from the first one and each other; each deserve ample space and time to be properly analyzed which this study cannot afford within the limits of its purposes.[187] Suffice it to say, though, that the 1980 coup represents the end of the contentious leftist politics, in other words its demobilization, through a severe crackdown on the activists. It is also the end of the contentious episode which is under scrutiny. The 1971 coup is, however, more symbolic and less consequential as it will be mentioned in detail below.

[184] Landau, 9.
[185] Ahmad, The Making of Modern Turkey, 130.
[186] Ahmad, 131.
[187] See Feroz Ahmad, "Military Intervention and the Crisis in Turkey," *Merip Reports*, no. 93 (1981): 5–32.; Tachau and Heper, "The State, Politics, and the Military in Turkey."; Özgür Ulus, *The Army and the Radical Left in Turkey : Military Coups, Socialist Revolution and Kemalism* (London ;;New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

Therefore, it is safe to say that the period between the two coups in 1960 and 1980 marks a unique episode in the Turkish politics, in which the first one created the conditions for an opening in the regime to outside actors and challengers, the last one sealed it for a long time afterwards. The general attitude of the military towards the left in this period was inimical rather than neutral. From the late 1960s onwards, in parallel with the political authorities, the military blamed the leftist movements for ever-growing contention and disorder, and viewed communism as the most important internal threat. A book titled *Means of Combatting Communism* was ordered to be read throughout the military[188]. Therefore, both during the 1971 and 1980 interventions, it deliberately targeted, arrested and imprisoned mostly, if not only, the leftists; thereby, encouraged the far-right groups who were in fact responsible for the most of the political violence and killings.

3.2. Iranian Political Regime: An Authoritarian Monarchy

Conventionally, the history of Iran in the 20th century is broken down to several politically distinct periods shaped by a number of national and international historical events, namely the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1909), the First World War, authoritarian modernization under Reza Shah (1921-1941), the rise of nationalist movement (1941-53), and finally the consolidation of Mohammed Reza Shah's power between 1953-1963 and the rapid and uneven development until 1978. This study focuses on the last two periods, which witnessed ambitious socio-economic reform projects, a fast development of state capitalism, drastic socio-structural transformations, an overwhelming growth of the gap between the poor and the rich, a brutal repression of opposition of all kinds, and consequently a rise of oppositional groups from among various strata of the society. Almost each of these periods was marked by either a popular uprising, a repressive state reaction or an external intervention. It is fair to say that modern history of Iran is mostly characterized by popular politics and state's repressive responses. The interaction between various oppositional movements and the state both influenced and was

[188] Clement Henry Dodd, *Democracy and Development in Turkey* (N. Humberside England: Eothen Press, 1979),138.

influenced by the form and character of the regime. In addition to popular politics, it is also fair to say that foreign interventions played a definitive role in the political, economic and social transformation of Iran throughout the last century.[189] The political regime and the actors in the 1960s and 1970s began to form in the post-war era; however, what determined the nature and character of not only the political regime but also the opposition in this period was the rise and fall of the nationalist movement as a result of a coup in 1953. One can hardly exaggerate the significance and influence of this intervention in the political developments in the following periods as well as in the collective memory of the Iranians.

The First World War brought about two nation states in the Middle East: Iran and Turkey. While Atatürk led the foundation and formation of the modern Turkish nation state, Reza Khan tried to follow suit. Despite Turkey and Iran had several features in common and resembled each other at the first sight; and while Reza Shah was aspiring to establish a similar modern state looking up to Atatürk, Iran differed from Turkey for a number of reasons from socio-economic to historical and geopolitical ones. The socio-political structure of Iran was different from Turkey with its decentralized political formation dominated by the tribal landlords and aristocracy. Moreover, regular interventions of the great powers into politics of Iran, first the Great Britain and Russia, then the US, had a peculiar influence on the way the political regime took shape in the later periods. Yet, it would be wrong to emphasize only on the structural reasons for the diverging paths of these two early modernizers. Even though both Atatürk and Reza Shah adopted an authoritarian trajectory of modernization, the latter's inclination to establish a dynasty rather than a republic was the definitive factor at the end of the day.

After securing the support of the outside as well as many others from democrats to socialists inside advocating for strong central state after WWI in Iran, Reza Khan crowned himself the Shah of the new dynasty which he called Pahlavi in 1925. In fact, he had first attempted to

[189] For a general history of modern Iran see Fred Halliday, *Iran, Dictatorship and Development* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), Keddie, *Modern Iran*, Ervand Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Parsa, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution*.

establish a republic, but the reactions from the conservative and clerical circles proved it to be a more difficult goal to achieve. From 1921 until his abdication by the allied forces in 1941, he launched and executed hitherto the most extensive modernization project in Iranian history that transformed Iran in a short period of time from a decentralized, agriculture-based, backward country to a more or less centralized modern state based on an extensive bureaucracy and a powerful military. Of course, his modernization was from above as those of many of his contemporaries in the global south; however, in order to establish a modern economy which was of utmost importance for Iran to survive independently in the new century was not an easy task to achieve through democratic means[190].

The regime that Reza Shah established was predominantly based on a patronage system instead of a parliamentary democracy; the parliament (*Majles*) was a rubber-stamp institution. Also, some of his reforms were either done half-heartedly or resulted in a backlash and opposite of what was actually intended. For example, the new civil law kept most of the patriarchal and Sharia-based customs making women subordinate to men, even the one allowing a husband to kill an adulterous wife with impunity.[191] On the other hand, to present a modern look, women were asked and when required forced to take off their *chador*, the veil from head to toe, in public places. This caused a popular outcry which made Reza Shah's social reforms unpopular among the masses.[192] The Dress Law was actually one of the many reform ideas Reza Shah copied from Turkey, with the exception of a few, however, most of these reforms were genuinely needed. His reforms were widely criticized for strengthening the landlords, not benefitting the poor at all, not doing enough agrarian reforms and finally favoring himself and his entourage. Despite all, Reza Shah left behind a reformed judiciary, new tax system, centralized bureaucracy and a strong Army. The economic development and reforms brought about, directly or indirectly, certain

[190] See Touraj Atabaki and Zürcher, Erik Jan, *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization Under Atatürk and Reza Shah* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004) for further discussions on the modernizations efforts of authoritarian leaders.
[191] Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 92.
[192] Houchang E. Chehabi, "Staging the Emperor's New Clothes: Dress Codes and Nation-Building under Reza Shah," *Iranian Studies* 26, no. 3/4 (1993): 209–29.

positive results such as the growth of industry, transportation, education and women's public presentation and participation.

During the WWII, just like during the WWI, Iran lost its sovereignty; both the British and the Russians invaded the country. They first ousted pro-German Reza Shah, re-defined their sphere of influence in which they continued to support different political and interest groups. Throughout the 20th century, Iran had experienced three foreign powers interfering into its domestic affairs and playing decisive roles in its political and economic transformation of the country. Russia, the northern neighbor, interfered mainly through advocating the movements of Azeri and Kurdish minorities as well as supporting socialist and communist groups. Whereas Britain was mostly active in the south supporting and mobilizing the conservative aristocrats and tribal leaders when needed. For example, the National Will Party (1941-1951) of Sayyed Zia ad-Din was backed by the British and domestically had the support of ulama, merchants, landlords, and tribes. The British had two main objectives intervening in Iran's domestic politics in the first half of the century: securing its geopolitical interests and oil concessions. During the Cold War, however, as in other parts of the Middle East, the United States took over the position of Britain and became the most influential foreign power in Iran. Just like the British. the US supported the Shah, the conservative clergy and landlords against the nationalist and leftist movements which were usually supported by the Soviets.[193]

The Period from 1941 until 1953 is considered the second constitutional era[194] in Iranian history due to the active political environment, relatively free press, and flourishing intellectual diversity. Iran entered the post-war era with a new Shah: Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the son of Reza Shah. The new Shah did not play a significant role until after 1953, instead several new political actors emerged in this period as a result of deteriorating economic and social conditions due to the war, as well as the liberated political environment in which socialist, nationalist and

193 Afshin Matin-Asgari, "The Pahlavi Era Iranian Modernity in Global Context," *The Oxford Handbook of Iranian History*, February 16, 2012.
194 Abrahamian, *Tortured Confessions Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran*,73.

aristocratic or 'feudal'[195] political groups and parties could emerge and organize freely after the collapse of the Reza Shah's dictatorship. This relatively democratic political environment continued until the new Shah got his grip on power in 1953, thanks to a CIA-staged coup toppling the Prime Minister, Mohammad Mossadeq, who was elected by the parliament and led the popular nationalization of oil movement with success in the beginning of the 1950s. In the aftermath of the 1953 coup, the Shah repressed the National Front and the Tudeh Party; further analyses of these two significant oppositional movements of the period is below.

The intricate relationship between foreign powers and the state constituted one of the significant dynamics of Iranian political environment during the last century. While the Shahs of Iran tried to pursue good relations with first the British then the US, and these powers had vested interests mostly related to Iranian oil reserves and strategic position; nationalists and leftists opposition opposed their imperialist policies and accused the regime of enabling or conniving with them. On the other hand, the members of the opposition were regularly accused by the Shah and conservative politicians of colluding with the Soviets and jeopardizing national interests. For example, the Soviet's demands for oil concession right after the WWII, and the Tudeh's legitimizing discourse on the demands discredited the Tudeh's cause as well as popularity. In the same vein, the opposition to Mohammed Mosaddegh and his oil nationalization campaign was mostly premised on the argument that he was a Tudeh supporter and serving to the interests of the Soviets. The presence and influence of the US over the regime increased gradually after the 1953 coup and reached to an extent that it was considered the most influential political actor in Iranian politics and therefore targeted by the oppositional groups throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, there is no need to explain the details of the relationship between the US and Iran to prove the support of the US to the Shah's regime.[196] It is suffice it to note that the influence of the US and presence of the US military and technical personnel was one of the

[195] Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 107. He calls the rule of the notables in this period "feudal democracy".
[196] This is detailed in various studies, for example see Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, Keddie, *Modern Iran*, and Said A Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

main characteristics of the Shah's regime and constituted one of the main pillars of criticism by the opposition.

The Shah set out to consolidate his power in the country after 1953 and eventually formed a monarchist dictatorship particularly by suppressing opposition of all sorts. Since then, his main line of policy was the destruction of what was left of democratic institutions and annihilation of the legal organized opposition. For this purpose, he established what was going to be maybe the most notorious intelligence agency, *Sazeman Amniat va Ettelaat Keshvar (SAVAK)*, in 1957 with the help of FBI and Mossad. "SAVAK has agents in the lobby of every hotel, in every government department, and in every university classroom. In the provinces, SAVAK runs a political intelligence gathering service, and abroad it keeps a check on every Iranian student … Educated Iranians cannot trust anyone beyond a close circle of friends, and for them the effect is the same as of everyone else belonged."[197] The Shah also established an intelligence unit in the Army for internal and external security; it was called Second Bureau or G-2.[198] Both SAVAK and the Second Bureau used brutal means to suppress resistance, which they sometimes exaggerated to legitimize and increase their role and presence.[199] Consequently, many people were executed on false charges. The military became one of the main pillars of the Shah's rule and he closely supervised everything related to it. The budget for the military raised from $60 million in 1954 to $7.2 billion in 1977[200] making it the fifth biggest army in the world by 1975.

After having turned into a rentier state thanks to ever increasing oil revenues from the 1960s on, not only the capitalist development but also the domestic politics in Iran was heavily influenced by the international politics, particularly by the relations with the US. During the 1950s in the post-coup period, the shah could rule with an iron fist, repressing all the

[197] Quoted in Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 126.
[198] Parvin Merat Amini, "A Single Party State in Iran, 1975-78: The Rastakhiz Party: The Final Attempt by the Shah to Consolidate His Political Base," *Middle Eastern Studies* 38, no. 1 (2002): 147.
[199] Amini, "A Single Party State in Iran, 1975-78."
[200] Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, "What Is Radicalism? Power and Resistance in Iran," *Middle East Critique* 21, no. 3 (2012),281.

dissident leftist and nationalist groups from intellectuals to students without needing to implement any social or economic reforms thanks to unfailing support of the US to the regime. Meanwhile, the US could increase its economic and military presence in Iran. It was only with a Democratic Party president's coming to power in the US and new foreign policy principles that the internal dynamics of the Iranian regime began to change once more in the beginning of the 1960s. Of course, the US did not singlehandedly determine the political developments in Iran; however, its position and policies immensely influenced the domestic actors' perception of opportunity or threat. This was the case, for example, not only when the US-backed Prime Minister, Amini initiated the long due land reform with confidence after 1960, but also when the democratic circles in and outside of the twentieth *Majles* dared to demand and protest for fair elections. In short, the US played a significant role in the formation of political opportunity structure for the opposition to the Shah.

Therefore, the 1960s brought about various problems for the Shah's regime as a result of the new US administration under newly elected Democrat John Kennedy, who emphasized the significance of democracy and human rights in the allied countries. The decade started with the controversial elections for the twentieth Majles which allowed independent candidates to run as a result of pressure coming from the Kennedy administration. On the election day, on 21 July 1960, three political parties which were affiliated with the National Front issued a declaration demanding free elections. The demonstrations continued and gained speed after the elections among the National Front leaders and supporters who claimed that the elections were rigged. After series of demonstrations by the National Front for free elections some of which resulted in a number of arrests and casualties, the Shah had to give in and issue the re-elections in January 1961. The demand for free elections gathered support from other parts of the society, especially from Tehran University students, as well as teachers who went on strike on 2 May 1961, and turned into a wholesale protests against the government policies. Finally, all culminated and convinced the Shah to ask Ali Amini, who was supported by the U.S, to form the government on 6 May 1961. Amini was ambitious and started implementing

reforms in various areas of economy and politics in Iran, such as the revision of electoral laws and the distribution of the agricultural land; he also invested in development plans. However, his close ties to the US and insistence to rule by decree sidelining the parliament costed him the support of the National Front, the only viable opposition which could have support him in the face of the Shah's attacks.

Extremely bothered by the support that Amini received from the US and his confidence and success, the Shah forced Amini to resign at the first opportunity on 16 July 1962; however, it set off a range of events that culminated into one of the biggest uprisings in Iranian history. It was led by Khomeini and the university students, bazaar merchants and many unemployed supported Khomeini. In civil war like conditions the security forces and the army killed hundreds of protestors, and finally Khomeini was arrested. Meanwhile major strikes took place; political turmoil compounded with the religious discontent paved the way for the 1963 riots. Even though the opposition leaders of the Muharram upheavals of June 1963 did not demand radical changes but moderate reforms, Abrahamian considers the events "a dress rehearsal" for the Islamic revolution.[201]

In the midst of the political turmoil, in January 1963, the Shah put his reform program to a national referendum and like many of its counterparts received 99 percent favorable vote. The pressure of Kennedy Administration for social and economic reforms also played a significant role in the Shah's decision for a reform program because it was also meant to present a reformist image for the Shah to the Western world, which to a great extent became successful on that ground. It consisted of an agrarian reform law, "vote for women, profit-sharing for factory workers, nationalization of forests, literacy corps, and sale of public sector factories to pay compensation to landlords affected by land distribution."[202] Officially referred as the White Revolution or the Shah and People Revolution, the Shah's reform program was

[201] Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 426.
[202] Val Moghadam, "One Revolution or Two? The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic," *Socialist Register* 25, no. 25 (1989): 77, http://socialistregister.com/index.php/srv/article/view/5560.

actually composed of the bids and pieces of both Amini's reform program and what had been already demanded by the opposition before, especially by the Tudeh Party first and then the National Front. However, in the way it was implemented by the Shah, the land reform did not only destroy the landowning class but also gave way to a mass migration from the rural areas to the big cities.

Eventually, the 1963 uprisings too were put down in the most brutal way. Yet, structural changes in the Iranian society due to industrialization, land reform, urbanization, modernizing reforms and expansion of educational opportunities continued to give way to the emergence or mobilization of new as well as old groups such as the intellectuals, students, workers, women, and ulama who perceived a stake for themselves in politics. In short, as Abrahamian puts it, the period between 1963 and 1977 can be defined as one of neither underdevelopment nor overdevelopments but *uneven development*.[203] Accordingly, the rapid socio-economic development carried out in this period, mostly thanks to the increasing oil revenues, was not balanced by the necessary political democratization. Furthermore, the development policies of the state served only the interests of certain sectors in society rather than the general public. “In industry, agriculture, and commerce, the government’s development strategies consistently favored the upper class over the working classes, urban over rural, and large modern enterprises over small traditional ones.”[204] Eventually, “the deterioration of the country’s agriculture, widespread peasant migrations, and urban housing shortages”[205] created a sweeping discontent on every level of the society that needed to be addressed democratically. Instead, the Shah increased the regime’s repression on all classes and groups in society through state instruments such as a single party rule, SAVAK, the army and a strong bureaucracy. No independent political organization, trade union, and media outlet was allowed to operate. By the 1970s, the level of political repression was unrivaled in any third world country. His own words, uttered after the establishment of a new single party in 1975,

[203] Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 419-450.
[204] Parsa, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution*, 63.
[205] Parsa, 63.

which is called the Rastakhiz or National Resurgence Party, summarized the nature of his regime best:

> A person who does not enter the new political party and does not believe in the three cardinal principles which I referred to, will have only two choices. He is either an individual who belongs to an illegal organization, or is related to the outlawed Tudeh Party, or in other words a traitor. Such an individual belongs in an Iranian prison, or if he desires he can leave the country tomorrow, without even paying exit fees; he can go anywhere he likes, because he is not an Iranian, he has no nation, and his activities are illegal and punishable according to the law.[206]

Consequently, not only political opposition but also religious groups, the Bazaar businessmen and workers emerged as the discontented groups during that period. This expansion of the political landscape was perceived as a threat to the sovereignty of the state and led the Shah to seek further and continuous surveillance and disciplinary mechanisms to keep these groups under control, thereby creating a vicious cycle of escalation during the 1960s and 1970s. Among the various dissident groups, we will focus on the evolution of the secular leftist opposition and the path to the adoption of guerrilla struggle among some of the leftist organizations.

3.3. Conclusion

As we have seen, Iran and Turkey followed a very similar trajectory of authoritarian modernization in the early 20th century which also determined the political culture as a result of formation of strong central national states in the two countries in the following periods. Therefore, the difference in the political systems, Turkey being a republic whereas Iran a monarchy, did not set the two apart to a significant extent. They have also stood out in the Middle East for not having been colonized by the Western powers; thus, they have always had a different relationship with the West and a unique Western influence than those countries that had been colonized. As we will see in more detail below, until the mid-century, the attitude towards the west and western states was one of respect and admiration among the intellectuals and general public alike. What is also worthwhile to mention is that Turkey and

[206] Halliday, *Iran, Dictatorship and Development*, 47, 48.

Iran have come to share a number of customs and traditions as long-time neighbors of similar size, religious affiliations and socio-cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the two countries fall in the spectrum of comparison into that of similar cases than the different ones.

Along with these resemblances, there were also a number of differences between Turkish and Iranian cases. Turkey as a parliamentary republic have always been committed to democratic and free elections after transition to the multi-party system and the rule of law with the exception of regular military interventions. Despite the continuous majority of conservative right-wing parties in the parliament and the governments; as well as the persisting political pressure, which regularly culminated into violent interventions, on the leftist movements in general, oppositional movements of various sorts and labor movement could always continue to operate legally in Turkey thanks to the democratic and political rights granted by the 1961 Constitution. However, in Iran the parliament had been more of a rubber stamp rather than a real house of representatives with independent executive and legislative powers with the exception of brief intervals during the interwar period and the nationalization of oil campaign. The Shah regime in Iran increased and consolidated its grip on power constantly in the second half of the century as well as its dictatorial tendencies which were particularly felt by the leftist and democratic opposition through censorship, suppression, intervention and prohibitions. Therefore, by the mid-1960s, there had been left no room for legal opposition to the Shah's regime, let alone a parliamentary one. Further implications of diverging political environments for the oppositional movements in the two countries will be the topic of the next chapter.

4. The Leftist Opposition in Turkey and Iran

This chapter analyzes the political, economic and social structural changes in Turkey and Iran, — a new constitution, rapid industrialization, urbanization, and land reform, rapid development, institutionalization respectively— as well as the opportunities and threats that paved the way for the emergence of a new left-wing opposition. The mobilization networks on which the left-wing activism relied to organize during the 1960s, and also before when it is relevant, will constitute the framework of the chapter. It will be followed by a chapter covering the framing processes through which the activists perceived and made sense of these threats and opportunities, and how they put them into action. Following Tarrow and Tilly[207] I conceptualize this period as the 'new coordination process' which was comprised of three main mechanisms: *brokerage, coordinated* action, and *diffusion* in Turkey; and *repression, institutionalization* and *disillusionment* in Iran. In order to explain each mechanism, I identify the political actors who played critical roles for each mechanism, emerging collective identities that created solidarity among the activists, and finally the repertoire of action that they adopted to challenge their regimes.

In parallel to the workings of these mechanisms, I identify the mobilizing structures that helped especially coordination and diffusion of left-wing collective action through student organizations and labor unions in the second half of the 1960s in Turkey, as well as a mighty student organization of Iranian students abroad and small clandestine groups of intellectuals and students in Iran. In the same vein, to explicate their choice of repertoire of actions, I give an account of the evolution of the streams of contention from more conventional methods of contention including strikes, demonstrations, and boycotts, to more disruptive ones such as university occupations and finally to the use of violence.

4.1. Turkey

[207] Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*.

While during the 1960s the leftist opposition was composed of four pillars: a vigorous labor party, progressive labor unions, socialist intellectuals and politically active students; the political contention in the 1970s, however, was dominated by a radical and mighty labor union federation (DİSK), five impotent legal leftist parties, and numerous militant leftist organizations and movements, several of which had considerable popular support. The raise of legal parliamentary left ended by the end of the 1960s and was followed by a short period of guerrilla struggle at the beginning of the 1970s. After an inactive period from 1972 to 1974, especially second half of the 1970s witnessed a gradual increase in the political violence in the forms of armed conflict between the extreme right and leftist groups, as well as armed attacks, bombings, bank robberies, gunfights, kidnappings and assassinations. Strikes, demonstrations and protests continued too. The conflicts in the form of street fights between revolutionary left-wing groups and right-wing groups accounted for most of the violence[208]. Among the dead, students and workers constituted the half, while the security forces 8.4 percent[209]. The two decades from 1960 to 1980 is a unique period for the leftist movement in Turkey, "considering that prior to 1960 […] a legal socialist movement actually did not exist, and that after 1980 it was again forbidden to operate within the law"[210]. In the following two chapters, I will explain and analyze the characteristics of the leftist contention in Turkey in this period by using the relevant concepts and approaches of the social movement studies.

a) The Turkish Labor Party: Brokerage and a New Coordination

During the Cold War, the left-wing opposition in Turkey found a fertile ground in the socio-political structuring of the country: The social conservatism, crisis-prone economic liberalism and political authoritarianism of the Democrat Party during the 1950s as well as the RPP's inability to offer an alternative or viable opposition provided a breeding ground for left-wing

[208] In 1969: 9, in 1970: 19, in 1971: 22, in 1972: 22, in 1973: 15, in 1974: 27, in 1975: 37, in 1976: 108, in 1977: 319, in 1978: 1095, in 1979: 1362, and in 1980 before the coup d'état on September 12: 1928 people died in the events of political violence. Most of the deaths took place in major cities such as Istanbul, Adana, Ankara and Gaziantep. Keleş and Ünsal, *Kent ve Siyasal Şiddet (City and Political Violence)*, 35, 36.
[209] Keleş and Ünsal,56.
[210] Lipovsky, *The Socialist Movement in Turkey 1960-1980*, 2.

opposition of various sorts. The foreign policy of Turkey, which had been transformed after the WWII as a result of the US's increasing interests and influence in the region, also contributed to this process. Turkey became an official US ally and American influence in Turkish politics began to be felt increasingly with economic and military aids received from the US through the Truman Program and the Marshall Plan, Turkey's entry into Korean War and the NATO membership. The emerging opposition was not only discontent with rising inflation or shortage of goods but also increasing American influence and presence in the country, which eventually caused anti-Americanism and anti-imperialism to become one of the main frames of the oppositional thought in the 1960s and 1970s. From the first military intervention in 1960 until the last one in 1980, which crushed down the left ruthlessly, Turkey experienced cycles of left-wing protests spreading and escalating in the course of two decades and representing the most serious challenge to the state authority in Turkey's modern history.

The military coup which took place in 1960 ironically represents a threshold in the history of the left mostly due to the new constitution it brought about. Article 1 of the 1961 Constitution proclaimed the Turkish Republic to be a "social state" in addition to its being a secular and democratic one according to 1924 Constitution. Furthermore, President Cemal Gürsel stated that the article "meant that Turkey was open to socialism".[211] What gave the new constitution its progressive character was actually the fact that it was drafted by the university professors, for the first and last time in Turkey's history. Other than defining Turkey as a social state, the new constitution also guaranteed unprecedented civil liberties and political rights, including freedom of thought, expression, association and publication[212]; thereby, providing the opposition and protestors with the legal grounds for a political activism. Liberalization of political life after the adoption of the 1961 Constitution, which was the most democratic constitution in Turkish history, provided the socialist groups and the worker's rights activist with an environment in which they could organize and

[211] George S. Harris, "The Left in Turkey," *Problems of Communism* 29, no. 4 (1980), 28.
[212] Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*,130.

disseminate relatively freely. If the growing number of workers prepared the ground for socialist movements, the legal structure based on the principle of rule of law and democracy facilitated their flourishing. These legal and political openings in the Turkish regime were the first signs of political opportunities assisting the emergence of a left-wing contention. However, we cannot say the same thing about the socio-economic structure of the country which could not be changed overnight. The large land-owners, the urban upper-middle class, ex-DP members and religious functionaries were still holding on to their powers after the politics returned to normal[213].

This is exactly why the beginning of the 1960s is a good example of how the perceptions of activists matter as much as, and maybe even more than, the conducive structural conditions in the emergence of social movements as McAdam et al. and other contemporary scholars argued in their theories of contention[214]. Despite the lack of a substantial change in socio-economic structure, the rights and freedoms guaranteed by 1961 Constitution were viewed as an opportunity to initiate a political opposition; and the establishment of the TLP in 1961 could be seen as a proof of the mechanism of attribution of opportunity by the activists.

The process which would best conceptualize the contentious episode in the 1960s in Turkey is new coordination.[215] According to Tilly and Tarrow (2015), the process of new coordination consists of mainly three mechanisms: brokerage, diffusion and coordinated action; and combination of the three usually leads to an upward scale shift in contentious politics[216] just like in the events following the establishment of the TLP. The mechanism of coordinated action usually takes place first and refers to a situation in which "two or more actors signal their intentions to each other and engage in parallel making of claims on the same object"[217]. If this mechanism could be followed by the other two mechanisms then we can talk about a new

[213] Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey*,14.
[214] McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*.
[215] Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*,35.
[216] McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, Dynamics of Contention, 333, Charles Kurzman, *The Unthinkable Revolution in Iran* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).
[217] Tilly and Tarrow, Contentious Politics, 34.

coordination. A similar line of developments can be observed during the early years of the 1960s in Turkey. The turning point in the left's critical role in the Turkish politics came with the constitution of a new political actor: the TLP, which was established in March 1961 by a group of union leaders. This coordinated action by the union leaders, who brought Mehmet Ali Aybar, a prominent lawyer, to the Party's presidency in 1962, quickly diffused among the intellectuals, students and workers. Even though there had always been socialist and communist groups in Turkey since the last century of the Ottoman Empire, they had never previously played such a critical role in the history of the country. Aybar's TLP did not constrained itself to be a labor party only and could also become "the party of the people" by including Kurdish tribal figures and wealthy landowners[218], alongside workers, intellectuals and students into its ranks. The party program of the TLP argued that "economic progress was only possible through a non-capitalist path of development […] and the Kemalist tenet of populism, with its denial of class differences allowed the growth of a comprador capitalist class, which acted in the interest of international capital, not the Turkish people"[219]. This was a very serious open challenge to one of the founding principles of Kemalist Turkish state paused by a political party. The TLP continued to be the gravitational center of all the leftist of all sorts until 1969 and what brought its demise later on was a combination of factors concerning the internal dynamics of the party as well as in its relations with its constituency and the state.

The TLP has a special place in the history of the Turkish Left for many reasons but mostly for its role as a broker in the popular politics. Brokerage is a mechanism that is defined as "the linking of two or more previously unconnected social sites by a unit that mediates their relations with one another and/or with yet other sites"[220]. The TLP, for the first time in Turkish history was able to connect unionists, intellectuals, and students by facilitating a coordinated action among them; and demonstrated that they could have a leverage in the politics of the country. It was not

[218] Harris, "The Left in Turkey," 29.
[219] Brian Mello, "Political Process and the Development of Labor Insurgency in Turkey, 1945–80," *Social Movement Studies* 6, no. 3 (December 1, 2007):220.
[220] McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*,26.

only able to bring labor union leaders and left-wing intellectuals together under the Party roof, it could also mobilize students who had hitherto been dormant or isolated from politics through the intellectual clubs (*Fikir Kulüpleri*) and student organizations in the universities. In order to understand the importance of the role the TLP played, we can take a further look at the evolution of labor and student movements in the 1960s in parallel to the TLP's increasing role in the politics.

b) The Labor Movement in Turkey: Diffusion of the Leftist Ideals

Workers had been discouraged to get involved into politics under Atatürk's presidency. Indeed, "the Kemalist fiction of a 'classless, casteless unified society,' showed a paternalistic interest in the problems of labor"[221]. The 1936 Labor Law had strictly forbidden strikes and it was not until 1947 that the government allowed the right to establish trade unions; it had only been three months since RPP closed down "socialist parties and 'dangerous' union organizations" with a martial law decree issued in December 1946.[222] By 1952, the trade unions were able to establish a federation called *Türk-İş* (Turkish Labor); however, their activities were still restricted and kept under strict surveillance by the DP government during the 1950s. Despite its initial rhetoric supporting workers' rights, the DP, just like RPP before it, suppressed workers' mobilization under its rule[223].

The 1961 Constitution guaranteed the right of workers to organize, to establish unions and even strike. This open political opportunity was coincided with the new leverage that the workers achieved as a result of rapid industrialization and drastic increase in their numbers in the 1960s. These collectively brought about a more assertive political actor: The Confederation of Revolutionary Labor Unions *(Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu* -

[221] Ronnie Margulies and Ergin Yıldızoğlu, "Trade Unions and Turkey's Working Class," *Middle East Report* 121 (1984):16.
[222] Mello, "Political Process and the Development of Labor Insurgency in Turkey, 1945–80," 214.
[223] Yıldırım Koç, *Workers and Trade Unions in Türkiye* (TURK-İŞ, 1999),37, http://yildirimkoc.com.tr/usrfile/1325425564b.pdf.

DİSK), which was to play a key role in the politics of the country until the 1980 coup[224]. The workers constituted one of the most important political actors in the 1960s and 1970s through active labor unions and federations, prolonged cycles of protest, strikes and factory occupations. They were mostly concerned about rising prices, low wages, working conditions; however, the two federations they established, Türk-İş and DİSK, were also concerned about more general political and economic problems of the country.

Turkey made its first leap towards the planned economy with the creation of State Planning Organization (SPO) in 1960; it was another product of the 1960 coup and the new constitution. The main aim of the planned economy was a rapid industrialization via import substitution model. With the help of favorable global economic environment, Turkish economy grew by 7 per cent throughout the 1960s; thereby, changed its character and that of society to a great extent by the end of the decade. The most significant change in the economy was the unprecedented growth of the private industrial sector. Its share in the GNP reached that of agriculture which had dominated Turkish economy with a small state-supported industrial sector up until the 1960s[225].

The fast industrialization resulted in great structural changes in society: first through rapid urbanization, and then with the emergence of a working class in such high numbers for the first time in Turkey's history. By 1970, "173,000 workers, 20 percent of the industrial work force, worked in factories employing more than 1,000 workers," and the number of unionized workers had reached one million[226]. In short, political, economic and social changes occurring almost simultaneously during the 1960s had a great impact on the development of labor movement and its relations with the state and other actors of the social movement sector.

[224]Ümit Cizre-Sakallioğlu, "Labour and State in Turkey: 1960–80," *Middle Eastern Studies* 28, no. 4 (October 1, 1992): 712–28, Koç, *Workers and Trade Unions in Türkiye*; Mello, "Political Process and the Development of Labor Insurgency in Turkey, 1945–80."
[225] Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 133,134.
[226] Margulies and Yıldızoğlu, "Trade Unions and Turkey's Working Class,"16.

During the 1960s, among the demands of Türk-İş were a fair distribution of land, limited foreign investment, and the nationalization of natural resources and foreign trade[227]. In the atmosphere of the period, however, these demands and other policies of Türk-İş were found too moderate by more radical members of some trade unions in the Federation. Also, on several occasions Türk-İş failed to meet worker's expectations by prioritizing maintaining good relations with the government[228]. A group of trade unions eventually broke away from Türk-İş and established a new federation called DİSK, in February, 1967. DİSK refused Türk-İş's principle of staying out of politics and declared its support for the TLP, which was also established by the leaders of trade unions, and commitment to class struggle by asking for complete redistribution of land and extensive nationalization of more sectors. Until its suspension by the 1980 military regime, DİSK played a very important role in the labor movement as well akin the politics of Turkey; and was revered by the workers and left-wing organizations alike.

In addition to escalated student activism and intellectual radicalism, the competition between the two union federations led to an increased number of strikes and conflicts with the police at the end of the decade[229]. Thanks to sustained and well-organized strikes by DİSK, workers became more successful in achieving their objectives. Especially with the economic crisis felt at the gate, political authority wanted to hinder the diffusion and strengthening of the labor movement led by DİSK, so the parliament met to make an amendment in the Unions Law on June 12, 1970, which required a trade union to represent at least one-third of the workers in a specific branch of industry for it to be able to organize at national level. The minister of labor announced that "unions which have become tools of ideological movements [i.e., DİSK-affiliated unions] will automatically be abolished as soon as the law is passed".

[227] Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey*, 92.
[228] Margulies and Yıldızoğlu, "Trade Unions and Turkey's Working Class,"17.
[229] Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey*, 94.

The response of the workers came as a surprise to the government as well as to the leftist organizations: "Hundreds of thousands of workers blocked the Istanbul-Ankara highway. Armed with clubs, they fought pitched battles with police and soldiers on June 15 and 16. Three workers were killed; many other workers and police were injured"[230].

Despite tried hard, the military regime after 1971 coup could not suppress the workers' mobilization and soon after the unionization, DİSK politicization and strikes picked up from where they left off: 1974 witnessed a record number of workers going on strike; and 1977 a record number of days lost on strikes. The May Day demonstrations turned into a show-off for workers, half a million of whom were gathering in Taksim Square, in Istanbul, every year from 1976 to 1978. What is significant as far as the activism of the workers in this period is concerned is that as opposed to what was argued by the radical leftists who assumed the vanguard of the revolution, the workers, under DİSK leadership, were politically more of an influential actor than any other revolutionary movement or organization during the 1970s. Therefore, the relationship between the radical leftist activists and the workers could not exceed the limits of a romantic attachment and turn into a real cooperative or mutually supportive system, with some minor exceptions. The repercussion of this isolation of the revolutionary activists, i.e. radical leftist organizations, from the revolutionary subject, i.e. workers, will be discussed below in the context of dissociation mechanism.

c) The Students: Boundary Formation and Creation of a Collective Identity

In addition to the rapid industrialization and massive migration to urban areas transforming the socio-economic structure of Turkey, an increase in the number of educated population had a substantial influence on society especially on the youth activism during this period just like in most of the other Third World countries.[231] In parallel with the worldwide trends, the number of university students in Turkey increased substantially in the second half of the 20th

[230] Margulies and Yıldızoğlu, "Trade Unions and Turkey's Working Class," 17.
[231] Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, 344–72.

century; from 44,461 in 1960 to 73,228 in 1970[232]. Of course, these were the ones who could make it to the university; the high school graduates were even more numerous and it was a source of great grievance not being able to enter university among the youth. However, the universities were not without problems either. Crowded classes, inadequate university facilities, populous dormitories were the first causes for discontent among the students[233]. Students had been protesting the poor conditions in the universities during the 1950s too, but only with the 1960s student protests gained a more general character. Gradually, in addition to educational concerns, political and socio-economic issues began to occupy a significant place in student demonstrations, slogans and declarations.

The first step in the formation of the students' mobilization network, thanks to the new rights and freedoms provided by the new 1961 Constitution, was the creation of the political debating societies (*Fikir Kulüpleri* -FK, or 'idea clubs') in the major university campuses. Rather than focusing on solely educational issues, the FK were set up to discuss Turkey's problems and possible solutions in the first half of the 1960s; thereby, contributed to the politicization of the students. The popularity of the left and leftist ideas among university students was illustrated by a study as early as in 1964-5. According to this study, 80% of student leaders and 63.4 % of regular students read leftist dailies, overwhelmingly focusing on news and articles about political issues. Most of these students thought that socialism is a fairer system[234]. However, especially in the first half of the 1960s, activist students were overwhelmingly defining themselves as progressive or *Atatürkçü* (followers of Atatürk and his ideals) rather than as socialist; and their fight against reactionaries and obscurantism. Moreover, being called a communist was regarded as an insult and they were insisting that they had nothing to do with communism.[235] It was only by 1965 that the vocabulary of the

[232] Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey*, 31.
[233] Landau, 32.
[234] Landau, 33-35.
[235] Harun Karadeniz, *Olaylı yıllar ve gençlik (The Tumultuous Years and the Youth)* (Istanbul: May Yayınları, 1975), 33-43, 51.

student movement was expanded and their slogans and declarations began to include words like exploitation, fascism and imperialism[236]. One campaign seems to have particularly contributed to their transformation and approaching to a more socialist agenda; it was the nationalization of oil campaign which was organized in 1965 by a student organization protesting the high price of oil and higher share of international oil companies[237]. Students were accused of being communists or propagating communism in the course of this and other demonstrations and campaigns. The need to respond to these accusations and find solutions to offer for the problems they were concerned about and protesting, as well as the political environment let them to improve their intellectual knowledge and gradually approach to socialism.

The most important development in the politicization of the youth came with the establishment of the Federation of Idea Clubs (*Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu* - FKF) in 1965. Soon becoming affiliated with the TLP, the FKF attracted a large number of students and played the most important role in the student movement until 1969. It was the FKF organizing most of the student demonstrations that marked the 1968 movement in Turkey, such as the protest against the Sixth Fleet in Istanbul and the burning of American ambassador's car at Middle East Technical University. The events that brought the students to the center of socialist opposition movement had begun with the boycott on June 10, 1968 in Ankara University. It rapidly spread to the other big universities and evolved into an occupation in Istanbul University; the university occupations also spread to the other universities.

During the demonstrations and occupations, students' demands included but were not limited to university reform, criticism of policies of the government and the police. The police were particularly targeted for the repressive policing of protests by the left-wing groups, whereas favoring and turning a blind eye to the right-wing groups' activities. The government was

[236] Karadeniz, 44.
[237] Karadeniz, 68-76.

criticized too on domestic and foreign policy choices; students were also concerned about more global issues such as colonialism and imperialism of the Western powers in general and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Vietnam war in particular. The left-wing political literature popular in the world was translated into Turkish and made available in cheap editions. Increased accessibility of the global leftist and revolutionary literature, relative freedom of left-wing press in the country, and availability of international broadcasting of Radio Moscow, Peking Radio and others from Europe and America led to the diffusion of revolutionary ideas as well as repertoires of action on an unprecedented scale throughout the decade.

By 1970, boycotts and occupations became commonplace in all the major universities in Istanbul and Ankara; they were marked by the conflicts between students and police who were invited by the university presidents. However, the protests and student activism could not be contained in the university campuses; the growing sense of anti-Americanism let students also to attack American personnel and the buildings of American Cultural Center, Pan-American Airlines, and American News Agency[238].

With some exceptions, from mid-1968 until 1969, most student protests were democratic and generally about the university reforms that they were demanding from the university administrations. Most often, negotiations were interrupted and the conflicts were escalated by the police's use of force and violence. However, they could not easily be suppressed by the state's using force and repression for two reasons. First, students in Turkey were following the student protests in Europe and other countries; therefore, they were beginning to see themselves as a political actor. Second, students also noticed their disruptive power and influence in politics during these protest movements and they started to attribute a revolutionary character to themselves. Therefore, rather than dissuading students and, thereby, demobilization of their movement, police violence confirmed their belief in the

[238] Vehbi Ersan, *1970'lerde Turkiye solu (Turkey's Left in the 1970s)* (İstanbul: Iletisim Yayınları, 2013), 2-13, 29.

significance of their role in the road to revolution. Gradually, other dynamics too, such as competition among the student leaders and organizations and the attacks of the right-wing militants, began to play a part in escalating and radicalizing students' movement. However, it is important to note that what pushed the protestors into adopting radical strategies and tactics in the first place was mostly the initial repressive policies of the state.

Moreover, macro level developments of the period, such as the diffusion of disruptive performances or protest actions in Europe, guerrilla struggles in Latin America and Vietnam, anti-colonial, anti-imperialist liberation movements in the Middle East were compounded with the writings and calls of contemporary revolutionaries and intellectuals including Ho Chi Minh, Che Guevara, Fanon, Carlos Marighella, and Regis Debray, and contributed to the legitimization of the use of revolutionary violence against the suppressors of various sorts in the eyes of leftist activists. For example, the Tricontinental conference in Havana in 1966 was significant for many revolutionary organizations all around the world, where Che Guevara called for "two, three, many Vietnams" which became widespread slogan for the 1968 protest movements. Many radical leftist groups in the West too "adopted the premise that the objective conditions for a revolutionary uprising could in many cases only be created by guerrilla tactics, which would engender the necessary revolutionary consciousness"[239]. As another very influential figure on the leftist youth in that period, Regis Debray, wrote a book titled *Revolution in Revolution* to describe "[t]he task, role and function of this guerrilla activity" at the request of Fidel Castro. In a way it was announcing the subversion of the Old Left. It was derived from the example of the Cuban revolution and "call[ed] for the establishment of groups of guerrillas ("foci") in Latin America to form the backbone of the armed struggle of an avant-garde"[240]. Hüseyin İnan, the leader of the People's Liberation Army of Turkey (THKO), the first organization adopting guerrilla struggle, was heavily influenced by Debray's book; as evident in his booklet *Türkiye Devriminin Yolu* (The Path of

[239] Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, "Transformation by Subversion?," *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Collective Identities in West Germany and the US in the 1960s and 1970s* 3 (2010): 161.
[240] Gilcher-Holtey, 161.

Turkey's Revolution)[241] In short, while the state and its repressive methods became the push factors for the activists' transition from using conventional and peaceful means to more disruptive and violent ones in the course of the time, the diffusion of a rich disruptive repertoire of actions and the *Zeitgeist* legitimizing violent means became the pull factors.

The FKF was re-named as Dev-Genç (an abbreviation for *Devrimci Gençlik* or Revolutionary Youth) as a result of the domination of the adherents of the 'national democratic revolution' (NDR) in the 1969 congress of the Federation. From then on, it was all downhill to violence with the help of several mechanisms which were at play in the student movement. Especially three of them played a significant part in the transition of students to become one of the most important political actors of the period; they were social appropriation, boundary activation, and identity shift. Tilly and Tarrow (2015) define social appropriation as a mechanism through which "nonpolitical groups transform into political actors by using their organizational and institutional bases to launch movement campaigns"[242]. This mechanism defines exactly what was happening during 1968 and 1969 in the major university campuses in Turkey. Students used university buildings and campuses to organize and protest. As a result of recurring boycotts of classes and occupations of university buildings, educational activities in many universities in Ankara and Istanbul halted for several months. It was during these boycotts and occupations that most students were recruited to the movement.

Another mechanism influencing student movement was boundary activation which is described as "creation of a new boundary or the crystallization of an existing one between challenging groups and their targets"[243]. What is also called 'us-them division' between the students first occurred in the face of increasing attacks of the right-wing students. The constant fights with the right-wing groups, first in the campuses then in the streets, polarized

[241] Kürkçü, "Türkiye Sosyalist Hareketine Silahlı Mücadelenin Girişi (The Entry of Armed Struggle to Turkish Socialist Movement)," 498.
[242] Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 36.
[243] Tilly and Tarrow, 36.37.

the sides to an unprecedented degree. 'Anti-fascist struggle'[244] and the need to defend against the violent attacks of these far-right militants kept many protesting students occupied and even transformed the character of their movement. This division led the emergence of another mechanism in the transition of student movement to a political actor: identity shift. Defined as the "formation of new identities within challenging groups whose coordinated action brings them together and reveals their commonalities"[245], identity shift could be observed clearly in the way the leftist students began to identify themselves as revolutionaries, or even professional revolutionaries by 1970. In addition to the relentless attacks of the *Bozkurtlar*, there were also other factors, as will be detailed below, in the emergence of this new revolutionary identity among the leftist students such as the competition between different groups and disillusionment with the legal and parliamentary ways. All contributed to the creation of a militant identity which was based on the notion of who was the most revolutionary. It was in the way to prove their true identities as revolutionaries that many were to resort to the means previously unthinkable. Acceptance of violence only as a self-defense method first against the right-wingers eased their way to a more substantial change. In short, the identity shift of students as non-political actors to revolutionaries, one of the most contentious political actors, took place in a processual and causal manner in reaction to and as a result of various interactions with other actors.

[244] The terms 'anti-fascist struggle' and 'fight against fascism' were commonly used both by the activists, the parties and the intellectuals of the radical and mainstream left-wing politics in Turkey during the 1960s and 1970s to describe the political and social struggle against the activities and policies of far-right and ultranationalist parties, namely the NAP and paramilitary groups associated with the NAP. The author is naturally aware of the origin, historical and political connotations of the term fascism and acknowledges the differences between the usages. However, both to be able to reflect the authentic discourse of the period and also to follow the example of other scholars using the terms in this very context (For example, see Zürcher 2013, 263, 283) the terms such as fascist and anti-fascism are used to refer to the above-mentioned groups and the struggle against them throughout this study. Also noteworthy is that some scholars prefer to call the very groups and the party as 'neo-fascist' instead (See for example: Ahmad 1993, 151; Sayari 1987, 26).

[245] Tilly and Tarrow, 37.

4.2. Iran

Opposition to the Shah's modernization is conventionally divided into two camps: Secular and religious, the latter receiving the most attention and credit in the mainstream studies on Iran. I focus on the secular one for two reasons: first, the religious, or clerical, opposition has been studied and analyzed thoroughly from various perspectives and methodologies for its role and following success after the revolution. So, there is a clear teleological[246] bias that needs to be balanced in the literature. Second, women in the ranks of secular opposition outnumbered those in the religious camp. Also, for the reasons that I explained above regarding my choice of Iran and Turkey for a comparative study, it is more relevant to limit my focus on the secular opposition and its radicalization in this period.

While the beginning of the1960s provided the leftists in Turkey with new opportunities, conversely in Iran it brought about the consolidation of regime's repression and naturally an increasing threat attribution by the Iranian leftists. After the uprisings in 1963 was brutally crashed down by the regime, the small groupings of intellectuals and students in different parts of the country began to come to similar conclusions regarding the necessity of armed struggle as detailed below. However, it was not only the shrinking opportunities that led the leftists to this conclusion but also the evolution of the left-wing politics in general in the first half of the 20th century. The emergence, mobilization and repression of the popular movements of various stripes from the post-war era until 1963 had a decisive influence on the form and strategies of the radical leftist groups in the following periods. Therefore, this part is devoted to the history and evolution of the secular left in Iran.

a) The Legacy of the Tudeh Party and the National Front: Disillusionment

The history of the Left in Iran can be traced back to the Constitutional Revolution, 1905-1909. The ideals promoted by Democrat Party during the Revolution, such as freedom of press, speech

[246] Only recently some studies have begun to challenge this mainstream teleological reading of Iranian history. See, for example: Afshin Matin-Asgari, *Iranian Student Opposition to the Shah* (Costa Mesa, Calif: Mazda Publishers, 2002), 3.

and organization, the workers' right to organize and strike, universal male suffrage, and land reform[247], were in line with the socialist ideals of the period. The party played an important role in terms of giving the new constitution a progressive and democratic character, however, its influence could not be persistent due to the outbreak of the WWI, which resulted in the occupation of Iran by the British and Russian forces.

The Bolshevik Revolution in international arena and the formation of Reza Shah's modern central state in the domestic arena determined the larger context for the Iranian Left in the 1920s and 1930s. Although the formation of the Communist Party in 1920 and the declaration of Soviet Socialist Republic of Iran, in Gilan in 1921 presented a promising outlook at the beginning of the period, Reza Shah's regime proved its might by defeating the revolutionaries in Gilan first and then suppressing all kinds of independent political actors. The left was targeted by the Shah's regime from its beginning. The 1931 law, which banned all forms of collectivist[248] ideology, was used to imprison intellectuals, as well as activists, with communist and socialist leanings. "The first political prisoners in Qasr were from the Communist party. […] Some two hundred communists were arrested in 1929–30 soon after organizing a series of strikes—in an Isfahan textile mill, in the Mazandaran railways, in the Mashed carpet workshops, and, most sensational of all, in the British-owned oil Industry."[249]

The Reza Shah's autocracy came to an end with the occupation of the country by the British, Russian and American forces during the WWII. Between 1941 and 1953 was the period, for the first and the last time in Iranian history, during which the political opportunity structure was the most favorable for the emergence and mobilization of various social and political movements. First and foremost actor, acting also as a broker, was the Tudeh Party which mobilized various social groups such as workers, intellectuals and youth. Benefitting from the diffusion of popular politics, the second most prominent actor, the National Front coalition in the Parliament under

[247] Janet Afary, "Armenian Social Democrats, the Democrat Party of Iran, and Iran-i Naw: A Secret Camaraderie," in *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran*, ed. Stephanie Cronin (Routledge, 2004), 79–96.
[248] By collectivist ideology it was actually meant communism.
[249] Abrahamian, *Tortured Confessions Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran*, 28.

the leadership of Mohammad Mosaddeq, was a nationalist popular movement which was actually composed of different groupings. Later, student movements and certain intellectual and ulama figures also joined among the prominent actors of popular politics in the following periods during the Cold War.

The "Fifty-three" intellectuals, who were imprisoned by Reza Shah in 1937 for propagating socialism and communism were released in 1941 right after Reza Shah's abdication. Some of them, led by Iraj Iskandari, coalesced with intellectuals who were educated in Europe to establish a broad-based political party appealing to "to socialist, patriotic, democratic, and even constitutionalist sentiments".[250] This is how the Tudeh Party (*Hezb-e Tudeh* - Party of the Masses) was established in 1941. Known for its pro-Soviet line, the Tudeh party could grow during the war years in the north with the support of Russia but also in other big cities with textile or oil industry.[251] In their first party program, they declared: "Our primary aim is to mobilize the workers, peasants, progressive intellectuals, traders, and craftsmen of Iran".[252] Indeed, trade unions began to operate freely with the encouragement of the Tudeh by 1942, and by 1946 became as strong as to achieve legal rights through the new labor law.[253]

The Tudeh was one of the most important political actors in the history of Iran in other senses too such as the level of popular support it received from 'modern urban middle and working classes.'[254] Also, it was able to create first mass organization in Iran's history with hundreds of thousands of sympathizers in labor and craft unions as well as youth and women's organizations.[255] The Tudeh propagated for social rights such as 'the redistribution of Crown lands, labor law reforms, equal pay and voting rights for women'[256] to hitherto an unprecedented degree. It had not started as a communist party but a broad coalition of democratic and

[250] Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 108.
[251] Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 106, 107.
[252] Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 108.
[253] Moghadam, "One Revolution or Two?"
[254] Matin-Asgari, *Iranian Student Opposition to the Shah*, 42.
[255] Abrahamian, *Tortured Confessions Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran*, 81.
[256] Matin-Asgari, *Iranian Student Opposition to the Shah*, 42.

nationalist oppositional groups; however, by 1944 the militant Marxists dominated the Party.[257] The leadership of the party was composed mainly of the new generation of young Iranian intellectuals coming from privileged backgrounds.

The Tudeh party achieved its goals impressively by 1946, by not only securing six parliamentary seats and three cabinet ministries, but also by reaching a membership of 150,000, having branches in all the major towns and finally leading a successful campaign against the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC). Thanks to a general strike organized among the workers of the oil industry, the AIOC had to grant most of the modern labor rights from the eight-hour day to better housing and higher wages. Furthermore, the first comprehensive labor law in the Middle East was passed in the Iranian Parliament, *Majles*, thanks to Tudeh's endeavors.[258]

What divided the nationalists and leftists in the ranks of the Party and served as a setback in its popularity began first when the Tudeh defended the Soviets' demand for an oil concession during the War. Furthermore, the Tudeh also supported the autonomy movements in Azerbaijan and Kurdistan. By the end of the War, both issues were resolved by the central regime. Moreover, taking advantage of an assassination attempt on him in 1949, the Shah restored his authority by declaring martial law, outlawing the Tudeh and increasing his royal prerogatives.[259]

The Tudeh's decline by the end of 1940s paved the way for the emergence of another popular movement: The National Front (NF - *Jebe'eh-e Melli*) under the leadership of Mohammad Mosaddeq. With the end of the war and the occupation of Iran by the Russians and the British, the issue of nationalization of oil began to dominate the political scene thanks to Mosaddegh who introduced a bill forbidding foreign concessions, which passed the Majles in December 1944,[260] and advocated for the nationalization of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Leading the National Front, which was a coalition of socialist, nationalist and other middle-class oppositional

[257] Abrahamian, *Tortured Confessions Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran*, 78.
[258] Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 110.
[259] Abrahamian, 112.
[260] Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown*, 72.

groups, Mosaddegh also aimed to curb the Shah's powers and restrict them to those of a constitutional monarch. Initially he seemed to achieve both of his goals, first with the nationalization of the oil and then by becoming the prime minister; however, with a CIA backed coup d'ètat in 1953, the Shah could restore his power base and get rid of both Mosaddegh and the National Front once and for all. Yet, the repercussions of the 1953 coup transcended its spatial and temporal limits at least in two ways. First, the legacy of Mosaddegh outlived not only in Iran but also in the Third World countries even beyond the Middle East and influenced new generations of nationalists and revolutionaries. Furthermore, by toppling down a democratically elected prime minister as early as 1953, and instead supporting a dictatorial Shah, the US taught a significant lesson to not only the revolutionaries of the region but also the political leaders about its prospective politics in the region. The anti-American feelings of the 1960s and beyond was not so baseless after all.

The members of the Tudeh Party and the National Front had to go into exile or operate clandestinely under extreme pressure by the regime after the 1953 coup d'état. The notorious intelligence agency of the Shah, SAVAK, brought all sorts of political activity in the country under extreme surveillance. Yet, it was the Tudeh which suffered the most; forty party officials were executed when their safe houses were discovered, and fourteen others were tortured to death, 3000 rank-and-file members were arrested, 200 of them were sentenced to life imprisonment.[261]

Eventually, the 1950s in Iran represented the defeat of the leftist and democratic nationalist oppositional movements, and was marked by the consolidation of the regime's power in the face of opposition. The repressive policies of the Shah's regime and the SAVAK's brutal clamp down on Tudeh members played a significant role in this result. However, Tudeh also lost its popularity among the youth, and therefore its chance to be a reliable opposition in the following periods, due also to its own mistakes — especially for failing to support Mosaddegh during the

[261] Parsa, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution*, 45.

1953 coup. Its Stalinism and pro-Soviet policies led to demise of its legitimacy in the public perception and especially among the oppositional youth. Despite all, the Tudeh's influence on political culture as well as on the intellectuals of the following periods continued unabated; and it left an enduring legacy to the next generation of revolutionaries, even though it sometimes meant one of disappointment and disillusionment. Therefore, even though Tudeh pioneered the introduction of the concepts and notions that had previously been unheard of in the leftist circles, and the mobilization of various sectors in society; eventually it could not escape to become a disappointment, at least in the eyes of the young generation of activists, for its insistence on legal and parliamentary means in challenging the regime, as well as for propagating a wait-and-see tactics while the national and international context was calling for urgent political action.

In the beginning of the 1960s and during 1970s Tudeh experienced brief comebacks; it also went through several splits in these periods. The first one took place in 1964, some Kurdish intellectuals left the Tudeh and established the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran. The second split came in 1965, related to the Sino-Soviet dispute, several members of the central committee established the Tofan Marxist-Leninist Organization (*Sazman-i Marksist-Leninist-i Tofan*) and accused the Tudeh for unconditionally following the Soviet line and disregarding the Maoist teachings. And finally, in 1966, a group of youth members left the Tudeh with similar accusation made by Tofan group, and founded Revolutionary Organization of the Tudeh Party (*Sazman-i Inqilab-i Hizb-i Tudeh*). Clearly, both the Tofan and the Revolutionary Organization defined themselves as Maoist, the latter also favored armed struggle in rural areas, but had generational differences.[262] After a brief period of popularity and even going through further splits, both of these Maoist groups lost their support when China established diplomatic relations with the Shah regime.[263]

[262] Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 452–54.
[263] M. Reza Ghods, *Iran in the Twentieth Century: A Political History* (Boulder; London: L. Rienner Publishers, 1989), 207.

The National Front too experienced a revival in between 1960-63, with the formation of the Second National Front (NF II) by the coalition of three organizations including the Socialist Society of Khalil Maleki, who was the founder of the Third Force (*Niru-ye sevvom*) in the 1948. The NF II was very active among the students, teacher's union activists and intellectuals. It demanded free elections and reforms, opposed unconstitutional Amini government, and the Shah's dictatorial imposition of the reform program.[264] However, the regime's June 1963 crackdown on protestors eliminated the NF II and marked a critical turn in the perception of the leftist opposition. As a result, majority in the left concluded that the possibility for a nonviolent political transformation under the current regime was nonexistent. Yet, it was not only the repressive policies of the regime that led the leftists to this conclusion. The disillusionment with the policies and position of liberal National Front and the Tudeh also contributed to their radicalization. In addition to Tudeh's unfailing pro-Soviet line of politics, the National Front too disappointed the leftists at critical times in their struggle against the regime. For example, they prevented students from holding demonstrations in September 1963 after the National Front leaders were released from prison. This came after the National Front expelled ninety leftist students from its youth organization.[265] Disillusioned with the conventional oppositional political movements, the Iranian leftists, like their counterparts in many other countries, saw no other way out than resorting to unconventional means.

By the end of the 1960s, the level of political repression in Iran reached a level that left no room for moderate popular politics. The Shah came out triumphant in his battle with the moderate opposition. On the one hand, he co-opted their cause by adopting and materializing, for instance, the social reforms the opposition had been asking for; and on the other hand, he went too far with the authoritarian policies rendering any sorts of moderate reform demands futile and meaningless.[266] The two decades before the Revolution in Iran,

[264] Maziar Behrooz, "The Iranian Revolution and the Legacy of the Guerrilla Movement," in *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran: New Perspectives on the Iranian Left*, ed. Stephanie Cronin, 2004, 192.
[265] Parsa, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution*, 170.
[266] Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in the Twentieth-Century Iran*, 1997, 169.

therefore, witnessed the emergence and rise of urban guerrilla struggle as the only opposition viable in the face of ever increasing pressure coming from the Shah regime as well as the economic and social hardship people were suffering from due to the rapid but uneven transformation.

Mainly two types of radical opposition emerged in this period: the first one consisted large and small secular Marxist-Leninist guerrilla groups and the second Islamic Marxist guerrilla groups. In each set of groups one organization stood out as the most prominent: Fadaiyan-e Khalq and Mujahedin-e Khalq[267] respectively. Coming from the tradition of Tudeh and Marxist wing of National Front, Fadaiyan represented Iranian wing of the global turn to the guerrilla warfare among not only the Third World revolutionaries but also radicalized student movements in the West, or the new left as it is conventionally called. Therefore, my focus will be particularly on this organization in the following chapters.

b) The Labor Movement in Iran: A Story of Institutionalization

Working class in Iran grew with a steady pace from the beginning of the 20th century, when the majority, around 90 per cent, of the labor force was in agriculture. By the end of the 1970s, this figure dropped to 33 percent and the number of workers employed outside of the agriculture sector increased to 6.8 million.[268] Despite the numerical strength the working class could achieve since the 1940s, it was not allowed to play an independent political role under the Pahlavi regime from its establishment on with the exception of short intervals. All labor activism was put an end with the abolition of all trade unions in 1928. As mentioned before, during the 1941-53 period, the labor union activism was at its best under Tudeh Party's leadership, with widespread strikes, one of the most important being a three-day strike in July 1946 over pay and working conditions.[269] What must be mentioned about the worker's activism in that period was the role they played during the nationalization of oil.

[267] For a detailed analysis of the organization of Mojahedin-e Khalq see Ervand Abrahamian, *The Iranian Mojahedin* (Yale University Press, 1992).
[268] Halliday, *Iran, Dictatorship and Development*, 173.
[269] Halliday, 200.

Particularly oil workers, the largest category of industrial workers in Iran, spearheaded the campaign for the nationalization of oil from 1946 on with their demands from the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company which were not limited to the workers' rights but extended to the political concessions. For example, in addition to paid holidays, the striking workers demanded the AIOC not to interfere "in Iranian political affairs and cease instigating Arab tribes against union workers".[270] In another wave of strikes, oil workers in Abadan, where the vast majority of oil workers were located, stroke against British ownership of Iranian oil and British influence in Iran. When the army was ordered to put down the strikers, the clashes erupted between the army and the workers during which nine workers were killed and sixty injured. More clashes followed suit in 1951 in which the army killed thirty more workers and put hundreds in prison.[271] Despite the pressure and casualties, the workers continued to support Mosaddeq, after the nationalization of oil as well, in his struggle against the Shah. During the anti-monarchy demonstrations, after Mosaddeq's resignation, around 800 workers were injured or killed.[272] Of course twelve year of activism and relative success came to an end with the 1953 coup, which crushed all the trade unions. The yellow unions quickly took over the Confederation of Trade Union. Eventually, highly centralized, anti-democratic and autocratic nature of the second Pahlavi regime rendered the rise of autonomous class organizations impossible[273].

The 1959 Labor Law was designed to control labor activism through state-run unions; then the White Revolution brought profit sharing system[274] for workers; and finally, SAVAK closely monitored and governed the union structure with its officials located in critical factories. Through these unions, workers were not only provided with the welfare rights such as insurance, housing, pensions, etc.; could they also be mobilized to create legitimacy to the

[270] Parsa, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution*, 132.
[271] Parsa, 134.
[272] Parsa, 135.
[273] Moghadam, "One Revolution or Two?"
[274] Halliday, *Iran, Dictatorship and Development*, 193–97.

regime — with pro-Shah demonstrations both during the turmoil in the early 1960s and in 1978— as well as increase productivity.[275] As a consequence, with the exception of the teachers' strike in May 1961, the workers did not participate the uprising of 1963 and stayed mostly docile during the whole period until 1978. In addition to the promise of profit sharing and benefits, the workers and white-collar employees had nothing against the other reforms that the White Revolution brought about such as women's rights and land reform; on the contrary, they had already been demanded by the political movements that they were historically associated with: the Tudeh and the National Front.[276]

After 1973, with the oil price rise and rising inflation, the number of independent strikes increased once again; however, the regimes policy was always one of two scenarios: either their demands were immediately met and they went back to work; or the strikers were put down with extreme police force killing and wounding many if necessary.[277] In 1974, a law was passed to punish "industrial saboteurs" and create the Office of Security Affairs to monitor all activities in major industries. "Under the law, industrial saboteurs could be sentenced to fifteen years in prison or even be put to death.[278] In short, the regimes ability to satisfy the workers' economic needs, as well as its willingness to use violent repression in the case of resisting strikes, allowed it to keep workers under control up until 1978.

c) The Students at Home and Abroad: No Other Way Out

The repressive political environment did not try suppress only the workers but also the other groups who conventionally spearheaded opposition in Iran: intellectuals and students. While the intellectuals usually played a significant role in the establishment and mobilization of the oppositional political movements such as Tudeh Party and the National Front; the students presented the most prominent opposition to the regime by not only participating into the oppositional organizations but also organizing their own demonstrations and protests during

[275] Halliday, 199, 200.
[276] Parsa, *Social Origins of the Iranian Revolution*, 141.
[277] Halliday, *Iran, Dictatorship and Development*, 207.
[278] Parsa, *States, Ideologies, and Social Revolutions*, p, 167.

the most critical stages of the period from 1953 until 1978. For example, during students' the protests of the US Vice president Richard Nixon's visit to Iran at Tehran University campus security forces opened fire and killed three students, wounded many and arrested hundreds in December 1953.[279] Since then up to present, 7 December is celebrated as the Student Day in Iran. Similar violent clashes also took place during the period between 1960-1963, letting the police and SAVAK put the university campuses under extreme surveillance. Since then, the Shah tried to maintain order in universities by forbidding political activities on campus and through the presence of campus guard and office of "Student Affairs" with alleged links to SAVAK[280].

A strong culture of dissent dominated by the leftists of all spectrums: secular, Islamist, pro-Soviet communist, pro-China Maoist, Third-Continentalist, nationalist, etc., flourished during the 1960s and 1970s due to socio-political transformations in the country. Just like in many other countries in the global south in this period, industrialization, migration to the cities, the rapid urbanization and the increase in the number of university students were the most significant social structural changes experienced in Iran from the 1950s to the 1970s which caused similar repercussions. In two decades, urban population rose from 31 percent to 47 percent of the total population (from 6 to 16 million). Overcrowded cities, such as Tehran, Shiraz, and Tabriz hosted the most of the university students as well. The expansion of higher education gave an unprecedented chance to the students from lower classes to mobilize. The number of students in higher education rose from 22,882 in 1961 to 160,000 in 1978, more than half of it being in Iran.[281] University and dormitory environment provided the foundational network for mobilization among students. The university students constituted the largest social base of the opposition and the two decades before the revolution

[279] Manijeh Nasrabadi and Afshin Matin-asgari, "The Iranian Student Movement and the Making of Global 1968," in *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties* (Routledge Handbooks Online, 2018), 444.
[280] Parsa, *States, Ideologies, and Social Revolutions*, 101.
[281] Parsa, 100.

witnessed the outbreak of several militant protests by the university students despite being brutally and systematically suppressed each time.

The most prominent student organization was the Organization of Tehran University Students (OTUS), which was formed in 1960 and had 10.000 members. In the early 1960s, the OTUS regularly organized sit-ins and demonstrations inspiring others to follow suit and initiating a wave of strikes which brought down the prime minister in 1961. The OTUS was also very active during the referendum for the Shah's reforms, known as the White Revolution in 1963; and the students' reaction was embodied in their slogan: "Reforms Yes, Dictatorship No!".[282] Yet, like others, their activities inside the country were put an end by June 1963.

What was unique in Iran's case was that the number of university students studying abroad, especially in the US and Europe, which numbered as many as those in the country. Also because Iran had begun sending students abroad early in the 20th century, the leadership cadres of the most important political movements, such as the Tudeh and the National Front, came from those European-educated intelligentsia.[283] The influence of the Iranian students abroad, however, was greater than just providing the intelligentsia and political movements with cadres. Especially the CISNU (Confederation of Iranian Students - National Union), which was formed in 1962 by the unification of the Iranian student organizations in Europe and the US with the support of OTUS, had a tremendous influence in the formation and activities of domestic opposition to the Shah's regime. As an umbrella organization uniting mostly leftist but also Islamist and nationalist dissident groups, the CISNU acted not only as the proxy of Iranian opposition at the international arena but also as the headquarters of the opposition which could not operate under the close surveillance of SAVAK.

[282] Nasrabadi and Matin-asgari, "The Iranian Student Movement and the Making of Global 1968," 445.
[283] Matin-Asgari, *Iranian Student Opposition to the Shah*, 10.

What also made the CISNU an important actor in the domestic politics was that it was following the events in Iran closely and reacting immediately. All the discussions related to the ideological and strategical transformation of the opposition in Iran were also taking place among the ranks of the Confederation with direct repercussions for organizations inside the country. Just like FKF in Turkey but located abroad; the CISNU went through similar transformations and splits and reached the same conclusion with regard to the necessity of the armed struggle. For example, in its Third Congress in December 1963, it was declared regarding the June 1963 events that "the shah speaks the language of bullets, one must speak to him in his own language."[284] Under the influence of the rising Maoist ideas, the Revolutionary Organization of the Tudeh Party joined the CISNU's leadership in 1966. With the increasing appeal of Chinese and Cuban revolutions, and the successes of armed struggles in countries like Algeria inspired the Tudeh dissents and NF leftists in the CISNU, and it began to advocate for armed struggle in Iran.[285]

When the CISNU became convinced by 1967 that the only way to defeat the Shah's dictatorship was through armed struggle, it had to have serious implications on the domestic politics. We will analyze how the guerrilla organizations inside the country were formed and began to operate in the following parts; yet now, we can briefly mention the developments contributing to the CISNU's reaching this conclusion for they had the same impact on those organizations. First of all, the internal repressive environment in the post-1963 era and a revolutionary sprit in the international arena were clearly the initial triggers. Beside these, there were also other factors such as the disappointment with the popular nationalism and legal politics to bring about any change. Also, with both the US and the Soviet Union coming to terms with the Shah's regime, they felt isolated and left out. Moreover, the Tudeh and the National front both proved that they did not have much to offer in the post-1963 period; the

[284] Matin-Asgari, 72.
[285] Matin-Asgari, 78–81.

High Council of the NF the 'policy of patience and waiting'[286] while the Tudeh was discredited for its pro-Soviet line especially given the fact that the Soviets and the Shah were on good terms.

On 7 December 1961, 15,000 students participated to demonstrations at Tehran University; then similar protests spread to the universities of Abadan, Ahvaz, Esfahan, Mashhad, Shiraz, and Tabriz. University students' demonstration continued until the police and paramilitary groups entered Tehran University to intervene on 21 January 1962. However, the intervention was so violent that it left hundreds of students injured and 200 hospitalized.[287] Some parts from the resignation letter of the president of Tehran University in the aftermath of the intervention gives a clue about the atrocities that the security forces committed:

> Mr. Prime Minister,
>
> Pursuant to our conversation at 11:00 a.m., soldiers and paratroopers occupied Tehran University. There was no reason or excuse for the violation of rights and regulations of the university.
>
> After entering (the campus), soldiers and paratroopers indiscriminately attacked boys and girls … many of who were beaten to the point of death.
>
> I have never seen or heard of so much cruelty, sadism, atrocity, and vandalism on the part of government forces. The soldiers criminally attacked some of the girls in their classrooms.
>
> Inspecting the university, it seemed as if an army of barbarians had invaded an enemy territory.
>
> Books were torn, shelves were broken, typewriters smashed, laboratory equipment stolen or destroyed; desks, chairs, doors, windows, and walls were vandalized by the troops fighting unarmed students, while their commanding officer just stood by.[288]

Tehran University students were among the main participants of the 1963 uprising and also those that were crushed by the regime. The importance of the 1963 events for the students was that it was the final blow for the open and peaceful social mobilization and the student activism was driven underground taking a more revolutionary and violent form. From then on, oppositional students, in different parts of the country began to gather in small groups to read the revolutionary literature and discuss the case of Iran and their options under the current circumstances. It was these small groups leading to the establishment of guerrilla

[286] Matin-Asgari, 69.
[287] Matin-Asgari, 55, 56.
[288] Matin-Asgari, 56.

organizations by the end of the 1960s. As an implication of this transition, the commentary published in the newspaper of the OTUS on the occasion of the assassination of Prime Minister Mansur in January 1965 can serve a good example:

> The ruling clique must know that since all the classes and groups in Iranian society are mercilessly repressed, it should expect events such as Mansour's assassination. This results from the actions of those who have closed every path to the Iranian people, while making evert effort to conceal this fact. However, the people do not forget that the ruling clique itself began the terror against the nation.[289]

After being brutally repressed in 1963 and being quiet for some time, another wave of student protest could not revive until 1967-68; but when it finally did it spread to all the campuses in big cities: Tehran, Tabriz, Shiraz, Isfahan, and Mashhad. By that time, most of the groups inside and outside of the country had reached the conclusion that the only available form of opposition in the face of unrelenting repression of the regime is armed struggle. Yet the most militant forms of demonstrations could only begin in 1970 with the students' protesting government's raising of the public transportation fares. After the beginning of guerrilla operations in 1971, the student protests gained a new momentum and diffused at every opportunity. Thus, it is fair to say that, until 1977, it was the student movement in Iran and abroad, which represented the main source of opposition and paused the principle challenge to the Shah's regime especially by providing the most fertile ground for recruitment to the guerrilla organizations.

Students support for the guerrilla organizations was well known to the government of the Shah too. The Iranian Student Association in the US (ISA-US), with more than 5000 registered members supported Fadaiyan both ideologically and financially.[290] As early as 1971, the Shah had to announce an unscheduled vacation in Tehran's universities in fear of a student insurgency in support of the Fadaiyan's fight taking place in Siahkal to no avail.[291]

289 Matin-Asgari, 77.
290 Val Moghadam, "Socialism or Anti-Imperialism? The Left and Revolution in Iran," *New Left Review* 166 (1987): 10 [n. 10]. Financial assistance coming from the CISNU and ISA-US was confirmed by several of my interviewees.
291 Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 448.

Moreover, in 1976, in the face of intense student demonstrations for the Fadaiyan martyrs, the Shah even ordered the closure of two major universities of Tehran, only to take it back fearing an even bigger backlash.[292]

4.3. Conclusion

By the 1960s, the gap between the Turkish and Iranian regimes widened and the differences became more apparent especially in terms of the political opportunity structures, which came to be formed quite differently for the leftist politics, labor and student movements. While the 1960s began in Turkey with the adoption of a new democratic Constitution and the foundation of a dynamic labor party; in Iran, all attempts to challenge the undemocratic tendencies were quickly and brutally repressed by the Shah once and for all in 1963. During these episodes of collective action, the dominant mechanisms that were at play in Turkey were brokerage, diffusion and coordination; whereas in Iran those shaping the landscape of collective politics were repression, institutionalization and disillusionment.

The political opportunities provided by the 1960 constitution in Turkey were well seized by the TLP; and then, the leftist ideas and discourse quickly diffused to the other social movement sectors, namely students and workers, under the leadership of a student organization and a confederation of unions respectively. Despite the legal obstructionism of the right-wing governments, excessive use of police force, violent attacks of the right-wing groups and a coup d'état by the military both the student and workers movements persevered throughout the 1970s and continued to pause the biggest challenge to the regime in Turkey. Yet the character and the form of this challenge could turn violent in the cases of a number of groups and organizations in these movements. The next chapter analyzes the developments, causal dynamics and ideological thinking paving the way for this transition from peaceful conventional repertoires of collective action to unconventional violent ones.

[292] Parsa, *States, Ideologies, and Social Revolutions*, 100.

Meanwhile, the leftist activism in Iran had started and experienced its peak well before Turkey during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Under Tudeh's leadership, the country experienced a lively labor activism around the nationalization of oil campaign influencing its foreign and domestic policy. After all the leftist and democratic nationalist movements were put an end by the 1953 coup, the Shah regime started to consolidate its power in every sector of the society. Neither the leftist nor the democratic nationalist parties could gather their strength fully afterwards, while the labor movement was institutionalized by all the peaceful and violent means possible. The students too were held under close surveillance by SAVAK's presence on the university campuses; as well as the violent interferences of the army whenever they found an opportunity to protest. The only collective network that could operate and pause a challenge to ever increasing authoritarian policies of the Shah could be founded abroad by the Iranian students in Europe and the US. Deprived of any alternative means to operate inside the country and influence domestic politics, CISNU begin to propagate for armed resistance to the dictatorial regime as early as the beginning of the 1960s. Even by sending members to the country to initiate an armed struggle, the ideas, help, and support of CISNU played a significant role in the initiation and persistence of the guerrilla movement in Iran. Even though many small and scattered groups with leftist revolutionary ideas began to be formed and strategize clandestinely in the second half of the 1960s, only the Iranian People's Fadai Guerrillas could emerge and persist into the 1970s as we will see in the following chapters.

5. Framing the Contention and the Roads to the Arms

> political culture - the values, norms, practices, beliefs, and collective identities of insurgents - was not fixed but evolved in response to the experiences of the conflict itself, namely, previous rebellious actions, repression, and the ongoing interpretation of events by the participants themselves.[293]

The developments on two levels of analysis, national and international, played significant roles in the transition from peaceful to violent repertoire of action in the cases of a number of leftist organizations in Turkey and Iran. While the developments and trends on the international level inspired and influenced the perceptions and strategies of these groups more or less in similar ways; the political opportunity structures in the two countries presented the activists with completely different settings in which they had to operate and transform accordingly. Ted Gurr (1970) argues that the diffusion of normative and instrumental justifications, which are based on historical and political context, facilitates the use of political violence.[294] Normative justifications could be ideological and ethical, and were presented with references "to resistance, marxism-leninism or maoism, to anarchism, or to theories of liberation". Instrumental justifications, however, stemmed from the belief that there is 'no other way out'.[295] In the cases of armed left-wing organizations in Iran and Turkey, the legitimization worked on both levels. First, they viewed violence as necessary and unavoidable in the line of world revolutions because of their ideological commitments. Second, the diffusion of guerrilla struggles in the Latin American revolutions and liberation movements, as well as the brutal repression of peaceful protests, convinced them that the violence was the only way out with a potential to succeed. Therefore, in the following parts, first, the framing processes will examine the ideological formation of the leftist thinking in Turkey and Iran under the influence of international developments in the socialist states and revolutionary discourse emanating mostly from anti-imperialist liberation movements of the period. Second part will

[293] Elisabeth Jean Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) 19.
[294] Gurr, *Why men rebel*.
[295] Sommier, "Revolutionary Groups after 1968," 84.

track the roads which led a number of activists in both countries to resort to violence as a result of certain events and dynamics in their domestic politics.

5.1. Turkey's roads to Revolution

A comprehensive overview of the diverging positions, intellectual products and activities of each and every leftist group and organization in Turkey even when limited to the most significant ones is beyond the scope of this study. The programs, declarations, tactics and strategies of all the leftist groups, which far outnumbered those in Iran with a ratio of at least 2:1, most of the time with minor variations could create a plethora to work on especially during the 1970s. Still same also goes for the case of Iran. Therefore, for the sake of the purposes of this study, I define and explain some of the most significant currents and events playing a significant role in the formations and transformation of the main organizations to have a basic understanding of how those in the left framed their contention throughout the two decades. In the same vein, I only focus on the most significant currents and events, locally and globally, shaping and being shaped by the left-wing contention during this period.

The most resonant master frames[296] of the period were anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and liberation and independence of the suppressed people of the Global South, in addition to more specific ideological currents such as a socialist revolution, national democratic revolution and world revolution. Naturally, they took different shapes and more specific forms according to different national and historical contexts of each country; however, the concerns of the activists and radical intellectuals worldwide seemed to converge specifically on couple of issues in this period such as Vietnam war, plight of Palestinian people, and the Third World liberation movements. Naturally, the left in Turkey and Iran was heavily influenced by these events and master frames formed around them, but what is called a

[296] For the usage of 'master frame' in social movement studies literature see Benford and Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements."

'frame alignment' process[297] in the social movements theory took place as a result of some regional and national crises hitting close to home and their successful association with the greater causes of the period by the left. Despite slightly diverged on ideological, tactical, and strategic aspects of the struggle, leftist opposition of the period agreed on what motivated many Third Worldists around the world: an equitable distribution of land, nationalization of natural resources, controlled foreign investment and trade. Anti-Americanism and anti-fascism too emerged as a result of an alignment of global frames to local context.

Anti-Americanism was one of the defining characteristics of the left-wing politics in the 1960s.[298] For the leftists who blamed the West's capitalist expansion and imperialist exploitation for most of the problems in the world, as well as in Turkey, the United States, being the leader of the Western world, had already stood out as the number one enemy. Bosi describes the way Red Brigades in Italy framed the political contention as "a global imperialist counter-revolution to the international revolutionary forces … In this scenario, the Italian state was portrayed as the agent of the imperialist bourgeoisie for class domination and exploitation"[299]. A very similar framing was also used by the left-wing opposition in Turkey. The interventionist foreign policy of the US, both in the world and in the region contributed to this perception. Domestically, however, anti-Americanism can be dated back to acceptance of the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan and eventual joining of Turkey to NATO. Yet, it took a dramatic turn and became much more widespread with the Cyprus crisis in 1963-64 when the US sided with Greece and went as far as forbidding Turkey to use military force as a NATO member state. Perceived as an intervention in the domestic affairs of Turkey, and thereby its national independence, the act of the US created an outrage in public. The events in the following years, such as the US intervention in Vietnam, the 1967

[297] See David A. Snow et al., "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation," *American Sociological Review*, 1986, 464–481.
[298] Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 141.
[299] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, 66.

war in the Middle East, opium production ban[300] imposed by the US on Turkey in 1971 only exacerbated anti-American feelings in the society in general and among the politically active youth in particular.[301]

The more Turkey's dependency on American financial assistance increased and NATO's presence in the country became visible, the more the anti-American feelings among the youth and opposition became widespread during the 1960s and 1970s. Anti-Americanism did not only influence the discourse of the left but also determined the targets of its most popular protests as well as its violent attacks. While the calls for an 'independent' or non-aligned Turkey were made by the leftist intellectuals and the TLP in an increasing manner throughout the period, the youth organized the largest demonstrations against the American Sixth Fleet in every occasion during and after 1968. Furthermore, the US military personnel became the target of the radical leftist organizations' violent operations, such as kidnappings and attacks.

The Third Worldist socialist journal *Yön* (Direction) was the prominent publication in the leftist circles in the first half of the 1960s, gathering and giving a platform to a range of left leaning ideas. It "promoted an independent, anti-imperialist, nationalist, state-led industrialization as the only viable direction for Turkey"[302] and praised Kemalism for its achievements[303]. What distinguished Yön from the line of the TLP was indeed its commitment to Kemalism and suggestion of a 'third way', which was supposed to be nationalist and revolutionary, as the right way to development of Turkey, instead of a

[300]John Berbers, "Nixon Says Turks Agree To Ban the Opium Poppy," *The New York Times*, July 1, 1971, sec. Archives, https://www.nytimes.com/1971/07/01/archives/nixon-says-turks-agree-to-ban-the-opium-poppy-turkey-will-ban-the.html; Joseph L. Zentner, "THE 1972 TURKISH OPIUM BAN: NEEDLE IN THE HAYSTACK DIPLOMACY?," *World Affairs* 136, no. 1 (1973): 36–47; "The United States, Turkey and the Poppy - ProQuest," accessed May 21, 2019, https://search.proquest.com/openview/df2f748137128bc7b7c0b46d472e5c64/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=1821138.

[301] Ulus, *The Army and the Radical Left in Turkey*, 108, Emin Alper, "Student Movement in Turkey From a Global Perspective, 1960-1971," *Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Boğaziçi University*, 2009, 271.

[302] Emin Alper, "Protest Diffusion and Rising Political Violence in the Turkish'68 Movement: The Arab-Israeli War,'Paris May' and The Hot Summer of 1968," in *Dynamics of Political Violence: A Process-Oriented Perspective on Radicalization and the Escalation of Political Conflict*, ed. Lorenzo Bosi, Chares Demetriou, and Stefan Malthaner (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2014), 259.

[303] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 254, Ersan, *1970'lerde Turkiye solu (Turkey's Left in the 1970s)*, 22.

capitalist or communist method of development. To achieve this, Yön advocated for cooperation with those who they defined as nationalist revolutionary forces or Kemalists[304].

The second half of the 1960s, however, witnessed an ideological diversion among the leftists and two main currents began to dominate the ideological and practical sphere of the left-wing opposition. First one is represented by the advocates of theory of the 'national democratic revolution'; and the second one consisted of the supporters of a 'socialist revolution' (SR). The division originated in the TLP's declaration of itself as a socialist party after its success in the 1965 elections. While in the first half of the 1960s, the discourse of "the non-capitalist road to development" had been enough to unite various groups of the leftist movement, from the TLP to Yön and to Society for Socialist Culture; Aybar's clear statements regarding the TLP's new direction towards socialism and its difference from other leftists who accepted to operate in the capitalist system created its discontents within and outside of the Party. The main opposition to Aybar's 'socialist revolution' thesis came from the advocates of the 'national democratic revolution', which suggested "a two-stage revolution in Turkey: first the national-democratic revolution and only then socialist revolution",[305] and were led by Mihri Belli, Hikmet Kıvılcımlı, Resat Fuat Baraner, who were the old members of the Communist Party of Turkey (CPT). They proclaimed that Turkey is still a feudal society in which the proletariat was too weak to initiate a revolution; therefore, it could only be done by a coalition of intellectuals and officials. This idea became very popular especially among the youth and in the military. One of the critical differences concerning the theses of 'socialist revolution' and the 'national democratic revolution' actually originated in the role they attributed to the military in the revolutionary struggle. The Nationalist Democratic Revolution advocates claimed that Kemalist army and intellectuals are the natural allies of the workers in initiating a nationalist democratic revolution.

[304] Ersan, *1970'lerde Turkiye solu (Turkey's Left in the 1970s)*, 25.
[305] Lipovsky, *The Socialist Movement in Turkey 1960-1980*, 24.

The increasing popularity of the view of 'national democratic revolution' represented the growing influence of the CPT, which clearly supported this ideal for Turkey,[306] among the leftist opposition in the late 1960. This was to grow even more in the second half of the 1970s despite their disappointment in the army after March 12 coup d'état in 1971; it also represented the demise of the TLP.

Meanwhile, the main faction of the TLP under Mehmet Ali Aybar advocated that Turkey was ripe for a 'socialist revolution' (SR) but this should be achieved through democratic means, in other words, within the limits of a parliamentary opposition. Nevertheless, the TLP was able to keep different factions under its umbrella until 1969, afterwards international events, such as the Soviets' invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, Sino-Soviet split, and internal ideological disagreements especially among the leadership of the TLP polarized the groups. Also, the competition and power relations too seem to have played a substantial role in the demise of the TLP and SR thesis.

Just as for their counterparts in other parts of the world, the period between 1968 and 1970 represented a threshold in the history of the Turkish left. The worldwide events of 1968, namely the Tet offensive in February, the French May, and finally the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August, had a tremendous impact on the student activists. In addition to the domestic factors and experiences convincing the left of the impossibility of peaceful and democratic road to socialism, at the international level too, inspirational sources of the left, both intellectually and politically, were not calling for a democratic movement culture. While the success and diffusion of guerrilla struggles in Latin America were the source of inspiration; in a fierce bipolar international order, the criticism towards the policies of the Soviets and China were seen as the propaganda of the US for a long time. They had every reason to be suspicious about the US's intentions; for example, the CIA sponsored military coup in 1973 in Chile during which the democratically elected socialist Salvador Allende was overthrown did not only confirm their suspicion but also

[306] Lipovsky, 37.

consolidated their commitment to political violence. For those, Allende example displayed the weaknesses and the fate of the attempts of a parliamentary left.

Also noteworthy is the theoretical eclecticism of the radical groups leading the leftist contention and resorting to armed struggle during 1971-72, the period known as the years of guerrilla struggle. Bringing together quite disparate ideological currents, analyses and theses from Marxist-Leninist or Maoist essential texts to the guerrilla warfare theories of Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and Carlos Marighella to the Third Worldist arguments of Doğan Avcıoğlu, Mihri Belli and Hikmet Kıvılcımlı, they were more concerned about justifying their already made decisions rather than being theoretically consistent[307]. Especially the advocates of armed struggle described the Turkish regime as having a revolutionary potential but only sustaining thanks to an artificial stability, a persistent 'fascism' and a secret invasion.

The eclecticism of the guerrilla warfare was to be followed by a loss of interest and a practical lack of knowledge in theory by the next generation of revolutionaries who found themselves preoccupied with the day-to-day developments of very dynamic popular politics and anti-fascist struggle in the second half of the 1970s. Thus, the student protestors of the 1960s, or 1968 generation as they are commonly referred in Turkey, were distinguished from their followers in the 1970s for having the opportunity not only to read the essential texts of the leftist thought, engage in discussions and make their choice accordingly, but also to enjoy art, literature and life in general.[308] Whereas, the 1978 generation in Turkey, came of age in the middle of a conflict-ridden, polarized political environment in which they had to pick sides without much time to contemplate; and such intellectual concerns were considered luxury or petit-bourgeois.

[307] Ergun Aydınoğlu, *Türkiye Solu, 1960-1980 : "Bir Amneziğin Anıları" (Turkey's Left, 1960-1980: Memoirs of an Amnesiac)* (İstanbul: Versus, 2007), 311.
[308] Mentioned in many memoirs and interviews by the activist of the period, See, for example: Erdal Öz, *Gülünün Solduğu Akşam (The Night His Rose Faded)* (Can Yayınları, 2014).

Meanwhile, counter-framing and countermovement efforts by the governments and right-wing groups was based on the threat of communism and Russian imperialism. Prime Minister Demirel and others often stressed the danger of "too much freedom" provided by the 1961 Constitution and the abuse of those freedoms by 'certain ideological movements' to threaten the regime; so, he proposed the amendment of the constitution[309]. The overall policy of the government of the JP towards the left during the 1960s was two-fold: a constant anti-communist propaganda and harassment of leftist movements. The polarizing discourse of the JP was based on the marginalization of the leftists of any sorts; even though it might have brought success in the elections against its rivals, it also contributed to the radicalization of these groups and an eventual breakdown of the political system. People were arrested and brought to trial for publishing or translating socialist texts. "[W]ith the help of the infamous MİT (*Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı*, or National Intelligence Organization), […] continuous pressure was exerted on left-wing organizations and individuals"[310]. The government created a riot squad, so-called 'Community Police' (*Toplum Polisi*) to deal with demonstrators but even the most extreme measures did not bring stability but instead outraged the protesters further. Turkish political actors during the 1960s proved to be incapable of bringing political turmoil into an end and the use of repressive police force and counter-guerrilla tactics made it only worse as we will see in the following parts.

5.2. The Necessity of Armed Struggle in Iran

From the constitutionalists at the turn of the 20th century to famous fifty-three intellectuals and Jalal Al-e Ahmad of the 1960s, the majority of famous Iranian writers and intellectuals have always been anti-regime, secularist and leftists of different convictions.[311] The youth of the 1960s and 1970s grew up under the influence of stories and books like Samad Behrangi's *The Little Black Fish*, Al-e Ahmad's *Garbzadegi* (Westoxification), and Bozorg Alavi's *Scrap*

309 Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 199.
310 Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 251.
311 Keddie, *Modern Iran*, 184.

Papers of Prison. Even though the themes like anti-imperialism and saving Iran from the Western dominance were recurrent since the late 19th century, until the 1960s, most of the Iranian intellectuals adopted a Westernist and modernists position to the problems of the Iranian society in their writings. Therefore, it should be noted that until after the 1953 coup, the West and Western civilization had an overwhelmingly positive connotation in Iranian culture, especially among the middle class intellectuals.[312] Only with the intensification of 'Westernizing despotism' and Western interference, the themes revolving around Western intrusion and imperialism began to spread and became most popular topics among the Iranian critical thinkers.

Resistance to the West dominated the popular dissident culture during the 1960s and 1970s and best represented by the term of *gharbzadegi*, coined by Jalal Al Ahmad in his book of the same title published in 1962, in which he criticized Iranian economic, political and cultural subjugation to the West. Literally meant struck by the West, *gharbzadegi* signifies both the resentment in public vis-a-vis conspicuous Westernization policies of the Shah as well as the popular culture. It also represents the reactionary feelings against the Western influence and presence in their country. Anti-imperialism and cultural nationalism become amalgamated and turned into "the core element of an Iranian version of mid-twentieth-century Third Wordlist ideologies of resistance to imperialism."[313] Of course rapid socio-cultural changes associated with rapid urbanization and growing income inequality in this period played a significant role in the transformation of Iranian literary and political thought.

As we have mentioned the history of Socialist and Communist ideas can be traced back to the Constitutional Revolution of 1905-1909, which continued first in the line of Communist Party of Iran after the WWI and then that of the Tudeh party after the WWII, whose main line of politics was pro-Soviet. Only with the 1960s some leftist groups who identified as guerrillas rejected the line of the Tudeh party and advocated and adopted armed struggle to change the regime. Why

[312] Matin-Asgari, *Iranian Student Opposition to the Shah*, 44.
[313] Afshin Matin-Asgari, "From Social Democracy to Social Democracy: The Twentieth-Century Odyssey of the Iranian Left," in *Reformers and Revolutionaries in Modern Iran* (Routledge, 2013), 45.

and how they decided to take such a radical turn is related to, besides the relational dynamics between various political actors, the evolution of leftist political thought in Iran and the influence of international ideological conflicts especially between the communist bloc countries. Therefore, the rise and demise of the radical leftist thought in Iran should be analyzed against the backdrop of the national context, the international developments and the evolution of the leftist ideology in this period. Both the dynamics resulting from the state of domestic politics in Iran and the developments at the international level equally contributed to the radicalization of the Left especially in the 1970s.

Even though varied from country to country, the 1960s in general brought about the demise of the old orthodox communist parties and their ideological proposition. Instead, the new generation of the 1960s were after new methods and strategies for the type of drastic transitions and transformation they sought both in political and social arena. As we have mentioned above regarding the case of Turkish revolutionaries, in Iran too those who were interested in a regime change were especially inspired by the victory of liberation movements around the world in general, and Chinese, Cuban, Algerian, and Vietnamese revolutions in particular. "Revolutionary fervor was in the air […] from Front de Liberation Nationale in Algeria, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), the PAIGC in Guinea, and Qavam Nekrumeh's Pan-African movement, to full-fledged liberation wars in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Dhofar (Oman)."[314]

One of the first issues the revolutionaries of the period had to tackle with was the description of their society, whether it was a feudal, dependent, or a capitalist one, in order to legitimize their prescribed strategy for the revolutionary struggle. Second, their position vis-a-vis the international conflict between the Soviet Union and other communist countries also had an impact on their ideological stance. Finally, and closely related to the previous points, was the organizational challenges such as the character and form of the organization, type of their

[314] Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 13.

struggle, and strategic and tactical approaches they were willing to adopt were all source of tension and disagreement among the revolutionaries just as was the case in Turkey.

What united the 1960s' generation of revolutionaries in Iran is, I think, more worthwhile to mention since Iranian revolutionaries had to unite to be able to survive under the extreme pressure of the Shah's dictatorship as opposed to those in Turkey had the luxury to diverge, disagree and compete in a relatively free political environment. This difference between the political regimes of Iran and Turkey was to have long lasting and critical repercussions not only in the intellectual and organizational issues but also in the everyday experiences of the revolutionaries as we will see in the following chapters. First of all, there was a consensus on the fact that Iran's economic system was a dependent capitalist one which relied on state dictatorship and a capitalist class, or what they would call 'a comprador bourgeoisie'. Second common factor was their courage and willingness to fight against incomparably powerful actors, —the state, imperial powers, or the security forces— by using even extreme means when necessary, but more importantly, by also risking their own lives. Finally, even though many in the left was exposed to currents of international ideological contention, the majority adopted the general revolutionary discourse of anti-imperialism, dependent capitalism, neocolonialism and armed struggle. By the mid-1960s, they were all convinced that the regime would not allow any sort of peaceful and legal opposition to challenge it and the only way to change the regime had to involve armed struggle one way or another for the reasons we will analyze below.

As another similarity between the Turkish and Iranian cases the approaches of the most of the Iranian leftist groups were eclectic combinations of popular ideas and revolutionary ideologies of their time. The armed organizations that began to emerge in the 1960s "drew their inspiration from theories of guerrilla warfare developed in Cuba, Nicaragua, Vietnam, Palestine and China. Che Guevara's manuals were particularly popular […]; translated and widely distributed in Iran in the 1960s."[315] What made the new Iranian Left also a product of their time was that they too

[315] Adib-Moghaddam, "What Is Radicalism?," 279.

obtained "a distaste for theorizing, an impatience at intellectual and analytical work, and a preference for a rather narrowly defined 'practice'"[316] like other contemporaneous Maoists, anti-imperialists, and New Leftists in a number of countries including Turkey. In this vein, it is only understandable that they came to reject the gradualist approach of old orthodox communist parties. The conservatism of the old left, in the Iranian case it was Tudeh and to a certain extent nationalist National Front, led to the first breakaway and eventual radicalization of younger generation of leftists, who were unsatisfied with their moderate and parliamentary stances; and at the same time lacked alternatives in the face of the repressive regime. Anti-Americanism was also not something specific to Iranian new left but a global sentiment, as we have seen in the case of Turkish revolutionaries too. Furthermore, America's direct interference in 1953 into the domestic politics of Iran by staging a coup was of course still fresh in the memories of that generation, thereby, causing further threat attribution in their perceptions.

There were more striking parallels between the leftist thinking in Turkey and Iran during the late 1960s especially in their emphasis on the 'national' character of their prescribed models for development, industries and economy. Bizhan Jazani, one of the founders of the guerrilla organization, Fadaiyan, like many Turkish leftist leaders at the time, suggested a 'national democratic revolution' and 'national political rule' in the face of imperialism and dependency on the West.[317] However, just like in Turkey, the notion of 'national democratic revolution' was dismissed and instead 'people's democratic revolution' was advocated during the attempts to start the armed struggle as soon as possible[318].

For the guerrilla groups active during this period the "analysis of Iranian society," "the methods of struggle," and "definition of the revolutionary stage" remained as the most controversial topics, and their position on each issue determined the theoretical and

[316] Moghadam, "Socialism or Anti-Imperialism?," 9.
[317] Moghadam, 12.
[318] Ervand Abrahamian, "The Guerrilla Movement in Iran, 1963-1977," *MERIP Reports*, no. 86 (March 1, 1980): 7.

strategical approach of their organization. For instance, Fadaiyan initially decided to pursue both rural and urban guerrilla activities at the same time. While the Ahmadzadeh-Pouyan group took the cities, the Ashraf group took the rural areas; and they began their activities in Tehran, Mashhad, Tabriz, and Rasht. However, in 1966, the Jazani group concluded that the land reform transformed Iran from a feudal to a dependent-bourgeois society, and consequently peasants lost their revolutionary potential. Thus, they shifted their focus to the city as the base of the armed struggle.[319] Meanwhile, after Ahmadzadeh-Poyan group "rejected the Maoist assessment of Iranian society as semifeudal-semicolonial [by 1968, it] turned to Latin American revolutionary literature. Members read Che Guevara, Regis Debray, and the works of Tupamaros."[320]

The essential intellectual sources of the guerrilla movement were predominantly written by the founding leaders of Fadaiyan. For example, Amir Parviz Poyan's *The Necessity of Armed Struggle and the Rejection of Theory of Survival* (Zarrurat-e Mobarezeh Moslahaneh va Rad-e Teory-e Baqa), Masud Ahmadzadeh's *Armed Struggle: Both a Strategy and A Tactic (*Mobarezeh-e Moslahaneh: Ham Estratezhi Ham Takteek), and Bizhan Jazani's *Armed Struggle:The Road to the Mobilization of the Masses (*Mobarezeh Mosalahaneh: Rahaie Baseejeh-e Tudeh-ha) were widely read and discussed by the members and sympathizers of the organization. What is striking in the case of Fadaiyan is that in spite of the multiplicity and diversity of opinions among its leaders with regards to either analyses of the Iranian society or the methods of struggle, tactics and strategies, they did not directly lead to factionalism; on the contrary, the organizers could set aside those differences and act collectively on the grounds agreed by the majority even if it means adopting different strategies during different periods. How democratic these decision-making processes were, is of course open to debate; however, even the mere fact that factionalism among the Iranian New Left was scarce is a characteristic that sets it apart from its counterparts in other parts of the world, where, as we have mentioned,

[319] Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 19.
[320] Vahabzadeh, 22, 23.

the New Left was almost characterized by factionalism. This was also one of the main differences between the Turkish and Iranian cases.

For example, the most influential texts of the organization especially in the early years of its operations was *The Necessity of Armed Struggle and the Rejection of Theory of Survival* written by one of the founders of Fadaiyan, Amir Parviz Poyan. As can be understood from its title, he explains in this concise pamphlet why armed struggle is the only way for revolutionaries to achieve their goals under current circumstances which he describes as an absolute despair resulting from the perception of the invincibility of the regime. He argues that this predominant perception among people can be challenged only through armed attacks to the strategic targets to show people that the regime is not invincible. Once the vanguard organization achieved this goal, the revolutionary forces among the population will join the struggle and pave the way for a successful revolution. What is rejected as a theory of survival was the position of Tudeh, which was criticized for abandoning the armed struggle in order to survive and prioritize the strategic interests of the Soviet Union. Tudeh was commonly accused of opportunism and revisionism.[321]

In addition to Poyan's theory, Ahmadzadeh's *Armed Struggle: Both a Strategy and A Tactic* was also popular among the Fadaiyan and led them in the early years of their activism. Under the influence of Regis Debray, Ahmadzadeh describes in his book that armed struggle is a means through which both political and military objectives could be achieved at the same time. Armed attacks do not only target the state's military structure but also serve a propaganda purpose; thereby drawing people to the ranks of the armed struggle. Thus, it is both a strategy and a tactic.[322] Yet, by 1976, after suffering a great number of losses at the hands of SAVAK and other security forces, the Organizations had to give up on the lines of Poyan and Ahmadzadeh and adopt Jazani's theory which emphasized the political side of the struggle rather than focusing solely on the armed operations. The difference originated in the way they described the political

[321] Ghods, *Iran in the Twentieth Century*, 208.
[322] Massoud Ahmadzadeh, *Armed Struggle, Both a Strategy and a Tactic* (New York: Support Committee for the Iranian Peoples' Struggle, 1977).

regime in Iran and the revolutionary conditions. While Ahmadzadeh argued that the US imperialism, which installed the Shah's regime in the first place, was responsible for the main problems in the country and the objective conditions were present; whereas, Jazani insisted, without denying the role of imperialism, that Shah had some autonomy and his reforms transformed the socio-economic structure. Therefore, he claimed that the objective conditions were not present in Iran anymore; however, through political activities of the vanguard party, the proletariat and other lower classes can be mobilized and organized until the revolutionary conditions arise once again.[323]

As Vahabzadeh (2010) observes, in addition to the revolutionary discursive elements of the time from Marxism-Leninism to the guerrilla theories of Che Guevara and Carlos Marighella, Fadaiyan could successfully use the discourse of national liberation to mobilize a new generation of youth and intellectuals by bringing together two dominant schools of thought in the modern Iranian intellectual thought; on the one hand, the secular leftist ideas introduced mainly by Tudeh and on the other hand, the nativist cultural movement pioneered by Jalal Al-Ahmad. This discourse was based on a couple of premises as follows: the regime in Iran is a dictatorship, it is backed by the imperial powers, and Iranian society was undergoing a transformation from a feudal society to a 'dependent' capitalism. However, there were some differences too among the theorists of Fadaiyan. For example, while Pooyand and Ahmadzadeh believed that the objective conditions of revolution existed in Iran, Jazani claimed otherwise and suggested a two-step approach. According to Jazani, the first step was to establish a vanguard organization which would use armed propaganda; and only in the second step a people's army would be formed to represent mass-based revolutionary movement.

Finally, one needs to keep in mind, as Behrooz (1999) states clearly in his seminal book, that "[t]he activists of the armed struggle had clearly come to the conclusion that no other avenue remained open. The theoretical justification for armed struggle came after this initial practical

[323] Bizhan Jazani, *Armed Struggle in Iran: The Road to Mobilization of the Masses* (London: Iran Committee, 1976).

step. Right or wrong, the advocates of violence believed that inaction […] was unacceptable."[324] Similarly, even though the ideological, strategic, and tactical approaches of the radical left was laid out in detail in the main sources mentioned above and diverged from each, it was not these intellectual materials that convinced the youth to participate in the ranks of guerrilla struggle. The pull and push factors motivating the youth in Iran to self-recruit to the guerrilla groups had more to do with a general understanding of the Iranian society, the regime, and the left as well as their capacity and responsibilities in particular. As one of the former guerrillas puts it: "I was just looking for an opportunity to join the guerrillas and I was almost going to participate in the ranks of Mojahedin, my only concern was that they were too religious. Luckily, I came across with someone from Fadaiyan and I joined them."[325]

5.3. Escalation in Turkey

The TLP, the DİSK and the FKF represented the pioneering organizations, as well as mobilization networks, for the intellectuals, workers and students respectively and led the leftist contention throughout most of the 1960s. The gradual shift from the conventional moderate forms of protests, such as support for workers' movement and student demonstrations, to more disruptive ones like university occupations and finally to violent attacks on political targets took place in a political environment closing down for left-wing opposition towards the end of the 1960s. By 1970, both the universities and the factories "were paralyzed by student agitation and violence and […] by worker militancy and strikes" respectively[326]. For the reasons that will be detailed below, by 1970, this relatively organized movement had already been divided into several groups and organizations. The most prominent of these organizations emerged in the midst of the chaos of the late 1960s and became well known by their abbreviations: THKP-C (*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi Cephesi* – People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey), THKO (*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu* – People's Liberation Army of Turkey),

[324] Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 50.
[325] Mina (pseudonym), interview by Author, 20.07 2014.
[326] Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 201.

TİKKO (*Türkiye İşçi Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu* – Liberation Army of the Workers and Peasants of Turkey). They all came from the ranks of Dev-Genç, were led mostly by the student leaders of the 1960s and differed from each other by small ideological nuances. As the very first radical leftist organizations, these three organizations claimed "that only 'armed propaganda' […] and an armed guerrilla struggle could bring about a revolution"[327]. However, assuming that they came to this conclusion as a result of one or two factors that depend on either their ideology or tactical choices would not only be misleading but also ignoring all the other dynamics preparing the ground for such a radical turn. Instead, several significant mechanisms played key roles in this process of escalation: diffusion, delegitimization, attribution of threat, attribution of opportunity, repression and decertification.

First of all, from the TLP's formation onwards what was being witnessed in an escalating pace was a stream of contention or cycle of protests which were formed by consecutive and continuous occurrences of causal mechanisms and processes shaping the character of popular politics of the country. For example, one of the recurring mechanisms was diffusion. It is defined as "any transfer of information across existing lines of communication"; however, in the context of contentious politics it refers particularly to a "transfer in the same or similar shape of forms and claims of contention across space or across sectors and ideological divides"[328]. It is effective both on domestic and international levels as well as both in behavioral and ideational categories.

During the 1960s, the mechanism of diffusion among the leftist in Turkey occurred in both levels and categories. On the one hand, the protests and repertoires of European students have diffused among those in Turkey after the May 1968 demonstrations in Paris. Alper[329] stresses the role of diffusion, on the Turkish '68 movement, of the forms and frames employed by the student movements beginning in the mid-1960s in the Western countries against the war in Vietnam

[327] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 256.
[328] McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, 68.
[329] Alper, "Protest Diffusion and Rising Political Violence in the Turkish'68 Movement."

first, and then gradually gaining a general anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist character throughout the world.

On the other hand, before widespread anti-colonial and anti-imperialist ideas diffused worldwide among the leftist opposition in the period, already present anti-American and nationalist feelings among the Turkish students had culminated into a full-fledged anti-imperialist discourse with the Cyprus crisis in 1964 on the local level. Therefore, by 1967, anti-imperialism and solidarity with the Vietnamese people had already been common causes among the leftist student activists; however, the war in Vietnam had not resonated with the Turkish public as did the Arab-Israeli War. As Alper[330] also points out that the anti-imperialist protests in Turkey following the Arab-Israeli War in 1967 represented what anti-Vietnam War protests did in many Western countries. The students who were frustrated over the US's interference in the Cyprus issue, embraced the frame of anti-imperialism enthusiastically more than ever; and the emotions of embarrassment by a government that was still committed to the alliance with the US played a very important role in their activities.

In the midst of this collective resentment, the presence of the Sixth Fleet of US Navy served as a popular target for the protestors as an embodiment of the American military existence in the region. Furthermore, the government, which had long lost its legitimacy in their eyes, used excessive police force to suppress anti-Sixth Fleet demonstrations causing further delegitimization of its role as a neutral political authority, let alone a nationalist political actor that was supposed to be on their side in their fight against imperialism. The repercussion of delegitimization of state on the radicalization of protestors is emphasized by Della Porta (1995). She states: "the repressive measures these governments took often produced the opposite effect: they delegitimized the state by creating 'injustice frames'"[331].

[330]Alper.
[331] Della Porta, *Social movements, political violence, and the state*, 163.

Escalation of youth or student movement in Turkey materialized mostly during the episode of demonstrations against American sixth fleet, especially though two critical events as a result of which three students were killed. Generally, the killing of peaceful demonstrators by security forces represents a threshold in the radicalization of social movements via a cognitive mechanism changing the perception of the protestors. While the dead gains the status of a revolutionary martyr inspiring others to further commit themselves to the cause, it also convinces them that the regime and its security forces are the enemy attempting on their lives. There are many examples of this phenomenon among contemporary the left-wing activists in countries like Germany, Italy and the US. As the most well-known example, in Germany a student protestor, Benno Ohnesorg's killing by the police on 2 June 1967 resulted in the emergence of an armed group called the June 2 Movement.[332]

The first event took place on July 17, 1968, when the police raided a dormitory of Istanbul Technical University and threw a student, Vedat Demircioğlu, out of the window. He died in the hospital a week later and his death represented a threshold in the conflicts between the police and the students. He was seen as the first martyr of the revolution but certainly not going to be the last student activist killed by the police or the fascist groups whose violence police turned a blind eye to. At least 7 more students were killed in the student protests during 1968 and 1969[333]. The second turning point came to be known as "Bloody Sunday" which took place on February 16, 1969, when the 'Worker's March against Imperialism and Exploitation' organized by 72 student organizations was attacked by the right-wing groups in collaboration with the police. While two leftist students were killed by fascists carrying clubs and knives more than 200 were wounded[334]. Next day, a picture showing one of the two killed students being stabbed next to a police officer was published in the daily newspaper, Hürriyet; this can be seen as the last straw in the delegitimization of the police in the eyes of leftist students.

[332] See Varon, *Bringing the War Home*, 39,49. and Della Porta, 2006
[333] Karadeniz, *Olaylı yıllar ve gençlik (The Tumultuous Years and the Youth)*, 151.
[334] Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, 381.

The natural outcome of extremely repressive policies of the government towards the protestors, excessive use of police force, unfair treatment from the police towards the left-wing protestors while overlooking similar activities of the right-wing groups, if not favoring them, was a growing perception of threat by the left-wing activists. Increasingly oppressive political environment had not left much room for maneuver; as a result of shrinking political opportunities activists felt more and more constrained on their actions; moreover, the violent attacks of the right-wing groups attained such a systematic manner and frequency that the attribution of threat by the leftist activists reached an unprecedented degree in Turkey by 1970. What deserves a special mention is the need for self-defense that the violent attacks of the right-wing groups created among the leftist activists. Defending oneself on the face of right-wing violence was usually the initial and most common cause among left-wing activists legitimizing violence as a means.

In parallel to the attribution of threat, another cognitive mechanism, attribution of opportunity, was also at play in the unfolding of the political opportunity structure in Turkey by 1970. It is defined as "(a) invention or importation and (b) diffusion of a shared definition concerning alterations in the likely consequences of possible actions"[335]. In this vein, it can be confidently said that armed propaganda or armed struggle was seen as an opportunity to overcome all the problems and shortcomings on the way to revolution for the aspiring revolutionaries i.e. student activists. It was appealing for several reasons: ideological, contextual and historical. As I mentioned earlier, the way they framed their struggle - a revolutionary fight aiming to defeat imperialist and capitalist encroachment and establish a fully independent socialist country-, the way they define the state of revolutionary conditions in their country, as well as the inspiration they drew from the widespread guerrilla struggles around the world against the colonialists and imperialist interests of western powers, all singled out only one method which was promising success to achieve their aims; and it was armed propaganda or armed struggle.

[335] Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 95.

Armed propaganda conventionally aims to show people that the enemy is vulnerable and there are various ways to resist. The attacks are highly symbolic and target property rather than civilians. In its various uses it might also aim the punishment of certain actions which are considered "anti-worker" and "the exposition of state connivance with capitalist centers of power"[336]. For example, Bosi mentions that among the objectives of armed propaganda attacks of Red Brigades were "sparking the workers' struggle to come out of its shell in the battle against the management for the control of production and profits" as well as raising "the consciousness of working class"[337]. For the cases of armed propaganda tactics adopted by Turkish revolutionaries, violence was justified on the grounds that as a force it would trigger conflict between the state establishment and the citizens gradually creating the conditions for a revolutionary situation. Instead of waiting for the revolutionary conditions to become ripe, they decided to initiate or trigger the revolution through provoking the environment by means of mass agitation and attacks to the regime to show its weaknesses to the workers thereby encouraging them to take an action.

The mechanism of repression characterized the dynamics of the relations between the protestors and the state mostly through its security forces, i.e. the police and the army in Turkey. Repression as one of the most important mechanisms is defined as "efforts to suppress either contentious acts or groups and organizations responsible for them".[338] However, there is a whole literature about the role of state repression on the social movements[339]; and it is not possible to determine a simple definite response by protestors in the face of state repression. Instead, various factors concerning the character of the state, protestors and the context need to be considered. In this vein, the most salient features of the Turkish state's repression in this period, which was marked by an excessive use of violence against the protestors, can be described as unjustified

[336] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, 67.
[337] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, 67.
[338] Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 69.
[339] Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, ch.4.; Della Porta, *Social movements, political violence, and the state*.; Christian Davenport, Hank Johnston, and Carol McClurg Mueller, *Repression and Mobilization* (University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

and indiscriminate. As stated before, the police's favorable treatment of the right-wingers, while indiscriminately suppressing the leftist protestors of any sort, occasionally causing their death, created a sense of injustice, as well as martyrs, among them. So, in this context, state repression can be seen as a mechanism contributing to the radicalization of the left-wing groups in Turkey rather than their demobilization. Also, although varied widely in terms of intensity throughout the two decades before the coup in 1980, the state repression had never reached to a level of total prohibition of mobilization and activism, like had been the case for example in Iran before the Revolution. However, they were not allowed to mobilize, organize and challenge the political authorities freely either; therefore, in addition to injustice frame they came to develop a sense of what has been defined as 'no other way out'[340] than resorting to violence.

Among the developments that had led the left to this conclusion were the two law amendments showcasing decertification[341] of the legal left by the state authorities. One was in electoral law and the other in labor law. The first amendment targeted the TLP and abolished the electoral system that allowed the Worker's Party to win 14 seats in the parliament in 1965 by getting 276,000 votes accounting for %3 of the total. The 1969 elections represented the peak of disillusionment with a parliamentary road to any solution of the political crisis, let alone to socialism for the majority in the left. The fall in the votes and the representation of the TLP in the parliament, mostly due to the change in electoral law ending the national remainder system, confirmed the decisions of those who had already been in search for extra-parliamentary methods. The amended law eliminated any prospect of electoral success for TLP as proved by the 1969 elections in which the Party could only win 2 seats even though it had gotten 243,000 votes, %2.7 of the total. In many sources, the 1969 elections

[340] See Jeff Goodwin, *No Other Way out: States and Revolutionary Movements, 1945-1991* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001) for a detailed discussion of several revolutionary movements in the global South during the Cold War reaching the same conclusion and adopting armed struggle.

[341] As all the other mechanisms, decertification is also contingent and may refer to slightly different scenarios. While McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, 204. defines it as the withdrawal of "validation of actors, their performances, and their claims by external authorities"; I adapt it to a scenario in which the political authority withdraws recognition and commitments of future support, while often threatening with repression. Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*.

was presented as a failure for TLP and its policies in the eyes of left-wing opposition; however, what actually failed was the political regime in Turkey which opted deliberately to exclude the legal left from the parliamentary system. Naturally, as a result, those on the left lost their belief in a parliamentary left's chance to succeed, and eventually, the distrust in the parliamentary road to socialism, which had already been making its way among the leftist youth, was confirmed and multiplied after the 1969 elections. Only then, not all but many of TLP's supporters began to look for alternative methods and eventually the left began to be divided into several groups proposing various strategies and tactics as the best solutions for Turkey's problems. This split was the first of many that were to mark the Turkish left in the following periods; initially four main groups emerged but many more splits were to follow suit and result in what Sommier[342] calls "schizogenesis" or fractionalism in the left movements of many countries after 1968. I will discuss this phenomenon in detail below, but for now it is worth noting that the state's repression and decertification of the legal left played as much of a role as did the power relations and leadership ambitions of leftist activists in this process of schizogenesis in Turkey's leftist movements in the post-1968 period.

Second amendment aimed to curb the power of DİSK with changes in the Unions Law and brought membership quotas for labor unions to be able to operate. As mentioned above, this amendment, which was passed in the parliament secretly on June 12, 1970, with collaboration of the JP and the RPP, was seen as a direct attack to workers' legal rights and they took to the streets in unprecedented numbers on June 15 and 16. Eventually resulting in the government's declaration of state of emergency in order to suppress the workers' protests, the two-day episode represented the end of an era in the left's thinking and perception. First, at the request of the government the army forces joined the police to suppress the protestors and fire at them. For those in the left believing the revolutionary role of the army, mostly the supporters of the 'national democratic revolution', this was a real disappointment, but the army was to show its

[342]Sommier, "Revolutionary Groups after 1968."

real face even more with an intervention in less than a year. Also, these two amendments meant for the most on the left that all the legal ways for a revolutionary struggle, -parliamentarian, syndicalist even popular-, were to be repressed by all means possible. This was the conclusion that many on the left had reached by 1970, right at the time several groups adopted political violence and organized armed operations to attack political targets. Feeling justified as a result of these mechanisms of attribution of threat and opportunity, repression, delegitimization, and decertification several Turkish left-wing militant groups like their counterparts in many other countries in that period "decided to take their struggle to the next level of intensity and lethality, further legitimizing resorting to violence as a means of resisting attacks, while also striving to destroy the capitalist state once the state was under an alleged 'authoritarian regression'"[343].

5.4. Formation of a Guerrilla Organization in Iran

While the 1960s for the left in Turkey was a story of escalation, in Iran it was one of a revival in a different form after almost a total elimination. The year of 1963 was a turning point in the perception of the leftist groups in several senses. Before 1963, even despite the catastrophic 1953 coup, the secularist dissenting groups had been able to sustain a level of hope for the possibility of a peaceful, legal, and conventional opposition through either the revival of the Tudeh or the transformation of the NF. Especially the activities of the Second National Front during the 1961 free election campaign was promising. However, by June 1963 all the hopes for nonviolent conventional means of opposition was depleted and the political opportunity structure for the leftist activists were defined by the consequences of the Shah's successful consolidation of power on various levels and arenas from domestic politics to foreign policy.

Most of the mechanisms that were mentioned above to analyze the escalation in Turkey were also present in Iran one way or another, especially in shaping the perceptions of the activists. For example, we can begin with one of the most effective mechanism, the attribution of

[343] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, 70.

threat, among the Iranian leftist dissenters which resulted from a number of developments and structural changes in Iranian politics. By 1963, as we have mentioned, the Shah has eliminated the opposition through every means possible from repression to co-optation and appropriation. Nothing with substantial potential was left of the Tudeh, the NF, workers' movement and student organizations inside the country. The rest of the 1960s witnessed the Shah's consolidation of power. Also guaranteed the support of the US, the Shah could achieve good relations with the Soviets and eventually China too. Not bound by any sort of national or international legal and political commitments, SAVAK was free to operate and exert unlimited pressure on the oppositional attempts. SAVAK's relentless repression of all opposition throughout the 1960s culminated in a perception among the left-wing opposition that they need to do something immediately or all prospects of change will be vanished forever. In Iran the adoption of armed struggle did not originate as a defensive strategy against the violence of right-wing groups as it was the case in Turkey. However, the state's use of brute violence during 1953 and 1963, as well as the violent repression of each and every opposition attempt raised the attribution of threat among the activists to such an extent that they were convinced that "[c]ombatting the shah's regime empty-handedly was a type of suicide."[344] So, it was ever a self-defensive strategy it was only against the security forces of the state; but of course that was not the whole story.

It was in that gloomy political environment that a number of students and intellectuals began to form clandestine groups either simply to discuss Marxist-Leninist literature and find solutions for the problems of their society or to organize an underground movement to resist and change the Shah regime. A number of armed resistances with ethnic origins took place in the 1960s, such as the Qashqai uprising and the Kurdish uprising; but they were mostly sporadic and put down by the regime immediately. Also occurred splinter armed groups such as the Revolutionary Organization of the Tudeh Party of Iran (ROTPI) which was established by a dissent group in Tudeh living in exile in 1963 and one of its members attempted to assassinate the Shah

[344] Behrooz, "The Iranian Revolution and the Legacy of the Guerrilla Movement," 197.

unsuccessfully.[345] However, the emergence of a persistent guerrilla movement in Iran had its origins mostly in the proliferation of small Marxist cells during the first half of the 1960s and their formation of a coalition in the second half of the decade.

The most important and influential secular leftist guerrilla organization was formed from a merger of three groups from Tehran, Mashad and Tabriz known by the names of their leaders: Jazani-Zarifi, Ahmadzadeh-Pouyan and Dehqani groups. They eventually took the name *Sazman-e Cherikha-ye Fadai-ye Kalq-e Iran* - The Organization of Iranian People's Fadai Guerrillas (OIPFG) but also known as either *Cherikha* (guerrillas), *Fadaii*, *Fadaiyan* or *Fadaiyan-e Khalq*.[346] The members of the groups were mostly originated in either the National Front's or the Tudeh's youth organizations. They advocated for armed struggle with slightly different interpretations depending on their source of inspiration from Latin American revolutionary literature to Maoist writings and to the revolutionary struggles in Cuba, Vietnam and Palestine. All of its original founders were either executed or killed in clashes with the police forces. The words of Hamid Ashraf, one of the founders of the organization sums up best their perception of the current conditions and the why they came to the conclusion of 'no other way out' other than an armed struggle as follows:

> After much deliberation we reached the conclusion that it was impossible to work among the masses and create large organizations since the police had penetrated all sectors of society, We decided that our immediate task was to form small cells and mount physical assaults on the enemy so as to destroy the repressive "atmosphere" and to show the people that "armed struggle" was the only way to liberation.[347]

Ahmadzadeh-Pouyan group was initially formed to discuss social issues and study Marxism. The members of the Ahmadzadeh-Pouyan group were coming from more religious backgrounds than

[345] Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 8.
[346] As mentioned before, there were other guerrilla organizations in the 1960s and 1970s, such as MKO, RO, Paykar. Besides, there were also small unnamed guerrilla groups, splinter groups, or Kurdish guerrillas operating during this period. Moreover, many scattered small groups identified themselves with Fadaiyan or acted independently; however, due to the lack of sources about their activities, it is impossible to document all of them. Still, people active during that period confirm the existence of numerous small and secret groups operating in that period. For a brief list see Abrahamian, "The Guerrilla Movement in Iran, 1963-1977," 4. and Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 5–12.
[347] Quoted in: Abrahamian, "The Guerrilla Movement in Iran, 1963-1977," 6.

those of Jazani group; they were also less experienced both in practice and in theoretical training, whereas more radical in their program of action.[348] Fourteen members of the Jazani-Zarifi group including them were arrested and sentenced to long years of prison term in 1968 thanks to SAVAK agents among them before they were able to take any armed action. A few the remaining members fled the country and joined the Palestine movement where they obtained both training and arms; while Hamid Ashraf remained in Iran to restore the group and recruit new members.[349] Thanks to the activities of these few members, the Jazani-Zarifi group could revive and joined forces with Ahmadzadeh-Poutan group to initiate the armed struggle in Iran.

The Tabriz group included Behrooz Dehqani and Samad Behrangi. Behrangi was a teacher and author who became well-known for his short stories the most famous of which was The Little Black Fish. Behrangi was drowned in a river in 1968; his sudden death was attributed to SAVAK by famous intellectuals of the period such as Jalal al-Ahmad and this raised him to the level of a martyr. Unfortunately, the accidental nature of his death was not revealed by the members of Fadaiyan who knew it from the beginning because the guerrillas needed a martyr figure to draw attention to their cause and SAVAK's atrocities, as it was later confessed by a number of former guerrillas.[350]

The OIPFG shared the criticism of many previous leftist Iranian intellectuals regarding the West and Iranian economic and cultural dependency on it. However, there were two divergent views among the leaders of the organization concerning the characteristics of the relationship between the regime and the West. While Ahmadzadeh viewed "the Shah's regime [as] a puppet of imperialism, created and maintained by it"; Jazani "believed that his regime was a personal dictatorship [with] a certain amount of independence." Therefore, Jazani suggested the slogan 'Down with the Shah's dictatorship and his imperialist protectors' as an alternative to 'Down with imperialism and its running dogs', which was adopted by Fadaiyan following

[348] Ghods, *Iran in the Twentieth Century*, 208.
[349] Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 44.
[350] Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 23.

Ahmadzadeh's line of thought in the first years of the armed struggle.[351] Even though seems like a minuscule detail, this difference is significant in understanding the prevailing perception behind Fadaiyan's anti-Shah armed struggle, which was heavily influenced by the period's anti-imperialist discourse and in search of ready-made solutions; because clearly Jazani's more elaborate and nuanced analysis of the regime and socio-economic conditions was calling for a long-term gradual process of struggle.

In February 1971, as a response to the capture of one of its members by the gendarme in Siahkal, the OIPFG launched its first armed operation, what was later called the Rastakhiz-i Siahkal, or the Resurgence of Siahkal and accepted retrospectively as the beginning of the armed struggle in Iran. The operation resulted in the death of all the members involved partly because the local population was indifferent to the guerrillas and cooperated with the regime forces. Almost all the founding members were arrested and imprisoned in the following months. Even though the operation was a disaster in military terms it was regarded as a propaganda victory by the Organization and celebrated as such. While the dead guerrillas were declared as the martyrs of the revolution, the new recruits replaced them enthusiastically in the fight against the regime. For example, in late 1972, 'violent and aggressive' student demonstrations took place in Tehran, Ahwaz, Tabriz and Isfahan protesting the regime's Siahkal incident. The large number of protestors were executed or imprisoned.[352]

Siahkal operation represented a turning point in the history of the Left in Iran for several reasons. First, this moment of crisis was seen as an opportunity by some leftist intellectuals and activists. The overreaction of the Shah to Siahkal incident, for instance, led to a thinking that the left-wing groups can indeed destabilize the country and challenge the regime to an extent that it has to resort to extraordinary measures. Those who believed that they can create a revolutionary sprit

[351] Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 55.
[352] Nozar Alaolmolki, "The New Iranian Left," *Middle East Journal* 41, no. 2 (1987): 223.

and struggle from these crises felt encouraged and perceived it as an opportunity too to pursue armed struggle.

Second, Siahkal triggered the activation of another mechanism called boundary activation. Defined by Tilly and Tarrow as the "increase in the salience of the "us-them" distinction separating two political actors"[353], boundary activation is important for the organizations in order for them to distinguish themselves and their strategies from the previous or contemporaneous actors. As we have mentioned earlier, in Iran, the divergence from the line of Tudeh was stressed both during the establishment as well as the following phases of Fadaiyan; Siahkal can be seen as the main landmark of the boundary between the old leftist activism of Tudeh and the guerrilla warfare adopted by Fadaiyan. The boundary activation can be also related to the mechanism of identity shift as was the case with Iranian activists: Siahkal incidence accelerated the speed of transition in the self-identification of the activists from students and intellectuals to guerrillas and contributed to the radicalizations of those activists.

Just like in Turkey, for the advocates of armed propaganda, armed operations also had strategical uses. For example, they were seen as a propaganda tool to make people aware of the existence of Fadaiyan and attract new recruits. Furthermore, instead of waiting for the revolutionary conditions to become ripe, Fadaiyan decided initiate and trigger the revolution through provoking the environment by means of mass agitation and attacks to the regime to show its weaknesses to the workers thereby encouraging them to take an action. Yet, more importantly, political violence began to be "used in an offensive manner in order to establish the vanguard-underground organization"; in this vein, it was also used as a form of punishment against the 'enemy of the people', or support for the other oppositional groups.[354]

From the Siahkal operation until the summer of 1978, Fadaiyan undertook more than 2000[355] acts of resistance and lost a great number of its members during these operations, especially in

[353] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, 70.
[354] Behrooz, "The Iranian Revolution and the Legacy of the Guerrilla Movement," 197.
[355] Ghods, *Iran in the Twentieth Century*, 210.

the shootouts with the police, as well as in prison due to torture, suicide, and maltreatment.[356] Out of 368 guerrillas died during this period 172 were from Fadaiyan and the rest belonged to Mojahedin and other Marxist and Islamic groups. Almost all of them was coming from middle-class backgrounds and majority was college students and professionals. Also noteworthy was that women constituted 11 percent of the death guerrillas, as a sign of their participation in guerrilla struggle in high numbers. By the end of 1976, all the original leaders of Fadaiyan was dead, except Ashraf Dehqani, and most of its members were imprisoned. For example, Poyan was killed during a shootout with the police in 1971, Ahmadzadeh was executed in 1972, and Jazani was assassinated in prison in 1975 with eight more leaders of the movement.

By 1978, Fadaiyan had carried out a series of armed operations such as bank robberies, assassinations of police informers, an industrialist, and the Chief Military Prosecutor, as well as the bombing of the embassies of Britain, Oman and the US, and the police headquarters of Tehran, Tabriz, Rasht, Gurgan, Mashad, and Abadan.[357] Despite losing its original leadership, high number of casualties, and never ending SAVAK pressure, Fadaiyan continued to grow and recruit members to its ranks until and after the revolution.

Yet, of course, it was not a straightforward process and had ebbs and flows, as well as waves of diffusion and withdrawals; yet it is worth to keep in mind that "there was never one Fadai group but many. Fadaiyan could not have survived without being continually replenished by small, self-motivated militant cells of students and intellectuals"[358]. For example, between 1963 and 1971, a different sort of diffusion was at play as we have mentioned in the form of scattered small clandestine groups around the country which eventually culminated into the formation of Fadaiyan. Between 1971 and 1974 we can talk about the diffusion of the guerrilla movement pioneered by Fadaiyan; especially in 1975 the group experienced an unprecedented expansion to an extent that even the OIPFG did not know what to do with the high number of recruits. Second

[356] Abrahamian, *Tortured Confessions Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran*, 102–4.
[357] Abrahamian, "The Guerrilla Movement in Iran, 1963-1977," 8.
[358] Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 46.

half of the 1970s, however, brought about a number of quantitative and qualitative changes. "[B]y 1976, many of the members no longer believed in guerrilla warfare."[359] In 1977, the OIPFG went through an ideological transformation and rejected the primacy of armed struggle advocated by Pouyan and Ahmedzadeh; instead it adopted Bizhan Jazani's view on the importance of organizational strength and role, which meant renunciation of Maoism.[360] The reasons for the ebbs and flows and waves of diffusions will be explained in the next chapter through the relevant mechanisms that were effective during the episode of guerrilla warfare in Iran.

5.5. Conclusion

As we have seen, anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, Third Worldist discourse was the main frame or the narrative of the period which shaped the worldview of Turkish and Iranian revolutionaries even though both countries had never been colonized and due to the presence of powerful regimes the influence of imperialism had been limited. The revolutionaries inspired by these dominant discourses tried to appropriate the main arguments and strategies, and adapt them to the conditions of their countries. Therefore, trying to define their targets and objectives, they used the terminology of the anti-colonialist literature rather than targeting directly their undemocratic governments and adopting a reformist agenda. The theories and strategies that they were advocating for were based on the conditions of other geographies; trying to adjust them or picking the best one to apply to their own country seem to have caused more than usual splits among the leftists. This could be one of the main reasons for many of the disagreements and immoderate fractionalism among the leftist groups in this period.

[359] Vahabzadeh, 49–51. It is still controversial among both the members of Fadaiyan and the scholars working on the subject whether the majority still supported armed struggle as a method or not by 1976; and due to the clandestine nature of their organization it is impossible to reach a definite conclusion.
[360] Alaolmolki, "The New Iranian Left," 223.

There is no doubt that the global revolutionary *Zeitgeist*, both in discursive and practical realms, convinced the revolutionary activists in Turkey and Iran to the legitimacy and prospective success of the armed struggle. As if to reinforce this conviction of theirs, the internal events and developments too concomitantly contributed to the inevitability of the use of arms either to defend themselves or to break the perception about the invincibility of the regime in Turkey and Iran respectively, which eventually also contributed to their further radicalization. In addition to the domestic political environment which was marked by an overwhelming threat attribution either due to right-wing attacks or SAVAK's clamps down; the internal dynamics of the left in Turkey and Iran were primarily determined by two mechanisms. First was the identity shift representing the transformation of their identification from leftist intellectuals and students to armed revolutionaries; and second was the boundary activation taking place vis-a vis the old left that was represented by the parliamentarian TLP in Turkey and the Tudeh in Iran.

However, the dynamics and mechanisms paving the way for radicalization and persistence of armed groups developed in characteristically different ways in the two countries. The reasons for the differences, however, did not originate in the ideological variations between the armed groups, as it has usually been attributed to both in the leftist and academic literature, but were mostly results of the relational, cognitive and environmental mechanisms that were at play between a number of actors in the political and social arena. The next chapter, takes a deeper look into the workings of the dynamics of relations between various actors and prominent mechanisms influencing the perception and actions of the activists, as well as the other actors.

In the next chapter, the process of radicalization will be teased out through the mechanisms explaining the relationships between the main actors mentioned so far. Some of them have already been introduced, such as de-legitimization, repression, threat attribution and identity shift; they have continued to exert a great deal of influence in the following periods too. Yet, with the escalation of contention in Turkey and existence of an armed guerrilla organization in Iran, some new mechanisms have begun to bear upon the relations, reactions, strategies and other characteristics of these radical leftist organizations; namely competition, emulation,

disillusionment, retaliation, vigilantism, encapsulation. Before beginning to analyze the experiences of women in those organizations, it is vital to determine and understand the working of these mechanisms to be able to compare Turkish and Iranian cases.

6. The Dynamics of Radical Leftist Contention in Turkey and Iran

> [W]hy did the movement of this new social group of students, […] opt for a radicalism of the Left?[361]

In this chapter, I move on to take a closer look at the 1970s and conceptualize the period as the radicalization and persistence of the armed struggle as an outcome of both the contention during the 1960s and the causal mechanisms influencing the process during the 1970s. An outcome in the context of social movements is described by Tilly and Tarrow (2015) as "changes in conditions at or across the sites that are plausibly related to the contention under study, including transformations of political actors or relations among them"[362]. Following its emergence, growth and diffusion, the outcome by the end of 1960s was an escalation, or better put, radicalization of left-wing contention in Turkey and Iran, rather than a demobilization through possible means conventionally used by states such as institutionalization, co-optation, selective or indiscriminate repression to end contentious mobilization. During the 1970s, the armed contention either diffused among the students or at least sustained in the face of police repression or right-wing attacks. This period of the leftist contention in Turkey was characterized mainly by two developments: the clashes with the right-wing radical groups and an acute form of competition between the radical leftist organizations in Turkey; whereas, in Iran the armed struggle ironically both diffused and dissociated further from the masses due to extreme repression of the SAVAK.

The first wave of guerrilla warfare in Turkey, which emerged right after the adoption of armed struggle by the three major organizations, lasted only five months from the end of 1970 until May 1971 and the operations were limited to couple of bank robberies, kidnapping of a businessman, four American military personnel and British technicians, kidnapping and killing of the Israeli Ambassador and shootouts with the police. The military regime after the March 12 coup, chose to annihilate the activists completely by killing the leadership cadres though

[361] Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*, 299.
[362] Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 318.

executions, in tortures, or during the skirmishes. This brutal repression of the first attempts not only contributed to the creation of a legend around these ‘revolutionary martyrs’ and their heroic sacrifices, but also inspired and encouraged many more young people to self-recruit to the ranks of radical leftist organizations as the testimonies of the activists of the period prove. The rank and file activists, or simply people who participated only in a couple of demonstrations were arrested and held in prison for years until the 1974 amnesty. The time served in prison has been commonly referred as ‘educational’ by the activists and for many just itself the cause for radicalization for the reasons from ill-treatment by the prison administration to political environment and its polarizing effects among the inmates.

Eventually, after they were released in 1974, as a result of the amnesty granted by the RPP government, the leftist revolutionaries were more divided and ideologically radicalized than ever. The period from 1974 until 1980 have seen more than 50 leftist organizations, a more active labor movement, further diffusion of popular movement and also the escalation in political violence, especially between the fascist and leftist groups. Most of the leftist organizations formed clandestine branches to undertake underground activities including the CPT which became very active in the second half of the 1970s. Almost all the groups claimed to be anti-imperialist and anti-fascist while the splits were mostly based on different interpretations of the works and actions of the previous generation of revolutionaries. Finally, the political violence, which initially targeted the regime in the form of armed struggle or propaganda in the first years of the 1970s, began mainly to be used in the anti-fascist struggle against the radical right which had become a real threat by the second half of the decade, as well as in the conflicts among the different left-wing groups.

During what is commonly referred as the period of guerrilla struggle, from 1971 to 1978, as reported by Abrahamian, SAVAK killed 341 members of guerrilla organizations; 177 of them died in gun battles, 91 were executed, 42 were tortured to death, 15 ‘disappeared’, 7 committed

suicide, and 9 were shot 'trying to escape'.[363] Among the dead, 172 was from the OIPFG; majority was from upper and middle classes; and 22 of the dead Fadai guerrillas were women.[364] A large number of small and big organizations from various ideological and political convictions were established before and during this period; they adopted or advocated armed struggle against the Pahlavi regime.

In short, to be able to make a systematic analysis of this period, I focus on four main areas of interaction between the radical leftist organizations and other political actors; and identify the mechanisms and sub-mechanisms playing a significant role in these areas by following the outline that Alimi et al.[365] propose in their comparative study of various radical armed organizations. For that purpose, I pay an extra attention to the radical leftist organizations' relations to the state and its security forces, fellow organizations, counter-movement organizations, and its constituency. In order to analyze and explain the implications of these relationships, I employ mechanisms and sub-mechanisms causing and contributing to the radicalization processes. To be more specific, in four arenas emerged one main and a couple of sub-mechanisms facilitating the radicalization of left-wing organizations: 1) amongst SMOs; 2) between the state, its security forces, and protestors, 3) between counter-movements organizations and SMOs; 4) between social movement and its constituency.[366]

The reason for breaking the left-wing contention into arenas of analysis is three-fold: First, this way interactive and dynamic relationship between two or more political actors could be better analyzed. Second, the mechanisms do not work chronologically but simultaneously, continuously or intermittently. Therefore, without losing touch with initial conditions and general context, focusing on each arena of interaction individually let us examine the causal relational mechanisms that are most effective in the process of radicalization. Third, this method

[363] Abrahamian, "The Guerrilla Movement in Iran, 1963-1977," 3.
[364] Abrahamian, 4,5.
[365] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*.
[366] See Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence* for a detailed analysis of each mechanism in the radicalization process.

enables us to compare and analyze the similarities and dissimilarities between the leftist contention in Turkey and Iran. The repercussions of these similarities and differences in the process of radicalizations in these two countries, particularly on the recruitment and experiences of women in these radical left groups will be the topic of following chapters.

6.1. Repression: Escalating Policing & SAVAK

Repression by the state is seen as an important factor in the radicalization of oppositional movements by many scholars.[367] The state repression has long been proved to be detrimental to social movement mobilization as SMS literature has demonstrated in various cases, but it also triggers the move towards more violent means of protests among some activists.

Policing strategies of protests also plays an important role in the evolution and strategies of SMOs. The characteristics of the policing depend on the qualities of the police force, such as "their military versus civil organizational structures, the police culture, the type of training, and the degree of professionalization and specialization"[368]. Policing style has a great influence on the direction that movements take and the repertoires of action they adopt. While an indiscriminate use of violence by the police creates a sense of solidarity among the non-violent protesters with the violent ones; police's unfair treatment of protesters —tolerating counter-movement organizations but repressing SMOs—, definitely causes delegitimization of the police in the eyes of SMOs and further radicalization. The image of unfair state from the perspective of the protestors is created by the police's use of excessive force and violence, or taking sides among the protestors;[369] with the escalation of conflicts, this image transforms and turns into that of an illegitimate entity or even an enemy for the protestors. This, in turn, legitimizes for at least some activists the use of violence against the state.

[367] Davenport, Johnston, and Mueller, *Repression and Mobilization*; Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*; Sommier, "Revolutionary Groups after 1968"; Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*.
[368] Donatella Della Porta, "Research on Social Movements and Political Violence," *Qualitative Sociology* 31, no. 3 (July 15, 2008): 224.
[369] Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 284.

Even though it is beyond the limits of this study, there is a clear need for studies on the characteristics of the policing and their repercussions during the contentious episode of the 1960s and 1970s in Turkey.[370] Nevertheless, it is still possible to observe and analyze the methods of repression and how they were perceived by the activists, which makes a big difference in the ways in which they react to repression. As already mentioned, the use of force by the police against the left-wing protestors had been perceived as being unjust, disproportionate, and indiscriminate. We can give some specific examples and analyze their repercussions. In this direction Alimi et al. (2015) point out a main mechanism, outbidding, defining the characteristics of the relations between the security forces and protestors and three sub-mechanisms constituting its dynamics as follows: repression by proxy, delegitimization, and provocation.

The outbidding mechanism begins to play a substantial role when movement activists start to perceive the present repertoires of action are not effective and a need for different and possibly extreme forms of contention are necessary to achieve their goals. As mentioned above amongst Turkish leftist activists, by the end of the 1960s, the majority had become convinced that the older means of contention, including non-violent demonstrations, legal trade-unionism and parliamentary politics, proved ineffective in the face of the political regimes they were dealing with. Confronted with increasing repression by security forces, many among them were drawn to more aggressive and radical strategies and tactics which resulted in violent actions on the ground. This in turn led to counter-actions by security forces equally or usually more violent in form thereby paving the way for "an interactive spiral of violent moves and countermoves"[371].

In addition to the police repression, the role of counter-movements, in the form of right-wing militants, is crucial in the radicalization process of left-wing organizations, especially when they are believed to be in complicity with the police forces, just like in the case of Turkey's left-wing

[370] For one of the very few studies on the police subculture in Turkey see Biriz Berksoy, "Devlet Stratejilerinin Bir Tezahürü Olarak Polis Alt-Kültürü: 1960 Sonrası Türkiye'de Polis Teşkilatında Hakim Olan Söylemlere Dair Bir Değerlendirme (Police Sub-Culture As a Representation of State Strategies: An Evaluation of the Mainstream Discourses in the Police Force in Turkey after the 1960s)," *Toplum ve Bilim* 114 (2009): 98–130.
[371] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, 73.

contention. The conflict with the right-wing militants, especially when it takes place on a daily bases, caused other problems too, such as object shift, but it is another mechanism which will be analyzed below. In terms of their role in the outbidding mechanism, however, it can be said that right-wing organizations justified left-wing activists' taking up arms to defend themselves in the face of their ever-increasing assaults, to which security forces were turning a blind eye. It is called *repression by proxy* and it is a relational sub-mechanism that is defined "as informal outsourcing by the state actors to non-state actors of law-and-order activities". Thereby, some groups in security forces could employ right-wing militants as their foot soldiers in undertaking "dirty repressive measures as an instrument of "counter-mobilization"" against growing Left-wing activism.[372] For example, paramilitary units were regularly used by the Shah's regime to manipulate, agitate and directly attack the protesting students in the 1960s. For example, on 24 January 1963, paramilitary units who were dressed as "workers and peasants" attacked the students; and as a result, "hundreds of students and professors […] were arrested".[373]

The examples of Italy and Turkey are very similar in this sense. The left-wing organizations and communism were considered a threat to the security of these countries, whereas the same was not the case for the Right-wing organizations and their ideologies. Instead, they were seen as allies by the Italian and Turkish states. For the case of Italy, the Right-wing militants "benefitted from the complicity of the parts of the Italian establishment as well as the United States, the CIA, and NATO, in terms of resources. … [F]ear, disinformation, psychological warfare, agent provocateurs, attempted coup d'états, and false flag political violent actions that were then blamed on the Left" were used to manipulate the public opinion, polarize the conflicting sides and suppress the Left[374]. In Turkey, the use of the 'contra-guerrilla', which was established in 1959 with the help of America against a communist takeover, by the state to suppress the left has

[372] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, .75,76.
[373] Matin-Asgari, *Iranian Student Opposition to the Shah*, 66.
[374] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, 77.

immensely contributed to its radicalization. The members of contra-guerrilla were selected among the right-wingers, and armed and paid by the army[375].

The complicity between the Right-wing organizations and the police forces in turn intensified the deep sense of mistrust among the Left-wing activists towards the state and eventually amounted to the de-legitimization of the state in their eyes. As a cognitive sub-mechanism, delegitimization is "defined as a decrease in positive and popularly resonating representations of actors and their actions"[376] and was the result of illegitimate conducts of the state and its security apparatus. Consequently, in the view of Left-wing actors, any means to defend and fight against a delegitimized state had been justified, which in turn speeded up their radicalization.

What contributed delegitimization of the state in the eyes of leftist activists was not only the police complicity with the fascist paramilitary groups but also the excessive use of violence against the university students which reached a new high in January 1971 when the JP government permitted the security forces to enter into the university campuses and conduct extensive operations. During these operations in most of the major university campuses, the universities were closed, dormitories were raided and the students were beaten. The bloodiest of all was the operation that took place in March 5, 1971, in the Middle East Technical University's student dormitories which were surrounded by the gendarmerie and the police. They opened fire against the dormitories leaving the buildings tormented with bullet holes. 3 students were killed in the operation, 15000 were arrested and only 5 rifles could be found[377].

Furthermore, the second military intervention, which took place on March 12, 1971, and its exclusive repression of the left-wing activists eroded what was left of the thrust that the revolutionary activist had for the regime and its actors, including the army; thereby, further contributing to the delegitimization process. The coup was allegedly staged to stop the violence that had taken various forms from armed bank robberies, bloody clashes between the police and

[375] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 259.
[376] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, 77.
[377] Ersan, *1970'lerde Turkiye solu (Turkey's Left in the 1970s)*, 32.

university students or workers, bombing of public buildings, kidnappings of 5 American servicemen, etc. The army accused also the government of not being able to cope with the violence. However, it too had to extend the state of emergency several times which had started a year before the coup. Ephraim Elrom, the Israeli Consul-General in Istanbul, was kidnapped by the Turkish People's Liberation Front in May after the military intervention. The hunt for and execution of armed extremists continued at least for a year under the military rule and according to an official White Paper distributed by the authorities in April 1972, 687 people were sentenced by military courts[378].

Contrary to the expectations of many leftists, the military coup in 1971 has contributed to delegitimization of the state, as well as the army, in the eyes of revolutionaries by its various implementations including the systematic torture of the leftists, the execution of revolutionary leaders, the amendment of the 44 articles of the 1961 constitution to make it less liberal — with the support of right wing parties in the parliament, and the establishment of 'state security courts' (*Devlet Güvenlik Mahkemesi*), which tried more than 3000 people until 1976[379]. "Thousands of people, principally suspected leftists, were detained, arrested, tortured, tried and jailed. These included prominent writers, journalists, trade unionists, party leaders and officers. The TİP was disbanded by court order, and its leader, Behice Boran, was arrested and sentenced to fifteen years in prison"[380]. The most notorious of the sentences imposed by the military regime was the execution of Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan and Yusuf Aslan, ingraining a bitter memory in the minds of not only contemporary activists but also in the collective memory of the future generations. Also, those numbers do not include the activists killed in the operations after the coup, such as the killing of Mahir Çayan, the leader of THKP-C, and his friends.

By the beginning of 1973, the leading cadres of the radical leftist organizations were either killed or executed; while the rank-and-file members were arrested, tortured and put in prison. However,

[378] Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey*, 45.
[379] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 260.
[380] Ulus, *The Army and the Radical Left in Turkey*, 18.

despite the crackdown on the activists, closing down of the youth organizations, and commitment to socio-economic reforms which had been advocated by the left, the military was not able to end the violence and activism of the radical groups among the students and workers. Especially with the release of the prisoned activists with the 1974 amnesty a new phase of radicalization has started out.

The left-wing organizations interpreted the repression of the state, which had already been delegitimized in their eyes, as a revelation and embodiment of its true authoritarian nature and suggested that political violence should be used to awaken the working classes and the masses, and to make them realize the need for armed struggle to topple down the regimes through a revolution. Known as armed propaganda, this strategy of the Left-wing organizations was implemented through a relational sub-mechanism called provocation, which is defined as "acts initiated by one actor with the intention of inciting the response of another actor"[381]. Implementation of armed propaganda operations instigated harsher responses from the police and other security forces, gradually entrapping both sides in a spiral of mutual raising of the stakes.

While political violence was adopted initially as a defensive strategy by most of the left, some groups, such as Mahir Çayan and his followers also believed that armed propaganda could awaken the masses and help raise awareness among them.[382] This approach help transformation in the use of violence form a confining defensive strategy to a more open ended and speculative provocation tactic. Thereby, the extent and the aim of the legitimate use of violence for the left could be expended. Once one or two groups had already raised the bar in the revolutionary struggle in such a way, with the influence of other mechanisms, which will be detailed below, such as diffusion, competition and emulation that were very influential among the revolutionaries of that generation, the escalation of violence was inevitable. Once the use of violence was legitimized one way or another in the perception of activists, just like opening the

[381] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, 75.
[382] Mahir Çayan, *Kesintisiz Devrim (Permanent Revolution)* (Ankara: İlkeriş yayınları, 2008).

Pandora's box, it becomes almost impossible to either put contents back into where they came from or contain them within the borders of one sphere of influence, such as within the limits of a defensive strategy. The next area where political violence was to spread was the interactions between the leftist organizations and groups which already come to be characterized as competitive and conflictual.

State repression is most relevant in understanding and explaining the ways in which leftist guerrillas organized, operated and formed their organization in Iran too. In order to understand and explain the radicalization in student movement or left in general, we have to keep in mind the two major events: the removal of democratically elected Dr. Mosaddegh from power by a coup d'état in 1953 and government's brutal repression of opposition in 1963 eliminating almost all institutional means for opposition. Consequently, the youth of the 1960s and 1970s came of age during and under the regime that the Shah established in the post-coup period. The cultural landscape in Iran was gloomy and depressive. The dominant feeling was one of despair and defeat. It was this perception which shaped the worldview of the next generation and contributed to the conclusion that some of them were to arrive soon as we have mentioned before: there is no other way out. Even though repressive policies of the Shah regime, which wiped all non-violent opposition off the political sphere by 1963, could be interpreted as the sole reason for the new generation of dissidents' resorting to violent means i.e. armed struggle, understanding the workings of other mechanisms helps us see the dynamics contributing to their commitment and perseverance, such as outbidding and delegitimization.

Outbidding in the case of Iran did not play a definitive role in the radicalization process but certainly in preserving their commitment to and perseverance during the contention.[383] Obviously, Fadaiyan's commitment to armed struggle provoked further repression from the state security apparatus. In return, the need for retaliation right after they suffered a loss, as

[383] Parsa, *States, Ideologies, and Social Revolutions*, 245.

well as feeling of revenge became prominent among the activists and very much contributed to their persistence on the armed attacks. Siahkal operation and the wave of repression afterwards exemplify best the repressive nature of the Shah regime and triggering of outbidding mechanism between the security forces and the guerrillas. The regime "sent the entire Gilan Gendarmerie Regiment, hundreds of police forces, and several helicopters to suppress the eight guerrillas." Then, on March 16, 1971, thirteen guerrillas were executed. Once the news spread that thirteen guerrillas were executed students came out to support the guerrilla movement. In response, "police […] arrested over one thousand dissident students."[384] In retaliation, Fadaiyan targeted prominent political or military figures who were known for their role repression such as Gen. Zeinolabedin Farsiu, head of the military tribunal responsible for political trials, who was assassinated in 1971.[385] During the first year after Siahkal, Fadaiyan lost 42 members and 300 people were arrested for having relations with Fadaiyan. Meanwhile, they also undertook some operations both to give a political message and to provide financial resources to the organization such as the bombing of the offices of the American oil companies and the robbery of Bank Saderat branch in Tehran.[386] Also targeted were the members of ruling classes especially those who became infamous for their treatment of workers such as Muhammad Sadeq Fateh-yazdi, a factory owner who caused the death of striking workers. Of course, the main target of Fadaiyan's assassination attacks was notorious SAVAK torturers: the killing of first Alinaqi Nik-tab in 1974 and then of Abbas Shahriari in 1975 were big blows to the heart of the regime. Until 1976, "a kind of psychological contest existed between the Fadaiyan and SAVAK whereby every attack by one side was answered in kind by the other. The Shahriari assassination, which was preceded by others, was followed by the assassination of Jazani in prison."[387]

In the same vein, delegitimization of the regime in the eyes of Iranian guerrillas also occurred as a product of the closely-knit network of SAVAK, brutal torture practices and a

[384] Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 28–30.
[385] Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 62.
[386] Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 34.
[387] Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 63.

massive prison system. For example, in 1968, SAVAK infiltrated into Jazani group and arrested almost all the members. They were tortured and then either executed or sentenced to lifetime imprisonment. They have not committed even a single armed action by then. This should not only be considered the last straw in a range of events proving, in the eyes of activists, the futility of the peaceful activism as well as the dangers of it, but also a warrant of the illegitimacy of the regime.

The most pervasive security instrument of the Shah's dictatorship was the intelligence agency SAVAK whose main task went beyond the identification and destruction of anyone and everyone who dared to oppose to the Shah's regime. SAVAK was not merely secret police; first of all, it had a public face as it was intended by the regime to be known and feared by all the Iranians. While SAVAK buildings and houses were known by the public, the students were sure that its agents spying among them constantly, and suspected each other for being one occasionally. Second, SAVAK was also the agent of censorship in Iran, the media outlets received instructions from SAVAK almost weekly with regard to what could be safely published. Finally, it "also run[ed] the 600-odd government trade unions and SAVAK officials ha[d] offices in some factories; again, they d[id] not just repress strikes, but also mediate between workers and owners"[388].

Shah's dictatorship in Iran was also well known for its notorious prisons and 'advanced' torture technics used in these prisons; the most famous of which were in Tehran —Qasr, Evin, and Qezel Qale— but other cities did not lack their very own infamous prisons in which SAVAK tortured inmates. With the beginning of the 1970s the Shah's regime started to use torture in its prisons on political prisoners.[389] What the regime aimed to obtain as a result of torture was not only information about the organizations and their members but also

[388] Halliday, *Iran, Dictatorship and Development*, 81.
[389] Abrahamian's work on the use, extent and objectives of torture on the political prisoners both before and during the 1970s is primary. He also explains why the torture in prisons in Iran in 1970s was unprecedented, and the abuse that was experienced by the previous prisoners was minor compared to the brutal treatment that the prisoners in the 1970s were subjected to. See Abrahamian, *Tortured Confessions Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran*.

public recantations by the revolutionary activists. Aiming to kill two birds with one stone, the regime tried to both discredit the revolutionary organizations and increase its legitimacy in the eyes of general public through these recantations. Iran was not the first or the only country using public recantations for the same purposes but rather its methods resembled to those in Stalinist Russia and Maoist China both in format and content.[390]

Especially after Siahkal, interrogators were sent abroad to receive training to prevent unwanted deaths during torture and brute force was replaced by new technics of torture, such as "the bastinado; sleep deprivation; extensive solitary confinement; glaring searchlights; standing in one place for hours on end; nail extractions; snakes (favored for use with women); electrical shocks with cattle prods, often into the rectum; cigarette burns; sitting on hot grills; acid dripped into nostrils; near-drownings; mock executions; and an electric chair with a large metal mask to muffle screams while amplifying them for the victim. […] Prisoners were also humiliated by being raped, urinated on, and forced to stand naked."[391] While SAVAK was free to arrest and detain any person without being constrained by any legal measures; all political trials were held before military tribunals in which the judges were either army officers or SAVAK officials. Almost no case of a defendant was being acquitted.[392]

As another example, in 1972, during the trial of Masoud Ahmadzadeh, one of the founders of Fadaiyan, who was arrested by SAVAK, a French Lawyer observed the traces of torture on his body after he took off his pullover: "The whole of the middle of his chest and his stomach was a mass of twisted scars from very dee burns. They looked appalling … His back was even worse, there was a perfect oblong etched into it, form by a continuous line of scar tissue. Inside the oblong, the skin was again covered in shiny scars from burning."[393] Ashraf Dehqani, a women guerrilla in Fadaiyan, who escaped from prison explains in her memoirs

[390] Abrahamian, *Tortured Confessions*, 6.
[391] Abrahamian, *Tortured Confessions*, 106.
[392] Halliday, *Iran, Dictatorship and Development*, 85.
[393] Halliday, *Iran, Dictatorship and Development*, 87.

how she was tortured and raped by SAVAK. The stories of similar nature in which the guerrillas were put through the most notorious torture methods should be considered in explaining the radicalization of the youth and the reasons for their participation into Fadaiyan in great numbers between 1971 and 1975.

In addition to the notorious torture tactics and a high number of prisoners kept in terrible conditions, as a result of which a number people died; during the years of from 1970 to 1977, SAVAK also killed and executed at least hundreds of people. While an unknown number of people were killed during the shootouts, SAVAK executed over 300 people after they were sentenced by the military tribunals.[394]

6.2. Competition

The need for new strategies and tactics seemed pressing for the left-wing movement organizers in the face of weakening position of the legal left in Turkish politics, increasing threat attribution and a simultaneously growing popular support for the left in general. These developments prepared the ground for competition for power among the leaders and organizations of the left-wing movement because in part the question of whose tactics and strategies were to be adopted for the revolutionary struggle depended on the outcome of this competition. Once the legal or parliamentarian way in the revolutionary struggle was dismissed for those in the radical branch of the movement, disagreements regarding the new tactics and methods became the main cause for competition; which in turn let to further factionalism among them. This mutually sustaining relationship between radicalization and competition was called schizogenesis by Sommier (2010). Competition for power among different groups and organizations had a unique effect on the radicalization process and the use of violence had a distinctive role to play in this competition. Sommier's (2010) observation regarding the radical left-wing organizations in Europe, the US and Japan in the same period can be extended to their counterparts in Turkey:

> From the moment they were formed, the organizations of the new left were subject to fissures, tensions, splits and expulsions, most of which revolved around the same question: who was the

[394] Halliday, *Iran, Dictatorship and Development*, 89.

> most revolutionary. Furthermore, the question of violence became integral to the measurement of revolutionary commitment, paving the way for the emergence of a plethora of armed left-wing groups.[395]

The leftist movement in Turkey was composed of different groups and organizations during the 1960s, including labor unions, associations, student clubs, and parties. What made them a part of the same movement was their objection to the political regime, its capitalist character and oppressive policies, as well as its alleged complicity with the imperialist powers. What divided them, especially by 1970s, however, is more complicated. Their positions on 1) the international developments and disputes between the socialist states, 2) the use of violence (whether for self-defense, armed struggle or propaganda), 3) the form of organization, strategy, tactic, to be adopted to achieve the revolution, 4) the characteristics of social, economic and political system in Turkey. Ideological, strategic and tactical dissimilarities, as well as conflicts, between all the leftist organizations of various sizes and effect, stemmed from the different positions that they adopted regarding these four areas.

The initial sub-mechanism playing an important role in the competition for power is disillusionment. It is a cognitive sub mechanism and refers to the "decline in the commitment of individuals or political actors to previously sustaining beliefs"[396]. As mentioned before, disillusionment was resulted mainly from the disempowerment of the TLP after the 1969 elections and its unfailing commitment to parliamentary democracy. In the face of this threat, the militant leftist students were triggered to innovate new strategies and tactics to prove that they are more committed to revolution as well as more capable to spark it. In this endeavor, the willingness to resort to violence was seen as the measurement of one's commitment to the revolutionary activism.[397]

By the end of 1960s, most of the left-wing activists were already convinced that socialism could only be achieved through a revolution. Çetin Altan, a popular journalist and once a TLP member,

[395] Sommier, "Revolutionary Groups after 1968," 73.
[396] Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*.
[397] Ömer Laçiner, "THKP-C: Bir Mecranın Başlangıcı (THKP-C: The Beginning of an Advanture)," *Toplum ve Bilim* 78 (1998): 11.

was one of the most outspoken supporters of extra-parliamentary opposition and had influenced many, particularly young, people. As a result, the idea of extra-parliamentary opposition spread among the intellectuals, the youth as well as some junior officers[398]. It was the character of the revolution, whether a nationalist democratic or a socialist one, was what they could not reach a consensus on and this was going to create fractions among the leftist opposition.

In this vein, first, in August 1969, a radical revolutionary group took over the FKF and established *Dev-Genç*, abbreviated from its Turkish: *Türkiye Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu*. Among the initial objectives of Dev-Genç were raising socialist awareness, making connections with workers and peasants in revolutionary struggle, and fighting against imperialism. Soon, the leaders and publications of Dev-Genç began to pronounce that the way to revolution and regime change in Turkey goes through armed struggle. From then on, the in-group arguments revolved around the timing and method of the armed struggle. Indeed, Dev-Genç was an umbrella organization and consisted of various groups of different ideological stances which were acting independently on a local level. All the well-known active revolutionary organizations of the later period were born out of Dev-Genç as a result of schisms. The disagreements among various groups in Dev-Genç resulted usually from their different interpretations of Marxism and its applicability to Turkey. There was, however, no doubt among them about the necessity and inevitability of the revolution.

First organization emerging out of the ranks of Dev-Genç was called *Sosyalist Aydınlık* (Socialist Enlightenment) and consisted of the followers of 'national democratic revolution' (NDR) conceived by Mihri Belli, a veteran communist, ex-TLP member and a prominent leftist thinker, influencing most of the left-wing groups in that period. A split from this group was a more extreme group called the Revolutionary Proletarian Enlightenment (PDA–*Proleter Devrimci Aydınlık*), which was to establish Revolutionary Workers and Peasants Party of Turkey (TİİKP–*Türkiye İhtilalci İşci Köylü Partisi*), soon after, also known as rural guerrillas. It was led by

398 Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey*, 38.

Doğu Perinçek and known to be a Maoist organization. They had a very limited experience of guerrilla struggle in Aydin lasting only couple of weeks without any significant consequences. Yet, many of its members went to Palestine to receive guerrilla training and fight against Israel.[399] A splinter group under the leadership of İbrahim Kaypakkaya founded the Communist Party of Turkey/Marxist-Leninist (TKP/ML) in 1972 and organized rural guerrilla attacks in the eastern cities such as Tunceli, Malatya and Elazığ.

The other famous revolutionary organizations of the period were also originated within the circles of Dev-Genç: The People's Liberation Army of Turkey (THKO) and People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey (THKP-C). THKO was also known as 'supporters of guerrilla warfare' or in short "guerrillas" established by mostly the students of the Middle East Technical University in 1970; its leader was Deniz Gezmiş. Some of its members too were trained in Palestine, at the camps of the Fatah.[400] It was the most eager organization to start the guerrilla struggle, to gather money and arms for that purpose, they begin with the armed robberies, killing of two policemen and kidnapping of a US sergeant[401].

THKP-C was led by Mahir Çayan and was also known as Çayanists. Its monthly journal was *Kurtuluş - İşçilerin Köylülerin Gazetesi* (Liberation - the Magazine of Workers and Peasants), and called the Turkish and Kurdish people to unite against imperialism. They accused the members of PDA of being "Maoist of the campus" only to be accused back by them of being "adventurous", "anarchist" and "isolated from the masses"[402]. Even though mutual accusations of similar sorts and disparaging were commonplace among the leftist organizations, they rarely turned into violent attacks against each other before the mid-1970s.

The second sub-mechanism playing a significant role in the competition for power is emulation, "collective action modeled on the actions of others".[403] As its name suggests it is the repetition of

399 Ersan, *1970'lerde Turkiye solu (Turkey's Left in the 1970s)*, 55.
400 Landau, *Radical Politics in Modern Turkey*, 41.
401 Alper, "Student Movement in Turkey From a Global Perspective, 1960-1971," .467,468.
402 Ersan, *1970'lerde Turkiye solu (Turkey's Left in the 1970s)*, 53.
403 McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, 335.

a strategy or tactic of certain organizations by other organizations. Especially in the case of successful strategies and tactics, it is commonplace among the SMO of the same or different movements whether they are competing, cooperating or unrelated to each other. However, in situations of competition, emulation and competition between the organizations mutually reinforce each other[404] .

Both emulation and competition[405] mechanisms played an important role in the first attempts to initiate a guerrilla struggle in the beginning of 1970s. Originated in the same youth movement and having small variations in terms of both ideological inspiration and tactical methods, THKO, THKP-C and TKP/ML all resorted to violence one after another to show how serious revolutionaries they were. It is understandable and expected, given the characteristics of their young age which was compounded by the characteristics of the period's romantic revolutionary figure whom they were all aspiring to become: competitiveness, unselfishness, and bravery. Also, the urging sense of responsibility and the pressure of having to "do something" in the face of growing social opposition pushed the young revolutionaries, who had stood out as the only viable actor of the radical politics after the disempowerment of the TLP, to resort to "an easy recipe" of guerrilla warfare one after another emulating, as well as trying to prevail over the others[406].

What did differentiate THKP-C, THKO and TİİKP from each other? As one observer states, they were all 'bookless'[407] in the sense that the examples they were inspired by and following, such as Latin American guerrilla movements, liberation movements in Africa, PLO, and guerrilla resistance in Vietnam, had not yet produced intellectual works to outline

[404] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, 87.
[405] Aydinoglu claims that since the armed operations of THKO were received with sympathy in public, THKP-C channelled its efforts to conduct similar operations. See Ergun Aydınoğlu, *"Sol Hakkında Her Şey" Mi? (Is It "Everything about the Left"?)* (İstanbul: Versus, 2008), 173.
[406] Aydınoğlu, 174.
[407] Taymaz Merih, "Merih Cemal Taymaz Ile Söyleşi: Türkiye'de Sol ve Silahlı Mücadele Bir Muhasebe (An Interview with Merih Cemal Taymaz: An Evaluation of the Left and Armed Struggle in Turkey)," *Birikim*, no. 271 (Kasım 2011): 48.

their strategies, tactics and theories. Following their footsteps and guided by a perception of threat and opportunity, the first armed operations by these groups in the first years of the 1970s were more reactionary and out of impatience rather than strategically well-planned or based on a theoretical approach. Therefore, their essential texts such as THKO's *Türkiye Derviminin Yolu* (The Path of Turkey's Revolution), and THKP-C's *Kesintisiz Devrim* (Permanent Revolution) revolve more around the analyses about social, economic, political and historical characteristics of Turkish society rather than the military strategies or rural guerrilla warfare.

The result of this rushed decision to resort to violence which was born also out of competition and emulation, was sensational but not-well thought or planned armed operations. The adventurous guerrilla operations usually resulted in the arrest or killing of especially the leadership cadres of these organizations. For example, Kızıldere massacre, during which almost all the activists were killed, was one of the most obvious examples of the lack of experience and planning on behalf of revolutionaries, as well as the state's unrelenting repression. THKO had carried out several high profile attacks before, but the most striking of them was the kidnapping of three NATO engineers in 1972, an operation they conducted in cooperation with THKP-C, in order to prevent the execution of their founders: Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan and Hüseyin İnan. The guerrillas tried to hide in a village called Kızıldere but were soon found and surrounded by the security forces. In the shootout the hostages and all but one of the activists were killed. After the execution of Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan and Hüseyin İnan on May 6, 1972, both THKP-C and THKO were dissolved in practice. TKP/ML too was dissolved after İbrahim Kaypakkaya was killed during torture in the prison and the last members of the leadership were arrested in 1973.

All but few of the prominent revolutionaries of the 1968 generation lost their lives in the armed operations of similar sorts or as a result of the tortures and executions by the military regime between 1970-73. Most of the remaining rank and file members and followers, or as Zileli calls

them ‘disciples’,[408] did not have time and opportunity to contemplate and analyze the past mistakes. Instead, they interpreted their legacy as more responsibility and obligation to complete what the pioneers were not able to do. Moreover, the new generation with less theoretical and intellectual knowledge, were recruited through friend networks that happen to be close to this or that group. Therefore, competition and emulation, along with other mechanisms continued to play even a more of a significant role for the ever-multiplying organizations that were established and stayed active after 1974.

From the remnants of the organizations active before and during the military regime emerged numerous small and medium-sized organizations. Dev-Yol, Dev-Sol, *Kurtuluş*, *Halkın Kurtuluşu*, MLSPB, TKP/ML, TKEP, TİKP were the most widespread and widely supported left-wing organizations among many others in the second half of the 1970s. The use of violence in this period by the leftists against each other during the conflicts between for example the Maoist and the followers of the Soviets or between *Dev-Yol* and *Kurtuluş* was a novelty of the period and ranked second among the reasons for death due to political violence after the conflicts with the radical right. It is hard to determine how many people died in the conflicts between the leftist groups but according to a study at least 62 radical leftist activists lost their lives[409]. What was remarkable, however, was the level of animosity between some of the leftist groups amounting to or even surpassing the one that was felt against the ultra-nationalists. For example, 6 out of 15 militants of TKEP who lost their lives during the armed conflicts were killed by the members of *Halkın Kurtuluşu* in feud-like manner: each time one side killing a member of the other in turn[410].

Neither state repression nor indiscriminate attacks by the ultra-nationalists could bring about a sense of unity or prospect for it among various leftist groups. The so-called ‘safe havens’ from right-wing or police violence were created in certain districts and were under the control of one

[408] Zileli, *Havariler*.
[409] Aydınoğlu, *Türkiye Solu, 1960-1980*, 399.
[410] Ersan, *1970’lerde Turkiye solu (Turkey’s Left in the 1970s)*, 157,158 fn.4.

or the other left-wing group; and even the members of other leftist groups were not allowed. Consequently, the constant competition between different organizations and effort to overcome each other contributed to a competitive and combatant movement culture which was already strengthened by the anti-fascist struggle as we will see in the next part.

We cannot talk about the role of a competition in the formation of guerrilla groups during the 1960s or as a radicalization mechanism in Iran, because this mechanism presupposes some sort of a free movement sector as we have seen in the example of Turkey; the remnants of such an environment ceased to exist completely after 1963. Instead what can be observed among the new generation of leftist activists in the face of SAVAK's repression was a co-operative and compromising attitude as the unification of the three groups with quite different approaches to form Fadaiyan and persistent participations to the organizations illustrated. The lack of a competitive movement sector in Iran is also pointed out by other observers: "The relations between Fadaiyan and Muslim Mojahedin-e Khalq (OIPM) demonstrated mutual support and respect, despite ideological differences."[411] It can be claimed that an environmental mechanism, an acute repression, in the case of Iran prevented the emergence of another mechanism, competition, which is a very common phenomenon especially among the leftist organizations of the period in other countries as we have mentioned for the case of Turkish leftist organizations through the concept of schizogenesis. Instances of competition particularly among some important figures of the guerrilla movement or certain groups became more prevalent during and after the revolution when the repressive political environment began to loosen up. Therefore, we can say that competition among the guerrilla organizations was not a contributing factor in the radicalization of the leftist contention in Iran. The only split from Fadaiyan before the revolution took place in 1976 by a group called *Munshaeb* (Split) who joined the Tudeh party arguing that

411 Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 48.

armed struggle is not working in Iran under the current conditions and the priority should be given to nonviolent revolutionary activities such as political education of the working class.[412]

Yet, emulation mechanism can account for the widespread adoption of armed struggle by a number of small clandestine groups who were invited to join to Fadaiyan during the 1970s. For example The People's Democratic Front, which also believed in armed struggle, joined the organization in 1973.[413] Under the circumstances that Iranian dissents had to operate, diffusion of the armed movement and emulation mechanism were very much interrelated; therefore, instead of social movement organizations emulating the tactics and strategies of each other, what was witnessed was the idea of armed struggle disseminating among the youth and thereby encouraging them to self-recruit to the guerrilla organizations.[414]

The lack of competition in the social movement sector during this period in Iran did not guarantee the emergence of a democratic movement culture in Fadaiyan. Especially under the leadership of Hamid Ashraf, Fadaiyan was managed like a Stalinist organization as it is claimed by at least one observer.[415] The facts that the internal purges of some members from Fadaiyan turned out bloody and that some others were executed for "wanting to leave the underground life" should be seen as a proof of its dogmatic character and strict hierarchical structure. Yet, it is difficult to obtain information with regard to the details of the organizational workings of Fadaiyan as the main actors died long time ago and the vow of secrecy taken by the activists still prevents them to provide such sensitive information.[416] Finally, what prevented the emergence of a competitive environment —an authoritarian, repressive regime— curiously gave way to the emergence of another phenomenon: emulation of the state's surveillant and disciplinary methods by guerrilla organizations[417]. Vahabzadeh discusses in detail the repercussions of this adaptation

[412] Sepehr Zabih, *The Left in Contemporary Iran: Ideology, Organisation, and the Soviet Connection* (London, Croom Helm; Hoover Institution Press, 1986), 132.
[413] Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 64.
[414] Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 156.
[415] Behrooz, *Rebels with a Cause*, 65–67.
[416] Behrooz, 67, Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 63–65.
[417] Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 226–44.

for the lives of guerrillas, I also analyze its effects on women in the organization in the last chapter.

6.3. Object Shift: 'Anti-fascism'[418], Survival and Retaliation

There are numerous examples of encounters between the state and the movements producing radicalization. Civil rights movements in the US, ethno-nationalist movements in Spain and Northern Ireland, left-wing groups in Italy, Germany, France experienced similar escalation of violence in their encounters with the state. The emergence of right-wing radical counter-movements usually coincides with the increase in tension between the state and left-wing movements. The use of fascists groups and radical right as a counter guerrilla strategy against the growing influence of communist movements in this period was already documented in the countries such as Italy. The mechanism of object shift operates in the arena of interaction between the movement and the counter-movement through the influence of two sub-mechanisms: vigilantism and retaliation. As a result of increased conflict with the extreme right on a daily basis, the radical left-wing organizations become preoccupied with the anti-fascist agenda which gradually replaced their original objectives taking up arms in the first place. While vigilantism is defined as "the initiation of provisional law-and-order activities by a non-state actor outside the control of its government and security forces"; retaliation is "reprisals by an actor of wrongs experienced by the actor or members of its constituency"[419]. In addition to the efforts to compete and conflict with the other radical leftist groups and organizations, the radical leftist activists were also absorbed by vigilant and retaliatory activities against the right-wing militants or security forces in most of the 1970s. The overly competitive and conflictual environment not only contributed their radicalization, but also help create an aggressive and belligerent movement culture.

The radical right, convinced that a communist threat is real in Turkey, had been further threatened by the popular support the left acquired through protests, demonstrations and

[418] See footnote 244.
[419] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, 93, 94,96.

workers' movement in the 1960s. In response, they adopted counter-insurgency measures including attacking the left-wing activists in the streets and intimidating their supporters in schools, universities and elsewhere. The most active fascist organization, as mentioned before, was the NAP's youth organization, Grey Wolves became notorious for their attacks initially at the university students but then all the striking or protesting groups of any sort, as well as murdering numerous people with leftist leanings. They were responsible for the most of the killings as a result of political violence but almost always favored and never investigated by the government. They have also collaborated with certain sections of the security forces while the police and the courts turned a blind eye to the crimes they committed. In the face of these deadly right-wing attacks, which accelerated after 1975, initially only a few left-wing organizations stressed the need to adopt self-defensive strategies and retaliatory actions while others objected. Without being able to decide the right course of action, the leftist organizations drifted towards the vicious cycle of mutual violence and away from their original objective of achieving a democratic and autonomous university[420].

We have already mentioned the police's unfair treatment against the left-wing activists, clamping down on each and every demonstration by them during the 1960s. From 1974 until 1980, "the police and security forces […] remained heavily infiltrated by fascists who shielded and protected the Grey Wolves"[421]. The first and second Nationalist Front governments after 1975, consisting of small religious fundamentalist and fascist parties in a coalition with the right-wing Justice Party, encouraged the fascist movement as a counter-movement strategy against the growing influence and popularity of the left in society. Prime minister and the head of the JP, Demirel's infamous statement that "you cannot make me say that the right wingers are committing murders" after Maraş massacre in 1979 was only one of the evidences proving the regime's encouragement of the radical right's attacks and activities against not only the radical

[420] İletişim Yayınları, *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi (Encyclopedia of Socialism and Social Protests)*, Sosyalizm Ansiklopedisi, 8v. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1988), 2244, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/[u]: mdp.39015042231459.
[421] Zürcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 263.

left but also other groups on the opposition such as striking workers, teachers, leftist police officers, students, Alevi people, etc. In addition to its countermovement mission to intimidate and suppress the leftist movement, the radical right under the NAP had also contributed to the creation of instability and chaos in the country especially after 1978 when Ecevit of the RPP became prime minister, thereby entailing an intervention by the military to repress the left and the worker's movement for good.[422]

Anti-fascist struggle or armed resistance to the threat of fascism became of the utmost importance for the organizations on the radical left. However, it must be noted that what they understood from the threat of fascism was not only the countermovement activities and attacks of the Grey Wolves or idealist commandos. Infiltrated into the security forces and were favored and encouraged by the political authorities, the objectives of the Grey Wolves were naturally associated with those of the regime in the eyes of leftists of any sort. Therefore, the radical left's preoccupation with the anti-fascist struggle in this period was born out of pressure and was a natural outcome of the state's policy of 'repression by proxy'. In short, the anti-fascist armed struggle of the second half of the 1970s was still targeting, even though indirectly, the regime in Turkey.

What is called object shift in the contentious politics was also experienced by the Iranian leftists yet in a different way than what took place in Turkey. While Turkish revolutionaries saw armed activism as a defensive strategy and legitimized it as only out of necessity, Iranian guerrillas claimed to use it to protect themselves against the police's violent attacks. Yet, rather than a gradual shift from a revolutionary armed activism towards an anti-fascist struggle as was the case in Turkey, in Iran the main purpose of the revolutionaries turned gradually into an objective of survival. It should not be confused with "the theory of survival" of which the founders of Fadaiyan accused Tudeh; instead, it became an operational obligation due to the necessities of functioning in a brutal dictatorship. At least, this was the rationale behind the organization's

[422] Aydınoğlu, *Türkiye Solu, 1960-1980*, 404.

undemocratic and centralist policies.[423] Consequently, Fadaiyan had to focus more on the survival of the organization, even more than the members, and design the everyday activities accordingly. Therefore, instead of working for and undertaking activities to trigger the revolutionary situation, especially after 1971, they had to spend most of their time and energy on the ways to keep the underground organization safe and intact. They had to even take extreme measures in order to survive SAVAK's extreme clampdown such as meticulously disguising the safe houses they were living, going deeper underground to protect the cells, and operating in great secrecy. One of the extreme measures the members had to take, for example, was carrying cyanide capsules in their mouths all day long when outside of the house in order to be able to kill themselves in case of an arrest by the police. This measure had to be taken after several members spoke under torture and revealed the safe houses causing more to be captured. As one organizational pamphlet suggested "a guerrilla must know that death is preferable to being captured."[424]

Justifiably, Vahabzadeh (2010) draws the attention to the consequences of the obsession with the survival of the organization especially among the leadership cadres at the cost of individual freedoms, as well as lives, and a democratic structure. "The survival of the organization required total submission to organizational surveillance and control."[425] Reminiscent of Che Guevara's *Guerrilla Warfare,* and Marighellas's *Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla,* Fadaiyan published *Instructions for Urban Guerrilla Warfare* around 1972 and advocated for the surveillance of "details of members's lives including their relationships, contacts, and movements".[426] After the ultimate objective became the survival of the organization, even the most restrictive and demanding tasks and expectations from the members could be justified.

What also contributed to the radicalization of Iranian guerrillas and to the continuing commitment to the armed struggle as well as what motivated them to retaliate with more

[423] Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 234.
[424] Vahabzadeh, 235, 237.
[425] Vahabzadeh, 236.
[426] Vahabzadeh, 234,235.

violence was the emotional reaction —mostly in the form of revenge— they gave after losing many comrades in armed conflicts with SAVAK or under torture. Many reported that even after they lost their belief in armed struggle as a way to achieve revolution, they stayed engaged out of the responsibility they felt towards the fallen comrades.[427]

6.4. Encapsulation

The fourth arena of interaction contributing to the process of radicalization through various mechanisms is between the SMOs and its broad constituency. The sub-mechanisms contributing to dissociation of militants during the radicalization process are decertification, marginalization and encapsulation.[428] The general assumption is that the increased intensity and spread of violent actions usually result in the loss of support for the movement actors not only in general public but also among the left-wing constituency. During the periods of intense political violence, the popular support for revolutionary actions gradually diminishes whereas the support for the counter terrorism measures increases. In parallel to this, however, is "the more involved in the clandestine life a militant was, the more extreme the militant's dissociation from reality"[429] The conflict with the security forces and the lack of links with or the approval of the society contributes the emergence of a collective militant identity.[430] Defined as the actors' isolation from the society, encapsulation has tremendous repercussions on especially everyday lives of militants because more the organizations become isolated from the society the more they behave like sects.[431] As mentioned earlier, the strict clandestine conditions that the guerrillas of Fadaiyan were subjected to, created the conditions of encapsulation. The ever growing need to focus on the objective of survival for the Iranian guerrillas played the greatest role in their encapsulation, yet progressive encapsulation was a characteristic shared by the radicalization processes of other radical leftist organizations, such as the Weathermen in the US or the Red Brigades in Italy.

[427] Author's interviews with ex-guerrillas.
[428] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, 175.
[429] Della Porta, *Social movements, political violence, and the state*, 186.
[430] Davenport, Johnston, and Mueller, *Repression and Mobilization*.
[431] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, 93.

Decertification, as defined earlier, is the lack or withdrawal of validation or recognition by an external authority. It usually occurs also a legal left-wing party refutes and propagates against radical left. This mechanism seems to have played a role in the radicalization of Turkish student movement when the main opposition party, the RPP, who had previously supported the student movement, renounced it for endangering the democracy and contributing the chaotic environment on June 12, 1969. This renouncement came right after one of the major conflicts between student activists and police had taken place on June 10, during which students had used Molotov cocktails and sound bombs for the first time[432]. The decertification of the student movement through the RPP's renouncement contributed the radicalization of the leftist students not only by denying them of a legal official support but also by encouraging the further state and paramilitary violence towards them.

A similar mechanism of decertification was also experienced in the second half of the 1970s. While Ecevit's RPP was able to turn the popular support for the leftist ideas and policies among the masses, and especially among the workers who were going through the most active period under the leadership of the DİSK, into electoral successes, it repeatedly declared and demonstrated its disapproval of the activities of radical leftist organizations. While both the DİSK and the CPT supported Ecevit and the leadership of the RPP in the fight against the right-wing assault on the workers and leftist activists, Ecevit even refused to cooperate with the legal leftist parties against 'the threat of fascism'[433]. The last straw in the decertification of the socialist left by RPP came with Ecevit's declaration of martial law after the Maraş massacre in December 1978. Instead of a positive response or at least an open support for the campaign to legalize the CPT, Ecevit's government preferred to increase the repression of the CTP's youth and women's branches, while simultaneously declining to investigate the NAP and its Grey Wolves' role in the massacre; thereby, legitimizing their activities against the leftists on several

[432] Ersan, *1970'lerde Turkiye solu (Turkey's Left in the 1970s)*, 29, 30.
[433] Ersan, 67.

occasions[434]. Although, it is not uncommon for a left-wing government to apply more pressure on the leftist movements and show less sympathy to their demands when in power than a right-wing government, under these circumstances in Turkey, Ecevit's full dismissal had a more damaging and radicalizing effect on the left.

Barred from all the legal means to do politics, the radical leftist groups became more and more engrossed into the ideological and technical details of the best revolutionary struggle that suits to the conditions in Turkey. Furthermore, polarization between the socialist states in the international arena also contributed to not only the competition between the different leftist organizations but also their further encapsulation into the details of highly theoretical and ideological discussions. This sort of an ideological encapsulation was commonplace among their counterparts in the new left of many European countries[435]. The smallest differences in the positions of different organizations concerning even the issues irrelevant to Turkey became the reasons for the fiercest conflicts between them, which warranted further isolation from the masses and their problems.

Yet, there had still been many leftist organizations and groups supporting and participating in the workers' demonstrations, strikes and movements, as well as working among them to organize and recruit them into their movements. Also, in Turkey, unlike in Iran, the police repression and fascist attacks could never reach to the extent that would totally sever the links between the workers and the leftist activists and necessitate a full-fledged isolation under complete clandestine settings. Even during the martial law, even the most radical illegal leftist organizations could enjoy the popular support of their advocates. In short, other than a couple of isolated cases, the radical leftist activists in Turkey, did not experience a total isolation from the general public or their constituency. Whereas in Iran, Fadaiyan became so isolated from the society, by the time demonstrations that were to lead to the revolution broke out, they were

[434] Ersan, 140, 141.
[435] Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 208-210.

initially not even able to join them as an organization. The level of dissociation from the society became a source of internal criticism too.[436]

6.5. Similarities and Differences

Having analyzed the origin and formation of the radical leftist organizations in Iran and Turkey my main argument is that even though originated in the Middle East, the experiences and strategies of these left-wing organizations cannot be fully explained in the context of, for example, other liberation movements in the Global South or guerrilla movements in the Latin American countries. Instead, I argue, they should be seen as a part of the "new radical left" that came into being in Europe and the US in the same period and represented by the organizations such as RAF, Action Direct, Red Brigades and the Weather Underground, because they share many characteristics in common with these organizations including a process that is called 'radicalization'. In the same vein, the concept of radicalization can help us not only see the similarities between the radical leftist organizations in Turkey and Iran and the new left movement in the Western countries, but also compare and contrast the experiences, evolution and conceptions of Iranian and Turkish revolutionaries throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

What distinguishes Iranian and Turkish cases from their counterparts in the Global South and make them similar to their Western counterparts is not solely the process of radicalization per se but mostly the ways in which the mechanisms were combined and shaped the emergence, development and outcomes of this contentious period. The origin of these movements, socio-economic background of their members, the framing of their arguments, and the identity shift they experienced as a result of relational mechanisms had more in common with the new left movement in countries like Italy, Germany and France. Just like their counterparts in the Western countries, the radical leftist organizations in Turkey and Iran evolved from the student movements in the previous decade and went through a process of radicalization as a result of a number of factors such as state repression, schism, competition, etc. Similarly, their members

[436] Hajebi Tabrizi, *Dad-e bidad: nakhostin zendan-e zanan-e siyasi (Memoir of Iranian Women Fedai Guerrillas).*

were mostly coming from middle class families, intelligentsia, and university students rather than working classes and peasants as it was the case with most liberation movements of the period. Similar events played resembling roles in the radicalization of activists in both clusters of the new left; for example, the killing of a fellow activist by the security forces brought about the concept of 'martyr of revolution' and triggered the same response from the sympathizers. Just like Benno Ohnesorg's killing in Germany, the death of Vedat Demircioğlu, a university student during a police raid in Turkey, and Samad Bahrangi's drowning in Iran represented a point of departure from conventional means of protest and tendency toward armed resistance.

My argument that the radical left-wing social movement organizations in Iran and Turkey in this period belonged to the wave of social movements originating in the 1968 student uprisings in Western countries is a very rare, if not nonexistent, observation among the scholars of Turkey and Iran. This is mostly due to the fact that the general perception has been shaped by the focus of Turkey and Iran being categorized and indeed compared to the other countries in the global south such as Nicaragua, Philippines and Egypt. Especially Turkish scholars tend to compare Turkey with Latin American countries. Also, the 1979 Revolution in Iran diverted the attention from the radical left-wing activism in the 1970s and led many to contextualize Iran in the limited geography of the Middle East.

The period in which radical leftist organizations emerged and evolved in Iran and Turkey could better be analyzed and understood as a process of a contentious episode in the history of these countries rather than an era of terrorism or revolution in making. Given the fact that Iran experienced a revolution at the very end of the decade and Turkey a coup d'état under the pretext of stopping the spread of terrorism in the society, my argument might seem unusual; and as stated above the period in the two countries has so far been accounted for within these paradigms especially by structuralist theories. However, structuralist conceptualizations have exhausted their potential to explain the period for both countries and therefore we need alternative approaches to expend our understanding of the period. In line with the recent discussions and approaches in social movements studies, I prefer to define the

period as one of radicalization, to account for especially the evolution of left-wing opposition movements in Iran and Turkey. I use the term radicalization to define the gradual process from their origination in non-violent movements to their transition to underground activism resorting to political violence, by acknowledging the thresholds and stages instead of proposing a smooth linear progression. Furthermore, focusing on mechanisms constituting the unique radicalization process in each country allows me compare these different countries, rather than remaining stuck in the structural, political and socio-cultural differences setting these cases apart and creating obstacles for a comparative approach.

In this direction, Alime et al. (2015) point out three aspects of the formation of mechanisms which explain similarities and dissimilarities between different cases of radicalization. First, in addition to the main mechanisms which a process of radicalization consists of, there are also sub-mechanisms forming each mechanism; therefore, differences in sub-mechanisms can explain dissimilarities between the different cases of radicalization. For example, they explain, in the case of the Red Brigades in Italy, outbidding emerges through a set of different sub-mechanisms such as de-legitimization, provocation, and repression by proxy. Second, the variety in the combination of mechanisms can also be a reason for dissimilarities between two cases of radicalization. It takes place in two ways: either in the sequence in which mechanisms emerge, or in the total number of mechanisms, in other words, one or two mechanisms that might be missing or extra in one can be the cause for difference. Finally, not every mechanism is equally salient in each case; relative salience of one or the other mechanism for different cases of radicalization can explain dissimilarities. From this outline, we can point out and also explain the reasons for the similarities and differences between the Turkish and Iranian processes of radicalization.

If we begin with the similar mechanisms, as we have seen above, boundary activation through disillusionment can be detected both in Turkey and Iran by the end of 1960s. The new left emerging in many European countries in the 1960s took a critical stance against the policies and position of their national communist parties in the 1960s and 1970s and adopted more radical

positions.[437] However, CPT had never been able to occupy a similar position in Turkish politics; instead, what can be called as the 'old left' in the Turkish context was represented by two main trends in the 1960s: the first consisted of the advocates of the idea that socialism could be achieved through a parliamentarian struggle. They gathered around Mehmet Ali Aybar (1908-1995) and represented by TİP. The second one contained the leftists supported the ideal of 'national democratic revolution'. However, disillusionments with both positions brought the young leftist in Turkey to similar conclusions reached by the new radical left in the Western countries: the old left was unable to offer a viable solution in the face of new problems and more importantly against the crashing repression of the state. Whereas in Iran there was a definitive disillusionment with the policies of Tudeh Party, among the youth, especially after 1953 coup toppling popular nationalist Prime Minister Mosaddeq. Tudeh's relations with the Soviets too was a great source of criticism particularly when the Soviets improved its relations with the Shah regime during the 1960s, Tudeh lost all of its potential to challenge the regime and Fadaiyan was established as a reaction to and by accusing Tudeh of being reformist. Therefore, boundary activation with the old-left, in the sense it was experienced by the new left in the Western countries could only be observed in the Left in Iran, where the radical left mostly emerged as a reaction to the Tudeh Party. Whereas for the left in Turkey, if there is a reactionary aspect, it was against the parliamentary left which proved to be unsuccessful in the previous period. In that sense, Turkish experience is closer to the German new left while the Iranian one to the Italian radical left.

There are many other parallels that can be drawn between these organizations in the Western countries and Turkey and Iran such as the role of state repression. However, since the main reason that I examine the similarities and differences between the radical leftist organizations in Turkey and Iran is to be able to analyze and compare the experiences of women in the radical leftist organizations in the two countries, hence I only focus on those that potentially influenced their experiences most. At this point readers might ask why the details and characteristics of

[437] Della Porta, *Social movements, political violence, and the state*.

radicalization of the Left in the two countries are important for the experience of women in the left-wing organizations; or in more general terms, what a relational perspective to contentious politics can tell us about the gendered experience of contention. A short answer to these questions, as I will go into the details in the following chapters, is, I argue, that the similarities and differences in the relational mechanisms constituting the radicalization processes in the two countries could also explain the similarities and differences in women's experiences in the radical left-wing organizations. For example, competition among the movement organizations was more intense in Turkey than in Iran. This highly competitive movement environment, combined with the patriarchal culture, created the conditions that are inimical to women's equal participation. Similarly, regular violent conflicts with right-wing counter-movement organizations in Turkey contributed the formation of a more militaristic and masculine movement culture. This too impaired the conditions for women's equal participation. However, both of these mechanisms were not present in the case of Iranian radical left with obvious implications for the everyday experiences of activist women. Therefore, in order to prove my argument, first I briefly summarize them in this part; then, in the following parts, I will give relevant examples from the lives of women in various stages of their participation into these movements with a particular focus on their recruitment processes and everyday lives during high-risk activism based on the oral history interviews I have conducted with them.

The first difference between Turkish and Iranian cases concerning women's experiences took place in the arena between the state and the activists and was related to outbidding mechanism. As we have seen in the previous chapters, even though the activists both in Turkey and Iran were subjected to heavy state repression, the political environment in Iran left no room for legal opposition and the only possibility was underground activism in which strict clandestinity became necessary as a result of increasing state repression. Whereas the relatively relaxed political environment in Turkey allowed the growth of varied forms of oppositional organizations, both legal and illegal. This provided the activists in Turkey with more room to maneuver and consequently a semi-clandestine formation was possible and preferred by the

majority of the organizations. This initial difference in the level or repression brought about other differences which consequently impacted the social movement sector as well as the experiences of women. For instance, the number of Turkish radical leftist organizations could be higher than their Iranian counterparts in the period[438], which brings us to the second most important difference between the cases of Turkey and Iran: competition between the radical leftist organizations.

In the same vein, the organizational characteristics of the radical leftist organizations in the two countries varied. While Fadaiyan in Iran had to declare itself as a guerrilla organization from its foundation and adopted strict urban guerrilla tactics due to the level of state repression; in Turkey there was a great diversity among the radical leftist organizations as far as underground activism is concerned as well as a relative flexibility in having links to aboveground activism. For example, in Fadaiyan, all the daily activities of guerrillas living in safe houses were planned according to a program determined by the central committee, time to get up, work out and sleep was the same in every safe house. There were specific times slots in their daily schedule which were allocated to organizational activities such as reading, discussion, maintenance of organizational materials and weaponry. Even the most mundane everyday activities such as household chores from cooking to cleaning were shared in a daily plan written by those living in the house. Yet, in Turkey, even though there was almost a pressure to form an underground branch and obtain guns in order to prove one's commitment to revolution, mostly resulting from the competitive movement culture; the underground activism consisted of a wide range practices from robbing banks, stealing cars, carrying guns to use in the fights with right-wing groups to establishing only a couple of cells where copies of banned revolutionary literature were read and pamphlets were produced to disseminate. There were also groups which preached armed struggle yet did not actually undertake any

[438] In Iran, there were 14 guerrilla organizations at the time in various sizes, the OIPFG being the biggest and the most effective. Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 481. Also see footnote 5. In Turkey, there were 23 radical leftist organizations and unlike in Iran several of them were prominent in the radical politics of the period. See Ersan, *1970'lerde Turkiye solu (Turkey's Left in the 1970s)*, 427.

armed operation; as well as those which resorted to arms on and off for a limited period of time. This brought about a great diversity as well as arbitrariness in the organizational discipline and conduct, thereby leaving women more vulnerable to personal decisions and preferences of their male comrades and leaders in most cases.

In addition to the lack of centrally enforced organizational rules and regulations to be observed uniformly, the radical leftist activists in Turkey also did not have to sever their links with society to the extent that Iranian guerrillas were obliged to. Therefore, thanks to their continuing activities among the masses, for instance among factory workers, the traditional and cultural rules of conduct, including the expectations deriving from patriarchal gender roles, continued to exert a greater impact on their behavior compared to what was experienced by Iranian guerrillas. Thus, along with its moderating role, persistent links with constituency, at least in our case, also calls for more conformity to its traditions and customs. Consequently, even women coming from more egalitarian socio-cultural backgrounds had to observe more traditional gender roles during their activism in the radical leftist organizations in Turkey. Furthermore, there were many examples in which male leaders or comrades trying legitimize their arbitrary actions and decisions based on "the values of the masses."

In a similar vein, the differences between repression strategies of the states in Turkey and Iran had diverse implications in everyday lives of activists. As we have seen in the Turkish case the mechanism of *repression by proxy* was a part of counter-guerrilla activities and began as the right-wing nationalist thugs, the Grey Wolves, attacking every leftist demonstration. Eventually, after the leftist activists began to strike back regular violent confrontations, vigilantism, and gunfights dominated the daily activities of the radical leftists and turned into the main activity of many leftist organizations under the banner of anti-fascist struggle. Whereas the outbidding mechanism taking place between SAVAK and the guerrillas in Iran necessitated hit-and-run tactics such as assassinations and bomb placements, which required more planning and less confrontation. Of course, these two different contexts influenced the experiences of women in diverse ways. For example, while women alongside men in Iran received military training and

carried guns because they had to engage in shootout in case of a SAVAK raid on a safe house. In Iran, the guerrillas preferred to die rather than to be captured SAVAK because this could most probably be worse than a sudden death. Also, because they did not want to give any information under torture. However, in Turkey, being arrested by the police did not have the same connotations; therefore, neither men nor women were trained to engage in armed conflict with the police at least not as systematically as the Iranian guerrillas were. Furthermore, the conditions of anti-fascist struggle as I described above inhibited women's equal participation into not only the violent conflicts taking place on a daily basis but also organizational affairs in general.

Finally, the process of radicalization and continuous commitment to armed activism continued in an interactive and relational manner through the mechanisms listed above until the end of the 1970s. One of the consequences of violent struggles taking place on a daily bases for these organizations was creation a more militant, competitive or dogmatic but certainly retaliatory movement culture, which in turn, not only inhibited their original revolutionary objectives to take priority, but also influenced the micro-relations between and among the activists. Some of the mechanisms had greater implications for micro-relations and everyday life of activists such as competition, object shift and encapsulation. These implications on the experiences of women and gender relations in these organizations will be discussed in the following chapters.

7. Life Stories of the Former Revolutionary Women

The next two chapters are devoted to the individual life histories of women who joined and had various experiences in the ranks of the radical leftist organizations and groups in Iran and Turkey during the late 1960s and 1970s. The first chapter deals mostly with their life stories[439] and the recruitment processes as a result of which they first became involved in the radical leftist activism. The following chapter, on the other hand, consists of the analyses of their everyday life in the semi or full-clandestine conditions with a special focus on their gendered experiences from division of labor to relations between male and female members.

In these chapters, I focus on a number of fundamental questions: What were the socio-political backgrounds of the women participating in the radical leftist organizations? What were the formal and informal networks through which these women participated in the radical leftist organizations? What were the emotional, social and political factors determining their motivations to join the revolutionary activism? How did the high-risk activism affect their emotions, perceptions, and commitments? And finally, in what ways did various mechanisms of radicalization of the leftist organizations have an influence on the experiences of women in revolutionary activism?

For the next chapters, I have drawn on the life history interviews[440] that I have conducted with former activist women from Iran and Turkey. Based on the biographical narratives of 13 women, I analyze and compare the similarities and differences between the experiences of women in radical leftist organizations in Turkey and Iran in the 1960s and 1970s. Micro-mobilization in general and that of women in particular can best be studied through ethnographic methods; when it is not possible especially in historical studies, best alternative is life history or biographical

[439] The difference between life history and life story is important as the latter is related to an individual's interpretation of her or his life or experiences in the past, whereas the former is more of a chronological narrative of one's past. See Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (Routledge, 2010), 175, 176.
[440] Use of life history interviews has not been so common in social movement studies but there are valuable works especially on militants of underground organizations. See Della Porta, *Social movements, political violence, and the state*, Zwerman, "Conservative and Feminist Images of Women Associated with Armed, Clandestine Organizations in the United States."

research methods based on in-debt interviews with the participants. This is exactly how I have collected information about the participation, everyday experiences and life of the women activists in the radical leftist organizations. The life histories of the 13 women activists, published and unpublished memoirs as well as other interviews conducted by me and other researchers will be the part and parcel of the following chapters on micro-mobilization of the women in radical leftist organization in Turkey and Iran during the 1960s and 1970s.

7.1. Oral Histories of Former Revolutionary Activist Women and the Question of Intersubjectivity

More than four decades have passed since both the Iranian revolution in 1979 and the notorious September 12 coup d'état in 1980 in Turkey. The women who were devoted revolutionary activists fighting against the state in the decade preceding these historical events lived varied lives afterwards and ended up in completely diverse settings. While Iranian women had to flee the country soon after the 1979 Revolution and have not been able to return ever since;[441] in most cases, 'Turkish' women[442] have eventually been able to pursue a life in their own country even though having spent some time in prison or in exile.

Before starting to conduct the interviews, some of the questions in my mind were as follows: How was it like to be a radical activist woman in these two similar but different countries? How did their experiences differ from each other and why? What was an ordinary day of a

[441] While a vast number of women in Iran participated in the 1979 Revolution, as it is well documented by Halleh Ghorashi, and some of them continued their political activities in exile, the women I focus on in this study were active long before the Revolution in underground leftist organizations, Mostly Fadaiyan, and could not even participate in the demonstrationd during the Revolution due to the nature of their activism. For more about the women's activism around the Revolution and their experiences in exile, see Halleh Ghorashi, "Shifting and Conflicting Identities: Iranian Women Political Activists in Exile," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 4, no. 3 (1997): 283–303, Halleh Ghorashi, *Ways to Survive, Battles to Win: Iranian Women Exiles in the Netherlands and United States* (Nova Publishers, 2003), Halleh Ghorashi, "From Marxist Organizations to Feminism: Iranian Women's Experiences of Revolution and Exile," 2003.

[442] I prefer and try to use when possible the term "women from Turkey" instead of "Turkish women" as the former is a more inclusive and ethnicity-neutral. Unfortunately, there is not a direct equivalent of the term *Türkiyeli* in English to define everyone coming from Turkey regardless of their national or ethnic backgrounds; like Iranian to define everyone from Iran. Yet, there are some phrases that I have to use 'Turkish' women, then I use single quotation marks to indicate that it does not refer to woman's ethnical or national background but just the country of origin.

militant activist woman like? How was the relationship between men and women or division of labor among them?

I have prepared my questions with a gender perspective and a focus on everyday life. I have organized the interviews in the form of semi-structured and conversation-like interactions instead of formal question and answer sessions. As a 31-year-old Turkish woman,[443] I was quite younger than all of my interviewees and I knew intuitively that my gender, nationality and age would have a certain influence on the dynamics of the interview, in short, the intersubjectivity of the interviews, something I have tried to benefit from rather than letting it to set any sort of limits. When necessary, I intentionally emphasized my gender and generational features during the conversations rather than trying to avoid what is apparent; but it was more of an intuitive rather than an informed conduct since I had not yet by then delved into the ethical and ethnographical intricacies of the field of oral history.[444] Later, I have contemplated on this issue at various stages of my field work and arrived at different conclusions. Initially, I was under the influence of the works I had read particularly about the women in the guerrilla struggles in Latin America. Even if I was not fully aware of it, I was influenced by their theoretical and methodological approaches which were mostly quantitative. Although I constantly reminded myself about the contextual differences between the cases I work on and those in other parts of the world, the clear dominance of

[443] I follow the example and approach of the Valery Yow and others who has extensively written about the relationship between interviewer and interviewee and the fieldwork as an ethnographic study. The edited book *Oral History off the Record* has collected similar articles viewing the interview process from a more personal and reflexive perspective and therefore presenting it with a personalized voice. A. Sheftel and S. Zembrzycki, *Oral History Off the Record: Toward an Ethnography of Practice* (Springer, 2013).

[444] The concept of intersubjectivity allows to view the oral history interviews as a product of a conversation between the interviewee and the interviewer directly influenced by their subjectivity. So, obviously my identity, in other words subjectivity, played a role in the way they narrated their past. Some of the fundamental texts see Katherine Borland, "That's Not What I Said: Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research," in *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, ed. Daphne Patai and Sherna Gluck (Routledge, 1991), 63–75, Valerie Raleigh Yow, "'Do I like Them Too Much?': Effects of the Oral History Interview on the Interviewer and Vice-Versa," *The Oral History Review* 24, no. 1 (1997): 55–79, William Schneider, "Interviewing in Cross-Cultural Settings," in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, ed. Donald A Ritchie (Oxford University Press, 2011), 51–65.

quantitative methods in the field of social movements and women's participation as well as their prevailing analytical framework was not easy to overcome. As I will explain in more detail later, the comparative character of my study helps me see beyond the power of numbers and discover the explanatory potential of a qualitative analysis. For example, I had thought it would have been easier to reach 'more' women from Turkey and since I am also from Turkey I thought of it as an advantage. I could communicate easily, be more familiar with the history and cultural codes. Obviously, I felt more comfortable around 'Turkish' women. With Iranian women, however, I was more nervous. Even though I was able to reach almost all the surviving ex-guerrilla women, which were seven of them, I was not comfortable with their number. I was also afraid that as a non-native Persian speaker and an outsider, I would never be able to establish a close relationship with the Iranian women like the one I thought I achieved with the women from Turkey. Furthermore, due to the character of their activism in the past and the nature of their current lives, Iranian women seemed more reserved and less willing to share the details of their past experiences. I thought they might be more suspicious about me and my intentions, or simply more cautious about opening up. However, I proved to be wrong in many of my initial assumptions. For example, Iranian women became actually more engaged in the course of interviews. Trying to explain the intricacies of their experiences to a curious outsider, they exerted more effort to remember and reevaluate. What the literature on women's participation in armed conflicts around the world and the examples of women from Turkey had in common was widespread discriminatory attitude towards women or unequal treatment of women. I began the interviews with Iranian women with an expectation that I would hear similar stories; yet, they told a different story as I illustrate through the individual stories in this chapter and specific examples in the next one.

Even before starting the fieldwork I have always wanted to write about my experiences with the women I have interviewed, independently from the topic of my research. Yet, I did not know how to explain why exactly I would like to do this until I have read similar concerns

and motivations of other like-minded oral historians.[445] The value of such an enterprise is already commonly accepted in the last thirty years of the filed; and I deem myself lucky for being able to benefit from the ever-flourishing literature of the oral history and the latest approaches to the oral history method.[446] If it was not for these studies, I could have easily concentrated solely on the information I had collected through the interviews. However, I am now convinced that the interview environment, the time and place of the interview, as well as the intersubjectivity between the researcher and the interviewees matter almost as much as the content itself. In short, the content could not be analyzed independently from the context in which it is formed.

Besides, as the editors of the *Oral History Off the Record* stated, the oral history method can be better advanced through the sharing the experiences not only following the good practices. Thus, my other aim in this chapter is also provide other oral historians with my own experiences, the difficulties I have encountered and the ways in which I have tackled with them; in order also to contribute to the general oral history literature developed especially in the last decades.

My primary objective in this chapter, however, is to present a more holistic, historicized and contextualized portrayal of these women and their experiences so that they are not perceived or remembered as one-dimensional or exceptional figures. I claim that, only through their false and superficial characterization in the popular as well as scholarly literature, it has usually been believed that they had come to undertake such dangerous and radical actions without any reference to the historical context, the generational characteristics, and the

[445] I have benefitted immensely from the works of a number of oral historians, especially those working with women and other marginalized or minority groups. See, for example Gluck and Patai, *Women's Words*; Susan Armitage, *Women's Oral History : The Frontiers Reader* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002); Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014).

[446] Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli, and Other Stories Form and Meaning in Oral History*, Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* (Oxford University Press, 2014), Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, *The Oral History Reader* (Routledge, 2015), Sheftel and Zembrzycki, *Oral History Off the Record*.

dynamics surrounding their mobilizations. These sorts of representations run also the risk of offering no relevance for today. Therefore, a more holistic representation of the women, the subjects of this study, I argue, can only be achieved with the inclusion of the individual life stories and stories which have only unfolded in the specific oral history fieldwork I have conducted.

What should also be noted is that giving an interview on one's life history can actually be very stressful.[447] It can be extra challenging for those whose memoirs concern collective discourses and memories; and thereby, have the potential to be contested. Besides, volunteering to remember especially a difficult past is a tough enterprise in itself. One has to be careful in selecting and recounting their memories. On the other hand, the researcher also needs to consider the motivation of participants to tell their stories in the first place; to remember sometimes unpleasant sometimes repressed memories with ever present risk of misrepresentation or misinterpretation. Second, they tend to think that their experiences or stories are not worth telling. This is especially common among rank and file members of movements and women. For example, an Iranian former activist woman did not accept to talk to me just because, as she explained to me, she did not have a long enough experience in the underground to be useful for my research. When the number of women who have declined to talk is almost as high as that of those who have agreed, the motivations and stories of the ones who agreed is to something to be considered.

Last but not least, I would also not like to present an experience independently from the person who had it, or only a part of someone's biography, or only a specific period from a life history without mentioning the significant details of their life stories; because I think this would not only be missing significant and relevant details but also misleading. When I used to read about them from the old headlines or in the relevant studies, they were mostly portrayed as either parodic or heroic figures, or militants. Yet, after meeting and getting to

[447] Alan Wong, "Conversations for the Real World: Shared Authority, Self-Reflexivity, and Process in the Oral History Interview," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 43, no. 1 (2009): 239–258.

know them during my field work, I have concluded that they deserve a better representation which would not only do justice to their agency in the past but also acknowledge the value of their account at present. This way, I claim, we can even empathize with them and ask what we would have done if we were in their shoes. Therefore, I strongly believe that an ethnographic analysis of the oral history practice along with a self-reflective scrutiny and a retrospective examination of the interviews help us achieve that. This should be the final objective of this chapter.

7.2. Former revolutionaries, new activists: always-prominent women of Turkey

Before starting the fieldwork with the women from Turkey, I have read all the primary books that are written by the women who had been active in one or another revolutionary organization during the 1960s and 1970s,[448] including a number of novels again by those women.[449] They are mostly published recently and very valuable in terms of offering the perspective of women, which have always been underrepresented both in the historiography and collective memory of the period. Yet, both the novels and the nonfictional works on the women's experiences in the leftist movements have been written with certain political or social motivations ranging from celebrating the women's participation in those movements to raising awareness about their motivations, objectives and the price revolutionary women had to pay during and after their activism. Especially the fictional works, as well as the studies based on the collection of interviews with the revolutionary women,[450] focus on the time they

448 Yazıcıoğlu, *68'in Kadınları (Women of 68)*, Baydar and Ulagay, *Bir Dönem Iki Kadın*, Akkaya, *Sanki Eşittik : 1960-70'li Yıllarda Devrimci Mücadelenin Feminist Sorgusu (As If We Were Equal: A Feminist Inquiry of the Revolutionary Struggle in the 1960-70s)*, Çelik, *Üç Dönem Üç Kuşak Kadınlar*.

449 Baydar, *Sıcak Külleri Kaldı*, Soysal, *Yıldırım Bölge Kadınlar Koğuşu (Yildirim Region Women's Prison)*, Ayşegül Devecioğlu, *Kuş diline öykünen (The One Mimicking the Language of Birds)* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2004).

450 For example see Neyyire Özkan, *Cezaevi-- Cezaevi-- : 1980-1986 Türkiye Cezaevlerinden Kesitler (Prison, Prison: 1980-1986 The Fragments from the Prisons in Turkey)*, (İstanbul: Onur Yayınları, 1986), Çelik, *Üç Dönem Üç Kuşak Kadınlar*, Mamaklı Kadınlar Kitap Grubu, *Kaktüsler Susuz Da Yaşar: Kadınlar Mamak Cezaevi'ni Anlatıyor (The Cactuses Can Live Also Without Water: The Women Talk About Mamak Prison)* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2011).

spent in prison or the period after being released trying to adapt back to the society. While there is nothing wrong with having political motivations or certain agendas when writing books; we are still lacking proper scholarly analyses of the participation, motivation, and everyday experiences of women within the revolutionary organizations from established gender, feminist, or social constructionist approaches, by using qualitative methods like oral history properly, which would contextualize, historicize, analyze the subject to a better extent.[451]

Moreover, relatively higher number of publications on and by women in the 1968 movement in Turkey might actually be deceiving because it gives a false impression that it is easy to reach these former activist women. In the beginning of my fieldwork, I realized that even finding the contact details of the authors and editors of these best-selling books might be very difficult. After I succeeded in obtaining the contact information of some of them, my emails and messages did not yield a result as, I suspect, they had simply come from an obscure Ph.D. student that they had never heard of. If it was not for women like Serpil Çakır, who is a professor at Istanbul University and a prominent feminist, Sevgi Adak, and many others that I cannot name here, calling and actively persuading women to talk to me, I could never reach all these women who generously told even the most private and traumatic memories of their pasts. My interviews with women in Turkey started and proceeded in a snowball sampling method, with my interviewees playing also the role of informants. This method did not only enable me to reach women who preferred to live ordinary and not so visible lives; but also provided me with a sense of the potential and limits of my field work.

I have started my interviews with the women from Turkey first in the summer of 2013 and continued the next summer in 2014 after I had completed all the interviews with the Iranian

[451] There are a few works that deserves a special mention with their either in-depth inquiry or analytical methods on the the involvement of women in the revolutionary organizations. See Yazıcıoğlu, *68'in Kadınları (Women of 68)*, Akal, *Kızıl Feministler*, Talay Keşoğlu, Birsen, "Socialist Women's Organizations in Turkey, 1975-80" (Boğaziçi Üniversitesi, 2007), Baydar and Ulagay, *Bir Dönem Iki Kadın*, Akkaya, *Sanki Eşittik : 1960-70'li Yıllarda Devrimci Mücadelenin Feminist Sorgusu (As If We Were Equal: A Feminist Inquiry of the Revolutionary Struggle in the 1960-70s)*.

women. This two-tiered process enabled me to compare and contrast the experiences of two different groups of women, from Turkey and Iran, while conducting the interviews; at times by also informing women from each side of my findings in the other side respectively. I have interviewed 18 women from Turkey in total from various radical leftist organizations in that period, such as THKP-C, Dev-Genç, Kurtuluş, Dev-Yol, Dev-Sol, TKP/ML, and THKO. Not all of them had participated directly in armed operations or spent time in a safe house in the strict sense of the term. Still, I had very fruitful conversations with all them and obtained significant information regarding their motivations and experiences in the radical leftist organizations. Eventually, I have decided to include six women from Turkey[452] in my dissertation to present the diversity of experiences by the women in radical left without becoming repetitive. Still, I have to note that the other women as well, whose individual life stories do not appear in the structure of this chapter, have after all provided me with significant details as well as a better understanding of women's experiences in the radical left.

It must be noted in passing that there were some militant groups in Turkey, which solely organized around clandestine cells and undertook exclusively armed operations. Yet, they were very much in minority among the leftist revolutionary groups. I could not reach anyone from

[452] I do not identify these women with the names of the organizations in which they were active for a number of reasons. First of all, they themselves have never described themselves with the names of their organizations, such as '*Dev-Yolcu', 'TKP/ML'li', 'Kurtuluşcu'* —the suffixes imply the membership to an organization in Turkish like in the case of Red Brigadist for the members of Red Brigades in Italy, or Fadai for the members of the OIPFG or Fadaiyan—. Second, in some cases, their membership was fluid in the sense that they were undertaking activities for two organizations at the same time. Third, for some of them, the name of their organizations was changed after a split or merge with another organizations. Finally, when women were talking about their experiences in the revolutionary organizations in this period, referred to a 'revolutionary struggle' (*devrimci mücadele*), 'the state of being professional revolutionary' or 'professional revolutionism' (*profesyonel devrimcilik*), as a condition transcending one's membership to a specific revolutionary organization. Thereby, all the women I have interviewed have emphasized, implicitly or explicitly, that they all were a part of single revolutionary movement, rather than the diverse members of different organizations diverged from each other by ideological, strategic, tactical or structural differences. This is a significant characteristic distinguishing the narratives of revolutionary women from those of revolutionary men who almost always emphasize their membership to a particular organization and its significance in their accounts. Still, to give the reader a general idea, the names of the major organizations in which the women were involved are stated in the Table 1.

those groups, and I was assured that they would never give an interview. The difficulties associated with ethnographic work among the armed groups have been pointed out in the literature already.[453] Besides, it is understandable that the women, who were members of the armed groups which only relied only on armed operations in that period, have since established totally different lives, —some of them are public figures or have prestigious lives—; therefore, they do not want to be associated with their past anymore. This is the case even with many other women who had not committed a crime or convicted, but simply participated in the revolutionary movement in this period[454]. Thus, as I have also mentioned before, apart from prominent 'names' of the revolutionary movement, mostly known as 1968ers, whose experiences and memories have appeared multiple times in the media and publications, the history of the 1978ers, as they are usually called in Turkey, is yet to be written. Yet, it is not an easy enterprise also because of these reasons.[455]

Almost all of the women I have interviewed from Turkish side were living in Istanbul and working full time. Most of them were politically active either in an NGO or a political party with either leftist/socialist or feminist objectives. They were not currently living in exile, even though most of them had spent some time in prison or lived as fugitive after the September 12, 1980 coup d'état. Living through the 1980s and 1990s in Turkey, a period in which feminism flourished and became one of the most important oppositional movements in Turkey, most of the women had a certain feminist consciousness; and therefore, tended to critically remember their experiences from a gender perspective. Indeed, women supporting the feminist cause at in the 1980s and 1990s were coming from the leftist movements of the 1970s and they had generated the first and only opposition to the regime after the notorious

[453] For example, see Seidman, "Guerrillas in Their Midst."
[454] Julide Aral, interview by Author, May 8, 2013, İlkay Demir, interview by Author, July 9, 2014.
[455] This last point needs to be kept in mind in understanding the differences and similarities between the experiences of the women from Turkey and Iran. However, for the purpose of this study, it does not make any difference between the two cases because the comparison is between the leftist movements in Turkey and Iran during the 1970s which adopted armed struggle and resorted to clandestine activism, not between two identical social movement organizations with the same ideological, structural and strategic choices, which would be impossible to find anyway.

September 12 coup d'état.[456] Therefore, one of the most common comments I heard from them regarding their past activism was that even if they knew something was wrong with the way they were treated by their male comrades and the leadership cadres, which almost always consisted of men too, they could not think of patriarchy as being responsible for this problem but instead believed that all their problems would be solved after the revolution.[457]

In the following part, I continue with the stories of six women[458] in order to give a better sense of not only the nature of my fieldwork but mostly the individual life stories of these women. Through each life history, I aim to present the diversity, differences as well as similarities in the ways in which the women had participated, experienced and left the high-risk activism in the ranks of the radical leftist organizations; thereby, I attempt to let the reader to have a better understanding of the motivations, perceptions and emotions of each and every woman. The analysis of their everyday life experiences in the revolutionary organizations will follow in the next chapters.

a) Figen

Through personal networks I was able to persuade Figen to talk to me, but from the beginning it was clear that she was not very much interested in telling the part of her life history in the radical left. At the time of the interview she was a member of a very active feminist organization and had to make time for me in her busy schedule. We have met in a cafe and after hearing what I was interested in she begun to talk about herself in a very descriptive way. Born in 1959, she was the youngest of seven siblings in a family of middle-class background. She married her husband when she was 19; he was also a member of the same leftist organization in which she used to be active. They had a daughter after he served more than 5 years in prison and then they got

[456] For the development of feminism in Turkey since the 1980s see Şirin Tekeli, *1980'ler Türkiye'sinde Kadın Bakış Açısından Kadınlar (From the Women's Perspectives: The Women in the 1980s in Turkey)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık A.Ş, 1993); Devrim Çakir, *Kadin hareketinde mücadele deneyimleri : özgürlügü ararken (The Experiences of Contention in the Women's Movement: In Search of Freedom)* (Istanbul: Amargi, 2005).
[457] This way of thinking was not something peculiar to the women revolutionaries in Turkey but a commonplace belief among the socialists women in the 1960s and 1970s all around the world.
[458] I use pseudonyms for every woman, and translations of the direct quotes from the interviews are mine.

divorced. She was single and retired at the time of interview; identified herself as an 'independent' leftist and a feminist.

When the 1968 student movement began, her big brother was active among the leftist students in university. She was heavily influenced by him who used to read to the younger siblings books by the leftist intellectuals of the time, such as Aziz Nesin and Firuzan. She continued reading for the rest of her life, including philosophy books when she was at high school. Already identified as a socialist, the first thing she did after getting into the medical school in Istanbul in 1975 was to look for a leftist organization to participate. Her brother was a "role model" for her and even though she spent some time with groups that were affiliated with THKP-C, she eventually joined Kurtuluş. Soon after that, she quitted her studies at the university to pursue her revolutionary activism, or as she puts it: "for the struggle". She was arrested for the first time by the end of 1975.

She stated that they were not actually aware of the risks that their activism entailed before the September 12, 1980 coup d'état. They did not think that they would have to pay such a big price for putting up posters at night, or engaging in armed conflicts with the fascist groups. All they could think of was the revolution; family, home or love did not have a place in their hearts. The excitement that the 1968 movement generated did not leave room for any other thoughts, rational or irrational. Yet, she noted, "this was the case among the rank-and-file members, we did not know the situation among those at the top. Only after the September 12 coup d'état, we learnt there was only one woman among the 40-50 members of the central administration."

For the rest of the interview, she went on describing the organization and her experience from a gender perspective which was clearly critical of the patriarchal attitudes of both the members and the administrators. The discrimination against the women activists was apparent at every level of their activism from organizational division of labor to the everyday chores and the relations between women and men. Women were being kept in the lower cadres while men were quickly

rising to the upper positions; women were expected to fulfill the tasks pertaining to their gender roles in the society such as cleaning, cooking, and serving. For example, when the women objected the gender-based division of labor within an association of the organization, the resolution that the leading cadres offered was even more offending to the women: the men would have cooked the tea but the women had to serve it to the guests as serving tea would impair the men's authority over the newcomers.

She lived with her family until she got married in 1979 when she was 19 years old and this was how her illegal underground life began. She described marriage as fleeing from family pressure. Severing the family ties and devoting oneself to the revolution was encouraged by the organization; yet it was implicitly formulated as marrying a comrade from the organization. There was always someone from the organization staying in their house for a temporary period of time. They had to change the house each time when someone left the house for security reasons. Some of the organizational meetings too took place in their house.

She held a critical position in a workers' branch of the organization in the textile sector, as well as in a group called 'Democratic Woman'. She explained in detail how competitive she was, yet she only competed and compared herself with the other women in the organization. She was relentless towards the other women who would show a sort of weakness. She was also fiercely critical of the women in higher positions thanks to being married to the men in the top cadres, whom she used to call "the chefs' wives". She also objected a woman's taking up the role of the wife of a man who were sought by the police in order to disguise his identity as the sole responsibility of a woman in the organization. She complained that the strict underground conditions in which these couples in disguise were living eventually letting them to have a real relationship.

Yet her marriage changed her status in the organization too, as she began to be called as "Suat's wife" instead of Figen. She had to protest and fight to reclaim her identity as an individual revolutionary. In order also to have an egalitarian division of labor with her husband, they divided the responsibilities in the house; however, her workload had always been more, as she

kept working in a factory, than her husband who was just a 'professional revolutionary'. She had to take up other responsibilities in the organization such as mobilization of workers and squatters in the slums.

As most the revolutionary women active in the radical leftist organizations in that period, Figen underwent several abortions without any complaint or even requesting a special treatment. If anything, she wanted to be seen strong and resilient; so much so that once she even used a dubious folk medicine to abort the baby and donated the money they allocated for the abortion to the organization. It was for her a part of her constant endeavor to be 'just like men' in her revolutionary activism, something she remembers at present as naive.

b) Meral

I have met and interviewed Meral a number of times and she helped me immensely find and convince several other women. She also provided me with a detailed description of the current lives of many other women who would not talk to me for various reasons, such as currently having established positions or pursuing completely different lives that they do not even want to remember their past as radical activists.[459] There were also those women who would not accept to give me an interview for it is still a traumatic experience to remember and recount the past.

Initially, it was only through her writings that I could come across with Meral; yet it was never explicit in her writings which organizations she belonged to.[460] Only later into our interviews, I was to discover that she was either very close to or at times among the leadership of TKP/ML and its splinter organizations during the 1970s. Still an ardent political activist in legal socialist and Kurdish parties and organizations; she identifies herself as a socialist who accepts the importance and relevance of feminism at the time of the interviews.

[459] This statement was made by some other women too, which I have interviewed.
[460] This is also a very common characteristic of women's writings both in fictional and non-fictional works. It might also due to the fact that throughout their activism they had been affiliated with more than one organization after all the splits and separations.

As one of the five children of a soldier father and a housewife mother, she was born in the east of Turkey in 1954. Traveled through the Kurdish villages during her childhood due to her father's job, she saw the social and economic problems of the region first hand. Her first encounter with the revolutionary ideas, however, was during her high school years which coincided the 1968 movement; she was in a boarding school and they were following the events through their friends whose older brothers and sisters were in university. At the same time, she kept traveling to Diyarbakır where her father worked and became aware of Kurdish issue in Turkey. She described her father as a relatively liberal man towards her; fully trusting her, he even signed empty papers for her to be able to get permissions from the dormitory to stay overnight at her friends' when she wants. Yet, he was very harsh on her mother.

Mostly concerned about the injustice and inequality in the society she found herself close to a number of friends from TKP/ML-TİKKO without being really aware of the leftist groups and organizations. In a similar way, she ended up in prison in 1970, where she decided to live a revolutionary life. As for so many others in her generation, the prison served as a school for her where she spent almost 4 years, reading and discussing Marxist, Leninist and other revolutionary literature. "Without the prison experience," she described, "I would have just become an ordinary teacher with certain revolutionary leanings as most others did due to the revolutionary spirit of the 1970s."

Right after being released from the prison with the 1974 amnesty, she began her activities as a full-time, or as they put it at the time, as a 'professional revolutionary', in the same organization. Until the September 12, 1980 coup d'état, she continued her illegal revolutionary activities in that organization, lived in a number of safe houses under different disguises, and fell in love with 'the love of her life'. Even though they got married officially, they did not live in the same house for a long time; they were always busy with organizational activities in different cities or in different branches of the organization. Different from the majority of the radical leftist organizations of the period which were based in the big cities in the midst of the middle classes and students, they were mostly organized and located in the slums among the factory workers.

She had unique experiences while she was hiding sometimes in the houses of sympathetic workers and squatters.

She described everyday life in the organization during the 1970s as organized around the patriarchal customs and traditions of the society. However, due to her being an experienced revolutionary and holding higher positions in the organization, she did not personally endure the consequences of gender-based division of labor or discrimination. Despite her advantageous position in the organization, she too had to adapt to the social conditions wherever they were located in order to disguise. They had to move very often and survive on a very limited budget. Still she thought the 1970s were the best period for the revolutionaries as the support of the people was at its highest to their cause. For example, they collected donations in big plastic bags from people attending the funeral of a revolutionary, so did it the other revolutionary organizations as well. She was arrested in the 1980 coup. Her husband was killed during torture soon after. She has never married again but had a daughter with her partner from the same organization.

c) Nilay

Nilay agreed to talk to me only thanks to the insistence of a professor whom she and I have known for years. At the time of the interview, she was retired after working for years in different trade unions. She identified herself as feminist and still active in feminist and socialist circles. We have met in the same cafe I have conducted most of my interviews.

She was born in Istanbul, to a low-income family with four children. Both her father and mother were coming from the immigrant families from the Balkans. Her father was a worker in Germany, and her mother joined him to help the family financially after three of the older kids decided to pursue university education. Everyone in the family was a supporter the Republican People's Party as the majority of the immigrant families at the time who were usually poor workers and not religious. She recalled her uncle was a politically conscious factory worker and a trade union member; her older brother was a leftist. She was already politicized in high school

during the 1968 movement; her friends and she admired Deniz Gezmiş, Mahir Çayan and other revolutionaries. Reading whatever they could lay hands on, one day she was busted at a school search for banned books and sent to the board of discipline. She was a good student and getting a disciplinary punishment for just possessing a book encouraged her to follow the social and political events even more carefully. By the end of high school, she had read all the classical leftist literature that had been translated into Turkish; she became known as a leftist among her schoolmates.

Her older sister was a student in the Middle East Technical University, when she started her university education in 1974 at Ankara University, in Political Science Faculty, which she chose for it was the university of Mahir Çayan and his friends. Dev-Yol was dominant in Political Science Faculty, her sister was sympathizer of TİP and TSİP, and she made friends with girls from these groups. While people around her were trying to persuade her to join their groups and there were endless discussions among various leftist groups regarding the discourse and ideological differences, she resorted to the books to find an answer. Having read Clara Zetkin and Engels' *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, she objected gender-based division of labor among the leftist students during the establishment of a student club. The female students were asked to clean the club's building before the opening. She recalls vividly that she was lectured by the male students with a reference to what Ho Chi Minh's wife allegedly said: "some would die for the revolution, but some others would cook."[461] She does not remember whether she participated in the cleaning, but supposes she did.

What alienated her from Dev-Yol supporters in the university was the beating of a close male friend of hers by three of them due to a rumor. This instance offended her sense of justice and betrayed her trust towards Dev-Yol supporters. As a result, she started to hang out with a group of people who were all the friends the beaten male friend, and soon they formed another splinter

[461] It is my translation from Nilay's narration as I could not find anything similar that might have been said by Ho Chi Minh's wife.

group.[462] There were other groups as well at the time who were organizing under alternative organizations against Dev-Yol such as Ankara Higher Education Union (AYÖD – *Ankara Yüksek Öğrenim Derneği*). In one of AYÖD's meetings which took place in a house late at night with the participation of about 40 people, she was the only woman. She recalls how she was targeted by a one of the participants who questioned her presence in the meeting as suspicious; he claimed it was unusual for a 'girl' to stay out so late and be able to participate such a meeting. She felt embarrassed; yet, fortunately one of the leaders knew her beforehand and defended her, so, she did not have to leave.

She stayed with this small radical revolutionary group for most of the 1970s. There were four women and three men in their campus branch of the group which consisted of 50 or 60 people in total in Ankara. She took different responsibilities in the group from organizing civil servants and workers to participating protests and carrying guns. She was so active that she was arrested a number of times and eventually had to leave for Germany after a police officer threatened to kill her if she was to be arrested again. After being exposed to the police right before the 1980 coup, she was advised to go to Germany and this way able to escape the military regime's clampdown on all the leftist and revolutionaries after September 12, 1980.

d) Banu

It would have never been possible for me to even be aware of Banu's presence in a radical leftist organization without if Nilay did not introduce me to her. Banu was one of the former revolutionary activists who pursued a modest professional career afterwards. She was still working at the time of the interview and not married. She likes to be called a communist or feminist, but she would not identify herself as anything because she believes it is the deeds of people what really matters not the labels.

[462] Even though it was just a very small group as many other radical leftist groups during the period, I will not name it to protect the anonymity of Nilay.

She was born in 1954 to a middle-class family, her father was a soldier and her mother was a teacher. She was apolitical during high school years; as a child of a soldier she did not have any exposure to the left or leftist ideas. Instead, she was interested in literature, and reading novels and newspapers. She entered in Ankara Engineering and Architecture College in 1971 and until the last year of the university she kept a low profile; however, what she experienced in the first year of the university drew her attention to socialism and socialist groups. Her name was given to the police by some 'fascist' students and the police raided their faculty building; she could escape with the help of some professors, yet after this event she began to question and read about the leftist ideas.

How she began organized activism was more of an accident rather than a result of an intentional act of participation. Already sympathetic to the leftist groups, she was hanging out in a bookstore owned by TİP supporters in campus during the boycott of classes at the university in 1975. By chance, one of the protestors approached her and asked: "sister, which school are you from?", and upon hearing her answer he asked again: "then, why don't you stand guard?". Oddly, she began her guard duty at that very moment and stayed on the barricades for days and nights until someone else told her to go. She recalls that afterwards everything developed naturally, she was one of the few women among the student activists in their campus and everyone was interested in recruiting her to their groups. She began her revolutionary activities as a part of a small radical leftist group which joined THKO eventually. She immediately felt useful trying to mobilize people in the slums in Ankara.

They were very active in that period, she was meeting almost 50 people in a day to recruit people. The interests in their organization was so high among the people that they were unable to meet the demand. For her, it was a real mass movement. She continued her illegal activism for about two years and found herself out of the underground organization as a result of a set of curious events. She and her friends split from THKO in order to turn into a better mass movement; however, they could not succeed in their attempts. After a period and a round of self-criticism, they wanted to rejoin THKO, yet as one of the organizers of the split she was not

allowed back in the organization. So, she could go back to the university and finished her studies in 1979.

Starting from the rank-and-file she rose up the highest levels in the organization and undertook various responsibilities from the mobilization of the teacher movement in Ankara, to preparation of propaganda items, posters, and leaflets. She was initially sent to a yarn factory, but could not adapt to the living conditions as she was coming from a very different socio-economic background. During a police inspection, she fled the house and never went back.

Soon after joining the movement, she got married to the person who recruited her to the organization, yet it was not a marriage for love but more of a marriage of convenience as she described it. She was not in love with her prospective husband, just felt an admiration for him. Not expecting it at all, when he invited her to a cafe she first thought she was going to be promoted to a higher position in the organization. Instead, he asked her to marry him or he would go to another city for an organizational work. It took her a while to decide: "I was thinking that night, to make a decision, I was weak because it was a circle that I had just entered, I was shy too. The person whom you trust is very important in illegal activism, the person I trusted most would have gone, I couldn't say no, I didn't want to separate with him, […] I didn't want to say no but I wasn't actually ready, I had never had a boyfriend…"

They got married right away, donated all the wedding gifts to the organization. It was not a 'classical marriage'; yet, she was responsible for the housework, as it was the case with other women in the organization. "Usually men didn't do any housework, women did, and it was not something we would discuss, maybe it was also because the men we were together with were always from higher positions, always busy, and had more important things to do." They hosted many male comrades from higher positions in the organization in their house. None of them help with the housework, but one.

e) Umut

Umut, like Meral, Nilay and Figen, was one of the still very active women both in feminist and leftist organizations. We have met several times, and she presented a detailed picture of regarding the current conditions of the former revolutionary activist women. As opposed to the women that Meral had described as disengaged and apolitical, Umut circle of women friends seemed to be more politically engaged and active. At the time of the interview, she was divorced from her husband who was a former comrade and had one daughter.

Umut was born when her mom was 17 years old to a poor family living in a village in the north of Turkey. Her mom had four more kids, they moved to the slums of a big city and lived there until she finished the high school. She always had to take care of her siblings as well as the house when her mom went to work in a tobacco plant in summers or was sick. She began to work with her mother in the tobacco plant at the age of 12. "This is why I had always been a leftist, growing up in a poor family protesting injustice."

In the plant, she encountered the socialist ideas for the first time through the chief worker who was an immigrant from Bulgaria. She liked listening to his experiences under a socialist regime, such as easy access to health care and education. Then, she began to read newspapers and columnists, especially Çetin Altan; despite all the burden she had to shoulder, she was the best student in her class and graduated with success from the science branch of the high school. "After I finished all the housework, I used to wake up 03:00 am in the morning and study in the light of the street lamp shining through the window, we didn't have electricity. I was a successful student and everyone, including our relatives, respected me."

After saving enough money and securing a scholarship, she went to Ankara to study mathematics at Hacettepe University in 1968. Found herself in the middle of university boycotts and protests, she joined Dev-Genç right away and until 1972 participated in all the activities of Dev-Genç from mobilization of workers and squatters to studying revolutionary literature in clandestine house meetings. When Dev-Genç split into several organizations she supported THKO without

becoming a member; she was also sympathetic to THKP-C but her friends were closer to THKO, so was her. During the summer of 1972, she eluded the police and a guaranteed imprisonment by mere luck; yet the police began to look for her again when her illegal revolutionary activities were revealed in a police raid to the safe house she was living.

Thereafter her fugitive life began; with the help of her brother, mother, and a few activist friends she did not only find a place to hide but also escaped the police once more in Istanbul when her father disclosed her whereabouts to the police. For a while until she arranged a fake identity for herself with the help of her boyfriend who was also a revolutionary activist, she had to change her location regularly. Finally, she rented a small room, found a secretarial job in a firm, and resumed her revolutionary activities gradually together with her boyfriend particularly in trade unions.

Her two-and-a-half-year fugitive life ended with the 1974 amnesty. She got married with her boyfriend soon after, yet they got a divorce six months later after he proposed to live in a small village and pursue a "normal" life. Meanwhile, she was also in love with another activist in Ankara, who were in prison until 1974. Actually, they had both loved each other as he confessed 40 years later to her; yet, they had never been able to open up to each one another believing that their most important priority was revolution not love.

"Under the pretext of trade-union activities, we were actually mobilizing the workers for the revolution. Our union was the most radical one in that period, we were very active in the strikes and clashes, even DİSK did not want to take us… You must have seen our workers' entrance into Taksim Square on May 1, 1976." She also mentioned the close relations that the trade union in which she was very active had with the illegal revolutionary organizations of the period such as THKO, THKP-C before 1976 and afterwards Dev-Yol and MLSBP. She was active in Dev-Yol.

Between 1974 and 1980 she lived in a number of communal houses together with at least two activists from various radical leftist organizations and the trade union. She was also one of the

founders Revolutionary Women Association (*Devrimci Kadınlar Derneği* - DKD) in Istanbul, which was a semi-independent but also a subordinate branch of Dev-Yol. She complained about the unending attempts by the men from higher-cadres to control or exert authority over women and their activities. However, it was, as she claimed, mostly thanks to the women's mobilization activities that Dev-Yol could establish a strong presence in workers' districts and slums. The organized revolutionary women played a very important role in having access into people's homes and recruiting them into the organization.

During her activities in DKD, she remembers objecting and protesting the gender discrimination; yet, women's rights or equality between men and women were taboo subjects that were never spoken of. Despite all, DKD provided education and training to women on various topics namely first aid, contraceptives, and abortion. Still, both her and her friends had to get abortion more than once. She said they were not able to see the contradiction, as well as the causes for the discriminatory treatment they were subjected to living in a patriarchal society.

f) Funda

In one of my meetings with Meral, she brought Funda along. Funda joined and listened to us for a while and only then decided to speak to me. Even then she had a lot of reservations; unlike most of the women from Turkey that I had interviewed she did not want her real name to be known. She explained that the way the history of the left as well as the women in the left for that matter had been narrated revolved so much around certain individuals, controversial figures, and splinter groups either in a mythical or in a rumorous fashion that the experiences that matter still remain untold. Thus, she noted, she just wanted people to learn about their experiences not their names. She was single at the time of the interview, trying to make ends meet by giving private lessons, and not politically active. She and her partner, who was from the same organization, lived a fugitive life in Turkey for decades after the 1980 coup d'état until after the statute of limitations had expired on charges against them. She never had kids.

She was born in 1951. Both her mother and father were teachers and coming from families migrated from Caucasia and Circassia. Her mother, who was from Thessaloniki, played a very important role in her life with her strong and independent character. Her father was an atheist; and almost all her relatives were RPP supporters. There was a relatively big library in their house and both her mother and father were ardent readers. Her mother used to put pressure on people around them to send their daughters to school. When her older sister entered into university in 1963, the family moved to Istanbul where they settled down for good.

Everyone in the family followed the rise of the left during the 1960s, the establishment of the TLP, DİSK, and the student movement both from the news and from her sister who identified herself as a socialist. Funda was a very successful student, wanted to study in Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara but her family did not allow her to go there due to the scale of the student movement in METU. Therefore, she got into the Istanbul University; however, as it was the case in all the universities in Turkey in that period, the leftist students were very strong there too. "The boycotts began a week after I got into the university. FKF had already turned into Dev-Genç. There was no need for invitation or recruitment, everything is taking place around you and you find yourself in the middle."

Funda experienced, first hand, the workers' "legendary" demonstrations and their violent repression by the police during June 15 and 16, 1970; and there, for the first time, she comprehended the magnitude and plausibility of what they were advocating for in theory. She also witnessed the formation of all the prominent leftist organizations of the period from the ranks of Dev-Genç, like THKP-C and Aydınlık; as well as the arrest and imprisonment of all of their members during the martial law and 1971 coup. She lived through this period, without being arrested, but instead reading and studying the revolutionary literature that was being created by the prominent revolutionary leaders of the period. Finally, she decided to join TKP/ML with a number of friends.

After being arrested in 1973 during a police raid in one of the safe houses of the organization, she stayed in prison until the amnesty in 1974. Like many other revolutionary women

imprisoned in that period, she was also brutally tortured. “I was tortured like everyone else in prison; including verbal and sexual harassment, but not rape. Electric shock was applied to everyone. But I was not traumatized, I despised them. There was no rape by 1973 because the military regime had already collapsed then; but before us, I heard from a woman that she was raped, there were others too.”[463]

A year after being released, she left her family and began her activist life as a professional revolutionary in İzmir and had to travel afterwards to several other cities due to the police operations and repression during the rest of the 1970s. She participated in various organizational activities from armed operations to workers’ mobilization in factories. She worked in a textile factory in Adana, among the women workers; lived in the slums among the Kurdish- Alevi workers for two years from 1976 to 1978. “They were already sympathetic to our cause coming from the regions in which revolutionary struggle has been a part of their history. I would meet them in the neighborhood or in the factory, make friends with them, and then recruit them to our movement. […] Then was assigned to another work in Istanbul, otherwise, I would have never left Adana, it was the happiest period of my life.”

During all this period she had boyfriends, however, they never lived together or even stayed in the same city. She lost both of them in the shootouts with the police. First one was killed after fleeing from the prison. She heard the news right before an organizational meeting and did not give any reaction. “No one even asked.” They separated with the next one during a split in the organization because they were in different camps. He was also shot death later. “So many people died including a dear friend of mine with whom I shared an apartment, he was Armenian; […] I never cried after anyone. You know what happened then? Hrant Dink was killed,[464] he was also Armenian, I knew him a little, I learnt about his death in a park and cried my heart out.”

[463] The cases of rape during torture were reported by many women during the 12 March Military Regime. See for example: Mehmed Kemal, *12 Mart, öfkeli generaller ve işkence (March 12, The Angry Generals and The Torture)* (Soyut Yayınevi, 1974), 235–88.
[464] Hrant Dink was a Turkish-Armenian journalist who was assassinated in Istanbul in 2007 by a Turkish nationalist. For his bio, see https://hrantdink.org/en/hrant-dink/316-hrant-dink-biography. Accessed November 26, 2018

With her last boyfriend, they were dismissed from the organization due to their dissenting opinions in 1979 and lived the period after the September 12, 1980 coup d'état together.

7.3. Forgotten Women of Fadaiyan?

It was my Ph.D. supervisor, Prof. Touraj Atabaki, who provided me with the contact information of five women that I was supposed to talk initially. As a former activist of Fadaiyan himself, he has not only been my supervisor but also my first informant before going into the field. Moreover, I have initially conducted interviews with two former activist men from Fadaiyan before starting the interviews with the women. First one was Nasser Mohajer, a well-known researcher who has focused and written extensively on the modern history of Iran.[465] Second informant, Hadi, had been an active guerrilla in Fadaiyan for a long time with extensive experience in the organization both in and outside of Iran. He was also in exile in Paris and did not want his name to be known. They both help me immensely in understanding the period, and the ideology and the structure of the OIPFG, as well as in establishing contacts with the former activist women of Fadaiyan.

I have conducted life history interviews with seven Iranian women living in various countries and cities in Europe during the summer of 2014.[466] All of the interviews were conducted in Persian. I have started my field trip in Paris where three of the women were located and traveled through Cologne, Dortmund, and Stockholm. The reason for the number of Iranian women to be limited compared to those from Turkey is that not many guerrilla women have survived after most of them were killed either in the shootouts with the police, in prison or

[465] Touraj Atabaki and Nasser Mohajer, *Rahe-ye digar: revayetha-ye dar bud va bash-e Cherik-ha-ye Fedai-ye Khalq-e Iran = The road not taken : narratives on the life and times of Iranian Feda'i guerrillas* (Amsterdam [etc.: Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis [etc. 2017), Nasser Mohajer, *Ketab-e zindan (The Prison Book)* (Berkeley; Creteil: Noghteh, 1998).

[466] They were all from the OIPFG for mainly two reasons; one is practical that I had the means to reach these a few women through personal and professional contacts. Second is more methodological: I had not even looked for the women who were members of the Mojahedin, the Islamist Marxist guerrilla organization of the period, as I would not have been able to comparatively study Turkish and Iranian since there was no such leftist Islamist organization in Turkey. Thus, I limited my participant women from Iran to Fadaiyan; whereas in Turkey I picked women from various revolutionary organizations in order to represent the diversity of the secular leftist organizations at the time in Turkey.

committed suicide before the 1979 Revolution in Iran. Remaining few had to flee sooner or later. Even though the number of women was more or less set, there was always the possibility of new names to be suggested by every woman I was talking to. Indeed, the women I interviewed told me about four more women in addition to the initial five whose contacts I had received from my supervisor, but I could interview seven of them eventually. I was also informed that there are a few others living in Europe and the US but it would be futile trying to contact them as they clearly made it known to the friends in the community that they would not talk to anybody about their past. The most famous of them is Ashraf Dehqani who wrote several books[467] about her experience and is singled out as the only Iranian woman writing her memoirs as a guerrilla.

Before going into the details of each interview and life story,[468] I would like to give a general information regarding the current conditions in which these women were living at the time of the interviews in order to understand the spatial and temporal conditions in which their memory of past has been shaped and recalled. First of all, for almost all of them, it has been at least 30 years since they had left Iran and they had all ended up in Europe either directly or indirectly after spending a few years in various countries like Afghanistan and ex-Soviet Republics. Except for two of them, they were all married to their former comrades at the time of the interviews. All but one had children who were in their late twenties and married to the citizens of the countries they were residing.

Economically, most barely made ends meet and the majority of them was still working; only two were retired. They all had to work hard to survive in Europe and not always in the professions that they received their education at the university level in Iran. Socially, the level of their integration into the societies they were living seemed to be very limited and most of them was willing to go back to Iran in case the regime changes. Technically, they

[467] For example, see Dehqani, *Torture and Resistance in Iran*. There is also the memoirs of Marzieh Ahmadi Oskoui, who was killed by SAVAK. But both memoirs were published by the OIPFG mostly for propaganda purposes. Marzieh Ahmadi Oskoei, *Khaterati Az Yek Rafiq (Memoirs of a Comrade)*, n.d.
[468] I use pseudonyms for every woman, and translations of the direct quotes from the interviews are mine.

could actually return but most preferred not to do so as long as the regime in Iran persists. Some had traveled to Iran for various reasons after the Islamic regime had declared that there would be no charges during the Khatami presidency, but others refused even to visit the country under the current regime. It was one of the contentious topics between the members of this small community. They indeed constituted a community even though located in various cities and pursuing different lives; they seemed to call each other regularly, be aware of how everyone was doing, and meet once in a while. The most helpful part of their still being in close contact with each other for me was that some of the women were persuaded to talk to me by the other women I had interviewed. They also helped arrange our meetings.

So far, most have not talked or written anything about their experiences as guerillas. All showed, however, a keen interest in talking to me and accounting their stories. Some even expressed their interest in or even has started writing their memoirs believing in the significance of transmitting their experiences to the new generations. They were not politically active and did not believe that there was something they could do for their country from their current locations. None of them defined themselves as feminist nor find it useful in any way to make sense of their past.

Regarding my role as an interviewer, after meeting most of them more than once and talking for hours, I was still at a position that defines me as an outsider. I felt sometimes that women were not telling me the whole story or preferring not to mention certain issues and events. Certainly, the characteristics of their activism as well as the relationships and old ties still must have played a role in their silences on certain issues. I even noticed that they hesitated to give me the sorts of details that I could easily reach as a result of a simple Internet search. However, I knew that it was not personal. Instead, the behaviors of this sort gave away how they still preferred to hide instead of reveal, as an underground 'guerrilla' would do. They themselves confessed that, even if in varying degrees, the remnants of the principles, values and practices that they cherished as guerrillas are still haunting them in their lives and relationships.

Being an outsider has certain advantages too. During the interviews, I often felt like they enjoy explaining the details or stories that were most probably repeated and discussed over and over for several times amongst the community to someone who had no prior knowledge or prejudice. I benefitted from the fact that it is always fun telling someone who is enthusiastic about listen to your life history. My identity as a young, Turkish, female scholar who is not Iranian but still from a similar culture, younger but from the same gender, also helped create an agreeable interview environment. For example, I often shared the experiences of Turkish militant women of the same period that I had talked to beforehand or showed my familiarity with Iranian culture and customs when they were making references.

a) Fariba

I met Fariba[469] in the same café that I had met a male member of Fadaiyan, Hadi, who was a male former guerrilla in Fadaiyan. She had asked many questions to him about my objectives and me on a phone call they had during our meeting with him. She even asked for my picture, which Hadi took and sent to her through his smart phone. Still, she insisted that I wear a certain color on the day of the meeting. We agreed on red.

She has been living in Paris for 30 years and working as a freelance journalist. As I was to learn from others, she was married to a comrade of hers from Fadaiyan. She had no children. She expressed regret about not pursuing university education in France; she had already studied journalism and used to work as a journalist in Iran. She continued publishing and editing right after coming to Paris. She defined herself as a communist even though, she stressed, it is considered obsolete by most of her former comrades. Finally, still being politically and intellectually engaged in the same political circles seem to have kept her more committed to the cause compared to the other women.

[469] She introduced herself to me with her *nom de guerre*. After hesitating a little and only after I told her that I can find her name in different sources that I have, she decided to tell me her real name.

She was very much willing to talk and share her experiences with me; however, at first, she sounded defensive and seemed to have strong opinions about some controversial issues regarding ideological and tactical transformations of the organization. She seemed to have an adamant belief in the rightness of their cause and methods; maybe therefore, preferred to talk about organizational issues rather than personal experiences and everyday aspects of guerrilla life, around which majority of my questions was revolving. I felt like I was talking to one of the male leaders of the organization. However, when I confessed this to myself, I realized that it was actually my gendered expectations that was impacting my perception of her and her narrative. I had unconsciously expected her, a woman, to be more emotional, less political, and more critical of the past, at least at present.

One of the first things that she wanted to talk about was the emergence of two groups, *Aksariat* and *Aqaliat* (Majority and Minority), as a result of a split in the ranks of the OIPFG right after the revolution and the ideological differences between them.[470] Fariba was from the Minority. The *Aksariat-Aqaliat* division matters for my study for several reasons but during the interviews it came up as a factor that might potentially influence a former guerrilla's memory; in other words, as an ideological point of view affecting the way one recalls one's past. In this context, the split between these two groups is significant with regard to the differences in their views of the past experiences in the safe houses and the strategy of armed struggle. While the Aksariat disproved their past and refuted the guerrilla warfare after the revolution, the Aqaliat has never renounced the guerrilla struggle and has claimed that it was the best possible strategy given the conditions of the period and the political regime they were fighting against. Some also claimed that the Aksariat questioned and refuted armed struggle as an appropriate strategy even for the period before the revolution. Therefore, I was warned about a possibility that women from the Aksariat might have a negative perception of their experiences as a guerrilla or at least a tendency to

[470] I was also going to receive an email from her in the evening of our meeting explaining further what she thinks about the role of emotions and the relationship between men and women in the organizations, as well as a piece by her on the subject published on a website.

remember and interpret events in a more negative way. I was also told, for example, that they usually are the ones complaining about being discriminated for their gender or complain about their status in the organization. I should note that in passing, I have talked to women from both sides and have not observed such a difference in their evaluation of their past or the strategy of armed struggle. What I have noticed though was more of personal divergences in their view of the past – details of which I will go into later; and that an overwhelming majority claimed their past and expressed no regret. However, women from Aksariat expressed that guerrilla struggle became obsolete after the Revolution, an opinion accords with the stance of Aksariat group in general.

Fariba was coming from a middle-class family from Tehran, as was the case with these families mother was a homemaker while father was the breadwinner. All her siblings were high school educated. She did not remember when exactly she became politically conscious and then active, because for her everything was connected and intermingled, she always read a lot of books and knew deep down she was a leftist. She insisted: "There is no way I can say… I have no certain event that I can tell you this happened and I became political." She had never been religious either. She described her father as the most democratic and feminist person she had ever met in her life. He did not discriminate between his sons and daughters, she noted.

For Fariba, it was very important to emphasize that Fadaiyan was the only political organization in which she could join; Tudeh was not even an option after being criticized and denounced by Fadaiyan. She had to go underground after being arrested due to SAVAK's heavy surveillance. She disappeared so suddenly that her family thought she had died and looked for her in the cemeteries. Unlike most of the guerrillas of the period, she was not a university student when she established a connection with the organization, but working as a journalist.

She had spent relatively more time in various safe houses than other women: 4 years. She pointed out that there were more than 30 percent women in the ranks of Fadaiyan and

sometimes they were three women in a safe house. For her, it was difficult to talk about one specific guerrilla life[471] as her location and the conditions in time changed constantly during these four years. Yet, one can tell that the fact that their everyday life was planned hourly and monitored by each other did not change much over time. Throughout her narration of her past as a Fadai guerrilla, Fariba was convinced that everything they did was necessary and reasonable: all the planning, security measurements, limitations, punishments, prohibitions and deprivations. She recalled even though it was not an easy life there was not a single problem they could not solve.

b) Suri

I have met Suri in her apartment. She had invited a friend to help with translation even though I insisted that I would not need one. The so-called translator was a male friend of hers and his presence affected the nature of the interview to a great extent; luckily, I could avoid his role as a translator completely if not his presence. Suri looked oldest among them; it might be also because she had a hard life in exile and was at the time of the interview living in a poor condition. I heard that she had health issues; this was why we met in her apartment in a building that looked like a retirement facility. She was retired after working as a domestic worker and then a retail clerk. She was living in Paris for 30 years.

As generally accepted and referred during the interviews, there were actually two generations of guerrillas and therefore, roughly two different experiences of guerrilla life. The first generation consisted of the founding or the first members of the organization, and organized in a relatively relaxed environment. They were usually killed or arrested within a year or two, and spent most of the 1970s in prison. Whereas, the second generation lived under very strict rules and experienced a full clandestine activism. Suri was one of the first-generation guerrillas and had spent a limited time in a safe house. Therefore, after learning that I am mostly interested in their everyday life in those houses, she hesitated to talk to me expressing

[471] The term 'guerrilla life' (*zandegi-ye cheriki*) was commonly used by all the women whom I interviewed to describe specifically their everyday life, as well as the discipline, norms and values in the organization.

that she did not have much experience. However, as one of the few women who were involved in the early stages of the initiation of the armed struggle and as a friend of prominent people in the organization, such as Marzieh Ahmadi-Oskui and Mostafa Shoaian, she had a lot to tell about the early years of the organization and first experiences of people in underground. Also, Suri was the only woman I interviewed who participated in the armed struggle through a female friend and an exception to most others who were directly or indirectly pulled into the activism through a male figure in their lives.

Although first half an hour of the interview was very difficult, my questions about her childhood and family, in other words talking about the early years of her life, made her more comfortable and she seemed like enjoying the interview. The first reason for her feeling ambiguous was that she had some misconceptions about my subject beforehand. As I mentioned earlier, theirs is a small and closed community and these women contact regularly. My research and request to interview them must have been one of the most interesting topics of their latest conversation. However, this had advantages and disadvantages; one downside being their misinforming each other about what I was working on and looking for. Therefore, I had to not only explain my research topic and motivation but also revise the misperceptions. Second drawback that I encountered with some of the women including Suri was that they had talked to another researcher[472] and thus thought that they had already told everything about their past; at least what they supposed that matters most about it: their political and militant activities, the leaders, the comrades, their cause, etc. One of the women did not even accept to talk to me under the pretext that she had already been interviewed and does not have much experience in safe houses anyway.

At the end of the interview, we were able to establish a good rapport, even though hers was the shortest amongst my interviews with the Iranian women. It might also be because of her brief and concise answers. After our conversation and seeing her poor situation, due to

[472] Hajebi Tabrizi, *Dad-e bidad: nakhostin zendan-e zanan-e siyasi (Memoir of Iranian Women Fedai Guerrillas)*.

having to work as an unskilled worker, living alone and deserted in the outskirts of Paris in a kind of retirement facility, I concluded that it was actually her life after the radical activism that was the most difficult part of her life. She ended up with neither a useful background nor a prospective future before her when she had to flee the country. The hardest days of her life were mostly ahead of her. Despite almost 30 years of struggle and having had to establish a life from scratch sometimes even without being able to benefit from their educational backgrounds and trainings in the countries they sought refuge, neither Suri nor others expressed any regret for what they had done in the past.

c) Mahnaz

Mahnaz came across like a very friendly and congenial person. She talked slowly with a very soft voice. In the meantime, I was getting used to talking to a former guerrilla woman in Persian. I could notice that I was more self-confident and able to guess and respond to their reservations in advance. I now had a better idea about the details of their activities and chronological events influencing their life. Finally, I had also adopted my questions to their experiences since I knew more by then, curtailing my presumptions deriving from my readings on the Latin American and Indian women's experiences in revolutionary guerrilla activism.

Mahnaz was actually a significant figure as a sister of one of the main leaders of the OIPFG; yet it was not possible to tell from her demeanor that she was any different from the other rank and file activist women I talked to. I was also to find out that she had never been treated or behaved as a person with certain privileges during the activism years as well. She stated that she was willing to talk about her experiences and transmit her knowledge to the coming generations did not want to emphasize how important they were and how much they sacrificed. At the time of the interview, she was retired after working in various unskilled jobs even though she had used to work as a medical practitioner in Iran. She has been living in Paris alone for 28 years but she said she was content with her life. She could be described as holding liberal and democratic values; despite she was critical of the strategy and

worldview of the organization in that period she adamantly stated that she never regretted for what she has done and all she has forgone. She lost two of her brothers during the armed struggle against the Shah regime, and Islamic regime killed her father, husband and third brother. She never married again. The participation and persistence of Mahnaz, who seemed to be a very romantic and sensitive person, in the guerrilla activism could be a proof that very different women with diverse personalities were drawn to the movement at the time. Talking to her reminded me again that it was more complicated than it seemed at first collecting and making sense of experiences and memories of a number of women even if they were part of the same movement. Both their experiences and the way they remember them could be so diverse that the need for a careful evaluation of the activism of the period became more and more obvious.

Mahnaz was coming from a middle-class family in Mashad, in which all the children were university educated, she was the oldest. Her father had always been politically active in the National Front supporting Mosaddegh and imprisoned regularly during her childhood. He was religious but not too pious or even conservative; she did not cover her head and was always allowed to play with boys and girls without a problem. Her mother used to read her father's articles in women's gatherings. In short, she was raised in a politically very active household. After getting a university degree in medicine, she went to Tehran to join her brothers who were already active in Fadaiyan, but she did not know what exactly she was going to do. She was arrested right after arriving Tehran; soon after, her brothers were arrested too and executed in four months by the regime. It was the time after the Siahkal incident and the regime wanted to suffocate the movement. Mahnaz remembered her brothers contemplating on Uruguay, Cuba, and Algeria as the possible models for their armed struggle.

She served in military as a doctor and received 6-month combat training after being released from prison. With short intervals until 1978, she was kept in prison with various excuses but mainly to keep her away from Fadaiyan. During her time in prison she was in close contact

with Fadai guerrillas and idealized living in a safe house. Yet, after going underground upon her release, she was disillusioned with the underground activism and the guerrilla life in safe houses. It was nothing like what she had expected. The revolution was in the air and she believed that they should have been among the people in the street not in the confinement of a safe house.

After the Revolution she sided with the Aqaliyat because she knew the new regime was not what the Tudeh and the Aksariat thought it was. Her father was killed by the Islamic Regime. She got married a year after the revolution to a former comrade with whom she lived in a safe house. She had never confessed her feelings for him even to herself before the Revolution; and she hesitated when he proposed to her after the Revolution because she was still thinking she would not live longer as a guerrilla. That was also why she did not want to keep the child when she got pregnant.

Despite all, she has never regretted and always believed that it was the right thing to do during that time. At the time of the interview, she believed that armed struggle as a revolutionary strategy was a mistake and it was only right as a self-defense. She argued that change should come gradually from below because 'revolutions devour their own children'. She claimed that the reason for them to aim for a revolution instead of reforms and to adopt armed struggle had been mostly related to the *Zeitgeist*; because they had had every freedom except the political ones and they could have achieved them through peaceful struggle. She identified herself as a social democrat and prioritized human rights and freedom rather than women's rights and justice.

d) Forouz

I met Forouz in a restaurant she picked for dinner. She looked younger than others wearing make-up and professional with formal work clothes. Each interview with every single woman turned into a source of wonder for me as they could not be more different from each other. As I was told in advance by other Iranian women and informants, Forouz was also

from the first generation of guerrillas. She left Iran in 1983, after spending some time as an activist in the country in the ranks of Fadaiyan - Majority. She first fled to Afghanistan and then to the Soviets before finally arriving at Germany in 1990 where she was working as an engineer at the time of the interview. She was married with two kids. Her first husband was executed by the Islamic regime. Forouz was coming from a lower middle-class, apolitical, moderately religious Azeri family; she never had to wear a veil. She was also not concerned with politics until the second year of the university when she met a boy through her classmates who were politically active and trying to recruit people to their cause. Fadaiyan was not established then; through the boy, who was her only contact and teacher, she became a part of a group of leftist students. Samad Behrangi and other poets and writers were also among the members of this leftist circle in Tabriz. For four years as a part of this group, before the group decided to adopt armed struggle, she had read and familiarized herself with the leftist literature including Marx's *Capital* which she had stolen from the university library. Since it was too dangerous for any group of students to have regular meetings, they had a chain like structure in which she could only get to know one person and it was with that boy she joined the armed struggle.

She explained the reasons for adopting the armed struggle in a very similar way to that of the other women: extreme surveillance and the repression of the Shah's dictatorship, having no other means to meet people let alone be politically active, and successes of the revolutionaries around the world including Cuban Revolution. She was convinced that they were living in such a period that living normally in their family's house and pursuing their education as usual was not an option for them. For her, unlike many others in the later periods, the decision came gradually as a result of years of theoretical discussions with like-minded friends and comrades. Informing the comrades, she initiated her process of going underground after completing her bachelor's degree. She clearly stated that: "when I decided to become a guerrilla, I was not under the influence of anybody, not my father, not my husband, not my brother, no one influenced my decision to become a guerrilla."

She left her family house lying to her mother that she was going to get a pharmacology training in another city. It was very difficult for her mother to accept this; her father was dead at the time and all her four older brothers were married. She came to Tehran to live in a safe house and met other members of Fadaiyan there. Their number increased gradually, she was living initially with four male comrades, one being her contact from Tabriz. They were actually in love with each other and rented the safe house as wife and husband. As she explained, she felt comfortable about living with men in a safe house and being the only woman for two reasons: First, she was used to have both male and female friends since her childhood. Second, and more importantly, the issue of living in mixed safe houses had been resolved as a result of the discussions they had during the four years before they adopted armed struggle. They had concluded that there was to be no difference between men and women in their struggle.

She spent only two months in a safe house and then was arrested and put in prison. She was sentenced to 10 years but served only 7 years until the Revolution. Even though she did not have a very long experience as a guerrilla, her experience during the two months is valuable in order to understand both the early periods of the OIPFG and the motivations of the first generation vis-a-vis those of the later generations. She argued that other than the big military operations to which only male guerrillas were assigned, there was no difference between men and women in terms of organizational and everyday responsibilities. She was active in intelligence activities of the organization, gathering and reporting information regarding the people the organization was planning to target. Due to her pharmacology education she was also responsible to buy chemical components of the explosives they were building as she was able to find reasonable explanations for her purchases. Other than doing the shopping for organizational materials, she was also contributing to other organizational activities such as reproduction of organizational publications.

She remembered that once they were all very much worried whether a woman guerrilla had been captured by the police. Her *nom de guerre* was Djamila, named after the Djamila Bouhired, a famous Algerian militant woman who fought along the Algerian National Liberation Front (NLF) against France during the War of Independence (1952-1954). Thanks to the instances like this, she always felt valued, protected and even favored as a woman by her male comrades in the safe house; and never felt uncomfortable around them doing anything in their everyday life. She described her feelings for her male comrades as one of compassion and camaraderie. She was ready to sacrifice her life for the people of Iran, she felt the same way for her comrades; she loved them more than her brothers. One could tell from the way she talked about them that she felt the same even now.

e) Mina

Mina was the youngest of all, from the so-called "second generation", and the most controversial one due to an autobiographical novel she had written, which was still not published at the time of the interview. Maybe because of her novel other Iranian women had mentioned her in one way or another during their interviews. Actually, they all knew whom I was interviewing and sometimes making brief comments regarding the other women I was going to interview. However, in her case the confusion about the character of her book — whether it was a memoire with factual events or a fictional story based on her experiences— seemed to cause quite a discussion within the community. While some do not agree with her on her portrayal of guerrilla life and the relationships no matter it was a memoir or a novel, for others it was this ambiguity on the character of the book rendering it controversial. In our meeting she assured me that it is a fictional work and she stated this in the preface of the book clearly.

Since her novel was not published at the time of the interview, it was one of the first things I was going to ask her and one of the reasons making me very excited about meeting her. She was the only one writing something about their past activism. She seemed to have a better idea about what I might be looking for than the other women had had. It might also be

because in order to write her book she had already contemplated about these issues in advance, or vice versa.

Maryam came across like a healthy and lively person. She was in Cologne for more than thirty years; married with two children. She had met her husband in a safe house and they were married ever since. As I was going to discern from her story later in the interview, as a second-generation guerrilla, the organization and underground life she experienced was different from those witnessed by the first generations. Many already confirmed that both the organization and the guerrilla life was quite different before the major crackdown on the leadership of the organization in 1975. Some even claimed that it was like two different organizations with different rules and regulations. Thus, as the only woman that was exclusively from the second generation, Maryam had experienced a different period of the organization. After all, I was not in a position to tell whether her story was more accurate or exaggerated; however, I knew that she was going to tell as the way she remembers it and this was what I was looking for.

Mina was from Tehran, introduced to politics through her father who was a former Tudeh Party supporter and an atheist. But she had to conceal her political interest from him because he had forbidden any sorts of political engagement owing to the fear of SAVAK. She, however, was so enthusiastic about doing something that she was almost going to join Mojahedin-e Khalq, the Islamic Marxist guerrilla organization. She eventually chose not to join them because she was supposed to get married to be able to live in their safe houses with other men and she was not willing to get married at that age. With a high-school friend of hers, she used to listen to Fadaiyan's radio program on a station that was broadcasting from Iraq. She was constantly looking for an opportunity to reach the Fadai guerrillas but it was something very difficult at the time in high schools; it was easier in the universities to get to know someone from among them.

She eventually established a contact with the organization through her uncle who had gotten to know people who were opposed to the Shah during his military service. They began to go

for hikes to the nearby mountains and discuss political issues.[473] She was 19 years old when she became an active member of the organization but she did not go underground for the first three years of her activism until after she completed her first year in the university.

Like Mahnaz and Negin, Mina was also disappointed by the underground activism; she could not make sense of the constraints it brought about and the strict hierarchical decision-making structure at work in the safe houses. She had thought that she would have been more active in underground but on the contrary she had to spend most of her time in the house. She spent three and a half year in various safe houses before the Revolution and joined Aksariat afterwards. She undertook various organizational activities including publication of the journal Student's Message (*Payam-e Daneshjoo)* for the university students and other books written by the founders of the Organization.

f) Mehri

Mehri invited me to her house for the interview; she was prepared bringing out a couple of relevant books[474] and her photos from the period. The interview started as a nice chat, she inquired about me, my study and its objectives curiously. Like most of the women she was enthusiastic about sharing her experiences, so that, as she stated, people would learn something out of them. Mehri was married to a former guerrilla from the same organization and had three children. She was still working as a physiotherapist.

Mehri was born to a working-class family in Abadan to where her parents had moved from Isfahan to get a job. She went to Tehran to study physiotherapy and was introduced to politics through a friend of his brother, Masoud, who lived just below the apartment they

[473] Going for hikes to the mountains around Tehran might still serve a similar purpose among the oppositional Iranian youth as I have observed and been told during the Green Movement in 2009. Understandably, mountains provide perfect shelter for the youth trying to escape from the surveilling eye of the state regardless of the type of the regime or the period of time.

[474] Hajebi Tabrizi, *Dad-e bidad: nakhostin zendan-e zanan-e siyasi (Memoir of Iranian Women Fedai Guerrillas)*, Mahmoud Naderi, *Cherik-Ha-Ye Fedai-Ye Khalq: Az Nokhastin Konesh-Ha Ta Bahman-e 1357 Jeld-e Avval (The People's Fadaee Guerrillas: From Their First Acts until February 1979, Vol.1)*, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (Tehran: Muassasah-ye Muṭala'at va Pizhuhish-ha-ye Siyasi, 2008).

rented. “He was one of the politically active students, and therefore, had been conscripted as many others during that period”. They too began to go for hikes in the nearby mountains, like many other politically engaged youth, in order to read books and discuss politics. Masoud was not a member of Fadaiyan at that time, and had a lot of influence on her. However, as she insisted, it was not independent from the social and political context of the period. They liked each other but only after he was imprisoned for a year for his political activism, Mehri confessed that she liked him too. Masoud had already established contact with Fadaiyan when in prison and they decided to join the organization together after getting married. They decided also to have a proper wedding so that SAVAK would think that Masoud was pursuing a normal life and as above-ground members they were allowed to be married. She still has the pictures of their wedding. They donated all the gold coins that were gifted during their wedding to the Organization. Yet, soon after the weeding, Masoud was informed by the Organization that his relation to Fadaiyan was exposed to SAVAK, they were both supposed to go underground.

In order to buy some time to decide whether to go underground or not, they run away under the pretext of going for a honeymoon. This process is very interesting because during the couple of months in which they contemplated about going underground, they knew they would not be able to stay as a married couple and had to live in different safe houses. They were very much in love but eventually had to decide to go underground for his safety. Mehri insisted that they felt like “a soldier going to a war to defend their country”; even though it was very difficult and they cried all night a night before separating, they were convinced that they were doing the right thing “as the path of armed struggle would demand”. Yet, she also noted: “it was the regime we were living under that forced us to do all these things, otherwise we would have never done it of course. So, we had accepted everything that guerrilla life dictated, it was a very regulated life; you had to follow the rules.”

Mehri made it clear that it was not her feelings toward Masoud that had persuaded her to join Fadaiyan: “He had an influence on me, for sure, but under those circumstances even without

him I would have made similar choices. Because after he was killed I continued my life in the same direction". Indeed, she continued her guerrilla life as usual. At some point, the Organization asked the guerrillas to build relations with the workers, so she began working at a factory. Yet, she found it impossible to build such relations as she attracted suspicion whenever she made any political comments. There were SAVAK agents at every factory and all she was able to do was reporting the conditions of the workers to the Organization. Despite failing to achieve her goal, she worked in the factory for a long time.

Her life story and guerrilla life took a strange turn after the safe house she was staying at was raided by SAVAK when she was at work. All of a sudden, she was left in the street unable to go back to the house and without a place to stay overnight. She did not know if anyone survived the raid or not. Despite all of her attempts, she could not reestablish a contact with the Organization. Out of any options, Mehri asked for help from her relatives whom she stumbled upon in Isfahan bus station in one of her trips to reach her brother who was a member of Fadaiyan but not in underground. This was how her two-year venture in hiding with her mother without any contact with Fadaiyan began and continued until the Revolution.

g) Negin

Negin was the last Iranian women I interviewed; we met twice, first in a cafe and then in her house. At both times her husband, Nadir, was present; he was mostly quiet and only occasionally commented. As can be guessed, they knew each other from their guerrilla activism days, got married after the Revolution and had two kids. Negin was still working as a nurse, she had been retired once but had to start working again for financial reasons. Her story, like those of others, was extraordinary and captivating. Yet, what made her stand out among others was her independent and fearless character, as well as her relatively very long career as a guerrilla.

Negin was coming from a very poor family in Mazandaran. Her father died when she was only four and her mother was widowed with four children; Negin being the oldest. Her mother did not marry again and rented the rooms of their house for income. Negin noted: "we had a lot of neighbors from different strata of the society and I became familiar with the poverty and injustice in the society at a very early age through people renting our rooms. I was always asking questions like why some people had to suffer and were not even able to buy food for their kids. Therefore, I started to read, and study the reasons of this."

First, it was through her uncle that she established a contact with the politically active people, such as her prospective husband, Nadir, and another person who was later killed in Siahkal. Her uncle and Nadir were imprisoned during Siahkal operations; they entrusted their books to her. She had already been sympathetic to the idea of armed struggle. Yet, their imprisonment persuaded her definitely to find Fadaiyan and began political activities right away. Her logic ran along these lines: If reading books was a crime that was punishable by imprisonment for at least several months under the dictatorial conditions, then it should be legitimate to use whatever means possible to fight against the regime creating poverty and injustice in the society.

Yet, it was not so easy to reach Fadai guerrillas, so she first organized several reading groups to read and discuss political issues and armed struggle. She described herself as determined and fearless at those times; she even forged a fake ID to be able to visit her uncle in prison all by herself. She also organized the families of the prisoners to find a way to contact Fadaiyan. Unable to achieve her goal, she decided to join Literacy Corps (*Sepah-e Danesh*),[475] to move away from home and become financially independent. After six-month military training, she became a teacher and worked in five villages at the same time. To be able to travel in between the villages she bought a motorbike. In addition to teaching, among

[475] It was an "educational program implemented in Iran in the framework of the White Revolution (1963-79) during the reign of Muhammad-Reza Pahlavi (1941-79)." See Farian Sabahi, "Literacy Corps," Encyclopaedia Iranica, July 20, 2004, http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/literacy-corps-1.

her activities in those villages were building schools and water canals, reading books, group discussions, organizing theatre plays, and, as she put it, raising awareness about the Marxist ideas. She noted: “I made people read Samad Behrangi’s books for example, to raise their awareness. Shamlou or Nima[476] too I read and made people read. All these without being a member of any group, I was helping everyone.”

Finally, through a friend of Nadir who was released from prison she reached Fadaiyan and was interviewed by the leader of Fadaiyan at the time, Hamid Ashraf, before being accepted to the Organization. After being recruited, she had to stop her individual works and instead receive orders from the Organization. She explained: “When they told me to work half-secretly half secretly, I told them that this is not the right way to do things. I told them I can work everywhere, in Azerbaijan, Isfahan… and that I want to stay in contact with the organization without going underground. But I was told that I was thinking individually, but the Organization thinks collectively, it knows better what needs to be done. I accepted this because I had promised. Our organization was both militaristic and political. Like an army, when the head of the unit commands you to do something you first do it and only afterwards you can criticize it.”

Even though she was critical of certain orders and not convinced by every explanation, she wanted the Organization to trust her and to be under its full command, because she believed in armed struggle as the only way to fight against the dictatorship. Despite her enthusiasm to be useful to the organization, she was very disappointed with her experience of underground activism, which meant for her being constrained in a safe house, unable to do anything useful. Out of desperation, she finally called Hamid Ashraf and, to disguise their conversation from SAVAK said: “I’m not happy with the husband of mine and I want to go back to my mother’s house”. Ashraf in response told her: “No problem you can go back, but what would others think, they wouldn’t trust you again when you want to come back.” This

[476] She is referring to Ahmad Shamlou and Nima Yooshij, the prominent Iranian poets who were popular amongst the Marxists in Iran.

was a big blow for Negin since losing the trust of the organization was equal to losing almost everything for her. Therefore, she decided to stay. Yet, she explained: “I was not like those university students joining the organization with the dream of revolution. I had real life experiences among people. I was in a way already working for the liberation of the people. This is why it was hard for me to accept restricting rules of the organization.”

Despite her criticism of the Organization on these issues, she never felt like I was treated differently or discriminated on gendered grounds. She argued that all the rules of the organization were applied to men and women equally. She tried to have the courage of a man. “We tried to do everything men could do, even in terms of physical power.”

7.4. Conclusion

Self-presentation of women’s experiences and life stories in the high-risk activism of revolutionary movements in Turkey and Iran in the 1970s is significant for a number of reasons. It showcases not only the individual interpretation of their involvement and experiences, and thereby the diversity of the paths and motivations, but also the role of collective memory and discourses in the formation and re-formation of their memories.[477]

It is of utmost importance that Iranian women whose life stories are presented in this chapter had a very different perspective about their experience in the OIPFG than what has been described in the literature[478] so far. As I will articulate more in detail in the following chapter, the representation in the previous studies of discrimination and inequality based on gender in the Iranian left was challenged by these women who unanimously described a more egalitarian experience. I argue that this difference is closely related to, first, the lack of influence of feminism and gender consciousness among the leftist activists in Iran, due to the fact that the feminist movements in Iran, like in many other countries of the Global South

[477] Gabriele Rosenthal, “The Narrated Life Story: On the Interrelation between Experience, Memory and Narration,” in *Narrative, Memory & Knowledge: Representations, Aesthetics, Contexts. University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield* (University of Huddersfield, 2006), 1-16.
[478] See for example: Shahidian, “Women and Clandestine Politics in Iran, 1970-1985.”, Moghissi, *Populism and Feminism in Iran*.

including Turkey, did not exert an influence during the 1960s and 1970s revolutionary movements. Having had to flee the country right after the revolution, the Iranian ex-guerrilla women did not have the opportunity to experience what former leftist revolutionary women in Turkey experienced during the 1980s: a feminist awakening and retrospective of their experiences in the revolutionary activism. Instead they began a new struggle of survival all by themselves deprived of the closely-knit community network of the organization, which must have caused them to remember the past nostalgically.

Second, the reason for their relatively positive presentation of their gendered experience is also connected to the period they were involved in the revolutionary leftist activism, which had completely different dynamics before and after the revolution. Majority of these women did not experience 'the left after the revolution' which operated above ground and reportedly became more patriarchal.[479] Those who did clearly stated the difference between these two periods. The clandestine organization in which they were active before the Revolution was completely different from the two fractions, Majority and Minority, born out of the OIPFG's division after the Revolution. Therefore, these two critical factors regarding their activism must be borne in mind evaluating their narratives.

As to the narratives of the women from Turkey, it is worthwhile to note that the feminist movement which emerged and flourished since the 1980s seems to have played a very significant role in the collective memory of the women's involvement in the leftist movements. Feminism in Turkey was spearheaded by mostly the former revolutionary women coming from the ranks of the leftist organizations and was based on a critical evaluation of their experiences in the revolutionary organizations. They have not only shared their experiences and studied feminist literature in the house meetings, but also published journals, magazines, and books on various topics concerning women's issues of the period.[480]

[479] Mina (pseudonym), interview.
[480] Tekeli, *1980'ler Türkiye'sinde Kadın Bakış Açısından Kadınlar (From the Women's Perspectives: The Women in the 1980s in Turkey), Yazko-Somut 4. sayfa: ilk feminist yazılar : 30. yıl kitabı. (Yazko-Somut 4th Page: First Feminist Writings)* (Kadın Kültür İletişim Vakfı, 2013).

Among them raised several prominent scholars who have kept working on and writing about women in Turkey.[481]

Consequently, the women from Turkey mentioned more often the unequal relations between men and women, as well as the gender-based discrimination in all aspects of their activism from the ways they were treated by the leadership of the organizations to the allocation of organizational responsibilities and the relations with their male comrades. Interestingly, also the women from the Turkish side mentioned a considerable increase in the level of gender-based discrimination as well as division of labor after the September 12, 1980 coup d'état; similar to the experiences of Iranian guerrilla women after the Revolution in 1979. However, ironically, the revolutionary organizations in Turkey had to go further underground and the revolutionaries lived fugitive lives, while the OIPFG began to operate above ground right after the revolution. Surely, these curious contradictory developments in the two countries and their consequences need to be the topic of another extensive study. Yet, I would argue, they still warrant my claim that rather than simply the general social, cultural, or structural characteristics, it is mostly the processes and relational mechanisms which constitute the most influential factors on the experiences of the women.

Collective and individual memories around the leftist movements and revolutionary organizations both in Turkey and Iran have generally been positive, if not nostalgic, and rarely regretful or denunciatory despite the criticism of some of the former members of certain aspects of their activism and organizations from feminist and democratic perspectives. Therefore, it is worth keeping in mind that during the interviews the women recalled their memories and told them under the influence of this positive collective memory of the period and their activism. There are of course some differences between the Iranian and Turkish collective memories of the

[481] It is difficult to name all the women feminist writers coming from the ranks of the Left who continued to write and raise awareness about the women's issues in Turkey in the following years. Any list of names would be missing many others working on local or smaller scales, but to name a few we can mention the following: Fatmagül Berktay, Yaprak Zihnioğlu, Ayşe Düzkan, Handan Koç, Ayşegül Devecioğlu, Ayşe Durakbaşa, Gülnur Savran, Filiz Kardam, Yıldız Ecevit.

revolutionary activism of period; for example, having been brutally repressed by the Turkish State seems to have created extra sympathy for the revolutionaries in public in Turkey. Also, many of the revolutionary activists of the period, who were able to stay in or return back to Turkey eventually, played significant roles in the creation of this sympathetic collective memory of the period through their heavy presence and influence in arts and media. However, having had to flee Iran and not being able to return or have any influence in the domestic cultural sphere, Iranian revolutionaries seem to have not been able to create a similarly sympathetic collective memory. Also, the strategic mistakes of the Left after the Revolution such as the support for the emerging Islamic regime by especially the Tudeh and Majority branch of Fadaiyan, as well as the 'failure literature' must have had an influence in slightly resentful remembrance of the leftist guerrillas of the 1970s in Iran.

Finally, besides their self-presentation and evaluation of their experiences, it is necessary to look into the details of these women's everyday life experiences in the radical leftist organizations of the period in both Turkey and Iran before arriving any sort of conclusion regarding the characteristics of their involvement. In order to do this, in the following part, I focus on several aspects of their everyday life as militant activists such as the organization of everyday life, division of labor, sexuality, and emotions. Lastly, I offer a comparative analysis of the two cases based on the similarities and differences in the two cases in these areas. At the very end, in the conclusion chapter, I draw parallels between the similarities and differences in the women's everyday experiences and those in the mechanisms constituting the radicalization of the student/leftist movements in Turkey and Iran.

8. Heroic Life vs. Everyday Lives of Women Revolutionaries

> If everyday life is usually associated with the mundane, taken-for-granted, commonsense routines which sustain and maintain the fabric of our daily lives, then the heroic life points to the opposite qualities. Here we think of extraordinary deeds, virtuosity, courage, endurance and the capacity to attain distinction. If the very taken-for-grantedness of everyday life means the necessity of subjecting one's activities to practical knowledge and routines whose heterogeneity and lack of systemicity is rarely theorized, then the heroic life cuts a swathe through this dense facticity. It points to an ordered life fashioned by fate or will, in which the everyday life is viewed as something to be tamed, resisted or denied, something to be subjugated in the pursuit of a higher purpose.[482]

Going underground, operating in full or semi-clandestine status, represented the highest point of a revolutionary 'career' for the activists of both Iran and Turkey in the 1970s. After becoming involved in the revolutionary activism, women were asked to go underground at some point and spent quite a lot of time undercover. Clandestineness in a revolutionary organization for women meant in that period in Turkish and Iranian contexts something quite peculiar because those women usually had to abandon their family and live in safe houses, — they are called *Örgüt Evi* in Turkish and *Khaneyi Timi* in Persian, — mixed with other men and women that they might not have even met before. This was something unprecedented in these cultures at that time; even now it would be a very rare incidence.

Overall, the life history interviews with these women revealed that the women from Turkey complained more often about the behaviors and policies that can be categorized as patriarchal, discriminatory and sexist during their revolutionary activism. On the contrary, the majority of Iranian women confirmed the presence of a total equality between women and men in organizational activities as well as an egalitarian treatment by their comrades and the leadership during their clandestine life. Even though they talked about some 'differences' between men and women, for them, those were mostly justifiable on various grounds such as necessities of clandestine life or conservative Iranian culture.

This chapter is concerned more about the everyday experiences of revolutionary or guerrilla women during the time they spent underground or in full or semi-clandestine activism. In this

[482] Mike Featherstone, "The Heroic Life and Everyday Life," *Theory, Culture & Society* 9, no. 1 (1992): 55.

chapter, I juxtapose the revolutionary activism and everyday life of women under the unique conditions of clandestinity, especially in the hybrid spaces of safe houses. I describe the safe house as a hybrid space as it can be defined as neither a public nor a private space. Therefore, the rules and norms regulating their everyday life, the characteristics of the relations between the occupants, as well as the gender roles do not confirm with those of neither but are influenced by both. Focusing on their everyday life, I pay a particular attention to role of gender in division of labor in organizational and everyday activities, sexism, sexuality, emotions, and the characteristics of the relationship between men and women, as well as amongst women in these revolutionary organizations. I also inquire about the role of violence in the everyday life of these clandestine organizations.

An internal document called *Security and Work Rules* regulated the life in safe houses in which the members of the Red Brigades in Italy during the 1970s lived in detail:

> The house belongs to the organization, which lends it to the militant. It has to be managed according to *specific and unbreakable rules, equal for all* …When a comrade takes possession of an organization's house, the first task is to create, in the minutest detail, a well-defined *social character*. … The role that a comrade has assumed must be consistent with his or her everyday life. If, for example, a person has taken the role of crafts person, he or she has to leave home before eight in the morning and not return until twelve thirty; he or she has to leave again at two o'clock and return at seven or later. This means that comrades have to organize a specific timetable for their work (appointments, investigations, etc.).[483]

Security and Work Rules also described how a safe house is to be furnished: "a radio or television, a first-aid box, basic living necessities for at least two militants".[484] It also regulated the details of daily chores and behaviors of the militants living in the house, "how to file bills, the type of keys to use, the noises to avoid so as not to arose the neighbors' suspicions, how to do the shopping or buy newspapers, the rules for going to cafés and restaurants. … Dressing, combing your hair, tending your beard".[485] Orsini views this type of a detailed micro-management of every aspect of everyday lives of the Red Brigades' militants as a sign of their

[483] Alessandro Orsini, *Anatomy of the Red Brigades the Religious Mind-Set of Modern Terrorists* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011), 49.
[484] Orsini, 49.
[485] Orsini, 49.

being a ‘revolutionary sect’. He does not mention why they might have seen the need to regulate their everyday life in underground in such detail, and gives the impression that it was simply a matter of preference or, even worse, a pathological condition. We do not know if the type of struggle they had chosen, urban guerrilla warfare, had necessitated such a micro-management out of security reasons; or an underground organization, which had staged a fight against the Italian state and operates underground in the 1970s, can be actually expected to have strict safety regulations of this sort in order to protect its militants’ lives rather than to control them. Because the focus is on “The Religious Mind-Set of Modern Terrorists” as the sub-title of the book suggests, rather than the historical context or the interactive relationships that play a critical role not only in the emergence and formation of such underground organizations but also in motivation of its members in participating and staying in these organizations.

At first sight, especially provided the existence of a document regulating everyday life in the clandestine organization, there seem to be some similarities between the Red Brigades and Fadaiyan and TKP/ML. Even the rules “forbidding to have children,[…] friendship or love with people outside the professional revolutionaries’[486] resemble to what the women from Iran and Turkey narrated and reported in some sources.[487] Yet, one of the accounts in Orsini’s book describes the life in the Red Brigades as a “nightmare”.[488] Even if it is not possible to make any sort of comparison between the Red Brigades and the radical leftist organizations in Turkey and Iran within the limits of this study; none of my interviews and of the other sources on the subject, one could come across with such negative depictions of neither the everyday life nor the activism in general in the context of Turkey and Iran.

Nonetheless, the everyday lives of the revolutionaries were far from a ‘dream’ either. Particularly women had to deal with the challenges of not only the clandestine revolutionary activism but also the patriarchal traditions, values and gender roles in their societies which

[486] Orsini, 50.
[487] Zileli, *Havariler*.
[488] Orsini, *Anatomy of the Red Brigades the Religious Mind-Set of Modern Terrorists*, 48.

still had varying degrees of influence on their extra ordinary lives. As I have argued before, understanding the actors' "preferences, their perceptions, their evaluation of alternatives, the information they posses, the expectations they form, the strategies they adopt, and the constraints that limit their action"[489] is paramount in understanding also the micro-mobilizations processes. This chapter evaluates the micro-mobilization of the women in this particular high-risk activism from this perspective and discusses their actions, choices, and experiences accordingly. In order to make better sense of women's experiences, as well as the challenges they faced during their micro-mobilization, I organized this chapter around a number of thematic and conceptual sub-titles such as paths to activism, division of labor, discipline, discrimination, emotions, relationships, sexuality, and violence.

[489] Robert H. Bates, Analytic Narratives (Princeton University Press, 1998), 11 quoted in Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, 54.

Table 1.

The Former Revolutionary Women from Turkey and Iran							
	Year of Birth / Participation	Recruitment	Education	Family Background	Organization(s)	Current Status	Identified as
Turkey							
Figen	1959 / 1975	Self-initiated, influence of the big brother	University Drop-out	Middle class, 7 Siblings, non-religious family, political brother	Kurtuluş	Retired, single, has a kid, activist	Feminist
Meral	1954 / 1970	Self-initiated	High-school	Middle class, 5 siblings, father (soldier), mother (housewife), non-religious and apolitical family	TKP/ML-TİKKO	Single, has a kid, Activist	Socialist
Nilay	1957 / 1974	Self-initiated, friends in the university	University	Working class, 4 siblings, father (construction worker), mother (worker), politically conscious and non-religious family	A Small Revolutionary Group and THKO	Retired, Single, no kids, Activist	Socialist, feminist
Banu	1954 / 1975	Self-initiated, friends in the university	University	Middle class, father (soldier), mother (teacher), apolitical family	A Small Revolutionary Group and THKO	Working, Single, no kids	Feminist, Communist
Umut	1947 / 1968	Self-initiated	University Drop-out	Working class, 5 siblings, father (worker), mother (worker), apolitical family	Dev-Genç, THKO, Dev-Yol	Retired, Single, has a kid, Activist	Feminist, socialist
Funda	1951 / 1972	Self-initiated, friends in the university	University Drop-out	Middle class, 2 siblings, father (teacher), mother (teacher), politically conscious and non-religious family	TKP/ML-TİKKO	Working, single, no kids	Socialist

Iran							
Fariba	1955(?) / 1973	Self-initiated	University	Middle class, 3 siblings, father (self-employed), mother (housewife), both educated, non-religious, and apolitical	Fadaiyan	Working, married to a former comrade, no kids	Aqaliat, Communist
Suri	1954(?) / 1970	Through a girlfriend in high-school	University Drop-out	Middle class, 4 siblings, father (archeologist, civil servant), mother (housewife), both religious and politically conscious	People's Democratic Front (later joined Fadaiyan)	Retired, single,	Aksariat,
Mahnaz	1945 / 1970	Through her younger brothers, politically active father	University	Middle class, 4 siblings, mother (housewife), father (civil servant), both religious and politically active	Fadaiyan	Retired, single	Aqaliat, Social democrat
Forouz	1947 / 1970	Self-initiated, established connection through a boyfriend in university	University	Middle class, 5 siblings, mother (housewife, nonreligious), father (civil servant, religious) both apolitical	Fadaiyan	Working, married to a former comrade, has kids	Aksariat, Socialist
Mina	1955 / 1974	Self-initiated, established connection through her uncle	University Drop-out	Middle class, 4 siblings, mother (housewife, non-religious), father (engineer, atheist, Tudeh supporter)	Fadaiyan	Working, married to a former comrade, has kids	Aksariat, Socialist
Mehri	1950 / 1975	Influenced by his brother, joined the organization together with her husband	University	Working class, 3 siblings, mother (housewife), father (worker)	Fadaiyan	Working, married to a former comrade, has kids	
Negin	1952 / 1974	Self-recruited, established connections through the families of prisoners	High-school	Middle class, 4 siblings, lost her father when 4 years old, mother (housewife), politically active uncle	Fadaiyan	Working, married to a former comrade, has kids	Aksariat

8.1. The Women's Paths to the Revolutionary Activism

The paths leading women to the revolutionary activism, in other words, their participation or recruitment to the radical leftist organizations varied not only between Iran and Turkey but also in the individual cases within each country. We cannot talk about a single trajectory of women's participating in these organizations. Nevertheless, there are patters, common reasons, and pull and push factors in the ways in which women make their way to these organizations and those patterns can be divided into a number of categories. Still, none of these patterns, reasons and factors should be considered independently from the mechanisms and processes paving the way for the mobilization and radicalization of the leftist movement in this period in general. That is to say, women, just like men, as they explained in their accounts, were equally influenced and motivated by the inequalities in their society, repressive policies of the political regimes, violence of security forces, disillusionment with the current opposition, as well as the revolutionary *Zeitgeist.*

As a comparison, some guerrilla rebel groups in Africa and Latin America could provide public goods or protection from the government forces as an incentive to join them.[490] However, in urban guerrilla groups in Iran and Turkey such incentives did not exist. Moreover, most of the activists were coming from middle class backgrounds; they were not in need of material incentives to undertake such high-risk activism. Was it just the power of ideology motivating them? What are the intangible benefits they were aspiring for; a better future for next generations? How did they make cost and benefit calculations? What was the rationality behind their decision to participate? Olson's argument in *The Logic of Collective Action* was that if there is no benefit, in order to persuade people to join movements you either need coercion or selective incentives.[491] Following his example, most modern

[490] Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion.*
[491] Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965).

approaches to recruitment to social movements are based on the assumption that individuals are rational beings and their actions depends on their innate tendency to maximize benefits and minimize costs.

However, recent studies show that these benefits should not solely be seen as material gains. Studies on motivations of participants especially in high-risk collective action in different contexts demonstrate that participants are motivated by nonmaterial benefits such as prestige, acceptance, ideology, moral obligation, benefit of their kids and future generations, and values.[492] The reasons for participation given by the women in Turkey and Iran had mostly something to do with the well-being of others. They knew they were sacrificing a lot, namely their education, future, prospect of marriage and having kids, and even their lives, without expecting any personal gain, not even for their families. They knew they hurt their families with those choices of theirs but even this was seen as a necessary cost that had to be paid for the revolution.

As mentioned in the fourth chapter, the term master frame was originally conceptualized to explain the emergence of cycles of contention in the absence of "a favorable political opportunity structure (POS)" or conducive structural conditions. The resonant master frame of the 1960s, as well as 1970s, was one of a "world revolution". Just like last years' growing opposition to neoliberal globalization serving as a common ground for various oppositional groups from farmers of the South to labor unions of the North[493], the ideal of world revolution against the imperialist, capitalist powers and complicit governments could motivate a wide range of activists from all walks of life in that period.

The mutual influence between master frames and ideology is long known, so I do not disregard the role of socialist, Marxist-Leninist, or Maoist ideologies. However, I claim that they were

[492] McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*.
[493] Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction* (Blackwell Publishing Malden MA, 2006), 81.

contained by the master frames of the period at least on the micro level. What really motivated people to join the revolutionary movements and to adopt extreme forms of insurgency was not the ideology per se but the master frames of injustice, anti-imperialism, inequality, etc. The widespread participation in the leftist movements despite the activists' lack of knowledge about the specific ideologies that their organizations belonged to can account for the power of these master frames. As we have encountered in the account of Mina, she was about to join Mojahedin-e Khalq, the other most influential guerrilla organization of the period with religious interpretation of Marxist ideas, to fight against the Shah and for an independent, egalitarian society. Yet, she eventually joins Fadaiyan for it was a secular organization.

A number of points stand out as the most influential factors leading them to approach, seek or be more sympathetic to the leftist opposition in the first place. These in the cases of Turkish and Iranian women include:

a) direct experience of poverty (Umut);

b) witnessing social inequalities and increasing political awareness (Umut, Meral, Funda / Fariba, Suri, Forouz, Mina, Negin)

c) family's political consciousness or engagement in politics (Figen, Funda / Fariba, Mahnaz, Mina)

d) recruitment of a close relative or friend (Nilay / Mahnaz, Suri, Forouz, Mehri)

e) politicized social networks (Figen, Meral, Nilay, Banu, Umut, Funda)

As can be seen from the list, direct experience with poverty does not play a significant role for the majority of the women; this is expected given the dominantly middle-class nature of both student and revolutionary movements in that period. Whereas, half of the women from each side reported the impact of either witnessing social inequalities or political events, such as political demonstration of students or workers, violent repression of the security forces, on the increasing of their political awareness. So far, there seems to be no big difference between the politicization

of women in the two countries; yet, family's political consciousness or active engagement in politics appears to play a more significant role for women's mobilization in Iran than in Turkey. Where the two countries significantly diverge from each other for the first time, however, is the role of the participation of a close relative or friend; this factor stands out as the most influential one for Iranian women's politicization and eventual joining in the movement. For the women in Turkey, however, it is mostly the politicized social networks, which was usually the university environment and close circle of friends paving the way for not only the beginning of their political engagement, but also their choice of certain organizations or groups. Therefore, once they are politicized, in the recruitment processes of the women three specific trajectories stand out: 1) self-initiation, 2) social network, and 3) a close relative or friend.

a) Turkey

The majority of the women in Turkey came of age during the politicized environment of the 1960s, witnessing the rise of the TLP, student demonstrations and labor movement.

> June 15 and 16 [1970] was amazing, then I saw the power of workers and mass movements. Women with their worker uniforms […] appeared and took to the streets in such a way that it was spectacular. I had read before about the working class making revolution but you don't really comprehend. I saw the working class there for the first time, I saw the women in the first rows, I watched their chanting in admiration. Next day, the troops got out of their barracks and blocked their path killing three workers. The demonstrations took two days. It was thanks to them, I comprehended the significance or power of the workers or working class.[494]

The university campus provided the revolutionary organizations with the main mobilization network and the youth with the opportunity to establish contact with them.

> I began to work with my mother when I turned 12. My leftism comes from those times, it started when I objected injustice in a poor family. […] I was a natural leftist when I entered the University. It was in 1968, I encountered the boycott at the gate of the campus. I was of course supporting Dev-Genç.[…] From 1968 until 1972 I participated all the demonstrations and activities as a member of Dev-Genç.[495]

Experiencing the student demonstrations and the university boycotts from their first day on in the university, the women usually defined their first encounters with the revolutionary groups or

[494] Funda (pseudonym), interview by Author, April 9, 2014.
[495] Umut (pseudonym), interview by Author, September 14, 2013.

leftist politics as 'finding themselves in the middle of everything' without a need for an invitation, or recruitment process. However, most of them had already been politically conscious, even sympathetic to the Left before they entered university, because high schools were also politicized in the period. Especially the high school students who had an older sibling in the university began their first experience of activism before entering university. Decision to join a certain organization depended usually either the circle of friends one had, or siblings' choices; yet it was not always direct. Sometimes witnessing an instance or mere coincidence could also play a role.

> My older sister and her friends were supporters of TİP and TSİP, and when I entered university, I chose Political Science Faculty of Ankara [University] because it was Mahir and his friends' school. Dev-Yol was dominant there. […] I read *Permanent Revolution* [by Mahir Çayan] I was very sympathetic. There were two women, one from TİP and the other was married to one of the leaders of Dev-Yol, they were trying to recruit me. I arrived in such an environment and I was about to be a member of Dev-Yol.[496]

However, Nilay witnessed a fight between Dev-Yol members and a friend of hers on a trivial ideological issue, her friend was beaten very badly by them; and afterwards she didn't want to join Dev-Yol anymore, instead began to act with a small group of revolutionaries, who were, despite their small size very active during the 1970s and eventually joined THKO. Banu's participation in the revolutionary activism story too represents the ordinariness as well as the randomness of the process.

> It was 1975 or 1976, I was in the last year of university. While the boycott was going on, I was hanging around because I just found it very interesting. One day, when I was sitting in the bookstore, someone came up and asked: 'sister,[497] from which school are you?' Upon my response he asked again: 'why aren't you keeping guard?' I said I will, and just like that I started keeping guard day and night without a break, until someone else sent me back. That is how I started. There were not many women; everyone was interested in me. If I hadn't joined the boycott that day I would have gone with the TİP, but I found protests more interesting, then everything developed naturally. […] Then, I began to recruit people.[498]

[496] Nilay (pseudonym), interview by Author, July 9, 2013.
[497] Exclusively male revolutionaries used to call female revolutionaries as 'my sister' (*bacım*). As can be expected, the usage has been criticized by the feminists heavily afterwards.
[498] Banu (pseudonym), interview by Author, December 9, 2013.

For those, who were not previously exposed or already sympathetic, precipitating factors such as arrest or death of a friend, a friend's decision to join, or the risk or actual experience of being arrested, played an important role, as in the case of Banu:

> I joined the leftist movement quite late, I was apolitical in high school, I was more interested in literature. Since my father was a soldier, I had no exposure to the left. I grew up citing [nationalist] poems and being wrapped in the flag; for me, there was no such opportunity. I liked reading literature, read a lot of novels and newspapers. First year in the university, there was a fascist attack. Fascists had given the name of a female friend of mine to the police …Professors used to like us, since we were good students; so, they let us escape from the back door. Then, I started to think why they had given my name too, I wasn't involved with anything. Afterwards, I began to be really interested in socialism, and I liked what I learnt about it.[499]

Still, there were also those who could not even make it to the university due to the repression and the criminalization of even the non-violent activities, such as possessing banned books. The experience of harassment of the police, arrest, and imprisonment at a later stage usually contributed to women's decision to take revolutionary activism more seriously, stay in the movement and persevere. Therefore, almost all the professional revolutionaries of the period dropped out of university not only in order to devote their full time to revolutionary activism but also due to repression and criminalization of their activities.

> When I was in high school in 1968 we used to learn [what was happening] from our friends whose older sisters and brothers joined the movement. I graduated from high school and began to travel to Diyarbakır, where I encountered the Kurdish issue. I had friends who were in TKP/ML-TİKKO, and before I understood what was happening I found myself in prison. I had of course chosen the Left consciously, I had seen injustices and unfairness, which I was opposed to. Nevertheless, it is prison where I decided to life my life as a revolutionary. […] As they say, prison was just like a school for me, […] In prison, I had already decided to be a revolutionary but when I was released the conditions also help me to put my decision into practice, they kicked me out of school.[500]

> Our dormitory was attacked by the fascists, we called the police, but they shifted the blame onto us. I had in my bag Mahir's *Permanent Revolution 1 and 2*, I could drop them down into the drain without anyone seeing me. The fascists pointed at me and claimed that I had a gun. I was searched but I didn't have it. We were taken to the police station due to the complaints about us.[501]

> We were still an organization in prison naturally, used to do everything together including educational training and exercise. Close to our release, we were asked what we would like to do

[499] Banu (pseudonym).
[500] Meral (pseudonym), interview by Author, August 28, 2013.
[501] Umut (pseudonym), interview.

> afterwards and we said we would continue. I was ready to assume all the responsibilities that would be given to me. Not everyone though, the majority didn't give this answer.[502]

Consequently, the women ended up in various organizations, groups, trade unions and associations and participated in activities with varying degrees of illegality and clandestinity throughout the 1970s, also in different organization or positions.

b) Iran

Since Fadaiyan was an underground organization from its beginning, it was never easy to establish contacts with them. Therefore, usually a close relative or a friend helped women to come to contact with the guerrillas. But it did not mean that they were actively persuaded to join the organization. On the contrary several of the Iranian women warned me against such a misunderstanding and emphasized that they themselves 'decided to become a guerrilla' independently from the influence of their contacts.[503] As one of them emphasizes, "What I am trying to say is that when I decided to become a guerrilla, I was not under the influence of anybody, not my father, not my husband, not my brother, no one influenced my decision to become a guerrilla."[504]

Forouz from the first generation of guerrillas in Iran explains the process of her participation in the armed struggle:

> After four years of theoretical discussion the issue of armed struggle began to be discussed among students and intellectuals and workers because we thought the older methods were not working: Would it work, would it be enough? Because the regime we were living under was very repressive dictatorship that we didn't have the right to gatherings, even two three people would be under surveillance. Intellectuals and new revolutionaries were under extreme pressure, didn't have any means to even meet people. In parallel to the Cuban Revolution and successes in the Latin American revolutions we came to the conclusion that armed struggle is promising. We talked a lot about this issue… read a lot, books like "Revolution in Revolution". I too personally decided that armed struggle was necessary and therefore decided to change my way of life. It was such a period that you couldn't live in your father's house or continue your education. We went underground and started to live in the safe houses. It was all personal decision for the first generation after thinking over it for at least 10 months.[505]

[502] Funda (pseudonym), interview.
[503] For example, Forouz and Mehri.
[504] Forouz (pseudonym), interview by Author, July 17, 2014.
[505] Forouz (pseudonym).

Mehri was also one of the women who got involved with the movement through a man (named Mesrur) whom she married later. Yet, she also wanted to note that it was not just thanks to him that she became a guerrilla:

> He brought books, and I started to read and study a lot about the history and society of Iran. It was 1973. […] Mesrur was not a member of Fadaiyan at that time. He had a lot of influence on me but it was not independent from the period's social and political environment. […] under those circumstances even without him I would have made similar choices. Because after he was killed I continued my life in the same direction.[506]

In other cases, women actively looked for an opportunity to establish contacts with the guerrillas;[507] under severe repression, close relatives and friends were the only ones whom they could trust to confide their political aspirations. Suri was mostly following her friend Maryam who had close relations with Fadai guerrillas. Maryam rented a house in Tehran with a fake name. They were not officially underground at that time yet. Maryam and Suri were permanent in the house the others regularly visited.[508] They set up a system at the house to make Molotov cocktail. No one suspected from them, they presented a very ordinary profile.

Negin's decision to join the armed struggle was a result of both witnessing social inequalities and increasing political awareness:

> We had a big house and my mom rented its rooms to different people. We had a lot of neighbors from different parts of society and I became familiar with the poverty and injustice in society at a very early age through people renting our rooms. I was always asking questions like why some people had to suffer and were not even able to buy food for their kids. Therefore, I started to read, and study. My uncle was interested in politics, he and Nadir[509] were close friends. They were arrested during Siahkal, they gave their books to me. I was already sympathetic to armed struggle, when they were imprisoned, my aim was to contact Fadaiyan, and begin political activities.[510]

Cognitive processes emerging as a result of the political opportunity structure also played a critical role in women's being in a way pushed to the armed activism in Iran: the feeling of 'no

[506] Mehri (pseudonym), interview by Author, July 23, 2104.
[507] For example, it took Mina and Negin to reach guerrillas months if not years.
[508] Mostafa Shojaiyan came to that house, he had a gun and was hiding, Saba Bijanzade too came to their house.
[509] Her future husband.
[510] Negin (pseudonym), interview by Author, 31.07 2014.

other way out' due to extreme state repression or criminalization of the all types of protests and even the most ordinary activities like reading books and gathering of friends. Negin explained why she wanted to join the guerrillas:

> Because dictatorial conditions in our society didn't even let us read a book. It was punishable with months in prison, I was hiding the books I was reading from everyone around me. […] I accepted armed struggle as the only way to fight against the dictatorship, and was not religious so I didn't join Mojahedin. Tudeh was opportunist, I criticized it so it was out of question. Because, the dictatorial regime didn't allow us to be in opposition in no other way than armed struggle. For example, after I went underground, SAVAK tracked down all my previous activities and reached the villagers I worked with and punished them, tortured them for just reading a couple of books with me.[511]

8.2. Everyday Lives of 'Professional Revolutionaries' in Turkey

Since the women in the revolutionary movement in Turkey during the 1970s were active and involved in at least a couple of organizations, associations or unions, it is not possible to talk about a permanent, single, centrally imposed 'organizational' everyday life that women had to live by, as it was the case in Iran. Still, we can talk about a widespread everyday life experience apart from the organizational works but very much influenced, or even determined, by the revolutionary activism. After all, despite the fact that they were not called 'guerrillas' per se, they were 'professional revolutionaries' who were not only supposed to work full-time in order to mobilize the masses for the revolution, but also pursue an exemplary everyday life. Even though it was slightly varied from one organization to another, and according to the organizational responsibilities of each member, the everyday lives of professional revolutionaries were characterized by certain values, behaviors, rules and regulations, tasks, limitations, as well as particular routines.[512]

> Being a professional revolutionary meant that everything you did should eventually serve to the revolutionary struggle, whether you were a doctor, a militant, or something else. Or when there was a need for you, you should have left whatever you're doing, such as a medical practice, and taken on the responsibility that was assigned to you, and lived collectively without worrying about finances. Your 24 hours was defined for the struggle.[513]

[511] Negin (pseudonym).
[512] Description of everyday life in this part is based solely on the interviews I have conducted with the former revolutionary women from Turkey, unless stated otherwise. Only direct quotations from the interviews are cited.
[513] Meral (pseudonym), interview.

In addition to what the women mentioned as the general expectations and ideals that were dominant in the movement culture of the revolutionary organizations in the period, vis-a-vis their appearance, behaviors, and activities, some organizations, like TKP/ML, wrote down 'instructions' to advise their members in conducting their organizational and everyday activities. Titled as 'Considerations to Keep in Mind in Your Work'[514], the TKP/ML document consisted of 75 items and described in detail what a professional revolutionary needs to know and do, and how to think and act in every possible situation. Yet, all the items were very open to interpretation; for example, it included instructions such as: 'Do not forget that you have devoted your life, not your spare time, to the revolution', 'Obey the decisions of the higher cadres', 'Clandestinity is important in order to work, not to hide you', 'Watch out for the police pursuit when going to an appointment', 'Change your nom de guerre when your contact person is arrested', 'Deny everything under arrest, confess nothing', 'Suspect those who want to know and ask a lot. Warn those who are curious in good intention'.[515]

Almost all organizations had a central committee, local branches, which also had a decision-making committee, and other units, which varied according to the objectives and strategies of each organization, such as military, political, youth, workers and publication.[516] The revolutionary organizations of the period were mostly located in Istanbul and Ankara. However,

514 *Çalışmalarımızda Göz Önünde Tutacağımız Hususlar.* T.C. Sıkıyönetim Komutanlığı Askeri Savcılığı Istanbul (TR Martial Law Military Headquarters Istanbul), *İddianame: Türkiye Komünist Partisi Marksist-Leninist, TKP/M-L, Türkiye İşçi Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu, TİKKO, T. Marksist-Leninist Gençlik Birliği, TMLGB, TKP/M-L Geçici Koordinasyon Komitesi. (Indictment: Communist Party of Turkey Marxist-Leninist, CPT/ML, Liberation Army of Peasants and Workers of Turkey, Turkey Marxist-Leninist Youth Union, TMLYU, CPT/ML Temporary Coordination Committee)* (Istanbul: Sikiyönetin Komutanliği Askeri Savcılığı, 1981), 52.

515 T.C. Sıkıyönetim Komutanlığı Askeri Savcılığı Istanbul (TR Martial Law Military Headquarters Istanbul), 52–57.

516 As one of the first and foremost armed revolutionary organization, THKP-C's organizational structure could give us a solid idea: 1) Military Unit, 2) Workers' Unit, 3) Youth and Dev-Genç, 4) Local Units, 5) Publication and Report Units. See Sıkıyönetim Komutanlığı (Martial Law Military Headquarters) and Istanbul Askerî Savcılık (Office of Military Procecutor), *İddianame: Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Parti-Cephesi davası (Indictment: Trial of People's Liberation Party Front of Turkey)*, ed. Haydar Başbağ (İstanbul: Devrimci Sol, 1979), 41.. The other prominent revolutionary organization TKP/ML also had a very similar organizational structure consisting of all the units above with a more regional focus. See T.C. Sıkıyönetim Komutanlığı Askeri Savcılığı Istanbul (TR Martial Law Military Headquarters Istanbul), *İddianame (Indictment)*, 47–52.

some of them had a heavy presence also in other major cities especially in those that were recently industrialized and received migration from other cities, such as Izmir, Adana, Antep. Everyone had certain responsibilities and worked in small groups which were determined according to their tasks, such as recruitment, publication, propaganda, intelligence and so forth. The responsibilities were usually determined according to experience, needs of the organization, and talents of the members. For example, the experienced and old ones were assigned to work among the workers while the young and amateurs with the students. Even though, decisions were discussed and taken on local levels, the approval of the central committee was required in most cases. As most of the women confirmed, the rank-and-file members did not know the people in the higher cadres, and in the central committee. Therefore, most of them were not aware at the time that there were no or only a few women in the leading positions. In the organizations which adopted strict clandestine activism, everyone had a nom de guerre, and even when they knew the real names of each other they had to use the nom de guerre instead.

All the women have mentioned that they were very busy and had rarely free time for themselves. An ordinary everyday of a revolutionary consisted of certain activities and responsibilities, such as going to work in a factory, trade union, or in the slums, having regular appointments or meetings with the other members, reading the essential sources of revolutionary literature, such as the books of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, or those of the leaders of their organizations. Copying and distribution of these publications was among the most common activities of the revolutionaries of the period and usually was the responsibility of the publication teams.

Financially, the Turkish revolutionary organizations did not have as much financial resources as the Iranian Fadaiyan did. Although some organizations acquired certain amount of resources through donations and bank robberies, most of the revolutionaries were supposed to work in a factory or a day job to make ends meet. Just like in Iran, frugality was encouraged and adopted among the revolutionaries with similar consequences especially for women. Therefore, the revolutionaries in Turkey too were usually renting houses in the squats, spending their money only on the minimum necessities, not indulging in any sorts of hobbies or pass time activities.

Recreational activities as simple as going to movies were seen as "bourgeois pleasures" and they were convinced not to spend "people's money" on such activities.

> Once, in Adana, 20 thousand people participated in a funeral, and the people donated money to the revolutionaries; we used to collect money with grocery bags, the members of Dev-Sol used to collect with sacks. This was how the masses supported our fight. But of course, the armed movements or the mass movements too need 'expropriation', this happened towards the 80s.[517]

Trying to survive on a very limited budget, Turkish revolutionaries rented houses usually in the poorest districts and did not stay in a house more than six months. Women usually had to take on more responsibilities in renting the houses and establishing relations with the neighbors. They adopted relevant roles to disguise the house and their identities, like husband and wife, siblings or close relatives. When renting a separate house was not possible for financial or security reasons, some of them were also staying in the houses of the advocates. In those cases, they were advised to help with the housework, and not to be a burden on the owners, for example, by eating less.

> Before 1980, we were a new movement and inexperienced. This was what we learnt from Kaypakkaya: urban or rural guerrillas would carry their house on their backs. We never had proper furniture, just things like mattress and chair. Somewhere in Ankara, I guess it was İncesu, we rented a house with a male friend from Dersim, […] it had one room and two sofas. We were acting as if we were siblings, we lived like this for a long time, we slept on separate beds. We couldn't stay more than six months though, we had either a problem or an organizational appointment. We only stayed in a house for a longer period of time with my husband, the landlord understood that we were revolutionaries, he helped us, he was from Yugoslavia and a former partisan. He used to cook and bring us, he really liked us. We heard that when we had been arrested in 1980, people supporting us cried a lot. We had such good relations with the people. The life of a professional revolutionary did not allow to earn a lot of money, but it was not like that…I mean, we survived on very little money in difficult conditions. […] We lived like the poor, in Istanbul fish was cheap and it was the food of the poor, our male friends were all chefs on cooking fish: anchovy, mackerel, bonito. We didn't need much money before 1980, also before September 12, the people and the revolutionaries were 'close as two coats of paint'.[518]

In the case of the revolutionary organizations in Turkey, ideological adoption of armed struggle, and presence of guns and military units did not necessarily mean that all the members had military training or experience in the armed operations. Although almost all the women I

[517] Meral (pseudonym), interview.
[518] A literal translation from Turkish would be: 'close as the nail and the skin'. Meral (pseudonym).

interviewed carried a gun at least a couple of times, only one of them participated an armed operation; for the rest, military training was limited to learning how to shoot as a procedural step in their activism. While most of the women did not have the willingness to use guns anyway, in most cases they were never encouraged, if not actively prevented from participating in armed operations. The lack of experience also resulted in tragic events such as injuries as a result of accidental explosions of hand grenades.

Mobilization of people and recruitment to the movement was one of the most significant jobs of the revolutionaries. Therefore, in their everyday life, they were supposed to establish relations with the neighbors and workers. It was not very difficult as the workers and squatters, especially those from Kurdish and Alevi backgrounds, were usually sympathetic to their cause. As a result of this policy, as also mentioned earlier, the revolutionaries in Turkey had much closer relations with the masses, including workers and squatters, compared to Iranian guerrillas. Most of them were already working in the factories and some of them were even staying in the houses of advocates.

> For example, when we went back to our hometowns, we used to join Dev-Genç village units, or in Ankara, we began working with workers in the factories; we were both studying at the university and working among the squatters in Tuzluçayır. Those were very instructive experiences for me. Even during the junta violence, we had book reading workshops in the houses of the people. We used to go to the squatter's districts to read books to them as a part of educational activities.[519]

Both as a part of the efforts to mobilize them, and as a natural consequence of spending a lot of time with the masses. The revolutionaries began to look and behave more and more like the workers or the peasants, as all the women I interviewed confirmed and complained. In some organizations, it was an intentional strategy while in others it was a natural course of action. In any case, these close relations resulted in the adoption of the traditional, in other words patriarchal, values and life style of the masses. Even though played a significant role, the close relations with the masses cannot be blamed for all the patriarchal tendencies, sexism and discrimination based on sex in the revolutionary organizations. The lack of regulations on an

[519] Umut (pseudonym), interview.

organizational level protecting women or at least emphasizing the equality between men and women, also paved the way to the continuation of the unequal relations and sexist behaviors among the revolutionaries.

In parallel to the adoption of the culture and values of the masses, in fact even beyond that, the revolutionary organizations imposed further restrictions on their members, for example, alcohol consumption was usually forbidden and women were not supposed to wear make-up. There were many other examples of similar over restrictive and discriminatory policies regulating everyday lives of the revolutionaries, which is discussed under the relevant following subtitles.

8.3. 'Guerrilla Life': Regulation of Everyday Life in Fadaiyan

Out of the interviews with the Iranian women, regardless of the period they were active in the organization, emerged a strictly-organized, centralized, and disciplined 'routine' which micro-managed every detail of their everyday activities in the safe houses of the OIPFG. What really made their everyday life extraordinary and, in a way, heroic resulted from the fact that Fadaiyan was indeed an operational armed organization, not just a clandestine movement trying to survive under extreme repression and surveillance. The guerrillas were supposed to be trained to engage in armed conflict and prepared to die. In order to be as effective and safe as possible, militaristic principles were adopted.

Therefore, all the Iranian women I interviewed unanimously agreed on one single notion of 'a guerrilla life' (*zendegi-ye cheriki*) which meant not only a lot of sacrifices such as giving up on your loved ones, forgoing your future and accepting that you have a lifespan of six-months, but also a number of rules and practices that shaped and regulated the everyday life. Some of the highlights of *guerrilla life* included following a strict schedule from the time they get up until they all go to sleep, sleeping less than minimum —6 hours to be exact—, staying up every night for one hour or two for guard duty, sleeping in one room all together on the floor, exercising at least twice a day, eating the bare minimum, handling explosive toxic substances, carrying a weapon all day long in the military cummerbund as well as a cyanide capsule in mouth every

time you go out of the house. The following definitions and details of their everyday life are based on a personal email correspondence with Negin[520] and the descriptions of the former activist women that I interviewed; since they did not differ from each other I do not refer to any specific woman for the specific information, only when their experiences diverge from the general outlines I cite the interview of the woman with different experience.

Fadaiyan was an urban guerrilla organization that was structured around the safe houses in which usually lived three to five members. All the members in a safe house constituted a guerrilla 'team'; the safe house in Persian literally means 'team house' (*Khaneh-ye Timi*). In every safe house, there were two main members, always a man and a woman, who were disguised as husband and wife, in order to conceal the identity and activities of the people in the house from the landlord and neighbors. Other members were always introduced as close relatives such as a sister, brother, uncle or aunt. Everyone had to stick to their roles at all times in public and take all the necessary measures to make their character as realistic as possible.

Life in a safe house was subject to a series of strict rules and regulations that everyone in the house had to follow diligently. The failure to meet one's obligations and even slightest negligence could be an offense punishable according to the rules and regulations of the organization. The OIPFG had a *Rule Book*[521] to regulate internal affairs of the organization; since the structure of the organization was mainly based on organization around the safe houses, the rules and regulations in the handbook concerned mostly the life in these houses. Some of the

[520] On August 23, 2014.

[521] Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 234. mentions that *Instructions for Urban Guerrilla Warfare* published in 1972 by OIPFG similar to Che Guevara's *Guerrilla Warfare* and Carlos Marighella's *Minimanual of the Urban Guerilla*. I do not know if it is the same booklet that the women I interviewed referred to because I was told that it did not survive until today. Yet there are many similarities between them. Besides, many of the rules and regulations of the organization were also explained and reasoned in its internal publications. Rightfully Vahabzadeh emphasized the level of surveillance through these rules, regulations and instructions the OIPFG had over its members under the pretext of security. Abrahamian too mentions a handbook in which the guerrillas were instructed how to manage torture. See Abrahamian, *Tortured Confessions Prisons and Public Recantations in Modern Iran*, 107.. The most detailed information regarding the Rule Book is in Naderi's book, yet it was also based on the information derived in an interrogation of a woman guerrilla, Zehra Aqanbi Qolhaki, and very similar to what I have heard from the women I interviewed. See Naderi, *Cherik-Ha-Ye Fedai-Ye Khalq*, 1:609–21.

members undertook other external activities too such as maintaining relations with sympathetic public, mobilizing among university students, keeping communication in between different safe houses; however, those were mostly male members.

Every safe house was designed both to accommodate the needs of a guerrilla squad and disguise it as a small family house for the landlord and neighbors. Therefore, there had to be at least two rooms in every safe house: one reception room tailored for the guests, and one *workroom* for the organizational activities. All the organizational materials as well as the military equipment such as weapons and explosives were kept in the workroom. Among the organizational items were typing and publishing equipment, radio receivers, an archive of newspapers, special reports of activities, and a small library of the publications by the organizations. On the walls of the workroom, they had posters of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh on the top rows. Below them were the photos of the martyred leaders of the historical armed movements and communist movement in Iran, such as the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1909) and Jangali Movement (1914-1921), namely Mirza Kuchak Khan, Sattar Khan, Taqi-Khan Pessian, Baqir Khan, Khosro Roozbeh, Parviz Hekmatjoo.[522] There was also two Fadai slogans written on the walls of the work room which can be translated as: "Prefer the movement to the organization, the organization to comrades, and comrades to yourself!"[523] and "With faith on our way to victory"[524]. These slogans explicitly testify to the priority that was given the survival of the organization that was mentioned earlier in the context of object shift mechanism contributing the radicalization of the organization.

The general duty of each house as well as the individual tasks of team members were assigned by the central committee of the organization. The teams were divided according to their responsibilities; there were for example publishing and distribution teams, labor teams, military teams, and communication teams. For example, the duties of a publishing and distribution team

[522] Negin (pseudonym). Personal email correspondence. August 23, 2014.
[523] "Jonbesh ra ber-e sazman, saman ra ber-e rafiq-ha, rafiq-ha ra ber-e khod tarjih dahid."
[524] "Ba iman be piruz-e rahman"

included typing, printing, binding, reproducing, and distributing of the organizational publications such as journals and leaflets or the books of the founding leaders like Masood Ahmadzadeh's *Armed Struggle: Both a Strategy and a Tactic*. Yet, the duty of a specific team, as well as its members were subject to change according to the needs of the organization as well as the conditions of the region it was located. Of course, the instances of an arrest or killing of a member or a police raid also changed the structure and responsibilities of certain members and teams whether they were the direct targets or not.

Labor teams were required to work in factories, gather information, establish good relations with workers and have an influence on them. They were also supposed to report to the central committee about the working environment and conditions. However, as I was told by women I interviewed, even though they were able to do all, they could not talk about anything political, let alone organize the workers, as doing so would create suspicion right away and put them in danger. So they had to hide their identity also in the factories among the workers to the extent that rendered their work pointless.

All the members of the organizations were supposed to receive *military training* and know how to use guns. Ironically, the compulsory military service that the Shah's rapid reform projects brought about provided almost all the guerrillas with military training that they would need.[525] Thus, the duties of the *military teams* consisted of identification of the targets for military operations, placement of bombs, and 'creation of finances' mostly through bank robberies —they were euphemistically referred to as expropriations—.

Everyone I interviewed confirmed that the organization was always financially self-sufficient and never in need of money. However, as again confirmed by all, the organizational culture stressed the significance of spending the minimum for the personal expenses of guerrillas, including for food. Every guerrilla had a daily allowance to spend on food. It was around 4.5

[525] Abrahamian, *Iran Between Two Revolutions*, 484.

Toman per person, which was equal to approximately 64 cents in 1978 before the Revolution.[526] Everything was rationed, from food, tea, sugar to cigarettes. As a former guerrilla woman notes, even after 600.000 Toman was 'expropriated' from the banks, it did not occur to them to use that money for themselves. That money 'belonged to the people' and they always tried to save more money, for example, they only ate minced meat because it was cheaper. Many went hungry but never showed it; those who would eat more were criticized.[527]

All communications both among the members of the organization and with the other organizations and specific people from outside of the organization were subject to special security regulations and confidentiality. They were only disclosed under certain conditions and kept as secret even among the members of the same safe house. The extent of secrecy could reach the degrees in which sometimes even people living in the same safe house did not see each other. This secrecy was adopted when one or two guerrillas were hiding in a safe house temporarily out of sight of the neighbors and the housemates were only allowed to talk to each other behind a curtain to keep everyone's identity secret. Actually, every guerrilla had a *nom de guerre* and no one knew the real names of others. This created a very significant tactical as well as practical problems; for example, when a safe house was raided by the police and some of guerrillas were killed in the shootout; those who could escape and survive were not able to identify those that were killed from their real names which was the only information that was reported in the news in newspapers or radio. After the revolution too, when the organization began to operate openly, aboveground, the guerrillas who had shared the same house had a hard time finding each other having no information about each other's real identities. During the interviews, this also created some confusion as the women kept using the real name and the nom de guerre of a former guerrilla interchangeably.

526 It was apparently only 1.5 Toman at the beginning of the 1970s as reported by a woman from the first generation of guerrillas. See Hajebi Tabrizi, *Dad-e bidad: nakhostin zendan-e zanan-e siyasi (Memoir of Iranian Women Fedai Guerrillas)*.
527 Hajebi Tabrizi.

The reason for such a high level of secrecy was of course safety. Under the extreme surveillance of SAVAK and security forces, the organization had to operate in full-clandestinity to ensure the safety of its members; and all members had to take all the necessary precautions and follow a strict protocol at all times and in cases of emergency. The organization paid an extra attention to the safety of external contacts such as doctors, civil servants and other advocates who were ready to help the organization with their service or property such as their personal car or house. In every safe house there was a folder called *double zero* and it was the first thing to be burned in case of a SAVAK raid. In the file was the fake IDs, and other important organizational documents.[528] Another folder to be burnt was called *zero* and contained potential means and financial sources. The guerrillas were supposed to burn these two folders even at the risk of their lives. There was another set of documents, called *one*, that the guerrillas were advised to take together with themselves escaping the house. They consisted of the regulations, notes, letters, articles, and internal analysis of the organization along with the formulas of explosives, weapons, grenades, and money.

Perhaps one of the most salient activities of the everyday guerrilla life was the preparation of daily and weekly schedules, they were called 'schedule writing' (*bername nevisi*): Every evening all the guerrillas in a squad sat down to write down the responsibilities of each and every one of them for the following day from 6:00 in the morning until 11:00 at night. Everyday a different person was in charge of overseeing and making sure that the individual tasks were completed. The internal affairs of the organization as well as the daily tasks, including house chores, were divided equally between men and women according to the abilities of each individual person. After daily programming was done, the team would discuss internal and external activities of the organization, daily issues in the safe house, news in the media, political events in the country as well as in the world. Following the news in different media channels was an important part of the guerrillas' activities. Every night, the members of the squad also wrote down a 'self-criticism' notes in which they confessed or reported their actions or behaviors that were either potentially

[528] Mehri (pseudonym), interview.

dangerous or not correct or suitable for a guerrilla. This was a very common practice among the members of Marxist-Leninist and Maoist revolutionary organization of the period in other parts of the world as well.

In every house, there was also a permanent person in charge (*Mes'ul*)[529] of the general management of the squad, but mostly responsible for political and military affairs. Even though other members too had a say regarding theoretical and military issues, decisions concerning the military operations lay with the leader of the squad. Only at times of emergency, such as during a police raid, an armed conflict, or an escape, every member was in charge of commanding.

Every guerrilla after joining a safe house were supposed to wear a military cummerbund in which they carried a gun, extra cartridges, a grenade, a cyanide, a knife, a money sac, and a first aid kit. The money was only for emergencies especially when a guerrilla loses all her or his connections with the organization after an attack or escape operation. The amount of money was enough for a person to survive a number of months and different for women and men —500 Toman for men and 1500 Toman for women.[530] The initial guerrilla training consisted of getting to know the location of the house, the streets, and the city, learning how to type, bind, make copies and print publication materials, familiarizing yourself with the explosives, preparing banner flyers, making cyanide capsules, making hand grenades, gun training, shooting outside of the city. Of course, not all of them could be practiced in each house, the guerrilla training was adopted according to the needs and duties of the safe house, and it evolved over time with the changes in the tactics and strategies of the organizations.

The OIPFG gradually put together and enforced a series of disciplinary regulations to manage internal affairs of the organization. It was a small booklet and called 'the Rule Book'; every guerrilla had to know and follow the rules in this book. What made the rules in the book really

[529] *Mes'ul* can also be translated as the head or leader of the house. In the beginning they seem to be appointed by the central committee, but later on, at least in some houses, members of the house elected the person in charge of the house.
[530] Approximately $70 for men and $210 for women in 1978, which would be around $420 and $1470 respectively today.

interesting is that they were meant to regulate every aspect of everyday life in a safe house from the dress code to relations between the members of the squad; in that sense it can be considered a code of conduct for the guerrillas. For example, the code of conduct required everyone to go to public bath at least every two weeks, sleep together in the same room, and participate daily exercises.

Yet, the way some of the practices were regulated was hard to understand even within the logic of a code of conduct. For example, when they were on guard duty at night and were to wake up the next person to take over, they were supposed to kick the person on the feet. They were not allowed to have any other physical contact to wake up each other. The reason for this particular act to be strictly regulated was of course related to the gender dynamics, which I will mention later by also including other examples. But for now, it suffices to say that, even though the book did not make it to today, the former guerrillas that I interviewed referred to it whenever they had to explain the reasons for the certain actions or behaviors that were not easily comprehended at first sight.

Regarding the dress code, the guerrillas in general were not allowed to wear bright colors, yet girls were forbidden to wear tight clothes either. Women wore a loose pullover, trousers and long stockings to cover their legs at all times. Both men and women had their shoes on all day long even when they were sleeping, to remain prepared to escape in case of a raid. Women were not allowed to wear make-up unless it was required by their undercover roles. In order to disguise, women could pluck their eyebrows, wear a wedding ring and have make-up.

Both the content and the character of the *Rule Book* were strictly militaristic. There were even corporal punishments for minor mistakes such as forgetting to take a procedural precaution in the course of the everyday life. Even though I was told by my interviewees that they were very rarely implemented, their very existence in the Rule Book is enough to anticipate at least some instances. The most common corporal punishment among the guerrillas was bastinado. Besides, there were also less violent, non-corporal punishments which were apparently more common as a form of punishment, such as suspension of organizational duties—for example, taking away

one's gun or not allowing to take over nightly guard duty—, boycott—not talking for several days—, and deprivation of certain privileges.

> We didn't have much money and we also didn't want to eat like bourgeoisie but like workers. We also didn't want to get fat. What we were going to wear and eat was written in the rules list, and it was hang on the wall and determined by the organization. They were about the clothes, food, weaponry, —how to take care of it, clean it once a week, how to disassemble it how to assemble it—, sleep schedule, exercise schedule, timing of shooting training, etc. Our weapons were on us during sleep but not during exercise. Once someone got shot and killed by mistake after forgetting a bullet in the weapon after taking out its magazine. After that the rules were made to describe how to take care of our weapons in detail to prevent similar instances. With experience the rules were changed.[531]

It is also important to keep in mind that we cannot talk about a monolithic experience for each and every woman; also, their experiences changed throughout the 1970s. Referring to the transformations that Fadaiyan went through during the decade, many described it as being active almost in different organizations. Nasser Mohajer, for example, mentioned three phases, 1) 1970-74, 2) 1974-77, 3)1977-79.[532] Critical thresholds in the history of the Organization had the most impact in this periodization, such as the loss of the leadership cadres by 1974, the series of attacks by SAVAK revealing many houses and guerrillas by 1976. As a result, the rules, regulations and practices, as well as the whole movement culture, changed eventually:

> After 1975-1976, […] those rules disappeared from the organizational documents. We didn't have military operations as much as we had before, a lot has changed, even though we had guard duty and gun on the belt, things became lighter. There are various reasons for this change. After the big attack, the ones that survived prioritized the protection of the organization and its survival. Then we started to focus more on the discussions about what strategies we should follow: should we continue our military operations, what should we do, etc. Also, those coming from prison made great impact on the character of the organization. After 1975 there was no punishment. The society was changing and we had to change too. For example, it was forbidden to attend the demonstrations but we did it anyway.[533]

8.4. Division of labor: Gendered or not?

The experiences of women in the clandestine revolutionary activism in Turkey and Iran diverged in a number of areas. The ways in which division of labor in organizational as well as everyday

[531] Mina (pseudonym), interview.
[532] Nasser Mohajer, interview by Author, 13.07 2014.
[533] Negin (pseudonym), interview.

level was practiced was conspicuously different among the activists of the two countries. While division of labor was mostly based on gender in the Turkish side, regardless of their abilities or the interests of the organizations, Iranian guerrillas swore by the equality between women and men in division of labor; the only difference in this sense resulted from the necessities of concealing a safe house, which required women to act according to their gender roles in society.

a) Turkey

The women's experiences in the revolutionary activism in Turkey, clandestine or otherwise, were marked by the gendered division of labor resulting from sexism in the leftist movement in the 1960s and 1970s. Even women themselves were nor immune from the sexist discourse which was dominant not only in the society but also among the student and labor activists. Believed in an emancipation after the revolution, revolutionary women viewed the capitalist system as the source of all their problems; their demands had never gone beyond the socialist or nationalist projections for women anyway. Despite all, the women were represented in great numbers in every area of the revolutionary activism and achieved extraordinary success. Therefore, this part is devoted to their activities in these revolutionary movement, not always as a part of their organizations or groups, and the challenges they encountered on the way.

> Women constituted the 50% of Dev-Yol activists, therefore women were taking care of a lot of things. What made us really mad, for example, only men were assigned as persons in charge. […] When the districts were mobilized, it was us women who opened the doors, who entered first all the districts. The revolutionary movement entered districts through women. Once we paved the way, men became the persons in charge. […] All the other works of the district, including security, were on the shoulders of women, carried guns, organized military groups. This was the case especially in Dev-Yol.[534]

As Umut stated: 'women organize life'; that is to say, it has always been women who think, plan and micro-manage every detail of everyday life and it was the case in the revolutionary activism in which they were involved as well. Women were not only cooking, cleaning, finding houses, working in the factories, but also establishing relations with the squatters and mobilizing workers.

[534] Umut (pseudonym), interview.

As confirmed by almost all, it was exclusively the women's responsibility to transport the guns since there were no woman police officers at the time and as a rule, women were not searched. Similarly, to provide a camouflage, they did also pretend to be the girlfriend of the man carrying the gun. Naturally, they were being arrested for carrying guns and even threatened to be killed by the police officers.[535] The only military training they received might have received was limited to shooting in an empty field or forest. None of the women I interviewed from Turkey had to use a gun, a couple of them had only been present in armed operations. Even though guns were present, transported and even owned by women, it did not even occur to some of the women to use them. Most found it useful only for defensive purposes.

Another organizational responsibility falling mostly on the shoulders of women was finding a house to rent, since men alone could not rent them alone. The 'external affairs', that is to say relations with the neighbors in the safe houses were also mostly taken up by the women. It was not always easy or 'natural' for them as they were usually coming from middle class families but living in the poorest, worker or squatter districts.

> I was trying to look like them by wearing trousers under my skirt but I was not exactly able to establish good relations. They used to sweep in front of the door, we were taking turns if there were three apartments for example. But I wasn't used to any of those, I had come from a very different background, had never done housework, lived a comfortable life, and I had to sweep in front of the door and cook. I saw all of them as organizational work.[536]

Besides these, among the organizational activities which women undertook were carrying guns, forging documents, preparing and distributing leaflets, putting up posters, publications of journals, participating in demonstrations and protests, foundation of women's branches of the revolutionary organizations.

> I was one of the founders of the Revolutionary Women's Association[537] in Istanbul. […] It was operating as the women's branches of political parties now. Actually, it was an organization whit minimum hierarchy, in which participation was taken seriously, and with a half anarchist structure. For example, if your head was not in the work done, you didn't care about her. We had

[535] Nilay (pseudonym), interview.
[536] Figen (pseudonym), interview by Author, August 19, 2013.
[537] *Devrimci Kadınlar Derneği (DKD),* established by the activist women from both Dev-Yol and Dev-Sol in 1977. After the split in 1980, Dev-Sol took it over.

> such a self-confidence, those who did the job was the owner of that job. Women had an autonomy, but politically we were dependent on men. For example, before the split, we met women from DKD Ankara, we had established a federation. The leader of our organization, Dursun Karataş, tried to dismiss me for not asking for permission before meeting the women. Men had an administrative hegemony. […] There was AKD in Ankara, and IKD, we thought that it would be good to found something similar, eight to ten of women had done readings for six months, before founding the Association, read everything women did in the history of revolutions.[538]

In addition to their administrative hegemony, men were also not willing to do 'degrading' works, meaning the works that had been traditionally done by women in the society, such as cleaning an office space or serving tea to the guests. According to a story told by Figen, in an association that was affiliated with Kurtuluş, women objected that they were the ones making tea and cleaning the office all the time. They called for a meeting, four women and more than four men. Men accepted only to make tea but not serve it with the excuse that it would hinder them to establish authority before the guests. There was an obvious hierarchy among the works: some were more revolutionary, such as organizing meetings and recruiting members. Nilay had a similar experience:

> They rented an office space for the association, […] and asked the girls to come and clean it, I remember this very well, I said: 'I don't clean your association, why are the girls supposed to clean it if Marxism promotes equality?' I must have read Clara Zetkin, and *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*; I don't know how much I could explain, […] but they told me that Ho Chi Minh's wife was reported to say that: 'some might die for the revolution but some cook for the revolution'. I remember this so well, they told me: 'look, Nilay friend, not all of us has to be leaders.[539]

There were exceptions too, but it was confined to only a few cases and resulted from certain dynamics, as Funda explains:

> I did everything men could do. I heard from no one something like: 'you're a woman, you can't do this'. Only once I witnessed that a young boy from lower ranks requested from above that he should be the one undertaking an armed operation. Even in the decision-making process I have never experienced an objection. That could not be, because we were from the experienced group, from among the oldest. Even those who were against me couldn't show it.[540]

538 Umut (pseudonym), interview.
539 Nilay (pseudonym), interview.
540 Funda (pseudonym), interview.

Consequently, it was always women who cooked, cleaned and did all the other housework in the safe houses. It was not only the case among the married couples between whom man was always occupying a higher position in the organization.

> In a house in which we were eight to ten people, I guess we were six women and two men, I found it unacceptable, when we come to the house in the evening, my having to go to the kitchen, even if we were equally tired, or having to wash men's clothes, or their behaving like our older brothers in the house even though we were at the same ranks in the organization, and gendered division of labor[541].

Some of the women attempted to share the housework, and exceptionally some men cooperated. Yet, even then, hanging the clothes out had to be done by women not for security reasons, as it was the case among Iranian guerrillas, but because it was seen as a 'women's job'.

> We thought that life, which we called collective, was really so. […] At times, men didn't even approve what you had done for them. There was a militant boy that I really liked, like my brother. We even called him our big brother in public, he used to go to the resistance early, stayed in tents. Naturally, we were washing his clothes. I never forget, once I washed his jeans, with a brush to remove stains. He scolded me for brushing his jeans because its color had faded. No thank you but scolding, as if it was my job to wash his jeans.[542]

b) Iran

As agreed by all, security and concealment of a safe house was mostly the responsibility of women in Fadaiyan. Naturally, this was of utmost importance for every guerrilla squad. The location of the house was usually determined according to the specific task of the squad. For example, a labor team would rent a house in a workers' district or slum. Actually, the safe houses were usually located in the slums and poor districts as it was cheaper to arrange a house and easier to survive as the police activity was limited in those areas. Therefore, the south of Tehran was a preferred location by the guerrillas, but by the mid 1970s, Tehran in general became too dangerous to live let alone conduct any military operations; many squads had to move to nearby cities. Regardless of where they lived, in order to blend in and conceal themselves, the team members had to adapt their appearance, behavior, accents, and actions to the roles in their coverup story. Consistency with and plausibility of their cover-up story were of great

[541] Umut (pseudonym), interview.
[542] Umut (pseudonym).

significance in order not to attract any suspicion; in an effort to ensure that, women had to be more active both due to the cultural character of the relations with the neighbors which was usually handled by 'woman of the house"; and because women proved to be more successful in detecting suspicious activities around the house. Of course, the two were not unrelated. For example, even though house chores were divided equally between men and women, from cooking to cleaning to shopping, in public they had to adhere to their gender roles to blend in. Since it was mostly the responsibility of woman to sweep in front of the door, hang out with women in the neighborhood, or do the shopping not only in the districts they usually had to live but in general in Iranian society, the guerrilla women too had to stick to the cultural codes of conduct, in other words gender roles. Having had to stay on good terms with neighbors and landlord, stay in regular touch with the shopkeepers, and consequently spend more time in the neighborhood naturally made them better at detecting unusual activities. Male guerrillas, on the other hand, could afford to be away from the house with various excuses when taking care of organizational duties, meeting other comrades, and moving relatively freer in the public sphere which has always been more hospitable to men's presence. The Iranian women I interviewed told several stories of either themselves or other women who could successfully recognize security agents undercover patrolling around their houses in time and allowed their squad escape from a possible police raid as well as a certain death. Yet, they also told how hard it was convincing their male comrades of the authenticity of their detection which at times could lead to deadly consequences. Women might be accused of being too paranoid or not having enough experience by their male comrades. To explain how critical that role was for the safety of the house and everyone living in it, Mina gave an example:

> At the beginning, we did not have much experience, did not pay attention to the image of the house that might be perceived by the neighbors. Everyday different men and women were visiting the same house, so the neighbors called the police and complained. The house was attacked by the security forces.[543]

[543] Mina (pseudonym), interview.

Iranian women emphasized that the daily schedule was written in gender neutral terms, both men and women were supposed to do the same things, yet to the big operations which required physical activities such as running, attacking, mostly men were allocated.

> I had only joined one operation in Qom, when SAVAK in 1356 suppressed a series of demonstrations by seminary students and killed some of the students. Khomeini's son was among those who were killed. So the organization made an operation to support the student. Three of us, attended the operation and I was driving the car, we made a bomb at home and took it to the office of Rastakhiz Party and exploded the bomb and go back to Tehran. It was a successful operation.[544]

In addition to the concealment and security of the safe house, the financial management of the house as well fell mostly on the women's shoulders. The financial management of a safe house consisted of the regulation and monitoring of the expenses made to buy food, personal items and everything else for organizational use. Almost all the women approved the rationale, in one way or another, behind the division of labor in their everyday life. For example, Forouz was educated in pharmacy, she was also responsible for buying components of explosives because she could find explanations when buying them. Also, she used to buy stuff that they use to disguise members, such as wigs. Since she was 'the only woman in the house', she found it normal to do shopping. For Mina it had to do with the culture:

> We had to respect and confirm the cultural rules of the district we were living. So women had to go for shopping, but in the house men also cooked. Everybody washed their own clothes. We took turns doing every job. There was equality between men and women.[545]

Negin elaborated a little bit more on their choices:

> Disguising the safe house was mostly at the shoulders of women. Since we were always renting houses in the low-income districts, women had to spend more time in activities to disguise the house and less in studying etc.[546]

Mina explained in detail how she was adopting a different role in various safe houses:

> I have stayed in so many safe houses but my role was different in each of them. Since I was so young, I pretended to be the daughter of the house. My hair was long, I was braiding them and going to the yard and telling the neighbors that I have finished the high school and came here

544 Mina (pseudonym).
545 Mina (pseudonym).
546 Negin (pseudonym), interview.

> with my bigger sister. In another one I was the wife in the house, so I changed my hair according to my role. I had close relations with the neighbors, when I was pretending to be a high school student, I was playing with the daughter of the neighbors. Once we rented only a room of a house and in that house every family was living in a room and sharing the rest of the facilities, like kitchen and yard. We did our dishes in the pool in the yard. It was easy to hide ourselves among them. Our weapons and other organizational stuff were hidden in the room. Therefore, we had to talk to the neighbors. In that house the brother of my friend wanted to marry me, they asked my mom but my mom said that I was promised to marry someone else.[547]

There were a few women in the beginning, and they did not have any military operations in some of the safe houses. For example, Forouz was only involved in intelligence activities, monitoring people who are connected to the regime.[548] The organizational activities in the safe houses mostly revolved around reading, typing and discussion:

> We were also typing the programs of radio *Mihanparastan*, copied them and distributed them at the university, on the stairs, etc. I was doing it at first by hand then bought a typewriter. 5-6 copies. […] I was in the publication group. We published *Payam-e Daneshju* for the universities. Or the books of Bijan we published.[549]

Iranian women stated that the appointment or election of the person in charge of a safe house was done regardless of the gender of the person. Seniority, experience or talent were the significant characteristics:

> The most important quality was being able to protect the life of others. Since I had been to prison, had more experience, knew who could be police in cover, knew what to do in certain situations, so I could become the person in charge of the house. Therefore, when electing responsible of the house what was considered most important quality was the ability to protect others' lives, not the gender of the guerrilla. No one said 'she is woman she can't be, let this man be the leader'. Since women had more abilities, they were sharp, focused, could identify who is police, therefore a lot of women could become leaders in the houses. And they became good leaders. But there was that problem too, because women didn't know the social conduct as much as men did, like buying cars, the unwritten rules, because they are not the ones buying the cars in society. Even if they were experienced in guerrilla warfare, they were not experienced in other social settings that were formed in a patriarchal society.[550]

[547] Mina (pseudonym), interview.
[548] Forouz (pseudonym), interview.
[549] Mina (pseudonym), interview.
[550] Mina (pseudonym).

8.5. Empowerment through Activism? Sexism and Centralism in the Revolutionary Activism

Participation in the revolutionary movements was usually recalled by the women as an empowering and liberating moment in their lives; however, their daily experiences in the organizations, everyday interactions with male comrades or the treatment of the leading cadres might tell a different story. The reasons for the difficulties that exclusively women suffered from in the clandestine revolutionary activism resulted from different causes in the two countries. In the case of Turkey, it was mostly sexism and moralism that was widespread in the movement culture; whereas in Iran it was mostly related to the centralist structure of the Organization.

a) Turkey

Gendered division of labor in the revolutionary movement in Turkey was already a sign of sexism among the activists. Although women's overall willingness, enthusiasm, and courage could not be hindered by these sorts of discriminatory treatments, mostly because they were raised in a patriarchal society anyway, it was still affecting their psychology adversely as we have seen in the previous part.

> Between 1974 and 1980, I always lived in the houses collectively with at least three to four people, with unionist friends, women and men together, singles and couples. After I became a feminist, I realized that both in the revolutionary struggle and in the houses, there was a total sexism. You are a militant woman but always a second-class woman, you're not in the decision-making processes, both in Dev-Yol and in the unions. We were coordinators in one of the unions, and the chairman used to say to us: 'write my daughter', and I hated it. I felt horrible but I took it personally, or thought it was his character, not a patriarchal behavior.[551]

Turkish revolutionary women also talked about trying to prove that they were not weak, fragile or girlish, but instead emotionally and physically strong like men.

> We were working in the mixed-sex organizations, but in a style that men do politics which women internalized too. If you did not use that style then no one listened to you. Only the women who used that style, who, let's say, tolerated it, could raise in the organizations.[552]

[551] Umut (pseudonym), interview.
[552] Funda (pseudonym), interview.

> It was not necessary for men, but women had to prove themselves, women had to always try harder, to be better in public speaking, in using guns.[553]

> I was always trying to be a woman who was more like a man, when I objected to inequality, because it was your role model, it was as if the manlier you're the more equal you're. We did not have make-up.[554]

> I also experienced something in which I had to prove my being a revolutionary, especially because my father was a soldier. I remember having dressed badly and trying to look shabby so that they would see me more like a proletarian. For example, when we had cheese to eat, I remember having thought that if I eat little they might ask that 'is it because it is not like the cheese your father would buy'. I don't remember this as a bad thing though, mostly it was a joke.[555]

To give you another example of a subtle everyday discrimination that usually only women were subjected to, an anecdote from the accounts of Melek Ulagay, a Turkish revolutionary activist of the period, can be mentioned here. She tells this anecdote in her book she co-authored with Oya Baydar, another activist woman of the period.[556] She was one of the revolutionary women coming from an upper middle-class family. In her recollections of clandestine life, she mentions that once she was forced to walk for 5-6 hours in a freezing cold for some ambiguous reasons. According to her it was in fact to prove that she was not just a bourgeois girl who fancied to be a revolutionary.[557] She argues that a man from a similar background would have never been required to prove his commitment in such a way. Still, she proudly remembers that she did walk for at least six hours, even though she fell sick afterwards, and gained the respect of others as a woman and a revolutionary.

If the role model for women was not a heroic male revolutionary, then it was another woman who sacrificed everything and devoted herself to the revolutionary struggle:

> Once we had a meeting with the leaders. There were two other women too in the meeting, and they were presented to us as exemplary women who achieved a democratic revolution. They have left their home for good, and for us leaving home, severing your ties with family was a big deal. But those women had left their home but they were either married or had a boyfriend, it was not like they were living alone, I was not able to comprehend that, married or not they were

553 Umut (pseudonym), interview.
554 Figen (pseudonym), interview.
555 Banu (pseudonym), interview.
556 Baydar and Ulagay, *Bir Dönem Iki Kadın*.
557 Baydar and Ulagay, 179.

> living with a man. Those sorts of people were presented as exemplary figures. Self-sacrifice was a very significant thing, self-sacrifice and endurance.[558]

While the pressure on women to self-sacrifice and devote themselves to the cause was very high, they were still expected to confirm to cultural gender roles in the society, otherwise, they might be subjected to serious suspicion or insults as Nilay explains in two examples:

> In that meeting, consisting of around 30-35-50 people, I was the only woman. It was not in my mind, the difference between men and women, but I realized that I was the only woman. By the way there was this constant talk of police, whether there was one amongst us and so forth, I was there with the reference of [my friend], and everyone there were discussing, I was 17-18 years old, they were my older brothers, I'm listening to them, but couldn't talk, because I didn't have the courage. One of the guys said; 'let's not go into such detail, there might be police among us, for example this girl friend of us, how did she come here, there is no one in the evening, there is no girl here, how did she come here?
>
> […]
>
> Burcu smoked, wore high heels and revealing clothes, she was from Eskişehir, while I was in more of a proletarian revolutionary style with unplucked eyebrows, wearing trousers and a parka. […] In a meeting, [one of the men among us] said to Burcu: 'what is this that you're wearing, like a prostitute.' I don't remember what Burcu said but even I couldn't defend her.[559]

b) Iran

On the issue of discrimination against women or equality between women and men in the organization, Iranian women almost unanimously voiced similar arguments to the following:

> I never felt like I was treated differently because I was woman or discriminated against. All the rules of the organization were applied to men and women equally.[560]
>
> In the safe houses there was no discrimination against women. When there was some sort of violence both men and women had to suffer from that. There was no such thing as women trying to prove that they were strong enough to be a guerrilla. … There were a lot of women in charge of the houses. The people who became guerrillas were coming from a culture of equality between men and women, in which Leyla Khalid was a model. Women, just like her, could be a guerrilla and be a part of the armed struggle, and there was never an issue of inequality between men and women.[561]

Despite this egalitarian discourse and equal division of labor in Fadaiyan there was a subtle and concealed discrimination against women. For example, the militaristic characteristics of

[558] Figen (pseudonym), interview.
[559] Nilay (pseudonym), interview.
[560] Negin (pseudonym), interview.
[561] Mina (pseudonym), interview.

the organization which favor physical strength were not always favorable for women. Besides, there were no acknowledgement of their special needs. Therefore, the portrayal of a genderless guerrilla in the eyes of women were more like a male figure, so they tried very hard to be as strong as a man, physically and emotionally. Women, for instance, felt obliged to suppress their emotions in the face of a death of a comrade; or during the daily workouts they did not ask for exemption when they had their periods; some even bound their breast during workouts and tried to do as many repetitions as men did. Despite it was made in an underestimating tone, Fariba's comment is telling: "Women had to bind their breast during the daily exercises, have some problems with having periods, yes, but they were not big deals."[562] Negin also confessed that they did not only have particular difficulties but also had to hide them.

> In the safe houses, we had of course difficulties as women, washing clothes and having periods were the most common ones. My period was always difficult, but you couldn't tell, you would be ashamed to tell your comrades that you're having a period, so you'd still participate the daily exercise and get sick afterwards.[563]

Furthermore, they were still under the pressure of cultural codes of conduct pertaining to their gender. For example, I was told couple of times that women were getting vaginal yeast infection for not being able to dry their panties properly because they were ashamed to hang them out in the safe houses. There are so many simple examples like these demonstrating the difficulties only women were going through.

> Once, a girl wanted to go to the toilet to pee but in the room there were male comrades. The sound of the pee would be heard and she was embarrassed. She waited and waited. Then they had to leave the house to meet someone, but she still couldn't say that she needed to go. She was in pain. She comes home and tries to loosen her bent of weapon but her weapon drops down and shoots first her in the leg and then the wall. She doesn't understand what is happening, wonders who might have shot that bullet. A doctor comes to treat her, she had forgotten that she needed to pee. She tells it to doctor and the doctor helps her to pee bringing a basin for her to pee in it but she cannot go anymore. It is closed. So eventually doctor had to use catheter to relieve her. It takes one hour to complete. I wouldn't have gone to pee either. I was using my hand to prevent the sound of my pee to be heard. Now I know that it's stupid.[564]

[562] Fariba (pseudonym), interview by Author, July 7, 2014.
[563] Negin (pseudonym), interview.
[564] Mina (pseudonym), interview.

Another anecdote, as it was told by Negin, illustrates how women could easily be accused of having petty bourgeois inclinations, or too much time to worry about cosmetic details, in a dispute between female and male guerrillas living in the same house. As mentioned before, they exercised two or three times a day always indoors for security reasons, and naturally during the exercise they sweated a lot. During one summer season, women in her house complained about the irritating body odor after the exercises and suggested to have a separate sports wear as a solution. Their suggestion was immediately rejected by all the male members with various excuses such as: 'body odor was not something bothersome', 'they were not living under normal circumstances', 'the rules were clear about the dress code'. Yet, men were also not taking baths as often as they were required in the Rule Book either. Still, women were accused of being too sensitive or having unreasonable expectations. When women did not give up and tried to proceed with sewing sports clothes, the head of the regional branch accused women of 'imposing petty bourgeois lifestyle in the team houses'. Despite all the objections and accusations from male members, women in the house under the leadership of the female head of the house went ahead and wrote a letter to the Central Committee requesting sports clothes to be worn during exercises. Finally, only with the approval of the leader of the organization, Hamid Ashraf, women were allowed to sew sports clothes, and many adopted them except some male members with strong convictions.

Even though participating in the revolutionary activism in Turkey was remembered as a positive and liberating experience, it was not always the case for the Iranian women. Despite they joined the Organization after trying very hard to be able to establish a contact, especially a couple of Iranian women I interviewed reported that they found clandestine activism restricting rather than helpful for their objectives. That was especially the case for women who were already politically active one way or another. For example, Negin was working as a teacher in several villages already before joining Fadaiyan and organizing consciousness raising activities among the villagers.

> After getting my high school degree I wanted to be independent because my mother was opposed to my activities. […] I wanted to go to university but my uncle told me 'why would you want to go to university, go and work in the society.' So I decided to become a *Sepah-e Danesh,* for teachers, it was a program for educated people, after six months of military service you received a training and went to the villages to educate kids, women went to educate other women about contraceptives, health issues, etc.[…] So, I became a teacher, I worked very hard in the villages, build schools, water canals, they didn't have a place to wash their dead, I taught them how to do it. I had a 6 months military service too during which I got military training. I was very active among the people in the village, tried to make them familiar with the Marxist ideas, we had theatre, read books, discussed. I was all by myself. […] I learnt a lot from the books but I was not only into theory but more interested in practice of raising awareness about the dictatorship, etc. […] I have done all these by myself without any order from a group or organization. People trusted me after seeing that I was helping them and working for them, for example some children I taught were hungry, going without food for days, I bought food for them and fed them. I made people read Samad Bahrangi's books for example, to raise their awareness. Shamlu or Nima too I read and made people read. All these without being a member of any group, I was helping everyone.[565]

After finally establishing contact with Fadaiyan, Negin was first asked to go underground partially, and she was not any more going to be able to work directly among the people:

> I promised that I can put all of my time and energy to this struggle. We didn't have the ID cards of membership. When they told me to work half-secretly half openly, I told them that this is not the right way to do things, I told them I can work everywhere, in Azerbaijan, Isfahan, and want to still be in contact with the organization without going underground. But I was told that I was thinking individually, but the organization thinks collectively, it knows better what needs to be done. I accepted because I had promised. Our organization was both militaristic and political. Like an army, when the head of unit commands you to do something you first do it and only afterwards you can criticize it.[566]

Although she accepted the orders of the organization, Negin never felt comfortable with being idle as an underground activist. After being asked to go underground at another occasion and staying inactive in a safe house for a month she began to question again the motives of the Organization:

> Because there was nothing I was doing that I couldn't have done overtly. I felt like I was being imprisoned in the safe houses. I always imaged a guerrilla could do both military and political works at the same time by being more among people. I wanted to do more. The person above me told me you can't work overtly now, you're underground. But I asked I'm not being useful, you told me the organization needs me. I was again told it is up to the organization when you will be assigned for a job. I talked to Hamid Ashraf too on the phone, I told him: 'I'm not happy with the husband of mine and I want to go back to my mother's house.' He told me: 'no problem you can go back, but what would others think, they wouldn't trust you again when you want to come

[565] Negin (pseudonym), interview.
[566] Negin (pseudonym).

> back.' This is what he meant: yes, you can go but don't expect the organization to trust you again. This was very hard for me to stand the fact that the organization might not trust me.[567]

Mina had similar feelings about underground life:

> I was raised with freedom, so after going underground, it was difficult to get used to the hierarchy in the organization. We were told not to go there, not to do this. I felt that I lost my freedom. I though that I would be able to work more underground. But I had to stay in the house more. It was very difficult for me. Regretted a little about this. Very active before but in the safe house I wasn't able anymore.[568]

Difficulties that women had to go through were not only limited to the centralism, strict discipline, or militaristic structure of the Organization; the nature of clandestine activism could also be challenging. Suri mentioned how hard it was sometimes to live with strangers:

> I was the only woman in that house and there was a man who was also permanent in the house, other 3 were coming and going. I had quitted the university. One of my responsibilities was buying oil. I bought oil with chador… to make picric acid. We had injuries preparing it. We were so busy with these activities, we didn't have time for self-critique or discussions. All other four in the house knew each other from the past except me, I was a stranger, an outsider. I missed my friends, didn't see them again.[569]

8.6. Revolutionary Marriage or Abstinence: Sexuality, Relationships and Emotions

a) Turkey

As to the relationship between men and women in the revolutionary organizations in Turkey, the most prominent phenomenon was the concept of 'revolutionary marriage',[570] in which couples were allowed to have sex without getting officially married. The instances of official marriages were limited and only took place if the couples were not yet underground or being

[567] At this moment at the interview, her husband Nadir wanted to explain the motives of the organization:"for the organization, safe houses were the most important, more important than working among the people like Negin wanted to do. They most probably wanted to have her ready to start a new safe house somewhere in the country. But Negin was into other kinds of works, she was impatient. For the safety reasons they couldn't explain why." Then, Negin objected: "But my identity was not revealed to the police, they were not looking for me. That's why I was not convinced why I had to go underground. I was only told that the organization needs extra forces."
[568] Mina (pseudonym), interview.
[569] Suri (pseudonym), interview by Author, October 7, 2014.
[570] For a similar practice among the Maoist armed organization in India, the Naxalites, see Srila Roy, "Revolutionary Marriage: On the Politics of Sexual Stories in Naxalbari," *Feminist Review* 83, no. 1 (2006): 99–118.

searched by the police. However, the couples did not have the total freedom either. Although they did not have to ask for an official permission, the couples were usually expected to inform the central committees, or person in charge of their branch about their 'intention' to enter into a relationship. This was not regulated as a rule in any of the organizations I have encountered; yet, the level of control over the members could be quite high in some of the cases.

> I have to say that people were ahead of us. For example, in terms of sexuality. For instance, two comrades were in love with each other, they couldn't tell us anything but sharing this with the families who were our advocates. Because they thought we'd be mad at them. But of course, we had to be more disciplined. Also, people can do whatever they want, but if you do the same then they would condemn you and wouldn't trust you. It was the same with drinking (alcohol), they drink but you shouldn't. There was a lot of pressure on the revolutionaries in that period.[571]

The customs around the official or revolutionary marriages consisted of several aspects: First of all, the couples had to be from the same organization or group; there were even cases of couples separating after a split in an organization if they had ended up in different fractions.

> I had another boyfriend, who ended up in the other side during the split, he was in prison and escaped from prison but died in a shootout with the Police. During the split we tried to persuade each other, but couldn't, so, we had to separate. Nothing tragic happened. Even if I had been very much in love with him I would have separated, but if it had been ten years later I wouldn't have. It was the frame of mind in the period which let us think that way. The political environment we used to live was strong enough to shape even our emotions.[572]

Second, the unions were almost always endogamous and heterosexual. Finally, the couples were not supposed to have kids. There was no rule strictly forbidding having children; however, the women referred to practical difficulties, movement culture, and their unwillingness when explaining why they did not have kids. Not so unexpectedly, abortions were very common and always the responsibility of women. I go into the details of the problems associated with having an abortion in the clandestine life in the next part.

The relations between the couples were not seen as traditional by the women, at least at the time, but as having more of a revolutionary character. They proudly mentioned that they did

[571] Meral (pseudonym), interview.
[572] Funda (pseudonym), interview.

not conform to the customs of a traditional wedding ceremony or marriage; and how they saw it as either a formality or even source of income. The priority of the couples were always the revolutionary activities and responsibilities, rather than the physical or emotional needs of the parties in the relationship.

> We didn't have molesters, but womanizers. In that period, it was always men who chatted up. I was beguiled right away and married the man who had recruited me. I was 21, in 1976. These sorts of marriages were very typical. Ours was a legal one, since our families were well-off, in order to provide the organization with financial sources we married officially. I didn't wear wedding dress, I have a photo wearing shirt and trousers with a sulky face. [...] at the day of our engagement, I was distributing leaflets and was late to my own engagement. It was not only me, we were all like this, just because I was being engaged didn't mean that I could neglect my responsibilities. I even had a gut on me that they.[573]

Nevertheless, women were bound by the sociocultural limits and expectations and had to act within the limits of their gender roles. In some cases, marriage for revolutionary women could be a way to escape the family's restricting grip, but not always that of the patriarchal morality of the society from which the revolutionary organizations were definitely not immune.

> I got married early, there was already a lot of family pressure. As an organization we were puritan, you couldn't date or fool around, we usually married someone from the organization, it was not something imposed but you knew coming from a strict family. My family was not democratic, girls couldn't go out with boys, if you held a boy's hand, then you were supposed to marry him. Seeing the same mentality in the organization, I didn't know any better. […] He asked me out and I asked immediately when we were going to get married. Not because I cared about the marriage, it took a 'yes' for a revolutionary marriage anyway. […] After marriage, men were in an advantageous position, had the opportunity to rise in higher positions in the organization. You were seen as a couple, and your husband's work influenced you. All of a sudden, I began to be called Sinan's wife Figen, not just Figen.[574]

Among the revolutionaries in Turkey, pretending to be a married couple to disguise their identity or that of the safe house was not as common as among the Iranian guerrillas; still there were some examples and they could be abused by the male comrades. For example, Figen was against the assignment of women to play the role of a wife just to disguise a male

573 Banu (pseudonym), interview.
574 Figen (pseudonym), interview.

comrade who were being searched by the police. She also mentioned the usual consequences of pretending to be married couples in her organization:

> There were those who pretended to be married to disguise a safe house but you were in a very confined space then, and people ended up having relationships. Because especially right before September 12, the repression increased, appointments were limited, you lived clandestinely with limited contact with outside, therefore, when you rented a place with a guy, getting closer was unavoidable.[575]

The most common custom regarding the relationships was that women were usually from the lower ranks and men were from the higher ones. This inequality between the ranks of couples created all kinds of problems that women talked about extensively. Holding always comparatively more powerful positions, both in terms of authority and access to information, male revolutionaries could use this privilege to their advantage and persuade women to enter into a relationship. Banu's story is very typical in this sense:

> We were the exemplary couple, everyone was looking up to us as the best example of revolutionary marriage, but we married out of a comradery relationship not out of love. He invited me to a café, I thought I was going to be promoted, have a more central position…I thought about it whole night that night, how to respond, yes or no. I had actually never thought about it, I admired him, liked him, adored him but there was no sexual attraction. When he was proposing he said 'if you don't say yes then I'd go to Black Sea region to work there'. He didn't seem to be in love either. Years later he admitted that I was one of the two girls he considered. […] I thought a lot that night, to be able to decide, because I was powerless, it was a new environment for me, what if he would leave, it was very important to have someone you trust in clandestine politics, I couldn't say no. I didn't want him to go, but was it out of love, I don't know. I was actually not ready. I had had no boyfriends. We became 'comrades in love' and married right away. […] I didn't get any abortion, there was no such problems for us, we were so busy, we didn't have any opportunity… we didn't have much sexual life, didn't live in the same house, when we did there were always others. He was always in higher positions in the organization.[576]

Finally, even though marriage, sexuality, and having romantic relationships in the Turkish side were not technically forbidden or controlled as much as they were in the case of Iranian guerrillas, showing excessive eagerness in romantic relationships, display of affection and at times even admitting one's love for a comrade were still disapproved and seen as a sign of weakness; as usual, the standards were especially high for the women. The women who had

575 Figen (pseudonym).
576 Banu (pseudonym), interview.

more than one romantic relationship, tendency to show interest in men or simply her fondness in her husband or boyfriend were condemned. Even the women could be the culprits in such cases. Therefore, I was told about many instances in which women had to hide their emotions, pretend that they were not interested, or tried to control their fondness. The level of peer pressure in this area had also let some tragic consequences, which I discuss in the next part.

> The boy I was in love with was released in the 1974 amnesty, but he returned to the militant student movement in Ankara, we kept seeing each other, even now, I had a crush on him […] only recently, he admitted that he was in love with me too, and I knew it deep down, but we couldn't admit at the time because we were revolutionaries. That's how it was, we were not supposed to be interested in love affairs because we were going to make revolution.[577]

b) Iran

The idea that a guerrilla would not have a gender, which was promoted by the organization and supported by some members even today, was not without its problems. According to the principle of 'genderless guerrillas', they were not allowed to have sex, or touch each other and enter into any sorts of emotional relationship. Iranian women I interviewed insisted that they saw each other as comrades and brothers and sisters. It was such an 'extraordinary friendship' as Forouz, Negin and others described it, that they could sacrifice her life for their comrades. A comrade meant more than a brother or sister. Since they were ready to sacrifice their life for the people of Iran, it was the same towards her comrades too.

The women also mentioned that there were of course cases in which a woman and a man would develop feelings beyond friendship; the custom was to inform the leadership about the situation and one or both of them would be transferred to different safe houses. The women mentioned many such examples. However, there were exceptions to the custom too. First of all in the beginning, the movement culture was more relax and there were married couples, even with kids; yet with the increase of repression and SAVAK's clampdown on the safe houses, the rules and regulations became stricter. Furthermore, the more the organization

[577] Umut (pseudonym), interview.

encapsulated and severed the ties with outside world for safety reasons, the more the paranoid and orthodoxy of methods became commonplace. In some cases, it went as far as to plot against member's lives. As it was reported in some sources and mentioned also by my interviewees, at least in one case of affective relation between a man and a woman, the man was executed while the women had to leave the organization.[578]

Self-discipline and sacrificial tendencies were no less influential in this sense even during the early stages of the struggle. Among the first-generation guerrillas, Forouz and her boyfriend were in love with each other before coming to the safe house; at that time, it was not forbidden yet, no one had told them not to get married or have sex. So, they got married; but still did not have sex at all during their stay in the safe house. "Before coming to the safe house, we were physical too but after that no." She gave a number of explanations for their rather curious choice"

> First, we didn't have the opportunity to have sex because we had to stand guard at night. Taking turns. There were other men too. Even in regular family visiting in Iran it's the case, people sleep in the same room and no one wakes up in the middle of the night to do something. Second, I was afraid to get pregnant because there were no available contraception and we believed that they have only six months to live anyway. Third, SAVAK and the regime spread misinformation about the safe houses, that women there were not virgins and they were having sex with each other. So, we didn't want them to be right. Also, we were tired and had not time for that. There was not even a mention of it. Other comrades sensed that we had a special relationship but we hadn't announced that we were married, didn't need to show it. So, we were not given a separate room to sleep. I didn't want to do things secretly from my comrades or hide something from them. It was private. I was embarrassed to admit it or say it to others. So, since I didn't do anything I don't know what the reactions would have been. The safe house was for us a work place not a private house.[579]

While many even today support the mentality and the reasons for their abstinence, some were critical of the level of control on emotions and relations between women and men. Fariba was one of the majority who believed in the rightness of what they were doing in that sense:

[578] Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 61,62.
[579] Forouz (pseudonym), interview.

> Think about 7-4 people living in the same house and having sex? What would that mean? What about the others? Why? Any time police could attack. How could you feel peaceful? You need to have peace of mind to have such relations.[580]

Yet, what was also revealed during the interviews was that there was actually a similar practice to the 'revolutionary marriage' among the activists in Turkey also between some members of Fadaiyan. It was, however, very rare. Mehri explained it as follows:

> We decided to get married. In that period that, there was this marriage of convenience (*maslahati)*. We were told to get married and live like a normal couple. The organization had decided by 1975 that not everybody should go underground. I don't know if Mesud had told the organization that we were in fact in love and want to marry. But when we married we were told to stay above-ground. In that period, some were open, most were underground. […] Mesud had told me to ask for the most expensive jewelries for my wedding so that we could give them all to the organization, which we did. […] We had not decided to go underground yet, we were waiting under the pretext of honeymoon in a hotel for a month and reading the books by Ashraf Dehghani, and others. Mesud was meeting with people from the organization. It was suspicious to stay in the same hotel for a month. By the way, I was not sure if having sex would be right under those circumstances. Even though we were in love, and Mesud wanted to have sex and all that, I was having second thoughts about it.[581]

Soon after they got married, the organization informed them that Mesud had to go underground for security reasons. Mehri explained their psychology at the time:

> We were both in love but also had chosen a life of armed struggle, like a soldier going to a war to defend his country. He knew more about the nature of this life, but I was determined to do what I decided. We knew before going underground that it means that we might die in six months and we wound't be allowed to have sex and all that. We cried a lot in that night before going to underground. (She is laughing) because we knew that in guerrilla life one has to cut all emotional relations. Because emotions can be used by SAVAK to destruct the organization.[582]

The limits of the principle of 'genderless guerrilla' was tested more often than not. What was also interesting was that most Iranian women even today did not see any contradiction or inconsistency between this principle and their practices. Maybe because the belief that they were like "brothers and sisters" and the principle of "guerrilla doesn't have gender" was confused to a great extent, as Negin's account also exemplifies:

> Every night there were a number of people on guard duty, comrade 1, comrade 2, comrade, 3, etc. When the turn of the first one was over, he or she was not supposed to touch to wake the

[580] Fariba (pseudonym), interview.
[581] Mehri (pseudonym), interview.
[582] Mehri (pseudonym).

> next one up. So, instead we kicked the next in line to wake them up. Men and women were not allowed to touch each other, during the work out too, people from same sex could of course touch each other. I went to public bath with my female comrades, or took showers together in the house.[583]

What this and other examples illustrates is that, despite all the discourse of genderless guerrillas or sisterhood or brotherhood between them, they were actually observing the patriarchal cultural models of gendered behavior with a touch of revolutionary discourse. Fariba's answer to my question whether they talked about the rules on sexuality was revealing:

> You did know your limits, you never went so far. There was *haram* too between us, despite all that camaraderie and all, even if you were very close and intimate.[584]

8.7. Everyday Violence? Self-Sacrificial Movement Culture, Unrealistic Expectations, Negligence, Punishments

Violence can be a tricky concept to define especially in a context in which political violence is adopted as a legitimate form of struggle for an objective or against an enemy.[585] Conventional descriptions of violence have already been challenged and its extent has expanded to include the actions beyond the use of physical force and the results beyond the bodily pain or death. The WHO define violence as: The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation."[586] Feminists of different political persuasions offered alternative definitions especially to draw attention to different forms of the violence against women and gender-based violence such as structural, psychological, economical, sexual, and emotional. My intention in this part of the study is to neither discuss various forms of violence nor pinpoint the acts of

[583] Negin (pseudonym), interview.
[584] Fariba (pseudonym), interview.
[585] Srila Roy, "The Grey Zone: The 'Ordinary'Violence of Extraordinary Times," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 14, no. 2 (2008): 316–333.
[586] World Health Organization, "WHO | World Report on Violence and Health," WHO, accessed January 17, 2019, https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/.

gendered violence against women in the revolutionary and guerrilla movements in Turkey and Iran respectively. Instead, I aim to present what these women themselves perceived and described as everyday violence that they experienced in these movements, such as sexism, sacrifices, psychological pressure, negligence, as well as punishments. As in the cases of discrimination, not every woman understood the same thing from violence or perceived the same acts of violence similarly. I also aim to present these nuances between the women I interviewed.

What is also noteworthy is the understanding of discipline among the revolutionaries of the period. As we have said before, the writings of the revolutionary leaders had a great influence on them. For example, for Mao the issue of discipline is indispensable; it must be based on individual conscience, rather than just deriving from a hierarchical system of obedience and needs to be self-imposed.[587] Che agrees with Mao in this sense: "[Discipline] should spring from a carefully reasoned internal conviction; this produces and individual with internal discipline. When this discipline is violated, it is necessary to always punish the offender, whatever his rank, and punish him drastically in a way that hurts."[588] When described and perceived this way, the lines between disciple, sacrifice and violence is hard to conceive and comprehend, and we can conclude from the accounts of women that that seem to be the case for them too.

a) Turkey

The violent nature of the political struggle they were involved in affected women in a number of ways. Imprisonment and the torture targeting their gender, witnessing their comrades being killed by the fascist groups or the police were accepted as a part of their revolutionary struggle.

> In that period, the dominant mood was something like this: we though that the revolution was so close that…Palestine was so nearby, the revolutionaries were visiting and getting armed training there, there was Vietnam and the excitement it created…No one was expecting to live until their

[587] Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, 30.
[588] Ernesto Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 113. quoted in Weinstein, *Inside Rebellion*, 30.

> 40s, we have lost many friends of us, we were feeling like anytime we could be attacked and killed.[589]

However, in the everyday life of the revolutionary struggle, revolutionary women in Turkey had also to deal with varying degrees of sexism, patriarchal norms and expectations as well as negligence and sacrificial tendencies affecting them more adversely than men. I have already mentioned the gendered division of labor both in organizational and everyday levels as well as the cases of discrimination based on sex that women had suffered from in the revolutionary activism. Therefore, in this part, I focus only on the adverse effects of the rules, regulations and the general conditions and nature of that particular clandestine politics on women, rather than the discrimination or sexism they were subjected to in their relations with revolutionary men.

For example, even though marriage, living together and having sex was not forbidden in the revolutionary everyday life, the consequences were almost only women's problem. Contraception was not very common among the revolutionaries; so, women were often getting pregnant. Furthermore, abortion was illegal and expensive, women were using all sorts of methods, especially provided the sacrificial tendencies among the revolutionaries, they were not afraid to take risks.

> I had a lot of abortions, three times, when I got pregnant for the first time my husband was in prison. He wanted to have kids a lot, but I didn't, I couldn't have kids. It would inhibit our struggle. It was my decision…only later we both wanted it.[590]

They could not have children because Meral's husband was killed under torture. Even when women thought about having kids they were quickly reminded by the harsh realities of their life.

> I got pregnant, we didn't use contraception, just withdrawal, for a moment I thought about giving birth, soon we were attacked and I came to my senses. Abortion was not legal, that was not a big deal but it was very expensive. […] I decided to give the money to the organization rather than spending it on an abortion. A friend of mine told me that her mother was terminating her pregnancies by using matches, so I collected and put up the tips of matches inside me. I went to work next day, when I had the miscarriage I just wrapped it in my underwear. I shared the 'good' news with my husband and the other person living in our house. The other person got really sad but my husband took it very normal, because we used to save from our heating money in winter and send it to the organization. So, I gave the abortion money I got from my big

589 Funda (pseudonym), interview.
590 Meral (pseudonym), interview.

> brother to the organization. I had also been alone during my previous abortion, out of belief that we were supposed to be strong like men.[591]

Another set of difficulties, which were resulted from the nature of the underground activism, were related to psychological pressure women had when they were abused by their comrades; it was never easy to complain about, blame or denounce one's comrades. The cases of abuse could range from minor sexual advances to major abusive harassments. For women it was not easy to disclose such abuses for many reasons, mainly because they were afraid to harm the struggle. Moreover, the consequences of such actions for men were not so serious, as we have seen in other examples too.

> The problem with the clandestine struggle was that two to three people were assigned tasks and no one else was supposed to know what and how they were doing, what was happening between them. It happened to me a couple of times but I was always lucky, I met good people. Still, I think what was commonplace was what I went through, abuses were exceptions.[592]

I was told a number of stories of abuse. I do not aim to generalize these cases and accuse all the revolutionary organizations or male revolutionaries of sexual abuse. It is understandable that individual experiences varied, and it is most likely that the positive ones outnumbered the negative ones. However, these cases illustrate what was potentially possible, and for the purpose of this study they are significant in order to be able to understand the gendered environment of clandestine revolutionary activism in the 1970s in Turkey. Because when neglected, women were more prone to suffer from the consequences of psychological pressure, sacrificial movement culture, as well as the hard conditions of clandestinity, as the accounts of Iranian guerrilla women also confirm.

As another example, Nilay was supposed to teach to and receive a training in forging documents from a male comrade whom she had not met before. They were ordered to spend a couple of days together to learn from each other in the house of the other comrade.

> He was a repulsive guy. We began working together. When he was cooking, he was ordering me to do things, and at the same time insulting me for not knowing how to cook; he was saying things like: 'what kind of a girl are you that you don't even know to cook' and so forth. […]

[591] Figen (pseudonym), interview.
[592] Banu (pseudonym), interview.

> When I was trying to learn, he was approaching me from behind and showing me how to wash the pages, I was uncomfortable but couldn't say anything, because we were leftist, revolutionaries, had no gender. […] I was 21 years old, you were not accepted to the central committee for being woman but could be assigned to do such dangerous things. [Despite everything] I still stayed there, because I was someone who would do everything the organization asks for; because I was a proletarian revolutionary. One day I took painkillers […] and laid down, I must be have fallen asleep, suddenly I felt him trying to kiss me, and the smell of *rakı* in his breath, I still hate *rakı*; I was outraged, started to scream, locked him out of the room. There was no scuffle, I threatened him to tell everything to the organization, he got scared and left. I escaped next day before he woke up. That was a rape attempt. Then, I couldn't tell this to anyone, I just said that I didn't want to go there and do that job.[593]

Some women also mentioned a document called 'TİKKO Penal Codes', in which rape was punishable with death. Yet, to their knowledge, no case was reported in their organization.[594] On the contrary, in cases of adultery or infidelity, it was usually women who bore the burden. The reason for this type of sexism was that the most of the organizations had adopted the patriarchal values of the society and the conditions of clandestine life made such situations even worse for women. Almost none of the leftist organizations were immune to sexist mentality. Umut told another example, this time from the ranks of Dev-Genç:

> In one of the houses in which our comrades were living like a commune, one of the leaders had sexual intercourse with one of our close friends, who already had a boyfriend in the same house and they were very much in love. Maybe she consented, but only she was found guilty, not the man. As a punishment, they brought her to us; we had no idea; and told us that she was punished, she could work in trivial assignments but she was not allowed to take any significant responsibilities. By the way, they have also forbidden the couple to see each other. Her boyfriend didn't care about the punishment eventually. There was a position in a reactionary police union, in which we had contacts and through that contact we were informed about a job opening. We sent her to work in that union, and thanks to her work there we learnt about all the relations and lists in the union; thereby in the election we prevented the reactionist candidate to win and took the union over. Afterwards, we were criticized harshly for assigning her to this job, we didn't care at all. Since the leadership cadres were all men, those who criticized us naturally were men too. They had restricted her political activities and we didn't care. By we, I mean mostly women.[595]

The myths about the heroic character of the revolutionaries and unrealistic expectations from them were so common that they were internalized by the activists to an extent that even their feelings and emotions were shaped these superhuman standards. These standards were so high

[593] Nilay (pseudonym), interview.
[594] Funda (pseudonym), interview.
[595] Umut (pseudonym), interview.

that even the death of a loved one was not supposed to affect the routine of their activism. In this sense, the mentalities, and thereby the experiences, of the revolutionary activists both in Turkey and Iran were almost the same. I present two very similar stories from both sides with endings that reverberate in their lives even today. First one is from Funda and I quote her right below. The second one from Mehri and at the end of this section.

> Right before the start of a meeting, I learnt that the person killed last night in a shootout was my ex-boyfriend. You would not scream if there is no one to hear, I didn't give any reaction, no one asked anyway, we proceeded with the meeting. […] I lost both of my boyfriends in shootouts. […] There was no one to understand me, even among the women. […] So many people died that it shatters one's sole. For example, another friend that I shared a house with was killed in a shootout, I read the news on a newspaper, I got very upset, and this friend was Armenian. I didn't shed even a drop of tear after any of these deaths, even after those of my beloved. Do you know what happened then? Hrant Dink was shot dead, he too was Armenian, whom I knew a little. One day, I was on my way when l learnt that he was dead; and there, in the middle of a park, I cried my eyes out. That was how I found myself, you know? Only there I cried.[596]

b) Iran

Violence for the women in Fadaiyan was almost taken for granted. Some of them had already been tortured by the regime when they were arrested or imprisoned. Mahnaz, for example, listed the sorts of torture they used on her: electric buttons, punching, kicking, and slapping before she was sent to Evin Prison. Those who had not yet been arrested or tortured attempted to prepare themselves by asking their comrades to beat the soles of their feet.

In addition to the violence at the hands of the regime, or the one they initiated to fight against it, we can also talk about certain practices in their everyday life in the Organization which consisted of some form of physical and non-physical violence, such as punishments, obligatory sacrifices, psychological pressure and negligence. Under obligatory sacrifices I include practices such as eating less food, sleeping six hour a day, living by an extremely disciplined daily schedule, some safety measures such as carrying cyanide in mouth when going out. Even though some of these actions were defended by the women as done on voluntary basis, or as expected after choosing a guerrilla life, after becoming a member of the Organization, what seemed to be voluntary

[596] Funda (pseudonym), interview.

gradually became obligatory as a result of various processes, structural or operational preferences, principles, beliefs and safety measures. In short, guerrilla life came as a package; since it was the 'only way out', there were ready to do whatever it takes for their struggle to succeed. However, the biggest problem emerged when at some point the survival of the organization became the priority, or the whole objective of their struggle rather than a means.

It was this shift in priorities and objectives which caused the orthodoxy in methods and practices. For example, at times the security measures were implemented religiously even when they were not really necessary. "I was given a cyanide capsule, even though I had no information. I had burned all my pictures, we believed our lives are only 6 months, in fact, you had to erase your identity, anything that could give you away. I was ready to die for the armed struggle. That's how I felt."[597]

Also doing everything that it takes or sacrificing more than what was necessary was seen as a way to prove one's commitment. This type of devotion or going to extremes should also be contextualized: unable to do more due to the repression of the regime and the consequential isolation from the society, the guerrillas turned to the only things that were left to them: the Organization, organizational rules and regulations, and principles. It becomes then more understandable that under such conditions they could go too far with the implementation of rules, sacrifices, and inflexibilities. Yet, the experiences always varied for each individual and safe house.

Negin told an incident in which she refused to punish another female guerrilla with bastinado for forgetting to put her gun on ready before answering the door of the safe house they were living in. She had confessed her misconduct during the self-criticism session and the punishment for this offense was 20 lashes as it was stated in the Rule Book. Negin defended her for realizing her mistake and claimed the punishment could be postponed for once; she also knew the female comrade was having her period and in a lot of pain already. Unfortunately, the majority did not

[597] Negin (pseudonym), interview.

agree with her and proceeded with the punishment; even Negin was punished with two-day boycott for refusing to implement the punishment. From this example, we can conclude that it was not only the Rule Book which was overly militaristic in its character but also the guerrillas who were eager to follow it religiously.

Yet, Negin also reminded me that even though that female guerrilla and her had lost the argument that day and were punished, her continuous criticisms regarding the corporal punishments in the organization for minor offenses had an influence later on the Central Committee; and eventually not only the corporal but majority of the all forms of punishments were revoked especially after SAVAK's big clampdown the organization and its near dissolution in 1975. Negin had questioned the ironic similarity between the organization's punishments for minor offenses and SAVAK's torture technics in her appeal. Later she was told by one of the comrades in a higher position that her criticisms were found valid by almost everyone in the committee.

Some apparently did not even believe in strict militaristic methods. "We didn't have any punishment thanks to Saba Bijanzadeh; Behrooz Armaqani too was not a type of militaristic person but instead more of a political one." Therefore, despite the strictness of the rules or the inflexibility of some members, it is hard to generalize or point to a single type of experience in all the safe houses or for every single member in any period of the guerrilla activism. Women accounted many other examples in which either they or another person in their house questioned, objected, or simply refused one rule or another. For example, Mina was against the use of cyanide to commit a suicide[598] in order not to be captured alive by SAVAK; instead, she argued that they should have always used weapons for self-defense. Yet, she was against the use of violence beyond self-defense purposes.

> I had a friend who didn't believe in using arms, we argued about it a lot. One day went outside without a weapon and SAVAK identified him and he had to swallow the cyanide. I got mad. I was also against using our weapons for operations but for self-defense he should have had it.

[598] After all the leadership of Fadaiyan was arrested in the first year of its establishment, the organization proposed suicide not to be captured by SAVAK. Hadi (pseudonym), interview by Author, June 7, 2014.

> Cyanide is terrible, you only kill yourself, if you shoot once you might scare them away, which happened several times. When you don't have any weapon, you don't stand a chance. It was obvious that we couldn't survive the tortures of SAVAK, but with a weapon you might have a chance. You don't even have to shoot to kill but to scare! Because the psychology of killing is different. One needs to be used to it. I might have been too scared of the sound of shooting. So, I was against swallowing cyanide, dying in a shootout makes more sense.[599]

As another example, Mahnaz openly rejected a rule commonly accepted by everyone:

> In a meeting they were talking about what they were supposed to do in case of a SAVAK raid to a safe house: if someone gets wounded in the shootout, you needed to kill that person. You were not supposed to let that person to be caught alive if you couldn't rescue that person. Everyone else accepted this, but I didn't want to accept it, they tried to explain to me why. I accepted to be ousted for my decision but I was not going to do that. I said you can do it but I won't. I understood that I was not someone to be in armed struggle. They accepted my decision.[600]

About the existence and the extent of punishment among the Fadai guerrillas, women had different experiences as well as opinions. For example, for Forouz it was nothing serious:

> "We didn't have punishment but criticized each other on their wrong doing. We hit each other to prepare ourselves for torture but even then, I could be exempted if I requested. Once one comrade asked me to hit on the soles of his feet, but I couldn't and there was no pressure or something. It was something between friends.[601]"

Yet, for others, it could be something difficult to deal with:

> We had different codes to knock the door. Once a guest knocked the door, the comrade going to the door released the safety of their gun, but since he forgot to put it back, he was punished with 20 whipping on the soles of feet. But I couldn't do it and I was punished too with three-day boycott and writing self-criticism.[602]

> My punishment was not going out of the house for insulting my supervisor. It was during the protests for the revolution. I was very excited. I was told to stay and do something trivial at the house and I told to the supervisor who was sewing his pants that: 'people will say that the revolution was happening and Fadaiyan was sewing their pants.' I was angry. And he felt insulted. And he was right, in directly I was telling him that he doesn't care about the revolution.[603]

Punishment could also be seen as a protection by some women:

> A male comrade touched my foot to wake me up for my guard duty, I got very angry with him and informed the organization, he was punished. His gun was taken away from him and he was

599 Mina (pseudonym), interview.
600 Mahnaz (pseudonym), interview by Author, November 7, 2014.
601 Forouz (pseudonym), interview.
602 Negin (pseudonym), interview.
603 Mina (pseudonym), interview.

> sent to work in a factory for several months. It was an invasion of my privacy, violation. I felt this way also because after 1976 the organizational discipline was relaxed and I heard that some men are abusing women. He confessed that he was interested in me. The rules were protecting me and I wanted everyone to respect them. Why didn't he tell me openly, but instead touched me sneakily. This was a violation. The organization protected me. After 55 since the leadership of the organization was killed, I was uncomfortable, I heard that some men try to abuse women.[604]

Apart from strict discipline, inflexible rules and regulations, and punishment practices, there were also other features of the guerrilla life that made life particularly difficult for the women among them. They were usually resulted from the militaristic lifestyle, which could be physically extra demanding for women, and the exaggeration of sacrificial tendencies. For instance, they were supposed to sleep only six hours a day —this was the maximum they could get—, have two to three times physical exercise every day, at least an hour of guard duty every night while sleeping on the floor with their shoes and daily clothes on, ready to escape in case of an attack. Meanwhile, every member of the squad had a daily allowance for food and it was the bare minimum to survive. The women mentioned that they were only able to buy what was cheap and most of the time the food was not enough for everyone; some members got so weak or sick that they were allowed to eat extra nutritious food like a pack of milk to get better. They ate so little food, I was told, that they never had a weight problem; instead, they were constantly hungry. It was particularly difficult for the teams who were responsible for military operations and had to exercise three times a day. For instance, Suri was disarrayed, confused, and physically tired from constant lack of sleep, especially when they were two of them in the house; and also, from inhaling the picric acid they prepared. Her skin had turned yellow; everyone who worked with picric acid was actually turning yellow. This was why she started to wear a veil.

Nonetheless, the hardest experience to deal with for women in the clandestine activism of Fadaiyan was being left out in the streets after their safe house was disclosed or attacked by SAVAK. They had usually back-up plans to restore contact with the organization;

[604] Negin (pseudonym), interview.

nevertheless, in the cases they could not reach anyone from the organization, they had nowhere to go, no contacts outside of the organization to resort to; it was really dangerous for them trying to survive as a lonely woman. The consequences of the negligence of the Organization could turn into a matter of life and death for some women. Mehri's story is really telling in this sense. After realizing that the house in which she was staying was raided by SAVAK, she did not know if anyone could have survived or not.

> Only after the Revolution I learnt that that day 4 people could flee from that attack […] But didn't know anything during that time. I was left in the street, and decided to call my friend. I didn't forget about Mesud but was carried away by these events. I went to see my friend in the hospital, I asked her if I could stay in her house, she understood what was going on and accepted me. She had 2-3 brothers, one was taken by SAVAK and her father was visiting them, and he asked "is your friend a guerrilla, she came to our house?" then I had to leave the house because SAVAK must be watching the house, and her father knew my situation. At 4 in the morning I left the house, we always had a "fixed appointments"[605] with people from and outside of our safe houses, so I began to wait for my appointment. No one came to meet me in the first date. I stayed at another friends' house that night, I couldn't stay longer than one night. They too understood, everyone seeing me would understand. In the 3rd day no one showed up for my fixed appointment again, I had no place to go. I started to take the bus to Isfahan, I spend the day there and at night I took the bus back to Tehran. I had no other contact, nowhere to go, it was harder than losing Mesud, at least then I had a house but now I was reading on the newspaper everyday a new safe house was uncovered and someone was killed. Since I didn't know the real names of my house mates, I couldn't know whether those that are reported dead on the newspaper were my friends or not. […] For men it was easy to rent a house alone with various explanations, but for a woman it was almost impossible. For two years I was underground all by myself. The organization didn't think to protect women better.[606]

Indeed, the men could spend a couple of nights on the streets, but when Mina was left on the street she too had to take the bus to another city just to be able to sleep in the bus and took another one to come back. It was not only the negligence of the Organization which put women in more danger in certain situations, also the general paranoia about infiltrators and spies could make matters worse. For example, after being able to survive when her connection with the organization was totally cut as a result of a similar situation to that of

605 Every guerrilla had regular appointments with the other guerrillas to keep a steady contact with the organization as well as to prevent the loss of contact due to a police raid, escape, and relocation of a safe house for safety reasons. In her case Mehri had three separate fixed dates every week.
606 Mehri (pseudonym), interview.

Mehri, Negin narrated what she had to experience with some comrades from the Organization:

> By chance I found two comrades in a grocery store and told them that my contact was cut and I need to reach the organization. They gave me an appointment for three days later, but was hard for me to find a place to stay in these three days and I was followed by a group of men who were trying to find runaway girls, I sought refuge in a store and asked for help from the owner. He was very kind and helped me runaway from another door. Then, I went to my appointment with the comrades and told them what happened to me, they took me blindfolded to a safe house. It took the organization a few days to help me because they didn't know if it was me who betrayed the appointment in the previous case, in fact there was a misunderstanding.[607]

Not every woman could survive when their connection to the Organization was cut. For instance, when one of their house mates was nowhere to be found, Suri and another woman had to leave the house as instructed. Neither of their appointments showed up on the time and place agreed in advance. They had no idea what to do next:

> We checked the two safety signs (*alamat-e salamati*)[608] we had placed, they were untouched. We had our cyanide in our months. Then, we went to a restaurant, ordered and took the cyanide out to eat and suddenly someone caught us from behind. We were being followed but didn't notice it. I was put in a car and taken to *komiteh*[609], where we were tortured. Since we had stopped going to the classes, our names had been sent to SAVAK, this is why we were being followed. Since we knew a lot about each other, [under torture] these kids (she means guerrillas) gave all the information to SAVAK.[610]

Meanwhile, emotional attachments were strongly discouraged among the Fadai guerrillas. Forouz was attached to her mother a lot and had a hard time being away from her, cried and cited poems at night for her to gather strength to be able to leave her. She was the youngest, had four older brothers but they had gotten married and left the home. She lied to her mom going underground that she had to get training to be a pharmacist; it was very difficult for her mother to accept this but she could not do anything about it. They were trying to comfort

[607] Negin (pseudonym), interview.
[608] The Fadai Guerrillas had several safety signs in case of a SAVAK raid or plot. One of them was placing an item in a certain place or position to let the housemates know whether the house was safe or not. However, SAVAK eventually learnt about these safety signs and prevented them from functioning.
[609] In February, 1972 the regime created the Anti-Terrorism Joint Task Force (*Komiteh-ye Moshtarak-e Zedd-e Kharabkari*) —known as *komiteh*—to coordinate the operations of armed and security forces. Vahabzadeh, *A Guerrilla Odyssey*, 34.
[610] Suri (pseudonym), interview.

each other and motivate each other by suggesting to think about millions of other mothers. Emotional attachments of this sort could create weakness. “We constantly struggle to let go those sort of feelings… to prepare ourselves to tolerate torture.”

Mehri explains how she dealt with the death of her husband:

> Our contact from the organization told me that a comrade wants to see me, I got so excited thinking that it should be Mesrur, because he had told me that we’d meet every month. I was so happy to see him, then it turned out to be a contact from earlier periods that both Mesrur and I knew. He was ver uncomfortable and he told me that Mesrur was killed in a skirmish. I didn’t cry at that moment. I told myself that a guerrilla wouldn’t shed a tear, I didn’t show any emotions. It was so hard for me of course. The other two comrade were not supposed to know what happened. I just told them yes in the skirmishes some have been killed. But they saw next day on the newspaper who were killed. I didn’t cry at all, but when my mom died a few years ago I cried a lot, I got depressed and went to see a psychiatrist; she told me that ‘you must have repressed your emotions for so long’. (She cries)[611]

In addition to the difficulties of guerrilla life, they also had to witness the death of their comrades, sometimes in front of their eyes. “We lived with the person, who had to swallow cyanide, for six months as husband and wife; his death stuck me very bad because I had feelings for him too.”[612] All the sacrifices, rules, regulations, physical exhaustion, and being away from one’s family and friends could get sometimes too hard to bear for some. Furthermore, since the display of emotions, whether sorrow or affection, was considered a sign of weakness or obstacle to the struggle, it could become even more difficult to deal with the most ordinary problems of everyday life. For example, Mina told a very tragic event she witnessed:

> A girl in one of the houses I lived, killed herself by swallowing the cyanide capsule. She was in love with the person in charge of the house, he also showed affection to her, but then he went for another girl. She had been criticized by the other members of the house for not fulfilling her tasks correctly and seen the man she was in love with the other girl, she couldn’t take it anymore and killed herself.[613]

[611] Mehri (pseudonym), interview.
[612] Mina (pseudonym), interview.
[613] Mina (pseudonym).

8.8. Conclusion: Similarities and Differences

Wood concludes in her study on the FMLN supporters and members that "classic explanations of revolutionary mobilization - class struggle, widening political opportunity, solidary peasant communities, preexisting social networks, and selective benefits - do not adequately account for patterns of insurgent collective action in El Salvador."[614] Instead, she observes that "moral commitments and emotional engagements were principal reasons for their insurgent collective action."[615] Furthermore, "the fact that victory was unlikely and in any case was not contingent on one's participation" did not seem to alter their decision to participate. Through rebelling, insurgents "asserted their dignity in the face of condescension, repression, and indifference."[616] One could not help but notice the similarities between the motivations, expectations, and objectives of the FMLN insurgents and those of the Turkish and Iranian revolutionary women in the 1970s.

The mechanisms impacting the participation and perseverance processes of the youth into the radical leftist organizations in Turkey and Iran were harsher than those that were influential among the youth in many Western countries in the same period. Both the political repression and the consequences of their activism were more brutal and violent. Furthermore, the reasons pulling or pushing them to participate usually became more relevant and intense once they became involved and further motivated them to persevere. The identification with and loyalty to the group in clandestine organizations are even more intense than the legal organizations, especially due to the high cost of their activism. For example, the deaths of comrades have a strong emotional impact on the group members strengthening the sense of responsibility towards "the martyrs". Therefore, the reasons for remaining in the organizations and accepting sometimes even the violent methods as legitimate can be explained through cognitive mechanisms and affective ties that formed in the context of their everyday lives.

614 Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*, 16.
615 Wood, 18.
616 Wood, 18.

Also, their young age played an important role, not only during their recruitment processes, as a biographical availability[617] factor, but also in the persistence of their commitment because the small community pressure could be doubled with the peer pressure that the youth is more prone to. The reality of outside world was more and more limited through the lens of their social groups. They came of age in a contentious environment, and the clandestine activism limited their prospects to overcome the limits of their socially constructed realities.

In addition to the family and social networks, which play a significant role in participation to high-risk activism as examined by McAdam (1986), emerges a close, tightly-knit network of comrades during the underground activism. Then, the activists begin to go through a "cyclical process of integration and resocialization"[618] which makes it easy for them to accept not only the violent forms of action in their activism but also tolerate other hardships occurring within their small groups such as discrimination or self-sacrifices. "[W]hen the customary practices of daily life are suspended and crisis requires a new repertoire of behavior, associational ties, and valuations"[619] then a so-called "cultures of solidarity" emerges among the members of oppositional groups. As the examples illustrated, the same can also be said about the clandestine revolutionary activists in Turkey and Iran in the 1970s. For these activists, the 'reality' of everyday life worked in a way to confirm and normalize their choices.

"Militant networks developed in small and radical groupings in which political commitment and friendship mutually strengthened each other."[620] Therefore, arrest or death of a comrade did not only consolidate their commitment to their cause and method but also radicalize them even further. Also, in the case of the second generation of activists in Iran, witnessing the execution of the founders of the organization contributed to the survival of these organizations under extreme repressive conditions only thanks to this solidarity culture which was created in action.

[617] Doug McAdam, "Recruitment to High-Risk Activism: The Case of Freedom Summer," *American Journal of Sociology* 92, no. 1 (1986): 64–90.
[618] McAdam, 69.
[619] Rick Fantasia, *Cultures of Solidarity: Consciousness, Action, and Contemporary American Workers* (Berkeley, California: University of California, 1989), 14. quoted in Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 286.
[620] Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 287.

Moreover, an 'affective enclosure' resulted from the everyday experiences of the activists, because sometime they have nothing but their clandestine groups or organizations when all their ties with their families and other sorts of support was cut. As Della Porta puts it: "[b]eing forced into the underground, the group lives in isolation and, [its members] working in close cooperation, evolves new models for the interpretation of reality that acquire a binding character for the group members."[621]

Despite all these common factors affecting their experiences in the clandestine revolutionary activism, as we have seen, the revolutionary women from Turkey suffered from the inequality, sexism and patriarchal practices and behaviors of their male comrades when it came to everyday life activities including not only cooking, cleaning and other housework, but also relations between men and women. A moralist and patriarchal perception were dominant among the revolutionaries concerning many aspects of their everyday life from the romantic relationships between women and men, sexuality, women's roles, responsibilities, as well as appearance. While the women were expected to take care of 'their problems', such as abortion, they were not always offered protection against the potential threats they might have faced as a woman in high-risk clandestine activism. However, protection of women could be used as an excuse to bar them from some organizational activities. The division of labor vis-a-vis organizational responsibilities was also based on gender in the radical leftist organizations in Turkey. There were rarely any women in the leading cadres. Furthermore, men were expected to produce intellectual material such as organizational publications, pamphlets and speeches; whereas women to replicate and distribute them. In the militaristic aspect of their activism too, women were assigned secondary tasks such as the transportation and hiding of the guns; they almost never used them. It was again mostly women who were assigned, for example, to go to a house of an advocate worker to help him and his family if they were in need for various reasons. These sorts of secondary tasks were considered more

[621] W. Rasch, "Psychological Dimensions of Political Terrorism in the Federal Republic of Germany," *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry* 2, no. 1 (1979): 82. quoted in Della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, 290.

suitable for women. Finally, when women singlehandedly achieved something, it was not unprecedented that men appropriated their successes and came in charge of the tasks.

In the case of Iranian revolutionary guerrilla organization, however, there was no division of labor based on gender with regard to the organizational duties neither in theory nor in practice. The character of their radical activism, a full clandestine urban guerrilla struggle, was based on the notion that the guerrillas have no gender. Both men and women were carrying guns all day long, expected to receive military training and take part in armed operations regardless of their gender. The organizational responsibilities might have been distributed based on experience but never on gender. Interestingly, this was the case with regard to everyday tasks as well. Both women and men were responsible for the housework, — cooking, cleaning, shopping — as well as for the maintenance of the weaponry. At first sight, gender equality in every area of guerrilla life seemed to be prevailing. However, the details of their accounts illustrated that guerrilla women were 'desexualized' in order to be considered 'equal' to their male counterparts. While the notion of 'desexualized equality' did not spare women from the pressures and expectations built around their gender roles in a patriarchal society, the 'identical treatment' of women and men still prevented them from asking for extra care or exemption from certain requirements when they were in need. In addition to the self-sacrifice culture and centralist discipline of the organization —resulting from strict-clandestinity— putting extra burden on women's shoulders, women were also more vulnerable in already dangerous situations not only due to the character of their activism but also patriarchal character of the society, against which the organization were not prepared to protect them.

All in all, what do all these similarities or differences tell us about the women's experiences and gender relations in the clandestine movements in general and in Iran and Turkey in particular? What are the factors and dynamics paving the way for such diverse experiences in clandestine activism for women, who were involved in ideologically similar movements in the same period in the two countries which had more in common than not?

As a conclusion of this part, I argue that, it would be misleading to talk about a common gendered experience for women in clandestine or militant movements taking place in similar geographical, political or cultural contexts. Instead more attention should be paid on the multi-level processes and causal mechanisms based on the interactive relations between various political actors and organizations, through which the conditions in which their experience of militant struggle was shaped. This is the last point on which I elaborate more in the conclusion chapter.

9. Conclusion

The clandestine politics for women was marked by an environment in which gender roles and expectations were constantly challenged and reproduced as a result of the extraordinary conditions under which they had to live and operate. These conditions were not stable but evolved and transformed in a dynamic environment in which not only various political actors were involved and interacted, but also the repercussions of their actions were influential on various levels. This study claims that, what the women involved in the clandestine revolutionary movements in Turkey and Iran in the 1970s experienced at the micro level was directly related to and influenced by both the macro level developments and political settings, and the meso level processes and mechanisms. Instead of holding only certain characteristics of the regimes, societies, or organizations responsible for the character of the women's experiences, this study argues that causal mechanisms which played a significant role in the radicalization processes of the leftist movements in Turkey and Iran could also help us account for the similarities and differences between the women's experiences in the two cases. Ideology, especially the ways in which it was framed and interpreted, obviously played a role, as the similarities between the mentality and practices of the activists in other parts of the world, such as Greece, India and Italy illustrate. Yet, ideological features, like the cultural characteristics of the society in which they were operating, could only be influential to the extent that the processes and mechanisms permitted.

Apart from the common factors which motivated the women in both countries to join and stay in high-risk revolutionary activism, the other similarities could also be observed in the experiences of the activist women in the clandestine revolutionary organizations in both countries. Among them were the negligence towards their needs; the lack of proper protection for women against the dangers of high-risk activism, adverse effects of self-sacrifice culture on women, and the regulation of their sexuality. The ideological as well as patriarchal worldview, which were dominant in one way or another, in the revolutionary organizations in the period seem to stand out as the most influential factors in the formation

of these similarities. We have already seen how it took place in practice through the examples accounted by the women interviewed. For instance, aside from the left's common perception of feminism as a threat to class unity and the progression of the revolution in the period, these clandestine organizations hated everything they considered bourgeois, not just feminism. Although mostly coming from middle class backgrounds, the revolutionaries envisioned themselves not only fighting for, but also having to live like, ordinary people: workers and peasants. This respect for the values and lifestyle of the people gradually turned into an admiration, if not an obsession; and contributed reproduction of sexist practices among themselves or embracing their difficulties as ideals, even though in varying degrees in Turkey and Iran. For example, the activists of both sides tried to eat at minimum, consume very little and dress simple at the expense of their health and wellbeing. Some even refused to take showers often because the people do not have the means to do so. Unsurprisingly, the values of the masses have always been conservative and patriarchal; therefore, every move towards them meant more discrimination and difficulties for women than men.

With regard to the differences, however, a more egalitarian division of labor and relatively better level of equality between women and men guerrillas in the Iranian Fadaiyan could be attributed to the extreme clandestine conditions under which they had to live. The heavy-handed regime of Shah gave them no choice but adopting strict urban guerrilla tactics, operating and living clandestinely and in isolation from the masses. The need to disguise a safe house necessitated the presence of at least one woman in each house, which made women very valuable for the survival of organization. At the same time, they needed to take measures against possible rumors, spread mainly by SAVAK, about men and women living together in their safe houses and having illegitimate sex. This would have obviously not only delegitimized their cause and ruined their reputation in the eyes of the public,[622] but also dissuaded women from participating in the organization. This has to be one of the main reasons for the ban on sexual relations among the activists living in the safe houses. These

[622] Viterna, "Radical or Righteous?," 191.

two features of clandestine everyday life, —the increased significance of women's presence and the ban on sexual relations—, seem, in return, to have eliminated the prospect for many discriminatory scenarios for Iranian activist women.

Thus, an increase in the level of repression and autocracy of the political regime eventually paved the way for a more secretive and isolated structure for the radical leftist organization in question in Iran, and in turn, a distinctively more egalitarian experience of clandestine everyday life for the activist women. However, this is not to say that a direct correlation could be drawn between the regime type, or repression level, and the characteristics of women's experiences in the oppositional activism. Instead, I argue, the role of other causal mechanisms based on the interactive relations between the relevant political actors were more crucial and definitive. In this particular case, for example, one of the explanations, which are premised on the role of relational causal mechanisms, for the increasing importance of women's presence and ban on sexual relations, would emphasize their origination 1) in the course of radicalization process —not in the beginning of their activism—, 2) as a reaction to the actions of state security forces, 3) as well as a precaution to protect their image in the eyes of their constituency.

However, in Turkey, women did not play such a critical role for the survival of the revolutionary organizations. Their operational contributions and significance, such as transporting guns more easily and mobilizing workers more successfully, could always be dismissed as secondary in a contentious process heavily determined by the competitive and retaliatory relational mechanisms, as I explained in the fifth chapter. For example, competition for power among the revolutionary movement actors was more acute in Turkey than in Iran. This highly competitive environment created conditions that were inimical to women's equal participation. Similarly, intense conflict with Right-wing counter-movement organizations contributed to the creation of a militaristic and more patriarchal movement culture in the organizations. Therefore, the activist women in the Turkish side suffered more from the sexist and patriarchal practices already present in the society during their involvement in the

clandestine politics than their Iranian counterparts. Furthermore, the repercussions of sexism and other forms of discrimination could become even graver for the women under the clandestine conditions as the stories of the women illustrated.

As we have seen, mobilization of people and recruitment to the movement was one of the most significant objectives of the revolutionary organizations in Turkey; whereas in Iran, for the reasons mentioned, the security and survival of the organization had to be prioritized. Consequently, Iranian guerrilla movement had never been able to penetrate into the people, and develop relations with the working class and peasantry; while in Turkey the revolutionaries were not only mobilizing workers in factories and work places, but in many cases also living among them. In short, dissociation mechanism did not take place in Turkey, at least not to the extent that we have seen in the case of Fadaiyan; therefore, interactions and even close relations with the workers and people were possible in Turkey. This difference naturally influenced their movement culture diversely, and especially set apart the ways in which women experienced the revolutionary activism in the two countries. For instance, trying to look and be more like workers, Turkish revolutionaries tried to tone down their progressive and marginal features. Hence, women wearing miniskirts were asked to respect the values of the people and dress more decently. In the same way, the activist women could be expected to behave like an ordinary wife when they were married, serve tea, take care of the housework and accept men's leadership in general.

On the other hand, encapsulation, which usually brings about harsher repressive policies[623], played an important role in the formation of women's experiences in Fadaiyan. Iranian guerrilla women suffered more from the repercussions of this mechanism in the form of harsh disciplinary measures, centralist decision making and strict regulations. Nevertheless, encapsulation, in other words isolation from the masses, also contributed to their ability to preserve the progressive, egalitarian and radical features of their revolutionary ideals. These ideals of their activism were

[623] Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou, *The Dynamics of Radicalization*, 93.

the first ones that were dismissed in the case of Turkish revolutionaries, mostly as a result of their efforts to mobilize and be part of the masses.

Interestingly, the Iranian women, who were active in Fadaiyan in a later period, during and after the Iranian Revolution, when the organization started to operate more openly, experienced similar discriminatory treatments and practices to those of the revolutionary women in Turkey. They reported to Shahidian that the "organizations treated female members much more strictly than their male comrades. Women's behavior was controlled to guarantee that it did not offend the public. In many cases organizations even interfered with such decisions as when and whom women should marry."[624] In the case of Turkey, however, the women who began to live fugitive lives to avoid the imprisonment after the September 12 coup d'état, mostly with their husbands or partners from the same revolutionary organizations, reported to be subjected to even more sexism and discrimination, including domestic violence in some cases.[625] This was the case both in the organizational activities, which was very difficult to undertake if not impossible, and the personal relations between the partners whose relationships looked more and more like a traditional marriage. This contradiction between the Turkish and Iranian cases is not easy to account for: while beginning to operate openly, aboveground, brought about more traditional and patriarchal gender roles and relations in Iran, it was an opposite development towards further clandestinity what brought about a similar fate for the women.

Obviously, this time, it is clear that, what brought about a difference of experience for women was a change in the political settings and in the operational structures of the organizations in question, rather than the culture of the society or the ideology of the organization. Did the policies and practices of the organizations become more discriminatory after adopting full-clandestinity in Turkey? Did the organization in Iran become more susceptible to the traditional patriarchal values and practices after coming out into the open

624 Shahidian, "Women and Clandestine Politics in Iran, 1970-1985," 9.
625 Author's interviews with the other activist women from Turkey who were not presented in this study.

in Iran? These are not easy questions to answer within the limits of this study; however, they should be seen as a further proof for my argument that rather than the ready-made answers based on the essentialist and culturalist assumptions, what we really need is to look for interactive processes and causal mechanisms that might have a more explanatory power in explaining such complex social phenomena. Yet, this should be the topic of another study.

On a final note, my focus on the processes and mechanisms, by no means, suggests that what these women chose and were able to do was not unprecedented, heroic and 'revolutionary'. On the contrary, it should be seen as a proof of the significance of the women's presence and agency even under extremely difficult or sexist conditions; because there is no doubt that their experiences in these radical clandestine organizations have had long lasting affects in the intellectual and social movements of the coming years in these countries.

Therefore, this study concludes that, even though women's struggle in the ranks of leftist movements seems in vain in terms of women's cause at first sight, it played an important role for their future in many ways. First, their mere presence in the clandestine revolutionary organizations challenged patriarchal notions with regard to women's accepted roles in society. Second traditional perceptions of women and of their nature as being delicate, fragile and submissive were also questioned. Third, women gained a great deal of experience in these movements and shaped their consequent activism and arguments by inferring from those experiences as the discourse and policies of feminist movements emerged in the 1980s clearly illustrate. Last but not least, the activist youth that we witnessed in the Gezi Park protests in 2013 in Turkey and during the Green Movement in 2009 in Iran grew up with the stories of the revolutionary women active in the 1970s, if not directly were the daughters and sons of these women.

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Samenvatting

The long 1970s, which can be traced from the events leading to the 1968 uprisings until the mid-1980s, was marked by a unique sort of activism experienced almost globally. This global contention occurring concomitantly in different parts of the world has been labeled variously, usually in accordance with theoretical and ideological perspectives of those defining it, namely: political violence, terrorism, radical or extreme left, armed insurgency, guerrilla warfare, illegal or underground revolutionary activism, so on and so forth. The inconsistency in usage of the terms describing the insurgent groups and their activities engaged in political violence to achieve social and political change in their societies throughout the period could also be attributed to the differences in their discourses, methods or the contexts in which they have occurred. However, what is more important than the characteristics distinguishing them from each other, at least for the purpose of this study, is what they had in common: contemporaneity, universality, and similarity of objectives, discourses, origins, and trajectories, more importantly the repertoires of contention they adopted, in other words, assumption of political violence as a form of protest. Inspired by the contemporaneous anti-imperialist and liberation movements around the world such as the guerrilla movements in Latin America, many young people in Turkey and Iran too were mobilized and organized around revolutionary ideals in order to put an end to what they perceived as authoritarian or 'puppet regimes' in their countries. From the very beginning, women from the middle and lower classes supported and actively participated in the leftist movements in the forms of student or workers' movements. Despite the fact that women from upper, middle and lower classes were drawn to revolutionary and radical left-wing movements and participated in various degrees during the 1960s and 1970s, both the national and leftist historiographies have largely ignored their presence and experiences. Iran and Turkey have not been exceptions in this sense.

Women's involvement in the radical leftist movements is significant for a number of reasons. First, the means they resorted to, namely, urban guerrilla war or armed struggle, is peculiar, especially when the theories like 'weapons of the weak' are taken into consideration. Second,

women's participation in the radical leftist movements in these countries and their experiences, for example in the safe houses, obviously defied traditional gender roles in their societies. Third, women's activism in the ranks of revolutionary or guerrilla groups also challenges traditional approaches and perspectives on the role and place of women especially in the Muslim societies, as well as the public-private dichotomy with regard to gender roles. The conventional perspectives on and approaches to women in these societies have assigned almost no agency to them and restricted our understanding of them to the obsolete concepts that are overused and abused like 'oppressed,' 'confined,' and 'submissive'. Therefore, women's active involvement in the radical leftist movements in these societies presents us with both challenges and opportunities that can be benefitted only through right approaches and methods.

I consider and conceptualize the emergence and growth of radical leftist movements and organizations in Iran and Turkey in the 1970s as a part of above-mentioned global phenomenon, but particularly in line with the appearance of new radical left such as Red Army Fraction (RAF) in Germany, Red Brigades (BR) in Italy, Direct Action (AD) in France; as well as Weather Underground in the United States and Japanese Red Army in Japan. Despite the inspirational influence of other contemporaneous revolutionary or liberation movements such as Latin American guerrilla organizations, Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria, or National Liberation Front in Vietnam on their ideological formation, radical leftist organizations in Turkey and Iran had more in common with their Western counterparts, namely having their origins in student movements, following trajectories leading to political violence, recruitment patterns and pools, repertoires of contention and organizational features. Most importantly, it is a particular process that they all went through — which is referred as radicalization by the scholars of social movements—, that allows me to group them in the same category.

Radicalization is a term used by some social movement scholars in order to describe the transition, from moderate to violent repertoires of collective action as a result of a number of mechanisms recurring in various arenas of interaction between social movement activists and other political and social actors. I analyze the mechanisms that were involved in the

radicalization processes of the revolutionary organizations in Turkey and Iran in order to make sense of and compare the experiences of activist women in these organizations.

The clandestine politics for women was marked by an environment in which gender roles and expectations were constantly challenged and reproduced as a result of the extraordinary conditions under which they had to live and operate. These conditions were not stable but evolved and transformed in a dynamic environment in which not only various political actors were involved and interacted, but also the repercussions of their actions were influential on various levels. This study claims that, what the women involved in the clandestine revolutionary movements in Turkey and Iran in the 1970s experienced at the micro level was directly related to and influenced by both the macro level developments and political settings, and the meso level processes and mechanisms. Instead of holding only certain characteristics of the regimes, societies, or organizations responsible for the character of the women's experiences, this study argues that causal mechanisms which played a significant role in the radicalization processes of the leftist movements in Turkey and Iran could also help us account for the similarities and differences between the women's experiences in the two cases. Ideology, especially the ways in which it was framed and interpreted, obviously played a role, as the similarities between the mentality and practices of the activists in other parts of the world, such as Greece, India and Italy illustrate. Yet, ideological features, like the cultural characteristics of the society in which they were operating, could only be influential to the extent that the processes and mechanisms permitted.

Apart from the common factors which motivated the women in both countries to join and stay in high-risk revolutionary activism, the other similarities could also be observed in the experiences of the activist women in the clandestine revolutionary organizations in both countries. Among them were the negligence towards their needs; the lack of proper protection for women against the dangers of high-risk activism, adverse effects of self-sacrifice culture on women, and the regulation of their sexuality. The ideological as well as patriarchal worldview, which were dominant in one way or another, in the revolutionary organizations in the period seem to stand out as the most influential factors in the formation of these similarities. For instance, aside from

the left's common perception of feminism as a threat to class unity and the progression of the revolution in the period, these clandestine organizations despised everything they considered bourgeois, not just feminism. Although mostly coming from middle class backgrounds, the revolutionaries envisioned themselves not only fighting for, but also having to live like, ordinary people: workers and peasants. This respect for the values and lifestyle of the people gradually turned into an admiration, if not an obsession; and contributed to reproduction of sexist practices among themselves or embracing their difficulties as ideals, even though in varying degrees in Turkey and Iran. Unsurprisingly, the values of the masses have always been conservative and patriarchal; therefore, every move towards them meant more discrimination and difficulties for activist women than activist men.

With regard to the differences, however, a more egalitarian division of labor and relatively better level of equality between women and men guerrillas in the Iranian Fadaiyan could be attributed to the extreme clandestine conditions under which they had to live. The heavy-handed regime of Shah gave them no choice but adopting strict urban guerrilla tactics, operating and living clandestinely and in isolation from the masses. The need to disguise a safe house necessitated the presence of at least one woman in each house, which made women very valuable for the survival of organization. At the same time, they needed to take measures against possible rumors, spread mainly by SAVAK, about men and women living together in their safe houses and having illegitimate sex. This would have obviously not only delegitimized their cause and ruined their reputation in the eyes of the public, but also dissuaded women from participating in the organization. This has to be one of the main reasons for the ban on sexual relations among the activists living in the safe houses. These two features of clandestine everyday life, —the increased significance of women's presence and the ban on sexual relations—, seem, in return, to have eliminated the prospect for many discriminatory scenarios for Iranian activist women. Thus, an increase in the level of repression and autocracy of the political regime eventually paved the way for a more secretive and isolated structure for the radical leftist organization in question in Iran, and in turn, a distinctively more egalitarian experience of clandestine everyday life for the activist women. However, this is not to say that a direct correlation could be drawn

between the regime type, or repression level, and the characteristics of women's experiences in the oppositional activism. Instead, I argue, the role of other causal mechanisms based on the interactive relations between the relevant political actors were more crucial and definitive. In this particular case, for example, one of the explanations, which are premised on the role of relational causal mechanisms, for the increasing importance of women's presence and ban on sexual relations, would emphasize their origination 1) in the course of radicalization process —not in the beginning of their activism—, 2) as a reaction to the actions of state security forces, 3) as well as a precaution to protect their image in the eyes of their constituency.

However, in Turkey, women did not play such a critical role for the survival of the revolutionary organizations. Their operational contributions and significance, such as transporting guns more easily and mobilizing workers more successfully, could always be dismissed as secondary in a contentious process heavily determined by the competitive and retaliatory relational mechanisms. For example, competition for power among the revolutionary movement actors was more acute in Turkey than in Iran. This highly competitive environment created conditions that were inimical to women's equal participation. Similarly, intense conflict with Right-wing counter-movement organizations contributed to the creation of a militaristic and more patriarchal movement culture in the organizations. Therefore, the activist women in the Turkish side suffered more from the sexist and patriarchal practices already present in the society during their involvement in the clandestine politics than their Iranian counterparts. Furthermore, the repercussions of sexism and other forms of discrimination could become even graver for the women under the clandestine conditions as the stories of the women illustrated.

Mobilization of people and recruitment to the movement was one of the most significant objectives of the revolutionary organizations in Turkey; whereas in Iran, the security and survival of the organization had to be prioritized. Consequently, Iranian guerrilla movement had never been able to penetrate into the people, and develop relations with the working class and peasantry; while in Turkey the revolutionaries were not only mobilizing workers in factories and work places, but in many cases also living among them. In short, dissociation mechanism did not take place in Turkey, at least not to the extent that we have seen in the case of Fadaiyan;

therefore, interactions and even close relations with the workers and people were possible in Turkey. This difference naturally influenced their movement culture diversely, and especially set apart the ways in which women experienced the revolutionary activism in the two countries. On the other hand, encapsulation, which usually brings about harsher repressive policies, played an important role in the formation of women's experiences in Fadaiyan. Iranian guerrilla women suffered more from the repercussions of this mechanism in the form of harsh disciplinary measures, centralist decision making and strict regulations. Nevertheless, encapsulation, in other words isolation from the masses, also contributed to their ability to preserve the progressive, egalitarian and radical features of their revolutionary ideals. These ideals of their activism were the first ones that were dismissed in the case of Turkish revolutionaries, mostly as a result of their efforts to mobilize and be part of the masses.

Curriculum Vitae

Sevil Çakır-Kılınçoğlu was born in 1982 in Eskişehir, Turkey. She has a B.A in International Relations from Hacettepe University and M.A in Eurasian Studies from Middle East Technical University. She has spent five years in Princeton from 2017 to 2012 auditing graduate courses and participating academic life as an independent scholar at the University. She worked as a lecturer between 2012-2017 at Middle East Technical University, Northern Cyprus and taught courses on social movements and the Middle East. She is currently a research fellow in the Center of Methods in Social Sciences at the University of Göttingen. Her research interests revolve around political violence, radicalization, contentious politics, activism, gender and biographical research. Her research has been supported by Leiden University Institute for Area Studies, Leiden University Fund, and Lower Saxony Ministry for Science and Culture. She speaks Turkish, English, Persian, and German.