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Between Central State and Local Society

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PART I

Human Geography of Provincial People's Houses

Chapter Two
Halkevi in local societies: Kayseri and Balıkesir

In the first chapter we have presented the Halkevi institution the way the ruling elite of the period had envisaged and planned it based on a number of normative texts such as the Halkevi Bylaws. We have thus tried to inscribe the Halkevi project into the regime's discourse and policies, while proposing an analysis of its basic ideological and political tenets. Based mainly on the examples of two Houses and the local societies within which they operate, Kayseri and Balıkesir, this second chapter embarks upon a second 'contextualising operation'. This time the context within which they Halkevi is sought to be inscribed is local societies and populations. In other words, this chapter tries to remove the Halkevi space from the discursive standard of its 'textbook version' and insert it into the social context of local societies, or, in another sense, to situate the programmatic nature of the center's plans and discourse upon a local population, within local social, political and economic networks and boundaries. What then follows is in a sence a 'human geography' of the Halkevi space, its clientele and manpower within the societies of provincial towns, where the majority of the People's Houses were established. The aim is to present the inhabited next to the discursive space of the Halkevi we have analysed in the previous chapter.

A few words have to be said regarding the 'case-study' approach used here. Dwelling on the cases of Kayseri and Balıkesir does not amount to a local monograph per se. The study of Halkevi cases within and in relation to their local societies is necessary in order to arrive at a corpus of accumulative data, to establish, in other words, a necessary context upon which to place and attempt to answer our research questions. It is a necessary methodological step towards the study of 'state-society relations' and the 'usages' of the centre's policies by local actors, social groups and individuals. It provides us with a cumulative corpus of sources necessary for our reading of the voices of individual Halkevi members (chapters 3 and 4) and for the study of activities prescribed by the centre through the eyes of the local Halkevi actors (Chapter 8).

Kayseri and Balıkesir have been chosen first of all because of their similarities that assist in comparing data: both are administrative centres and provincial towns, urban provincial centres with a substantial bureaucratic/state presence and a rural hinterland, characteristics that make them rather representative of a large number of People's Houses. On the other hand, the differences between the two provincial centres and their population, especially the existence of a large industrial workforce in Kayseri and a large number of settled refuges in Balıkesir, also offer the opportunity to assess the extent local peculiarities affect the local Houses and their activities. A second and more mundane reason for choosing these two towns among many others that share common and comparable attributes was the availability of accessible data/sources both archival and published.

I. Kayseri

The People's House of Kayseri has been selected as a case study. With the case study approach the objective is to place the activities and the cadre of the Halkevi into its social milieu. Consequently, more than a few words have to be said about the society of Kayseri, its population, the local Party structure, and the local power groups and elites. Subsequently the data collected about the Kayseri Halkevi, its cadre and activities will be placed within the broader framework of the local society, as it emerges from the sources.

Population

The starting point in this investigation is the results of the 1935 census.[185] The central sub district (*merkez kazası*) of Kayseri had a total population of 114.781, while the city of Kayseri 46.181. Among the population of the city of Kayseri only a 24.5% was literate (could read and write according to the census), 37% for men and 11% for women (8881 and 2439 in real numbers respectively). Turning to the professional distribution of the population, 94.7% of the female population belongs to the category 'no or unknown profession' (*Mesleksiz, meçhul veya gayri muayyen*). Because of their almost total absence from the statistics, we will not use the percentages and numbers given for women. A 29.4% of the male population worked in 'industry and crafts' (*sanayi ve küçük sanatler*), while an 8.2% in agriculture and a 10.8% in 'Administration, Public Services and the liberal professions' (*Umumi idare ve hizmetler, serbest meslekler*). A 34.4% of those working in the industrial sector were employed in the textile and clothing industries. The commercial sector comprised the 6.2% of the working force of Kayseri. 3,1% belonged to the category 'Transports and Communications', while the remaining 41,9% of the male population was not registered (*Mesleksiz, meçhul veya gayri muayyen*). Nevertheless, 2776 of the last category were registered as students. This number makes a 6% of the overall Kayseri populace. The female students were obviously fewer than the male ones (618 female for 2158 male students). As a percentage of the population, the male students make up 9% of the male and 4,5% of the total population of Kayseri, while the female students comprise the 2,8% of the local female and just a 1,3% of the total population.[186]

The Party: CHP

The Party membership in the province of Kayseri by the 1940s was over the country average. In 1942-3 it was 15%, while the overall country Party membership average was between 8.5 and 9.5 %. In absolute numbers the

[185] Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık İstatistik Genel Direktörlüğü Genel nüfus sayımı 20 İlk teşrin 1935, *Kayseri Vilayeti*, Vol. 33, (İstanbul: Hüsnütabiat Basımevi, 1937).
[186] *Kayseri Vilayeti*, pp. 6, 23, 26 – 32.

Kayseri Vilayeti had 45.759[187] in 1938, 51.721[188] in 1942 and 59.464 members in 1944.[189] The above numbers do not say much other than that compared to the membership numbers of other provinces the above 15% makes Kayseri one of the Vilayets with the largest Party membership figures. We do not have any indication why 15% of the Kayseri population was reported to be Party members. Even Öz, who has probably compiled one of the best works on the CHP of the period, neither offers any explanation why Yozgat and Konya, considered both rather 'conservative' provinces, have the highest percentage of Party members, nor makes clear why only 1% of the population of Malatya and 2,6% of Rize in particular register in the ruling Party.[190] My argument is that such statistical information has to be treated with great circumspection and always in relation to complementary data. Unfortunately more systematic and elaborate information about the members is not offered anywhere else. Only the educational background of the Party members is given in the first biannual report of the Kayseri Vilayet Administrative Committee in 1944.

Table 1
Educational level of Party members of the province of Kayseri (1944)

High	Lycee	Middle	Primary or able to read and write	Illiterate	**Total**
57	169	1270	47.972	9996	**59464**

Source: CHP Kayseri Vilayeti idare heyeti Haziran 1944 6 aylık çalışma raporu, in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/671.261.1.

Nevertheless, more detailed information on the Party Administrative Committees (*İdare Heyetleri* or *Yönetim Kurulları*), from the *Vilayet* down to the *Ocak* level is provided by the Party itself. The Party headquarters (*CHP Genel Sekreterliği*) had dispatched a number of forms the local party structures were periodically obliged to fill in. These forms contain information about the Party structure, activities, members, as well as data concerning non-Party institutions (newspapers, social, professional and athletic clubs or benevolent institutions) and the population in general. The copy of such a form is contained in one of the files of the *CHP Genel Sekreterliği*. Although the date of the original is not stated, the date of the copy is given, 4/4/1941. It contains two tables showing the educational and professional distribution of the members of the Party Administrative Committees of the province of Kayseri.

[187] CHP Kayseri Yönetim kurulunun 30/6/38 6 aylık çalışma raporu (biannual activities' report), in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/670.255.1.
[188] *Istatistik Yıllığı (1942-43)*, (Ankara: İstatistik umum Müdürlüğü Yayınları, 1944), pp. I-VII.
[189] CHP Kayseri Vilayeti idare heyeti Haziran 1944 6 aylık çalışma raporu, in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/671.261.1.
[190] According to a table given in Esat Öz, *Türkiye'de tek-parti yönetimi ve Siyasal Katılım (1923-1945)*, (Ankara: Gündoğan, 1992), p. 183. The percentage ranges from 1% in Malatya to 16.9% in Yozgat.

Table 2
Members of Party Administrative Committees according to educational background (Tahsilleri bakımından vaziyet)

İdare Heyetleri	Higher	Lise	Middle	Primary	Millet Mektebi	Illiterate	**Total**
Ocaklar İ	4	10	81	545	673	379	**1692**
Nahiye	1	2	25	96	18	12	**154**
Kaza	5	1	20	13		1	**40**
Vilayet	3		4	2			**9**
Total	**13**	**13**	**130**	**656**	**691**	**392**	**1895**

Source: **BCA CHP**, 490.1/276.1106.2.

Table 3
Members of Party Administrative Committees according to occupational background (Meslekleri bakımından vaziyet)

Occupation	Ocak	Nahiye	Kaza	vilayet	**Total**
Lawyer	2		1	1	**4**
Doctor			2		**2**
Pharmacist	2			1	**3**
Veterinarian					
Land owner	48	4	10	2	**64**
Teacher	3	5	4	1	**13**
Engineer	1				**1**
Retired Officer	1	4	2	1	**8**
Retired servant					
Merchant	134	22	13	3	**172**
Farmer	1322	108	7		**1437**
Worker	179	11	1		**191**
Total	**1692**	**154**	**40**	**9**	**1895**

Source: **BCA CHP**, 490.1/276.1106.2.

It is obvious that the educational level of the Party cadre rises at the upper echelons of the Party local Administration. The majority of those having higher education staff the Party Administrative Committees of the Province (*Vilayet*) and sub provinces (*Kaza*). As we move downwards to the Ocak level, the vast majority of the Party's cadre is illiterate or just knows how to read and write. Moreover, at the Ocak and Nahiye level most of the members are farmers or merchants. The above data seem to confirm Esat Öz's suggestion about the Party membership:

> *As we look at the summit of the pyramid the predominance of the professions, civil servants, teachers and merchants is*

> *evident. We can say the same thing for the Party local administrative organs. Although in some cases (especially in underdeveloped areas where traditional structures are dominant) farmers members also exist, the dominant structure in the local branches is the one we see in the Assembly. As we move downwards, the structure of the party membership starts to overlap more with general social structure. Between the local (il) administrative structures and the high Party structures a harmony is observed, while a disharmony with the general social structure.*[191]

No more information is given in the sources used here on the Party members and cadre below the Kaza level. The members of the *Vilayet* and *Kaza İdare Heyetleri* are mentioned in a number of sources. Their names and occasionally a short note on their personality are given in some of the reports of the Party Inspectors.[192] Hilmi Çoruh, Party Inspector of the Kırşehir area, in his report[193] of 3/3/1940 offers a brief description of all the 47 members of the Vilayet and Kaza Administrative Committees of Kayseri. Half of them -23- are merchants, some of them quite wealthy as the Inspector notes. The Party chairman, for example, is one of the contractors of the dam in Niğde, while one of the members of the Vilayet Administrative Committee is a shareholder of one of the big factories in Kayseri and chairman of the Chamber of Commerce. Their wealth though was not accompanied with a higher or 'modern' education. The former is described as of little education, while the latter as strictly religious and a *medrese* graduate. The rest of the Vilayet Idare Heyeti is composed of a retired Gendarmerie officer, one of the members of the chamber of Commerce, the former mayor and Halkevi chairman, two more merchants, a lawyer and his sister-in-law, the wife of the Party secretary. The Idare Heyeti of the central Kaza consists of a doctor, a lawyer, a pharmacist, two wealthy merchants, a woman 'earning her livelihood as a tailor', and Osman Feyzioğlu, engaged in agricultural activities (*ziraatçi*), in all probability member of one of the wealthy and influential families of Kayseri.[194] In total, 37 out of the 47 members of the Administrative Committees are merchants, civil servants, lawyers, doctors and pharmacists. Five members are described as occupied in farming (*ziraatle meşgül*) and only two as farmers (*çiftçi*). Some of them are also members of the local Municipal Assemblies, of the Chamber of Commerce and of the Bar Council. So, while the majority of the Party members in the province of Kayseri were farmers, the top echelons of the Party structure in the town were in the hands of local financial and political elites, mainly merchants, entrepreneurs and a few professionals usually members of local elite families.

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[191] Esat Öz, *Türkiye'de tek-parti yönetimi*, p. 186.

[192] On the Party Inspectors see Cemil Koçak, "Tek- Parti Döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nde Parti Müfettişliği", *Tarık Zafer Tunaya'ya Armağan* (İstanbul: İstanbul Barosu Yayınları, 1992); Hakkı Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve CHP* (İstanbul, 1999), pp. 244-47.

[193] Report of CHP Kırşehir Bölgesi Müfettişi Kastamonu Mebusu Hilmi Çoruh 3/3/1940 contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/670.255.1.

[194] Members of the Feyzioğlu family: Sait Azmi Feyzioğlu, lawyer and MP for Kayseri, his son and founder of the Güven Partisi Prof. Turhan Feyzioğlu. Ali Rıza Önder, *Kayseri Basın tarihi (1910 – 1960)*, (Ankara: Ayyıldız Matbaası, 1972), pp. 153-4.

Various professional institutions

The Bar Council of Kayseri had 21 registered members in 1938.[195] Three of them were in 1938, or would become later on, MPs for Kayseri, five members of the Kayseri Municipal Assembly and one Mayor.[196]

Kayseri was always a town famous for its merchants. The local Chamber of Industry and Commerce (*Kayseri Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası*) was established in 1312 (1896). In 1938 1630 members/firms were registered. The great majority – 1089 – was described as *küçük esnaf*, or small-scale craftsmen and tradesmen. Three banks, six factories, two printing houses, and hundreds of grocers, green grocers, plumbers, bakers, restaurant and coffeehouse owners, barbers, all kinds of tradesmen, contractors, and similar professions representing the largest professional group of Kayseri were registered.[197] The Municipal Assembly of Kayseri was also crowded with merchants; between the years 1939 – 1942 19 out of 30 members were tradesmen.[198]

The 1935 census testifies the existence of an expanding industrial sector in Kayseri. Almost 35% of the industrial working force of Kayseri was employed in the textile sector. According to the data given in the 1927 Sanayi Sayımı, 1096 workplaces (of which 1064 employed less than 10 workers) with 6747 workers existed in the province of Kayseri, the majority employed in the textile sector (4281).[199] In 1937 the Sümerbank Bez Fabrikası opened. By the next decade this factory employed more than 3000 workers. The Tayyare Fabrikası (Airplane Factory) was another industrial unit employing more than 300 workers. The above numbers clearly indicate that a large part of the working population of Kayseri was employed in the industrial sector and, after 1937, in one of the largest industrial plants of Turkey, the Sümerbank Bez Fabrikası.

This was not just a factory. Apart from the huge factory buildings, the company also constructed a small hospital, apartment blocks for its employees, sports facilities (football, volleyball, tennis courts), a 500-seat cinema.[200] The area where the factory and the rest of the facilities were situated became a part of the city, and by 1938 its Party Structure (*Sümer Ocağı*) had 1079 members, a considerable amount when compared to the 4455 members of the inner city. It was, as it seems, the only Party structure whose members were paying their Party fees.[201] It is not definite though whether the strength of this particular

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[195] Kayseri Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası, *Sekizinci İzmir Fuarında Kayseri* (n.p., 1938), p. 48.

[196] MPs: Sait Azmi Feyzioğlu, Mustafa Kemal Şatır, Raşit Turgut. Municipal Assembly members: Bekir Rıza Alpay, Ahmet Necmettin Feyzioğlu, Mustafa Kemal Şatır, Osman Nafiz Akşehirlioğlu, Ahmet Sait Karamercan and Ahmet Hıfzı Gözübüyük. Necmettin Çalışkan, *Kuruluşundan Günümüze Kayseri Belediyesi* (Kayseri: Kayseri Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, 1995), pp. 9-10, 18-9, 90-5, 117, 122-3, 133-4.

[197] Kayseri Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası, *Sekizinci*, pp. 23-7.

[198] Çalışkan, *Kuruluşundan Günümüze Kayseri Belediyesi*, pp. 94-5.

[199] Mentioned in Osman Köroğlu, *1923 – 1950 yılları arası Kayserinin ekonomik ve sosyal yapısı* (MA Thesis, Erciyes University, 1992), p. 18.

[200] Köroğlu, pp. 25-8.

[201] *CHP Kayseri Yönetim kurulunun 30/6/38 6 aylık çalışma raporu* (biannual report of activities), in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/670.255.1. Sümer Ocağı was one of the few Party subdivisions in Kayseri collecting money from the members, according to another biannual reports as well: *CHP Kayseri Vilayeti İdare Heyeti 1939 birinci kanun altı aylık çalışma raporu*, p. 6, also contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/670.255.1.

Ocak was strictly based on the members' initiative. In Cevdet Kudret's novel *Havada Bulut Yok*[202] a young worker in the Factory describes his payment in the following way: "I get 100 *kuruş* every day. They do not pay the Sundays; it is a holiday they say. They also cut 15 *kuruş* for the Party, they say there is an Ocak room in the factory (*Ocak odası varmış*), the money is gathered there."[203]

The 1935 census (as well as the Party membership statistics) reveals the significance of tradesmen in the society as well as in the CHP cadre of the city of Kayseri. Together with the educated segments of Kayseri, especially all kinds of state employees and the liberal professions, they constitute the local elite, in economic and political terms. The members of the Municipal Assembly, the Party Administrative Committees, and the occupational associations, as well as the representatives of Kayseri in the National Assembly, by majority belong to this group. In some cases, certain important families come to the forefront. People bearing the same surname appear in all the above institutions indicating the existence of powerful wealthy families. Lawyers, tradesmen, farmers, doctors from families such as the Feyzioğlu, Karakimseli, Özsan, Büründüz, Tacettinoğlu and Taşçıoğlu appear in all the Party, occupational and commercial Institutions mentioned above. Conversely, the workers and farmers of Kayseri, although comprising the most numerous part of the local society, do not appear in the representative bodies of the region.

Kayseri Halkevi

The People's House of Kayseri opened on the 24th of August 1932, together with another 19 People's Houses around Turkey. The first 14 Halkevleri had been established a few months before, in 19 February 1932. The Kayseri Halkevi building was the old *Türk Ocağı*[204] headquarters, an old Armenian church, up until the early 1940s when a new Halkevi was built.

Kayseri Halkevi Chairmen

The first chairman of the House was Reşit Özsoy, the local Party chief and MP for Kayseri from 1927 to 1950. He remained the House's chairman up until 1935, when he was replaced by the lawyer Naci Özsan. Özsan, member of the regional CHP Idare Heyeti, stayed in that position until 1940, when Hayrullah Ürkün took over. Ürkün had been the Mayor of Kayseri from 1936 to 1939 and would become an MP for Kayseri from 1946 to 1950. In 1941, the director of the Kayseri Lycée, Ömer Sıtkı Erdi, became the chairman of the House, position he held until 1942, upon his appointment to Bursa, and was replaced by Fevzi Kızıklı,[205] among the members of the Party Administrative Committee of Kayseri. Kızıklı stayed only for a few months, until the

[202] See chapter 3.
[203] Cevdet Kudret, *Havada Bulut Yok*, 2nd edition (Istanbul: Inkılap ve Aka, 1976), p. 235.
[204] Unfortunately the available here information about the Kayseri Turkish Hearth is very few. In 1928 and 1929, a number of courses (typing, foreign languages, new alphabet) were taught, theatrical plays staged, and various conferences were given. İbrahim Karaer, *Türk Ocakları (1912 - 1931)*, (Ankara: Türk Yurdu Neşriyatı, 1992), pp. 74, 87, 96 and 112.
[205] Merchant, member of the 1948 Iktisat Kongresi, http://ekutup.dpt.gov.tr/ekonomi/iktisa48/ikt48-1.pdf.

beginning of 1943, when he was replaced by Nazmi Akyurt,[206] who was in turn replaced a few months later, in March 1943 by Feyzullah Karakimseli, chairman of the local Party Administrative Committee and a teacher. Karakimseli was in turn replaced by another teacher, Reşat Oğuz (Vilayet Idare Heyeti member), principal of the Kayseri Lycée, in the beginning of 1945. The next Halkevi chairman was Tacettin Tacettinoğlu, a merchant, member of the Chamber of Commerce of Kayseri, of the regional CHP Administrative Committee, of the Municipal Council, and, for a short period of time, the mayor of Kayseri. He was appointed Halkevi chairman in 1947, only to be replaced by the teacher Kazım Özyedikçi, or Yedikçioğlu, in April 1948. Yedikçioğlu stayed up until May 1949, when he was replaced by the lawyer Mustafa Tütüncü, who was to be the last chairman, up until the closure of the Kayseri Halkevi in 1951.[207]

According to the People's Houses' By laws, the Halkevi chairman was appointed by the local Party Administrative Committee among its members, while the members of the Houses' and Sections' Committees had to be Party members or civil servants.[208] The purpose of course was to have the maximum control and supervision of the institution, its activities and members by the Party. In this way, the administration of the Halkevi and the communication with the supervising authority, the General Secretariat, was in the hands of the local CHP structure, the local Party elite. This was not the case exceptionally during the years of Adli Bayman, the Prefect and Party chairman during the Party and state merging years, 1936 – 1939. He had the double authority of Vali and chairman of the Vilayet's Idare Heyeti. All the papers of the Kayseri Halkevi sent to Ankara and found in the archive of the General Secretariat of the CHP in the Başbakanlık Archive in Ankara had been signed by Adli Bayman. Nevertheless, in general we observe that the chair of the local Halkevi was kept for the local Party bosses, among who the educated seemed to be more favourable. The Halkevi chairmanship, controlled as it was by local elites, can be put next to other positions of influence and authority in the local society, such as the mayor, the president of the Board of Commerce, and various other political, educative and commercial posts. In that sense, explicitly political in nature as it was, the Halkevi chairmanship was also a position fought for among conflicting competitors, an issue we treat in chapters 4 and 5.

Kayseri Halkevi Members

The overall number of the registered members of the Kayseri Halkevi is a rather controversial issue. According to the 28/01/1938 report of the House, the members reach the rather inflated (compared to another count given by another source below) number of 1399 for the first, and 1973 for the second semester of 1937. The report states that the House has among its members 8 lawyers, 11 doctors, 200 teachers, 234 merchants (Tecimen), 515 workers (işçi), 227

[206] First principal of Kayseri Meslek Lisesi in 1942 according to www.kayserimerkezeml.com/tarihce.htm. In all propability he was not a member of the local CHP Idare Heyetleri since his name does not appear anywhere in the relevant files of the Archive.
[207] Mustafa Şanal, "Türk kültür tarihi içerisinde Kayseri Halkevi ve Faaliyetleri (1932 - 1951)", *Milli Eğitim Dergisi*, No 161, (2004), pp. 4-7.
[208] *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası Halkevlerin Talimatnamesi* (Ankara, 1932), § 1, p. 5.

farmers (çiftçi), and 165 belonging to the obscure category Fine Arts (Güzel Sanatlar). It seems that the only credible figure of this table is the ratio of female to male members: 53/1346 for the first and 82/1891 for the second semester. Such a low rate of women/men members is mentioned in almost all the Halkevi sources.[209]

The reasonable numbers for lawyer and doctor members are also understandable; it is difficult even for a 21st century observer, not least for the ruling Party in 1937, to imagine that the overall number of doctors and lawyers of Kayseri at that time was much higher than the one offered here. As for the absence of the category 'Civil Servants', it suggests how vague the category işçi might be. The majority of the secondary literature on the People's Houses illustrates the preponderance of Civil Servants in the Houses. The absence thus of any Civil Servant member according to the above report raises a lot of questions about the credibility of such sources. In short, the superficiality of the above numbers and, probably, of many other parts of the report mentioned, and, consequently, of many other papers produced by local Party bosses eager as they were to yield results for the eyes of a demanding centre has to be recognized and treated accordingly, i.e. not at face value.[210] The implausibility of the figures above is highlighted when a more modest contemporary voice is taken into account. The Party Inspector[211] Hilmi Çoruh, two years later, in 1940 counts only 253 registered members of the Kayseri Halkevi, unfortunately without giving more details:

Table 4

Members	Section
22	Language, History and Literature
20	Fine Arts
22	Theatre
22	Sports
53	Social Assistance
13	Courses
15	Library
56	Village
31	Museum and Exhibitions
253	Total

Source: report No 42, dated 03/03/1940 of the Kırşehir Bölge Müfettişi, Kastamonu mebusu Hilmi Çoruh, contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/671.263.1/4th Büro.

[209] The percentage of female members was almost always below 10% of the overall members even in Party sources. See Table with membership statistics from 1932 to 1941 in *CHP Halkevleri ve Halkodaları 1932 – 1942* (Ankara: Alaadin Basımevi, 1942), reporoduced in Sefa Şimşek, *Bir İdeolojik seferberlik deneyimi Halkevleri* (İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2002), p. 253.

[210] This is something that unfortunately many works on the Halkevleri and their activities share in common.

[211] On the Party Inspectors see Cemil Koçak, "Tek- Parti Döneminde Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nde Parti Müfettişliği", *Tarık Zafer Tunaya'ya Armağan* (İstanbul: İstanbul Barosu Yayınları, 1992). See also Murat Metinsoy, "Erken Cumhuriyet döneminde mebusların intihap dairesi ve teftiş bölgesi raporları", *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, No 3, (Spring 2006).

Kayseri Halkevi Committee Members

All nine Sections of the Halkevi of Kayseri were formed upon its establishment in 1932. The names and occupations of the cadre of the Kayseri Halkevi, i.e. the members of the Sectional Committees, are to be found in three different sources. The *Kayseri Halkevi Armağanı*, published in 1934;[212] three years later, the 28/01/1938 report of the Kayseri Halkevi,[213] giving the members of the Committees of the Halkevi Sections in 01/07/1937 and 31/12/1937; and again three years later, in 1940, a report on the Kayseri Halkevi, by the Party inspector of the Kırşehir area, Hilmi Çoruk, MP for Kastamonu.[214]

The first observation on the members' lists would be that a large part of the House's cadre was composed of teachers and civil servants,[215] while a few members came from the commercial sector and the rest of the professions, at least till the 1940 members' list. Moreover, the ratio of teachers in the Committees of the Kayseri Halkevi rises from 10/41 in 1934, to 15/44, 16/40 in 1937, and 29/44 in 1940. This trend seems to continue well in the later years, as a report sent by the Halkevi to the Party General Secretariat in 1950 indicates. Out of the 10 members of the Administrative Committee[216] of the Kayseri Halkevi mentioned, only the president is not a teacher.[217]

Teachers and Civil Servants

Although many teachers were habitually transferred from one city to another, certain names recur from 1934 to 1950 among the above-mentioned Committee members. The irregularity of the available data might also suggest that more teachers than the ones referred here were active members of the Kayseri Halkevi for an uninterrupted period of time between 1932 and 1950. The names appearing more frequently are those of Nazlı Handan Kaspiralı, or Gaspiralı (wife of the doctor Haydar Gaspiralı son of Ismail Gasprinski), Hikmet Bora (Teacher of Music at the Lycee of Kayseri), Fahri Tümer, Hayri Özdemir, Nevzat Yücel, Cavidan Ada, Feyzullah Karakimseli, Kazım Özdoğan, to mention only few. Among them Nazlı Handan Kaspiralı, Fahri Tümer, Nevzat Yücel and Kazım Özdoğan were publishing articles in the House's journal Erciyes.[218]

The case of Kazım Özdoğan (1901 - 1961), member and chairman of the Museum and Exhibition Section for many years, is an example that deserves our attention since, as a local teacher and scholar, he can be seen as a representative of many similar teachers and functionaries who built their

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[212] *Kayseri Halkevi Armağanı*, No 3, (Kayseri: Yeni Matbaa, 1934), p. 49.
[213] The report is contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/837.310.2/5th Büro.
[214] Report No 42, dated 03/03/1940 contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/671.263.1/4th Büro.
[215] Teachers were of course state employees. Nevertheless, here we follow the sources, which mention teachers separately from other civil servants.
[216] The Administrative Committee of the People's Houses is composed of one representative from each Section and a president, appointed by the local Party Administrative Committee. Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası, *Halkevlerin Talimatnamesi* (Ankara, 1932), articles 17 and 19.
[217] Report of 23/08/1950 in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/838.311.1/5th Büro.
[218] Önder, *Kayseri Basın tarihi*, pp. 109-10.

intellectual persona within the People's Houses and the opportunities they offered to educated people. Kazım Özdoğan was born in Kayseri, where he received his primary and secondary education. He became a teacher in 1925 after obtaining a Diploma from an İmam - Hatip School. He carried out many studies and researches, mostly on local history. He took an active part in the Village Excursions the Vali Adli Bayman was organizing in the mid 1930s[219] and published the results of these village excursions in a number of brochures.[220] He also published several article in most of the journals and newspapers of Kayseri. In 1948 he published the first part of a four-volume Kayseri Tarihi. Ali Rıza Önder, probably a student of Özdoğan at the Kayseri Lisesi, wrote that he was the teacher usually entrusted with the duty to deliver the speeches at the national holidays and fests. Other sources indicate that Özdoğan was giving conferences in the Halkevi as well.[221]

In regard to civil servants, the above tables suggest a slightly decreasing presence in the Committees of the House: 19/41 in 1934, 15/44 and 12/40 in 1937, and 10/44 in 1940. In 1942, the Party Inspector of the Niğde area, A. Sırrı Levend, MP for Aydın, refers to the civil servants' indifference towards the activities of the House in one of his teftiş raporları.

> *The civil servants, especially the Directors of State Offices, are not interested at all in the activities of the Halkevi. With the exception of the Director of Medical Services (in his capacity as chairman of the Social Assistance Section of the Halkevi) and of the Director of Education (in his capacity as the chairman of the Sports Section), the indifference of all the other directors is overtly striking. I have been able to see some of them coming to the lectures I personally gave only out of kindness and to the family meetings once in a while. [It] is impossible for them to work voluntarily.*[222]

The 1934 members' list shows that six employees of the State Railroads were members of the Sectional Committees. Their names though completely disappear three years later. Moreover, none of them seems to have contributed any piece to the House's journal, according to the list of contributors Önder is offering.[223] Whatever their incentive had been in joining the executive groups

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[219] In one of the reports the Vali Adil Bayman sent to inform the Party Headquarters of these excursions, he refers to a speech Kazım Özdoğan gave at the Mimar Sinan village on the life and works of the famous architect. This is an indication of the important role Özdoğan was playing in the Vali's 'village enterprise'. Contained in the 19/11/1936 report of the Kayseri Valisi and C.H.P. Ilyönkurul başkanı Adli Bayman to the C.H.P. Genel Sekreterliği in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/837.310.2/5th Büro.

[220] Kayseri Halkevi Köy tetkikleri seri 1 – 5, *Tavlusun, Germin, Mimar Sinan, Argıncık* and *Talas köyü* (Kayseri: Vilayet Matbaası, 1936 - 38).

[221] Önder, *Kayseri Basın tarihi*, p. 165. The text of a speech given by Özdoğan at the Kayseri Halkevi in 30/01/1938 is contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/227.895.1/1st Büro.

[222] Abstract from the No 238 report of the Aydın mebusu (MP) A. S. Levent, Niğde Bölge Müfettişi, Kayseri 16/07/1942 in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/671.259.1/4th Büro.

[223] Önder, *Kayseri Basın tarihi*, pp. 109-10.

of the People's House, whether (un)official pressure from above, or sheer interest, it did not last for long.

Sahir Üzel, on the contrary, is an exception among the category 'Civil Servants', in that he appears as a member continuously from 1932 at least up until 1940. In 1932 he is a member and, from 1937 to 1940, the chairman of the Library and Publication Section of the Kayseri Halkevi. Üzel, a scribe in the Public Works Department and the Kayseri correspondent of the Cumhuriyet newspaper, also contributed articles to Erciyes, the House's journal and gave speeches, as the 1938 report of the House indicates.[224] He was also publishing articles in Kayseri, the local newspaper.

Artisans, Merchants, workers, farmers

The Halkevleri lists, as well as the Inspectors reports and the Party papers, classify the Houses' members as Teachers, Doctors, Lawyers, Civil Servants, Workers, Merchants and/or Esnaf and Farmers. In the case of the Kayseri People's House, workers, Merchants, Farmers and Esnaf members seem to play some role during the first years. According to the above lists of members, in 1934 the overall number of Workers/merchants/esnaf/farmers is 6/41, in 1937 14/44 and 11/40, while in 1940 no member seems to belong these three categories. Tacettin (Tacettinoğlu) is the only tradesman whom the available sources indicate as more active in both the Halkevi activities and the political and economic life of Kayseri. Between 1932 and 1938 he was among the members of the Administrative Committee of the Kayseri Chamber of Commerce (Kayseri Ticaret Odası).[225] He was also a member of the Municipal Council and for a short period of time the mayor of Kayseri in 1950. The 28/01/1938 report of the House states that he gave two speeches during 1937, one at the Cumhuriyet Bayramı and one during the Tasarruf Haftası.[226] As for the rest of the merchants, esnaf and farmers mentioned in the lists above as members of the Committees between 1934 and 1937, their names are not to be found anywhere else in the sources used in this essay. The disappearance of members from these occupational categories in the 1940 list suggests that they had not been equally important in the activities of the Halkevi as schoolteachers.

Mahir Şener, chairman of the Fine Arts Committee from 1934 till, at least, 1938, is an interesting case. He is a worker (pipe fitter – teşviyeci), probably a foreman, and the only worker - chairman of a Halkevi Section in Kayseri. In 1937, seven out of nine chairmen were teachers, one a Civil Servant and Mahir Şener the only işçi. Hamit, Ali and Sait are three more teşviyeci featuring in the Halkevi lists in 1934 and 1937. Nevertheless, none of them seems to have

[224] He gave two speeches, at the *Zafer Bayramı* and at the *Dil Bayramı* in 1937. 28/01/1938 report of Kayseri Halkevi contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/837.310.2/5th Büro. About Üzel also in Önder, *Kayseri Basın tarihi*, p. 55.
[225] www.kayserito.org.tr.
[226] **BCA CHP**, 490.1/837.310.2/5th Büro.

published anything in Erciyes, the Halkevi's journal, or in any of the books/brochures published by the House. In the 1940 list they quietly disappear, as well as all the esnaf and farmer Halkevi Committee members, to a dominant teacher (29/44), and, to a lesser extent, civil servant majority.

Reading the figures

A first crude indication of the People's House's appeal among the population of Kayseri can be extracted from a comparison between the membership statistics and the population of the city of Kayseri as recorded in the 1935 census. Three groups of figures are given: the Halkevi overall membership, the Halkevi Committees' membership and the population statistics. The indication is crude because of the suspected artificiality of the numbers and the given occupational categories of the members' statistics – consider the certain need of the Halkevi officials, all local Party men, the town's socioeconomic elite, to demonstrate their achievements to Ankara; the absence of the category civil servants although we know that a significant part of the active members were civil servants; the unclear category 'Fine Arts'. With these restrictions in mind, the comparison yields the following result:

Table 5

Percentages of occupational categories among the overall Kayseri city male population, the Halkevi members and the Halkevi Committee members.

	Kayseri (male)[227] population 1935	**Halkevi members 1937**	**Halkevi Committee members 1934 – 1940**
Workers	29,4%	26,5%	All three categories
Merchants	6,2%	12%	
Farmers	8,2%	11%	
Sub Total	**43,8%**	**48,5%**	**13%(1934) - 31%(1937) – 0%(1940)**
Teachers		10%	22%(1934) - 65%(1940)
Civil Servants	10%		43%(1934) - 22%(1940)

Sources: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık İstatistik Genel Direktörlüğü Genel nüfus sayımı 20 İlk teşrin 1935, *Kayseri Vilayeti*, Vol. 33, (İstanbul: Hüsnütabiat Basımevi, 1937); *Kayseri Halkevi Armağanı*, No 3, (Kayseri: Yeni Matbaa, 1934); 28/1/1938 report of Kayseri Halkevi contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/837.310.2/5th Büro; 3/3/1940 report of Hilmi Çoruh in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/671.263.1/4th Büro.

[227] The female population is not taken into account because 94,7% of the Kayseri city women is registered as 'jobless'.

The first comment on the above table would be to state the overrepresentation of teachers among the Halkevi members, but especially among the Sectional Committees. Together with the Civil Servant members, they constitute the majority of the Committee members. If the number 200, given in the 1937 members' statistics is correct, then almost the total majority of the Kayseri teachers were Halkevi members; even teachers from other parts of the Kayseri Vilayeti might have also registered.[228] The teacher preponderance coincides and probably correlates with the well-known Party and state desire and policy to have the teacher's army, as it is called occasionally, enlist in the Houses.

A second remark would be that the absence of the category 'Civil Servant' in the House Membership statistics seems rather strange given their noticeable presence in the Sectional Committees. Moreover, this absence makes the rest of the categories unclear – consider the category 'Fine Arts'.

The merchants of Kayseri seem to have registered in large numbers. According to the 1935 census they comprise the 6,2% of the Kayseri male population, while they stand for 12% of the House's overall members. Their preponderance in the House can be explained by the fact that they compose a large part of the CHP manpower in urban centers. Merchants also compose the larger part of the 13% in 1934 and 31% in 1937 joint category of workers, farmers and merchants in the Halkevi Committees. Farmer Committee members do not exist. As for the worker Committee members, they are limited to the small group of pipe fitters (*teşviyeci*) mentioned above. As skilled workers, probably coming from the same workplace and/or social space, this group cannot be considered as representatives of the large unskilled industrial (or not) workforce of Kayseri.

In sum, although the proportion of farmers and workers among the Halkevi members is almost identical to the percentage of farmers and workers of the Kayseri population, these two categories are definitely underrepresented in, or even excluded from the House's executive, with the exception of the *teşviyeci* company. Teachers, Civil Servants and merchants, on the contrary, make up the largest part of the Halkevi members, although they comprise a rather small section of the Kayseri population. The preponderance of teachers and civil servants, but not merchants, even rises in the Committees and the People's House's administration. In addition, merchants do not contribute articles to the Halkevi journal, or appear in the Halkevi activity reports. An explanation for this is that during the first years after their establishment the Houses were one of the most important projects of the Party and gathered around them a large part of the Party's members, a large part of which was composed in provincial centres by merchants and artisans. Without ignoring the Party directives to register or any kind of official pressure to do so, we must also consider that

[228] 229 were all the teachers appointed in the whole of the Kayseri Vilayeti in 1931-2. 88 were appointed in Kayseri, while the rest in the villages of the Vilayet. *Başvekalet istatistik umum müdürlüğü, Maarif istatistikleri 1923 – 1932*, (İstanbul: Devlet matbaası, 1933), pp. 82 and 93.

many Party members registered for political reasons as well, to show their commitment to the Party, or even not to lose any status the Halkevi membership might entail. In the 1940s though, during the war period and its hardships, but especially with the end of the war and the gradual 'opening' of the political regime and the creation of opposition parties, the Halkevleri in general, partly because of the criticisms it attracted, adopted a more educational and less partisan appearance. This offers an explanation for the gradual disappearance of merchants and the increasing presence of teachers.

The Kayseri Halkevi then seems to have gathered around it the majority of the local schoolteachers and professionals, a part of the town's civil servants and merchants. Turning to the executive of the House, the members of its Committees, we observe a clear teacher predominance, which also entails the presence of students, as the sources indicate as well.[229] The administrative cadre of the House then was drawn from a very small part of the population of Kayseri for sure. What is interesting is that it was not the local Party elite that had already been staffing the local Party structures and the rest of the local political and social associations that totally occupied the Halkevi administrative cadre. Rather, it did so together with schoolteachers and other educated civil servants and professionals, a number of whom were non-locals. Furthermore these schoolteachers and professionals seem to carry out most of the House's activities, in contrast to merchant members who seem to minimally interfere with the House's program of activities. On the other hand, the financial control of the House was in the hands of the local Party structure and part of its income came from the municipality, both structures controlled by local Party elites, which were locals, in their majority merchants and professionals, from local elite families. The Halkevi chairman was after all appointed by them usually among their members.

In a sense, at first glance the available sources portray a Halkevi space inhabited and controlled on the one hand by local Party elites providing the political and financial capital necessary for the House to operate, and, on the other hand, by educated state employees (teachers, civil servants) and professionals, a large part being non-locals, providing the 'scientific' capital, their technical and professional expertise. Although, a first reading of the sources would allow us to speak of two categories of Halkevi executive members – interestingly quite similar to the way the centre imagines and designs the Halkevi space, we should not apprehend them as quite distinct and dissimilar. Rather, we should allow for both dissimilarities and conflicts, as well as convergences and alliances between Halkevi actors. We should view the Halkevi space not only in its textbook terms, but also as an extension of the

[229] Theatrical plays were staged by students of various schools. *Kayseri*, No 714, 15 October 1932, p.1., and 1 April 1940, p. 2; *Kayseri Lise Mecmuası*, No 5, 30 April – May 1933, p. 19. Teachers were also organizing literature evenings together with students or giving lectures followed by students. *Kayseri Lise Mecmuası*, No 5, 30 April – May 1933, p. 20. Gymnastic shows were given by students in the Halkevi Hall. Language, physics and chemistry courses for students were opened in the House. *Erciyes*, No 28 and 29, May, June/July 1945.

local society and politics, thus an arena of both negotiation and conflict between individuals and fractions. Consider for example the existence of other constellations of power existing parallel and in relation with the local Party elites and the teachers and professionals operating in the Halkevi. Adli Bayman, the governor of Kayseri is an instructive example: a non-local high-level bureaucrat, heading most of the state services in the province plus the local Party structure, due to the 1936 decision for closer cooperation of State/Goverment and Party structures, and thus supervising the local Halkevi.

The sources do not indicate whether the people frequenting the Halkevi and its activities (conferences, concerts, plays, meetings) were also from the same restricted parts of the local society, although some indications imply that this was the case. In other words, we have a clear picture of who were (and what was the position in the local society of) the people directing the House and its activities, but only few sources indicating who were the recipients of them, the audiences of its concerts and plays, those registered in its courses, or the users of its library;[230] in short, which were the segments of the local society affected by the House's activities, or else, to what extent did the House (and its sermons) penetrate the local population - teachers, students and civil servants excluded.

[230] A table attached to the 28/1/1938 report of the Kayseri Halkevi, contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/837.310.2, shows that almost 1/3 of its library users to be students. Moreover, teachers, civil servants, officers, students and liberal professions (*serbest meslek*) make up the 70% of the total users between 1/7/1937 and 31/12/1937.

II. Balıkesir

This part focuses on the People's House of the town of Balıkesir. The first principal objective is to study the constituency of the House in the local society, or, more specifically, to determine the House's manpower, its members and executive. A second corollary aim is to place this constituency into the local society. The rationale behind this positioning of the Halkevi men and women into the locality is to appreciate the environment, or context, within which the Halkevi was operating. This act of contextualization entails at first the study of the local population, based on the population census of 1935. The primary organization in charge of the Halkevi, the local Party, its members, staff and leadership forms the second focus of this chapter. Next to the Party, other local institutions and their personnel will be examined, to the extent our sources allow for such an investigation. Thirdly, the Halkevi's membership statistics available and the managing team of the House are to be examined in terms of their gender, educational background, occupation and their relations to the local society.[231] All the above date then is collectively examined in an attempt to uncover the position of the House's personnel in the society and populace of Balıkesir; the segments of the local society the Halkevi draws its manpower from; the control and influence of the local Party structures upon the Halkevi; in short, the position the House occupied in the local society.

Finally, the conclusions of this part are compared to the findings of the part about the Halkevi of Kayseri. The similarities and differences between the comparable data for both cities (their population, Party and other social and political structures and People's Houses) are examined. An attempt is made to account for the similarities and differences between the two cases and offer some primary suggestions about the factors that can be constitutive of them and, thus, might have general interpretative value for People's Houses elsewhere and for the dynamics of the social change they were meant to initiate and advance.

Balıkesir society: population, Party, Associations

Population

According to the 1935 general census[232] the city of Balıkesir had a population of 26.699. Once again, as in the case of Kayseri, the majority of the female population (91.8%) is registered as "without profession, profession unknown or uncertain". A rather large part of the male population (41.4%) as well falls into the same category. Due to the almost total absence of

[231] Due to a limited availability of sources for the 18 years the House was operating, we concentrate on the period yielding a dense set of data, that is the first years, especially between 1933 and 1935, although some Party papers used here were composed as late as the mid 1940s.

[232] Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık istatistik Genel Direktörlüğü. Genel Nüfus sayımı. 20 ilk teşrin 1935, *Balıkesir Vilayeti*, Vol. 8, (İstanbul: Hüsnütabiat Basımevi, 1936).

information about the women of Balıkesir in the census, the analysis below is based on the data given for men, unless otherwise mentioned.

The largest occupational category is registered under the title "Public Administration, Services and Professions". It stands for the 20.9% of the total male population of the city, mainly including all types of state employees (civil servants, teachers, doctors, nurses, judges). "Industry and artisans" forms the second largest category (18.4%). The title though is misleading since the city of Balıkesir did not have any large industries or any industrial working force. Most of those registered were various construction workers and artisans – *esnaf* (grocers, bakers, butchers, photographers, etc). An 8.3% of the male population is registered as farmer. The next occupational category is the merchants with a 7.2% (Merchants, Banks, Hotel, coffeehouse owners, "other commerce-related occupations"). The last category of occupations related to "Transport and Communication" makes up the 3.2%.

As for the local women, the largest part having a registered occupation is working as farmers (4.1% of female populations). Balıkesir boasted of a rather large student population. An almost 7% of the overall female population is registered as student. The percentage of male students to the male population is 12%, while the overall percentage of students to the town's population is 10%. Teachers form the only major occupational category with a female majority (82 women for 41 men). So, students and teachers were the two of the few categories of the local population that included substantial numbers of women.

Local CHP

In one of his reports, Fuat Sirmen, MP for Erzurum and Party Inspector of the Balıkesir area, provided the General Secretariat with the names and occupations of the members of the Party Administrative Committees of the province of Balıkesir he inspected.[233] Not all the *Idare Heyetleri* members are there; the inspector mainly visited most of the Party structures of the city of Balıkesir and of the other cities in the Province (Balya, Edremit, Burhaniye, Dursunbey, Erdek, Ayvalık, Gönen, Bandırma, Sındırğı and Susığırlık, all *ilçe*, that is sub provinces). In that sense his report presents the local Party leadership of the towns and not of the province's rural hinterland. He reports the names of 205 members of the Party Administrative Committees. The largest group, 54% or 111 persons, is formed by all kinds of Merchants and Artisans (grocer, shoe-maker, baker, tailor, tobacco merchant, driver, oil merchant, petition writer (*arzuhalcı*), shop owners). 33 persons (16%) were civil servants or bureaucrats of all kinds (the Prefect, the mayor, scribes in various state departments, Agricultural Bank, Municipalities). An 11% was composed of the liberal professions (lawyers, doctors, pharmacists, dentists). Only six were registered as farmers, but we have to keep in mind that the report mostly registers urban Party members, since the Inspector did not visit villages and places smaller than the sub-province level. Four schoolteachers were also registered. Together with the farmers and two workers they make the 2% of the 205 names given by Fuat Sirmen. Lastly there is a 13% (or 27 persons)

[233] Report dated 15/2/1937 contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/623.46.1.

described only by their position in the Provincial or Municipal Assemblies. If we distribute these 27 persons to the above categories accordingly the percentages emerge as follows: almost 62% for merchants and artisans, close to 20% for civil servants and bureaucrats and something less than 15% for the professionals.

In his report, Fuat Sirmen presents the overall Party membership in the region. The central Kaza of Balıkesir had 9.196 members over its total population of 154.760, that is a 5,9%. The percentage for the rest of the sub provinces ranged from 4,5% for Sısığırlık to 11% for Edremit. The overall percentage for the province was 7,5%, almost the same as the overall membership percentage for Turkey at that time.[234] In 1941 the percentage for Balıkesir rose to 8,5%, again identical to the national percentage.[235] The first biannual activity report of the Provincial Party Administrative Committee of 1943 raised the Party members in the province to 41.704, an 11,5% of the 1935 population.[236] Even if we allow for the population growth from 1935 to 1942, the percentage to the overall population has to be higher than the 8,5% of the previous 1941 figures. The real numbers should be somehow lower for a number of reasons. First of all, we have to account for the local Party men's inclination to report inflated number of members in order to please the center. The local party structures from the lower *ocak* level informed the higher structure to which they were hierarchically linked of their activities and members. Thus, from *ocak* to *nahiye*, from *nahiye* to *kaza*, then to the Vilayet level, and finally to Ankara, the numbers could have potentially been altered a number of times. Secondly, an unknown number of members were registered in more than one Party structure, usually due to their change of residence. In most cases, these members were never deleted from their previous Party register.[237] Nevertheless, the importance of these statistics is not related to their numerical accuracy, rather to their capability to show the upward tendency of the party membership in the long run.

Another document dated 19/3/1941 from the archive of the General Secretariat of the CHP offers two tables, reproduced below, with the occupational and educational distribution of the members of *all* the Party Administrative Committees of the Balıkesir Vilayeti.

Table 6.
Members according to educational background.

Administrative Committees	Higher	Lise	High school	Primary School	Milli Mektep	Illiterate	Total
Ocak	7	20	243	1031	796	744	**2841**
Nahiye	3	13	67	138	52	11	**284**
Kaza	7	26	24	16	1	0	**74**

[234] Esat Öz gives a 7,8% for 1936. Öz, *Türkiye'de Tek-Parti Yönetimi*, p. 182.
[235] Öz, *Türkiye'de*, p. 183.
[236] CHP Balıkesir VİLAYETİ İdare Heyeti 1942 birinci 6 aylık çalışma raporu (biannual report) 25/6/942, p. 2, contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/624.49.2.
[237] This was acknowledged by the Party inspector Fuat Sirmen in his report mentioned above contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/623.46.1, p. 12.

Vilayet	4	2	3	0	0	0	**9**
Total	**21**	**61**	**337**	**1185**	**849**	**755**	**3208**

Source: Report of Balıkesir Vilayeti İdare Heyeti Reisliği in 19/3/1941 contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/276.1106.1.

Table 7.

Members according to occupational background.

Occupation	Ocak	Nahiye	Kaza	Vilayet	Total
Lawyer	4	1	2	2	**9**
Doctor	2	0	1	0	**3**
Pharmacist	1	0	2	2	**5**
Veterinarian	0	0	0	0	**0**
Land owner	122	31	6	1	**160**
Teacher	23	15	6	0	**44**
Engineer	0	0	0	0	**0**
Retired officer	3	3	0	0	**6**
Retired Civil Servant	13	12	2	0	**27**
Merchant	308	66	43	4	**421**
Farmer	2047	154	12	0	**2213**
Worker	318	2	0	0	**320**
Total	**2841**	**284**	**74**	**9**	**3208**

Source: Report of Balıkesir Vilayeti İdare Heyeti Reisliği in 19/3/1941 contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/276.1106.1.

This second report that gives the Administrative Committees' membership for the entire province has to be read together with the Fuat Sirmen's report that is giving the members of the Administrative Committees of the central sub-province, that is the city of Balıkesir from the Vilayet to neighborhood level (*ocak*), plus the Administrative Committee members of the towns in the Province (sub province level). In Sirmen's report, i.e. in Balıkesir and the towns of the province, farmers form a tiny, unimportant percentage of the Party Administrative Committee members, while the 1941 report about the entire province reveals a striking 68,9% of farmer members. A 92,4% of these farmer members were registered in the *ocak* Party level. The *ocak* is the smallest Party structure corresponding to neighborhoods and, mostly, villages. As for the mighty percentages the consortium of merchants, artisans, and civil servants achieve in the sub-province (*kaza*) and Vilayet level, it retreats to a tiny 17% of the membership of the entire Party structures of the Province. If we consider these statistics from a different perspective, the percentage of merchant members, for instance, decreases as we descend to the *ocak* (village) level; from 44% (Vilayet administrative committee), to 58% (*Kaza* level), to 23% (*nahiye*), to a 10% at the *ocak* level. In other words, as we climb the ladder towards the upper echelons of the Party that were definitely more important in terms of decision-making, we observe the preponderance of civil servants, professionals and merchants, or else of urban elites. If we move downwards,

towards the villages, the Party membership statistics tend to overlap with the overall population, an observation made by Esat Öz as well.[238]

Another rough indication of this tendency can be also demonstrated by a simple comparison of the percentage of illiterates between the Administrative Committee members and the overall Party members of the province of Balıkesir. The 19/3/1941 report[239] of the members of the İdare Heyetleri gives a 23% of illiterate members, while the 1942 biannual report[240] of the Party membership offers a 42% of illiterate members. Given the known tendency of local Party men to exhibit a picture that looked more amenable to the center, we might also assume that a part of the 45% of the Party members registered as "literate or Primary education" (*İlk tahsil veya okur yazar*) might have actually been practically illiterate or just able to read. In that case, the actual percentage of illiteracy among the Party membership has to be considered higher.

Although the above documents did not differentiate between female and male members, Fuat Sirmen's report gives an indication of the female participation in the Party structures: only one woman is mentioned among the Administrative Committee members of the towns of Balıkesir, Balya, Edremit, Burhaniye, Ayvalık, Dursunbey, Bandırma, Sındırğı, Gönen, Erdek, and Susırlığı. It almost goes without saying that the female participation in the lower Party structures (villages mostly), if existing at all, should have been exceptional, or, more probably, nonexistent.

Local Associations

The social and political landscape of a Turkish town in the mid-thirties and forties cannot be fully understood by examining its population and Party structures, or the members and executive of its Halkevi alone. Balıkesir, for instance, hosted a cluster of associations and institutions with varying goals and structures that were apparently attracting, or at least their administrative members came from, the local elites.

Some of these associations were local, others had nationwide presence; their level of independence from Party and state varied, some being totally independent only in theory. In reality though, they were staffed and administered by local elites. Moreover, they were inspected by Party and state men, as the following document displays. One of the duties of the Party Inspectors was to inspect the non-party associations, clubs, as well as the local press, and inform the Party about the level of their cooperation with the local Party and state authorities. Similar information were requested by local Party structures; in one of the questions they had to reply in the biannual reports they were sending to the General Secretariat, the local Administrative Committees had to provide information regarding local associations and societies, athletic clubs, workers' unions and local newspapers. In these reports the local Party

[238] Esat Öz, *Türkiye'de tek-parti yönetimi*, p. 186.
[239] **BCA CHP**, 490.1/276.1106.1.
[240] **BCA CHP**, 490.1/624.49.2.

structures were also asked about their cooperation with non-Party associations; the level of the associations' commitment to the regime's ideals; the existence of any discord between the local Party and non-Party associations; whether their chairmen or Committee members were Party members, and similar questions.

In 1944, the Party Administrative Committee of the province of Balıkesir, following the No. 9/2483 Party directive of 1/12/1943, informed the General Secretariat on the local Associations.[241] Ten Associations are mentioned (*Türk Hava Kurumu*, *Kızılay*, *Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu*, *Ulusal Ekomomi ve Arttırma kurumu*, *Yüksek Tahsil Talebe kurumu*, *Öğretmenler ve kültür müntesipleri biriktirme yardım birliği*, *Yoksulları Gözetme Birliği*, *Avcılık kulübü*, *Şehir kulübü*, and *Yardım Sevenler Cemiyeti*). With the exception of the *Türk Hava Kurumu*, *Kızılay*, and *Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu*, all the remaining associations were established in Balıkesir after 1932. The document also lists the names of the members of the Administrative Committees of the above associations and whether they were Party members or not. Out of 69 names 53 were Party members (one of them also a teacher), three were identified as not Party members, three as civil servants (*memur*) and 10 as teachers. Moreover, it seems that some of them were not just Party members. At least 12 of the persons mentioned in the above document also appear as members of the Party Administrative Committees of the town of Balıkesir, according to the 1936 inventory of Fuat Sirmen mentioned above, although there was an eight years distance between the two documents.

Next to these societies, the city of Balıkesir hosted a Teachers' Academy (*Muallim Mektebi*), a Lise, and a number of (*Orta okul*) High and (*Ilk okul*) Primary schools. The existence of these educational structures, their staff and students is essential for an understanding of the local society and, consequently, of the local People's House, its clientele, its administrative and working personnel. Based on articles by the local newspaper and the Halkevi journal, we immediately realize what most of the sources and the secondary literature on the People's Houses mention, i.e. the predominance of schoolteachers in the Houses and their activities. In short, the Balıkesir Lisesi with its 51 teachers,[242] not to mention their colleagues in the High and Primary schools and the Teachers' Academy with their students, function as one of the local nuclei (in all probability the most energetic and important) of personnel the local House is based on.

To recapitulate, the social and political associations and clubs of the city of Balıkesir in the 1930s and 1940s were by majority staffed on the one hand by members of local notable families, be it merchants or professionals, and, on the other, by state employees and teachers, some of them locals, but mostly outsiders appointed to Balıkesir. The placement of local elite members in various local structures/associations appears in other sources as well, such as the reports sent occasionally to the General Secretariat of the local Party Administrative Committee members by Party Inspectors or the applications

[241] Letter No. 27 dated 31/1/1944 signed by the chairman of the Party Administrative Committee of the province of Balıkesir contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/595.58.3.
[242] *Alkım*, Balıkesir Lisesi Dergisi, No 18-22, (15 May – 15 September 1938).

sent to the Party Headquarters before the national elections by the same members – a source to be treated below. These sources display the control of the Party structures and the non-Party associations and unions by the same group of people.

Nevertheless, these sources offer a rather 'frozen' picture of these actors' participation in, or rather membership of these structures. The dynamics of the symbiosis of people with obviously different occupational and educational profiles within the existing social and political associations of Balıkesir is missing. In other words, the above sources offer a highly static picture of their coexistence and interaction, bereft of any conflicts or antagonisms that are inherent in any given political landscape occupied by actors competing for a limited number of resources, and especially within a context of an extensive top-down sociopolitical change wherein a wide range of well entrenched habits, mentalities and attitudes (from political legitimization and religious outlook to everyday attire) were rendered obsolete and even treacherous, thus creating breaches between social actors that could be used in their struggles. Any set (new) sociopolitical order creates its enemies and the Kemalist regime was no exception to that; 'reactionaries', 'Islamic lodges', 'foreign ideas and movements' (catchword for communism), to state a few proclaimed threats of the regime, were prescribed categories ready to be used against adversaries. Given that the Houses, as we have seen in the case of Kayseri and, now, of Balıkesir, were one of the structures local elites occupied next to the Party branches and other local associations; given the conflictual nature of local politics – politics defined here as the exertion of actors to occupy a limited number of positions of power, status and authority, then the People's House being such a structure of power and authority cannot but have been the locus of conflicts and struggles between local actors. The case of the first chairman of the Halkevi of Balıkesir to be treated in the fourth chapter offers a more dynamic picture of the coexistence and antagonisms between local elite actors.

Balıkesir Halkevi

Background and establishment

Before entering into our discussion of the People's House of Balıkesir, it is necessary to mention the prior existence of a Turkish Hearth (*Türk Ocağı*) in the same town. In the First Part of this thesis we have discussed the close relation between the Halkevi institution and the Turkish Hearths in terms of their cadre, ideology and activities. There were several similarities between the two institutions, in both ideological and organizational terms. The People's Houses were founded upon the existing structure of the Turkish Hearths and the formative/constitutional documents of both institutions share great similarities. The property of the Hearths was transfered to the CHP and used for the establishment of the Houses. The first Houses were founded in the buildings of the Turkish Hearths. A degree of continuity in the human resources of both institutions is also to be expected, although the necessary sources to confirm this assumption are not available. The little information

available indicate that the Turkish Hearth of Balıkesir was one of the more active in the country, if we take the frequency Karaer mentions it in his book on the Turkish Hearts as a measure of its output. In 1925 the Turkish Hearth of Balıkesir opened a clinic and had patients examined by itinerant (*gezici*) doctors; in 1927 the Hearth organized shows and speeches to 'enlighten the people' on 'national, financial, social and medical issues'; in 1928 it opened courses to teach the new alphabet and gave dance parties (*balolar*); in 1930 it is reported that the Hearth continued its 'villagist' activities and that it openned a typewriting course for women granting diplomas to 20 ladies.[243]

The Halkevi of Balıkesir was established in December 1932. In the following days it started to register members and elect the members of its activity Sections.[244] "The local Party Administrative Committee was ordered to open the People's House of Balıkesir in 11/12/32. Esat Adil was elected among its members as the House's chairman. The House is composed of seven rooms, of two Halls, of 80 and 500 capacity, and a large garden. Up until now our members are 577. 97 of them have a university degree and 14 from a European University. *Balıkesir Gazetesi* is a wall newspaper, printed once a week in 1500 items by the House's Village Section. The House will open a *Köylüye kolaylık bürosu* (Office for the Assistance of Villagers)."[245]

A brochure published in 1934 by the Halkevi of Balıkesir describes its establishment in the following words:

> *The Administrative Committee of the Balıkesir CHF after receiving the order to open the Balıkesir Halkevi in 11/12/1934 elected from its own members Esat Adil as president of the Halkevi and started the preparatory works for the opening of the House. Building: The building of the old Turkish Hearth situated near the station was given to our House.*[246]

[243] İbrahim Karaer, *Türk Ocakları (1912 - 1931)*, (Ankara: Türk Yurdu Neşriyatı, 1992), pp. 74, 87, 95, 113, 158-9, and 171.

[244] "Halkevi Faaliyete Geçiyor", *Türk Dili*, 20 December 1932, p. 1; "Halkevi Kütüphane ve Neşriyat ve Temsil şubeleri bugün toplanarak komitelerini seçeceklerdir", *Türk Dili*, 23 December 1932, p. 1; "Halkevi Şubeleri faaliyete", *Türk Dili*, 25 December 1932, p. 1; "Halkevi Güzel San'atlar Şubesi bu akşam toplanacaktır", *Türk Dili*, 26 December 1932, p. 1.

[245] "Balıkesir Halkevi Tesis Faaliyeti", *Kaynak*, No 1, (February 1933), p. 32.

[246] Balıkesir Halkevi, *Sekiz ayda nasıl çalıştı ve neler yaptı* (Balıkesir: Balıkesir Vilayet Matbaası, nd), p. 27.

Members

The following table with the membership of the House is published in page 27 of the brochure.

Table 8.
Halkevi Membership statistics.

Section	Men	Women	Total	Primary	Middle	High
Language, History Literature	48	3	51	2	35	14
Fine Arts	105	37	142	39	94	9
Sports	84	3	87	33	44	10
Social Assistance	99	6	105	9	68	28
Courses	62	8	70	22	44	4
Library	68	4	72	2	56	14
Village	105	0	105	28	62	15
Museum	15	0	15	2	11	2
Theatre	48	6	54	6	43	5
Total	**635**	**67**	**702**	**143**	**458**	**101**

Source: Balıkesir Halkevi, *Sekiz ayda nasıl çalıştı ve neler yaptı* (Balıkesir: Balıkesir Vilayet Matbaası, nd), p. 27.

According to this statistical data, almost 80% of the Halkevi members were High School/Lise and/or University graduates. The remaining 143 members were registered under the title 'Primary Education' (Ilk Tahsil). With respect to the absence of any illiterate members mentioned, one might convincingly assume that either the illiterate were not registered (or even allowed to register) in the Halkevi, or that they were 'hidden' under the category 'Primary Education'. In any case, the above data suggest that all Halkevi members were literate and, most important, that four out of five Halkevi members were graduates of High Schools or Universities. This is an astonishing ratio compared not only with the educational background of the population of Balıkesir in the 1930s, but also with the population of several areas in Turkey today. It can be doubtlessly argued that the Halkevi was drawing not only its administrative members – as we shall see below- but also its members from the educated minority in the local society. Thus, the People's House, at least upon its establishment, was appealing to the literate and educated parts of the local population. On the other hand, the illiterate of Balıkesir, a total 62% of the city's population (49,4% for men and 75,4% for

women),[247] were totally absent from the House's membership statistics and in all probability formed a tiny minority among its members.

Next to the illiterate, women were also seriously underrepresented among the Halkevi members. Female members made only a 9,5% of the overall members. If we are to assume that the female members of the Halkevi came from the same social and occupational backgrounds as the female staff members (treated below), then a large part of these 67 women were predominately teachers and/or relatives (usually wives) of other usually educated Halkevi members. That means that some of them were not locals (teachers or wives/daughters of civil servants appointed to Balıkesir), while some (if not the majority) of the local female members were similarly teachers or Halkevi members next, or attached, to their male relatives, also members of the local Halkevi. In both cases, the Halkevi female minority appears to correspond to an even smaller, miniscule section of the local female population. To drive this reasoning even further, a part of this tiny female minority becomes inscribed in this space, an act that has a supposedly 'emancipatory' quality for women and runs against their seclusion and control by men, which is one of the aims upon which this institution was established, in a fashion that refutes the very logic behind this 'inscription', i.e. as wives or daughters of men, not just as women recently 'liberated' from the 'shackles of obscurantism'.

Apart from being plausible, if the above reading of the sources is correct, the above reasoning can then function as a crude indication of the penetration of the regime's emancipatory discourse and policies in relation to women into society and its popularity among the populace. The female presence/participation in the Houses is a subject pervading most of the sources – occasionally by its own ubiquitous absence – and we shall examine it in a more detailed fashion in the third part of this thesis drawing on sources that discuss women-related incidents directly.

Executive Members

The names of the Halkevi's Administrative Committee members are published in page 30 of the brochure "Balıkesir Halkevi, *Sekiz ayda nasıl çalıştı ve neler yaptı*".

[247] Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Başbakanlık istatistik Genel Direktörlüğü. Genel Nüfus sayımı. 20 ilk teşrin 1935, *Balıkesir Vilayeti*, Vol. 8, (İstanbul: Hüsnütabiat Basımevi, 1936), p. 42.

Table 9.
Administrative Committee (Idare Heyeti) of the Halkevi of Balıkesir.

Chairman	Esat Adil, jurist, member of *Vilayet Daimi Encümeni* (Standing Committee)
Secretary	Abdi, Chemist
Accountant	Suat, Primary School principal
Member	Ali Rıza, Surgeon, Memleket Hospital
Member	Halit Bedi, Music Teacher at Teachers' School
Member	Hasan, director of printing house (*matbaa müdürü*)
Member	Niyazi, chief interrogator
Member	Kemal, Doctor
Member	Bedri, High School teacher of Physics
Member	Avni, Pharmacist

Source: Balıkesir Halkevi, *Sekiz ayda nasıl çalıştı ve neler yaptı* (Balıkesir: Balıkesir Vilayet Matbaası, nd), p. 30.

The names of the members of the Sections' Administrative Committees follow in pages 30 and 31.[248] 14 school teachers, 11 professionals (doctor, lawyer, chemist), three merchants or artisans, seven state employees and three unidentified persons made up the 38 members of the Houses Administrative Committee. In other words, 32 out of 38 members were either state employees or professionals. Of the three merchants, Ekrem (Çavuldur) was a member of the Hacıilbey Party Administrative Committee in the city of Balıkesir,[249] the Chairman of the *Ulusal Ekomomi ve Arttırma Kurumu* in 1944[250] and a candidate for the 1934 municipal elections. He was not the only member of the 1934 Halkevi executive members to stand for the 1934 municipal assembly. Four more Halkevi executive members were candidates (Esat Adil, Avni, Kenan Emin, Sadık), although only Esat Adil managed to be elected.[251]

Besides their presence in the House's administrative cadre, the active engagement of teachers and, consequently, students in the activities of the House can be easily detected in the local press and the publications of the Halkevi. During the first weeks following the establishment of the House nine out of 13 members of three Sectional Committees were teachers;[252] public speeches (*konferans*) in the House were mostly delivered by teachers;[253] when the subject was of medical or legislative nature, doctors or lawyers might also

[248] The third issue of *Kaynak* published the names of the House's staff in April 1933. With a couple of exceptions the Committee members are the same. See "Halkevimizin bir buçuk ayda yaptığı ve başardığı işler", *Kaynak*, No 3, (19 April 1933), pp. 93-6.
[249] Fuat Sirmen's report of 15/2/1937 contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/623.46.1.
[250] Report of the Balıkesir Vilayeti İdare Heyeti Reisliği in 19/3/1941 contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/276.1106.1.
[251] Candidate list in *Savaş*, No 270, Sunday 30/9/1934, p. 1 and list of those elected in *Savaş*, No 282, Sunday 14/10/1934, p. 1. Artisans and merchants form the majority.
[252] "Halkevi Şubeleri Faaliyete", *Türk Dili*, 25/12/1932, p.1.
[253] Balıkesir Halkevi, *Sekiz ayda nasıl çalıştı ve neler yaptı* (Balıkesir: Balıkesir Vilayet Matbaası, nd), p. 12, 14-5; *Balıkesir*, 3/2/1936, p.1.

participate;[254] ten out of 14 actors/actresses of the first theatrical play staged in February 1933 were teachers;[255] teachers continued to stage plays in the Halkevi and open courses for students[256] and women;[257] students and teachers from the city's Lise and the Teacher's Academy recited poems during a 'literature night' in the Halkevi;[258] finally, students and teachers formed the bulk of the Halkevi library's users.[259] The majority of activities reported in the local sources (newspapers, *Kaynak*, Party and Halkevi sources) were either carried out by schoolteachers (occasionally with the cooperation of students) or by a small number of local professionals, usually doctors and lawyers, and a few state employees (Bank, Railway, various state departments). Most of the state employees and the professionals were Party members. Some of the teachers were also registered members of the ruling Party. Notwithstanding the fragmentary nature of the sources, the members and staff of other, beside Party and Halkevi, local associations and unions were people with the same educational and occupational profile, in many cases quite the same individuals.

In short, the sources used here suggest that the entirety of the political and social structures in the locality were occupied by a specific group of people – by majority men. We can broadly speak of local Party and state elites. Of course, the differentiation between locals and outsiders (usually state employees) cannot necessarily be always rigid. Many civil servants were locals. What is more important for our argument here is that it was the identity of an individual as an educated state employee and/or professional, local or outsider, Party member or not, that made him/her eligible to be an executive member of the People's House, the Red Crescent, the City Club or other similar associations. Most of the professionals were locals and Party members; some of them evidently came from local notable families other members of which were also Party members and executives (for example the families of Kırımlı, Seremetlioğlu, and Yırcalı). Teacher Halkevi members tend to be less Party members probably due to their status as civil servants (although exceptions exist) but also because a large number of them were not locals and were habitually reappointed to schools in other regions.

[254] "Konferans ve Nutuklar", *Kaynak*, No 10/11, (October 1933), p. 295.
[255] "24 Şubat", *Kaynak*, No 2, (19 March 1933), p. 64. Four of the six actresses were teachers, the remaining two were the wives of two of the actors.
[256] *Balıkesir*, 31/7/1933, p. 4. A physics class was opened for students in the Halkevi.
[257] *Balıkesir*, 16/12/1935, p. 3, 4. Sewing courses for women in the Mithatpaşa school.
[258] *Balıkesir*, 25/11/1935, p. 5.
[259] "Halkevimizin dördüncü üç aylık çalışması", *Kaynak*, No 22, (October 1934), p. 498. Four categories of readers are given: 'students', 'teachers', 'civil servants' and the rather vague category 'people'.

Conclusion

The basic assumption upon which this chapter is structured is that the study of the Halkevi institution as a space of interaction between the centre, its policies and projects, and the wider society and population requires the contextualization of the Halkevi space not only in relation to the sociopolitical order and discourse that established it, but additionally in relation to local societies and social forces, groups and individuals. This chapter executes this contextualization by outlining what I have called a human geography of the Halkevi space. Two provincial towns, Kayseri and Balıkesir, their population, local elites and their Houses offer the necessary local context, the stage or the map upon which to inscribe and thus test the textbook version of the Halkevi project, that we have attempted to describe in the first chapter.

Elites

Our data for both towns indicate that urban elites[260] were by majority bureaucrats (state employees usually in the military, education and administration) and local *eşraf* members (merchants, landowners and professionals). While some bureaucrats were non-locals posted to the area, the *eşraf* were locals from a number of prominent families, some members of which had studied and lived in big cities, in Istanbul, Ankara, or even abroad.[261] Local elites, local bureaucrats but mainly members of *eşraf* families occupy the local Party leadership, the Municipal and Provincial assemblies, the financial and cultural/social institutions of the region (Chambers of Commerce and Industry, City Clubs, various associations), are elected in the Parliament and act as representatives of their region in Ankara, but also serve as middle men between the state and the rest of the local population, the peasant majority through horizontal and vertical links with bureaucrats both in the locality and the centre, and the local population. Their status and function as middlemen had a long past as some of these had a tradition as tax farmers (*mültezim*).[262]

[260] The people who staff the local political, financial and social institutions.

[261] Hakkı Uyar has come to the same conclusion about local elites in his study of the lists of the second electors (*müntehibi sani*) of the 1935 elections for the towns of Denizli and Konya in his article "Tek Parti İktidarın Toplumsal Kökeleri", *Toplumsal Tarih*, No 106, (October 2002). For similar conclusions on Develi, a town in the province of Kayseri, see Ayşe Güneş Ayata, *CHP Örgüt ve İdeoloji* (Ankara: Gündoğan, 1992).

[262] I cannot claim to have carried out the necessary research to sustain such a statement, which is nevertheless supported by a number of monographs on provincial towns. See for instance Michael Meeker, *A Nation of Empire: The Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity* (California: University of California Press, 2002); Horst Unbehaun, *Türkiye kırsalında kliyentalizm ve siyasal katılım. Datça örneği :1923-1992* (Ankara: Ütopya, 2006). For a nuanced discussion on 'provincial elites' in the context of Ottoman History see Antonis Anastasopoulos, "Introduction", in Antonis Anastasopoulos (ed.), *Provincial elites in the Ottoman Empire*, Halcyon Days in Crete V. A Symposium Held in Rethymnon, 10 – 12 January 2003, (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 2005), pp. xi – xxviii.

Comparison

If we compare the statistics of the population and the Party elite of Kayseri and Balıkesir a number of differences and similarities emerge. First of all, although the city of Kayseri had almost twice the population of Balıkesir, the province of Balıkesir had twice the population of the province of Kayseri. Secondly, the workforce of the city of Balıkesir was quite different from that in Kayseri. The percentage of civil servants was 20% in Balıkesir and only 10% in Kayseri, indicating a far stronger state presence (state departments, educational and administrative institutions, civil servants and professions) in Balıkesir.[263] This presence is also evident if we compare the percentage of students in the population of the two cities; 10% in Balıkesir, a mere 6% in Kayseri. The comparison of the number of schoolteachers between the two towns and their surrounding provinces yields the same results: for 229 (107 women) teachers in the town of Balıkesir in 1932, just 88 (18 women) teachers in Kayseri. Similarly 260 (35 women) teachers were employeed in the rest of the province of Balıkesir, and just 141 (6 women) in Kayseri.[264] The percentages of farmers and merchants are almost identical for both cities, while the numbers of industrial workers and artisans are quite dissimilar indicating the presence of a growing industrial workforce in the factories of Kayseri, something missing in the city of Balıkesir (18,4% in Balıkesir, 29,4% in Kayseri).

Interestingly the comparison of the Party elite (Party Administrative Committees) of the province of Kayseri and Balıkesir does not yield any analogous differentiation. On the contrary, there is not any great dissimilarity between the Party bosses of the two provinces; there is a slight larger number of civil servants and merchants in the Administrative Committees of the city of Balıkesir, but what differentiates the two cities, i.e. the industrial working force, is completely absent from the Party statistics. In other words, the local Party leaders in both cities (and in the rest of the towns of the two provinces) were by and large stemming from the commercial and artisanal segments of the local society. A number of professions (doctors, lawyers) and various state employees were also Party executive members, mostly in the two cities rather than in the smaller towns, a quite reasonable phenomenon given that the occupational environment of these occupational groups, related as it is with the presence of state services (hospitals, schools, courts of law, financial and administrative institutions), is to be found in the larger financial and administrative centers, in our case mostly in the provincial centers of Kayseri and Balıkesir. Regardless of their presence in the two towns, workers and

[263] 644 teachers and civil servants plus 586 lower civil servants (*Daimi müstahdem*) in the Balıkesir province to just 237 teachers and civil servants plus 90 lower civil servants in Kayseri. Başvekalet İstatistik Umum müdürlüğü, *Vilayet Hususi İdareleri 1929 – 1936. Faaliyeti istatistiği. Varidat, masrifat, memurlar* (Ankara: Receb Ulusoğlu matbaası, 1938), p. 92, 95.
[264] Başvekalet istatistik umum müdürlüğü, *Maarif istatistikleri 1923 – 1932* (İstanbul: Devlet matbaası, 1933), pp. 76-7, 82, 93.

farmers were not a part of the Party leadership, although farmers were forming the bulk of the Party membership and leadership in the lower (*nahiye* and *ocak* levels) Party structures mostly in villages that were relatively insignificant in terms of decision-making.

Halkevi

In Kayseri the merchant Halkevi executive members were at least double than in Balıkesir upon the establishment and during the first years of the Halkevi (Kayseri: 13% in 1934 and 31% in 1937, Balıkesir: 7% in 1934). Conversely, the teachers, civil servants and professionals were staffing the Balıkesir House in greater numbers than in Kayseri at the same period (Balıkesir: 84%, Kayseri: 65% in 1934), which can be attributed to the greater numbers of these occupational groups in Balıkesir than in Kayseri. In other words, the state presence in Balıkesir, in terms of numbers of employees in educational, judicial, administrative and financial institutions, greater as it was than Kayseri, is displayed in the administrative members of the two Houses.

Although the Balıkesir Halkevi was mostly staffed by state employees and professions, the local Party elites, mostly merchants and artisans, formed the majority of the Party Administrative Committees, as we have seen, but also of most of the local associations and political structures (Municipal and Provincial Assemblies, Chamber of Commercial, City Club, etc). Moreover, members of local elite families appear among the staff and members of merely all local associations and social, financial and political structures (Yırcalı, Keskin, Kırımlı, Seremetlioğlu). The same family names appear in the Party Administrative Committees, and in the local Associations almost a decade later (1944).

To recapitulate, the Balıkesir Halkevi seemed to draw the town's state elites – state employees, teachers – and the liberal professions, in a sense the educated segments of the local society, locals or/and outsiders. The presence of local merchant and the artisanal urban elites in the Halkevi administration, on the other hand, were rather weak, compared to their pre-eminence and definitely their importance in the local Party structures, in the town's Associations and Clubs, and finally in the Municipal chamber. In Kayseri, on the other hand, while the Party membership and staff figures display an almost identical to Balıkesir picture, the Halkevi staff is more similar to the general population and Party membership distributed, although the presence of teachers and civil servants steadily grew up to the late 1940s.

This small differentiation between the cases of the Kayseri and Balıkesir Houses can be at least partially explained by a relative greater state presence in Balıkesir, in terms of state institution and personnel. Within the analytical framework of modernization theory or even centre – periphery relations the above finding can lead to a crude formula/hypothesis claiming that the existence and expansion of the state's penetration of the locality through its

offices and personnel is inversely proportional to the local Party elites' power and domination over the local society, population and the local People's House. The substantiation of this hypothesis of course needs further and more detailed case studies. Nevertheless, the 'state in society approach' and recent works of the anthropology of state urge us not to read the power relations in local contexts solely in exclusionary terms, but rather to study the interdependencies and multiple negotiations between various social groups and individuals. Moreover, in treating such assumptions we need to consider the dynamics of local societies. Our data here comes from provincial towns, Vilayet and kaza centers, where the majority of the People's Houses were established, exhibiting rather similar population and elite configurations, but we also have to account for structural dissimilarities and apparent divergences between many Halkevi centers.

More specifically, the membership figures of the Administrative Committees of a number of provincial Houses in Vilayet and Kaza centers reveal similar tendencies. In 1933 the Administrative Committee of the Halkevi of Aydin was composed of ten schoolteachers, two doctors, four bank employees and a writer.[265] Seventeen out of 32 members of the Administrative Committee of the Halkevi of Mersin were at the same date (1933) schoolteachers, bureaucrats and doctors. The occupation of the rest of the members was not defined, but a number of them were in all probability local merchants/artisans.[266] The Halkevi of yet another provincial centre, Trabzon, shows a similar picture. The 1935 membership statistics demonstrates that the identifiable majority of the Halkevi members were merchants, teachers, and professionals (doctors and lawyers). We have argued above that the membership statistics produced by the Houses were occasionally vague and ultimately not trustworthy. In this case the statistics refer to 357 members belonging to the unclear category 'fine arts'. Nevertheless, we can more or less trust the numbers for teachers (94), lawyers (8) and doctors (35). These occupational categories could not easily be inflated without being quite obvious; their numbers and whereabouts were easily detectable.[267] The provincial town of Uşak is another example displaying in 1937 similar figures in relation to the Administrative Committee members of the local Halkevi.[268] The Halkevi of Gaziantep is another similar example.[269]

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[265] Adil Adnan Öztürk, "Halkevleri ve Aydın Halkevi", *Tarih ve Toplum*, No 182, (February 1999), p. 44.
[266] Resul Yiğit, *Mersin Halkevi (1933-1951)*, (MA thesis, Mersin University, 2001), p. 35.
[267] İbrahim Azcan, *Trabzon Halkevi* (Trabzon: Serander, 2003), pp. 76, 86, 97, 101, 107, 111, 116, 119, and 122.
[268] *Uşak Halkevi, Bir Yıllık çalışmaları*, No 2, (İstanbul: Resimli Ay basımevi, 1937), pp. 20-1. 21 teachers, 11 clerks/civil servants (justice, bank, private sector), 7 merchants, 2 factory owners, 1 doctor, and 1 bank manager.
[269] *Gaziantep Halkevi Broşürü* (Gaziantep, 1935). 12 out of 29 members of the sectional Committees are teachers, 5 civil servants, the local gendarmerie commander and 2 doctors. The remaining members were 5 tradesmen and three farmers.

The above figures demonstrate that in provincial towns the Halkevi administration was mainly composed of civil servants, professionals and merchants, local Party and state elites. Although this was a definite tendency supported by many sources, we cannot argue here that it was an overall reality applicable to *all* Houses and provincial towns over Turkey. Other factors have to be taken into consideration as well. Regions with extremely dissimilar linguistic, financial and ethnic conditions and population – the southeast is a case in point – define the limits of applicability of the above hypothesis and must be treated separately, something though this thesis cannot account for. The example of Mardin is quite instructive. Within a population that in 1927 displayed an almost 90% illiteracy rate and whose mother tongue was by 85% other than Turkish, the local Halkevi seemed to be frequented and controlled almost exclusively by non-local civil servants.[270] The same applies for Artvin as well. Out of 29 members of the local House's Administrative Committee, 24 were civil servants (eight schoolteachers, three judges, five directors of state departments [*müdür*] and eight other civil servants). The five remaining members were the mayor, two Party chiefs, a merchant and an artisan.[271] In such cases, the existence of an extremely small in relation to other provincial towns[272] nucleus of non-local civil servants did not result in a Halkevi dominated by local merchants and artisans. The absence – rather common in most of the southeastern provinces - of a local Party structure that was habitually staffed by these urban strata is probably relevant.

On the other hand the membership statistics of the Halkevi of Eminönü, the first People's House in Istanbul, reveals a picture that was quite dissimilar from the Houses we study, although different from Mardin, defining in a sense the limits of the above hypothesis' applicability. The Eminönü Halkevi did not have a Village Section as no members were registered. Furthermore, only one member registered as farmer, while 4741 out of 5904 registered members were put under the category 'other occupations', in a members' list that did not include the category 'civil servant'.[273] The obvious argument is that the city and Houses of Istanbul cannot be comparable to provincial towns, where the majority of the People's Houses were operating.

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[270] Suavi Aydın, Kudret Emiroğlu, Oktay Özel, Süha Ünsal, *Mardin. Aşiret – Cemaat – Devlet* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 2000), 370 - 1, 374 – 382. CHP Mardin Halkevi, *Mardin* (İstanbul: Resimli Ay Matbaası, 1938). *Mardin Halkevi* (Mardin: Ulus Sesi Basımevi, 1935).

[271] From the 1941 activities' report of the Artvin Halkevi reproduced in a circular to all Houses by the General Secretariat of the CHP. Circular No 5/2035, dated 19/3/1941, in *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Genel Sekreterliğin Parti Teşkilatına Umumi Tebligatı, 1 Birinci Kanun 1941 den 30 Haziran 1941 tarihine kadar*, Vol. 18, (Ankara: Ulus Matbaa, 1941), p. 80.

[272] I am referring to provincial town with a larger state presence that host a number of state departments and personnel such as Kayseri.

[273] *İstanbul Eminönü Halkevi (1936 – 1938)*, (İstanbul, 1938), p. 64, where table showing the membership figures in 31/12/1937.

A place for the Turkish woman

The sources on both Halkevi and local Party structures and associations are the products of the correspondance between central and local Party. Most of these sources came in the form of standard forms that were devised by the central Party and had to be filled in by local Party structures or Party inspectors. Reports on local Party membership statistics, local associations, Halkevi members, executives and activities, all these documents were composed in the form of a questionnare, a set of questions to be answered, an amount of information to be given to the Party Headquarters. Interestingly enough, figures on women were only requested in relation to the People's Houses. Every six months the local Party structures were asked to report on the Party membership figures. Occasionally the central Party requested information on local non-Party associations and clubs. The Party inspectors had also to provide the Party regularly with information about a wide range of issues in relation to local societies: Party structures and conferences, the local press, all kinds of non-state and non-Party associations, the People's Houses, even state offices and personnel.

Nevertheless, among all the information the central Party was apparently asking information about women *only* in relation to the local Houses. Sporadically the General Secretariat sent directives regarding women and their participation in the political life of the locality or Turkey in general.[274] The majority of the Party papers though are silent on women. The statistics asked by the General Secretariat and composed by local Party structures on Party membership provide information about the educational and occupational distribution of members, never about gender.

The data on the Houses' membership though always provide information about female and male members. This trend can be explained when we consider the center's emphasis normative texts such as the Halkevi Bylaws put on the 'cultural' and not 'political' nature of the People's House. This preoccupation with the institution's non-political nature is probably related to the centre's expressed desire to enlist the support of the educated segments of society that are mainly state employees and thus in theory at least prohibited from entering overtly political entities, but also to establish an institution that would be more inclusive of the population than the local Party structures, in a sense to lure social groups and individuals who for a variety of reasons did not desire - *or were not considered fit* - to enter Party or explicitly political structures. Students and 'the youth' (*gençlik*), for example, although considered by the Party Bylaws as 'natural members' of the Party, were considered fit to enter the Party and politics only after having finished their studies and 'reached

[274] See for example the directive of Faik Barutçu, General Secretary of the CHP, sent in 5/7/1946 to the Halkevi chairmen to inform women Party members of the new, direct system of election to be applied for the first time. **BCA CHP**, 490.1/6.30.26.

an age of maturity'.[275] Needless to say, this attitude towards the youth concided with the respect for age/seniority.

My argument here is that the same applies for the place women were considered to occupy in a society broadly structured upon the segregation of sexes and the assignment of different social roles to different sexes. Politics as a public activity was considered to be the domain of men. My argument is that this perception of gender roles that was quite common in society was implicitely reproduced in the centre's silence and indifference when it came to women's participation in the Party structures, and in its explicit interest to have women register and participate in the Halkevi activities. Coupled with the emphasis laid on the 'cultural' and not 'political' character of the Halkevi as designated in its textbok version, the center's discourse appears to favour the engagement of women in 'cultural' activities, to assign women to the domain of 'culture', which can be conversely read as an implicit disinclination to have women perform more 'political' – widely considered more 'masculine' – roles. The above understanding of the regime's discourse based on our reading of the Party sources eminently comes to blows with the regime's celebrated discourse on women and the explicit references to the need to have women fully engage in the nation's life. This is not the first contradiction or ambiguity we have detected in the ruling elite's discourse though. In stead of reading contradiction and ambiguity as an anomaly though, we should rather see it as systemic to any sociopolitical order that attempts to instigate social change. Moreover, we need to attend to these contradictory moments and instances of ambiguity, the tensions they originate from, and, even more importantly, to the tensions and negotiations they give rise to on the field, upon the performance of social actors (see Chapter 7).

Women, Party and Halkevi

The data about the female participation in the Party structures reveals that only a handful of women - all wives or sisters of local Party men - were members of the upper Party structures in Kayseri, and only one in Balıkesir. Not even one woman seemed to be an *İdare Heyeti* member in the lower Party structures in the countryside, where the Party membership tended to overlap with the nationwide occupational and educational majority (i.e. illiterate farmers). This tendency, one might convincingly argue, seems to run parallel to the wider society's cultural and social perceptions regarding the position of women in social life, something the Party itself was purportedly struggling to change. The exceptional presence of women in the Party structures of the large

[275] According to the 1927 Party Bylaws a citizen can become a Party member only if (s)he is older than 18 years old. The limit was raised to 22 years in the 1939 Bylaws. On the other hand the 1935 Bylaws declared that all the Turkish youths that have not yet reached the age of 'political activity' are concidered natural members of the CHP, a provision that was erased in the 1943 Bylaws. Tuncay Dursun, *Tek Parti Dönemindeki Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Büyük Kurultayları* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 2002), pp. 15, 105, 37.

towns and cities as well as the absence of women in the rest of the country, even if we allow for possible exceptions, functions as a crude indication of the degree the Party and regime's ideas in regards to women had penetrated into Turkish society, especially in the countryside.

The Halkevi of Balıkesir on the other hand had 67 women among its 702 members in 1934. Among 43 executive members six women appear out of which four were teachers, while one was the wife of a lawyer and member of the Administrative Committee of the Village Section and another one was mentioned with just her name. It is thus safe to argue that the Houses' female administrative members were mainly women teachers. The first theatrical play the House staged in 1933 confirms this phenomenon; four of the six actresses were teachers, the remaining two were the wives of two of the actors, both state employees.[276] This was also the case in the Halkevi of Kayseri as we have already seen. In both towns then, with the exception of not even a handful of wives of local Party men, the majority of women Halkevi members were teachers and civil servants, wives and daughters of state employees, a larg part of which were not locals. The obvious question would be why the female members of local Party elites and especially merchants and artisans – the backbone of the local Party membership and leadership – were not registered, or perhaps allowed to register, in the Halkevi. Why did not even one of the female family members of the local Party men appear on the Halkevi stage in a theatrical play?

In her study of the People's Republican Party, Ayşe Güneş Ayata notes that in the 1930s but also in the 1970s the only women who participated in Party politics in Develi – a small town in the province of Kayseri - were the wives of educated men, mostly non local civil servants and local professionals with a western life style educated in Ankara or Istanbul. Their participation was restricted to exchanging visits and tea parties with other women in an attempt to support their husbands' political career. In the 1970s, when she conducted her research in Develi, the participation of women in 'politics' was literally non-existent.

> *There were many reasons – mostly cultural – that the participation of women in political activities was so restricted. In Kale [Develi] the engagement of women in politics was not considered appropriate. Local men, including some intellectuals, thought that their wives, daughters or any female member of their families should not take an interest in politics. Even for women working outside their houses, any political activity was deemed inappropriate because it meant that they would come into contact with men. [N]obody wanted* to injure his honor *by granting his female relatives permission to engage in politics.*[277]

[276] "24 Şubat", *Kaynak*, No 2, (19 March 1933), p. 64.
[277] Ayşe Güneş Ayata, *CHP Örgüt ve İdeoloji*, p. 185 (emphasis mine).

'Injuring his honor' by having his wife or daughter engage in politics for a local merchant or artisan would mean losing face with his clients and hurt his position as middleman and its benefits without necessarily gaining anything substantial in return from the centre. He might also give weapons to his local rivals as the following complaint against the first chairman of the Kayseri Halkevi and his sister-in-law Mamurhan, one of the exceptional cases of local women engaged in politics and active in the Halkevi, reveals: "Naci the lawyer is almost blind, his sister-in-law has no potential to be elected and is known among the people as a woman of low morals."[278]

[278] Sent to the Party Headquarters by the chairman of the Lale ocak in Kayseri Ali Talaslıoğlu and Murat şerbetçi, member of the same *ocak* (Party structure) in 14/3/1939, contained in **BCA CHP**, 490.1/344.1440.4.