

WHAT IS LEFT FOR 2000S:
STUDENT OPPOSITION IN TURKEY
BETWEEN GOVERNMENTAL REPRESSION
AND INTERNAL DILEMMAS



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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Dağlar Yaraşır, certify that

- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
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Date

ABSTRACT

What is Left for 2000s:

Student Opposition in Turkey Between Governmental Repression and Internal Dilemmas

This master's thesis aims to create an academic resource by focusing on the recent past of the student movement in Turkey, specifically addressing the 2000s that has been a neglected period in the existing literature on student movements. The study seeks to answer why the student movement failed to gain momentum throughout the 2000s. In this context, the research emphasizes the impact of changing and diversifying tools of repression (macro-sociological elements) as well as the internal tensions and dilemmas within the movement on the course of struggles during the 2000s.

ÖZET

2000'lere Ne Kaldı:

Hükümet Baskısı ve İçsel İkilemler Arasında Türkiye’de Öğrenci Muhalefeti

Bu yüksek lisans tezi, Türkiye'deki öğrenci hareketinin yakın geçmişine odaklanarak, 2000'li yıllarda öğrenci hareketine dair mevcut literatürde ihmal edilmiş bir döneme akademik bir kaynak oluşturmayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, öğrenci hareketinin 2000'li yıllar boyunca neden ivme kazanamadığı sorusuna cevap aramaktadır. Bu bağlamda, araştırma, değişen ve çeşitlenen baskı araçlarının (makro-sosyolojik unsurlar) yanı sıra, hareketin içsel gerilimleri ve açmazlarının mücadelelerin seyrine olan etkisine vurgu yapmaktadır.

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I would like to dedicate this thesis to the university students who have not lost their
point and objection finger...
(*“iřaret ve itiraz parmađını yitirmememiř” üniversite öğrencilerine....*)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background of the research question	1
1.2 Literature review on student movement in Turkey	2
1.3 Methodology and design of the fieldwork	7
1.4 Outlines of the chapters.....	9
CHAPTER 2: TRACING THE STUDENT MOVEMENT WITHIN THE FRAME OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT LITERATURE: APPROACHES TO STUDENT MOVEMENT AND ESSENTIAL ROLE OF YOUTH MYTH	11
2.1 Initial contemplation on student movement.....	11
2.2 Defining student movement	13
2.3 Influence of student movements in social movement literature.....	16
2.4 The essential role of youth myth in student movement	26
2.5 Conclusion	32
CHAPTER 3: THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF STUDENT MOVEMENT IN TURKEY:	
WHAT IS LEFT FOR THE 2000S OF THE MOVEMENT	35
3.1 Why does the history of the student movement matter?	35
3.2 An outlook to universities and student movement from Ottoman Empire to Democrat Party era.....	36
3.3 From campus politics to revolutionism.....	45

3.4 Increasing radicalism of leftist students from 1970s to September 12 th coup d'état	55
3.5 The associations and magazine circles period of the leftist students	58
3.6 University student coordination period as genuine experiences of socialist students.....	60
3.7 “We couldn’t accomplish it”: Outlook into the 2000s student movement.....	64
3.8 Conclusion: Some thoughts on autonomous realm of the student movement and what is left today	70
CHAPTER 4: STUDENT MOVEMENT THROUGHOUT THE 2000S: BETWEEN GOVERNMENTAL REPRESSION AND INTERNAL DILEMMAS	74
4.1 Introduction: A brief overview on the movement’s bottleneck in the 2000s..	74
4.2 Changing repressive tools to discipline and control the student opposition on transforming universities.....	78
4.3 Internal challenges of the student movement amidst dilemmas.....	119
4.4 Conclusion: Despite external and internal reasons	128
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION.....	131
APPENDIX A: APPROVAL OF ETHICS COMMITTEE	138
REFERENCES.....	139

ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party (<i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i>)
DP	Democrat Party (<i>Demokrat Parti</i>)
FKF	Federation of Ideas Club (<i>Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu</i>)
HDP	Peoples' Democratic Party (<i>Halkların Demokratik Partisi</i>)
MTTB	National Turkish Students Union (<i>Milli Türk Talebe Birliği</i>)
OHAL	State of Emergency (<i>Olağanüstü Hal</i>)
RPP	Republican People's Party (<i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</i>)
TİP	Turkish Labor Party (<i>Türkiye İşçi Partisi</i>)
TMTF	National Federation of Students of Turkey (<i>Türk Milli Talebe Federasyonu</i>)
YÖK	Higher Education Council (<i>Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu</i>)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the research question

I need to acknowledge that I owe this research question to my alma mater, Istanbul University, Beyazıt Campus. I still remember my registration day to university, and my first encounter with the iconic main gate that appeared in the coffee cup fortunes and the gigantic banner that reads: “*Deniz’lerin Üniversitesi’ne Hoş Geldin*” (Welcome to the University of Deniz). However, after this exciting and the free atmosphere that campus enjoyed, it did not take a long time to realize that putting up posters could get people into trouble with both the university administration and private security. So, the formulation of this research question took time. Maybe we just needed some time to find the courage to spill the beans or to wrap our heads around what we have been through.

Nevertheless, point of departure of this master’s thesis was one of my assignments for social movement class. It was about the Istanbul University Student Coordination (*İstanbul Üniversite Öğrencileri Koordinasyonu*) which was the roof organization of the student movement that aimed a mass student movement.

While writing the conclusion of the assignment, I had requested assessments from former activists regarding the 2000s. Two statements of my participants continued to linger in my mind: one of my participants expressed that “friends who came after us had to struggle in even harsher conditions”, and another of my respondents said that there was hardly any student activism worth mentioning in the 2000s. Both remarks were intriguing. However, I realized that the already limited academic literature on student movement during University Coordination Period

have started to trail off in 2000s. For that reason, examining the struggles of the student opposition in 2000s has become a compelling endeavor to me. Therefore, this study tackles the question: Why the student opposition could not gain momentum in the 2000s?

1.2 Literature review on student movement in Turkey

Student movements always have the potential to catalyze and accelerate social transformation (Rodriguez, 2012). In this regard, the student movement in Turkey that spatially proliferates and develops on university campuses has been an essential component of the collective dissent. Also, regarding social movement literature, it can be argued that there is a left hegemony in the social movement literature as a consequence of its history. Similarly, student movement in Turkey shares these characteristics.

One of the common features of the prominent revolutionary figures of Turkey, especially throughout the 1960s and 1970s, is being university students of their time. Almost every decade of Turkish political life has witnessed leftist-socialist student movements that carry out the legacy of the former generations and borrow their myths. Also, this movement left its mark in a certain period and present a picture of the challenges of the political realm. Moreover, the universities such as Istanbul University and Middle East Technical University have been identified with student movements and those universities have been remembered as the universities of these cult figures.

The existing literature on the leftist-socialist student movements in Turkey predominantly addresses the golden ages and protagonist generations of this vein of the university student movement in different decades (Alper, 2009; Feyzioğlu, 1993;

Kabacalı, 1992; Bali, 2006). However, by considering the current situation of the student protests in terms of their decreasing influence on the political atmosphere and the volatility of those protests, even in the recent past, Boğaziçi Resistance and Dining Hall Protests in İstanbul University have brought a relative resurrection, it might be claimed that the glorious and fervent periods of the university student movement have remained in the period before the 2000s. They have gradually become ineffective and lost their disruptive character to influence the status quo and become insufficient to recruit resources. In other words, the leftist-socialist student movement has gradually lost its power to steer the current situation and to make a striking effect on it.

Nevertheless, scholarship on student movements did not keep up with the latest occurrences, and the recent past was neglected. This negligence of the period caused a crucial gap in the memory of the student movement. Even the study about the unique social movement organization experience of University Student Coordinations in the 1990s, which left its mark until the early 2000s, did not address the reasons for the ending of this organization by the early 2000s (Savun, 2014). Yet, the fading away of University Student Coordinations' unique experience throughout the early 2000s contains myriad clues to usher in a new era of the movement. In that sense, it deserves to be examined to shed light on this alteration of the power of the leftist-socialist student movement in the 2000s which marks the period after the experience of University Student Coordination.

Resources about student movement are the compilations of the 2000s leftist-socialist student movement and columns of journalists (Öz, Atbaşlı, Bürkev, 2011; Yalçıntaş, 2011; Aksakal, 2014). Those focused to a great extent on the agenda of the movement such as resistance against neoliberalization and commercialization of the

higher education system. These compilations consist of the essays of the activists and pamphlets and brochures of the movement; thus, they did not speak about the decreasing influence of the movement to change the current and serve to continue the myth of the student movement. Therefore, by using those resources, it is hard to find out the decreasing influence and challenges in terms of resource mobilization of the movement.

On the other hand, the limited academic literature on the 2000s student movement underlines the changing character of the protest controlling and governmental repression (Berksoy, 2016; Molu, Kivılcım, Dinçer, Gürsel, Kurt, 2013; Tahincioğlu & Göktaş, 2013). According to these studies, the distinguishing features of the 2000s student movements are the emergence of disciplinary investigations, changing punishment procedures, and increasing the effects of repressive tools towards activist students.

The striking case study that focuses on the 2000s student movement handles the changing controlling and policing mechanism against student movement and deals with them through the pacification concept (Berksoy, 2016). According to this study, the main characteristics of the 2000s leftist-socialist student movement are increasing security measures that contain the implementation of surveillance-policing networks on campuses and a dramatic increment of disciplinary investigations and punishments against student activists. These new security and surveillance implementations and accompanying disciplinary punishment of the activist of the 2000s student movement show salient similarities with university campuses in the United States, Canada, and Britain, which rely on pre-emptive security measures on campus through the global impact of the 9/11 period (Rodriguez, 2012; Maria & Sze, 2012; Gearon, 2017). The study of Berksoy focuses on repression towards Kurdish

students in the 2000s. However, it may not be possible to speak of a Kurdish Student Movement with a distinct agenda separate from the Kurdish Movement. Yet, considering the solidarity relations between Kurdish students and leftist-socialist students, especially post-1990s, Berksoy's study can be beneficial for comprehending the evolving mechanisms of governmental repression.

Nevertheless, in terms of underlying the changing governmental rationality of the AKP, which is addressed by the concept of the “security state” and its reverberation on the campuses by the context of controlling and repressing the collective dissent discloses a neglected point in the literature (Berksoy, 2016, p. 130-138). Besides, this study does not address the changing feature of the security provision of the universities in the 2000s, which indicates the changing character of the repressive apparatus to policing and controlling the student movement. In fact, to control and police the collective dissent, the AKP (Justice and Development Party) period is significant for obtaining the legal ground for private security companies as a new phenomenon and creating private security guards as a new implementer of the pre-emptive security measures (Haspolat, 2012; Dölek, 2011). In other words, this process denotes emerging a new repressive apparatus to govern the collective dissent, and student movements are affected by the transition of repressive apparatus.

Research on the 2000s student movement again stresses that these disciplinary investigations against student activists have become a severe issue for activists (Molu et al., 2013; Berksoy, 2016). By differentiating from the former decades of student movement, those investigations have been used as a disciplinary and punitive apparatus against activists. Thus, these interrogations are not only tools for psychological violation, but also it might be claimed that the decisions taken by the university administration for disciplinary investigations have turned into a

detering threat for activist students. The decisions of the university administration at the end of these processes have changed, and they were in line with the political atmosphere of Turkey. Therefore, the cost of the administration's decisions and the proportions of these punishments have caused them to be expelled or suspended from the universities of the activists. Therefore, these punishment processes deprived the activist students' identity as students that unify them and ensure their existence for the mobilization of the movement on the university campuses.

According to this rights-based approach of Molu (2013), the justifications for the punishments of these disciplinary interrogations impinge on the freedom of speech and the freedom of organization of the students on the university campus. Thus, propaganda tools and the campus activities of the students have turned into a crime. In addition to that, student discipline regulations of the Higher Education Council (YÖK) have changed gradually and have become a solid justification instrument for disciplining and punishing the activists of the movement. In line with the changing political atmosphere of Turkey, the disciplinary code and procedures of the YÖK are rearranged or began to carry out by the administration of the university strictly. Thus, the interrogations find a basis to justify their decisions against student activists.

On the other hand, although these studies that touch upon crucial points to understand the policing of the student movement in relation to governmental rationality, these studies do not discuss the internal reasons for its inability to respond these alterations. Therefore, in order to present a nuanced approach, the internal reasons should be heard from the critical point of view of the activists. For that reason, the internal conflicts and strategical decisions or mistakes should take into consideration.

1.3 Methodology and design of the fieldwork

In social movement literature, student movements have been studied in the framework of two social movement approaches: New Social Movement Theory and Political Process Theory. By considering the literature review of 2000s and the crucial role of the changing governmental repression and protest policing practices during the 2000s both in local and global level, this study mainly employs the Political Process Theory that considers the determining role of the macro-social elements of the student movements. However, this study does not only stick to this theoretical perspective. Particularly, in order to create a nuanced narration when I encountered the limits of the Political Process Theory, I would like to utilize the cultural approaches that give room to understand the strategical choices and internal dilemmas of the movement.

In the scope of this study, I chose Istanbul University, Beyazıt Campus as my fieldwork. I can justify my choice based on two fundamental reasons. First, Istanbul University is not only the oldest university in Turkey, but also one of the most populous universities in terms of student enrollment. For that reason, Beyazıt Campus has a strategic space for social movement organizations in terms of maximizing their outreach and engaging with a broader audience. Thanks to its rooted history, Beyazıt Campus has hosted spectacular student protests as well as has become the university of the revolutionary cult figures of the Turkey's left movement especially after the May '68. Therefore, this campus has a peculiar importance to acknowledge the university as space of collective dissent that governmental repression performed.

Secondly, this campus is my alma mater where I met with people from various organizations of the left-socialist wing of the movement. By mobilizing my former network, I could reach more people who conducted activism on Beyazıt campus in different periods. Thus, I could overcome the shortage of academic resources by conducting semi-structural in depth-interviews with former activists and sympathizers of the movement.

To address my research problem, I conducted interviews with 33 former activists/sympathizer students from different factions of the movement on Beyazıt Campus. My participants' period of activism extends over a broad range, spanning from the mid-1990s to the end of the state of emergency (OHAL) in June 2016. Four participants (Yılmaz, Hayri, Orhan, and Meltem) engaged in activities during the Coordination period, and their narratives hold considerable significance in portraying the unfolding trajectory that extends into the 2000s and encompasses the years of the student movement under the AKP government. The remaining 29 participants' activism period partially or entirely spans the era of the AKP. Due to the absence of a central organization for the student movement in the 2000s, the field was designed to accommodate former activists from various organizations that identifies themselves as left-socialist wing of Turkey. Also, it should be noted that my research does not concentrate on the campus activism of the Kurdish Movement in this period, yet they will be mentioned within the context of the interaction with student movement. Besides that, even though I will word participants of the student movement as "activist" due to the framework of the social movement literature in English, I need to note that this definition remains mild for them. As you can trace in the subsequent

section of this study, and throughout my fieldwork with them by considering their performativity, that is also possible to define them as militants¹.

In order to understand the influence of the changing protest policing, and the diffusion of the surveillance and security technologies on campus, I conducted interviews with 5 private security guards of the university campus. However, finding more private security guards to conduct interviews was challenging. Their watchful and reluctant attitude may stem from their formal and informal relations with the law enforcement mechanisms. Therefore, I conducted interviews with 4 veteran officers of the university who have been working in the university for more than 15 years to hear about the changing security provision of the campus.

1.4 Outlines of the chapters

To answer this research question, this research is designed under five chapters. Each of these chapters has been written to explain the bottleneck of the student movement in 2000s. Following introduction, the second chapter of this thesis focuses on the theoretical dimension of the student movement. It examines the impact of student movements on the literature of social movements and juxtaposes it with youth studies that gained significant attention in the 2000s that can give us clues in terms of cultural elements of the movement.

The third chapter concentrates on the historical background of the student movement in Turkey under the influence of the global and local macro-sociological

¹ In addition to that, former activists define the students who are usually disinterested in political activities and non-affiliated with a certain organization in campus as “others”. In the context this study I define them as non-activists. Yet, in certain periods, these non-activist students can come close the political activities on campus. Beside these, it is possible to mention the autonomous activists as a third category. Autonomous students are not affiliated with a certain faction. Yet, they have a political stance, and they participate the demonstrations and organize their activities on campus. So, I will evaluate them as activists as well.

factors. By presenting a chronology, this chapter draws attention to the fact that certain problems and issues of the student movement, that hinder the mobilization of the movement or provide a base for the upsurge of the movement, have been carried over to 2000s. Also, this chapter contributes the student movement literature of Turkey by portraying the agendas and challenges of the student movement in 2000s by using the narrations of the activists of the 2000s.

The fourth section, where semi-structured interviews are most extensively employed, narrates the challenges of the 2000s within the context of internal and external factors. Therefore, this chapter draws upon both the political process theory and cultural approaches to understand social movements to provide a nuanced understanding of social movements.

Lastly, Chapter 5 presents a general outlook of this study by highlighting the importance of the student movement as a prominent component of the public opposition. For that reason, by pointing out the internal and external reasons that hinder the mobilization of the opposition on campus, this chapter concludes with humble opinions on current outlook of student movement. Finally, this chapter answers the question “what is to be done” to the student opposition striving to endure on campuses today.

CHAPTER 2

TRACING THE STUDENT MOVEMENT WITHIN THE FRAME OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT LITERATURE: APPROACHES TO STUDENT MOVEMENT AND ESSENTIAL ROLE OF YOUTH MYTH

2.1 Initial contemplation on student movement

In this section, I will articulate how I have examined the student movement as a form of social movement within the framework of this thesis. Therefore, I believe it is necessary to specify my position as a researcher in approaching social movements by taking into consideration the theoretical frame.

As Çetinkaya (2021) writes that striking feature of social movements are their stubborn and resistant characters to be addressed monolithically (p. 22). They do not confine to the abstractions and standardizations of the theories that deem them as a subject of examination. Thus, addressing social movements as an ordinary component of daily politics may lead to comprehend them as tame incidents that do not have claims against the status quo. However, essential characters of social movements usually rely on their authentic dynamics, their power to disrupt the routine, veering unexpected paths and astounding authority (p. 42). Therefore, they are more than predictable and calculable elements of daily politics. Social movements are restless, mischievous, whimsical, and full of possibilities as seen throughout history. In other words, I would like to summarize as follows: social movements are handful.

When the student movement became the axis of my research, I realized that these characteristics of the social movements gained another engaging aspect in terms of defining student movement and their demands and aims. First, even this is

possible to make a general definition of what student movement is; nevertheless, it still requires acknowledging the peculiarities and distinguished dynamics of student movement in different countries. Besides, student movement does not show a homogenous character even in one single country, but they can vary according to their ideological commitments. For instance, in Turkey's case, there are academic studies on right-wing and Islamist student movement². Nevertheless, it is possible to put forward that there is a left hegemony over the student movements both on global and local levels (Alper, 2009; Gill & DeFronzo, 2009). For that reason, in the scope of this study, the term "student movement" specifically refers to the left-wing student opposition on campuses.

Another point that I should highlight in this theoretical chapter is the interaction of the student movement with social movement literature. In conjunction with this, the development of the student movement as a branch of social movement interacts with the enrichment of the debates and theories inside the social movement literature. Particularly, the upsurge of the student movements in 1960s initiated several discussions to approach and explain them. Besides this, with the impact of the cultural studies in the 1980s, the concept of collective identity and the framing theory was introduced in social movement literature (Çetinkaya, 2021, p. 36). Regarding the student movement, the concepts of the cultural theory provide a basis to take into consideration of the construction of the category of the youth, and thereby the role of the students as the educated youth enlarged the discussions on student movement.

² Two of such studies can be mentioned as Yorgancılar, S. (2006). *1965 Sonrası İslamcı Bir Öğrenci Hareketi Olarak Milli Türk Talebe Birliği*, (MA Thesis). Retrived from https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tezDetay.jsp?id=60dZ03eUCg3mQyAs3aM95Q&no=5Q4Jh_vS-HuVeDtJ0OAFVw; Oruç, Z. (2005). *Bir Öğrenci Hareketi Olarak Milli Türk Talebe Birliği*, İstanbul, TR: Pınar Yayınları.

Finally, in relation with the characteristics of the social movements and student movement as a particular branch of it, one fieldwork note that I took after an in-depth interview states: *Looks like student movement amplifies the handful characteristic of the social movements*. Throughout my fieldwork, I have acknowledged that the aforementioned features of the social movements overlap with the qualities attributed to youth in society. For that reason, I argue that the characteristics of the social movements stand out overtly when student movement is at stake. Therefore, in the scope of this study, I find it significant to juxtapose the literature of the social movements and youth studies to comprehend their overlapping characters. For that reason, I would like to engage in a discussion by particularly addressing and examining the essential role of the myth specific to youth in the framework of the student movement.

2.2 Defining student movement

Before assigning this title, I had not anticipated that defining student movement would be this challenging, and surprisingly I realized that most of the former studies in this area do not attempt to bring up a definition about what student movement is, also definitions for student movement which are adaptable to any context seem like bland dictionary descriptions. For instance, according to Gill (2006) student movement is collective efforts of the students to achieve a goal (p. 849). Similarly, when I asked my respondents to define what student movement is, the answer was not significantly different, stating that “it is the movement that focuses on student youth’s problems and demands”.

As can be understood by these definitions, the student movement is aptly named. Thus, the emphasis on framing theory that points out the transformative and

reciprocal interaction between activists and movements within the process has become more of an issue (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 614). Therefore, it is worth inferring that the social groups that are behind the revolts, riots, and so forth at the same time construct and redefine their identity along with the movement. In other words, like all social movements, student movement develops its features in relation to the recognition of the educated youth as a social group while their movements are in motion. Therefore, student movements point out a large spectrum, and vary from protests of, for instance, high food prices in cafeterias to articulation of bigger opposition movements against the government (Gill, 2006, p. 849). Thus, to provide a definition and to analyze the student movement in both cultural and structural contexts that usher to the emergence of them must be taken into consideration.

By keeping the aforementioned points in mind, a comprehensive definition of the student movement can be formulated as the collective action of the large number of students to bring into or prevent the changes in the realms of government policies, institutional personnels who have status in university administrations or state institutions, social and cultural facets of the society by employing opportunities of institutionalized or non-institutionalized collective action (Gill & DeFronzo, 2009, p. 208).

Thanks to this comprehensive definition, it can be argued that the claims and agenda of the student movement can take shape under the context of the political atmosphere, and thereby, collective action methods of the movement may go beyond the means of conventional politics by the adoption of disruptive tactics. These diversified characteristics regarding their goals and their action methods reveal the high articulation capacity of the student movements. In other words, student movements are more eager to support and participate broader-scale movements.

Particularly when we consider the examples in the developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, students have shouldered the principal roles in national independence and anti-colonial movements (Altman, 1989). Furthermore, it is not coincidental that the prominent figures of socialist movements have emerged from within the student movement. Leading figures of revolutionary movements, such as Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Mao Tse Tung, and alike arose from the student movements in developing countries, and these cult figures formulated their revolutionary perspectives and formed their networks during their higher education years (Gill & DeFronzo, 2009, p. 204). Therefore, student movements, particularly in developing countries, have become the engines of the revolutionary movements by providing them leaders, intellectuals, ideologies, and networks.

In relation to these, even though university student life occupies a limited period in the lives of activists, which is why student movement have a transient nature, they continue to have an impact on the lives of the activist. Thus, within the realm of research on social movements, examining the student movements encourages pondering on the later stages of the activists' life. Especially, the university students who participate within the revolutionary movements, which are the form of high-risk/cost activism, are more persistent to continue their activism (McAdam, 1989). In a similar manner, my participants expressed that being a part of the student movement is an enriching and valuable experience, although their fleeting period of activism started on university campuses. They remember those times either nostalgically or excitedly. Participating in the student movement is valuable because throughout my fieldwork former activists put into words that student movement has enabled them to gain agency, integrated them into networks

and acquired the know-how on activism. In conjunction with this, as Orhan expressed clearly:

During university years as part of the movement, you feel for the first time like you become a subject. You are holding the floor, you are making decisions, you are taking actions and organizing people.

By considering his statement and by bearing in mind that almost all of the former activists who participated in this study are still part of various current social movement networks or deal with current politics actively, and still follow student politics closely, it would not be wrong to say that student movement is a watershed in the life of the activists. I would like to state that although student movement occupies a few years in their lives, it is a germination stage for future activists. Even after university life ends, the activists tend to participate in various social movements more eagerly thanks to student movement. From this point of view, student movement is the lifeline that strengthens and keeps collective dissent alive. For that reason, the significative role that student movements play in political life of countries, and their potential to result in a global impact, clearly expresses the puissant feature of them.

2.3 Influence of student movements in social movement literature

The 1960s had abundant proliferation of various social movements that pushed the social movement literature to go beyond existing approaches. Prevailing concepts such as deprivation, unfairness, grievances, and so forth coined by relative deprivation theory as an extension of classic explanations have become insufficient to explain the movements of the 1960s because these took place in relatively prosperous times of the world (Alper, 2009, p. 7-8). Similarly, the 1960s, when the student movement gained momentum, was a time when students held high social

statuses (p. 39). Therefore, the miscellaneous characteristics of the movements required more sophisticated approaches.

In addition, social movement scholars have become either supporters or activists of the movements of the 1960s. This change paved the way for the alteration of the attributions towards rioting social groups. In time, the comprehension of conventional approaches that define the revolting people as crowds, rabbles, and herds without rationality (Çetinkaya, 2021, p. 33). These derogatory descriptions of conventional social movement theories primarily were directed at the lower class. Globally empowering labor movement and socialist movement that established close solidarity with student movements gradually led to the gradual eradication of mainstream academic discourses on rioting groups from social movement literature.

At this period, the student movements all over the world surged and left their mark. Particularly the ground-breaking influence of 1968 May served as an example of the potential of the student movements and brought about thought-provoking debates in the social movement literature. Furthermore, the examination of these social movements and efforts to provide explanations to them came along with the enrichment of approaches in social movement literature in the 1960s. Therefore, the student movements of this period have contributed to the enrichment of literature on social movements as a driving force. In the abundance of these theoretical discussions, student movements were mainly addressed by the following two theoretical frames: New Social Movements Approach that has exerted influence in Europe and Resource Mobilization Theory which has reverberated in United States' scholarship (Çetinkaya, 2021, p. 33).

In the following section, I would like to discuss the approach of the New Social Movements and its features by differentiating it from the traditional

approaches to the social movement and address the drawbacks of evaluating the student movement in this framework.

2.3.1 Student movement beyond the debate of new social movements paradigm

Positioning the student movement in the scope of social movement literature leads us to another essential discussion in the literature which contemplates the separation of social movements as old and new. According to the scholars of the New Social Movements approach, student movements of the 1960s fall under the category of the new movements, such as peace, environment and civil rights movements that took place in the same period. Although this dichotomy of old and new suggested by this approach may seem quite appealing and ground-breaking, in fact, this approach can address the continuing conflicts and aims of the social movement, and thereby it may fall short in grasping the history of the social movements and their ongoing conflicts in front of the authority. As Çetinkaya (2022) points out, the discussion on the categorization of the social movement by New Social Movements Approach stems from the arguments of the postindustrial society, which considers the rupture from the movements that aim at power grab or revolution (p. 44). Thus, within the framework of this approach, the emphasis on social movement concentrated on identities and thematic concerns.

One of the prominent names in postindustrial societies and the new social movement approach is Alain Touraine. According to Touraine, throughout the framework of industrial society, the main concerns of the movements were concentrated on particularly the conflict among and capital. Yet, these new social movements focused on the democratic and pluralistic demands, and the core conflict between labor and capital left its mark to an industrial society replaced by central

struggles among technocrats and new social movements. Also, conflicts have shifted to struggles on symbolic understandings where the symbol makers such as universities and media have played crucial roles with the emergence of the new social movements (Jaspers, 2014, p. 61). Therefore, within the framework of new social movements approach, ecologist, feminist and student movements are new social movements. Those movements cannot be explained by concerns of the industrial society because these movements emerged in societies which are more democratic, pluralistic, strong, and civil. Regarding the aims of these movements, these focus on more recognition of a certain identity, participation, and exercise of civil rights openly (Çayır, 1999, p.15).

Similarly, according to Offe (1985), the characteristics of these movements stem from a variety of revolting groups. In his analysis, Offe points out that these movements emerge around “peripheral” or “decommodified” social categories. Regarding to this definition of Offe, women, retired people, peace activists and students represent the decommodified social categories that do not directly associate with socioeconomic positions in the labor market. For that reason, these revolting groups of new social movements are people who have time and budget that they can channel to a social movement, and these movements merge around a thematic concern such as peace, environment, and civil rights (p. 834). Regarding to this framework, Offe mentions student movement as a sample of new social movements that emerged in the 1960s, yet this approach remains insufficient to explain the student movements that gained a socialist character and their solidarity with the growing left and labor movement. For that reason, within the framework of this approach the movements can be seen as compartmentalized and discrete from the other movements.

On the other side, to explain the student movements and middle-class radicalism, scholars of postindustrial society approach put forward the New Working Class Thesis that particularly analyzes the May 68 (Touraine, 1971; Gouldner, 1979). According to this thesis, university students would become a part of the white-collar workers that differentiating from traditional proletariat because of their intellectual and cultural capital acquired by higher education. Therefore, the students and university graduates would not comply with the demands of technocrats and capitalists, when they became white collar workers, and thereby they are the social group shouldering the opposition. This thesis appears particularly convincing when considered in conjunction with the debate on the proletarianization of students that emerged in the 2000s. However, the impact of this thesis has been short-lived, fading into obscurity in the 1990s before reaching the 2000s. Also, their case studies are remained limited to explaining the movements outside the Western countries (Alper, 2009, p. 20-23). Besides, this thesis is the extension of their preconception of old and new dichotomy towards working class, and their understanding of class is isolated from the identity, race and gender (Çetinkaya, 2021, p. 48-52).

At this point, I would like to draw attention to the points that this approach ignores. According to Çetinkaya (2022), when the history of the social movements are examined, regarding their themes, their methods of action or their instruments, they come into view as continuations of the so-called “old” social movements in the former decades. Thus, when the theocratization of the principal distinction in between new and old social movement stem from the disengagement from the labor movements, and hereby the scholars of the new social movements in fact adopt a reductionist understanding of class relations which merely defined economic relationships (p. 46-48). Particularly, I would like to argue that in the framework of

the new social movements approach, grasping the roots of the student movement and political circumstances of the developing solidarity relations with labor movement that steer them to a socialist path by beginning from the 1960s cannot be comprehended through New Working Class Thesis.

Contrary to the new social movements frame, I would like to point out the global examples of the university student movement, which has a long-standing history that goes beyond the narration of the new social movements that are majorly based on the emergence of postindustrial society. In particular, the period in between the 19th century and the 1960s globally witnessed the rise of the youth in the political arena (Lüküslü, 2015, p. 49). For instance, the student movement founded its early examples during the Restoration era of Germany, the 1848 Revolutions in Germany and Austria, in Imperial China, India and African countries during anticolonial resistance, in Czarist Russia, and in Italy during the 1920s and the 1930s (Lutz, 1971; Lipset, 1968; Altbach, 1970; Gill & DeFronzo, 2009).

By taking into consideration the crucial roles that student movements have played in different movements, it can be claimed that the participation of student movement in broader-scale movements occurs under the influence of political atmosphere. Therefore, the impact of political atmosphere in diversifying the aims of the student movement should not be overlooked. Here, instead of reframing the existing movements as new social movements, the changing political atmosphere and its determining effect that create opportunities and limits in the mobilization of the resources for the movements come into sight.

Briefly, as discussed in this section, the approach of New Social Movements and New Working Class Thesis that is derived from it address the upsurging student movements in the 1960s among other so-called new social movements of the same

period. They define these new movements by abstracting them from their pasts and ongoing aims and demands. Therefore, from their perspective, the movements seem theme-oriented and isolated from contemporary movements. In fact, the preconceptions that stem from their dichotomic approach cause them to perceive social movements of the 1960s by producing ruptures from their predecessors. However, student movements with their pasts and interactions with other movements usually remain far from being theme oriented. Also, the explanations on the student movement and the case studies of new social movement approach are merely validated by the movements in developed Western and industrialized countries while overlooking the periphery countries. For that reason, this approach is insufficient to explain the student activism in the Third World and developing countries that have close relations with larger scale movements. By considering these and highlights of my participants, the determining role of the developments of the countries and the role of the political atmosphere that provide a basis for emergence of the movement have become more of an issue. Therefore, I would like to scrutinize Political Process/Opportunity Structure Theory in the next section which is disentangled from Resource Mobilization Theory in the 1970s as a convenient theoretical frame to understand the student movement in developing or periphery countries which Turkey can be considered to be a part of (Alper, 2009).

2.3.2 Resorting to the political process/opportunity structure theory for a comprehensive analysis of student movements

By taking my fieldwork with 33 former leftist student activists into consideration, the remarkable points they put stress on were the impact of the political atmosphere, particularly the changing face of AKP regime during the 2000s on the course of the

movement. Another point my participants addressed on the student movement was their references to the historical background of the movement. These push me to investigate another theoretical framework to contextualize the decline of the leftist student movement in the 2000s within a narration of continuity rather than reading ruptures that can undermine the history of the movement.

In relation with this, I would like to put forward that student movement in Turkey, which can be traced back to the 19th century, have become a part and parcel of the collective dissent with the influence of the political atmosphere, therefore, with the rising left movement globally and locally in the 1960s, student movement have developed relations with the rising leftist movement. Therefore, the student movements of Turkey have intertwined with diverse contemporary movements of their times, so they were not discrete or theme oriented. Moreover, considering the principal roles that students play during revolutionary movements all over the world and protests waves in May 1968, and by bearing in mind that revolutionary cults had met the revolutionary ideas when they were students, identifying the autonomous features and agendas of the student movement have become even tougher. Especially, the global characteristics of May 1968 and its legacy as a ground-breaking youth movement that developed hand in hand with the New Left requires us to dwell into the concept of youth and youngsters as leaders of the progress who shouldered the revolutions and modernist discourse. Thus, if the student movement is examined within a narrative of continuity, it can be observed that the movement diversified but also limited its agenda in accordance with the historical conditions and political atmosphere in which they were situated.

Furthermore, as I touched upon while defining the student movement in developing countries, student politics and their characteristics show peculiarities

compared to the industrialized Western countries (Altbach, 1984). That is why, in contrast to the new social movement approach, the terminology of the industrial society is still valid to comprehend the student movement. Another point that new social movements theory left unanswered is why the aims of the student movement are diversified. To address these, the crucial role that the political context plays and its transformative effect on the agenda of the student movement must be taken into consideration. Thus, the determining role of the general political atmosphere and the interaction between historical conditions and subjects must be touched upon. For that reason, Political Process/Opportunity Structure Theory seems convenient for analyzing the student movement that has a sophisticated approach of addressing these points.

Political Process/Opportunity Structure Theory developed as part of the Resource Mobilization Theory in the 1960s and made impact on social movement analysis, especially used for comprehending the grass-root movements by tracing the social movements back to its origins such as capitalism, urbanization and state formation (Buechler, 2011, p. 124). This theory focuses on the agency of the underrepresented people during the political process, opportunities, and power balances in society (Alper, 2009, p. 11). According to this theory, social movements and their actors emerge within the determination of historical conditions that consist of the opportunities and the limits in the political atmosphere (Tilly, 1978).

Therefore, this theoretical frame takes notice of the prevailing global atmosphere, state transformation, alteration of the mode of rule and the means of protest policing.

From the point of view of political process theory, agendas and actors of the student movements emerge and are reshaped under a particular political atmosphere. Also, by utilizing the framing theory, this approach does not give revolting groups

specific categories. In relation to this, from the 19th century to current days, the manifestation of the educated youth as an actor in political arena can be addressed within the framework of the political process. Thus, these social groups in the context of political process have stood out and gained prominence. Moreover, the claims and aims of the movement are shaped by their interaction within the determining role of the political atmosphere.

On the other hand, the theoretical frame of the political process theory has been criticized for their tremendous focus on the determining role of the macro sociological and structural causes while neglecting the role of the cultural meanings and emotions in the formation of social movements (Goodwin & Jasper, 1999; Jasper, 2014). By drawing on the criticism of the cultural approaches to social movements, scholarship of the political process theory has gained an eclectic character.

At that point, I suggest that the role of the myths pointed out an intersection for divergent approach to social movements in terms of their constituent and unifying role for collective and introducing agency for the social movement actors have become more of an issue for the political process theory. While addressing the student movement as a branch of youth movement, the role of myths emerges in a more explicit manner. Moreover, I would like to express that in terms of student and youth movement, the role of the myth is a nexus point of the macro and micro sociological elements of the social movements that political process theory contained. Thus, the construction of the social category of youth under certain political atmosphere and the creation of the youth myth must be taken into consideration. In the following section, I would like to address the youth myth as an

ongoing phenomenon of the 2000s leftist student movement in terms of resource mobilization and their introducing agency.

2.4 The essential role of youth myth in student movement

While conducting this research, I have realized that the youth myth as a crucial element has been in motion for the activists of the 2000s, keeping the collective together and functioning to gain the agency of the actors within the framework of student movements. From that point of view, the youth myth functions as an engine of the student movement that would provide a continuity of the movement by defining the youth and mobilizing them under common concerns. For that reason, I would like to put forward that the student movement cannot be understood without initially addressing the youth myth. Thus, before diving into the role of the youth myth, I suggest examining what myths signify in the context of social movements.

From the perspective of social movements, myths are fictions of the collective memory (Jasper, 2014, p. 97). Even though memory studies and social movement literature have examined similar historical and political processes, and though they also have common interests to understand the spirit of a certain era, they have rarely been engaged in a dialogue (Kubal & Becerra, 2014, p.873; Berger et al., 2021). Collective memory has begun to be studied by focusing notably on the deficits of Political Process Theory. The scholars of political process theory have started to put emphasis on the role of the cultural frames, collective identity, emotional and affectual dimensions that give room for the emergence and mobilization of the movements (Goodwin & Jasper, 1999; Polletta & Jasper, 2001). These dimensions particularly address the questions of unity and belonging for social movements. Therefore, it can be argued that the creation of collective identity and

collective memory is an interactional process in the process of social movements, and thereby the actors of movement feel a sense of unity and gain agency throughout this process (Gongaware, 2003, p. 485). For the establishment of this sense of unity and identification with a certain group, the function of the myths has become more evident (Melucci, 1985, p. 50). Thus, the role of the myth for social movement has become a nexus that the cultural and structural approaches to the social movements can address.

As aforementioned in previous chapters, the history of the youth movements and student movements can be traced back to the 19th century. Also, when we take into consideration of the mobilization of the student movements in this period, it can be put forward that the support of the students corresponds to the establishment of nation-states or restoration of new regimes or revolutionary movements of their times. The building process of the nation-states especially coincides with the establishment of the category of the youth. In other words, the youth category has a paradoxical function on the establishment of nation-state. Therefore, terms identified with the young nation-states and developing social categories of youth display considerable similarities. For instance, improvement, strength, and progress have been manifested through youth, and in this way, the youth must shoulder the responsibility of the constitutive ideas of those new regimes. Thus, paradoxical relation paves the way for the articulation of the youth towards establishing regimes, nation-states and in their public discourse. Therefore, youth have become both objects and subjects of the discourse of the sovereign (Lüküslü, 2015, p. 9; Neyzi, 2001).

In conjunction with these, for the developing countries, the youth have a greater impact on society compared to the advanced nations. Since the educated

youth have played significant role in national independence struggles in these countries, political mythology of their societies has accepted students as a spokesperson of a wider population (Altbach, 1989). Similarly, in the Turkish case, youth culture is usually portrayed as “pure, uncorrupt, idealist and dynamic segment of the society” (Alper, 2009, p. 24). This attribution to youth has paved the way for a Romantic-Jacobin youth culture which blended with nationalist liberation movements. Therefore, youth both gained an identity and ideological background that unified them during the establishment process of their nation-states (p. 34-35).

The youth set forth similar responsibilities in consideration of the youth myth since the 19th century in Ottoman Empire. By starting from the Young Ottoman and Young Turk Movement in 19th century, the educated young men as the carriers of the values of modernity identified themselves with the duty of “saving the Empire” (Lüküslü, 2015, p. 22-27; Neyzi, 2001, p. 416). The same mission of the educated youth continued during the early Republican era with the goal of saving the country (Neyzi, 2001, p. 416). This interactive and paradoxical relationship has been maintained discursively according to the promises of modernity and the constitutive values of the establishing nation-states. These ascribed roles placed upon the youth have collectively contributed to the formation of an overarching “youth myth” that will resonate for centuries (Lüküslü, 2015). However, this sense of identity of the youth was mediated by the state’s discourse, and the youth myth that shaped around this discourse was fiction in line with necessities of young nation-states. For that reason, according to Neyzi (2001), the youth should disengage from the definitions and attributions that cooperate with the imposed state’s discourse to find their genuine and authentic identity (p. 426-427). As a result, it can be inferred that a critical approach should be taken towards the category of youth and the constructed

youth myth within the field of cultural studies. As such, the well-known youth study of Lüküslü (2015) offers that youth of post-1980s should be approached by emancipating from youth myth.

On the other hand, I argue that skeptical approach of cultural studies may not go beyond creating another narration of rupture for student movements. Moreover, when we consider the post-1980s period when most of the social movements lost their anti-system claims and demonstrated apathy towards collective action which arose by confining the limits of the conventional politics, it is highly plausible that these reverberated within the academic sphere. However, from the lens of the social movements, myths are necessary fictions for collective action. Particularly in student movements, it is indispensable to have a perpetuating youth myth. Therefore, the suggestion of understanding the youth by emancipating them from the youth myth would not apply to the activists of the student movement. For instance, my informant Orhan remarks: “Of course, it is good to have myth as a young person. It is like a compass to allocate yourself in the event of incidents”. This is a compact example that summarizes the function of the youth myth for a former activist. As Melucci (1985) pointed out, the myths function to provide an instrument for the subjects to analyze certain phenomena (p. 50-51). Therefore, for the activists of the student movement, subjectification provided by myths comes along with a political stance and reference point in front of the authority. Also, another meaning of a former activist willingly embracing this myth is about their complementary role in terms of affectual and emotional side of the social movement as it strengthens resistant identity (Routledge, 2015, p. 385). Thus, youth myth for the activists of the student movement is at the same time used for pragmatic and functional reasons. In other

words, it can be stated that social movements, akin to state power, possess the capacity to produce subjects (Foucault, 1982).

In addition, as response to points of the Lüküslü in terms of their skeptical stance about the construction of the category of youth and the youth myth through the state's discourse, I would like to scratch out her points further. According to Foucault (1982), state's imposition of the individualizing and totalizing binds provides the recognition of them. This recognition also makes individual subject through a relation of control and dependence (pp. 781-782). In the example of the construction of the category of youth through a mythology that state discourse fictionalize is also a form of subjugation. Therefore, youth is concurrently recognized in the eyes of the states as a legitimate actor of the political arena.

On the other side, regarding Foucault (1982), one of the prominent features of the anti-authority struggles is throughout these struggles, individuals redefine themselves by refusing the categories and labels which are determined by state. By disentangling from the state-led definitions and defending own identity by means of self-knowledge and conscience. Therefore, in front of the imposed form of subjectivity by the state, a new form of subjectivity can be established (pp. 781-782). Such as other developing countries in Turkey's case, youth had to cooperate with imposed state discourses on mission and feature of the youth until they gain confidence in political arena to define and create their authentic culture. Therefore, youth myth does not remain same as they were established, and in time, it always contains the possibility of going beyond the sovereign's discourse with the interpretation of the social movement actors. In line with this, student movements of the developing countries after national independence movements have usually

experienced either a revaluation of their traditional values and adopted a new nationalist or Marxist standpoint against imperialism (Martinelli & Cavalli, 1972).

In relation with this, it can be argued that especially during the early period of Republican era, youth had become subjects by embracing the duties and responsibilities assigned to them in state discourse. By adopting these roles and myths, youth can have a demonstration effect for potential activists; or, in other words, those motives constructed around youth can turn into a tool for resource mobilization and legitimation of their stance as activists for themselves. For instance, Cemre expresses that “the student movement have always been one step ahead of the public opposition (...) We were idealist and daring to challenge the system. All over the world students are always pioneers of the wave of revolutions in history” and Ömer states that “as the youth, you have power to change the order. This has been the case throughout history”.

As can be argued from these expressions of my participants, the myths at the same time function as reference points for the 2000s’ activists. Therefore, by relying on the youth myth, activists at the same time try to protect their canonical role such as spokespersons or conscience of the society. Therefore, these myths at the same time point out the captured positions of the student youth during the political context that they have witnessed as actors. In conjunction with this, the social movements not only focus on certain issues, but they also try to protect their acquired fields and their accomplishments (Eder, 2015, p. 36-37). Therefore, examining the achievements of the movements and finding out the legacy of the movement lead us to address the past of the movement. In other words, as Markoff (2015) points out: to bring another dimension to social movement studies, the researcher eventually ends up dealing

with the history of the movement which presents a resourceful example that may challenge the theory (p. 68-71).

In order to contextualize the function of the youth myth which has been created by the sovereign and interpreting the roles of students as emphasized above by my interviewees, I suggest diving into the historical background of the youth and leftist-socialist student movement in the next chapter. As such, as political process theory offers, we can grasp the ongoing conflicts of the leftist student movement, ongoing influence of the youth myth in leftist students, and most crucially, the alteration of the political atmosphere which has led to the decline of the movement.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I tried to define what student movement is by highlighting their diversified aims in various countries. In relation to this, I mentioned the peculiarities of the student movement that paved the way to seeing the features of the social movements which are full of possibilities after they have emerged. In relation with these, I argued that since university life occupies a narrow time span in the lives of the activists, and former activists of student movements become eager to maintain their opponent political stance after they graduate. This point of view presents that the student movements can be addressed as a germination period of the future activists who would struggle in larger scale movements and would keep the collective dissent alive.

Following this discussion, I addressed the student movement within the framework of the two main different theoretical approaches towards social movements. Considering my fieldwork and the background of the student movements that can be traced back to 19th century and is usually in relation with the

left movement, I suggest that the framework of the New Social Movements Theory is inadequate to comprehend the solidarity and articulation relations between student movements and the left movement, particularly in developing countries. Therefore, in the scope of my thesis, I would like to apply the Political Process Theory to understand the student movement in Turkey's case as a developing country that can give room to contemplate on their leftist feature as well.

In addition, by utilizing Political Process Theory's eclectic feature, I suggest that the crucial role that youth myth must be taken into consideration while addressing the student movement. Although there is a skeptical point of view of cultural theory towards the construction of the category of youth by sovereign's discourse and creation of the youth myth during the building process of nation-states in line with state's discourse, I claim that for the activists of the student movement these concerns are not valid. From the perspectives of the activists, the youth myth serves for their subjectification and allocates them with an ideological reference while providing a complementary role for the affectual dimension of their struggles. In addition, youth myth is a manifestation of the recognition of students as legitimate and canonical actors of the political arena by the state. The influence of the youth myth is more concrete in the developing countries. After youth proved their position as actors of the political arena during the national independence movements and anti-colonial struggles, they usually attempt to reinterpret these myths and adopt a novel position. Therefore, until the youth can access the confidence and capacity to establish their own subjectivity, they continue to persist as legitimate political actors within the framework of the youth myth.

Finally, I argue that the youth have a canonical and legitimate position in the political arena, and they tend to protect their position as actors, which was gained in

the past. Thus, in the next section, I suggest diving into the history of the student movement in Turkey which can bring about the diversified aims and demands of student movement as well.



CHAPTER 3

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF STUDENT MOVEMENT IN TURKEY: WHAT IS LEFT FOR THE 2000S OF THE MOVEMENT

3.1 Why does the history of the student movement matter?

One of the significant common points that I witnessed throughout my fieldwork is that all my participants eventually touched upon the legacy of the leftist student movement while they were referring to their struggles in the 2000s.

“As youth, we have power to change. It has always been like this throughout history,” says my participant Ömer. As can be understood by this statement, there are samples in the past that youth shouldered the ground-breaking role in terms of social changes³. It is possible to put forward that the pioneering role of the youth in relation to social transformations has strengthened the hand of the activists to increase their capacity for mobilizing resources and provide a ground for the sustainment of the movement. This offers us to investigate the origins of universities as social movement spaces and the emergence of university students as activists. Also, to make sense of the possibilities and the constraints of the movement, I believe that the history of the movement can work as a reference point.

Activists of the social movements not only focus on certain objectives that they want to change, but they also struggle to protect their gained fields and sustain their former accomplishments (Eder, 2015, p. 36-37). In line with that, throughout my fieldwork, I realized that former activists demonstrate a notable sensitivity when it comes to protecting and embracing of the accomplishments and the space of the student movement. I believe that my choice of Istanbul University as my fieldwork,

³ I would like to highlight again that youth as a social category contains diversities, and in the scope of this thesis, I specifically address university students as youth.

which has been the venue for the most spectacular protests and boycotts of the student movement and as the school of the cult figures of the student movement and Turkey's left, has played a role in observing this tendency of the activists vividly.

Therefore, addressing the history of the movement allows for acknowledging the accomplishments of the movement that would create a legacy for the activists. Moreover, within the framework of my research, I would like to point out that examining the history of the movement enables us to observe the challenges and trials transferred to future periods. In other words, as Markoff (2015) points out: to bring another dimension to social movement studies, the researcher eventually ends up dealing with the history of the movement which presents a resourceful example that may challenge the theory (p. 68-71).

3.2 An outlook to universities and student movement from Ottoman Empire to Democrat Party era

As I have discussed, the youth myth has led to emergence of the youth as a political actor of their period. Myths work as a subjugation of the youth, especially educated young people, and made them daring to object the authority as Cemre stated.

On the other hand, these attributed characteristics did not always serve to object to the status quo for youth. These roles at the same time were useful instruments for the establishment of a new regime through state discourse and the mobilization of the youth as servants for the constitution of a young republic. That is why, in particularly early republican era, these attributed features did not implicate the whole youth, and the responsibilities of the young were defined repetitively according to the necessities of the period.

In conjunction with this, the institutional structure of the universities specific to their autonomy from the government have become more of an issue by the beginning of single party period and maintained to be one of the foremost issues in the late 1950s. Therefore, universities as institutions have humanist-liberal traditions and at the same time they accommodate a resistant and destructive potential in terms of conforming to the necessities of the states (Alper, 2009, p. 80). That is why, the capacity of the universities as a potential space of collective dissent and their relations with governments involved a delicate context since the early period of the young republic.

3.2.1 Legacy of the youth myth in the early republican period

The 19th century witnessed massive student movements, and the Young Turk Movement was a reverberation of these movements in the Ottoman Era. What makes the 19th century so influential was the modernization step in education. Thanks to the achievements of modernization in education, new educated élité was created for the modern legal and administrative institution of the Empire with the ethos of integrity, loyalty, responsible and take-charge for overcoming the problems of the country (Lewis, 1968, p. 126-127).

Modernized educational institutions such as *Harbiye*, *Mülkiye*, *Tıbbiye* and *İlmiye* supplied space for arising of Young Turk Movement. The proliferation of this new educated youth is described by Cemil Meriç as “an inexperienced youth (toy deli- kanlı) who wants to carry the treasures of a foreign civilization to his country” (Neyzi, 2001, p. 416). In other words, starting from the 19th century, the seeds of the youth myth had been planted in the Ottoman Empire as well. This provided a role for

youth, particularly the students, resonating throughout the *Tanzimat* period of the Empire.

Even though the Empire collapsed, the youth myth has maintained its legacy during the Turkish Republic, particularly early republican period strongly retained the public discourse. In conjunction with foundation of the republic, the mission of saving the institutions of the empire transformed into the duty of saving the country during the early republican period for youth.

By the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the ideal society of it had was embodied through the youth. The modernizing role of the youth maintained itself to consolidate the basis of building a modern nation-state and national consciousness in society (Neyzi, 2001, p. 417). Therefore, youth was brought forward by the state as a prototype of the ideal citizen who was freed from the ties of the outdated traditions. Beside the mental dynamism of the young people, their bodies were part of the representation of the new Republic's ideal society (Lüküslü, 2009, p. 32-33).⁴ In other words, during the single party period, the youth shouldered and represented the role of the “unwavering guardians of the republic” (*Cumhuriyet'in yılmaz bekçileri*) by discourse of the state (p. 40) Besides, the “Speech to Youth,” the duty of the youth towards the republic was put into words radically by Atatürk in the “Bursa Speech,” on July 6, 1933. According to this speech, the youth as the owner and guardian of young republic was the primarily held responsible to fight against

⁴ In relation to this, The Atatürk and Youth Monument at Istanbul University, Beyazıt Campus represent the young Republic embodied in the body of youth. The monument may be considered one of the best works illustrating the young Republic. In this work of art, Atatürk is raising his left hand upward in a wise appearance. On both sides, a young woman holds a torch, and a young man carries the flag on his shoulder. The modeling for the young woman sculpture was done by the beauty queen of that period, and the young man sculpture was modeled by sportsmen of the time. Retrieved from <https://www.istanbul.edu.tr/tr/haber/iu-ataturk-ve-genclik-anitinin-kadin-modeli-gunseli-basar-vefat-etti-6C00380050007A00330034006D0035006900510063003100>

religious reactions and betrayals of the governors, regardless of the actions of all kinds of police forces (Neyzi, 2001, p. 419; Alper, 2009, p. 212)⁵.

Despite these vital responsibilities for the continuity of the state that were taken over by youth, such emphasis on youth did not summon the entire young population of the country. We should bear in mind that since the 19th century, the critical role that higher education played in terms of the foundation and protection of the modern nation-state was primarily attributed to the educated students, thereby the university students (Savun, 2014, p. 16). Therefore, at this point, the inclusivity of the education policy of the state needs to be touched upon.

Firstly, the clustering of these modern education institutions in cities created a more isolated and homogenous atmosphere entails us to consider the class origins of the young. Throughout decades in Turkey, both high school education and higher education were not affordable for the lower and rural classes, that is why, the implied feature of the youth indicated an urban and upper class origin. These reasons led to preserving the elitist character of the university students for a long time. Therefore, it can be argued that Kemalist elites' approach to education was a far cry to ushering in encouraging the lower class and people who lived in towns and villages, and hardly aimed at a meritocratic elite from lower class (Alper, 2009, p. 136-137).

The first generation of the student youth consisted of a small minority in the population under single party rule. Until the 1940s, the youth movement remained limited by the party program of the Republican People Party. Proliferations of the various tendencies inside the student movements began to arise with the 1940s. However, for the first generation, student movement of the republican era was rather associated with national concerns and national interests. Narrations of the first

⁵ The influence of the Bursa Speech was enormous. In addition to that, the speech became a solid legitimization for the revolutionary youth of the '68 generation (Neyzi, 2001, p. 147).

generation of university students was hard to disentangle from foundation of republic, Atatürk's principles and his memory (Lüküslü, 2009, p. 40-42).

Throughout the late 1940s and the 1950s, organizational bodies of university students had emerged. These organizations presented themselves as semi-corporatist organizations which were rather prestigious, had networks with different departments in universities and were acknowledged by the administrative elites. These student organizations of this period positioned themselves discreetly as "above politics" (Alper, 2009, p. 173).

3.2.2 Universities and student youth during the Democrat Party Period

In the 1950s, under the Democrat Party (hereafter, DP) rule, the demographic configuration of the population changed dramatically because the modernization steps on agriculture policies led to an immense migration from rural to urban especially for young males. As aforementioned, while the new regime embodied itself through the educated youth under the single party period, the gap between student youth and the young people from rural origins remained for decades. These steps led to a migration from rural to urban and the mobilization of the younger people accelerated during this migration (Neyzi, 2001, p. 417-418). Moreover, investments on higher education became a global phenomenon in the 1950s, which was also adapted by the DP rule, for observing the vertical mobility effect of the migration in terms of accession to higher education required a long time (Alper, 2009, p. 133).

At the beginning of the DP period, the relations among the government, the university and the student movement were relatively favorable. One of the most crucial issues of the DP period was about the autonomy of universities. This matter

has existed since the RPP government period and for a long time would remain to be the one of the foremost issues of the student movement of Turkey. Although the former government declared the University Reform in 1946 concerning the autonomy of the universities, the leftist and left sympathizer academicians were expelled by the government (Timur, 2000, p. 249). Ensuing this incident, the fledgling leftist movement among students published a declaration that supports leftist professors in daily newspapers. Thus, for the first time, the leftist student movement became more of an issue for the government and university administration. This support declaration caused the arrest warrant of 16 students (Arslan, 2002, p. 53).⁶ Therefore, these undemocratic implementations of the RPP towards student opposition strengthened the hand of DP, and university's autonomy was used as election promises of DP. At the beginning, the issue of the autonomy of the universities and free speech was welcomed by the DP government. Even in their party constitution, the autonomy of the universities has been mentioned as part and parcel element of democracy (Arslan, 2002, p. 54). At the beginning of DP government, universities and intellectuals were content with the atmosphere of free speech (Alper, 2009, p. 175). However, it turned out that these good relations would not last long.

In 1953, one of the speeches of Adnan Menderes at Istanbul University addressed that regarding the law on universities, there was no provision that prevents students from participating in daily politics. However, he pointed out that some of the student organizations go out of their purposes and because of the principle of the autonomy of the university, these organizations could not be intervened (Arslan,

⁶ Although Arslan states that this incident caused the leftist student movement in the 1940s for the first time, in fact the closure of the "Union of the Progressive Youth" in 1944 under the leadership of the Mihri Belli and arrest of the fifty members of the association may be counted as former issue (Can, 1998, pp. 532-533).

2002, p. 75-76). These initial warnings of Menderes in fact implied a new period in terms of university and its components. This new period was remembered as an infertile time in terms of diversity of thoughts (Timur, 200, p. 250).

The prominent cause of deterioration of the relations between universities and DP government started with the discussions on the participation of the professors in daily politics, writing political articles and being a member of a political party. According to the law on universities, there was not a contrary provision on the position of the professors, yet in 1953, the government changed the law. Even if this alteration led to reactions from university and RPP, the serious implementation of the new law was utilized strictly after the second election victory of DP in 1954. Accompanying this alteration in the law on universities, another repressive implementation was brought through the new press law granting the government full authority over the retirement process of public servants, including faculty members. Therefore, the change of the law on universities have started to pose a clear threat to the freedom of thought in universities. These changes made it easier to control and eliminate the critical voices in universities and gave room to expel professors under the name of retirement (Alper, 2009, p. 177).

Dissenting positions of the students in the face of these implementations of the DP government was sharpened by the enforcement of these laws. Until this time, the issues of the students focused on logistical and physical problems of the universities and national issues. As aforementioned, students' organizations under the DP rule maintained their semi-corporatist structure and prestigious positions. These organizations were recognized as legal representatives of the students and the government subsidized these organizations. The main concerns of the government were keeping these organizations away from being partisan politics. The congresses

and offices of prominent student organizations such as *Milli Türk Talebe Birliği* (MTTB) and *Türk Milli Talebe Federasyonu* (TMTF) were visited or telegraphed by Adnan Menderes, and private meetings that addressed students' problems among president, prime minister and minister of education were arranged (Alper, 2009; Szyłowicz, 1970). Even if the government tried to control and defined a high status to these youth organizations, hereby the students, these organizations provided a ground for the politicization of the students (Alper, 2009, p. 183).

One of the reasons that strengthened the student opposition was that their favorite professors had become targets of the government as oppositional figures (Demirel, 2021, p. 227). That is why, protests of the students took place fiercely after the discharge of Professor Turan Feyzioğlu in 1956 due to his opening speech of the academic year in Ankara University (p. 180). Following this, another major incident happened in Istanbul University in 1958 because of Hüseyin Nail Kubalı's critique of the law that included forcing the professors to retire by the ministry of the education without right to appeal to court. Kubalı evaluated these implementations of the DP as anti-democratic. He emphasized that his critique was within the frame of the discipline of law, and that is why, his expression did not have political motivation. Nevertheless, the ministry of education forced the Senate of Istanbul University to begin an interrogation on Kubalı. Although the Senate decided in favor of the Kubalı, the ministry of education ignored the decision and expelled him (p. 178- 181).

In addition to such direct involvement of the government in universities, throughout the DP rule, configuration of the population of university students had gone through an immense change because of the government policies. The enrolment to the universities dramatically increased in this period and the infrastructure of the universities remained insufficient. Also, the students were expecting a promising and

prestigious career in civil service, yet during this period, because of the emergence of new groups, such jobs in civil service did not offer what students anticipated from their future (Szyliowicz, 1970, p. 158). During the DP period, political orientation and class origin of the students continued to be consisted of urban middle class families. Their parents were professionals, businessmen and merchants and these were the people who affected the DP policies adversely in time (Alper, 2009, p. 173). In conjunction with this, it can be argued that in addition to the DP's stance on the autonomy of universities, its policies diminishing the status of these professions paved the way for student opposition to align with public opposition.

While the relationship between DP government and student organizations such as MTTB and TMTF deteriorated, the RPP gained a position as the apostle of the democracy, and towards the end of the 1950s, the youth branch of the RPP became influential (Timur, 2000, p. 250; Alper, 2009, p. 190). Besides these student organizations, the dissenting voices were substantially predominant at the faculties that had professors form the opponent magazine, *Forum*, and its circle. These were the faculties such as Law Faculty in Istanbul University and Political Science Faculty at Ankara University which educated the prospective bureaucrats. To control the opposing voices at Ankara University, Political Science Faculty in February 1960, DP government took a step to tie this faculty to Ministry of the Education. This punishment attempt of DP by taking off the autonomy of this institution caused the ignition of the April demonstrations of the students of these faculties (Alper, 2009, p. 193).

Although this protest started as such, the agenda of the student protest did not remain limited with it. The constitution of the Research Committees that have power to abolish political parties was another prominent concern for the opponents. In

Istanbul and Ankara Universities, students started demonstrations against these committees.

This accumulated discontent of the students, which started specifically in relation to autonomy of the universities and political involvement of the students and concerns of students about their higher status, in time turned into dissent with DP's repressive rule. Therefore, eventually, dissent on campuses turned into the demonstration against the DP government, and student protests found a vast scale of public support. The protest in Istanbul University was supported by even the high school students.

During these protests, the activities of the youth branch of the RPP took the lead in the organization. Demonstrations such as the protests in 28-29 April, particularly in Istanbul University, were getting fervent because of the brutality of the police force. The turning point of the demonstration was the death of the student of Forest Faculty by gunshot of police on April 28, 1960. The DP government predicted that the protests would flare up after this incident, thus, the government decided to close the university, yet the protests were already very fervent and out of government's control. Following the protests in the universities, on the 21st of May, the Military Academy organized a march in Ankara and welcomed students. That was one of the manifestations of the coup d'état that would bring the end of the DP period in May 27 (Alper, 2009, p. 194).

3.3 From campus politics to revolutionism

The dissent on the campuses against the DP's implementations had started with the autonomy of the university and the participation of the university and its elements to

politics brought the end of the DP period. After the DP period, the political life entered into a more open phase with the influence of the new constitution.

In this period, organization of the student movement carried certain similarities with the former period such as the claim for autonomy of the university. Yet, the changing economic backgrounds of the university students, influence of the relatively open political atmosphere and the global impact of 1968 led students to rethink the attributed role to them from being servants for the country to establish the future of the country. Thus, the new generation started to differentiate itself from the past by giving up the semi-corporatist organizations.

In particular, in the period after 1968, student movement associated itself with the left movement in Turkey thanks to the growing the solidarity of the student movement and socialist movement. Over time, this relationship of solidarity, coupled with the influence of the global 1968 youth movement, would usher in a new era for the student movement in Turkey.

3.3.1 Towards May 68 and fading away of semi-corporatist student organizations

As Rodriguez (2012) pointed out, dissent in university campuses has the capacity to accelerate social transformations (p. 311). It can be argued that the same pattern is valid in the case of Turkey's student movement in the 1960s. There is no doubt that student movement gave an immense momentum to the following political incidents that brought the end of the ten-year rule of the DP period. After the 27 May Coup d'état, the student movement entered into a new phase by acknowledging their ability to change the political authority.

The remnants of May 27 mostly have a controversial connotation: some groups called it a revolution and others thought May 27 was a coup d'état (Demirel,

2021). However, the crucial role that students played remained significant. From the lens of the student movement, the short-term effects of May 27 were promising, particularly the adoption of the 1961 Constitution, known as the most liberal constitution, which created a more open and democratic political atmosphere. Especially, faced with the attempts of the DP which deteriorated the status of the students, they achieved to protect their privileged status in society. Therefore, it is possible to state that the pioneering role of the students increased their self-confidence as the main actors of change.

Until May 27, demonstrations of students functioned as a precipitating step of collective dissent and brought the end of the DP period. Although this turn took place with the intervention of the army, students did not function as the subsidiary of the army, and they were insistent on their education related demands (Alper, 2009, p. 231-232). Even though students supported the National Unity Committee during the first years of the coup d'état, in 1962, the purge of the 147 professors, some of whom supported the student movement, got reactions from the students against the army (p. 217). After May 27, students tried to separate themselves from their allies such as the army and bureaucratic elites (p. 212). Towards the middle of the 1960s, former semi-corporatist student organizations such as TMTF and MTTB lost their power and the influence of the FKF, adopted by TİP, gained an enormous influence on the students (p. 315).

3.3.2 FKF period, 68 generation and making the youth movement socialist

Regarding political process theory, politically open and democratic atmosphere provide opportunities for the emergence of social movements (Tarrow, 2011; Tilly, 2004). In line with this, the 1960s in Turkey witnessed major demonstrations of

students and competency of the worker's movement.⁷ However, this relatively open political atmosphere functioned to sharpen the polarization between left and right movements.

The new generation in the universities at this period was less influenced by the Kemalist restoration of the May 27 Coup d'état. The foremost theoretical discussion of the period was the economic development issue of Turkey, which caused the emergence of the divisions within the left movement, and during this period, the socialist left gained influence and slightly started to separate from Kemalist-leftist ideas. The influence of circulation of Marxist ideas and literature led to the fermentation and formulation of the idea of revolution in the Turkish case. In conjunction with these, a more open political atmosphere paved the way for the solidarity of the student movement with labor movement and street politics (Alper, 2009, p. 323-324). Thus, in the 1960s, the efforts of the youth organizations went towards the agendas of the worker youth as well (Koçak, 2018, p. 101-102).

Nonetheless, the socio-political backgrounds of this new generation of university students were distinguished from the former generation. At this new period, with the ongoing effect of the migration, student youth was from neither the wealthy nor urban families. They were the children of middle and lower class families who came to large cities and struggled economically (Toprak, 2018, p. 72-73). Therefore, students and workers suffered from same problem: economic struggles. However, to see the alliance of the students and workers more visibly, student youth needed to take advantages of this politically open period to improve their intellectual bases.

⁷ As mentioned in the previous chapter, in line with the framework of the Political Process Theory, global upsurge of the student movement and the labor movement in 1960s was the outcome of the politically open atmosphere and growing welfare. Similarly, Turkey experienced the rise of the student and labor movement in the same period (Alper, 2009).

The influence of the democratic atmosphere through 1961 Constitution, diversity of thoughts had enriched, and their circulation had increased. The approach of the new government towards leftist ideas was more tolerant, thus, the growing circulation of the leftist ideas and their literature was the outcome of this atmosphere, reflected in university students (Alper, 2009, p. 207-208).

In such a context, one of the turning points in Turkey's political life influenced the student movement as well, which was the entrance of the first socialist party Turkish Labour Party (TİP) into the parliament, and this success of left excited the students. Although the demand of students for involvement in the party organization was met with a positive response, the party's central office hesitated and showed reluctance due to concerns that granting delegation to the students could lead to internal division within the party (Ünüvar, 2019, p. 415). In the beginning, the student youth close to TİP began to gather under the roof of Federation of Idea Clubs (FKF) on campuses. Thus, FKF became the central organization that carried the momentum of the student movement and during the events that led up to Turkey's 1968, FKF functioned to establish the hegemony of the left among youth (Ünüvar, 2019, p. 416).

In this period, deepening intellectual debates of the period profoundly affected the youth. In addition to writings on socialism and revolution, along with criticisms of the Kemalist restoration of May 27, the idea of engaging in street politics led the young generation to distance themselves from party-guided politics (Ünüvar, 2007, p. 824). Therefore, the youth adopted a skeptical position towards the youth branch of the RPP and other semi-corporatist organizations. Hereby, in 1967, by differentiating from the former student organizations, FKF as an autonomous organization began to be predominant among other organizations as an alternative to

them. From the perspective of the student movement, FKF was a manifestation of the youth movement which cannot be harnessed through political parties (Ünür, 2007 p. 828). Therefore, as aforementioned in the beginning of this chapter, a more open political atmosphere, both globally and locally, at the same time triggered propensity for possibilities and unpredictability of the social movement, and in this case student movement of Turkey and its central organization FKF, such as their counterparts all over the worlds, became the pioneer of the left movement.

1968 in Turkey had started with protests of the students due to faculty regulations and gained a revolutionary character in due course. In terms of boldness of this generation, it is possible to say that they owed their confidence to the global movement of the 1968. The youth was aware of the student's uprisings and demonstrations in Europe that had broad repercussion in Turkish press. The news about the protests were published in the front pages or headlines of the newspapers, and opinion columns discussed the character of these uprisings (Alper, 2009, p. 352-354).

Turkey's May 68 protest waves, which started with student-led demands, and turned into a revolutionary movement, was an outcome of the open political atmosphere and the solidarity as well as the opportunities that the labor movement created. The demands of the students until the 1968 protests can be defined as "education reform" (Alper, 2009). In this period the demands of the students focused on practical problems in education, such as high fees, counting the internships into education time, scholarships, and so forth. These compromised demands among students in the beginning of the 1960s prevented an ideological separation of the left and right wings among students (Boyras, 2015, p. 85-86). However, in 1968, these demands were framed as "revolution in education" as it can be understood from the

change in their slogan, and FKF and leftist students had started to dominate the mobilization in campuses (Alper, 2009, p. 331). Security forces and university administration were aware and watchful of the wave of student movements that rose all over the world, as if they were anticipating a similar uprising in Turkey as well, because campuses were already politicized (p. 355).

That is why, it is possible to say that the increasing self-confidence of the youth as prominent actors in such a relatively democratic political atmosphere through the demonstration effect of the global May 68 encouraged them to aim high. It led the students to practice new action repertoire, rely on disruptive methods such as boycotts and occupation, and particularly Istanbul University was the main address of such uprisings (Koçak, 2018, p. 73).

In such a politicized campus atmosphere, socialist students and their central youth organization FKF saw this mobilization that unified under university based demands and took initiative to practice these collective action tactics to consolidate their hegemony on student movement (Alper, 2009, pp. 360- 363).

For that reason, it is not a coincidence that revolutionary figures began to emerge among the students who experienced new collective action tactics on campuses. In other words, the role of the university campuses turned into a transition stage to become revolutionary. During the occupation and boycott waves at university campuses, the demands of the students were addressed by rectors and ministers, and socialist students became the spokesperson of the movement (Alper, 2009; Koçak, 2018). For instance, the well-known revolutionary figures of the 68 generation such as Deniz Gezmiş, Mahir Çayan and İbrahim Kaypakkaya who all

pondered on the theory of the revolution from different perspectives and pioneers on campus and streets were at the same time university students⁸.

In that context, FKF experience functioned as a springboard for students towards the socialist movement. By contributing to the theory of the revolution through their articles and discussions, student-represented leftist-socialist movement gained a diverse range of wings. In the beginning of such an atmosphere, students expressed their demand based on the university, and in time they turned into vigorous actors of the period, as it was all over the world. In the Turkish case, besides being activists, leftist students at the same time produced an immense literature on the theory of the revolution based on the development discussions of Turkey.

Beside these, open political atmosphere and global wave of May 68 brought about immense diversity in cultural atmosphere of Turkey as well. In cinema, Yeşilçam genre adopted a socialist realist stand that criticized feudal relations. Besides, Turkish popular poet singers such as Aşık Veysel and Anatolian rock emerged as a new genre in music, which were sought after by university youth (Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi, 1988). Also, according to narrations of the activists of the period, being interested in literature was deemed as a manifestation of the leftists (Baykam, 1999). Hippie counterculture surrounding all over the worlds did not find correspondence in 68 Generation of Turkey, and student youth remained distant from the hippie-like culture (Zileli, 2000, p. 347-348). By differentiating from their European peers, Turkey's 68 Generation remained distant to clothes such as short skirts and blue jeans, as well as long-haired hippie like appearances. Moreover, as the students gained a lower-class character and became

⁸ In time, these prominent names of 1968's Turkey started to be associated with different wings of socialist movements in Turkey.

hand in hand with the working class and peasants, they started to have an apathy towards such popular cultural elements towards the end of 1969 (Alper, 2009, p. 503). In other words, not to lose their image with the allied movements, leftist students distanced themselves from cultural elements that could create a divide between them and the working class. In particular, with the adoption of the activist's political violence and the leftist students adopted a well-disciplined culture in their organizations (p. 504). Accordingly, their clothing changed and gained a militaristic style. The appearance of cult figures adopted by other activists such as facial hair and green parka of Deniz Gezmiş became a distinguishing feature for the leftist students (Neyzi, 2001, p. 421).

In terms of intellectual legacy, generation of 1968 made youth movement socialist and brought a socialist hegemony in university campuses. In terms of the contribution to the legacy of the leftist-socialist student movement, FKF period of the youth may be seen as an incubation period. In that sense, FKF experience and its legacy involve genuineness. First of all, FKF period, as an autonomous organization which was independent from political parties, reveals that youth had given up waiting for a savior and decided to be their own voice (Ünüvar, 2007, p. 828-829). In that sense, FKF as the central organization of May of '68 Turkey, the generation of the FKF represents a rupture from May 27 generation (Lüküslü, 2018, p. 67).

Nevertheless, both generations sustain the youth myth, 68 May generation decided to choose a more radical path. By comparison to May 27 generation, FKF experience that represents May '68 generation reveals that instead of being a servant for the future of the country, the youth went towards constructing the entire future according to their own ideals (Ünüvar, 2007, p. 829). In other words, 68 generation was thirsty to change the world before they hold a degree (Erten, 2007, p. 842). In

relation to this, it can be argued that youth myth which was in line with the state discourse had changed with the influence of the global 68 May. The youth began to set aside the role assigned to them as servants of the youth nation-state in the discourse of state-led youth myth, aiming instead to determine the future of the country with their own hands. In this way, they reinterpreted the youth myth to strengthen their canonical positions in the political arena according to their aims.

In addition to these, the 1968 May period marked a new phase for leftist-socialist movement as the militarization of the socialist movement that had hegemony over caused the estrangement of the non-activist students. The movement arose from the demands which relied on university and education began to fade away. Therefore, it became insufficient to mobilize non-activist students in campus (Lüküslü, 2015, p. 68).

In addition, even though there is an immense literature on Turkey's 1968, during my study, I have realized that the role of the changing repressive mechanism of government to police and control the movement was underestimated. Yet, the emergence of the Society Police in 1965 played a crucial role in controlling the collective dissent as specialized units. So, to understand the change of the attitudes of the government towards the protestors or students, this factor must be taken into account. In fact, the increasing role of the security forces caused an alteration in how the protests were perceived. Therefore, the tolerance that security forces displayed in the first half of the 1960s transformed into a more violent way (Uysal, 2015, p. 22-23). Besides, the pioneering role of the FKF, a socialist organization of the youth and changing demand of the students, caused a polarization among the left and right on campuses. These repressive factors pushed the leftist movement to a more radical and militaristic path. The status of the students was prestigious, and society had

respected them. Nevertheless, this state would not be long-lasting, and the perception towards the students would change because of their changing methods and increasing use of political violence.

3.4 Increasing radicalism of leftist students from 1970s to September 12th coup d'état

Although the open political atmosphere brought a vitality in terms of social movements, it led to the fragmentation of the wings inside the left and crystallized the polarization between left and right. In the period between 1968 and 1971, the leftist movement lived through a dramatic fragmentation (Berksoy, 2007, p. 158).

Leftist students under the roof of the FKF already had hegemony over the student movement. Moreover, the momentum of 1968 paved the way for making the student movement the subject of the socialist struggle in Turkey (Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi, 1988, p. 2081).

In 1969, disruptive methods of leftists in universities such as university occupations and boycotts became ordinary (Alper, 2009, p. 390). On the other hand, the changing repressive mechanisms and the increasing organization of the right-wing paramilitary organizations led to the militancy of left concurrently. Therefore, particularly with the second half of the 1970s, youth became the subject of political violence (Lüküslü, 2015, p. 94-103).

During this harsh polarization and increasing criminalization of the left, FKF experienced a change in its schism. In this new period, the central organization of leftist students did not limit themselves to legalism and adopted a more militaristic position that displayed political violence. At the same time, the attempts of the government turned into suppressing these boycotts and university occupations that

became mainstream on campuses. Increasing intervention of the police on campuses and police raids caused the Molotov bomb to be detected on campuses, and the legitimacy of the left to be lost in the eyes of the university administration, government, and elites. Also, this tactical alteration of the movement from parliamentarism to political violence was criminalized in the rhetoric of the RPP which was the main opposition party of the time (Alper, 2009, p. 391). Although criminalization of the leftist student movement in campuses, this harsh and polarizing atmosphere led moderate and non-organized students to become a part of a wing. Therefore, besides its hegemony on campuses, FKF maintained recruiting new militants towards the 1970s (p. 392).

Such increasing radicalism was not peculiar to leftist students. The influence of the politically open atmosphere strengthened the labor movement as well. Existing dialogues between leftist students and workers became more evident compared to former periods. Leftist students had already gained self-confidence. Inside of the left-socialist movement, students had already given up a pacifist position and the growing labor movement excited the students. This abundance of the social movements in this period and increasing hegemony of the left outside the campuses led them to be pioneers of this possibility of change (Alper, 2009, p. 393).

Precursors of this alliance was indicated by abolishment of FKF in October 1969 and announcement of the Dev-Genç (Revolutionary Youth Federation of Turkey) (Ünüvar, 2018, p. 422). In terms of the feature of the 1970s youth movement, it might be put forward that instead of being campus militants, the leftist students stood close to the left movement of Turkey. In other words, the socialist campus militants of 1968 who came up with issues based on studentship, such as fees, qualified education, and autonomy of university, had turned into rigorous

militants of the left. Until March 12, 1971, former campus militants were the pioneers of different wings of the Turkey's left.

As aforementioned, radicalization of the student movement was an outcome of the politically open atmosphere globally and locally. Also, thriving labor movement gained an immense momentum, and socialist students as carrier of the youth myth shouldered the Turkish left. Therefore, in such context towards the 1971 coup d'état, the prominent demand of the students, the autonomy of the university, can easily be connected to each other, yet at the same time engulfed by the ideal of independent Turkey (Boyras, 2018). Thus, the period after 1968 with the drastical leap of the left movement that went on outside of the universities eventually prevailed on the agenda of the leftist students. That is why, the issues of the university peculiar to its spatiality became secondary, and the demands of the student movement were associated with demands of the left.

In addition to that, students, because of the change in their tactical agendas, had turned into subjects of political violence. Despite the increasing fragmentation among the left, most of them had chosen the guerilla model especially at the beginning of 1971 (Alper, 2009, p. 461). Also, growing use of violence and ensuing this transformation of repressive mechanism by creation of the Society Police led to criminalization of the leftist movement in the eyes of the public. After the coup d'état, the authoritarian attitude of the regime became evident, and the government violently repressed the leftist movement. For instance, former leftist student activist and revolutionary figures of the time Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan and Yusuf Aslan were sentenced to death.

The characteristics of the 1970s in terms of student movement resulted from the highly politicized and polarized atmosphere of Turkey, the abandonment of a

campus-based left-wing student movement, and the neglect of student-centered issues as a backbone of the leftist students (Alper, 2009, p. 461). Therefore, despite its immense contribution to the socialist struggle of Turkey and its memory, this period left a tension concerning how the student youth movement would define itself independently from the left-wing movement. In other words, it would become crucial to build the autonomous space of the left-wing student movement and choose the appropriate methods of action in order to differentiate the student movement from the broader left-wing movement. In short, being able to distinguish between the student movement and the left-wing movement would gain importance.

3.5 The associations and magazine circles period of the leftist students

1980 Coup d'état was one of the most important turning points of Turkey's political life, and was evoked as the dark age. The period after the coup d'état displayed a restructuring and depoliticization process in every aspect of social life.

During this period, the leftist struggle that had a hegemony on society lived through a crucial trauma. Since the 1970s, the movement had lost many of its cadres to political violence or had been hindered by state repression apparatuses that sought to suppress its organization. One of the important changes of the junta regime was the abolition of the 1961 Constitution and enactment of the 1982 Constitution.

In addition to that, after September 12, the crucial politicizing role of the universities as the space of the collective dissent started to be controlled intimately. According to the speech of the prime minister of the time, universities had abused their autonomy and initiated anarchy in the country (Timur, 2000, p. 339). For that reason, the junta regime found the solution to increase the governing and controlling power of Higher Education Council (YÖK) that worked under central government

over universities. In time, this institution turned into the focal point of criticism and protests by socialist students.

In this period, in conjunction with the politically repressive atmosphere, the dominant discourse concerning the youth and typologies about them shifted. Youth after September 12 was criticized by former generations as being apolitic, and they were named as “Özal’s Kids”, “Yuppies” or “September 12 Kids” (Lüküslü, 2015, p. 132-143).

On the other hand, instead of focusing on these dominant typologies of youth, we should bear in mind that the junta regime and its repressive implementation pushed collective dissent into a tight corner. In this period of constraints for social movements, socialist youth, as adopters and bearers of the youth myth, was striving to find platforms where they could express themselves. For that reason, as Melucci points out, this latency should not be understood as inactivity since at those times movement still contains its potential and looks for alternatives (Jasper, 1997, p. 71).

By transition to the parliamentary system in 1983, the enactment of Law No. 2907 on Associations and the implementation of the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations brought a relatively open atmosphere, and socialist students began to engage in the process of forming associations or started expressing themselves within magazine circles (Savun, 2014, p. 55-57). The second half of the 1980s, especially with the positive impact of the of *Bahar Eylemleri* in 1989, provided a renewal of self-confidence in students.

As a remnant of September 12, under the Law no 2495 in 1981 on Protection and Security of Institutions and Organizations, security guards as civil servants were hired. Consequently, the existence of the security forces on campuses became the norm. In terms of the dissociation of this period, increasing existence of the policing

forces on campuses and excitement of the approaching 1990s as a new decade led the leftist students to find novel ways to provide their resources (Savun, 2014, p. 57).

3.6 University student coordination period as genuine experiences of socialist students

After the coup d'état, university campuses and university students became more of an issue because they already proved their potential to induce social transformation and usher in collective dissent. Therefore, to undermine the autonomy of the universities, YÖK, which was established after 1971 coup d'état and stayed as a symbolic institution under central government, was resurrected by the 1982 Constitution as a mechanism to police the dissent on campuses (Timur, 2000, p. 293). After the political violence of the 1970s and following September 12 coup d'état caused the campus politics to be perceived as a threat. However, YÖK as institutional remnant of the junta regime in universities has become the center of opposition against which students organized campus-based activism⁹.

As Melluci pointed out, this latency is a fermentation phase for the movement that evaluates the possibilities to mobilize the sources, and in that sense the period after the end of the 1980s and at the first half of the 1990s can be seen as such. Until this time, social clubs of the students were an opportunity for socialist students to organize and recruit their sources (Savun, 2014, p. 58). Towards the second half of the 1990s, the central leftist student movement organization evoked the University

⁹ For me, one of the biggest challenges to write this chapter was to find academic texts about this period as the materials on this period are usually the printed materials of the leftist organizations of this period. To overcome this shortage and to understand the activists of this generation and dynamics of this organizational model, which differentiate them from the former generations, I conducted my interviews with four activists from University Student Coordinations in Beyazıt Campus.

Student Coordinations, thus, the movement entered an uptrend (Tahincioğlu & Göktaş, 2013, p. 63).

The activists of this generation were children when the coup period. For that reason, they were less influenced by the repressive rule of the junta. Nevertheless, my participants expressed that they grew up hearing about the repression of the coup period from their elders. This generation of activists not only embraced the legacy of the past through these narratives, but they also contemplated and criticized the mistakes of the past.

The political and the cultural atmosphere of the 1990s indicated an abundance in relation to the rise of new actors, themes, and organizational models of the social movements (Çayır, 1999). These fruitful times were promising for the student movement to employ new ways to massify the movement. For instance, Hayri states changing strategies to recruit new people by considering altered socio-cultural atmosphere of 1990s:

My generation does not remember September 12, and for my generation of leftist, the groundbreaking incident was the collapse of USSR. Furthermore, we were thinking and interrogating how and why USSR collapsed. We saw that it was the collapse of something that belonged to us. Generations emerge through the criticism of the former generations in the student movement. So, for example, we thought about punk culture (...) and thought about another leftist imagination of daily life, another way to organize a struggle (...) I used to play football at those times, so I thought how a leftist imagination of football could be. We rethought about the things that were slandered by orthodox organizations as bourgeois things (...) we had a rock club, football tournaments, a theater club, and what not. Those were alternative ways to be organized.

Towards the second half of the 1990s, besides the increasing existence of the police forces on campuses, the rise of the right wing activism on campuses brought the leftist students together regardless of their fractions (Savun, 2014, p. 59). Therefore, organizing under Coordinations as a roof platform for leftist students was an outcome of the urgent need of solidarity in front of increasing right wing

organizations on campuses, neoliberal implementations were adopted on campuses by privatization of the education and implementations of YÖK such as the increase in the fees (Ünüvar, 2011, p. 11). Thus, by referring to the coordination type of organizing student movements in France, Cointre states this type of organization ensures the opportunities for collective action and increases the number of participants (Uysal, 2001). Organizing in the form of coordinations allowed for the assembly of masses in a non-hierarchical and decentralized way. In other words, this type of organizational model brought changes in the organizational model of the roof organization. By diverging from the organizational model of the former period, coordination type of organizational model brought flexibility and diversity to the movement. As a result of growing participation and diversity the movement's creative capacity peaked (Koçak, 2004, p. 591). The organization defined its course of action as “legitimate, militant and mass” (Yalçıntaş, 2011, p. 76).

By distinguishing from the traditional leftist organizational structure, Coordinations gathered up the ecologists, feminists, and anarchist students (Ergün, 2011). Besides that, with the rise of the Kurdish movement in the 1990s, Kurdish students also started to become more visible (Aydın, 2021). In line with this, my respondents from the 1990s and 2000s stated that although they had different agendas, Kurdish students and the leftist students allied against the attacks of the right wing, police, and security guards on campuses.

In the previous chapters, I talked about how 1968 and its legacy to the students caused tension and confusion about having an agenda about studentship or focus on the agenda of the left outside of the campus. To overcome this dilemma, the activists of the coordinations considered handling the major problems of society within the identity of students. To point out the authenticity of the coordinations

experience, my interviews contain certain highlights. For example, according to

Orhan:

Faced with the increasing oppression of the right-wing students on the campuses, we chose to focus on campus-based politics. That is why, we were always at the university from early in the morning to the evening. We were leftist, but first we were students. (...). We adopted leftist cults and the legacy of 1968. But at the same time, we were done with the orthodoxy of organizations. Our point of view was more diversified, more multivocal (...), but anyway, we were looking for a class-based analysis.

Therefore, they could get rid of the stigma about the leftist students, and in the eyes of public their struggle could find a legitimate base. By prioritizing student-centered agendas, their protests and demonstrations against YÖK about the dramatic increase in student fees embraced vast public support in 1995 and caused the withdrawal of this increase in the fees (Laçiner, 1997).

During this period, protests against YÖK every November 6 became traditional for students, and their repertoire of actions usually took on a festive atmosphere by the participations of the performances of the music and theater clubs of the students. Despite the criminalization of the campus based activism in the past, the innovation of repertoire of actions and insistence on prioritizing a student-based agenda in this period encouraged the participation of non-activist students.

In 1997, the period of coordinations strengthened their hand in terms of bloc recruitment and became a crowded organization. This situation of the organization paved the way for discussions on centralization which confronts the essence of its organizational model. These internal conflicts also caused polarization of different fractions inside the left groups (Savun, 2014). In addition to that, even though students could manage to revitalize the movement, the 2000s signaled another period

in terms of future of the student movement and policing collective dissent on campus¹⁰.

3.7 “We couldn’t accomplish it”: Outlook into the 2000s student movement

As the era of University Student Coordination approached its end, the issues that shape the agenda of students continued during the 2000s, such as right of free education and opposition against YÖK. Also, action methods and resource mobilization until the early period of the 2000s carried similarities with the former period. For instance, the activities of the students’ social clubs, on-campus forums, circulation of the textual materials about the current topics of university and politics, such as fanzines, magazines, newspapers had become ordinary practices for students¹¹. However, after the dissipation of the University Student Coordination experience of the movement, leftist students did not gather under a roof organization nor did a certain organization of youth gain a central position.

The student movements that emerged every decade and left their mark on the era could not establish a presence after the end of University Student Coordinations period and by the time 2000 arrived. Therefore, the 2000s were heralding a new period for the youth, and this relatively liberal atmosphere as the accomplishments of the 1990s would not last long. The first signal of this deterioration of the climax was a severe global economic crisis in 2001. Suat who was a student in the late 1990s and early 2000s summarized this period by referring to the song of a popular rock band,

¹⁰ The changing ways of policing the leftist students, in particularly, the changing repressive tools used by the beginning of the 2000s and the alteration of the way of criminalization of the activists are going to be addressed in the next chapters of this thesis. This chapter is designed to highlight the evolvement of the leftist student movement.

¹¹ Although these written materials were tolerated by university administration in different periods of the 2000s, my participants highlighted that the posters on the walls of the lecture halls and the aisles of the buildings were always problematic as well. Posters and wallpapers were almost unacceptable for university administration and Disciplinary Regulations of the YÖK throughout 2000s.

Rashit, 2001 *Yazı*: “In a deadly void, the youth now reside, no branch to hold on to, nor a dime”. In this context, my participants emphasize that the emergence of the anti-globalization movement is noteworthy in terms of resistance against the government’s policies of marketization and privatization. Yet, my participant Mehmet points out that these neoliberal policies had already begun to increase in the 1990s after 1980 coup d’etat and reached a novel phase in the 2000s and AKP regime.

Coming to 2000s, YÖK as the policing and controlling apparatus of universities started to develop relations with TÜSİAD (Turkish Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association). The cooperation of these two institutions had concentrated on the idea that the universities should be run with managerialist principles similar to private enterprises. In other words, starting from the middle of 1990s, the universities in Turkey adapted to the market economy and the emerging demands of the global market. Thus, to ensure this integration of the universities regarding to market need caused to consider them as a factory of the human capital. According to this relation of dependency, universities must lose their autonomy and ethos of critical thought more than the past to sustain the needs of the private and neoliberal government. In such context, university students were seen as the human capital. (Timur, 2000, p. 351-358). In fact, these implementations of restructuring of the universities according to the necessities of the market were an extension of a global phenomenon. The influence of neoliberal governance on universities begun to develop in the 1980s at the universities in the UK, the USA and Australia (Davies et al., 2006; Olssen & Peter, 2007; Troiani & Dutson, 2021).

This fundamental shift in the inherent ethos of universities and dissents on campuses against neoliberalization deserve to be addressed along with the rise of the

anti-globalization movement, which emerged at the end of the 1990s. Thus, it can be put forward that the 2000s are years that witnessed crystallization of the neoliberal policies of central government and YÖK in universities. In that sense, leftist students on campus share similar rhetoric with the anti-globalization movement. The repercussions of anti-globalization movement on student movement are stated by Erdem as the following:

We followed the anti-globalization movement. We thought that similar to how the workers all over the world resist against the IMF and WB policies, our resistance on the campus was an extension the same topic. We resisted against the commercialization of the universities. (...) For instance, in this period, YÖK wanted to change the name of the department of labor economics and industrial relations under the faculty of economics to human resources. We protested with the slogan: human is not a resource.

In conjunction with this climax, another phenomenon that emerged in the 2000s of the campus highlighted by my respondents was the proliferation of the business clubs as a branch of social clubs and the increasing on-campus career days. My participants expressed that they used these career meetings as an opportunity because these meetings were crowded. Yılmaz explains their strategy as:

During the question and answer parts of the career days, usually one raises a hand, and criticizes the speakers because of their market logic and this logic is contrary to the values of the universities.

After the 2002 General Elections, AKP came to power as the party that consolidates the neoliberal policies through the privatization and acceleration to the articulation steps to global market (Angın & Bedirhanoğlu, 2013, p. 81). Contrary to these steps that AKP took in these more than 20 years ruling period, one of the first promises of the party was the abolishment of YÖK (Bağımsız Sosyal Bilimciler, 2015).

However, YÖK, the regulator of the university according to the demands of the market and as the apparatus of the central government to police and control the university campus, maintained its function more violently, thus, the collaboration of

the universities with private sector through YÖK strengthened consistently (Berksoy, 2016). In addition to these, the impact of the 2001 economic crisis continued during the AKP period, and the employability of university students declined dramatically. In other words, the position of educated youth in society went into decline dramatically (Benlisoy, 2008). The activists of 1990s Orhan evaluates these:

My generation had confidence when it comes to finding a job. We would graduate one day. But we had confidence. One way or another, we would make good money after university. But I would not say the same thing for our friends who had university life in the 2000s.

In addition to these, ongoing impacts of the 2001 economic crisis led university students to become more competitive and individualist, thus, the identity of being a university student and its collective experiences were being undermined (Benlisoy, 2008, p. 132). The disappearance of the sense of belonging that comes from being a student caused the withdrawal of non-activist students regarding the political activities in campus. This period marks the gradual loss of support from fellow students for the leftist student movement, which created a fragmented outlook of the movement. Thus, instead of a campus based organization, during the AKP years, leftist students have re-organized under various political parties, mass organizations and associations. This caused interactions in between the leftist student movement and leftist movement outside of the campus (Tahincioğlu & Göktaş, 2013, p. 76). Although this interaction with the outside of the campus left could be seen as a positive impact, in fact, this close relation led to a break away from the agenda of students. For instance, Suat and Mehmet who were the students during 2000s express the following respectively:

One of the prominent subjects of the 2000s that I remember was the *Hayata Dönüş Operasyonu* on the campus. This was a heavy topic of the time and the left on the campus was not indifferent to it. Yet, at this time, I may say that the student movement somewhat sacrificed itself for the agenda of the left.

Some subjects were not actually the focus of the student movement such as F-Type Prisons and hunger strikes. Nevertheless, those were not our (students') primary problems. So, at some point, we were not talking about the agenda of student youth. We had detached from it.

Therefore, in the 2000s, leftist students were more detached from the agenda of the students. Also, political groups and fractions that leftist students organized had a divergent organizational culture which were closer to the organizational culture of the 1970s described as well-disciplined and didactic. In other words, the organizational model and repertoire of actions of the University Student Coordinations that characterized as festive and multivocal started withering away in this period. With this alteration, political organizations evoked negative connotations among the youth such as "killing the individuality" (Lüküslü, 2015, p. 157-161). However, according to the emphasis of my participants, this perception of youth towards the left softened thanks to the Turkish TV series *Hatırla Sevgili*¹². Emre and Hakan state, respectively:

I think that sounds funny, but we should admit that one generation has become leftist and preferred Istanbul University just because of *Hatırla Sevgili*. I remember that even the offices of the fractions were busy with teenagers at those times. During registration days of the university, new students were trying to find us on campus and gave their contact information to us.

I would say that a generation of *Hatırla Sevgili* passed from Beyazıt. I was entering into lecture hall for agitation. I used to hear the freshmen talk with each other: See! Just like Deniz Gezmiş in *Hatırla Sevgili*.

¹² *Hatırla Sevgili* was a popular romantic and historical television series broadcasted from 2006 to 2008, which lasted for 68 episodes. The series addresses a long time period of Turkish political life and atmosphere from 1950s to 1980s coup d'état, and gave an ample room to youth movement that left mark on the period. Pioneer figures of the leftist movement who came from leftist student movement were shown at starring roles, and many episodes were filmed in Beyazıt Campus. During my fieldwork, my participants noted that *Hatırla Sevgili* created a motivating effect for themselves and for non-activist students. Moreover, my participants pointed out that during the years that the series broadcasted, they recruited more people on campus.

The influence of *Hatırla Sevgili* had been a useful instrument for carrying over and recognition of the cults of the leftist movement for the students in the 2000s. Thereby, the social action forms of the former generations became familiar for prospective activists of the movement. In addition to that, it may be argued that thanks to the influence of the *Hatırla Sevgili*, the traditional social action form of the left did not seem repellent in the eyes of the non-activist students, and they did not remain apathetical towards those social action forms. However, the impact of this popular culture did not last long, and according to my participants expressions could not go beyond creating nostalgia in a university that gradually lost its autonomy, which provided a base for a mass movement. That is why, the influence of this popular culture element only created sympathy for non-activist students, and the concerns of the youth about their future generated an apathy towards the left movement in campus.

Besides, the neoliberalization of the university in order to make them factories that produce “human capital” according to the demands of market required the application of new governmental strategies on campus as well (Berksoy, 2016). In line with this, during the AKP regime, to police and repress the left movement on campus entered into another phase. This new management strategy of collective dissent indicating signals since the beginning of the 2000s became more evident and violent on campus throughout AKP years. In conjunction with this, three of my participants who were activists in 2010s Cemre, Ömer and Eren described their state:

Beyazıt was like a miniature of Turkey. So, what happens outside of the campus has meaning inside of the campus or vice versa. In my university life from 2011 to 2019, in the eyes of AKP, a university was not perceived as a university. I mean, they see the university as a crime scene, and the students as criminals.

The biggest challenge of our times was our loneliness on campus. Our struggle coincided with the time when apolitization campaigns of AKP were conducted in every aspect of university life.

We could not accomplish it. We could not organize a mass youth student movement. Beyazıt Campus witnessed the most fervent period of the movement; we knew it. But, during the AKP years of campus was like a little Turkey. So, what happens outside of campus or in the country's agenda affected us. Similarly, what changed on the campus had a bigger meaning about mode of rule of AKP. Beyazıt was like a laboratory.

In this context, it can be argued that placing emphasis on issues outside the agenda of student life in the 2000s and losing the claim to be a mass movement hindered the gaining momentum of the student movement. Nevertheless, despite their disheveled and diverse appearances on campus, student opposition managed to continue in 2000. Yet, when we bear in mind this crucial emphasis of my participants that concentrated on the political context, it is obvious that during the AKP rule, the movement reached a deadlock gradually. In the consideration of these significant highlights of my participants, in order to understand this bottleneck of the movements in 2000s, it is critical to find out the how the neoliberal rationality functioned to govern and control the leftist students on campuses.

3.8 Conclusion: Some thoughts on autonomous realm of the student movement and what is left today

In light of the past of the leftist student movement, I suggest that the universities always have the potential to induce or articulate public opposition, and they have never been isolated from prevailing political atmosphere at both local and global levels. Inherent values of higher education, which distinguished them from outside of campus, which I touched upon such as climax of freedom of thought and critical thinking, give room for student movements to thrive. However, as we can follow from Turkey's case, the dissents of students about autonomy of university and

educational policies have always tended to articulate or showed solidarity with growing social movement outside the campuses. In that sense, student movement presents a peculiar example of resilient to calculation and prediction due to its capacity of growing and expanding through alignments. Also, it should be kept in mind that the enhancement of these feature stem from youth and youth myth.

On the other hand, this articulation may leave a narrow autonomous realm for students such that they can fix or prioritize certain agenda in, especially after the leap of youth movement on campus with the dynamism of May 1968. Nevertheless, when we consider that being a university student represents a temporary phase in the lives of activists, student movement can be a springboard for other movements, in that sense, I thought that my choice of doing fieldwork in Beyazıt Campus might present a valuable example. My informants, as activists in the 1990s and 2000s, still engage in active politics under various organizations.

Even though universities accommodate students and their movements from various political wings, the student movement in Turkey is predominantly associated with left wing movement and political violence in highly polarized milieu in the 1970s. My fieldwork with activist students from Beyazıt Campus, which hosted ample demonstrations and become the university of Deniz Gezmiş and many leftist cults, presents a crystallized sample of the nesting character of Turkey's left and student movement. In addition to that, my participants are the children of the generation that lived through or suffered from the 1970s political violence and repression of September 12. In that sense, as my participants put into words jokingly cliché advices from their elders when they left home to go to university, such as “be careful out there my son/daughter. Everyone runs away, gets away. Then, you have to pay the price,” can be understandable.

The influence of May 1968 channeled student movement to the left, and the tactical shift of the left caused criminalization of the campus politics in 1970s. After the 1980 coup d'état and its constitution, universities were perceived as a nest of the anarchy and held responsible of the political violence, and that is why, the junta regime left the YÖK to govern and control the dissent on campuses under central government.

In the middle of the 1990s by the University Student Coordinations, a student movement that conducts campus based politics focused on opposition to YÖK reached a peak, and stigma about leftist students was removed. After the latent period of student opposition in the 1980s, coordinations successfully organized a movement focused on student issues and campus dynamics. Thus, it can be argued that this period of the movement could establish a delicate balance between the student movement and the leftist movement outside of the campus.

In addition to these, during the 1990s period, rising movement and Kurdish students on campuses were allied against the attacks of fascist groups and police forces. Nevertheless, the accomplishment of the 1990s was not enough for the abolishment of YÖK and internal conflicts of the coordination type of organizational model caused its dissipation. Following the end of this period, increasing existence of the police on campuses became norm coming to the 2000s.

In the 2000s, the main subjects remaining from the 1990s such as the abolishment of YÖK and free education became more of an issue, and the outlook of the leftist students was more disheveled and lost its claim to create a mass movement. The opposition groups active on campus were organizations and factions outside of the campus. Therefore, student opposition became fragmented without a umbrella organization in 2000s. It can be said that during this period, the student

opposition experienced a weakening of their constant state of alertness, insistence on their demands, and reflexes against governmental repression.

After 2001 economic crisis, universities were transformed with the lead of YÖK and its collaboration with private sector. Ensuing this, after 2002 election, the beginning of more than 20 years rule of AKP left its mark on the 2000s of the movement. Though leftist students maintained their activism on campuses and time to time could rise, thanks to the influence of the popular cultural element, the transformation of the universities as a factory of human capital turned into a crime scene throughout AKP years. Therefore, starting from the 1980 coup d'état, the effort of the central government for policing the left movement in campuses entered a new phase, starting the end of the University Students Coordinations. Yet, the alteration of the policing instruments of government on campus remained as an overlooked point to give meaning to the decline of the left student activism. Thus, in the scope of my study, I suggest listening to the narrations of the leftist students to understand the decline of the movement through the impact of alteration of the repressive mechanisms consolidated during AKP years.

CHAPTER 4

STUDENT MOVEMENT THROUGHOUT THE 2000S: BETWEEN GOVERNMENTAL REPRESSION AND INTERNAL DILEMMAS

4.1 Introduction: A brief overview on the movement's bottleneck in the 2000s

In the past, participating in the protests or being taken into custody meant police brutality. I mean, beating up was the cost of the protesting until the 2000s. The day after getting beaten, we still came to school and continued our activities and attended the classes as students. But approaching the 2000s, they stopped beating us up. They even stopped beating us while we were waiting in detention. At that point, we understood that something started to change towards the 2000s. They were going to try to bring us to our knees in other ways.

The quotation above is from my interviewee Yılmaz who is a former activist of University Student Coordination and participated in the student movement on campus between 1995 and 2001. Another interviewee, Ozan, who started university after the Gezi Park Protests put into words:

After Gezi, I had expected a strong and vibrant student movement on campus. Yet, after a fleeting time, I felt quite disappointed because politics on campus was not about student-based problems. We (leftist students) did not have any concerns about the participation of the non-activist students. I can say that the left on campus was disconnected from the problems and demands of the students.

I would like to highlight that these two quotations from my interviews touch upon crucial points in terms of my research. Firstly, the repression and elimination of the public opposition are usually explained through the AKP's authoritarian turn, which is a popular narration with strong justification. However, when we consider the trajectory of the student movement, its decline had begun before the AKP came to power in 2002. For that reason, merely focusing on the AKP's authoritarian policies to explain the repression of student movement may not completely explain the bottleneck of the student movement that they had faced before it. Therefore, while

explaining its decline, we should look at the changes that started before AKP government and consolidated throughout its rule. Also, within the framework of this thesis, the current authoritarian surge of the AKP government will be addressed as concomitancy of reformist and repressive forms of governmentality for not addressing its authoritarianism monolithically (Alemdaroğlu & Erensü, 2018). Thus, the political atmosphere that influences the possibilities and limitations of the student movement would be diversified from the homogeneity of the authoritarian rule. Secondly, regarding the protest policing in response to student movement, novel techniques have come in sight approaching the 2000s.

One of these techniques was the disciplinary investigations based on the regulations of the YÖK mushroomed against the leftist students in early 2000s. These investigations functioned to discipline the left opposition on campus, and they started to result in harsh punishments such as suspension, expulsion from the universities, cutting of the scholarship and eviction from the student dormitories. In other words, the usage of physical violence and police brutality, which dominated how consecutive governments dealt with the opposition of university students since mid-1960s, decreased during the AKP era only to be replaced by new mechanisms of punishment and control.

In addition to that, as an extension of the changing security perception in the 2000s globally, the emerging surveillance technologies and the privatization of the security services on campus generated another external factor that hampered the student movement. Thus, precautionary measures on the grounds of security and maintaining public order on campus started to be used for preempting the student protests and keeping the activities of student clubs on campus under the strict control of the university administration.

In line with the diffusion of surveillance systems and policing networks on campus, and the disciplinary regulations of the YÖK were mobilized to suppress the movement through psychological and financial violence. In the scope of my research, these reasons to explain the decline of the movement fall under the category of external reasons led to decline of the movement which are incessantly in relation to the political climate of the 2000s that influence the course of the student movement.

On the other hand, by taking Ozan's point into consideration, it is possible to argue that there are internal dynamics that caused the downfall of the movement.

Nevertheless, I must highlight that even these changes in the internal dynamics are under the influence of the alteration of the political climate primarily, yet the movement could not achieve to deliver accurate response due to their own reasons.

One of the foremost issues of the 2000s is the dispersed outlook of the left student organizations on campus since the dissipation of the University Students Coordination by the end of the 1990s. In such atmosphere, left organizations on the campus were the extensions of the left organizations outside of the campus.

Therefore, absence of the roof organization of the movement caused to escalation of the ongoing tension between autonomous realm of the student movement and the agenda of off-campus left movement. Especially, in periods that public opposition upsurged under the influence of Gezi Parkı or during the relatively open atmosphere of the Kurdish Peace Process, left movement on campus majorly focused on macro issues and missed out the campus politics. In such atmosphere, we would expect the student movement to shift into higher gear. However, surprisingly the left movement on campus remained indifferent to recruiting non-activist students and unwilling to create a common ground that can meet the student-based agenda. However, when the Kurdish Movement that have solidarity relations with leftist students withdrew

from the campus during the Kobani Resistance, left movement became isolated on campus. Thus, the movement suffered from their ignorance and inwardness in terms of recruitment and abandonment of campus politics, especially after the assignment of the trustee rector in 2015.

In addition, I would like to touch on the statements I heard several times from different respondents: “university as a miniature of Turkey” or “campus as a micro-cosmos of the country”. At first glance, these analogies are striking, and they point out valid claims, because the campus as a space of the collective dissent lived through the alterations of government’s response towards social movements at first hand. However, this analogy can obscure the acknowledgement of the possibilities to organize a movement based on the dynamics of the campus. Therefore, articulating the larger scale of aims may cause escaping the actual aims of the movement. In other words, focusing on the macro issues and abandonment of campus-based politics caused the problems that articulation and innovation dilemmas can address (Jasper, 2014, p. 98, 259). Consequently, in 2000s organized students were involved in larger matters of public opposition, and these events were not based on student issues. In other words, the activist students of this period abandoned the practice of organizing around campus-based politics and student life concerns. Thus, the delicate autonomous realm of the student movement has been ignored, and determinant power of the off-campus topics increased dramatically. Intrinsically, the primary topics of the student movement engulfed by the topics of the off campus left, and thereby the campus, that already blacklisted by governments as a space of collective dissent, have become more fragile in front of the government’s response.

Briefly, throughout the 2000s, the impact of the political atmosphere and changing repression and control mechanisms affected the student movement. When

the internal dilemmas faced by the movement were added to these external factors, the student movement weakened significantly.

4.2 Changing repressive tools to discipline and control the student opposition on transforming universities

When my participants expressed the reasons for this decline of the student movement, they primarily mentioned the changing political atmosphere related to their period of activism. This period of the student movement was peculiar, because in this period activists managed to strike a balance between the autonomous space of the student movement and the leftist movement in general. Throughout this period student movement garnered broad public support. Despite employing disruptive methods, activists managed to bring their student-oriented and campus-based agendas and action repertoires without losing their legitimacy in the eyes of public.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, activists of the University Student Coordination (Yılmaz, Orhan, Hayri and Meltem) mentioned that their struggle was against the neoliberal transformation of university education. By the middle of the 1990s, the process of adaptation of the universities and education policies according to the demands and necessities of the market started (Eğitim-Sen Yükseköğretim Bürosu, 2012). This was a global issue that contemporaneously forged the main axis of the student movements in Chile, Italy, UK, and so on (della Porta, Cini, Guzmán-Concha, 2020).

In the example of Turkey, by the middle of the 1990s neoliberal transformation of the university became evident by the co-authored report of YÖK and TÜSİAD with the title *Higher Education, Science, and Technology in Turkey and in the World (Türkiye'de ve Dünya'da Yüksek Öğretim, Bilim ve Teknoloji)*. This

report published in 1995 pointed out that the process of the integration of Turkey to global market and its necessities would require an adaptation of the factories of the human capital (Timur, 2000). These relations among the YÖK as central government's controlling institution in universities and the private sector would be considered as the initial step of impositions of the neoliberal reforms to the universities. In the forthcoming decades, regarding the emphasis of my participant Emre, the cooperation protocols and incentives among YÖK and the Industry Sector were one of the main topics of activist students in the first decade of the 2000s.

In the early 2000s, student organizations continued to resist and protest the education policies tailored to the needs of the market. At this period, according to my participants' statements, the subjects of the student politics concentrated on the abolishment of YÖK, privatization of the services within the university, dining hall price hikes, exorbitant increase in tuition fees, proliferation of private universities, and changes in the curriculums that lost critical stands and designed to overburden the student with increasing course loads.

At that point, I find it important to remember once more the significant historical role of universities. As Alper (2009) emphasizes, universities are the opposition centers with a revolutionary potential create the knowledge holders that would challenge the capitalists and political authority. By sustaining the deep-seated humanitarian-liberal intellectual tradition, universities have not been surrendered for the needs of state and capital easily (p. 80). Thus, universities by their inherited values and student opposition resist falling under the yoke of capital and the state. From that point of view, neoliberal university means the erosion of the inherited values and missions of higher education for the sake of the needs of the market (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2000; Giroux, 2002). Therefore, imposing the corporate ethos

on the universities which are the space of the student movement would come along with the new constraints for the activists (della Porta et al, 2020, p. 10).

In conjunction with this, withdrawal of the welfare state from the sphere of higher education would create universities work with corporate ethos, and this alteration undermines the public character of education (Cini and Guzmán-Concha, 2017). In relation to this transformation, not only socioeconomic background of the university student changes, but also the way that students conceive themselves inside the higher education, society and the politics have altered drastically under the imposed requirements and expectancies of the market. In other words, neoliberal transformation of the state at the macro level reshapes the lives of the students on the micro level (della Porta et al., 2020, p. 20). Hence, specific characteristics of university student life such as having leisure time to read, to investigate and to spare time to get involved in politics have begun to fade away in neoliberal university (Allerbeck, 1972; Klemenčič, 2014). In other words, from a Foucauldian perspective, neoliberal university responsabilizes the students in terms of the emerging requirements of market-dependent education. Therefore, concurrently the features that associated with youth myth such as idealism, enthusiasm, radicalism and being open to new ideas were abraded under neoliberal universities (della Porta et al., 2020; Benlisoy, 2008). Subsequently, students as potential activists and the prospective cadres of the public opposition have become occupied and overburdened by the withdrawal of the welfare state from higher education system. Under the neoliberal university, the canonical position attributed to educated youth through youth myth in society was also compromised in this period. In relation with this, during my fieldwork, I found it important the insistence of the activists to preserve and perpetuate values of youth myth, and thereby they also struggled for the gained

status and recognized privileges of educated youth; otherwise, the only option that system presents “*to be a cog in the wheel*” in plain terms according to my interviewees.

Besides these, it is possible to discern this neoliberal transformation of the advanced capitalist countries relatively earlier than Turkey. For instance, the universities in the US, UK and Canada as developed states have lived through neoliberal transformation initially. In line with this, neoliberal higher education, which is characterized by privatization of the public education, increasing the partnership with the private sectors and university, adopting the corporate ethos to the university as if they are startup companies, has been thrived in these countries earlier. Another common point in these neoliberal universities is dramatic decrease of the student protests and campus activism (Smeltzer & Hearn, 2015; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2000; Muzatti, 2022). Declining time budget of the students due to responsabilization process of neoliberal universities and the erosion of the youth myth can be seen as one of the reasons of the silence on campus. However, in the scope of my study, the growing intolerance and repressive stance towards the left opposition on campus had a significant impact.

In relation to the increasingly severe response of the government institutions and university administration towards student movement is repercussion of the neoliberal governmentality. It should be kept in mind that neoliberal policies were usually introduced by means of violence (Madra & Erensü, 2020). Also, under neoliberalism, violence diversifies and expands in the spheres that are influenced by the withdrawal of the policies of the welfare states. Violence can manifest itself in the form of precautionary measures, and in accordance with this legal domain transforms into a form that operates for punishment (Wacquant, 2009). Therefore,

starting from the 2000s, to make the rules of the market function within the university campuses, student opposition was responded violently by YÖK which is the right-hand of government in universities.

Besides this, one of the prominent phenomena in this period that gave rise to governmental repression and violence is the emergence of the preemptive security understanding. In this period, reasons to legitimize governmental repression usually occurred under the guise of providing security, maintaining public order or public peace (Tilly, 1978; della Porta, 1995; Tarrow, 2011). Aftermath of 9/11 Attacks, particularly “security” has become the most crucial reason for policing and controlling the student opposition on campus (Grasso & Bessant, 2018; Smeltzer & Hearn, 2015).

By keeping these points in mind, it can be argued that the transformation of education through neoliberalism has also been accomplished by suppressing student opposition through violence concealed under the guise of security. Therefore, it is possible to argue that the increasing governmental repression against the students resisting the neoliberalization of education has deemed student movement as a risk or threat. Student movement has been perceived as threat or risk because it opposes the adaptation of the market ethos to campus. In other words, the student movement that took place can jeopardize the capitalist order by resisting to conform the previously calculated needs and demands of the market. Thus, universities resisting neoliberalization and organizing a collective action in campuses, which can be considered as the factories of the human capital, could impede or thwart the operation of the market order. For that reason, governmental rationality of the neoliberal state conceives the student movements as anomalies that threaten the security of the dominant economic operation. Therefore, to supply the needs of the

market, not only the visibility of the student movement, but also even the slightest possibility of collective action on campus is intolerable for the government and university administration. It means that security paradigm transforms from preventive security to preemptive security in accordance with neoliberal governmentality (Neocleous, 2008; Çalkıvık, 2010; Dillon, 2008). Altering the definitions of the threat and risk according to preemptive security paradigm concurrently transforms legal and criminal domain. Besides this, the logic of preemption comes along with constant vigilance that makes diffusion of the surveillance mechanism and technologies indispensable.

To wrap up, until the 1980s Turkey's neoliberal transformation following the military junta of September 12 and the legacy of this transformation in universities have deemed the YÖK as the controlling and policing institution of the central government on campus. Concurrently, by the middle of the 1990s and throughout the 2000s, universities were subjected to neoliberal transformation more evidently with the lead of YÖK. Therefore, the student movement has faced more challenges in resisting this transformation compared to previous periods because they have encountered repressive mechanisms that they had not previously been exposed to. At this period, the emergence of the disciplinary investigations and their sanctions have become more of an issue among the activists. Following this, the implementation of the surveillance technologies on campus and employment of private security services on campus came along with increasing surveillance-policing mechanisms in the 2000s.

In line with these altering governmental repression by means of disciplinary investigations and expanding surveillance and policing networks indicates another Foucauldian point in this chapter. As Foucault (1995) writes in *Discipline and*

Punish: The Brith of the Prison, use of physical violence and torture as indicators of the sovereign power has started to be abandoned (p. 7-8). Ensuing this, punishment has turned into “an economy of suspended rights” (p. 11). With this turn, punishment has become a more cynical and sophisticated strategical process that took place through “the internal economy of a penalty”, thereby, this manifests another form of power with which individuals are kept under supervision through security measures (p. 18). Thus, in *Security, Territory and Population*, Foucault (2009) coins disciplinary power and regulatory power through security dispositives. As Gambetti (2009) notes that in disciplinary power, by means of law, docile bodies are created, and the regulatory power operates through security mechanisms, consisting of the calculations of the risks and threats in order to maintain neoliberal governmentality (p. 153-157). In that sense, the alteration of the governmental repression towards the 2000s student opposition can also be read as the manifestation of change of the governmental rationality.

In the following part of this section, I would like to address the emergence of the disciplinary investigations against the activist students ensuing the dispersal of the University Student Coordination Period by the end of the 1990s based on my fieldwork. Regarding my respondents and as I mentioned in the previous section of my thesis, the existence of the law enforcement mechanism and undercover polices on campus was an ordinary policing method of the central government on campus. Yet, the integration of Turkey into the global market and adaptation to neoliberal policies have brought about policing of the dissent on campuses through disciplinary investigations. Following this, implementations, privatized security provision on the campus paved the way emergent challenges for the student movement will be addressed.

4.2.1 Criminalization of the student movement by the means of emerging disciplinary investigations in university

Regarding the policing of youth politics, Nayar (2018) asserts that the emphasis on discipline stems from the perception of a threat. Thus, this perception of threat calls for the security and punishment in an intertwined manner by the government (Calvo & Portos, 2018). I suggest that these statements are accurate to comprehend the reasoning behind the disciplinary investigations against the student activists in the 2000s. Within this context, disciplinary regulations can be regarded as a new form of legislation that comes into existence or undergoes restructuring according to the political atmosphere in the Turkish case. So, similar to other forms of legislation, disciplinary investigations function as the expansion of the novel forms of discipline, control, punishment, and surveillance towards collective dissent (Calvo & Portos, 2018). This new form of governing the student opposition by keeping them under the state's control have started with the termination of the university's autonomy through the reactivation of the YÖK after 1980 coup d'état, and in the ensuing decades, YÖK have functioned like a sword of Damocles hanging over the head of the academia and student opposition¹³ (Timur, 2000; Berksoy, 2007).

Four of my participants, Meltem, Ahmet, Suat and Yılmaz as the former activists of the University Student Coordination and graduates of the 2000s have named the years pointing the early 2000s as a notably significant period for student activism. They called this time the “transition period” because the 1990s' crucial student organization and fervent demonstration reached an end by the dispersal of the University Student Coordination. Each of my participants highlighted that even

¹³ Although I put emphasize on the influence over the student opposition, the disciplinary regulations of the YÖK can be applied to any personnel of the university such as academics, civil servants, workers of the university, and so forth.

though there were internal conflicts among the cadres of the Coordination about its massification that led to the end of this experience, their main emphasis was on the changing political atmosphere that came along with the alteration of the response and repressive tactics of both university administration and the government through YÖK towards the student protest by the end of the 1990s.

In this brief transition period spanning from the late 1990s to the early 2000s, student activists met with disciplinary investigations based on the YÖK's disciplinary regulations. One of the striking points that my respondent shared is that despite YÖK having a disciplinary regulation for a long time ago, they started to implement them against student activists in the 1990s¹⁴. In the beginning, the disciplinary investigation was conducted at the level of the faculty deanship. However, during the period of University Student Coordination, as the student movement gained momentum and protests became constant on campus, they started to be conducted on the level of the rector in accordance with the relevant article of the regulation¹⁵.

About the matter of this investigation, Ahmet highlighted that “all routine actions that we conducted on campus within the freedom of expression have become the subject of the disciplinary investigations”. For instance, press speeches, demonstration marches, and propaganda tools such as wall newspapers, posters, banners, opening a stand, and so on have become the subject of these investigations and were registered in official documents of university administration. Nevertheless,

¹⁴ By considering the years of activism, the activists of Coordination Period are subjected to the disciplinary regulation of YÖK promulgated in 1985. Following this, YÖK released another disciplinary investigation in 2012 and in 2016 after the coup d'état attempt the regulation underwent a significant overhaul. Yet, their principle of zero tolerance to students' opposition continued.

¹⁵ According to Disciplinary Regulation of YÖK published in 1985, Article 13 specifies the investigation procedure. It states that protests which take place in public spaces collectively and continuously must be addressed by the university administration (Molu et al., 2013).

although these disciplinary investigations often became a topic of concern for activist students, the investigation committees consisting of academicians did not pursue a final goal of punishing students. About disciplinary investigation, Yılmaz stated:

God knows how many disciplinary investigations I went through during that period. I mean, if I were to try to count them, I couldn't (...) The investigations were already being opened due to the files sent by the police to the university's administration. But academicians in investigation committees were not behaving cruelly to us, because they knew us, and we knew them. We were their students, may be most critical and active students in lectures. We respect each other always, and they always saw our protest as legitimate and as part of freedom of expression. Despite all those inquiries, I neither got kicked out of school, nor faced any suspension.

Although my participants did not face punishment at the end of the investigation process, they put into words that these investigations would bother them in the coming years. Another point that Yılmaz emphasized was the increase in these investigations that took place after the change of the university rector in 1997. In fact, it was a significant point during my interviews that my participants usually discussed the changing policing practices by associating them with the government of the time, the YÖK, or the university rectors. In relation to this, in my opinion, this tendency of my participants is understandable considering the YÖK's procedures about the selection and appointment of the university rectors that excludes the students from the entire process, in that they were not regarded as a component of the university. Therefore, the terminated autonomy of the university in 1980 junta caused establishment of the strong coherency among the central government, YÖK and university administration.

In line with this, it is possible to argue that the autonomy of the university means not only bringing a democratic and liberal atmosphere to university which is impervious to external interference for knowledge production with their humanitarian tradition, but also a major impetus to initiate or articulate the social

movement that would bring social change (Lipset, 1972; Van Aiken, 1971; Bernasconi, 2007). However, according to the neoliberalism's pre-emptive security understanding that force the university to become market-oriented, the remnants of the autonomous university struggle would be tried to be eliminated by these disciplinary investigations at the end of these transition process.

Starting in the early 2000s, disciplinary investigations that were signal of the change have started to be implemented more strictly. University Student Coordination which held their last congress in 1997 gradually dissipated. Although some activists from the end of the 1990s witnessed the early 2000s of the campus, during the interviews, they stated that they were tired of struggling with financial problems of student life and focused on graduation. In this conjunction, as della Porta (2018) states that the student movement usually tends to the organizational structure form that provides a ground for forthcoming activists to sustain the struggle. Yet in 2000, this component of the movement was absent on campus after the Coordination period. Therefore, student movement organizations after the 2000s were not organized under roof organizations. They were fragmented appearance on campus, and the student organizations in this period were predominantly extension of the off campus left groups (Tahincioğlu & Göktaş, 2013).

Meltem says "2000, it is the millennium. The world was going through a major shift, so was the student movement," and indeed in a short period, the hegemony of the left on student movement faded away. Besides, the autonomous realm of the student movement which was established during the Coordination period started to lose its ground. As Ahmet stated, "we entered the university after a student movement that had suffered a defeat." While leftist students resisting neoliberalism were losing their hegemony on campus, the Anti-Globalization

movement with left-wing arguments was gaining momentum. However, the influence of the anti-globalization movement on the student movement remained confined to the rhetorical dimension.¹⁶.

In addition to that, the student opposition in this period often focused on the left's agenda outside of the campus because the student opposition on campus were the extension of the off-campus left opposition groups, parties, and associations. For that reason, it is possible to argue that the activists of these period were under the influence of the leftist organization that they have connected. In other words, it would not be wrong to argue that the student movement of the 2000s perceived themselves as the smaller version of the left movement, so they have become more dependent the trajectory of the left movement outside of the campus. As a result of this perception, during my fieldwork I acknowledge the equation the activists of the 2000s that can be summarized as "government=YÖK=rector"¹⁷. However, this tactical mistake of the student opposition strengthened the hand of the university administration to legitimize their punishment in the course of future.

One of the incidents for student movement, considering the narrations of my participants, took place on a career day in the spring semester of 2002. The intervention of the student activist on campus career days was an ordinary incident on campus either by asking provocative questions to the organizers during the event or by using disruptive tactics such as chasing off the organizers or by attacking the

¹⁶ In the third chapter, I touched upon that Anti-globalization movement has provided a basis for activist students to interpret the neoliberal transformation of the university through creating analogies with anti-globalization movement. However, the student movement has maintained a distant and critical stance towards the cultural elements of the anti-globalization movement. For example, Orhan evaluated the World Social Forum, a product of the alternative globalization movement, as "revolutionary tourism". Similarly, Hayri expressed that the left movement in Turkey follows the anti-globalization movement with "shy nationalism."

¹⁷ In the following sub-section, I am going to address this issue broadly by employing the articulation and innovation dilemma over the example of the Kurdish Peace Process and its repercussions on campus.

stands of the organizers, and so forth. However, in 2002 career day, the university administration did not tolerate the sabotage of the career day. Ahmet was one of the students during the incident:

We used to sabotage the career days. During that time, big shots from large companies began showing up for career days. The Business Club was behind these career events. The one in 2002 got heated and was chaotic. So, rectorship opened disciplinary investigation against us. We were a pretty crowded group. They accused us of causing damage to public property, disrupting classes, and curtailing freedom of speech. Plus, once an investigation gets underway, you are banned from campus, classes, and all facilities of the university.

Considering my participants' narration, the next period that began shortly before the AKP came to power can be named as criminalization period of the student movement. Ensuing this disciplinary investigation, Ahmet had been expelled from the university by the decision of YÖK. To return to higher education, he had to engage in a long legal procedure that involved the administrative court. Even after he managed to turn back to university, Ahmet continued to be exposed to the disciplinary investigations when he attended a protest in university. He says:

At that time, my family and I suffered psychologically a lot. After going through that, I felt like I was blacklisted and isolated from my circle and from the campus. Although I managed to return to the university, I could not join our protests comfortably. I felt like I was walking on eggshells. I was constantly made to feel under suspicion on campus. After that, I was subjected to plenty of disciplinary investigations as well, and I became unable to conduct activities I wanted (...) Once they are kicked off from the university, they cause maximum harm to both you and the movement. Our organization and our efforts to carry out activities stumbled.

Although this period began shortly before the AKP came into power, what Ahmet went through is like a trailer for what the activists could experience during the AKP era. Although disciplinary regulations of YÖK have existed for a long time, these were not being enforced against student opposition. They used to be criminalized through police attacks and detentions. Therefore, disciplinary investigations, that exemplified for the first time during this period, seemed to exert a more deterrent

effect on students. The face of governmental repression has become more cynical for activists throughout time, and in the scope of my study, I suggest that this change is not discrete from the crystallization of the governmental rationality during the AKP period.

Both global and local political atmospheres were drastically changed in particularly with the impact of the 9/11 Attacks and 2001 Economic Crisis. In the context of Turkey, the 2001 Economic Crisis paved the way to step up gear of neo liberalization process. As a recovery formula for the economic crisis, IMF-sanctioned neoliberal standardization policies have started to be implemented by bringing fiscal austerity and increasing privatization steps (Yalman & Bedirhanoğlu, 2010; Madra & Erensü, 2020). Following this economic crisis in 2002 general election, AKP came to power as the successor of these policies. By starting the first period of its power, AKP government consolidated the institutionalization of the neoliberal policies on behalf of the EU harmonization and IMF policies that promises democratization and good governance (Erensü & Alemdaroğlu, 2018). The EU candidacy process during this period have become an eligible leverage to continue the neoliberal project in guise of reforms of democratization. However, neoliberal standardization policies continued, and the Turkish market have become more integrated to global market. Privatization expanded to large scale state enterprises, indebtedness increased dramatically in low income households. In line with these, job security of working class was dismantled for the sake of the privatization and profit maximization of the global capital (Angın & Bedirhanoğlu, 2013; Akça et al., 2017; Çelik, 2015).

By perpetuating and intensifying the neoliberal policies and its governmental rationality, AKP rule thoroughly hollowed out the benevolence of the welfare state.

For that reason, keeping political discontent under control during the implementation of these intense neoliberal policies has become the primary concern of the AKP since its early period. In line with this, security dispositives were restructured to meet the needs of the neoliberal security state, and thereby preemptive security implementations proceeded¹⁸ (Akça et al., 2017; Berksoy, 2016; Kaygusuz, 2016). Concurrently, penal domain underwent changes according to the broad and vaguely defined risks and threats against the neoliberal state (Dean, 2010; Aradau & van Munster, 2007). Thus, these ambiguous definitions in legal domain have become a strategic instrument to create intention-based accusations through overinterpreting the law (Berksoy, 2016, p. 127). In the light of these points, it can be put forward that the governmental rationality of the AKP did not step back from authoritarian tendency. However, to sustain its hegemony on society, governmental rationality of AKP has constituted consecutive reforms and repressions (Erensü & Alemdaroğlu, 2018).

One of the significant promises of Erdoğan specific to higher education was the abolishment of the YÖK and democratization of the university (Bağımsız Sosyal Bilimciler, 2016). While austerity policies continued, the promise of democratization in universities was not convincing for the students because YÖK operates as the warrantor of the neoliberal policies of the government on campus, also students have continued to face the economic effects of the AKP policies. As my participants pointed out, throughout this crisis period, economic conditions of their families deteriorated. My participants predominantly, as in line with the student profile of the university, are predominantly the children of the worker and civil servant families

¹⁸ According to Foucault (2009), security dispositive means the collection of heterogeneous apparatuses and mechanisms that function in order to keep risks and threats at an optimum level that would not hinder the dominant economic order (p. 1-71).

who live in smaller cities that were affected profoundly by the economic crisis and austerity policies. Therefore, earning pocket money by working temporary jobs has become a common phenomenon among students. Student opposition assessed this transformation as reconsidering the proletarianization of the university students by undermining their intellectual quality gained during university life and socialization on campus (Benlisoy, 2008). Also, when we consider the organization form of the left student opposition which depended on the off-campus left movement's and that its agendas and cadres have become transitive. Therefore, I think it is possible to argue that the dissent outside of the campus spread the university more quickly, because students were affected in two different dimensions, losing both their economic status and privileged positions in society by proletarianizing.

In addition to that, since the dissipation of the Coordination experience, there was an overt power struggle and hegemony battle among student groups on campus. So, the 2000s were years of ongoing conflicts between different wings of opposing student groups, and especially leftist and right wing student groups were frequently getting into violent fights. While right wing students became more visible after the dispersal of the Coordination Period, on the other side, Islamist students, which were on the rise during the 1990s continued their agendas on campus. At the same period, relying on the EU harmonization process, Kurdish students initiated an immense campaign for education in the mother tongue (Sancar, 2002; Berksoy, 2016)¹⁹. In other words, the political reform and democratization promise of the AKP resonated on campus quickly. However, the political strategy of AKP that functions for expansion of their hegemony came along with the rising demands from various

¹⁹ I must touch upon that in the early 2000, Kurdish students were faced with disciplinary investigations and punishments earlier than student movement. As I mentioned previous chapters, Kurdish students had a different agenda, and they did not have concerns to organize campus based struggle.

conflicting groups in a narrow space such as campus²⁰. Therefore, in order to police the dissent on campus, AKP needed the YÖK and its disciplinary regulations as an instrument of governmental repression on campus. In line with AKP's governmentality, while the AKP was pledging to abolish the YÖK and democratization of the universities, they were subsequently establishing conditions that legitimized and rendered the existence of the YÖK justifiable.

In this context, disciplinary investigations and punishment have become the main repressive instrument during the AKP years. Arguments of my respondents about the mushrooming disciplinary investigations during the AKP period can be confirmed by resorting to the statistics of the YÖK. In 2000, 2601 disciplinary investigations were conducted. This number reached 5871 in 2011. In 2018, they peaked at 10202 with a dramatic increase. University Monitoring and Evaluation Report of YÖK remarked the reason of these procedure conducted on the ground of the disturbance of university's peace and security (Molu et al., 2013; YÖK, 2020)²¹. Therefore, by taking into the consideration my respondents and the official data, the usage of disciplinary investigations crystallized as a new repressive tool during the AKP period. They turned into an instrument for punishing and disciplining the student activists by violating the students' freedom of expression and their right to education (Molu et al., 2013)²².

²⁰ According to Akça et al. (2017), during the expansive hegemony period of AKP, the promise of political reform to increase civilization against the military tutelage was the most crucial strategy to garner the support of divergent groups from Kurds to left-liberals (p. 197).

²¹ Retrieved from <https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Yayinlar/Yayinlarimiz/2020/universite-izleme-ve-degerlendirme-genel-raporu-2019.pdf>

²² Also, when I scrutinized the extensive annual human right reports of the Turkey Human Right Foundation (TİHV) published since 1991, it is possible to acknowledge that in early period of the 2000, students were usually subjected to police brutality during their protests, particularly YÖK protests on 6th November. However, in coming years, first disciplinary investigations, and then disciplinary punishments increased (TİHV, 2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2004).

In fact, YÖK and the university administration always had power to punish the activist students, yet they had only used this authority selectively²³. Being beaten by the police and getting detained during the protests were things that students were already accustomed to and expected to face. Student activists had knowledge of how they should resist governmental repression that was usually in the form of physical violence in former periods. However, the activists of this early period did not have any information in front of disciplinary punishments, and they could not predict the costs of these investigations. For activist students, the only way to learn to deal with these was to be subjected to investigations.

By starting the early period of the AKP, disciplinary punishments have started to increase significantly. As results of these punishments, activist students were either suspended or expelled from the university. The cost of these punishments in terms of the student movement was considerably high that Erdem states “nothing had weighed on us as heavily as disciplinary penalties”. According to my participants, disciplinary investigations and penalties fundamentally aimed to create a politics-free campus. The first step was to remove the visibility of the left-wing opposition, which formed the backbone of the student movement. For that reason, activists were to be expelled or suspended from the campus. Thus, the absence of activist students on campus caused a halt in organizational activities and the recruitment process of the students.

In addition to that, my participants noted that as soon as the disciplinary investigations were initiated, injunctions were implemented and activists under these

²³ For instance, expulsion of the Kurdish students was one of the manifestations of this power. Yet, in the scope of my research, Meltem as former activist told me about their arrested students after the protest of the tuition fees in 1990s. Their lawsuit was portrayed on the media as “Kalemlı Çete Davası” (Uysal, 2001). However, this case continued to be peculiar for a long time.

investigations were not allowed to enter the campus²⁴. Also, they were prohibited from attending classes. They could not use facilities such as the cafeteria, dining hall, and library, my participants put into words that being deprived of these facilities was also causing economic hardship. In other words, the process of disciplinary investigations worked not only as psychological violence for the student activists that make them feel blacklisted or suspect, but also as depriving them from entire privileges of the studentship. It meant to punish them by leaving them economically destitute, which is another form of violence for student activists.

Moreover, the extent of economic damage is not limited to being prohibited from using campus facilities, also students who are subjected to the investigations are expelled from university dormitories, scholarships and student loans by Credit and Dormitories Institution (*Kredi ve Yurtlar Kurumu*, KYK), and other scholarships by foundations and associations are terminated. These consequences were rather severe because activist students were children of families barely scraping by. In addition to that, accommodation has always been a burning issue in Istanbul, and in the 2000s the capacity of the student dormitories was insufficient²⁵. For that reason, housing and financial support of the state were even more indispensable and survival. Basically, cutting off these supports meant leaving students to die. My participant Can entered in university in 2005, and after he became a devoted activist, he was exposed to plenty of disciplinary investigations and disciplinary suspensions:

²⁴ According to the disciplinary regulations, injunctions can be issued by the investigative committee when deemed necessary (Molu et al., 2013, p. 187-190). Regarding the disciplinary investigations of my participants, it can be argued that injunctions were implemented in an absent and present manner, so this was a discretionary implementation for committee, yet from the side of the activists, this implementation could deeply impact their higher education life.

²⁵ Student housing is still a burning issue for students in 2023. Also, nowadays, not only the capacity and the price of the dormitories, but also whether it provides an adequate level of security to guarantee the physical and psychological well-being of the students is questionable. On 25th October, the tragic death of Zeren Ertaş in university dormitory of Adnan Menderes University due to an elevator malfunction have kicked off strong protests at numerous universities.

My family was really struggling financially, and not just me, but my brother and sister were in university. Money was always tight at our home. I managed to get into law school. However, there were not enough spots in university dorms, at those times too and I did not get one. So, I ended up staying in a dorm that was run by a religious group because it was cheap. But later, they kicked me out due to some investigations (...) Then, all my scholarships were cut off because of these investigations. During suspension, it was banned to attend lectures and exams. Because of both the financial difficulties and those long suspensions, my time in education got extended quite a bit. At some point, my family considered having me quit the university.

Can's narrative is crucial as a typical example of activists being deprived of fundamental rights and privileges associated with student life. Furthermore, this form of deprivation implies that activists are not considered as students. Therefore, the cost of being a part of the student opposition has begun to be abandonment to destitution. Similarly, Hakan was subjected to numerous disciplinary investigations. In 2009, he got expelled from university and managed to return to university after filing a lawsuit in administrative court:

I faced multiple suspensions - two semesters, a month here, three weeks there, and so on. At some point, I thought I wouldn't be able to graduate (...) It was 2009 fall semester, I came to campus and private security guard told me that I was expelled. And not only me by the way, but a lot of friends also had suspensions (...) I couldn't eat in dining hall on campus for long time. Attending lectures and exams was not possible because I could not enter the campus (...) My mom and I struggled a lot with the administrative court. Legal process was expensive, I remember at those time it was around the 8100 TL (...) The judge issued a restraining the order, so I could go back to the university. But, in those times, there was always a way to come back when you were expelled.

As can also be inferred from Hakan's statement, the disciplinary investigation process is a punitive and criminalization process intertwined with economic and psychological violence. Moreover, as Can and Hakan put into words, another dimension of disciplinary investigations was about being informed about the process. Since these investigations were employed against the activist students in the early 2000s, families of the student opponents have been informed by phone calls, official

documents, and formal notices. My participants from different periods of the 2000s have faced this practice of the government and university administration. These documents consisted of the investigation records that includes accusation reasons such as fights, disturbing the peace and order, and photos of the students during protests or propaganda. My respondents put into word that even though their families are social democrat of leftist, seeing the tone of official documents, they felt terrorized. For that reason, activists interpreted this implementation as intimidating through their families and disrupting their peace with their family and at home as well. For instance, Cem and Esra mention, respectively:

My family lives in Adana and I was in Kadirga Dormitory. I heard that they sent the investigation records to the family houses. I called my little brother and told him if the postman brings a letter from the university, he would keep it somewhere that mom and dad wouldn't see (...). When I went back to my family home in Adana, my brother gave me all documents.

I remember that some students were waiting for the mailman at home. I got involved in many disciplinary investigations, and my family is social democrats, and they respected me a lot. But, when this investigation letter from the university came home, reactions of my family were so dramatic that I was shocked.

According to Berksoy (2016), the informing of families during the investigation process can be manifestation of attempts to involve them in a surveillance and policing network. Furthermore, considering the points made by Esra and Cem, it can be expressed that informing the families has also had an infantilizing effect on the activists. For instance, being in a constant state of alarm towards their families, feeling guilty towards them, receiving reprimands from mothers or fathers are situations frequently mentioned by my participants. By considering these points it would not be wrong to argue that, throughout criminalization period has created extra mental burden for activists.

In first decade of the 2000s, although these severe punishments by criminalizing the activists, and perpetrating violence in psychological and financial forms against the activists, activist students continued to resort to the disruptive methods. Activist students continued to protest YÖK, privatization of the university services, increasements of the education fees, and followed their calendar of commemoration days of left. Also, they kept resisting the bans on propaganda means in campus such as posters, banners, and opening stands on campus. Nevertheless, my participants noted that even though they felt the fellow-feeling of their classmates during the protests, the responsibility of these actions on campus was solely on their shoulders, and other students were attending protests such as fare hikes, privatization of the dining hall. In other words, in this period, students who were not constantly involved in politics at least were sensitive to issues that disregarded the privileged position of university students, and these students were hesitant in terms of attending the off campus agendas that reflect on campus²⁶.

This behavior of the non-activist students can be understood along with the impact of the disciplinary investigations. Governmental repression that appears in the form of disciplinary investigations caused a distance between activist and non-activist students. Therefore, non-activist students who fuel the campus left-wing opposition and the driving force behind the establishment of the autonomous space of student movement have started to approach protests on campus more cautiously in order not to be seen as criminals.

On the other side, changing political atmosphere in country accelerated the atmosphere on campus. Promulgated Counter Terrorism Law in 2006 and

²⁶ At this point, I need to make a reminder to assist the reader. The participants I define as activists mention about students who do not actively engage in politics “others.” Yet, “others” occasionally engage with the agenda of leftist students, or they take a moderate stance towards them. In my study, I have used the term “non-activist” to define them variably due to the literature on social movements.

reescalation of the conflict of the Kurdish cities brought remilitarization of the ongoing Kurdish question, and thereby in front of the rising nationalist wave increased the pressure on Kurdish students that demand their education in mother-language. Although their completely different agendas, my participants emphasized that Kurdish students and leftist students always have solidarity relations against the police brutality and attacks of right wing groups. However, during this period increasing conflicts that stemmed from the off campus topics escalated the tension between the right wing groups and Kurdish students. In relation with that, Esra and Cem respectively put into words the influence of this tension on leftist students:

Whenever something happens in Kurdish cities, as leftist students we felt the need to watch out ourselves. For instance, I remember the day after 2007 Dağlica Ambush, campus was very tense. I felt like anything could happen to us at any moment, our years passed by feeling on the edge (...) Also, for left opposition of Beyazıt, assassination of Hrant Dink was very heavy for us. In such days, there would always be right-wing provocation.

Whatever was going on outside, it was pretty much the same inside our school. Especially during times when nationalist reactions were running high, and with incident against Newroz in 2005 in Mersin and 2006 Amed Uprising. Kurdish movement was getting more intense. At the same time, war was going on in Kurdish cities. Kurdish students were responding seriously to the right-wing attacks (...) Also, Kemalist students had become actors and supported the right-wing groups on campus. We felt caught in the middle between the conflicts between two groups that do not belong to us. When there was a conflict between Kurds and right-wing groups, investigations were initiated against us, because Kurdish students had suddenly become crowded on campus, and security personnel and the police could not recognize them yet (...) E-memorandum, Kurdish issue, martyrs, what not were not on our initial topics. But these incidents were somehow affecting us. For instance, I would say left opposition on campus was confused in front of rising topics.

Based on the statements of Esra and Cem, it can be understood that the tension between the Kurdish movement and nationalists has also manifested on campuses and has become threatening for leftist students. Besides, my participants expressed that during this period, the security measures on campus changed in parallel with the

incidents in Kurdish cities. In relation to the rising Kurdish movement on campus, the attitude of the investigation committee has changed. Erdem mentions that:

Around 2005-2006, I was a master's student, I went through four investigations. The professors on the investigation committees would inquire about how our classes were going and what our family did for a living, among other things. These details could be decisive because, at that time, the real enemies were the Kurds and PKK. The committee members used to have a different perspective back then: if student was Kurdish, they would be punished. Investigation committees were like leftist students are our sweethearts, but all those Kurds are PKK members.

Therefore, in line with the political atmosphere of Turkey, during these disciplinary investigations on campus who were punished and who were criminal changed. So, the “enemy” or “criminal” outside of the campus which was defined by government corresponded to Kurdish students on campus (Berksoy, 2016). Also, it would not be wrong to put forward that the close intertwining of the national agenda and atmosphere on campus has further increased the reluctance and hesitance of the other students. Especially, the rise of Kurdish students on campus and their emergence of solidarity among leftist students against the right wing attacks and police brutality may cause the non-activist students to distance themselves from the campus politics.

Beside these, the influence of the 2007-2008 global economic crisis was also causing its neoliberal policies to continue unabated (Akça et al., 2017). The collaboration protocols between YÖK and the industrial sector sustained. While services within universities were being gradually privatized, the number of private universities continued to increase.

On the other side, privatization of the TEKEK started an immense protest wave that spread all over the Turkey with the substantial public support. My participants put into words that TEKEK resistance supported by activist students, they went to Ankara to show their solidarity with the workers or joined solidarity rallies in Istanbul. Also, my respondents from the Coordination periods emphasized

that the former Coordination activists played crucial role in the organizational part of the solidarity demonstration with TEKEL workers. On the other side, left opposition on campus continued their protest on YÖK and education fees, and propaganda bans continued to be enforced arbitrarily towards left opposition. Especially, according to emphasize Hakan and Soner, posters on campus about the TEKEL resistance became issue for the university administration while they were more tolerant towards posters about other topics.

After the change in AKP's attitude towards the Kurdish issue after 2010 and the visibility of the outcomes of the Peace Process both in political atmosphere and on campus due to the regulations of the YÖK such as establishment of Kurdish language and literature departments on universities, another period began on Kurdish question (Yeğen, 2015, p. 165)²⁷. Yet, as a part of the AKP's governmental rationality, it would be revealed with repression towards the Kurdish youth and left opposition on campus.

The second decade of the 2000s brought about another period for the student movement. The first incident that marked this new period began with egging the politicians of AKP who came to their university campuses (Tahincioğlu & Göktaş, 2013). My participant noted that these disruptive protests received extensive coverage in the media, and numerous columns were written about their protests. Thus, tuition-free education and abolition of the YÖK were discussed once more, and as of the 2011-2012 academic year, tuition fees in higher education were

²⁷ Retrieved from
https://books.google.com.tr/books?hl=tr&lr=&id=d1HmCQAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA157&dq=Kurdish+peace+process&ots=6lE-6RdaVf&sig=AvYOxqG6n1tSHyFXcT_ixwLCb2U&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Y%C3%96K&f=false

abolished. Thus, it seemed that one of the most fundamental issues of the student movement was resolved during the AKP era²⁸.

On the surface, students had achieved success as tuition fees were abolished, and the AKP had taken a step as part of the democratization process. However, as Can emphasized, “AKP appeared to be democratic, and we, as students, continued to pay a serious price to demonstrate that it was not” such that at the same period, the number of imprisoned students had increased, and even Solidarity with Arrested Students Initiative (TÖDİ) was established. Ironically, democratic opening period was the period that opponent students were arrested due to accusations of being associated with illegal leftist organizations predating 1980 or linked to the PKK before 1980. The increase in student arrests is related to the Anti-Terror Law, which has been regulated according to the AKP’s perception of “pre-emptive security,” and the changing composition of the groups that are considered threats or risks under this law (Tahincioğlu & Göktaş, 2013; Molu et al., 2013; Berksoy, 2016). In other words, by the beginning of the democratic opening process, attempts were made to punish student opposition not only through YÖK's disciplinary regulations but also by implementing the Anti-Terror Law. Therefore, a new reason for framing the student opposition as criminal has emerged; in line with this, the form and the cost of the punishment have gradually hardened. In other words, these alterations in the penal law paved the way for treating student opposition as terrorists. In relation with this, my participants who were part of student opposition during and after the Reconciliation Process or Democratic Opening period began to mention the Anti-

²⁸ Considering the continued exponential increase in the number of private universities, the abolition of tuition fees can be interpreted merely as a minor concession on the part of the government. Also, I would like to point out that abolishment of tuition fees can be interpreted as a strategic step by the government. The resolution of this issue, which has been a foundational concern of student movement for decades, has closed the space for the movement to formulate discourse on the intrinsic problems of student life.

Terror Branch Directorate and the Police Directorate as new actors that influence their disciplinary investigations in university and their punishment processes.

During the democratic opening process that began in 2010, the Anti-terrorism Law started to be increasingly enforced against student activists. So, the opening process was not a period in which government repression decreased on activist students. In contrast to stance of government, university administration allowed propaganda activities and showed considerable tolerance towards the student opposition on campus. Once the most common reason for disciplinary investigations, hanging posters, opening a stand, and organizing events on campus had almost been allowed freely on campus, also university registration days passed in a festive atmosphere that Eren mentions as follows: “an outsider coming to the campus could have felt as if they were in 1970s. everywhere along the corridors of faculties, these times were incredible.”

Student opposition, which was not even desired to be visible in the neoliberal universities, began to make its presence felt during the democratic reconciliation process²⁹. Thus, during this process, opponent students engaged in another action to represent the voice of social opposition. In 2012, Erdoğan’s visit to METU induced the enormous student protests that referred to as “METU Standing Strong” (*ODTÜ Ayakta*)³⁰. In relation with this, my participants highlighted that student protest in METU was the signal flare of the Gezi Protests in 2013 that the youth played crucial role in. After Gezi Protests, my participants who witnessed this period on campus put

²⁹ I need to emphasize a significant point that I am going to touch upon in following sections. During democratization process and relatively open atmosphere of the campus, despite increasing number of the arrested students, student opposition on campus primarily focused on the opposition to the AKP. In other words, students continued to move away from their campus based and university life based agendas. Yet, in this process different leftist organizations on campus started coming together strongly in such visits in this period.

³⁰ Retrieved from <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/44763/odtu-ayakta>

into words that support of the non-activist students have become more overt, and in terms of their recruitment, student opposition had advantage for a short time.

On the other hand, rising collective dissent paved the way for the alteration of the hegemonic project of the AKP from expansive to limited hegemony. AKP's changing policy in terms of the conflicts in Middle East along with this changing stance about the Kurdish question, and intra-state conflicts with the Gülenist cadres have become the signal of the change (Akça et al., 2017; Bedirhanoglu, 2021). These changes were also projected on campus, Soner pointed out:

The withdrawal of the Patriot Youth from the campus left the campus unprotected against the attacks of the right wings, fascists and certain Islamic groups' attacks. During the Kobane incidents and Rojava conflicts, they went or some of the leftist students who were close to Kurdish Movement participated in international brigades. As leftist students, we were alone on campus against all forms of pressure and attacks.

In addition to that, the rectoral elections on March 17, 2015, a professor of medicine, Raşit Tükel as the democratic and opponent candidate won the election. However, President Erdoğan appointed the second-ranked candidate Mahmut Ak as the rector instead of Tükel. This appointment was protested by students on campus by leftist students. However, trustee rector remained in his position, and thereby the first of the trustees, which would leave its mark on the period following the June 7th elections, was appointed as the rector of Istanbul University.

Following this trustee rector case, approaching general election on the 7th of June in 2015 was on agenda of students and Turkey. My participants noted that despite sporadic obstacles by university administration, they were able to carry out their propaganda for the general election on campus. The key issues during the pre-election period were AKP's approach in the Middle East and the securitization of the Kurdish question. In this context, during this period, in which Kurdish students had largely withdrawn from the campus, the on-campus left-wing opposition

predominantly supported the HDP. Thus, increasing governmental repression was usually implemented in the form of securitization towards the Kurdish movement backfired, and HDP passed the 10 percent threshold with the support of socialists. For the first time, AKP could reach the sufficient number to form the government alone.

After this achievement of the left opposition and Kurdish movement in the election, on July 20, 2015, 33 people were killed in Suruç Massacre by an ISIS suicide bomb attack. 14 of them were university students, and they were on the way to bring toys to the children in Kobani and participate in the reconstruction efforts in the region. Suruç Massacre has deeply wounded left opposition. Two of their friends from Beyazıt Campus, Polen Ünlü and Büşra Mete, were among the students who lost their lives. On the opening of the 2015-2016 academic year, students wanted to plant trees for the memory of their classmates, but they were thwarted by the school administration and private security. Zeynep describes the atmosphere on the campus as follows:

I started university in 2012, and I saw the campus more open after the Gezi protests. Back then, both rectorship and security guards did not bother us with our activities. However, after the success of June 7 and the Suruç Massacre that followed, especially when we think of these targeted students. Then, on the 10th October Massacre, numerous students were in the square. Let me put it this way, we were witnesses to a regime building process in universities.

By the start of the 2015 Fall semester, common practices and propaganda activities of the leftist students faced obstacles. Especially during the Opening Process and Gezi Protests activities such as poster hanging and opening stands, which the university administration and private security did not interfere with or tolerate for a while, began to be banned again. In addition to that, the restrictions on inter-faculty entry of the students, which had been implemented for a period in the 2000s and later

abandoned, have started to be enforced again. Besides, security measures increased in the entrance of the university including student identification card checks, X-rays and body and belongings searches.

The issue that student opposition most vigorously contended with was the ban on posters, they perceived it as an attack on their visibility and hegemony on campus such that Meryem expresses their manner on this issue “The poster is a matter of honor”. For that reason, resistant stance of the student opposition for their propaganda material caused the inference of the university administration by means of the riot police. In time, interference of the riot police expanded the other actions on campus such as commemorations, meetings, press speeches and so on. My participants from this period noted that entrance of the riot police and their attacks led to detentions of them on campus almost every day. This time detentions were widespread. They were taking into custody not only the activist students in the forefront but also other students. Meryem and Eren expressed that these daily conflicts over their propaganda materials and the detentions became exhausting for the activist students. About this period, Cemre mentions:

During the appointed rector’s time, students no longer had any means of self-expression. Because of these issues, the police began entering the school every day. All the other students started seeing us only when we were in clashes with the police and getting detained. It was as if there were the other students and then there were us, who were seen as criminals. It was like we weren't even considered as students.

According to the Ministry of the Interior, entrance of the riot police into university campuses depend on the permission of the rector³¹. Therefore, it can be argued that the increased frequency of riot police entering the university following the appointment of the trustee rector is also an indicator of the strengthening ties

³¹ Retrieved from <https://www.icisleri.gov.tr/arem/universiteler-ve-stadyumlarda-guvenlik>

between the Ministry of Interior, law enforcement forces, and the university administration. Also, detentions on campus that started in 2015-2016 academic year caused the resurrections of the disciplinary investigations against the activist students, yet this time according to my participants the wave of the investigations was strong.

I would like to touch upon another significant resemblance. Resurrections of the disciplinary investigations during the 2015-2016 academic year happened almost at the same period as the demand of the autonomy in Kurdish provinces upsurged after the Suroç Massacre and clashes in Diyarbakır and Sur. Besides, before the warfare of the in Kurdish provinces during the summer of 2015, in April 2015, Law on Police Duties and Entitlements (*Polis Vazife ve Salahiyet Kanunu*, PVSK) had changed in line with the changing policy of the Kurdish question. The policies of the AKP government in Kurdish cities have resurrected the peace, security, and war on terror discourse. This alteration to the law expanded the power of the law enforcement mechanisms, also intensified the relations among the governors and police forces. The internal security package deepened the preemptive security understanding by introducing new regulations to the anti-terrorism laws promulgated in 2007 and the law on meetings and demonstrations³². As Yonucu (2017) pointed out, anti-terror law in 2007 as a lawfare aimed at the internal enemies (i.e., Kurds, socialists, and Alevis)³³. There is no doubt that these internal enemies were the groups forming the backbone of collective dissent that includes the activists of student movement, hence, the student movement was always critical on the AKP's

³² Retrieved from <https://tihv.org.tr/basin-aciklamalari/turkiye-insan-haklari-vakfinin-tihv-yeni-ic-guvenlik-paketinin-elestirisi/>

³³ Lawfare means the use of the penal and administrative powers as a means of violence to discipline the subjects (Yonucu, 2017, p. 3).

policies in Kurdish question and was not discrete from this lawfare and securitization policies that preceding OHAL (State of Emergency) in 2016.

The student opposition, which was already in decline in terms of numbers, has further eroded significantly due to increasing attacks of the police on campus and mushroomed disciplinary investigation. By starting 2015-2016 academic year, agenda inside and outside the campus became indistinguishable from each other. Promulgation of the new internal security package resonated on campus as reimplementation of the disciplinary investigations and punishments against activist students. From that point of view, disciplinary investigations can be seen as lawfare against the student opposition in the scale of the university. Bilal assessed this period as:

Beyazıt is the place where the changing political atmosphere in the country had its first impact. It was the most relaxed place during the peace process, but also the space where the most severe attacks took place after the peace process ended. This is because Beyazıt is the hub for the Turkey's militant youth movement and leftist cadre.

In line with Bilal's statement Meryem put into words that "in fact, we started to feel OHAL on campus one year before it declared", also regarding Eren "in 2015, it was such investigations frenzy that almost like the early 2000s". Therefore, punishments that come along with these investigations have become more of an issue, and consequently significant number of activist students stopped engaging in politics on campus due to increasing repression.

My participants noted that after the declaration of state of emergency in 2016, punishments have become harsher due to the new implementations by decree law No 677. This decree law rearranged the YÖK's disciplinary investigations in 2016, and thereby injunctions from the university due to disciplinary investigation started to be

implemented³⁴. These harsher penalties seriously harmed their educational life, for instance, Merve mentioned that:

Some disciplinary investigations that coincided with the exam weeks were such a nightmare. Because we couldn't take the exams. Also, some lectures had compulsory attendance, and I failed. I mean, even your education can extend because of these investigations.

Activists informed about their disciplinary investigation by means of notification letter sent their family homes, or private security guards in the entrance of campus, or their non-activist friends told them after seeing their names on the notice boards in faculties as investigation announcements. According to Senem, these documents were like police reports that described their actions in detail, and the manner that investigations were announced aimed to discriminate them from their classmates.

In addition to that, the most crucial influence of OHAL was the decree law that expelled the Academicians for Peace (*Barış için Akademisyenler*, BAK) who are signers of the declaration “We will not be a party to this crime” that criticizes the AKP’s policies in Kurdish cities and Middle East of. My respondents put into words that after the expulsion of their professors, investigation committees turned into a small court for them that aims to penalize them. As Bilal puts into words:

Unionized and democrat professors were more lenient towards us on the investigation committee because what we did on campus was legitimate for them as well. After they were suspended from the university, the investigation committees seemed to start judging and passing verdicts on us (...) The scholarship cuts and getting kicked out of the dorms are already a big deal for us. We became all alone.

This statement reminded me the words of Hakan: “But, in those times there was always a way to come back when you were expelled”, and he added “at these times, there was always a hand that protected us (...) Democrat and leftist professors and veteran administrative officers who share university with us, or fatherly judges and

³⁴ Retrieved from <https://www.sosyalhukuk.org/2017/05/benan-molu-yazdi-tutuklu-ve-hukumlu-ogrencilerin-khk-ile-engellenen-egitim-haklari/>

prosecutors”. However, after OHAL and the decree laws that came along with it, it is possible to state that student activists were demoralized and depressed. In other words, there was no longer a merciful power for activist students on campus.

In addition to these, Senem and Meryem told me that YÖK have started to conduct disciplinary investigations following their participation in marches, demonstrations, propaganda activities or detentions outside of the campus. The initiation of a disciplinary investigation within the school simultaneously due to an incident outside the campus was an unprecedented situation before the OHAL. The reason for the concomitance of this process in two different institutions was about the decree law no 677 that changes the YÖK disciplinary regulations about the expulsion from the higher education due to supporting a terrorist organization. However, during the legal proceedings, socialist associations, parties, and organizations that students were involved in or supported were also labeled as terrorist, leading to disciplinary investigations at university as well.

In relation to these, I would like to touch upon that to provide concomitancy and coordination to conduct lawfare against the left opposition on campus requires diffused surveillance mechanism and extended police family. From this point of view, emergence of private security provisions and private security guards on campus should be addressed as another external reason.

4.2.2 Extending surveillance and policing networks on campus through privatization of security

In addition to disciplinary investigations, implementation of private security technologies (e.g., X-rays, turnstiles, CCTVs, security cameras, etc.) and hiring of private security guards on campus have become another dimension that transforms

the control and police of the student opposition on campus. Moreover, the existence of undercover police on campus has always been an ongoing issue for the student opposition.

As I touched upon, in particularly the aftermath of the 9/11 Attacks, the surveillance instruments and technologies have become a part of everyday life. Concordantly, private security guarding emerged as a profession, and private security guards started operating in parallel with the state's apparatus of repression (Haspolat, 2010). In other words, the consolidation of the pre-emptive security measures and diffusion surveillance technologies came along with the establishment of an "extended police family" consisted of local authorities, administrative institutions, law enforcement mechanisms and private security guards (Lea & Hallsworth, 2011, p. 27). In other words, areas where the state's repressive apparatus may not fully function are kept under control through private security guards and surveillance technologies. Hence, these extended police family consisting of the coexistence of the law enforcement mechanisms and private security guards has become the characteristic of the authoritarian state formation (Haspolat, 2010).

In Turkey's case, privatization of the security gained a legal basis in AKP era through Law No 5188 on Private Security Services in 2004, and thereby the profession of private security guarding has obtained a legal foundation by mushrooming private security companies run by former police officers, retired security chiefs and soldiers or former intelligence officers³⁵. Therefore, private

³⁵ Although private security companies seem discrete from repressive states apparatus, in fact they operate for consolidating the relations among the capital, local authorities and police force (Haspolat, 2010). The alteration of the security paradigm has created a brand-new occupation, concomitantly, private security guards. This occupation existed before gaining legal basis. Before this law, private security guards existed under the names of cleaning companies or consulting firms on the paper (Haspolat, 2010; Dölek, 2011). Nevertheless, after the establishment of the security firms, private security guards have been worked under performance evaluation system and precarious conditions (Dölek, 2020). Besides, Harun who is a private security guard on campus said that majority of

security companies sustain the unofficial ties with the state's repressive apparatus, and they are not complete civil organizations. Moreover, private security companies operating in Turkey engage in a wide range of criminal activities, and thereby, privatization of the security can pave the way for the institutionalization of the mafia-like organizations under disguise (Haspolat, 2010; Dölek, 2011).

Before law no 5188, university security was provided by watchmen, and the presence of civilian police within the campus was legitimized under the pretext of ensuring security³⁶. Subsequently, with the Law No. 2495 published in 1981 regarding the protection of certain institutions and organizations and the provision of their security, protection officers were subjected to the Law No. 657 on State Civil Servants started their service at universities. However, by the promulgation of law no 5188 in 2004, universities resorted to private security companies (Dölek, 2011, p. 126)³⁷. Therefore, periodically various security companies and their employees had become visible on campus³⁸. Moreover, exclusively for the universities, YÖK began to conduct collaborations under the name of “Free and Safe University” starting from

assignments are made according to presentableness or their ages, he says their shifts used to be arranged according to these criteria.

³⁶ According to Ministry of Interior, the entry of the police into the campus or their presence on campuses occurs with the permission of the rector. Retrieved from <https://www.icisleri.gov.tr/arem/universiteler-ve-stadyumlarda-guvenlik>

³⁷ Even though the Private Security Law repealed Law No. 2495, protection and security officers continue to work on campuses until their retirement. However, both occupational groups have the same duties work under different law and work ethos. For instance, during my fieldwork, I have realized that veteran civil servants of the university socialize with the protection officer of the campus. They greet each other and know each other by their names, and they eat their lunch together in employee cafeteria. It seems like working under the same law at the same time establishes a collegial relationship. Also, one of the protection officers on campus that I met during my fieldwork, Kerim is a father whose two children who study in university. He has started to work as protection officer in university after 2006 following the privatization of Türk Telekom.

³⁸ In 2018, with the publication of Decree Law No. 696, private security officers were transferred from subcontracting to permanent staff position in public institutions. However, before this decree law 64 private security companies identified with connections to FETÖ have been shut down. Retrieved from <https://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/feto-baglantisi-olan-64-guvenlik-sirketi-kapatildi-286871.html>

2008 (Berksoy, 2016). Thus, when the university security is at stake, both number of institutions and complexion of the networks among them rise.

When we talked about the private security implementations on campus, former students mentioned that these security personnels and surveillance systems became more visible after 2005. Yet, Engin and Cennet, who have been the veteran civil servants of university more than 20 years, mentioned that some personnels on campus had responsibilities similar to private security guards, and they used to work as cleaning staffs, or some rectors have their personal bodyguards. One of the striking nexuses that I heard from Engin, *Tepe Güvenlik*, which is a private security company, at one point provided security services to the university, is a company associated with the first president of the YÖK, İhsan Doğramacı. This connection proves how disciplining through institutional investigations and simultaneously exerting pressure by utilizing private security services for physical control and violence are deeply intertwined when student opposition is at stake.

In addition to this, the privatization of the security service of university by discarding protection officers' university means the emergence of new employees on campus who work under a private security company. When I talked with private security guards on campus, they pointed out that since they worked under a company different from the officer, they had to abide by the rules of company that isolate them from the other personnels of the university. For that reason, their shuttles and their lunch times are scheduled separately throughout the times that they worked for the company. Also, private security guards in university work on rotation in different areas of campus. As my activist participants noted, private security personnel with

good relations with students and civil servants have their workplace rotated or their shifts change³⁹.

Beside these, Engin and Cennet emphasized different points. According to Cennet and Engin private security guards have never been an organic component of the university due to their strict hierarchical organization and their mafia-like images on campus. Although private security guards have become permanent staff after Decree Law No. 696 in 2018, veteran officers of the university who are union members have continued to keep their distance. Engin states:

Private security guards are responsible for providing intelligence of what happens on campus to their superiors. Sometimes they sneak in your union's meetings in campus (...) They filled the university with all kinds of random and shady men under the name of private security guards (...) I am telling you these guards are picked selectively. Most of them are criminal types. They are already affiliated with far right groups. I mean we saw that when an MP from the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) visits, they all lined up to welcome him.

In line with Engin's statements, my activist participants touched upon the same points, especially women activists described them as "brothers from Idealist Hearths with Grey Wolves tattoos."

In addition to that, my interviewee Harun, who works as a private security guard of campus for more than ten years, said that security department of the university works under the rectorate. Organizing in this manner is meaningful, as it enables quicker communication with the rector in charge of the entry of riot police into the campus. Also, he states that in accordance with law no 5188, following the entry their law private security guards articulate to riot police to interfere in the

³⁹ Another point that I found striking while I was interviewing five private security guards of the university was all of them were high school graduates, only Harun proudly stated that he continued the university through distance education. Also, compared to the protection officers and civil servants of the university, private security guards are younger. Probably when they started to their jobs, they were the peers of the university students. When considering the difference in educational status between private security guards and university students, this gap may be used as an eligible reason to provoke the resentments of the security guards against the activist students. For that reason, they may be inclined to work beyond their job descriptions.

“incidents” on campus. He stated that unlike police officers, they are responsible for the pre-emption of the incidents on campus that may disrupt the peace of campus or preventing the lectures. About their distinctive features from the police, he pointed out:

For example, when I was little, I used to be very scared of the policemen and soldiers. After all, this is Turkey, and there are certain experiences in here. That’s why hiring private security is better. We don’t seem strict like the police or military. We seem more moderate (...) I think, especially in universities, private security is a must because university is autonomous institution.

Although Harun says that the universities are autonomous, this does not mean that universities are not exempt from control and policing. They should also be kept under control, yet at least these pre-emptive mechanisms should appear in a “moderate” form. However, moderation or presentability of these mechanisms does not mean that they do not work as repressive apparatus. In such context, private security guards are responsible for the mundane duties that police intervention might seem extreme. For that reason, implanting the arbitrary bans of the university administration on the campus, tearing of the posters and banners, annihilation of the newspapers and leaflets, etc. are the duties of the private security guards. Thus, former activist students point out that usually initial incitements against their collective actions and the propaganda materials are started by private security guards upon the order of the security supervisor of the university and university administration.

In line with their duty of provision of pre-emptive security comes along with constant vigilance, and suspicion on campus is concentrated on the activist students. In other words, private security guards work as mobile cameras that chase the well-known activist students as Cemre mentions: “Private security’s main job is to keep an eye on students all the time or stalking us inside the campus. They end up doing

all the things that the police do not really want to bother with.” Similarly, Ömer states:

For example, we had to go through procedures that other students didn’t. After X-raying our bags, they would also do manual checks or even body searches. They were making us look suspicious to the other students (...) They were already doing things that went beyond their authorities, like filming us or physical violence.

In addition to the intensity of these, precautionary measures do not have a standard, they usually fluctuate such as disciplinary investigations. In relation to this, Harun mentions that in the periods that there is high circulation of students, such as registration days and exam weeks, security measures are increased. In fact, these are the periods that socialization and the interaction of the students rise such that left opposition on campus tries to be more visible at these periods for propaganda and their recruitment activities. Besides these periods, former activists mention that involvement of the private security guards on the ground of the security increase according to their protest calendar and in line with the political atmosphere. For instance, former activists noted that every 6th of November, commemoration days and before gatherings inside the campus, private security guards mushroom all around with their cameras.

In addition to that, activists noted that private security guards as the implementors of the mobile emergency rule on campus hindering gatherings within the campus. That is why, when university administration foresees or notices an increase in dissent on campus, they implement inter-building entry-exit restrictions through private security guards. When they asked for the reasons of these bans, the arbitrariness of these bans becomes evident in the responses of private security guards such as: “we were told that” or “the rectors said that, so do not make trouble, OK”. Nevertheless, activists used to overcome these bans through disruptive

methods such as crowded entries to the buildings. Also, when I wanted to talk about these arbitrary bans with the private security guards, they did not want to respond, only Harun said:

We don't want students to get into conflict with each other. We would like them to attend their classes properly, entering and exiting smoothly (...) When an incident occurs, believe me, I also feel very sad. So, if there are instructions from the superiors, we implement them. The ban on posters and what not are all decisions coming from the university administration. We just do what we are told (...) But still, incidents involving students on campus have decreased. So, it's not like when I first started the job. Especially after the state of emergency, the campus is calm.

In other words, Harun said that they are the “yes-men” of the campus, and as expected in neoliberal universities, from the eye of the private security guard the campus is a space solely for academic activities. Nevertheless, by considering Harun's remarks, it is possible to say that repression of OHAL and de-politization comes along with it had impact on campus. However, regarding activists, these disruptive methods started not to function during the increasing disciplinary investigations that followed the end of the Peace Process, and they particularly emphasized that private security became more police-like. During this process, the punitive measures of the university administration and the escalation of hawkish approach by private security are parallel to each other. In line with this, by the end of the Peace Process, Cemre and Zeynep mentioned the approach of the private security guards:

In our university, it was already very difficult to distinguish between private security and the police. Things got even more complicated after the 2015 Suruş Massacre (...) After 2015, when we tried to organize an event, they were constantly tailing us. For instance, we leave leaflets on tables, and they go to the lecture hall behind us and collect them (...) For instance, when I read a poem loudly on campus, they came and recorded me on camera. It's as if I'm committing a crime.

After June 7, the attitude of private security towards us changed. During campus protests, they would specifically address us by our names. This was already very unsettling. They knew each of us individually by our names.

That's why, during interventions in actions, they would especially call out our names. In the eyes of other students, this situation seemed to stem from personal tensions. It felt like we were not regular students of the university but rather treated as marginals. So, other students started to keep their distance from us (...) Once I remember during a conflict about banners, one of the guards had pulled my hair. They were already using disproportionate violence, but pulling hair is such a dirty trick to do.

By considering my participants expression, it can be understood that private security guards are not only responsible for the ensuring the security on campus as private security guards mentioned during our interviews, but also in line with changing administrative approach of the university administration, they are the implementers of the physical violence, besides psychological violence through stalking and addressing the activist students by their name.

On the other side, activist students mention that these tactics of the private security guards not only blacklisted them, at the same time these tactics have functioned to disassociate activist students from the non-activist students. Regarding this issue, my activist participants have criticized themselves by expressing that they could not effectively respond to the black propaganda conducted against them both through private security and the penalties imposed by the university administration. From this perspective, the movement has been unable to generate alternatives to the increasing governmental repression since their internal reasons could not produce any alternative as well. In the following section, I would like to point out their self-criticisms particularly during the Peace Process by addressing Jasper's articulation and innovation dilemmas.

4.3 Internal challenges of the student movement amidst dilemmas

Throughout my interviews with former student activists of the 2000s, they primarily pointed out the impact of the political atmosphere in Turkey. Therefore, my

participants highlighted increasing governmental repression and rampant authoritarianism during the AKP years towards different veins of collective dissent. In the former sections, I touched upon this dimension of the decline of the student opposition on campus extensively. Also, I put emphasizes on the fact that student opposition failed to formulate a response against the changing facets of governmental repression, and thereby other students have become increasingly distance towards opposition on campus.

In relation to this, it can be thought that increasing governmental repression and growing punishments against the student activists have intimidated and created apathy for the non-activist students. However, increasing governmental repression at the same time had opposite effect on activist students without reflecting their recruitment activities.

As della Porta (1995) points out, growing governmental repression and state violence can backfire, and thereby activists may become more devoted to their aims, or they may embark on implementing more radical tactics. Similar to della Porta's point, in the scope of my study this can be argued that activist students have been developed more profound devotion and commitment to their organizations to provide them with necessary resources (e.g., money, legal support, moral support, etc.) in front of the increasing student arrests and judicial cases concerning students. However, this further commitment has been paved the way for a creation of a comfort zone for activists, and thereby they may have become less inclined to venture outside their own bubbles for recruitment activities or to create a strategy for overcoming the apathy of the others.

In addition to that, throughout my interviews, the analogy I heard, "campus is a miniature of the Turkey" holds great validity to give meaning the decreasing

acceleration of the student movement after the Coordinations period. This analogy usually led activists of the 2000s to attribute the decline of the movement to external factors and justifies the increasing engagement with left movement. Yet, this analogy can pigeonhole the movement's awareness of its own mistakes. Therefore, throughout the 2000s, the close intertwining of the student movement with the agenda of the left movement and the significant determinant of the off-campus agendas on student oppositions are noteworthy aspects to ponder on. As mentioned in this section, the 2000s student activists are inclined to read their position within the framework of their equation, which can be expressed as "university administration= YÖK= AKP". In relation to this equation and increasing engagement with left movement at the same time led me to ask the following question throughout my interviews: *Should this equation also necessitate relinquishing the autonomous space held by the student movement?*

I would like to point out that attributing the obstacle social movement exclusively to external reasons, particularly based on an invariant authoritarianism, can induce a state of inertia that obstacles hindering the prospects for the movement. Moreover, as my participants mentioned, the campus was open to propaganda activities. Particularly Opening Process was one of the most open periods that university administration was tolerant towards activists that my participants expressed that activists enjoyed the freedom to engage in activities of their own choosing. Yet, even in such atmosphere, student opposition could not gain momentum.

Within the frame of this study, political process theory provides a base to see the influence of macro-sociological and structural elements on student movement. In conjunction with this, specific to 2000s, consolidation of the neoliberal governmental

rationality and its transformative impact on governmental repression through changing security paradigm have become more of an issue. Therefore, political process theory leads me to read these structural alterations clearly. However, this approach caused us to evaluate the movement solely determined by external factors. So, student opposition may appear to fluctuate merely based on external determinants, and it might even seem devoid of fundamental characteristics of collective action, such as willpower and making decisions regarding their strategies and styles. Also, political process theory may be insufficient in explaining why the movement did not gain momentum during politically open and opportune periods.

In relation to these points, I have noticed that I encountered the limits of the political process theory which employs a structural approach. Regarding to the thought-provoking highlights of the Goodwin & Jasper (1999), mobilization of the movement may not be explained by merely invariant recipe of factors, and thereby the role of the cultural elements such as resonant slogans and shared emotions should not be underestimated (p. 51). Therefore, the absence or diminishing of the state violence or repression may not inherently revive the social movements, so the roles of the cultural meanings, strategical choices and shared emotions in motion become crucial (p. 38). In line with these, I find it significant to pay attention to the self-criticisms of the activists in order to understand the inability of gaining momentum during the Opening Process.

When the topic shifted towards the strategic mistakes of the movement, some participants wished to skip it, while others delved into extensive self-criticisms. One of the striking criticisms came from Zafer. He was a well-known devoted activist of the Beyazıt, from 2009 to 2017. He witnessed numerous students' politization process during their university life and lived through countless disciplinary

investigations and on campus fights against the police and private security guards.

Yet, during our interview, he considerably mentioned strategical mistakes:

Two things caused significant damage to the student movement. The first one is the Peace Process and the freedom it brought to the campus. Everything was free in university. All socialist students tried to recruit as many people as possible to strengthen their factions during that period. As a result, the organizational agenda overshadowed the student movement's agenda. We disconnected from the student movement's agenda and entered a period of rough organizational propaganda period. When we deviated from the classic student agenda, we marginalized ourselves.

By taking Zafer's point into consideration, it is possible to argue that open political atmosphere or lack of governmental repression produced a rivalry among socialist factions on campus. In this period, they have begun a "recruitment competition" to increase their faction's hegemony over others. Therefore, already fragmented outlook of the left opposition on campus with the absence of a roof organization became more distant from each other due to this rivalry. However, although the existence of the recruitment competition on campus, participation was less than what activists anticipated.

In relation to that, the prioritization of the agenda of the left movement entailed increasing disengagement from the issues of the student movement. Consequently, the issues that they focused on in their propaganda materials, their action repertoires, and the emotions that they evoked repelled other students rather than attracting them. For instance, Ceren who was an activist during this period remarked:

There were times when I felt that we were separating ourselves too much from other students (...) For example, the posters and announcements were not about the student agenda. As activists, we considered everything as our issue to involve, and our approach was more didactic compared to other students (...) I sometimes felt that when we were calling for protests loudly in the yard, we appeared too radical in the eyes of other students; sometimes, I found myself thinking, is it necessary to shout like this in such a small area? Is there any other way to agitate the others?

Regarding Ceren's point on dissociation from the non-activist students not only took place in terms of the agenda of the movement, but also the way and the style of the left opposition on campus created sectarian image in the eyes of other students. In other words, such politically open atmosphere caused presentation of the cultural elements of the left movement for the activist students. However, in such politically open atmosphere, presenting and performing in the style of old-school leftist was more than necessary.

According to my participants, this sectarian image of the leftist students seemed to soften partially by the influence of the Gezi Parkı Protest, also my participants stated that non-activist students have become more moderate and interested in their activities. Especially, forums which were popularized during the Gezi Protests were practiced on campus. Yet, the vibrant impact of Gezi did not go beyond being a flash in the pan, and ongoing problems about order of the priority of the agenda continued. Ozan who became an activist during the Gezi period and started university in 2014 stated:

Nothing was being discussed about the real problems of the students, and I think this was the real issue. Nothing was being done according to the dynamics of university and student life. So, we pushed the other students to get into deeper waters (...) In these forums that we organized on campus, activists were the ones speaking, while the rest of the thousand students were just watching, not even reacting. And what he was talking about was always their own organizational agendas (...) We were mimicking figures from the left who had associated with Beyazıt. We used to dress like them, green parka and earth tones, what not (...) During the protest calls, we would try to behave like them (cult figures of the left) even if there were very few people behind us, we would step a higher place and make a call such in the photos of the Deniz Gezmiş in 1960s boycotts.

Although there was a growing interest of the other students, leftist students found a way to differentiate themselves from others by their style. As Ozan said "Gezi politicized a lot of people; those already inclined towards organizing got organized".

Thus, this change of the attitude of the non-activist students was short lived.

Therefore, during Gezi, dynamism outside the campus engulfed the internal agenda and dynamics of the campus. In relation to this Zafer put into words that:

When I say this, many people disagree, but I don't care. Unfortunately, the second thing that harmed the student movement is Gezi. There was tremendous momentum during that period, but leftists as 'agas' of campus, got complacent easily. They thought the wind had turned in our favor. So, they didn't do any extra work to convince new people, thinking that those who wanted to participate in the movement would come and be one of us. On campus, the agenda has dramatically concentrated on anti-AKP discourse, we left the campus empty. I mean, we kind of brought it upon ourselves.

By taking into consideration Zafer's point, it can be argued that period that collective dissent on the rise outside of the campus can lead to the increasing neglect of activism on campus. Finally, despite the accumulation of these tactical mistakes that caused them to distance themselves from non-activist students, their recruitment activities on campus insistently maintained to be merely focused on attracting left-leaning students. Ozan expressed that:

During registration days, the stands, posters, and magazines were set up to attract students who were already left leaning. No one had the concern of politicizing other students. Everyone was already struggling to recruit students who identified themselves as leftists to join their fractions.

As Jasper (1997) put stress on, success of mobilization to some extent depends on activists' ability to establish empathy and moral vision for other people who are not part of the movement (p. 278). Therefore, in terms of evoking similar feelings and legitimizing and rationalizing a novel moral framework for other students were not achieved, and thereby mobilization and recruitment activities in this period ended in failure. By relying on the open atmosphere of the period, activist students became more reluctant and patronizing throughout their interactions with other students. In other words, left opposition on campus did not make an effort to establish a legitimate and reasonable position in the eyes of other students, and thereby the transformative role of university campuses in a political sense has been neglected.

Taking into consideration of the role of these cultural elements of the movement, it is possible to argue that although there are numerous opportunities for mobilization of the movement in a politically open atmosphere, the left opposition on campus have failed to utilize from the opportunities due to their strategical mistakes. Jasper (2014) points out that decisions on the strategies which constitute the cultural dimension of the social movement come along with dilemmas (p. 13-14).

Fundamentally, dilemmas involve the assessment of the costs, risks, commitments, or losses that a strategic decision might incur. In the light of the emphasizes of my participants, it is possible to discuss the existence of two fundamental dilemmas for student movement during this period: innovation dilemma and articulation dilemma.

Innovation dilemma revolves around whether the strategy of a social movement can propose a new semantic world and moral vision that would push the boundaries of people towards the aims and demands of the movement. In other words, activists must be attentive while they try to attract other people by transforming their stance. According to this dilemma, if a movement pushes the boundaries of people too fast, it might lose its target audience (Jasper, 2014. p. 98).

In relation to this concept, I argue that since the beginning of the 2000s, student movement has highly been intertwined with the left movement and its cultural motives. The framework that the student movement could propose was overlooked, and other students were forced to greater innovations proposed by left-socialist movement. This impact had revealed itself with prioritization of the agenda of left movement. Following this, left opposition on campus chose to display the cultural influence of the left more overtly in their actions and their style in relatively open atmosphere of Opening Process. Therefore, particularly the style of the activists and their bodily displays during the protest and their attitude that carry old-school

sectarian left motives have not resonated with other students. Moreover, my participants pointed out that their didactic style or leftist mimicry in terms of their action repertoire and their style seemed patronizing in the eyes of the others. In other words, these strategical choices of the left opposition have appeared as a moral superiority of the leftist students over the others. Thus, the activism of the student movement in this period as a confined and relatively open atmosphere such as university campus have become more than necessary to transform others or suggest them a novel moral vision.

As mentioned in previous sections, student movement has a great articulation capacity to the bigger movements, particularly the left and socialist movement in their countries. However, articulation capacity can distort or derange the peculiarities of the movement. In conjunction with this, another concept that was coined by Jasper (2014) is that articulation dilemma concerns the scale of the aims of the social movements. Considering this dilemma, articulating either the narrow or broader goals of the social movement can influence the continuity and mobilization dynamics of the movement (p. 259). As pointed out in this section, throughout the 2000s, left opposition on campus had confusion about the articulation of their goals and agendas. This confusion in the 2000s usually stems from the equation in the minds of the activist students, which is “university administration= YÖK= AKP”. Although this equation holds significant validity, it has clouded the articulation of the student movement’s goals. In that sense, during the Opening Process, activist students articulated their broader agenda which is intertwined with the socialist movement’s goals with the impact of growing mobilization of the left opposition outside of the campus. Also, while they were focusing on their broader goals, left opposition on campus neglected their narrow goals related to the dynamics of the student life and

campus. Furthermore, despite the limited scope of an environment such as a campus, there was a failure to garner adequate mobilization and establish hegemony these broader goals dominantly focus on the anti-AKP discourse was getting into deeper waters.

In the light of these criticisms of the former activists, it can be argued that politically open atmosphere, as an external reason, might pave the way for emergence of the dilemmas for the movement that I addressed as an internal reason. Therefore, in such politically open and tolerant atmosphere, movement can create obstacles related to cultural dimension of the movement. In the example of the student movement during the tolerant and open campus atmosphere has reopened the old wounds of the student movement that fundamentally about claiming and protecting the autonomous domain of the student movement instead of being engulfed by the left movement's trajectory.

4.4 Conclusion: Despite external and internal reasons

Throughout this section, I explored possible causes of the decline of the student movement. As I touched upon, the decline of the student movement can be traced back to the dissipation of the University Student Coordination period in 1998. However, the remnants of the Coordination period remained on campus, the movement could not achieve to bring a fervent dynamism to campus.

In relation to decline of the movement, alteration of the governmental repression and protest policing tactics have consisted of the external reasons for the bottleneck of the movement. From this point of view, the emergence of disciplinary investigations against the activist students emerged as a new instrument to control the student movement. My participant highlighted that these investigations were

eligible instruments to intimidate and deter the activist students while creating the label of “criminals” for the activist students. Throughout the AKP period, reemergence of the disciplinary investigations has usually been compatible with the governmental strategy of the AKP which is described as concomitant reform and repression periods. Also, in the times when AKP was faced with the hegemony crisis, such as after 7th of June election or coup d’état attempt in 2016, disciplinary investigations were reimplemented by the university administration. The punishments of the disciplinary investigations occurred in different forms of violence, especially psychological violence and financial violence towards the activist students have become common.

In line with the neoliberal authoritarianism and its pre-emptive security understanding, security services of the university have been provided by private companies that presents preemptive security services. Therefore, surveillance technologies and private security guards have sprawled on campus. Besides, the existence of the undercover police on campus, private security guards were added. According to my participants, the security guards work hand in hand with riot police, and private security guards are extensions of the right wing groups. When we bear in mind the official and unofficial ties between security companies and the central government, I suggest considering the private security guards as an expansion of the state repression in a more moderate form. In terms of the student movement, private security guards are responsible for the implementation of the arbitrary prohibitions of the university administration, including keeping eye on the activist students constantly and blacklisting them in front of other students.

These external reasons, which are mentioned as another form of the governmental repression and protest policing due to governmental rational of the

AKP, establish a coherent narration of the Political Process Theory. However, in politically open periods such as Opening Process, student movement could not recover due to its mistakes stemming from the cultural dimension of the movement. In that sense, articulation and innovation dilemma which derive from the relinquish of the autonomous domain of the student movement have emerged as external reasons that hindered the acceleration of the movement.

In light of this chapter, it can be stated that the student movement's inability to assert its own autonomous space and its focus on larger agendas have significantly diminished its mobilization. Firstly, the equation that activists maintained, blurring the distinction between campus and off-campus activities, has created confusion within the movement's agenda. Additionally, old style leftist rhetoric of activist students has not resonated with other students. There has been a disconnect from the audience that arrived at the university, got politicized through exposure to the student movement, and organically nourished the movement. For that reason, perhaps prioritizing the preservation of the autonomous space of the student movement and emphasizing the dynamics within the campus holds the potential to nourish both the student movement and public opposition.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Student movement has always been a significant vein that keeps collective movement alive. Although university life and student movement occupied a narrow period of the lives of activists, their impact on its subjects in terms of their political stance is significant and long-lasting.

Student movements, especially after the impact of the global May 68, enriched and enlarged the discussions in the social movement literature. Previous literature usually focused on the causes of the student movement, for that reason defining the student movement has not been an issue. However, trying to define the student movement gave a lot of clues about the peculiarities of them in different countries. For that reason, I pointed out that diversified aims of the student movement and existence of the youth myth plays crucial role to understand the meaning and definition of the student movement for a specific country.

In Turkey's case, student movement has a high articulation capacity to broader scale movements, and student movement supplies the prominent cadres of the left movement similar to other developing countries. In order to acknowledge this articulation that changes under political atmosphere, I suggested resorting the Political Process Theory. Additionally, I benefited from youth studies that discuss the role and position of youth in society and contribute to my understanding of the cultural elements of the movement. Therefore, I addressed the role of youth myth in the scope of based on my narration of my participants. Although the youth studies in Turkey express that youth after 1980 should be understood without the youth myth, this statement is not valid for the participants of the student movement of 2000s. In

relation to this point, I put stress on the integral role of the youth myth as a cultural element of the movement that encourages and catalyzes the educated youth's mobilization. In the example of the activist of the 2000s, youth myth is still a functional and pragmatic element of the student movement which conserves and continues the canonical position of the educated youth in political arena of Turkey. Moreover, as can be traced from this research, the youth myth dedicated to educated youth has been sought to be eroded with the diffusion of neoliberal rationality into universities. However, the student activism of the 2000s tended to embrace the youth myth, asserting their canonical positions in collective dissent. Youth myth can be criticized due to its state-led construction, but erosion of this myth can undermine the legitimate position of educated youth as prominent component of collective dissent.

By taking into consideration my participants reference to the past of the student movement, in the second chapter of this study I examined the situation of the student movement in different periods. In light of the history of the movement, it is possible to argue that aims and the obstacles that student movement faced in the 2000s have been inherited from their pasts. In relation to this, the association of the student movement with left movement is an outcome of the past. Especially, after May 68, prominent student activists have turned into revolutionary cults of the Turkey's left movement. Thus, for the succeeding generations of the student movement, balancing out the agenda of the student movement, which is campus based and student oriented, and agenda of the left-socialist movement of the Turkey continued to be a challenge in the 2000s. In other words, the autonomous domain of the student movement has always been under the risk of being engulfed by broader agendas. Also, considering the past of the student movement, I argue that the position of the university campuses as a space of the collective dissent crystallized

gradually, and thereby, the central government always continues to keep an eye on the university campuses. In that sense, my choice on Beyazıt Campus as my fieldwork provided me to see this role of the campus more evidently due to its distinguished place in the memories of my participants as a university of numerous revolutionary figures of Turkey.

On the other hand, the Coordination period of the student movement in 1990s have achieved to protect and improve a balanced student movement regarding its agenda and action repertoires, and thereby, it presented a genuine experience for left opposition in university by middle of the 1990s. In spite of their success, there is not enough academic research on the period of the Coordination, so within this study, I tried to compensate this academic shortage through my interviewees with the activist of the Coordinations. Also, during period, despite having a significantly different agendas from the student movement, the rising Kurdish Movement began showing solidarity with leftist students on campuses during the same period, and their solidarity against the governmental repression and the attacks of the right wing groups continued throughout the 2000s. However, after the dissipation of the Coordinations, student movement entered into a disorganized phase without a roof organization that maintain throughout the 2000s. Regarding the end of the Coordination period, two reasons can be argued as follows: the internal conflicts of the organizations and the changing face of governmental repression.

In terms of the opposition on campus in the 2000s, repressive attempts to police and control the student movement took place in line with the neoliberal transformation of the state that started in 1980 junta, and the increasing market-dependency of the university came along with this transformation. Therefore, by the beginning of the 2000s, disciplinary investigations and the extension of the policing

and surveillance networks through the privatization of the security provision on campus have become novel methods to police and control the dissent on campus. These repressive methods in university have operated for establishing peace on the ground of the pre-emptive security paradigm that the neoliberal state needed.

In line with the emergence of disciplinary investigations, throughout the 2000s student activists were tried to be disciplined through severe punishments in the forms of psychological and financial violence. According to my participants, these investigations have become one of the reasons that hinders their mobilization on campus criminalizing and punishing them in front of other students. Particularly in the AKP period, implementations of the disciplinary investigations and the severity of the punishments occurred in accordance with the AKP's hegemonic projects. In relation to this, YÖK's disciplinary regulations and the criminal law have been rearranged and implemented towards the activist students. As a result of these investigations, non-activist students have become more apathetic and abstaining towards student opposition. In other words, disciplinary investigations have become a mechanism for the pacification of the student movement.

In addition to the disciplinary investigations, the surveillance and the policing networks on campus consolidated with the privatization of the security services in the university during the AKP period. Besides the surveillance technologies diffused all over the campus, private security guards emerged as a new repressive actor, and they work just like a mobile camera for the well-known student activists. According to my participants, private security guards were responsible from the duties that a police officer would intervene. That is why, besides using physical violence against the students, they stalked and blacklisted the students.

Seemingly, private security guards created a more moderate image in terms of implementation of the governmental repression. However, my participants emphasized that private security guards worked in cooperation with the undercover police and riot police. Moreover, I put forward that working under performance assessment system and private sector ethos both separated them from the components of the university and at the same time intensified their in-group gang-like relations. Thus, the private security guards always have a shady image in student opposition and the veteran opponent officers of the university. Furthermore, my participants pointed out that these security guards were affiliated with the far right groups. Parallel with my participants' highlights, the literature on the privatization of the security put stress on the official and unofficial relations among the central government, local authorities, law enforcement mechanisms and the private security companies run by the former police chiefs, retired police, intelligence officers. Therefore, in an atmosphere of rampant authoritarianism of the AKP, private security guards have become more aggressive against the left opposition on campus.

By disentangling from these external reasons which occur under the influence of the political atmosphere, I examined the situation of the student movement during the Opening Process. Although this period was portrayed relatively as an open atmosphere in terms of conducting their propaganda and recruitment activities, the student movement did not gain movement. In that sense I put emphasis on that in an open atmosphere, student activists encountered articulation and innovation dilemma which are related to their strategical choices. I pointed out that fundamentally these dilemmas stem from underestimation of the autonomous domain of the student movement. Therefore, the performance that activists presented in front of their

audience and the agendas that they brought on did not resonate with the non-activist students.

In light of this study, I would like to add a couple more humble opinions. From the fermentation of the initial idea of this study to my entire writing process, numerous student protests took place on various campuses. The fervent protests that took place afterwards were supported by public and took place by the participation of the non-activist students was about the protest on the Dining Halls' fee increasements and accommodation protests on state dormitories of them. Also, unfortunately, we witnessed numerous young university students committing suicide due to economic distress or dying in university's facilities tragically. A great majority of the protests about these incidents were merely shouldered by activist students, and these protests found correspondence both in audition and the public. However, these protests did not turn into a mass movement.

Nevertheless, considering these points, it is possible to argue that the problems and demands belonging to the autonomous domain of the student movement still urge on burning issues. Therefore, it can be claimed that these issues still carry the possibility of sparking a fervent mass student movement. At this point, I believe it is crucial to reassess the possibilities and limitations youth myth can offer. As highlighted in my study, this myth serves a function for leftist students by providing a sense of belonging to a movement and determining their stance in the face of events. In the 2000s, the youth myth was embraced by dissenting students and played a role in students transforming into activists, and the youth myth was employed by activists pragmatically for accelerating their recruitment activity. However, by the 2000s, this myth began to solely serve as an identity-affirming and unifying function for leftist students. In this context, it is imperative to question

whether the youth myth currently holds any resonance within society. In other words, it is a question awaiting investigation whether educated youth are still perceived by society as the conscience or spokesperson of collective dissent.



T.C.
BOĞAZİÇİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL VE BEŞERİ BİLİMLER YÜKSEK LİSANS VE DOKTORA TEZLERİ ETİK İNCELEME
KOMİSYONU
TOPLANTI KARAR TUTANAĞI

Toplantı Sayısı : 32
Toplantı Tarihi : 26.05.2022
Toplantı Saati : 10:00
Toplantı Yeri : Zoom Sanal Toplantı
Bulunanlar : Prof. Dr. Ebru Kaya, Prof. Dr. Feyza Çorapçı, Doç. Dr. Arhan S. Ertan, Doç. Dr. Senem Yıldız,
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Yasemin Sohtorik İlkmen
Bulunmayanlar :

Dağlar Yaraşır
Sosyoloji

Sayın Araştırmacı,

"Türkiye'de Güvenliğin Özelleştirilmesi Üzerine: Üniversite Örneği" başlıklı projeniz ile ilgili olarak yaptığınız SBB-EAK 2022/61 sayılı başvuru komisyonumuz tarafından 26 Mayıs 2022 tarihli toplantıda incelenmiş ve uygun bulunmuştur.

Bu karar tüm üyelerin toplantıya çevrimiçi olarak katılımı ve oybirliği ile alınmıştır. COVID-19 önlemleri kapsamında kurul üyelerinden ıslak imza alınamadığı için bu onay mektubu üye ve raportör olarak Yasemin Sohtorik İlkmen tarafından bütün üyeler adına e-imzalanmıştır.

Saygılarımızla, bilgilerinizi rica ederiz.

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Yasemin
SOHTORİK İLKMEN
ÜYE

e-imzalıdır
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Yasemin Sohtorik
İlkmen
Öğretim Üyesi
Raportör

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