Contested masculinity

Sexuality, Love and Resistance among young male leftists in Istanbul

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Summary

This dissertation relates to a field that in the last decades have gained increased attention in Western Europe; constructions of masculinity. My aim is to illuminate constructions of masculinity among young leftist in Istanbul and how their masculinity was related to contradictory cultural discourses of sex, love and marriage.

The fieldwork that constitutes the empirical material was done during a period of two years while I was living in Istanbul. In addition to this I accomplished 10 qualitative in-depth interviews that were carried out as life-history narratives. My informants were a group of radical, intellectual young men related to the feminist movement and in their late 20ties. Their socio-economical background was middle class and during my fieldwork they were living in Istanbul, but they originally came from villages or small cities outside Istanbul. Another characteristic I search for was that they had accomplished a higher university education and that they were voluntarily engaged in human rights struggles.

The guiding question this dissertation aims to answer is whether leftists' ambiguous masculinity constructions among leftists can be traced back to paradoxes and contradictions embedded in their male identity. The feminist movement in Turkey started in the mid or late 1980ies and grew out of a well established socialist movement, where men were key actors. For my informants feminism represented an ambiguous sphere in their struggle for sexual emancipation. My informants joined the feminists' denial of their former asexuality but this implicated another paradox and shaped their contradictory masculine configurations. I use gender theories with special emphasis on Bob Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity as an analytical framework to analyse how this group of radical, intellectual young men 'do masculinity'. Doing this I aim to focus on how new expressions of masculinity contested existing ideas of fixed gender identity. Constructions of masculinity are analysed as an ambiguous dimension of both continuation and change. By focusing on leftists' everyday life my empirical analysis aim to examine how ideas of sex, love and marriage were shaping masculinity and how contradictory masculinity practices constitute and contest existing perceptions of fixed gender identity.

Among leftist sexuality had become a terrain of fundamental political struggle, but this seemed to be contradictory embedded in leftists male identity. I argue that sexuality within the context of my material has become an arena with room to perform both 'traditional' - and 'new' masculinity configurations.

Preface

When do you finish a dissertation? When do you put the last stop? I wish I had the possibility to work further but for me this decision has also been guided by others than pure academic questions. To write this dissertation I have been in Oslo, while my family stayed in Istanbul. My son is 7 and has just learned to read and write and it has not been easy to explain to him why it took so long time to write approximately 100 pages. He kept asking me why it what so difficult and actually questioned my ability to write! My husband has been a 'single father' during these months and has been provided with new experiences in the male world in Turkey. It has been a tough time for all of us and I am most grateful for their support and I could not have done this without them. Now other aspects of my life have gained importance, and I have to put a stop to this work.

I wish to thank all the people who have helped in the whole process of writing this dissertation, and if I have forgotten anybody I hope they can forgive me. First of all I wish to thank those who shared their lives with me in Istanbul, who trusted me and opened their thought about their own male identity to me so honestly.

Next I am especially indebted to my academic advisor: Willy Pedersen for his engagement and indefatigable job of advising me to the academic world. His critical awareness and alert, intellectual capacity has been a great inspiration for me through these months. His collegial attitude and his trust in my project have had better inlfuence on my concentration than vitamins or ginseng ever could have given.

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Finally I wish to thanks my other family for their unquestioned believe in me and my mother and father for housing their 'grown up daughter'.

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Sidsel Braaten

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Katula Katula

Güleyirum haline katula katula
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vermiyesun

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Sen bi kalori bile etmeyisun
Ula ula ula ula
Bu alemin Light Erkeğisun

Ne oldu sana
Ne oldu böyle
Nerede o eski taş fırın erkeği
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Lyrics by Tarik Mengüç
(From the album Katula Katula, by Davut Güloğlu)

1. INTRODUCTION

In some neighborhoods residents wait in line to buy bread that is a few pennies cheaper: in others all the glitzy displays of wealth can be found. Luxury sedans proliferate while homeless children become more visible on the streets. There are sections of the city where a photographer could frame a crowd scene and pretend it to be from Kabul; others could stand in for any modern neighborhood from a European city.

Keyder (1999:195)

The reason for me choosing Istanbul as the frame for this dissertation goes back 13 – 14 years. I first visited Turkey in 1987, and since this time my relation the Turkey has only been enforced. Today I am married to a Turkish man, we have a son and I have been living in Istanbul for many years. I speak fluently Turkish and in the process of deciding what to write in this dissertation, an issue related to Istanbul emerged naturally.

My interest for how the male identity is constructed, shaped and challenged gained increased attention 7 years ago, more precisely on December 8th 1996. That day I gave birth to my son. When he was only three weeks old we flew back to Istanbul where we were living and I started my journey in the experiences of motherhood.

The point of departure for my interest was merely personal but as the years went by and I could compare my son to my nephew born only two days before but living in Norway, we soon traced an authoritarianism we knew from the Turkish society, patterns that both me and my husband were opposing to. How could this be? Where did he pick up the macho' behaviour 'while his cousin in Norway did not show sign at this at all? I was forced to realise that my son was socialised into the Turkish society, and that he probably perceived an unbalance between what he experienced in kindergarten or out playing and what he was taught at home. Watching my son adopting some of the very patriarchal and authoritarian patterns of the Turkish culture we were struggling against required in my case to recognise how these were immanent in the whole society.

My curiosity for the development of my son's increasing displays of a 'macho-culture' coincided with and was enforced by my engagement in women's questions. Through the years I had been introduced the Turkish feminist movement and different

questions around gender and sexuality occupies me. During the different obligate courses at the university I was introduced to Bob Connell and his theories on masculinity. This opened new doors for me and gave me a theoretical foundation to analyse the different types or forms of masculinity I had observed through my years in Turkey.

Before I continue I will stress that Turkey as a region always have been seated both in east and west and that the Turkish culture carry parallel influences. Both cultures have had significance for the Turkish society today. A common metaphor to describe the differences between the urban and the rural Turkey have been to claim that the distance between a Turkish village and Istanbul is longer than the difference between Istanbul and any European capital. As being positioned both between but also within two different cultures there is historical tradition in Turkey for many coexisting religions, and in the Ottoman Empire religious minorities were given free space and a large extent of autonomy. Even if the statistics shows that 90 % of the Turkish population is Muslim, most of these are not what we in Western Europe would define as practicing and orthodox Muslims. Since the establishment of the Turkish republic have secularised large parts of the population and religious expressions have through the republic been suppressed and prohibited. During the last decade that has been an increased political will for democratisation. Paradoxically with the democratisation processes new Islamist or radical religious groups have emerged and gained increased attention. The military have been essential for the development of the secular Turkish state, and have had substantial influence. But paradoxically their significance has decreased as the democratisation processes have advanced. The last military intervention in Turkey was in 1980, and in the free elections in 1983 a conservative party won and with them a new liberal era emerged.

The social developments in Turkey in the aftermath of the liberalisation in the 1980ties have challenged different aspects of the social structure among these, the family. The family institution is basic to all societies, but in Turkey it is crucial to the socialisation process and constitutes a significant universe for the development of personal identity. Radical changes in the family structure are often followed by a questioning of one's whole existence and can provoke crisis. In the contemporary Turkish society there seems to be a beginning recognition of ambiguous gender roles, instead of fixed and complimentary role patterns (Özdalga and Liljeström, 2002). These changes have mainly focused on women and not men, and are a result of the feminist movements' engagement and contributions to the public debate. They have challenged men's power and women have taken their rightful place in the public debate. These developments have provoked a kind of a 'crisis' in the

hegemonic masculinity. Traditionally children born male are attributed certain fixed values, but as these values become fluid and not so easy identified and being born a man is not enough. Before I began this study I assumed that such a change or 'crisis' if present, could be traced in masculinity constructions among a group of radical, intellectual young men and Bob Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity has worked as my theoretical framework. My point of departure was the ambiguous masculinity constructions I had observed among a group of leftists close to the feminist movement, and the guiding question this dissertation aims to answer is whether this could be traced back to paradoxes and contradictions embedded in their male identity. The guiding notion behind my theoretical framework as well as my analysis are how new expressions of masculinity challenge and change existing perceptions of fixed gender identity.

According to leading sociological theoreticians like Anthony Giddens, Zygmunt Baumann and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim there is an increasing preoccupation with love and sexuality in the modern society. Sexuality has been separated from reproduction and Giddens claims that *'the sequestration of experience separates individuals from some of the major moral reference-points by means of which social life was ordered in pre-modern cultures'* (1992:180). This leads me the topic of this dissertation through which I aim to study change of masculinity. I wish to study how ideas of sex, love and marriage constitute key elements in masculinity in Turkey, and how a group of radical, intellectual men 'do masculinity' in their everyday life. I particularly look for whether contradictory practices constitute their masculinity configurations and how these practiced are contextualised and prescribed meaning as masculine values.

In Chapter 2 I will give a wide-ranging socio-historical overview of Turkey with particular emphasis on developments that have influenced a change of fix ideas of gender and masculinity. This framework dates back to the turn of the last century because developments before the establishment of the Turkish republic have essential significance to contemporary masculinity configurations.

In Chapter 3 I introduce the theoretical framework for how I approach questions of gender and masculinity. This framework provides the reader with a theoretical toolbox to understand the particularity of masculinity in Turkey. In the end of this chapter I present regional studies of masculinity that at first sight seemed to be relevant, but when closer examined I realised that they foremost carried similarities and that studies of male identity examined through masculinity constructions are underanalysed. With this dissertation I have entered an un-chartered dimension of gender analysis in Turkey.

In Chapter 4 I present how I received my data and the troubles and difficulties I met during my fieldwork. I have done a qualitative study based on 10 in-depth interviews and field observations. Through a short description of my two main informants I aim to frame the sub-cultural group of men I talked to and their socio-economical and political background. I hope that together with the historical chapter to provide the reader with and understanding of leftists' particular position as point of departure for their resistance.

Chapter 5 is divided in three sections that all together form my empirical analysis. First I examine masculinity in relation to the feminist movement and sexual emancipation. Essential in this section is leftists' relation to feminism and how the development of sexual emancipation was embedded in the historical context. Secondly I examine the ambiguous element of masculinity construction in relation to love and marriage. Here cultural understandings of love are especially important because they both shape and challenge masculinity configurations. Finally I look at leftists' male sexuality and how this emerged as their main tool of resistance against authority and almost defined their political identity as well as their male identity, because of its egalitarian aspects. Their relations to women will be examined through how a flirt created a legitimate sphere to affirm male identity without being an expression of male domination. The egalitarian element of sexuality appeared more essential in what I have called curiosity for bi-sexuality. The homosexual encounter will be analysed as an attempt to redefine masculinity, and in general their sexuality occurred as their main terrain for political struggle.

In Chapter 6 I hope to summarise my different conclusions and answer my guiding question.

2. SOCIO-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Learning of the past

> A civilised, international dress is worthy and appropriate for our nation, and we will wear it. Boots or shoes on our feet's, trousers on our legs, shirt and tie, jacket and waistcoat – and of course, to complete this, a cover with a brim on our heads. I want to make this clear. This head covering is called a 'hat'.
>
> Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

Julie Marcus says in her introduction to the book *A word of Difference: "To study contemporary Turkish social life must take Ottoman history into account"* (1992: 3). I cannot agree more and all contemporary research should be understood in its social and historical context. The difficulties, contradictions and ambiguities of masculinity constructions are contextualised by the late developments of the Ottoman Empire, because what happened in this period created tensions in how men and women legitimated their gender. These tensions can still be traced in the society and forms a kind of social consciousness or mental structures in the male identity in general. By going through different social changes from the Ottoman Empire until today I aim to create a frame to understand contemporary tensions in masculinity.

The Ottoman Empire was founded in the 13th century by a minor *beylik* – a duchy under the leader Osman. The period from approximately 1400 – 1600 is regarded at its greatest period and the empire rapidly expanded out the south-eastern Europe, Asia, Anatolia Hungary and the Arab word. In 1453 was the last outpost of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople, concurred by the Sultan Mehmet the Magnificent, in Turkish

Fatih – the Conqueror. The Ottomans changed the name of the city into Istanbul[1] and was the centre for the new empire. The Ottoman Empire was a Muslim theocratic state with a multi -ethnical and religious population. The organisation of the population groups was done by religious and not by ethnical belonging in something called the *Millet system* (Millet: people). This system secured a high level of autonomy within the community, but they had to obey the theocratic rules – *Shari'a* (Aksin 2002).

The Tanzimat period (1839 – 1876)

After two centuries of military defeat and territorial retreats within the Ottoman Empire a growing interest for Western oriented solutions started. The period that started with the First constitution was called *Tanzimat*. Tanzimat it the Ottoman term for reordering or reorganisation and refers to a set of modernising reform which introduced important changes in the legal, educational and administrative structures of the Empire. Western-oriented Grand Viziers acting under Western powers carried out these reforms. These reforms had far-reaching consequences for the Ottoman Society, including a rise of a Western-looking, centralised, bureaucratic elite and a relative loss of the power of *ulema* – the religious authorities, which saw their monopoly over the legal and educational systems being gradually eroded. This very period is of particular importance because it started a painful cultural search and enchanted self-consciousness that in many ways can be said to still be present in Turkey. Starting with the *Tanzimat* reforms new attempts to define Ottoman identity prevailed under new pressures towards a renovation and a Westernisation. These reforms were challenging basic foundations in the society and produced a debate around cultural and national integrity, notions of order and disorder and conceptions of the Ottoman in relation to the foreign. They have relevance to the question of masculinity because challenging to Ottoman identity in many ways implied to contest the gender order and men's unquestioned power. These reforms created the very first beginning of a renegotiation and redefinition of power and equality. Based in criticism of the Ottoman social order indirectly the created a sphere for the first ambiguities about the male identity. As such these reforms prescribe themselves onto the contemporary society

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[1] Etymologically the name Istanbul derived from the Greek *stin poli*, which means 'to the city'. According to Turkish grammar all foreign words beginning with ST will get I ahead. In this way *stin poli* developed into ISTINPOLI that with time changed into ISTANBUL (Redhouse English Turkish Dictionary, 1987)

and constitute a kind of frame for male everyday practices. They evolve as more than nostalgic references because they challenged the very foundation of male identity and the hierarchical structure of power.

Transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic

Foreign countries like France and England have had strong interests in Turkey, economically, politically and strategically since the last decade of the 20th century. The allied played a major role in the establishment of the Turkish Republic especially in the period after the First World War. The Ottoman Empire was undermined both from the inside and from the outside. The European influence in Turkey and the ending of the First World War formed the basis of the occupation by the Western allied forces and Russia. The Ottoman Empire participated on the loosing side in the First World War. By the end of the war did France occupy parts of southeast Turkey, Russia took eastern parts and England occupied huge parts of north western Turkey. Greece invaded the west coast included the city Izmir. This was the political situation when intellectuals started to discuss different model for establishing a national state. The allied with England in the front, had occupied Istanbul and arrested many of the rebellions to the empire – the so-called Young Turks that had fought for a constitutional monarchy. The Sultan signed an agreement in Sèvre in 1920 that reduced Turkey to the north western corner of Anatolia. This agreement divided Turkey between Greece, Italy, France and England. In the same period had an officer with in the Ottoman Empire's army, Mustafa Kemal organised an army against the Ottomans. This army under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal defeated the French and the Italians and won the so-called Turkish Liberation War. With help from the new Soviet Union this army fought also Greece. The last sultan Mohammad VI was forced to flee the country. On November 29th 1923 founded Mustafa Kemal the new republic and took the name of *Atatürk* – the father of Turks (Tunçay, 1982).

One of the most important changes in the transition into a nation-state was the debate around 'women's questions'. This promoted three major political currents *Islamism*,

Ottomanism, and *Turkism*[2] to emerge. Essential values on gender understanding can be traced back to the discourse around 'women's question' during the *Tanzimat* period. The debate between these currents signalised what type of society that could be defined at the 'correct one'. Women's emancipation gained importance because it came to be a question of *medeniyet* – civilisation. The most influential movements were the *Turkist* movement argued that a civilised society must be founded along a European national-state model. The concept of civilisation - *medeniyet* - became an essential argument in the debate. It is important that the concept of civilisation continued to be a key element in Kemalism, and linked to the modernisation project of the republic.

The major changes in the Ottoman Empire started with the modernising reforms the *Tanzimat* period. From this period onwards there was a significant increase in attacks on the traditional Ottoman family system and the position of women (Kandiyoti 2000). However the rise of the Turkish nationalism that started with the *Jön Türk* – the Young Turks, and the *Turkist* movement with the second constitutional period in 1908, introduced a new term to the debate; *Türkçülugun Esaslari* – the principles of Turkism[3]. In the process of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire three major political currents emerged; *Islamism*, *Ottomanism* and *Turkism*. *Turkism* had placed a new emphasis on a cultural integrity based on 'nationhood' rather than faith. In the emerging period the discourse on women became a suitable object to voice disagreements with certain discriminating aspects of their society. The discourse between the *Ottomanist*, the *Islamist* and the *Nationalists* that emerged with the transition to the republic are in many ways still valid in Turkey. With the enforced political pressure on the democratisation process from EU the conflict between these three currents have been revitalised, and paradoxically certain Islamist feminist groups have gained increased support. In this way the social changes that emerged with the transition to the secular republic created tensions that still are valid in the process of defining family

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[2] The Islamists advocated a return to the literal application of Sharia and a pan-Islamic empire consolidated around the caliphate – that was the highest religious authority in Islam and that vested in the person of the Ottoman sultan. The Ottomanists strove to maintain the integrity of the Empire in its multiethnic form. Deniz Kandiyoti writes: *"However the rising tide of nationalism and secessionist movements in both the Christian and Muslim provinces was exposing the untenability of both positions"* (2000:104). The Turkist movement introduced the idea of the state based on the Turkish nation. This movement founder was Ziya Gökalp with his 'Principles of Turkism' that was later adopted by Atatürk.

[3] This book Ziya Gökalp's landmark. Ziya Gökalp is regarded as one of the central leaders in Turkish Nationalism or Turkism.

relations, men and women and sexual emancipation. Thus constructions of masculinity in contemporary Turkey are redefined and renegotiated follow traits back to the socio-historical tensions from the turn of the century.

The Turkish Republic

The new Turkish republic founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was a secular republic, and the reforms Atatürk put into life must be seen as one of the biggest revolutions in recent Turkish history. He abolished the sultanate and the caliphate and turned the basic state of law and authority completely upside down.

The *Kemalist* reforms were key elements in the civilising process that emerged. A short chronicle over some of the *Kemalist* reforms are illustrative to show the profound changes they caused regarding men's inherited authority.

In 1925 the only head gear allowed to wear was a hat – a western hat – and not the Ottoman fez that was the common head gear used by all men without any particular position within the empire[4].

In 1926 with the adopted the Swiss Civil Code polygamy was outlawed. With this law equal right to both partners to divorce and child custody rights to both parents was granted.

In 1928 the change of alphabet from the Arabic to the Latin was effectuated.

In 1932 was the First Turkish History congress held. This is essential because of its aim to rewrite the Turkish history, and Atatürk set up himself the Association for the Study of Turkish History. The Turkish Historical Synthesis traced back its origin to Central Asiatic beginnings when the Turkish peoples and the Chinese were to main actors on the scene of civilisation. All the later civilisations of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia were considered as links in the chain of Turkish civilisation[5].

In 1934 did women finally achieve full right to vote at all political elections (Aksin 2002).

This was the wider framework where the new republic redefined essential aspects of the cultural and historical foundation inherited from the Ottoman Empire.

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[4] Head gear was a main identification in the Ottoman Empire and showed besides your position, status and rang also your religious belonging.

[5] Compared to the relatively recent conversion of the Turks to Islam in the tenth century, this history could be traced back to 5000 BC.

The foundation of the new republic was based in the principles of *Kemalism*. The 6 principles of *Kemalism* were the ideological foundation for the Turkish republic and proclaimed by Atatürk himself. These principles were to modernise the country according to European standards and ideas. They were Republicanism, Nationalism, Revolutionism, Populism, Etatism and Laicism (Aksin 2002). Through *Kemalism* modernisation came to equal Westernisation.

Opposition to Kemalism as raison d'être

The nation building project of the Turkish History Foundation aimed to create coercion around the nation-state. This resulted in a numerous attempts at defining the nature of the collectivity called 'nation'. These were supposed to be common language and culture.

This ideology that was developed through the one-party period (1923–1946) until today cut deeply into the Turkish society. And the foremost defender was the armed forces. From the first free elections Turkey experienced in 1950 and on, the political and democratic development can be framed within the chronology of military interventions.

Turkey has experienced three military interventions, the first in 1960 and the last in 1980. In 1980 the army suspended all political activity, arrested more than 100.000 people and disbanded the National Grand Assembly. The main target was the political left; socialist, social democrats and trade unions. Until 1983 there was no elections, political parties were disbanded and new ones could not be formed, and all political organizations were closed down.

In 1983 the army allowed civil elections, but under military control only three parties where admitted to the elections. The election was won by a one of the conservative parties (ANAP) and the Turkish nationalist ideology regained its political importance. The 1980ties is signified by great economic liberalisation, and this weakened the political left considerably. Decrees limiting political freedom for leftist were approved. Until 1987 it was forbidden for everybody employed at universities included students to be a member of political parties.

From 1987 to 1991 the government embarked a gradual liberalisation of the political system. During these years a numbers of reforms concerning human rights where announced, but got no further than their announcement (Kinzer, 2000). In 1991 constitutional changes was made before the elections and a new anti-terrorism law was adopted that defined the concept of 'terrorism' very broadly. In this period were countless

trade unionists, lawyers, human rights activists, journalists and writers prosecuted on this basis.

There is not sensational because political opposition based on popular movements traditionally has been given little chance to develop – on the contrary there is a fundamental suspicions towards popular movement inherited from the Ottoman Empire. Political opposition in the second half of the 19th century was almost aimed at the absolute power of the sultan and in favour of a constitutional monarchy. A new constitution was adopted in 1876, in terms of which a representative parliament was established. The problem was that the opposition was a forum of different nationalists interests groups with hidden agendas i.e. national independence and separation from the Ottoman Empire, and the struggle for constitutional rights was a mere cause to promote their own agenda. During the reign of the last powerful sultan Abdühamit II (1876-1909) the constitutional regime was soon dissolved and the opposition was cruelly controlled in order to prevent the feared dissolution of the empire from within. But the opposition managed to survive and remained secret. It was organised with the aim to seize power by a coup d'état. This opposition was headed by the *Jön Türk* - Young Turks and in 1908 they reintroduced a constitutional regime and finally managed to dethrone the sultan in 1909 (Özdalga and Liljeström, 2002). But the wars that overwhelmed the region (Balkan wars 1912-13, First World War and the Turkish War of Independence) prevented the social movement to develop and cut deeply into the society. This created a fundamental suspicion that spilled over to the republican rules and maintained to a certain extent even after the introduction of parliamentary democracy after the Second World War.

Today the relationship between the state and the citizen is imperative not only for access to resources necessary for economical production, but also for the social identity. Definitions of and relations to the state are crucial components of male leftist identity, because it defines their male identity in negative terms. Looking at the male identity through a hegemonic masculinity perspective comprises how male identity is historically contextualised in tensions way back in time. These historical tensions are so to say imprinted in the male habitus, thus opposition to *Kemalism* seem to create a basis for new tensions and paradoxes between their political identity and their male habitus. Because the male habitus is embedded in a socialisation process over time, a political identity constituted at a certain time as a result of political conviction will create an inner revolt. In this way the leftist identity can be seen as an attempt to renegotiate a national male identity that paradoxically is a part of their habitus. Authoritarian and hierarchical patterns are

embedded in the *Kemalist* principles and as such they create a psychological or mental conflict within the political leftist opposition; they are struggling against authority and hierarchy but these patterns are also structuring their own leftist identity. One of the reasons for the antipathy and the aversion to the *Kemalist* principles might be found in their embeddedness in the male habitus. The *Kemalist* principles refer to behaviour aspects of public life more than private life. For leftists *Kemalist* principles have created a legitimate sphere for resistance and might have channelled the experienced tensions as a male member of the society. For example has the rite of male circumcision been secularised and appear as a Turkish rather than a Muslim tradition, and among leftist circumcision is as widespread as among the other population.

The principles of *Kemalism* have been modified to a certain extent as well as the opposition against them, but their general legacy still constitutes a basis to which people identify today. They create an either 'for' or 'against' attitude among the population, and today they still constitute the main axis of identity and self-representation. As such *Kemalism* works as a metaphor for the process of the social changes on the Turkish identity. In this way *Kemalism* is imposed in the male identity and opposition to *Kemalist* principles are not merely a political struggle, but constitutes an ambiguous tension because it contradicts a major part of the social identity as a man – as male identity embedded in mental structures that aim to reproduce versions of the very identity they are opposing to. Thus the socio-historical changes way back in time refers to contemporary tensions in the male identity, because the idealised version of masculinity that emerged with the republic also contained reproducing aspects of the Ottoman Empire.

The state and the military

The military is a very important institution in Turkey. The tradition of a strong military leads back to Atatürk that was a commander in the Ottoman army. Today the military sustains its influence through The National Security Council. This council has legal superiority to the parliament in the constitution, and is in the position to give propositions to the government[6]. They meet the parliament every month for an approval of

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[6] After the general election in 1996, when religious party *Refah* (Welfare Party) gained political power, the military displayed their power by silently rolling through the streets of a small Anatolian village with a *Refah* mayor, and February 1997 after the next meeting of the National Security Council they presented an edict to the government with clear references to diminish the political power of the *Refah* party.

government policy.

Close links between the state and organised crime has gained main headlines the last decade. Incidents linking mafia to the military - even to the former Minister of Interior affairs, have dominated the political debate since 1995 and are still ongoing. Many of these incidents could not be persuaded legally because all parliament members have immunity. In spite of the growing attention to political corruption the military as an institution and Military service is still regarded as on the essential components of male identity. The military represent the state and for many men it is the first encounter with the very important institution of the state (Sirman 1990). The army and by extension the state, is seen as provided a crucial experience necessary for the attainment of male identity. You enter as a boy and return as a man. The army is regarded both by the conscripts and the armed forces primarily as an institution of education. Conscripts are taught 'proper' action as well as the history of the Turkish nation and the role of Atatürk (Sirman 1990b) with 'proper' it is referred to 'a modern' attitude in contrast to the traditional/rural. The armed forces regard themselves as the provider of modernity. Mehmet Ali Birand's book *The Steeled Army* (1986) describes the education and training form in the army from the educators' point of view, and he writes: *"Conscripts receive the first lesson in modern living in the army* (1986:232). The army thus becomes the strict fatherly figure who has the well-being of the whole nation at heart. This aspect of the relation between stat state and the military was essential in the construction of the national identity. As such the military service ascribes aspect of the male habitus even among leftist. My data in the empirical analysis is not directly linked to experiences my informants had in the military service, but the military is essential because it constitutes a frame to understand inner tensions and ambiguities in the male habitus among leftist. Thus references to the significant link between the military and the state provide us with a kind of metaphor for an idealised version of masculinity. In this way the armed forced as an institution become imprinted in the common male habitus as a dimension to measure virility and manhood. Military service becomes the image of the unquestioned part of masculinity – or in Bourdieu's words *doxa*. The leftist were caught in an ambiguous position where essential rite-de-passage like the military service involved a kind of manhood testing that with the aim to confirm how hierarchical and authoritarian pattern are embedded in the male habitus. In this way military can be seen as a metaphor for these patterns in the Turkish society and thus creates a framework I analyse later. So in my analyses of experiences, tensions and ambiguities in leftist constructions of masculinity the military lies behind and enforce the male habitus.

As such it creates a kind of recoil to resistance against its nature based in authority and hierarchy. Thus military is an important back-cloth to understand the paradoxes intertwined in their male habitus.

The state, male identity and leftists

The state as the fatherly figure represents a symbol of self-representation and self-identification. Nükhet Sirman claims that 'representativeness' is a vital part of the male gender identity (1990b), because a man is through his position as the head or the representative of the household, defined as an economically independent individual. Relations between men are egalitarian because all men are by definitions equals, and dependence or subordination is deeply disliked. Marriage is the first step in the way to become a head of a household. The state is in the same structural position to the citizens as a father to his son. They are both 'men' and they both have the best for their 'children' in mind, but both are restrained by their responsibility to the nation, or the country - *Vatan* (Sirman 1990b). Because of this double relation military service is regarded as *vatan borcu* - a debt to the country. Through military service men achieve independence from the state because they become its extension. When they have finished military service they have altered into representatives of the state, and are 'true men'. The hierarchical and authoritarian patterns embedded in the male society can be visualised through these kinds of representation. By this I mean that being under the authority of someone always refers to a certain position and how they are represented. Thus authority and responsibility seems to be embedded characters of the male identity. As such the state has penetrated the everyday practices and experiences of men. Even if I don't directly explore how the state is related to and significant for the male identity my empirical analysis explores tensions and ambiguities embedded in masculinity constructions as an expression of an inner struggle embedded in habitus. The state is represented as symbol of authority and hierarchy imprinted in the male identity and by exploring a group of radical young men I aim to analyse certain aspects of the state's representativeness and significance on the ambiguous road to 'become a man'.

The debate around political corruption has gained a renewed power to the leftists' political struggle. The core of the leftist identity is penetrated by an opposition to *Kemalism* and its principles. This opposition have promoted common activities with certain Islamists in spite of their totally different political goals. All my informants were activists in different left wing organisations or illegal fractions and one had been a member

of a militant urban guerrilla movement. They defined themselves as political active because they spoke out their meaning and contributed to the public discourse. Turkey today is in the middle of a democratisation process. Large segments of the Turkish populations do not identify themselves with the state and state ideology, like in many South American countries with similar context. For leftist their political identity is their primary identity, the one they present themselves with and through which they identify themselves as different from other groups. Immanent in this political identity is the resistance against the state and the *Kemalist* ideology but this appears ambiguously linked to masculinity because of the force behind the male habitus embedded in historical context where leftist identity very much have reproduced instead of challenging an idealised version of masculinity. The economical liberalisation sustained through the 1980ties laid a solid ground for conservative forces and today the economical elite has substantial political influence. Being a leftist has a comprehensive meaning to their male identity and shapes their everyday life and activities, but the military service remains an unsolved paradox for leftist. Because of military's significance to alter men into representative adults thus embedded in the male habitus it is very little resistance against conscription. Still when I explore how ideas of sexuality and relations to women create a framework for a redefined and renegotiated masculinity, the structural force inherited from the nationalist discourse on social identity reproduced through the military, I explore how the male identity or constructions of masculinity refers to how the state is embedded in the male habitus. Since my data does not provide military experiences my analysis of habitus comprise an analysis of value assessments in the Turkish society. A main aspect of how military works through the male identity to reproduce an unambiguous understanding of men can be illustrated through how virility works as a symbol for dominance and authority. Thus military works as a metaphor to understand implicit tensions within an identity that attempt to resist against its very existence. I will explore how leftist challenge these authoritarian aspects of their habitus by analysing contradictions in their ideas of love and marriage and their relation to women and sexuality. My informants were involved in the feminist movement that created a sphere for alternative masculinities, but their engagement also created certain tensions especially when it conflicted with their male identity.

The feminist movement

Since women achieved the right to vote at all political elections in 1934 they have been supported and encouraged in their personal struggle, but gained little support to

struggle for the feminist movement as a popular movement. This kind of struggle acknowledges a different group identity and has a different character.

In the political struggle before 1980 women's political contribution was to help their husbands to get voted into to politics. The feminist movement in 1980-90ties was an important watershed and after the 1990ties a variety of social organisation working for women's rights has emerged, among these are different religious women's groups, women supporting Atatürk's principles and the political feminist movement. I will here only try to draw the main lines the development in the political feminist movement because it has a direct reference to this dissertation.

In spite of the families heavy influence on whether a women would enter political struggle or not, some women have resisted their families and entered different social feminist groups. The feminist movement after the 1990ties can be divided in two main periods (Berktay, 1993). The first period existed of women supported by their political colleagues and party instead of their families. To be able to receive the necessary respect in a male dominated society these usually were aged over 45 and married. They received little support from their male colleagues and were often politically excluded, they were not taken serious or literary teased, and they were often sexual harassed. Because of this they tried not to be special, they would dress in a dark suit, and they don't use make-up or jewelleries (Berktay 1993). They would suppress their femininity to gain an egalitarian status to men.

The second period was influenced by younger women, more openly challenging sexuality and the suppressive elements in Turkey as a patriarchal and authoritarian society. They suggested that the ideology of the sexual unavailable women contributed to reproduce the denied female sexuality and concealed men's continued control over women's sexuality.

These two periods reveals contradictory aspects on women's sexuality and can still be found among the feminist movement represented by their different supporters. The first period convey a discourse of sexuality that required that for politically active women to be respected on a similar level as male comrades, they had to be asexual, while in the latter period feminists were challenging this very conceptualisation of women and sexuality. The political struggle for women's rights, equality of status and women's control over female sexuality are still prime questions in the contemporary political discourse, and after a very long and difficult process there was enough political power to challenge the legal foundation for male hegemony.

With the rise of the feminist movement during the late 1980ties, feminist put legal questions on the public agenda. After their various campaigns they had their first legal achievement in 1990; the change of the article in the Civil Code that obligated spousal consent to the employment of women. Later in the same year the article that provided a reduced sentence for the rapist if the woman was proved to be a prostitute, was annulled. In 1995 the first – and still the only – women's shelter was established. And in 1997 women were granted the right to keep their maiden name along with the name of their spouse.

Four years after the military intervention in 1980, a reform of the legal foundations for the oppression of women – the Turkish Civil Code by 1926 became a public debate enforced by the feminist movement. Since this time several women groups have worked on this and submitted a series of petitions to the National Assembly. However not until 1994 a public commission was formed to prepare a new draft of the Civil Code. In the same year there was an international letter and fax campaign demanding full equality for women in the Civil Code. This campaign was joined by hundreds of NGO's all over the world. The draft was adjusted through work done on several international women's conferences and presented for the National Assembly 1998. Because of the general elections in 1999 a new commission had to be formed and they finalised the draft and prepared a law governing its enforcement. This was finally presented the National Assembly again in 1999. That Turkey officially was named as a candidate for EU accession in December 1999 might have accelerated the process of accepting this law, but the primary force came from different women's organisations.

The fall of the man – the new Civil Code

The old Civil Code in Turkey that was approved in 1926 was adopted almost un-changed from Switzerland. This Code represented an essential alternative moral to the traditional moral codex inherited from the Ottoman Empire. In matters relating to marriage, divorce, custody of children, legal testimony and inheritance the - new and progressive at the time - Civil Code gave equal right to women (WWHR, 2001). This was revolutionary and regarded as one of most important victories in modern Turkish history.

Through contemporary eyes this Civil Code is experienced quite different. Correctly it gave rights to women equal to men as humans – they were to be equal to men in a testimony were earlier two woman equalled one man, and they were entitled to inherit and to take care of their own children – were earlier children belonged to the man. With this new Code women got the right to take the husbands name and the family was seen as a

union between the married couples. But as revolutionary it might have been at the time, looking back today it was also a product of the time. The code stipulated that the husband is the head of the family, he represents the union and wife and children carry his family name. He was suppose to choose family residence and could prohibit his wife from seeking employment if he believed it would hinder her responsibilities at home. In other words this Civil Code solidly fastened the traditional gender order and the patrilocal family was constituted and re-established. This civil Code remained entirely untouched for decades.

In 2000 a political proposition to change this Civil Code was put forward in the parliament - maybe as a result of the political pressure EU had been executing towards Turkey in the last years. It took a long time before this proposition was approved because there was strong political resistance from the conservatives, the ultra nationalist and other parties on the political right. The proposition was experienced as a threat to men's legal position within the family and the formalized power relation men had been advantaging from since 1926. But after a long fight and increased political pressure from EU the new proposition was approved on the 21. November 2001, but not enforced until January 1, 2002.

The present Civil Code was a little revolution and the husband is no longer legally head of the family. Legally marriage is constituted between equal partners and both partners can represent the union. The wife is free to seek employment as she likes and both husband and wife are responsible regarding the family residence. With marriage the wife still has to take the husbands family name, but she can apply to keep her maiden name in addition. These structural changes were designated to make both parts of the union equal but the law proposition was also meant to be a symbol of political will to influence traditional attitudes towards women.

The moral codex represented by the Civil Code from 1926 is institutionalised in society and not easily changed. Presumably it will take a long time before this is institutionalised in whole Turkey, but these are important political signals regarding patriarchy and the domination over women that men as a group have been advantaging from. The rise of the new strong feminist movement in the 1980-90ties and its success in revising several articles in the Civil Code discriminating women. Only time will show if these changes will have a profound effect and become widespread as changed attitudinal behaviour.

Summarising remarks

With the reforms of the *Tanzimat* period a crisis in the Ottoman culture and the Ottoman family emerged. More precisely the traditional Ottoman family based on deference to the *pater familias* and seniority was challenged. The arranged marriage, segregation between the sexes was contested through different reforms that challenged the foundation of the Ottoman identity. This had substantial impacts for the definition of masculinity, and paradoxically engagement in women's questions became a metaphor for development and modernism. Paradoxically enough men were the most outspoken critics of the Ottoman family system and the most enthusiastic advocates for romantic love (Duben and Behar, 1991). By the turn of the century an Anatolian-based, predominantly Turkish nationalist discourse was becoming an established fact. Within this current the principle stirrings of feminism in Turkey occurred and left their mark on all subsequent treatments of women's questions. The specific form and content of women's questions that emerged with the republic is directly traceable to the birth and development of Turkish nationalism. In the construction of a 'Turkish national history', the national identity itself was embedded in a sexual egalitarianist discourse. By this I mean that the importance of correct female behaviour became a symbol of the substantial reforms that had altered the foundation of the Ottoman identity.

In spite of the new emphasis on cultural integrity based on 'nationhood' instead of faith alone, there seemed to be certain persistent components in the new discourse on women's questions and sexuality. That component seemed to be the Islamic association between appropriate female behaviour and cultural integrity. This made the search for moral legitimate alternatives extremely difficult.

The leftist discourse on women's questions and sexuality reproduced the nationalist discourse in many ways, and the asexual women became the socialist answer to appropriate female conduct. Economical liberalisation and demographical change have provoked changes in the family structure even further since the 1980ties. With the fall of communism in 1989 the Turkish feminist movement gained ground and importance and the further they challenged women's sexuality the further they seemed to provoke a theoretical 'crisis' in hegemonic masculinity. The legal foundation of the hegemonic masculinity culminated with the change of the Civil Code in 2000, but its cultural legacy still remains.

The process of historical and social change has been increased with urbanisation and economical pressure the last decades. This again has encouraged new ways of

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understanding gender and opened up for ambiguous and contradictory constructions of masculinity. These socio-historical backgrounds I have presented constitute references to the contemporary tensions of being a man. The male habitus will be analysed through incorporated and contextualised value assessments and their historical references, because I suggest that the tensions experienced for leftist masculinity constructions are embedded in their male habitus. As such my analysis of how ideas of sex, love and marriage intermingle with ideas of male identity I aim to illustrate changes and continuities with the constructions of masculinity and how this frame the tensions they experience. This historical framework carry ingredients embedded in the contemporary life-situation of leftist, and as such history are imprinted in their habitus and thus evolve as ambiguous when contested or challenged.

3. THEORETICAL

FRAMEWORK

Love and sexuality

> Sexuality is a terrain of fundamental political struggle and also a medium of emancipation, just as the sexual radicals claimed.
>
> Giddens (1992:181)

In opposition to earlier when love implied a secure promise of marriage and family today love has become an arena to explore self-identity. The search for 'the deeper meaning of life' has entered the love-relation and love has become the contemporary society's new religion (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim suggest that a kind of social subjectivity has grown up in which private and political issues are intermingled and enlarged. They claim that:

> "In this sense individualisation does not mean individuation, but is a hybrid of consumer consciousness and self-confidence" (1995:42).

Largely driven by social changes, individuals are unwillingly are entering a sensitive and investigative phase. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim suggest that individuals want to experience new ways of living merely to challenge the dominance of roles; they want to express themselves freely and give in to impulses. These kinds of experiences are the starting point of a new ethics based on 'ones duty to oneself' aiming to integrate the individual with the social in a new way. In the undermining of traditions and the fact that the significance of religion is evading, our lives are formed after the need to find out who we are. Love fills this gap is given the same status as truth. Thus the individuals choice of 'life-style' or the question of how do I want to live my life, implies a choice of how to manage and shape intimacy. Love-relations in themselves become an arena where the individual can 'realise' itself and achieve authentic feelings and experience the 'truth'

(Giddens 1992). This transformation of intimacy has produced what Giddens calls the 'pure relationship'. A 'pure relationship' refers to:

> "a situation where a social relation is entered for its own sake, for what can be derived by each person from a sustained association with another; and which is continued only in so far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfaction for each individual to stay within it" (1992:58).

A crucial element implicit in the pure relationship is women's claim of sexuality and sexual emancipation. Giddens suggests that sexuality today is freed form the needs of reproduction and he calls this *plastic sexuality*. *Plastic sexuality* is decentred sexuality, freed from reproduction. It can be constructed as one of the characteristics of personality and thus immanent in the self, at the same time as it frees sexuality from the egotistical importance of male sexual experience. Within the late-modernity sexuality according to Giddens has become a terrain of fundamental political struggle and also a remedy of emancipation. Emancipation suggests autonomy of action in the context of the generalisation of plastic sexuality. Giddens claims that:

> "Sexuality (…) is effectively understood in a procedural way, as the possibility of the *radical democratisation* of the personal" (ibid:182).

In this way Giddens emphasises the emancipating element of sexuality and how sexuality both constitutes but also challenges the male personality. Through this perspective I aim to analyse ambiguities in leftists' masculinity constructions. Plastic sexuality understood as sexuality freed from reproduction appears to me as a useful concepts to analyse the Turkish context through. But when sexuality in understood in marriage and family it evolves more complex and deferred understandings that reconnects it to reproduction emerge. The specific historical context rooted in Islam's understanding of sexuality has played a significant meaning for the sexual emancipation of women in Turkey. Within the nationalist discourse that have been predominant since the establishment of the republic, the understanding of sexuality has been linked to a certain form for puritanism. This puritanism was mobilised as a symbolic shield and women's sexuality in the public sphere could only appeared in a covert form in a Freudian perspective, as a denied element of life. Giddens' plastic sexuality gained importance in Turkey together with the strengthened feminist movement late in the 1990ties but sexual emancipation has been troubled by its immanent discourse of women's correct behaviour. In Turkey sexual emancipation was also a struggle for emancipation from authority and an exploitative social system. Thus Giddens concept of plastic sexuality seems to be a

convenient tool to analyse sexual emancipation and masculinity constructions among leftist in Turkey. Difficulties leftist meet in their struggle for sexual emancipation seemed to be embedded in their male identity as incorporated structures of this economical system.

Women's sexual emancipation in Turkey was followed by an attempt to free men from the same structures. The essence of plastic sexuality freed from reproduction is thus a guiding concept to analyse ambiguities in leftists' political struggle for sexual emancipation. Giddens reference to sexuality as a terrain for political struggle seems to frame the situation in Istanbul quite good, and I will analyse sexuality as their main focus of resistance against authority and repression.

The leftist struggle for sexual emancipation seemed to be troubled by the unquestioned aspects of social structure or *doxa* as Bourdieu (1995) suggests. In Turkey a significant element of *doxa* was how virility reproduced through the military symbolised male dominance. Giddens' concept of plastic sexuality together with Bourdieu's concept of habitus constitutes my main framework to analyse ambiguities and tensions among and within leftists' sexual emancipation. The specific historical references based in perceiving women as the bearer of chaos demanded controlled male behaviour to be identified as a 'civilised person' and alternatives were perceived as illegitimate or uncivilised. The socialist alternative thus reproduced the authoritarian and patriarchal patterns in the Turkish society. The relation between habitus as imprinted in the male identity and plastic sexuality as a societal change emerged as a conflict where habitus represented the male tradition and plastic sexuality symbolised their struggle for sexual emancipation. The thought that both elements are working parallel frames tensions in the leftists' masculinity constructions.

Another sociologist who analysis love and relationships, is Zygmunt Baumann in his book: *Liquid Love* (2003). He claims that love carries an ambiguous promise of eternal happiness because of its implicit threat of destruction or worry. His argues that instead of a raising standard to love, standards have been lowered, and *'as a result the set of experiences referred to by the word love has expanded enormously"* (2003:5). Love has become a kind of commodity that easily can be changed as far as it does not modify the promise of eternal happiness. According to Baumann in a liquid modern society relations are 'mixed blessings' – they will never bring happiness alone, but always appear together with its sibling; despair. Giddens on the contrary analysis of the pure relationship is founded in the thought that the relationship will last only as long as the individual is satisfied with it. Implicit in this perspective there seems to be an optimism revealing that

this type of relation will bring happiness. Baumann is not as optimistic as Giddens and claims that liquid love paradoxically will bring both loneliness and misery because:

> "…humans attention tends nowadays to be focused on the satisfaction that relationships are hoped to brings precisely because somehow they have not been found fully and truly satisfactory; and if they do satisfy, the price of the satisfaction they bring has often been found to be excessive and unacceptable" (ibid:ix).

The questions of intimacy and happiness are in the Turkish context ambiguously linked to love and marriage. In many ways Baumann's prophecy is illustrative for how leftist related to women and marriage. The promise of eternal happiness embedded in the love in marriage constituted merely one context of leftist everyday life, while the search for happiness and autonomy in the name of passion evolved as much more significant. Both Baumann and Giddens analysis of love and relationship and their emphasis on happiness or satisfaction – or the lack of the same – is guiding to analyse leftists struggle for autonomy and sexual emancipation. Giddens analysis of sexuality is especially illuminating to analyse resistance. Baumann suggests that the ambiguities immanent in love are:

> "Love is about adding to the world – each addition being the living trace of the loving self; in love, the self is, bit by bit transplanted to the world. The loving self expands through giving itself away to the loved object. Love is about self's survival-through-self's-alterity" (2003:9).

According to Baumann love requires sacrifice and this element is crucial to understand leftists' ambiguous relation to women and marriage. According to Giddens and Baumann, in the late modern society marriage, love and sexuality are fundamental ambiguous (Giddens 1992, Baumann 2003). Paradoxically love is thought to give meaning and security, but at the same time the relationship is continued only as far as it is satisfactory for the individual. The leftist in Istanbul seemed to be caught in this ambivalence; they seemed to search affirmation in the flirt with women as they simultaneously expected to find the 'truth' in marriage. In both cases love seemed to bring a promise of happiness and satisfaction. Their relations to women emerged as an arena where they searched to 'realise themselves' in a search for the truth. The 'truth' that they replaced the importance of tradition in previous societies. Since Atatürk sat the identity at loose from its cultural roots there has been different efforts to create new 'Turkish traditions', but since the leftists opposed both to the Turkish ideology and to the revitalised trend of Islamism they were caught in an particular socio-historical space with substantial

influence of European thoughts. They seemed to be heavily influenced by different European sexual politics and thus a search for sexual emancipation and love seemed to fill this vacuum. Thus the leftist seemed to be balancing on an edge between tradition and self-realisation as it presents itself through individualisation in the modern society.

The tensions in leftist everyday practices were explicit in their relation to how marriage paradoxically seemed to threaten their freedom and thus their male subjectivity. Their habitus seemed to be penetrated by contradictory ideas of freedom and domestication, and I will try to analyse how love and sexuality emerged as a framework for their masculinity constructions.

Masculinity – masculinities?

My point of departure is social constructivism. People themselves are active in constructing the cultural understanding of gender. Social constructivism represents a philosophical orientation where reality is given meaning through concepts, categories and interpretations made by people. Thus universal concepts loose their meaning because they are per definition a social construction. The essence within social constructivism within sociology has been a focus on how the subjects experience social structure, and not these social structures objective reality or existence (Sosiologisk Leksikon, 1997). Approaching constructions of masculinity through a social constructivist perspective implies that we all contribute to shape the cultural ideas of gender. The notion masculinity is therefore a historical and variable notion constructed and constituted in the cultural and historical context.

But traditionally men are associated with the public sphere, placed outside of re-production in production. In the book *‘Making sex – body and gender from Greeks to Freud’* Thomas Laqueur scrutinizes how the contemporary understanding for gender emerged (1990). He explores how men since ancient times have been associated with energy and variable structures in opposition to women. In this book he thoroughly goes through how a so-called <u>two-sex model</u> occurred in the 18th century and how this became universal. Before the two-sex-model emerged men and women where understood according to their similarities, but with to the two-sex model their <u>differences</u> based upon biological differences was presented as natural. His study illustrates how gender today commonly is understood according to an imaginary complimentary difference between men and women. The two-sex model is still influential and constitutes a major force in the

way gender is perceived in Turkey. Differences between men and women are perceived as embedded in two separate spheres. Biological differences between men and women in Turkey often occur as explanations to different values, and determine the individual identity to a large extent. In general there seems to be little understanding for gender ambiguities and gender differences are sustained by a number of rites such as male circumcision.

Through the last decades there has been an increased focus on men and men's identity within gender studies. I will in this chapter depart from the concept 'masculinity' in an attempt to understand the process of how a certain group of men 'do masculinity' and thus become 'men'. First I aim to outline the tradition around masculinity studies to create a theoretical toolbox for my analysis. The particularity about the masculinity in Turkey is how it is constituted in the juncture between Eastern Muslim -and Western Christian cultural contexts. Historically, Turkey has always been a part of both the west and the east not only through its geographical location on the brink of Europe, but also through its cultural, economical and political currents. As such Turkey emerges as different from other Muslim countries even tough 90 % of its population is Muslim. Increased economical pressure, urbanisation, demographical changes together with a rapid increase in population during the last decades have created new tensions for masculinity constructions. The feminist movement in Turkey represent an alternative to fixed gender understandings but simultaneously they have created men as their Other. The data of this study is based on a fieldwork among leftist closely related to the feminist movement and this relation seemed to be contradictory and ambiguous for their masculinity constructions. This paradox caught my interest and has shaped by point of departure in this dissertation. Can leftists' ambiguous relation to the feminist movement and sexual emancipation be traced back to contradictions, paradoxes or negotiations in their masculinity?

Within academic research today there is a widespread understanding that there exists no universal or fundamental form of masculinity. Masculinity is ambiguous and fluid, depending on local contexts. Thus there seems to be many different ways to construct the 'masculine'. Robert W. Connell has been one of the main actors in the field especially with his definition of hegemonic masculinity.

In his book *Masculinities* (1995) Connell explores the power relation between men as well as between men and women through his typology of different types of masculinities. These are; 'hegemonic', 'subordinated', 'complicit' and 'marginalised' (1994). There is not 'One' masculinity – not a unity of masculinity, but multiple

masculinities. Implicit in his theory of hegemonic masculinity Connell focuses on masculinity as a process that implies tension and ambiguity. This process is constructed in the juncture of a multitude of dimensions such as biological sex, ethnicity and class belongings. To reveal the power relation embedded in gender configurations Connell underlines the importance of hegemonic masculinity that he defines as:

> "Hegemonic masculinity" is not a fixed character type, always and everywhere the same. It is rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable" (1995:76).

He further stresses that:

> "I emphasise that terms such as 'hegemonic masculinity' and 'marginalised masculinities' name not fixed character types but configurations of practice generated in particular situations in a changing structure of relationships" (1995:81).

In his latest book *Gender* (2002) Connell confirms that the key for gender understanding is to move from a focus on difference to a focus on <u>relations</u>:

> "Gender is, above all, a matter of the social relations within individuals and groups act" (2002:9).

He continues:

> "This allows a definition of gender that escapes the paradoxes of 'difference'. Gender is the structure of social relations that centres on the reproductive arena, and is the set of practices (governed by this structure) that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social practices. (…) This definition has important consequences. Among them: Gender patterns may differ strikingly from one cultural context to another, but are still 'gender'. Gender arrangements are reproduced socially (…) by the power of structures to constrain individual action, so they often appear unchanging. Yet gender arrangements are in fact always changing, as human practice, creates new situations and as structures develop crises tendencies" (2002:10)

Connell defines gender as: *"the structure of social relations that centres on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices (governed) by this structure) that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes"* (2002:10). Masculinities in Connell's terminology must be understood as ideal-types, and his implicit understanding of agency can be linked to the debate of subjectivity as an active and changing notion. Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity opens up for the possibility to explore subordinate masculinities and certain ways men experience to be stigmatised or marginalised. In Europe there has been a focus on men stigmatised for their sexual orientation – like the gay movements, but in Turkey westernisation and civilisation

synonymous with modernisation gained the central position. The modernisation of the Ottoman society has mainly been explores as a 'crisis' in the Ottoman family and there has been little attention to the fact that this modernisation implied changes in masculinity. The different reforms after the Turkish republic have produced a variety of masculinity constructions.

In general Turkish men get advantages of their authority but paradoxically leftists manifested themselves in the feminist discourse of women's sexuality and patriarchy. They were speaking from a subordinated position and their tone was loud or full of disgust. Their main accusation was that they too were victims of the gendered structuring in society that forcefully developed and reproduced the hegemonic masculinity. Resistance against hegemonic masculinity also involved positioning in relation to hegemonic masculinity. Using the notion 'hegemonic masculinity' in a multi-ethnic context like Turkey requires a recognition of many coexisting hegemonic masculinities, where each context produce its own hegemony and where these contexts are parallel and not mutually excluding.

I aim in this dissertation to explore how leftist constructions of masculinity are linked to particular social contexts, and these contexts' enduring and changing patterns. The hegemony of the armed forces as an institution is deeply embedded in masculinity constructions and intertwined with the Turkish identity. According to Connell's definition there will exist a number of different masculinities in a society, but they can all be related to the idealised version inherent in the hegemonic version. In Turkey this can be illustrated through how different dimensions of the Turkish nationalist ideology are reproduced by both men and women in Turkey through their everyday practices.

Connell follows the pioneering French feminist Simone de Beauvoir's classical statement: *'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman'* (2002:4). And in spite of the difference in women's position the essence of the principle can also be true for men; *'one is not born masculine, but acquires and enacts masculinity, and so becomes a man'* (2002:4). So we cannot think of masculinity or manhood as fixed by nature, but we should not either think of them as purely imposed by social norms or pressures from authorities. Connell claims that by the way we conduct ourselves in everyday life we construct our masculinity and either as a claim of a place in the gender order or as a respond to the place we have been given. Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity depicts a rather conform and universal form of hegemonic masculinity and does not seem to open up for inner contradictions and a variety of masculinity practices or arrangements. It might be difficult to identify 'one' hegemonic masculinity, but also because of the increased pressure on the

male role in general as Susan Faludi explores in her book (1999) there are reasons to believe that several hegemonic masculinities will coexist. Masculinity constructions in a sub-cultural context in Istanbul are also a product of the Turkish society. Exploring masculinity in Turkey must be related to how individual identity is constructed in a complex interaction between historical, sub-cultural -and individual aspects. Individual identity in Turkey is developed in the juncture of the family, kinship and the peer-group (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2002). The fact that the surrounding contexts are influential for the personal identity is also one of the themes in Bourdieu's notion of habitus. Leftist's masculinity constructions also seemed to form a kind of confusion of the power behind the hierarchy. I am aware of the danger of oversimplifying the context, but still I would suggest that female resistance to the patriarchal and authoritarian patterns occurred more uncomplicated than male resistance, because men simultaneously was socialised within this very system. Still I aim to analyse how their contradictory constructions of masculinity challenge the very legitimacy of hierarchy and whether it create chaos or disorder with authority. As such I will analyse how leftist question the very foundation of this authority embedded in their male identity as well as in the Turkish society.

Cornwall and Lindisfarne criticise the hegemonic masculinity paradigm and claim that different contexts produce different hegemonic masculinities. Talking about 'a hegemonic masculinity' might refer to stereotypes of masculinities and does not open for an analysis of the complex and variant constructions of masculinity (1994). I agree with Cornwall and Lindisfarne saying that different masculinity constructions occur as more complex than what seems to be immanent in the idea of hegemonic masculinity. They address the possibility of many coexisting hegemonic masculinities. They claim: *"Rather, in different contexts, different hegemonic masculinities are imposed by emphasising certain attributes, such as physical power or emotionality, over others. And, of course, different hegemonic masculinities produce different subordinate variants: as we know form the feminist concern with women's 'invisibility', powerlessness in one arena does not prelude having considerable influence elsewhere"* (1994:20).

In an attempt to transfer the above complexity to Turkey the hierarchical structuring of men and women certainly will reproduce particular masculinities and femininities valid in specific contexts, but these are neither permanent nor exclusive. These contain a complex ambiguity like the case of leftists that are both attracted to, but also resent the hegemonic masculinity. Still within the leftist tradition there seemed to have developed a particular internal hegemonic masculinity that again was challenged by the group of leftist

I spoke to. My interest in this dissertation is to explore these coexisting hegemonic versions of masculinity, in constructions of masculinity among a particular group of leftist in a personal and political relation with feminism. But the idea of hegemonic masculinity might illustrate how different masculinity configurations are forced by the surrounding society's values. Either 'one' or several masculinities, it raises a question of whether hegemonic masculinity marginalises groups without disturbing or confronting the hegemony. I would like to raise the question of whether leftists' masculinity constructions can be defined within the hegemonic model. This is the basic thought that shapes my arguments. In my empirical analysis I aim to explore ambiguities and paradoxes and the question whether the particular masculinities among leftist confuse and complicate the essential meaning behind 'how to do masculinity' in the hegemonic masculinity paradigm. Thus the reading key to this dissertation is supposed to be the question of how leftists' constructions of masculinity stimulate the system of understanding and challenge its various key elements. In leftists' ambiguous masculinity constructions they seem to complicate the hierarchical order immanent in the hegemonic system and obscure its possibilities to marginalise and subordinate. Thus leftist' male identity or its variety of expression and their legitimacy challenge the authority of patriarchy.

Masculinity and patriarchy

One of the main aspects in much feminist literature is domination and patriarchy. Through different expressions of feminism in the Western world in the 1960-70ties the fact that women where controlled and objectified by men was made visible. Within feminist theories the notion of patriarchy refers to an asymmetrical relation between men and women related to the organising of production.

Regarding Turkey as geographically situated within the so-called 'seat of patriarchy' notions of authority and hierarchy needs a comment. According to Dorothy Smith patriarchy means the gendered system that historically surrounds us – including the determinants for what kind of man you are. In her terminology gender becomes historicised and positioned (Widerberg, 1996). In my analysis of the Turkish society I focus on patriarchy as a *relational gender system* instead of focusing on it as a-symmetrical power execution. Men as women cannot be said to be free to choose their situation. Men's everyday life, their masculinity construction is also a product of the gendered production and reproduction fitted into the bigger system.

The notion of patriarchy has more than once been disputed in feminist literature as underestimating the agency of women seeing them as dominated and passive. The notion patriarchy often implies an ambition *"to theorise male dominance as a system process in society level"* (Ellingsæter 1999:151). In feminist theories patriarchy thus refers to a systematic execution of power by men over women. As such this indicates a specific asymmetrical relation between men and women. And the notion patriarchy has also within the studies of masculinity been criticised of only referring to one dimension of power – without recognising the complexity immanent in different power relations. But regarding patriarchy as a relational system, instead of focusing on the asymmetrical relations between men and women, opens up for an understanding of how men, as well as women can be disfavoured.

Hegemony and masculinities

Through Connell's notion we are given a tool to understand masculinity from a multitude of values and relations intertwined in an internal power relation immanent in the notion <u>hegemony</u>. Hegemony is etymologically derived from Greek: *hEgemonia,* from *hEgemOn* leader, from *hEgeisthai* to lead, and means**:** *'preponderant influence or authority over others'* (Merriam –Webster English online dictionary, http://www.m-w.com/). The notion is popularly used and a short look in different dictionaries does not clarify the understanding any further.

According to the Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary hegemony is defined as; *"hegemony, noun [U] FORMAL (especially of countries) the position of being the strongest and most powerful and therefore able to control others: The three nations competed for regional hegemony"*. And according to Oxford English Dictionary it is used as; *"Leadership, predominance, preponderance; esp. the leadership or predominant authority of one state of a confederacy or union over the others: originally used in reference to the states of ancient Greece, whence transferred to the German states, and in other modern applications"* (Oxford English Dictionary online, http://dictionary.oed.com/)*. As we can see they all refer to leadership or the authority of a state. Hegemony is a 'kind of' social power that determines a society's morality, ideology and intellectual power.

Marie Nordberg criticises Connell's adoption of Gramsci's hegemony in the of notion hegemonic masculinities (2000). Gramsci uses the notion to analyse class-formation and how the development of ideologies establish unity and stability in society (Femia 1981, in Nordberg 2000). Gramsci distanced himself from the Marxist use and transformed

the notion of hegemony to include a focus on social relations. This transformation alters the notion into a more comprehensive concept with certain similarities to Foucault's notion of power. Gramsci's notion of hegemony aims to reveal how everyday-practice and routine becomes unquestioned as a result of the structural force behind intellectuals and institutions. As such hegemony expresses an ideology. In this understanding of hegemony there seems to similarities to Bourdieu's notion of *doxa* – that also aim to present the 'given' or the unquestioned ideas in society sustained through the system.

Gramsci's use of the notion hegemony is not solely bound to 'power from above' but can evolve from grassroots movements. As such it aims to explain how revolutionary praxis' can bring together social heterogeneity and create unity. But what happens when the notion it is relocated in other arenas than its original?

Connell focus on how mobility, struggle for domination, and social relations influence and define gender. According to him hegemonic masculinity is constantly present in the making of an individual gender identity.

Through his use of patriarchy inherent in hegemonic masculinities hegemony is reproduced by:

> "…the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (…) the dominant position of men and subordination of women" (1995:77).

Here Connell refers to the notion of patriarchy as an unquestioned, given power-structure. The notion of patriarchy easily becomes a-historic and static and as such looses the notion of individuals as active agents. The notion of patriarchy implies a danger of focusing on the asymmetrical power relation between men and women instead of patriarchy as a relational system where men also can be 'victims'. Because of this it is essential that studies of masculinity related to the debate of hegemony and patriarchy. The feminist movement that emerged in Turkey in the late 1980ties and 1990ties challenged men's unquestioned authority and domination. The national discourse of gender in Turkey has been influenced by Western feminist literature, but did not gained the same ground as in Europe. The Turkish state has left nearly all responsibility for social support and solidarity to the family. According to Esping-Andersen's analysis of different welfare systems, the Turkish society can be categorised along with Italy and Spain as a familistic variant of the conservative model (Erder, 2002). The characteristic about this model is the fact that family and other forms of voluntary support plays a greater role than the state in supplying welfare services. In a family-oriented conservative society, household and

kinship is overloaded with responsibilities (Erder, 2002). This creates structural inequalities for women because of their supposed role within the family. But there is less attention to how this model also creates structural inequalities for men, especially groups of men with a deviant identity such as the leftist group I met in Istanbul.

Habitus and masculinity

As we have seen from above Connell define both structural influences as well as private agency into the concept hegemonic masculinities, and provides a way to understand men as gender without categorising them as the symbolic carriers of patriarchy. The notion 'patriarchy' implies a system of authority and hierarchical patterns embedded in the male habitus. Constructions of masculinity among leftists emerge in a complex mixture of *complicity*, *resistance* and *hegemonic masculinity*, and I would like to use Pierre Bourdieu's notion of habitus to reveal how domination occurs ambiguous and creates tensions among leftist.

While Connell explores the immanence of the power relation between men, Bourdieu explores men's 'inner power' or habitus and how and how these mental structures reproduce particular masculinities. Habitus shows how experience embedded in the body, is a result of a socialisation process over time that unquestioned incorporates the objective social structures that develop as mental structures (1995). By this Bourdieu means that widespread values in society become embedded in the body and through their unquestioned embeddedness they reproduce the very same values.

Bourdieu describes how social differences are re-produced through *habitus* as a practice that verifies certain life-styles:

> "The habitus is both the generative principle of objectively classifiable judgments
> and the system of classification of these practices. It is in the relationship between
> the two capacities, which define habitus (…) that the represented social world i.e. the
> space of life-styles, is constituted". (1994:405)

Habitus is essential because it illustrates how the authoritarian and hierarchical patterns embedded in the Turkish society are absorbed in the male identity. Thus they appear as a reproduction of persistent male arrangements within the gendered structure. In my empirical analysis I aim to explore how the male habitus creates ambiguities by exploring male solidarity and the significance of male friends-of-heart. In the Turkish

context habitus as imprinted mental structures internalised over time, illustrate the contradictory and paradoxical component of their resistance. Their male habitus seemed to trigger a disorder in their resistance and contribute to an unwillingly reproduction of hegemonic masculinity. Thus it can be analysed as the opposite of their resistance working to reproduce fixed and unambiguous gender roles. More precisely I analyse how the male habitus preserved male values as responsibility, civilisation and male friendships. I aim to examine the solidarity between men as a sphere for the ideas of the free, autonomous man immanent in the male identity. Further their paradoxical relation to sexuality and women is illuminated by analysing how habitus reproduced, internalised and universalised a certain historical context. Leftists' relations to love seemed to be constituted in the tension between their grand-fathers life in the coffee shop and their engagement with women's questions through feminism. I aim to analyse how their male habitus urged for the uncommitted love and how this generated contradictions when there were no legitimate alternatives to marriage.

In his book *The Masculine Dominance* Bourdieu explores the Algerian tribe of Kabylia where virility seemed to be essential to the male identity (1999). Virility indicates the physical expression of male dominance and characterises a common male habitus rather than its individual expression. Virility must be seen in relation to the wider society and how men reproduce authority over women and their sexuality. Bourdieu reveals how the male habitus is sustained over time and embedded in everyday practices and as such it serves as an appropriate concept to analyse the multifaceted resistance to the cultural available male role among leftist in Istanbul. It is especially convenient as a theoretical concept to analyse the experienced ambiguities in leftists' resistance.

Regional studies of masculinity

Several empirical studies of masculinity and male identity have been executed over the last decade, but here I will only refer to those of regional interest. Several studies and different ethnographical literature of the Mediterranean and the Middle East in spite of their different religious foundations, points at several common features of this region. In spite of their local varieties certain processes of the internalisation of gender carry common elements. Particular areas or arenas where masculinity explicitly is constituted in this region are male circumcision, marriage and the military. I will in the following go through regional studies that have searched to explore male identity. In spite of men's traditionally

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role as patriarchs in the Middle East empirical studies of masculinity is almost non-existing.

One of those who have done a research on male identity is Julie Peteet, associated professor in Anthropology at the University of Louisville. In her article *Male Gender and Rituals of Resistance in the Palestinian Intifada, a cultural politics of violence* (2002) she explores how the beatings and detentions among male youths have become a central passage-de-rite in the construction of an adult, gendered male self among Palestinian youth. The assertion that the male under occupation is reconstituted via violence implies that the creation of meaning is a matter of Palestinian control. And as passage-de-rite the beatings and imprisonments are removed from the control of the family. Beatings and imprisonment emerge as an individual experience within a collectivity of young men and implies a step into adulthood. Peteet explains how 'been beaten' corresponds with privileges, power, authority and respect that previous have been privileges accomplished through the family sphere. She follows Connell's hegemonic masculinity theories and sees masculinity as neither natural nor given, but paradoxically she refers to a kind of Arab masculinity that she claims is 'ever-present rather than universal' (2002:107). According to her in the Palestinian context the Israelian occupation has seriously diminished those realms of practice that previous allowed men to engage in, and affirm masculinity by means of autonomous actions. In her study she finds traces of the link between masculinity and paternity that also is essential in the Turkish society. She explores how this is related to sacrifice, and thus to resistance. In many ways this was similar to the ideas among leftists in Istanbul and how their political identity might require personal sacrifices. For my informants sacrificing themselves for politics was the only sacrifice approved because it conflated with the embedded urge for freedom and independence in the male subjectivity. This sacrifice seemed to be the only legitimate sacrifice because it did not conflict with the urge for freedom and independence embedded in the male habitus, rather on the opposite it seemed to affirm this freedom and emphases its position in the male subjectivity. Among leftist in Istanbul there was a widespread idea that 'being revolutionary' demanded freedom and flexibility and this flexibility was perceived as a kind of sacrifice.

Another interesting study of male identity is done by Evthymios Papataxiarchis in Aegean Greece. His article *Friends of Hearts: Male Commensal Solidarity, Gender, and Kinship in Aegean Greece* (1991) he explores how male friendships are associated with leisure, drinking alcohol or gambling, and the absence of significant economical functions. Papataxiarchis claims that the core of male friendships is that they do not belong to the

same constellation of cultural meaning as kinship. Rather friendship and kinship are juxtaposed as essential components of different programs for prestige-oriented action. Men's lives are lived in the coffee shop where their friendships are emotionally based on equality and sameness. Sometimes 'heart-friendship' developed. The solidarity between these 'friends of heart' developed via alcohol or gambling, to relations that were voluntary, open, freely terminable and deeply egalitarian. Friendships implied equality while kinship implied hierarchy.

Michael Herzfeld study: *The Poetics of Manhood. Contest and Identity in a Cretan Mountain village* (1985) explores how Glendiot men express their masculinity through rhetoric. He shows how there is less focus on 'being a man' than on '*being good at being a man'*. This is expressed through how everyday actions conveying conventional life are not noticeable, because everybody works hard and most men dance elegantly enough. To be noticed the ordinary must be changed into a context where what is noticed is <u>how</u> the act is performed, and not <u>what</u> is done. Herzfeld calls this *"'performative excellence' or the ability to foreground manhood by means of deeds that strikingly speaks for them"* (1985:16). When he explores certain domains of the male discourse he touches similar aspects of masculinity as Papataxiarchis do. According to Herzfeld the Glendiot phrase 'being good at being a man' refers to a variety of performances from *'knowing how to wield a knife, dance the acrobatic steps of the leader of the line, respond in elegant, assonant verse to a singer's mockery, eat meat conspicuously whenever he gets the chance, keep his word but get some profit form it at the same time, and stand up to anyone who dares to insult him. He must protect his family from sexual and verbal threats, and keep his household (...)* (1985:124). And as Papataxiarchis, he explores the male solidarity in coffee houses. Coffee houses are regarded as men's own special arena within the village. But except from being a male location they are also marking a clear boundary between internal and external space and it requires certain rules of etiquette to enter or leave. When a man enters a coffeehouse he is supposed to greet all present and *'take care that the sweep of his eyes take in the entire company'* (1985:154). In this I sense an echo of Bourdieu's analysis of the café and how differences are linked to class and habitus (1994). Bourdieu describes how the working class café is a place a man goes in order to drink in company. And in contrast to the middleclass or the bourgeois café or restaurant *'where each table is a separate appropriate territory (one asks permission to borrow a chair or the salt), the working class café is a site of companionship (each new arrival gives a collective greeting 'Salute la campagnie! etc.)* (1994:414). Leftist in Istanbul show signs of a similar attitude

in their behaviour when they go to a *meyhane*[7]. Without implying Herzfeld's unitary notion of Greek masculinity I would like to emphases the relevance of this study to the leftist context in Istanbul. Among leftist a male solidarity did not only occur at the *meyhanes* as the masculinity constructions at the Greek coffee houses, but *meyhanes* presented one <u>important</u> arena of masculinity constructions because it was connected to a consumption of alcohol. Drinking alcohol or *raki*[8] is an essential element of male identity and implies solidarity. They drink with their friends and the social interaction between men around a *raki*-table implies a particular solidarity. This solidarity seemed to approve an enormous tolerance for all kinds of misbehaviour or offences, and a great deal of delicacy was involved when they handled their friends' displays of vulnerability. With another word this might be called *'coffee shop masculinity'* and in my empirical analysis it guides my understanding of leftists' constructions of masculinity.

In the article *A broken mirror: masculine sexuality in Greek ethnography* by Peter Loizos marriage, procreation and house holding as hegemonic gender values are explores according to the cultural variety of patterns within these spheres (1994). He explores how post-marital residence seems to relate to different attributions in masculinity and femininity, how sexuality no necessarily is a part of the conjugal package, and finally how male friendships and its local variations are a part of the generalised 'Greek masculinity'. He is criticising Michael Herzfeld for generalising on behalf of whole Greece, and suggests that there is no single sense of masculinity in that abstraction called 'Greek culture', but local contexts, institutions, and domains or discourse are contrasting but coexisting ways of being masculine.

All the mentioned studies are examining different aspects of male identity but don't directly look at how different masculinity constructions seem to be constituted in tensions within the hegemonic paradigm. In other words they are all very informative about conservation practices of masculinity, but none of them carry direct relevance to the

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[7] Meyhane is compounded by *mey* that means wine and *hane* that means house. So it is originally a drinking house. You're supposed to stay at a *meyhane* for a long time but to be able to continue and not to get drunk, you have to have some food. Today *meyhane's* are different than Western restaurants because of their placements of tables and chairs. Tables and chairs are put in long rows and there is etiquette to talk to those who are sitting besides you. This characteristic is similar to the middle class café or the coffee house.

[8] Raki is transparent Turkish anis liquor that usually is mixed with water. It is also called 'Lion-milk' because when it is mixed with water it gets a milky-white colour, and it is assumed as a drink for 'lions' – synonymous with men.

question this dissertation aim to analyse. They don' question how certain alternative constructions of masculinity carry ambiguous elements or how resistance challenge the very legitimacy of authority. They rather aim to explore institutions that reproduce a particular male role and local varieties of masculine identity.

Most of the studies I have referred to above have been done in non-Muslim countries, but are relevant to the extent they describe similar patterns of social behaviour. And to the extent the Mediterranean region can be said to carry analogous cultural expressions in spite of their different religious belonging in Greek Orthodox Christianity, Islam, Catholicism or other local varieties of these. Studies of masculinity in Muslim countries are rare but one of the few studies existing is the study of Thomas Walle *As good as a man can be! Masculine ideals and male practise in Lahore, Pakistan* (1999). Walle explores the 'moral' and 'unmoral' aspects of male gender identity. The moral values conflate with what is expected from a good Muslim man and refer to the ability to provide for your family, to respect older, and to be abstinence from alcohol and pre-marital sex. Walle direct the attention to that these values were not referring to opposite groups of men, but that both 'the moral' and 'the unmoral' where contradicting values immanent within the group he studied referring to different contexts they related to. In spite of being a study of masculinity in a Muslim culture, Walle's division between moral and unmoral have not occurred as essential among leftist in Istanbul. The reason for this might be found in their moral codes as not valuing Islam but freedom from authority and independence, and the fact that Turkey is a secular country. Another possible answer might be traced to the leftists' political conviction, and the link between socialism and non-religious movements in Turkey.

Within Turkey there are numerous empirical studies of female identity, but empirical studies of masculinity are so to speak non-existing.

To my knowledge there is only one study of masculinity based on empirical evidence, and that is Deniz Kandiyoti's study among transvestites in Istanbul: *Pink Card Blues: Trouble and Strife at the crossroads of Gender* (2002). She explores how male-to-female transsexuals in Turkey are shaped through complex boundaries between their personal biographies, the economical and political pressure of their local milieu and the more distant international trans-gender and human-rights environments. The interactions transsexuals have with the state apparatus i.e. the military, communicate powerful messages of their stigmatisation. Being born male and having to craft a female self gives access to the 'backstage' of gender ideology to discover what might remain hidden.

Through this study she explores how the institutions shaping and reproducing hegemonic masculinity sustain relations of power and hierarchy in the society. She argues that transsexualism in Turkey is a uniquely modern possibility both as an identity but also as a medical category. The title refers to the Turkish identity cards that for men are coloured in light blue, and for women in pink. The pink card is a precious commodity because it provides the legal affirmation of transsexuals' new identity as a woman[9]. The fact that it is possible in Turkey to get legal recognition for the sex-change and thus change sex officially may appear more advanced than that of many European countries, where the original record of one's sex of birth cannot be changed. Kandiyoti argues that the reasons for this might be that in Turkey the pressure towards elimination of ambiguity in matters of gender are very high. This study explores masculinity and illustrates an alternative male identity, but do not explore the inner ambiguities in masculinity or opens up questions to understand divers and contradictory elements of resistance as I aim to analyse in this dissertation.

Among other studies on different aspects of hegemonic masculinity in Turkey[10], Ayşe Gül Altınay study explores the structural force behind the military on hegemonic masculinity and the military's interrelation with the state (2000b). She states that state ideology and nationalism constructs certain gendered identities that again reproduce certain masculinities (and femininities). Also Emma Sinclair-Webb's article '*Our Bülent is now a Commando'. Military Service and Manhood in Turkey* (2000b) explores the essential role military service plays and how military service is widely regarded as central to the socialisation of men. She explores various responses to military service that is compulsory, and look primarily at the institution of military service as a mean to understand dominant conceptions of masculinity. Common for the two latter studies is that they both explores idealised version of hegemonic masculinity and how the military penetrates the masculinity constructions on the way to become a grown up and responsible man. They

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[9] The law that allowed sex-change operations is of relatively recent origin. It was based on the model of Bülent Ersoy, a popular singer who applied to the courts for a legal recognition of his female identity after his sex-change operation in London. In 1988 the Turkish Civil Code approved a new clause that states: 'In the cases where there has been a change of sex after birth documented by a report form a committee of medical experts, the necessary amendments are made to the birth certificate'. But unfortunately the medical and legal preconditions for sex-change surgery are not yet finished.

[10] To my knowledge these are not based on empirical data, but nevertheless they are important contributions to the debate of masculinity constructions.

both refer to how idealised versions of military service conflate with state ideology and how these are embedded in the male habitus. These contributions are essential as so far they explore how the hegemonic masculinity paradigm is embedded in the Turkish male identity and thus becomes impossible to oppose to. As Sinclair-Webb clarifies the resistance against compulsory military service in Turkey are almost none because evaders are almost synonymous with traitors. The importance of having done your military service is enforced through certain practices that limit men's possibilities. For example there is a widespread idea that fathers will not give their daughters away to a man before he has finished the military service, and those who cannot prove they have 'served the country' cannot get a job in big companies, and finally an evader cannot get a passport or get officially registered (Sinclair-Webb 2000b). Altınay and Sinclair-Webb illustrate how the military aim to reproduce and sustain fix gender order without ambiguities, and as such their studies also provide essential information about hegemonic masculinity reproduced through authority and hierarchy. But their studies seem to reproduce rather than challenge the idea of how 'one' hegemonic masculinity penetrate all constructions of masculinity. Studies of paradoxes and ambiguities immanent in the male identity and how they disturb the legitimacy of hegemonic masculinity even within a local, sub-cultural context are highly under-analysed. This dissertation aims to explore and analyse a *terra incognita* in Turkey and much further work needs to be done. Existing studies of gender in Turkey are predominantly about women's questions and femininity and there is an urgent need for empirical studies on men and masculinity.

The guiding question in this dissertation is whether ambiguous masculinity constructions among radical, intellectual young men can be traced back to paradoxes and contradictions embedded in their male identity. I ask what practices that are constituted as masculine and how young male leftist 'do masculinity'. More specifically I aim to illuminate leftist ambiguous masculinity through their ideas of sex, love and marriage. In what ways can flirting legitimate an ambiguous male identity? And in what extent do their ideas about heterosexuality shape their masculinity? I also aim to analyse whether leftists' resistance articulated in particular configurations of masculinity disturb the idea of hegemonic masculinity. The quintessence of my analysis is whether leftists' constructions of masculinity challenge and change perceptions of masculinity or whether they can be identified within the hegemonic model. Thus the reading key to this dissertation is the question of whether leftists' contradictory constructions of masculinity stimulate the system of understanding and challenge its various foundation elements.

4. METHOD

Epistemological foundation and choices in fieldwork

According to Dorothy Smith theoretical knowledge is not a good place to start a sociological study:

> "Since the procedures, methods, and aims of present sociology give primacy to the concepts, relevances and topics of discourse, we cannot begin from this frame. This would be to sustain the hegemony of the discourse over the actualities of the everyday experiences of the world" (Smith 1987:89)

She rather suggests that we shall start in the other end, where we as individuals do our experiences. These experiences must be contextualised in time and space. So what I have tried to do during fieldwork was to depart in everyday experiences of masculinity as a close and concrete approachable theme. According to Tove Thagaard the process of collecting data is essential, and her two aspects of qualitative research as systematisation and commitment are vital. Commitment refers to being a part of the social situation the researcher may come to an understanding for their situation. In the very beginning of the fieldwork intuitive feelings might provide good contacts to informants and give further ideas to the meaning of the data. Systematisation refers to the researcher approaches and handles the data. Systematisation and commitment reveals different aspects of the process, where commitment will bring understanding systematisation refers to how the researcher deals with her data. Systematising the data is a process where the data are prescribe meaning, in other words they are been interpreted. Handling and interpreting is an essential part of the empirical analysis.

Interpreting data and analysis them is two sides of the research process, because we cannot describe and categorise the process without attaching meaning to them. Interpretative theories thus represent an important foundation for qualitative methods. One way to ascribe actions and processes meaning is through hermeneutics. The hermeneutical

approach emphases that there are many ways to interpret data and there exists no universal truth. Experiences and everyday practice according to a hermeneutical approach will reveal 'a meaning' without asking after the truth. Geertz' suggest that 'thick descriptions' is an aim of a qualitative study, because it can reveal many layers of meaning (Geertz, 1973 in Thagaard, 1998). For example Geertz study of rituals on Bali reveals how their cock-fight was an expression of masculinity. The cockfight is a bloody sport among men, and quite popular in spite of its prohibition. The cockfight symbolises aggressive sides of masculinity that are suppressed in the Bali culture, and he emphasises that the locals are engages in the cockfight because it reveals important aspects about their culture and society. Here the cockfight had a hidden meaning for the natives (Thagaard 1998).

The date in this dissertation is based on fieldwork among a group of secular young men in Istanbul, in addition to in-depth interviews with 10 of them. They were aged 25 – 35; they formed a network with a loose and fluid structure around voluntary human rights works. They all have higher education and formed two minor 'groups' consisting of doctors and lawyers. Common was their political identity and their affiliation to the feminist movement.

They all seemed to have many female friends without that this necessarily implied a sexual relationship, but at the same time they were flirting a lot and had a sexualised language and tone. Sexual liberation seemed to be an essential element in their political project, and they challenged all sexual stereotypes.

My first insecure steps in the late autumn 2000, started at a café in *Beyoğlu* called *Kaktüs*. This café had been established in the mid 1990s by a group of the feminists by the same name. Many of men working at this café had close relation to and sympathised with the feminist movement.

When I still was searching entrance to field and I only was talking about it to those who seemed interested I soon realise that I had to be careful with my choice of words when I presented my project. Since I had decided to be informal I had no written notes with me, and once somebody asked I wanted to use the word 'masculinity' – maybe to give an academic reference, I am not sure. Anyway I was excited because somebody seemed to pay attention. This might turn out to my advantage and I wanted to be as thorough as possible to get them interested. Because these were intellectuals I wanted to use the word 'masculinity' but this has no Turkish equivalent. Embraced in my own word I erroneously came to use the word *erkeklik* that means sexual potency! Once I had pronounced the word I realised what I had done, but I received a lot of surprising gazes from those who

listened and they were curious how I was going to proceed to get any results! Anyway we got a good laugh and it was a way to get attention. After this episode I was careful to translate 'masculinity' with *erkek kimliği* which means male identity.

The method I used was the snowball method. Tove Thagaard explains how this works: *"It is usual to establish a contact to central individuals that can contribute to find other informants"* (1998:54). To be able to get started with the interviews, I had to be presented or introduced, and I needed to show that they could trust me. I knew Ali that was working at the café from long back, and hoped that his introduction would let me into the milieu. But it was much more difficult than I had imagined. Anyway I tried to develop my relation to Ali, and I also tried using my relation to his wife. But I didn't succeed and we couldn't find a good way to communicate. I felt that Ali was tensed and felt uneasy with the whole situation. So by the end of February 2001 I still was not very successful in finding somebody at all.

I decided to change strategy. I wrote a short letter explaining who I was, what I wanted to do and with whom I wanted to speak. At the same time I informed my friends that I was searching for informants. A gave this letter to Ali, and to some of my private friends with contacts to the same milieu. I felt that I had been a little too informal in the first try so maybe this was better. A coincidence turned out to be a big advantage to me. During the initial period after I had given my letter to Ali and he had spread them to some others, while I was trying to develop my relation to Ali and still searching for informants, coincidently one of Ali friends knew me through another person. As I explained I had also used my own personal network, and suddenly one person heard about me from two different people. This made the ball roll. In this way I was presented first to Volkan and then to Yurtkan. I was exited and finally I felt that I was starting.

My informants might be easy to identify because they are linked together in a quite transparent network type of mutual relations. This way of approaching a group might offer problems regarding anonymity. To secure their anonymity I have done some insignificant changes in their background, their marital status and their age. I have also juggled their fictive names so that one name does not always present the same person.

Very short I would like to comment on how my informants were linked together and what kind of relations their 'network' was based on. As I already have mentioned, they claimed a leftist identity and were working in voluntary human rights works, representing foremost themselves but also their profession. Other common features were that they had close connections to the feminist movement, and they were originally from outside

Istanbul. Their common interests in human rights questions led them together on different occasions like the hunger strike in the prisons, and they arranged different actions and meetings during this period. This kind of network was fluid and changeable like a plate of spaghetti[11] that changes every time you eat from it, but still can be said to be a plate of spaghetti. This kind of network is constituted by a fluid replacement of people but in the certain main aspects like their political identity and an involvement in the feminist movement seemed to constitute the core.

Informants and key-informants

Most of my informants were doctors or lawyers; Volkan, Taner, Emre, Yurtkan, Mehmet and Onur, but some of them had different employments; Egemen, Bumin, Farih, and Irfan. What they all had in common was that they were voluntaries in different human rights organisations.

Volkan and Yurtkan soon became my key informants and I was able to follow them and their friends closer also in other settings, in a period of approximately six months. During this period I performed the in-depth interviews, we held close contact and they often invited me out.

Because Volkan was one of my key informants I will describe him closer. Volkan was 27 years and a lawyer. At the time he was working for another lawyer, but wanted to establish his own office. He had volunteered to take cases without being paid. This meant that he was appointed in cases where the accused could not afford a lawyer. He told me how he was a specialist on children's cases usually pick pocking or steeling. He felt sorry for the children because and he explained to me that they 'had to steel' to stay alive. He was proud of the job he did and linked it to his personal political project.

Volkan was divorced twice and lived alone. The area he was living in was typical a lower middle class area with cheap rents. Being an idealistic lawyer you cannot expect to become rich, as he said. But he was happy for the flat, and told me that not all of his friends could afford to live alone. His parents are living far away from Istanbul in a

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[11] Thanks to Willy Pedersen for this metaphor. When I had difficulties describing the kind of relations my informants had to each other, this metaphor seemed to be a good characteristic of the quality of the leftist network because it described the fluidity without changing the larger depiction.

provincial city. He lived at home until he married the first time. He was not very much in love but the girl needed to get away from her parents, so they married. They divorced after a year. Today most of his friends were female and he told me that he preferred to be with women. This seemed to be a general aspect of all my informants, but in spite of close female friendship relations the relation between male *dost's* – friends-of-heart, was strong and I Volkan told me that their relations were different.

In his late teenagers he had been the leader of a youth group in one of the illegal urban guerrilla groups. This group was authoritarian and hierarchal with strict social control. He spoke about this time in a paradoxically nostalgic and hatred way. Looking back he described himself, as a soldier. The social cohesion in the group was strong and they lived isolated from the outside world. After some time he wanted to leave the group because of its authoritarian and hierarchical structure, but had hard time getting out. After some time he finally succeeded. The year after he split he moved back to his parents and prepared himself for university. He explained the break with the group as traumatic and they threatened to kill him. But he was determined because the group did not live up to his ideals of freedom and equality.

He is atheist, and ethnically an *Alevi*. Volkan was known as an intense flirter and he had several relationships with different girls, but he never introduced any of them as his girlfriend. He didn't try to include them rather he withdrew from the group when he was seeing a new girl.

My other key informant Yurtkan was 30 years old and works as a doctor. Besides his unpaid work as a doctor everyday, he was working at a private hospital to earn money. He was the sole breadwinner of his family. Yurtkan was very affected by his voluntary work. During my fieldwork there was a political hunger strike in the prisons and Yurtkan was heavily involved in their treatment. Many of his patients died during the period we where seeing each other, and this had devastating effects on him.

Yurtkan had been divorced and was married for the second time. His wife was at home and taking care of the children, but she was educated a bookkeeper.

Originally Yurtkan came from one of the burned villages in south-eastern Turkey. His village had no school, so he was walking every day to the nearest village to go to school. When he was 11 years old he decided that he wanted to go to a state boarding school, because he had heard that this was the way to higher education and he wanted to go to university. Already at this age he knew that he wanted education. He was ambitious and education was his possibility out of poverty. State boarding schools are designated for

children in villages without schools, and most of these villages were inhabited by the Kurds. The schools are many Kurdish children's first meeting with the Turkish language and the education aimed to teach Turkish history beside language. The three years at the boarding school were years of beating and torture for Yurtkan. Finally he escaped and flew back to his family that in the mean time had been moved to *Diyarbakir*. In *Diyarbakir* the family at 13 where living in one single room. His father was violent and beat both his mother and him a lot. Yurtkan wanted to continue to study after the 5 years of obligatory schooling and he decided to go *orta okul* - mid school. Since they were poor he had to earn the money to buy books and school material himself. After mid-school he managed to enter gymnasium and decided to try to enter university. During his period as a student, he was working to provide for himself. He was the youngest of 11 children and his father wanted him to help the family economically instead of studying, but his mother supported him.

Yurtkan was both *alevi* and *Zaza* Kurdish - this is a very small ethnic group with a different Kurdish originated language. He was very alert to the fact that his daughters should learn Zaza-Kurdish. He was also an atheist.

As far as I know Yurtkan didn't have any girlfriends, but he was also known as a flirter both at work and among his friends. He never brought his wife, except one occasion on a special celebration in a human rights association.

There seemed to be a strong social cohesion among my informants, in and they would define themselves as a negation of other groups. Like every cultural entity they were existing because there was a boundary between those who are outside it, and thus represent its opposite. For the stability of every social unit a 'definite other' is needed. For the leftist the fascists or the Islamists functioned as the 'definite other'. Günter Seufert who has done research among *alevi's* in Turkey got the following answer to a question about what signified a leftist beside their political affiliation:

> "Leftist are not like fascists, not cruel and aggressive, they are either not like to Islamists that want to force a legal proposition about the headscarf for women and oppressive against women". What is true for any other identity is also true for the leftists: "Identity is always… a structured representation which only achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative. It has to go through the eye of the needle of the other before it can construct itself" (Seufert, 1997).

The negation of 'the other' was the most remarkable way the leftists identified themselves.

The empirical data

My empirical data consists of a mixture of my previous knowledge to the Turkish society and my own relation to Turkey, in-depth interviews and field observations.

My relation to Turkey

I had been living in Istanbul more or less permanently since 1996 when I started my fieldwork, but my understanding of the Turkish society goes 15 years back. I am married to a Turkish man and have a son at 7 years old. In many ways the network I have been studying overlaps my own personal network. But my informants constituted a younger generation.

In spite of my knowledge to the Turkish society I will always remain a foreigner. But my long relation has given me deep insight to different social codes. One of the advantages of being foreign is that it is easier to ask questions to what is taken for given by the informants. To understand a foreign culture you need take part in it, but a problem with long stays can be that the researcher takes over the norms and values of the foreign culture. In anthropological literature this is called 'to go native', and signifies that the researcher does not sustain the distance to the culture which in central (Thagaard, 1998). Fieldwork stretching out over a long period is usually broken up by a trip to your own environment to gain back this distance. Thagaard explains that these break *"provides the researcher with an analytical distance through which she or he can gain the necessary perspective in its totality"* (1998: 72). In my case I had to find a balance between fieldwork and interviews, and the interaction with my personal life to sustain this analytical distance. Along with my fieldwork I had an employment at the Swedish Research Institute and this constituted a kind of a waterhole or an oasis where I could refill and gain the analytical distance. At the institute I was able to either to talk to the other employed or the director, which at that time was a Swedish sociologist, or I had talks with the Scandinavian guest-researchers living there.

One of my advantages was my knowledge of the language. Language is a main asset when you are learning another culture, and the language itself contains several cultural codes. The fact that I was married Turkish and had personal contacts to socialist networks seemed to open up gates for me.

It turned out that Volkan and I had a common friend, and in the beginning he was talking about this 3rd person a lot. He was quite tensed in the beginning of our relationship,

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and I experienced that he was not quite sure whether he should have accepted my invitation or not. I felt that the chatting of our common friend was a way to create 'our common space' and we soon had a good communication.

Volkan was concerned that I should get 'correct' data and he felt responsible on my behalf. I was afraid that his engagement would jeopardise my possibility to achieve varied data and I felt he took over the control for a period. What he did left me in a difficult situation. He wanted to show his interest and his goodwill to my project. Being accepted by a group was an advantage, but at the same time I felt I had lost control over with whom I came to speak with because Volkan would arrange 'everything' for me. Anyway I was able to establish the connection to Yurtkan, and this went without any difficulties or tensions from Volkan. So finally my worries seemed to be needless.

In the Turkish society being known or sharing networks is essential to achieve a deeper meaning of social codes. I had achieved trustworthiness within the network that worked in my advantage so I was not to jeopardise it. This implicated that I had to be very careful with whom I talked about my project, because of the transparency of the network.

My apprehension of the Turkish society prior to this fieldwork, may have involved a weakness. My personal situation may in some situations have made me 'blind' to certain aspects of the Turkish society and of masculinity. As far as possible I have tried to be alert to this fact. My knowledge to both the language and the social codes played an essential role for me to be able to spot contradictions and paradoxes inherent in their constructions of masculinity. In this way my social pre-understanding of Turkey constitutes a part of my data.

Interviews

Most of the interviews were conducted in public places like cafés and some took place at the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul. The length on each interview differs from two to six hours. In most occasions we had more than one interview, and at the most we had three interviews.

To achieve a general picture of their life situation I decided to follow their life trajectory in the interviews that constitute my main data. I was insecure about using a tape-recorder because of their connection with the police and how to perform an interview without giving it the atmosphere of an interrogation. In the end this was not a very difficult problem to overcome. I asked if they objected use of tape recorder and most of them told me that they where not very comfortable with it on, but they would try to forget it. A usual

problem with tape recorder is that you miss the natural and free way of expressing yourselves because the attention goes to the recorder itself. It turned out that my worries where bigger than the problem itself. As soon as we started to talk the atmosphere softened and went on natural. Only in one occasion did I experience an odd situation. In the first interview with Farih, we talked a bit about his ex-wife and jealousy. Farih was tensed and where expressing a body language telling me that he was not feeling well. On his request we met at a local café and there was nobody but us. He was not sitting quite on the chair, leaning back and forth, looking to the sides all the time to see if anybody was listening. I tried to make him relax and asked him if he wanted to stop. All of a sudden he leaned forward and screamed into the microphone. I asked if he wanted to turn off the tape recorder and have a break, but he refused. Anyway I turned the recorder off and we talked a bit if he wanted to keep it off, but he said that it was ok and that he just had lost himself for a moment. Except this episode I felt little difference from our other conversations to the interview situation with a tape recorder.

Fieldwork and observations

My analyses are not only based on the facts or themes we talked about during the interviews, but are achieved through participating observations during fieldwork. Observations can be good tool to achieve understanding in interactions between members of a group or a network regarding different meanings they prescribe their actions. Whytes classical study *Street Corner Society* (1981) is an example of how observations of a group of youth provided general knowledge about minority groups' culture and organisation. Even if my study does not provide sufficient information to generalise to other men with equal background, the fundamental principle behind observations studies like *Street Corner Society* is valid because my analyses on behalf of observations give knowledge about the meanings they prescribed certain behaviour and how these were organised. To achieve this kind of knowledge it was essential for me that I achieved access to the group and was accepted by the group for what I was. In that respect my study was open and I never concealed my intentions.

In a study of foreign cultures whether the researcher are accepted or not have devastating effects on the quality of the research. I was lucky to achieve a good relation of my informants and was able to use them as controllers in many situations. I could go back and ask them if I had perceived the situation correct and usually this led to a discussion about my understanding. Sometimes they were shocked to hear how I interpreted some

situations and sometimes they were pleased because they were provided with new information on how their actions were interpreted by a woman.

To observe means to select what is relevant to the study. In my case my aim was to explore masculinity constructions and to observer this was a balance between me being a woman and me being a foreign researcher. My role as a researcher was shaped by my aim to explore masculinity constructions as a woman. Sometimes they were concerned to show me how they departed from what they called the cultural available role for men, and sometimes their actions or behaviour towards me was a 'natural women to man' relationship. By this I mean that in situations they regarded me as a researcher they would 'control' their behaviour, and in situations I was regarded as a women I represented the opposite sex and could observe a different and more 'relaxed' behaviour. Throughout the whole fieldwork this smoothed out and didn't create any major difficulties.

Intimacy and distance to my informants

I was lucky to be able to establish a good relation to both Volkan and Yurtkan simultaneously. Thus I followed them and their friends separately in different contexts. I was never invited home to any one of them, so I have not experienced my informants in a family setting. When I think of my own experiences this occurred as 'natural'. It is quite common that friends meet at cafés etc. and inviting somebody home requires a different relation. Especially if there is a relation between a man and a woman this seemed essential, because it may create misunderstandings.

Meeting in public, going to restaurants implicated a distance that was good for me. This made it possible for me to sustain the necessary analytical distance to my project. Our relationships were based on mutual respect. The balance of being 'inside' but at the same time 'looking from the outside' was not always easy. Our level of interaction helped me to balance on this edge between intimacy and distance. When I was invited to i.e. a bar after work my husband was also invited. This was sign of friendship and they were curious about me. During the end of my fieldwork my husband had meet several of my informants.

Ethical aspects in fieldwork

There are some aspects connected to me being a woman, interviewing men. Gender theories emphases the importance of social processes during interviews and fieldwork (Thagaard, 1998). As in my study it was important to be aware of the possible impact I as a

women might have on the results. Tove Thagaard (1998) points out the importance that the researcher him- or herself, is perceived as a part of the collection of data. In the type of qualitative interviews like those I have done, I became a part of the context thus who I was, was important. In this context Thagaard (1998) mentions how female researchers can evoke male informants to formulate things in a different way because some things might not seem naturally understood for a woman.

The different literature mainly focuses on situations where the researcher is a woman and the informant a man. This might provoke a feeling of gender dichotomising, meaning: the informant emphasizes that the researcher and the informant are of different gender, and uses this to strengthen his masculinity (Thagaard, 1998:94). One example of this is Lomsky-Feders study of male military (Thagaard, 1998). In an early phase of the study the researcher entered a traditional female position. She submitted to the male informants and did not ask questions to their story. This turned out to give little information and she changed strategy. When she decided to emphases that she was both foreign and a woman, and also took more control over the interview, the situation changed. Because they felt secure during the interview and there was no power involved, she received a much richer data material (Thagaard, 1998).

In my case it seems being a woman was a good thing. My informants told me that they preferred to speak to woman and that they preferred female friends because 'women in general are better listeners' (Interview). I never felt that there were some things I was not told or that was withheld from me, on the opposite I experienced that they respected me as an honest researcher.

Generalisation and validity

To interpret results of a study implies reflecting over the meaning of the data. How the data are being interpreted is decided by the theoretical approach the researcher puts forward and of the tendencies and connections that emerges in the analysis. Interpretation takes place at different levels, and theorizing over data is usually done on a generalized level. According to Tove Thagaard (1998) qualitative research needs new conceptions. Thagaard presents an alternative to the common used notions in quantitative studies, reliability, validity and generalization. Her alternatives are credibility (troverdighet), affirm-ability (bekreftbarhet), and transfer-ability (overførbarhet). These notions

emphasise the distinctiveness of qualitative approach better than the common used ones.

How these things are conceptualised is not the most important, it is the content of the concepts. A lot of qualitative research stops when it comes to generalisation and leaves this to the quantitative colleagues. Usually the qualitative approach is exploring, experience close, focuses on understanding instead of description, and generates hypotheses instead of testing them. In qualitative research the most important thing is to understand the phenomenon studied and the question emerging is whether this understanding can be transferred to other contexts and have relevance. In opposition to quantitative studies it is the understanding in itself that constitutes the basis for the transfer ability to other studies. Transfer ability constitutes a re-conceptualisation by transferring the theoretical understanding achieved in one study to other connections.

The common way to understand the notion generalisation is by statistical induction, but this is a very narrow understanding of the concept. If this were the single understanding of the notion, qualitative studies would seldom be valid at all. The significant issue is not to be able to transfer a single case to a population, but the force in the understanding in itself. The force behind the explanation itself should be understood in accordance in the line of thoughts of Bourdieu (1995). He writes how 'thinking in analogies' provides both a possibility to explore particular and distinctive aspects, and at the same time provides a possibility to recognise the general aspects of the peculiar. Inherent in Bourdieu's analysis of *doxa*, the ambition of sociology must be to achieve a new understanding of phenomenon we already have a pre-understanding of or unreflectively know what is. Through developing concepts, perspectives and theories to interpret the social reality that surrounds us we are given a tool to explore contradictions, ambiguities and paradoxes.

Regarding the transfer-ability of my own study, I would like to point similarities to Paul Willies study: *Learning to labour* (Wadel, 1991). This is a qualitative study of twelve blue-collar boys with a working class background. It might seem unreliable to generalise from this small number of units from the English working class youth, but Willies study has caught a general process according to why working class kids get working class jobs and why they let themselves (Wadel, 1991). Willies study and experience from other studies and teachers shows a development of a working-class-culture and that this is something found in every school with students with the working class background. The essence of this study is how structural conditions like class background must pass through an active cultural environment to be reproduced. It is not enough to list the structural conditions and say they themselves decide the reproduction. To be able to understand and

interpret we have to pass through what is done with what you have. According to my study and how masculinity is experienced in relation to stereotypical understandings of men in the Turkish society, it is mirroring ten young well-educated men in Istanbul. As in Willies study, it should be understood as an illustration of the connection between social structure and interaction between people on the daily level. The stereotypical understanding of men in Turkish society might reflect the hegemonic masculinity in Turkey as a structural force, and the subjective experience constitutes the cultural environment where they transform or reproduce what they carry with them. In other words the micro-perspective cannot be separated from the macro, not can they be reduced to one another.

5. EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Masculinity and Women's emancipation

The sexual liberation of women requires the liberation of man

(Bouhdiba 1985:239)

Negotiations of masculinity among leftist must be explored as a part of their moral codex around women's sexuality and the tradition of chastity. My aim in the following is to explore the relation between men and women, more specific the relation between leftist and feminists. Because the struggle for women's emancipation among the younger feminists have addressed women's sexuality. In the junction between the historic and the contemporary understanding of women the relation between leftists and feminists constituted the socio-historic background for the fragile change of men's construction of masculinity.

To achieve an understanding of this development of the social structure, certain aspects of the Turkish society needs to be outlined. The overall Turkish society is penetrated with hierarchical and authoritarian patterns of social interaction that occurs in almost all aspects of everyday life. In the framework of this dissertation among these it is worthy to mention how men don't refer to his wife by her name or as his wife, but uses the term of family in front of others (Koçtürk, 1992). This can be observed at restaurants where women usually sit in the areas reserved for 'families' – and usually is the term *aile* - family synonymous with 'women'. Usually when men talk to other men outside the family they call their wives *hanim* – lady, and in the same context women address each other's husbands as *bey* – lord. This uneven pattern of interaction can also be seen in the relation between child and parents, in the relation between teacher and student or in the military between the officer and private. These patterns exist in the private sphere and in the employed life. In common for all these relations is that the dominated part is supposed to

address their superiors by using the respectful *Siz* – Thou, instead of the more common *sen* – you, that are regarded as less respectful. These authoritarian patterns are persistent, and might be understood according to Bourdieu's notion of *doxa*, which refers to unquestioned, self-evident and common-cause assumptions about social life. These patters arise from a long tradition within Turkish political system with several military interventions since the first free election in 1950 and a deep-seated patriarchal social structure inherited from the legacy of the Ottoman Empire.

Such patterns also constitute the foundation among the contemporary urban middle class culture and plays and essential role their sexual moral codex. The essence of the Turkish women's sexual moral was her *iffet* – virtue, and her chastity. 'Women's question' has been central to different ideological and political developments in Turkey – but all can de read as different versions off the chaste women. Many studies of women's question in Turkey indicate that this served as an instrument to keep women's sexuality under patriarchal control where fathers, brothers or husbands were assumed responsibility for ensuring women's chastity (Kandiyoti 1989, 2000, Ilkkaracan 2000, 2000b, Altınay 2000).

Understandings of women in Turkey bears a tradition of sexual repression derived from an ideological symbolism of the nationalist heroine that was depicted not only as virtuous, but as *asexual*. The nationalist heroine was a strong rhetorical mean of the republic, and aimed to create the 'new Turkish woman' that was different from both the Ottoman woman and the Western woman. Deniz Kandiyoti gives a historic passage and explores how critical junctures in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish republic coincided with key moments in the transformation of discourses on women (2000). Several other studies also suggest that the 'true' national identity unified women through 'the asexual woman'. The development of the *BACIM* terminology meaning the sexual unavailable women was embedded in and intertwined with the Turkish national identity that took form after the establishment of the Turkish republic in 1923. This idea indicated that women had entered public space without abandoning their chastity where their a-sexuality served as a *symbolic shield*.

Even if it is common for men and women in the secular middle classes to socialise together, this sexual moral codex is deeply embedded in their habitus. This is observed when for example a man feels it as a duty to walk a woman to her door and wait until she has entered the main door until he leaves, because it is his responsibility to protect her from dangers. One of my Turkish female friends explained how she utilised this and

applied to men's embedded duty to protect women. If she was left with nobody to follow her home, she would apply to these feelings by the taxi driver – that usually are men – and ask if he could wait for her until she had entered the door so that she would feel 'safe'.

Women's rights in Turkey was not obtained through sustained activities of women's movements – as in the case of the Western suffragettes movement – but were granted by an enlightened governing elite committed to the goals of modernisation and 'Westernisation'. When the feminist movement entered the public discourse in the late 1980ties and during the 1990ties they challenged women's sexuality embedded in the 'asexual woman', through a number of actions and today resistance against suppressing women's sexuality in widespread among the younger feminists. But women – and not men - are the main actors contesting understandings of women's sexuality in the feminist movement. I am suggesting that a group of leftist men in close interaction with the feminist movement is challenging the same sexual moral because it indirectly restrains their male sexuality. This development is not unambiguous and they negotiate a leftist masculinity in the junction between their loyalty to the leftist tradition and their influences by the new feminist movement. Here I would like to explore how their engagement in 'women's questions' has created a sphere for negotiation of new masculinity constructions.

We're supposed to call them BACIM – my female comrade

> Sexuality became sequestered or privatised as part of the processes whereby motherhood was invented and became a basic component of the female domain. The sequestering of sexuality occurred largely as a result of social rather that psychological repression and concerned two things above all; the confinement or denial of female sexual responsiveness and the generalised acceptance of male sexuality as unproblematic.
>
> Giddens (1992:178)

The following episode made me realise the ambiguities leftists experienced when women that was central figures in their socialist tradition but embraced in their a-sexuality, entered their space. I had been invited out to eat with Volkan and some of his lawyer friends, both men and women, and we were sitting in one of the local restaurants. The conversation was loose and relaxed and the men spoke in a cocky, or a teasing tone. I sat with my back to the public so I couldn't see what happened – but something had made the tone around the table change. The men stopped the cocky tone and a more '*political correct*' conversation occurred. In a few seconds the whole atmosphere at the table had changed. When I saw Canan Arın, one of the most famous feminists in Turkey, at the other end of the table I understood what had happened. C A is a lawyer and started an NGO,

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which she was leading – KADER[12]. KADER was aiming at 50 % female parliamentarians independent of political affiliation. Canan Arın was older than most of those present at the table, and she was highly respected for her work. She came over to our table to say hello to one of the female lawyers present, and a few seconds after she left the old friendly, loose and teasing tone was back. Since she was standing in the other end of the table I was not able to hear what they were talking about but I observed a change among all present. I knew that she was a respected lawyer but I couldn't figure out why they altered their behaviour when she arrived - so I asked Volkan. He looked upon me with surprise and claimed he didn't! I was confused. I was sure I had observed a change when she came, but could it be that they were not aware of this themselves? When I pursued the issue, Volkan said that maybe he had changed because he was afraid to say something that might hurt his career. I was still puzzled because I knew that Volkan did not have anything to do with Canan Arın directly. I tried to make Volkan explain to me why and he said: *"You must understand that she is not anybody - she is CANAN ARIN – not just any feminist! As BACIM[13] – my female comrade she is entitled to respect"*.

So far they behaved equal to all the women I had seen them with. But from the above observation I understood that certain women were different. Volkan claimed that he should treat her with a different respect than he did with other women because she was conceptualised as *BACIM*. In this context this meant stopping the cocky way of speaking. Canan Arın's presence in itself was enough for all those present to change their behaviour from a 'relaxed and teasing' tone into a 'respectful' and 'political correct' one. Another interesting aspect of their reaction was that it was spontaneous and not arranged they all 'knew' how to behave when a woman like CANAN ARIN was present. This implied that it was widespread and fitted into a larger cultural pattern of relations between men and women.

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[12] In Turkish KADER means 'fate' or 'destiny'. But the letters in **KAD**ER is an acronym of KADIN, which means 'women' and **DER**NEGI, which means 'association'. Together it makes the name of on of the most active feminist association.

[13] Literary: sister.

BACIM – an ideological understanding of women

An analysis of the above observation cannot be done without penetrating the origin of the socialist conceptualisation of *BACIM* as 'my female comrade'. *BACIM* literary means sister and indicated that men and women were equal. Among socialists it came to symbolise that politically active women not were to be regarded as sexual objects. Paradoxically the Turkish left adopted the terminology *BACIM* concurrently with the raised awareness of women questions in the early 1980ties. Women's questions were not to have any superiority to other questions of inequality but to be treated together with these. The *BACIM* terminology attempted to be congruent with the socialist tradition of solidarity and equality. But important details in this development need to be explored as a reproduction of Islam's understanding of women and sexuality. It seems that the key moments of the transformation of the discourse of women in Turkey coincided with critical junctures in the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic. In the tensions of this transition women's questions became a central part of an ideological terrain where the changing social order was articulated and debated. But before I try to penetrate into the relation between *BACIM* and Islam's understanding of women and sexuality, I would like to illustrate how the morality implied in the *BACIM* terminology today existed as an almost unquestioned part of their male habitus.

My informants claimed that by using *BACIM* they were signalling 'a correct socialist approach' to women and sexuality. Volkan tried to explain:

> VOLKAN: "*BACIM* actually means sister, but leftist started to use the concept when they felt threatened by the first feminist movement …to illustrate that women were equal men…but…today *BACIM* is socialist language for women…we are supposed to call our female comrades *BACIM*…

I interpreted that the expression *'socialist language for women'* as a way to present the official socialist approach. This specific vocabulary seemed to be a mean to manifest their political identity and they used it in everyday life similar to social codes like i.e. *hanim* – or lady. But the ambiguity towards this very terminology seemed to be present already from the sentence *'leftist started to use the concept when they felt threatened by the feminist movement'*. Since the feminist movement was described as a threat it seemed that their ambiguity was related to their discourse on women's sexuality. In light of the above the socialist ideology of the sexual unavailable women reproduced the denied female sexuality or concealed men's continued control over women's sexuality. When I revealed

my questions to this way of manifesting an ideology, Volkan explained to me that the redefinition of women's sexuality was the essence in the feminist movement:

> VOLKAN: …this is one of the things the young feminists are opposing to…I agree…for me it is a masculine thing to call women *BACIM*…it has nothing to do with socialism actually …as they [men] pretend they don't think of women sexually…because that is what it implies…

Volkan revealed that he was reluctant to the use of *BACIM* notion himself. And he exposed a differentiation between socialism and what he called '*masculine*'. By this he referred to the socialist discourse as a reproduction or a covert form of men's control over women's sexuality. And when he continued to claim that men who used *BACIM* to conceptualise women actually '*pretended they didn't think of women sexually*', he was referring to the ambiguity immanent in the term *BACIM*. The word 'pretend' was essential because it seemed to indicate the indirect character of sexuality. Abelwahab Bouhdiba takes up a similar development in his book *Sexuality in Islam*. (1985). He states: *"The sexual liberation of woman requires the liberation of man. (…). For the Arab-Muslim society - is still largely male-worshipping, in essence and in its appearances, in its deep structure and in its superficial manifestations"* (1985: 239). Bouhdiba is concluding that challenging the sexual ethics – like the younger feminists did in Turkey – would lead to transformations in society that all would be a threat to the status of men, but it might not result in the necessary radical arrangements. The socialist terminology *BACIM* seemed to play the role of what Bouhdiba called superficial manifestations. What I experienced among leftist might also be described as a development where the <u>male</u> discourse on women followed the traits of <u>women's</u> discourse on women, and following Bouhdiba's words it indicated that 'the liberation of woman was followed by the liberation of man'. Leftists' resistance against the BACIM terminology implied a re-negotiation of masculinity as a part of a project aiming to liberate men from the immanent structures in their male habitus inherited from the Islamic conceptualisation of sexuality.

Then why did Volkan and the others change their behaviour at the restaurant when CA came? And why did Volkan explain his actions referring to the *BACIM* terminology? How was he claiming to be a leftist but rejecting what he himself called the '*socialist language for women*'? Yurtkan was not present at the table but was caught in the same ambiguity. The following quotation enlightens these contradictions:

> YURTKAN: "It used to be a good socialist value to think of women as *BACIM*…I mean…but the feminist movement changed this…or maybe not changed but challenged…I mean… many of the leaders…being a good male leftist implied regarding women as *BACIM*…at least this is what we were taught…but for me women are women…I mean…it is not so easy to explain…regarding women as individuals is more important to me than whether they are *BACIM* or not…maybe I don't always show this… is at least for me it is like this…"

Yurtkan described an internal contradiction within the socialist network that seemed to be in the bottom of the conflict. On the one side the socialist movement had a well-established tradition around the discourse of the sexual unavailable women and politically active women were to be respected on a similar level as male comrades. This implied to regard all women equal as *BACIM* and not as separate women with lust and desires. On the other side was the younger feminist movement emerging from these socialist networks challenging this very conceptualisation of women and sexuality.

The reason that this created such a conflict must be seen in relation to its cultural and social roots in Islam's discourse on women and sexuality. Major changes in the Ottoman Empire were started with the modernising reforms that took place in the middle of 19th century called the *Tanzimat* period. From the *Tanzimat* period onwards there was a significant increase in attacks on the traditional Ottoman family system and the position of women (Kandiyoti 2000). However the rise of the Turkish nationalism that started with the Young Turks and the *Turkist* movement with the second constitutional period in 1908, introduced a new term to the debate; *Türkçülugun Esaslari* – the principles of *Turkism*[14]. In the process of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire three major political currents emerged; Islamism, *Ottomanism* and *Turkism*. Turkism had placed a new emphasis on a cultural integrity based on 'nationhood' rather than faith. In the emerging period the discourse on women became a suitable object to voice disagreements with certain discriminating aspects of their society. The nationalist currents rose and were strengthening and the Westernised upper class was to be viewed as increasingly alien and finally treacherous in contrast to the 'traditional' native middle class and the mass of the people. The women's question was fought out in the junction between these three currents and was founded around women's chastity. Deniz Kandiyoti explores how the association in Islam between appropriate female behaviour and cultural integrity *'has made the search for*

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[14] This was a book by Ziya Gökalp and became his landmark. Ziya Gökalp is regarded as one of the central leaders in Turkish Nationalism or Turkism.

morally legitimate alternatives extremely difficult (…) (2000:92). In the construction of the Nationalist movement the 'sexual' was used to create a symbolic terrain, but was problematic because it confirmed the power of the original Islamic paradigm ant the difficulties of breaking apart from it.

I will shortly try to explore how the socialist moral was rooted in Islam's understanding of women and sexuality. One of the essential themes in Islam and sexuality is that the 'sexual' represents an active pole of danger and potential chaos in society, hence it needs to be channelled, controlled, legalised and tamed (Kandiyoti 2000). Bouhdiba writes: *"Fitna is both seduction and sedition, charm and revolt. For it is when they are under women's charm that men revolt against the will of God* (1985: 118). The term *fitna*[15] has a clear referent to the field of sexuality and women are seen as bearers of *fitna* – understood as chaos and disorder because they distract men and tempt them to sin. This suggests that female sexuality is a repressive project aiming at the annihilation of the female subject that is seen as the bearer of the uncontrolled desire. According to this interpretation desire is defined under the broad rubric containing everything that risks deflecting the believer's attention from his focal point, God. Thus, reason and desire are linked in a power relation where the strengthening of the one implies a weakening of the other (Kandiyoti, 2000). This conceptualisation of sexuality seemed to fit into the new nationalist thoughts on women and it offered a convenient vehicle for the projection of fear of loss of control onto the women. This might be understood as one of the reasons it gained actuality when the theocratic Muslim Ottoman Empire transitioned into a Turkish nation-state with great Western influence.

The ambiguity this created among leftist can on the one side be understood as the socialist tradition of the sexual unavailable women rooted in the Islamic discourse on women and sexuality as I have explored above. And on the other side as the force behind the younger feminist movement they sympathised with. As far as I can understand, their ambiguity towards the *BACIM* terminology was immanent in the power of the sexual unavailable women that seemed to be essential in their male habitus.

Volkan was clearly divided between the contradictory leftist traditions. I understood that this was the reason he changed behaviour when C A came to our table at the restaurant. Volkan was not comfortable and felt drawn in different directions. He told me

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that he wanted to avoid situations where he might exhibit that he was insecure about this. This made him prefer to be with feminists at his own age.

> VOLKAN: "I don't ague very much with other leftist on this issue…but… maybe that is one of the reasons I am not spending so much time with men… I like much more to be with women…"

According to Yurtkan *BACIM* represented an essentialist understanding of women that reduced them to wives and mothers. With this I refer to the tradition within feminist literature where women are understood according to their biology. Being a woman is crystallised trough her biology that provides her to carry children and is associated with nature. The following clarified this:

> YURTKAN: As leftist we should maybe be calling them *BACIM*… I don't like the concept because it connotes self-sacrificing women as wives and mothers… instead of seeing women as individuals… I would rather say that my female friends are feminist…feminists sounds better…when leftist use *BACIM* it is a false sign saying that women are your equals…some of the female socialist also use it…but …this is a part of the old socialism…we are different…we are not conform to this kind of crap…

The concept *BACIM* was related to a discourse of power. In my understanding this had similarities to the discourse of patriarchy that evolved with the feminist movement in Western Europe in the late 1970ties. Patriarchy was conceptualised as a system of male dominance over women. In Turkey this debate linked to what Karin Widerberg (1996) conceptualised as radical feminism. In radical feminism the division of labour was organised by gender and suppression of women was related to men's control over women's sexuality. But opposite to the feminist movement in Europe, the feminist movement in Turkey have not gained the similar support because popular movements never really have had a chance to develop. Until very recent the husband's authority was sustained by law and this moral authority seems deeply embedded in the society (see Chapter 2. Socio-Historical background).

The question of men's control over women's sexuality was an essential question to the feminist movement. But there seemed to be an internal political disagreement among men on how to relate to this question. The following quotation from Mehmet clarified the question of whether the feminist movement was regarded as a part of the socialist movement or if it was an independent fight for women's rights:

> MEHMET: …some feminists are like 'monsters' in my eyes… and then there are those we work together with… like Gül for example – Egemen's girl-friend… she is also a comrade, but I prefer to say female friend or just friend… when it is your friend you don't have to say whether it a 'she' or a 'he'… just your friend… in the real world women and men have sex and look upon each other as representatives for the opposite sex… this is the natural way people are together… oh, no I don't believe any man who call women *BACIM*…but it is very strange how I find myself saying *BACIM* sometimes when we are talking politics…

All the other informants agreed with Mehmet. As leftists they felt obliged to call their female comrades *BACIM* but were not comfortable doing this. Some were not as open as those I have referred to here. This was, in my eyes, a conflict between younger and older leftists. The group of older leftists was regarded with high status and respect, something that made it more difficult to oppose to them. When I asked them how they solved this they displayed a pragmatically solution. As Volkan told me:

> VOLKAN: "When I am in settings where *BACIM* is used I just smile and we talk, but when I am together with my female friends I never call them *BACIM*…I don't want to accept the pressure to see women as *BACIM*".

Mehmet was also drawn in two opposite directions:

> MEHMET: "I don't think I would stand up against the use like the younger feminist do… what matters is how you actually treat women and not whether you call them this or that…but usually when leftist men talk about women they use *BACIM*…"

Summing up there seems to be an inner contradiction within the leftist network on how women and sexuality was conceptualised. Red feminists and young men were sceptical to the tradition of naming women as *BACIM* because of its immanent denial of sexuality. They seemed to be divided between loyalty to their socialist tradition and loyalty to their knowledge of feminism.

Young and old feminists and responsible men

Young leftist tended to reject to address their female comrades as *BACIM*, and saw this as part of and older male leftist vocabulary. But because this understanding seemed be deeply rooted in their male habitus it was not easy to transfer into practice. They escaped the difficulties by spending more time together with same age leftist women than with leftist men, and by acting '*respectful*' or '*political correct*' if older socialists were present. Acting 'respectful' or 'political correct' implied that they followed the moral codex inherent in the authoritarian pattern of interaction, as I have explored above. The type of 'political correctness' that I witnessed might also have been a cultural lag from the socialist discourse and as such the key to their contradictory position in relation to women. These

authoritarian patterns were present in the leftist network when men addressed older men with a respected position as *abi* - big brother. The term *abla* - big sister – for women is also common but this term either requires a closer relation between the man and the women or else it indicated that you had a rural background. Because it connoted backwardness and reactionary behaviour, it didn't achieve the same importance as *BACIM*. One central aspect of leftist's identity was constructed in opposition to the rural – the Other - that was regarded as reactionary and boorish.

When Volkan tried to explain the difference between the young and the older feminists, it became clear to me that social understandings of sexuality was immanent in his habitus that in a way determined him to act or behave different:

> VOLKAN: …it is just some feminist whom you never think of as women, and those are the most 'red' ones… most of us are careful when we are together with them…at least I can speak for myself… it is exhausting to be correct all the time…to be controlled…but this does not mean that I change a lot when I am with feminists of my own age … I am maybe not only so tensed.

Volkan was underlining that being together with older feminists required a different behaviour, a more controlled behaviour. His habitus demanded this controlled behaviour because it had incorporated the discourse on the sexually unavailable women. Because Volkan was distinguishing between 'red feminists' and 'other feminists' he tried to challenge this inner contradiction with his own habitus.

Yurtkan also experienced this contradiction and was more relaxed when he was together with same-age women:

> YURTKAN: I don't behave bad to women in my own age either, just different maybe… I mean… probably I am more relaxed together with them… more myself…not so controlled, as I am when I am together with the older feminists…

'Relaxed behaviour' appeared as the contradiction to 'controlled behaviour' and can be related to the indirect nature of sexuality. In a Freudian interpretation of sexuality the controlled behaviour implied in the category of *BACIM* appeared problematic, because it is a denial of sexuality that seemed to create a vacuum because it implied a loss of the possibility to experience sex. Also Irfan commented on the different praxis towards women depending on their age. Irfan perceived the older feminists as aggressive wanting to prove themselves. It seemed like a power game. In Irfan's understanding the power game occurred more essential for older feminists than for those of same-age:

> IRFAN: Some feminist makes you more aware of what you say and how you act, and with others you feel more equal. For me age constitutes the difference...I am more natural when I discuss with feminists on my own age than with older ones. The older ones always wants to 'teach' something...they always look at you from above and correct us...of course they are right in most of the things because they have been fighting for human rights or women questions for many years, it is just the way they do it I don't like... like it is a power game...they have to win...because we are men we are to be 'taught' how to act equal...in that sense it is much easier to be discussing with feminist my own age...we don't have this power game between us...These feminist they act as if they where men... I mean of course there is no difference... but sometimes it is like they have to prove themselves...this is also the case for some of the younger feminists... but... they are not as aggressive as the older ones...

Their different behaviour towards older or younger feminist occurred as different aspects of their leftist identity along a continuum of socialism. This conflict seemed to be linked to their understandings of themselves as civilised. They were preoccupied to be civilised men. For a leftist man '*being civilised*' was intertwined with respect towards women that required a conceptualisation of women as asexual. Within the context of the hierarchical and authoritarian social structure embedded in the Turkish society, socialism aimed to alter all inequality including the women's question. Within this context the vocabulary of *BACIM* aimed to indicate an egalitarian political struggle. The terminology of *BACIM* had become an unquestioned part of the socialist tradition immanent in their habitus. Therefore the connection between civilisation and socialism evolved out of the hierarchical and authoritarian political climate. Even if the younger feminists heavily influenced my informants, the internalised socialist tradition seemed to be embedded in their masculinity.

To be regarded an appropriate leftist among older feminists or more experienced leftist they 'swallowed a camel' and conceptualised women as *BACIM*. The particular civilising process in Turkey created a strong division between the modern, western elite that was urban, and the traditional rural masses. Civilisation among leftist was a project aiming at the annihilation of the hegemonic image of men that departed in the rural masses that they prescribed little self-restraint and that they meant was guided by their instincts and emotions only. The rural masses constituted the definite Other they used to define their own leftist identity. Compared to the image of the uncontrolled rural man they wanted to appear as civilised. The truly civilised were regarded as those who had developed individualities, those who could think and act autonomously and who had the powerful mechanisms of internal control. The civilised can be characterised by what Featherstone calls controlled 'de-control of emotions' (Featherstone in Kandiyoti 2002b:38).

But leftist were troubled by their influence by younger feminists and their knowledge to feminism as a project aiming to address of women's sexuality. To do this they had to address sexuality as a part of women's subjectivity and individuality.

> MEHMET: "…I told you… I mean…for me women cannot be *BACIM* because then you don't see them as individuals…*BACIM* is a way to connect women to men…a sister… she is not just a woman…"

In their negotiation of masculinity developed in the tension between the civilised socialists and the feminists, the ability to address women's subjectivity was evaluated. Volkan elaborated on what occurred as a paradox for him:

> VOLKAN: "…you know as a leftist I regard myself as a civilised man, but I think maybe that I am a bit afraid those feminists that initiated the feminist movement [in Turkey]. They have a special thing over them… difficult to explain…but something about them…like they are untouchable or superior….I don't know what to do… instead I try to forget that they are feminist and I try to act civilised… as I think they would except a man to do…"

As we can see Volkan's understanding of civilisation refers directly to how a civilised man treats women. He claimed some feminist women necessitated a different attitude and behaviour, because they belonged to that generation of women. This was also confirmed by my observation that they stopped speaking in the cocky-like, teasing tone when a so-called *BACIM* came to the table. Conceptualising women as *BACIM* required that they were alert to behave civilised. To be civilised meant to be political correct and required a controlled behaviour. We remember Volkan said: '*… it is exhausting to be correct all the time…to be controlled…*'

Leftists controlled behaviour seemed to a problematic project aiming to separate themselves from hegemonic masculinity that they perceived as uncontrolled. Inherent in this project is a theme of <u>guilt</u> that Bob Connell addressed in men's encounters with feminism. He writes; *"His task, in responding to feminism was therefore to change his head, to adopt more supportive attitudes towards women, and to criticize other men's attitudes"* (Connell 1994:129). For my informants guilt seemed to be a theme but not a private psychological problem like Connell here describes it. Their interest and encounter with feminism seemed to be a matter of resistance. Feminism presented a sphere where they could negotiate a redefinition of the cultural available image of men. The rejection of hegemonic masculinity seemed to be a project of resistance against the cultural available role for men.

The concept *BACIM* referred to how women were conceptualised as female comrade within the leftist network. The younger generation of men felt drawn between the two directions within a continuum of socialism. My informants felt closer to the feminists that wanted to establish an individual fight:

> MEHMET: "…I told you… I mean…for me women cannot be *BACIM* because then you don't see them as individuals…*BACIM* is a way to connect women to men…a sister… she is not just a woman…I mean…even your sister is an individual…she is a human being with own thought…and the crap that calling women for *BACIM* as if that shows that men don't think of women in sexual terms…"

All my informants experienced a loyalty-conflict between socialism and the feminism. They supported the younger feminists but were ambivalent on their own part in this development and how this contributed to create a sphere for their negotiations of masculinity. Contradictory values within the leftist network immanent in the conceptualisation of *BACIM* prescribed two different ways of civilisation. How young leftist men related to the notion *BACIM* seemed to indicate a sphere where they could to renegotiate and redefine masculinity. This project was guided by the rejection of the cultural available image of men.

To conclude negotiation of masculinity and leftist identity was intertwined with the women's discourse on women and sexuality. The term *BACIM* that was widespread among the older generation of socialists implied certain ambiguities they resisted against. I suggested that the resistance against this was a problematic project because it was internalised in their male habitus through the cultural understanding of women inherent from Islam's conceptualisation of sexuality. *BACIM* that was an ideological term developed in the triangle between *Islamism*, *Ottomanism* and *Turkism*, produced asexual women within the political collective in a suspect way because it implied a Freudian denial of sexuality. In this way sexuality was linked to the feminist movement in a form of guilt among men.

There seemed to be similarities between leftists' relations to the term *BACIM* and the Freudian-Marxist position that emerged in Europe in the aftermath of 1968 and where Erich Fromm and Herbert Marcuse were key references[16]. The essence of this position was

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[16] I thank Willy Pedersen for making me aware of these similarities.

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a fuse of Marxism and psychoanalysis to forge a revolutionary sexual radicalism which argued that capitalism sexually repressed the masses in the interest of its life negating and exploitative goods. Sexual energy had been colonised and serviced capitalisms focus on consumption and sexual emancipation was linked to the revolutionary outcomes. In the Turkish socialist context this was articulated as the struggle against the asexual women because it reproduced other discourses that were suppressing women. Since my informant not made explicit references to either Fromm or Marcuse I asked İskender Savaşır[17] both in his position as a psychiatrist but also as a leading figure among the intellectual leftist elite, if he could clarify the situation. According to Savaşır, Marcuse was first translated to Turkish in the late 1980ties and the Freudian-Marxist perspective became especially significant within a circle of intellectuals after 1989. This seemed to indicate two essential things to support my analysis; first that the collapse of the communist world had a greater impact for socialists in Turkey than it might have had in the rest of the Western world, and that it created a kind of vacuum. Secondly that within this particular sphere that had challenged the very *raison d'être* for socialist in Turkey, the emancipating aspects from Fromm and Marcuse articulated through the specific Freudian-Marxist that had emerged in Western Europe 10 year earlier gained scope and were revitalised. Today the fact that I met not specific references to neither of the key references might indicate that this position has become internalised in the leftist cultural expression.

In the tension between socialism and feminism understanding of sexuality leftist developed a sphere for negotiation of masculinity. This redefinition of masculinity was also intertwined with a civilising process where the rural masses constituted the definite Other because they where not thought to have a self- restraint and was merely guided by their emotions. In this context their controlled behaviour towards sexuality appeared as civilised. Leftists' negotiations on masculinity seemed to follow the traits of feminists' discourse on women and sexuality.

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[17] This was an 'e-mail conversation' dated 11th June 2004 where İskender Savaşır upon my request, clarified the historical development of sexual emancipation according to his own experiences.

Men, Love and Marriage

In our rampant 'individualisation' relationships are mixed blessings. They vacillate between sweet dream and a nightmare, and there is no telling when one turns into the other

(Baumann 2003: viii)

The structural changes that began already in the *Tanzimat*[18] period (1839 – 1876) were the start of a long historical development with profound effects on the social life in Turkey. Summarising, this period started what later came to be the loss of the religious authority of the theocratic state. This development was firmly established with the declaration of the Turkish republic in 1923. The gradual change from an Islamic, theocratic, multiethnic empire to a modern, secular nation-state was exemplified with the transformation of the discourse on women and the actual changes that involved women's position. In this transition the discourse on women became a convenient vehicle for the projection of fears of loss of control, and the debate on women's mental life signalised a more general anxiety for non-rational, asocial behaviour. The republican nationalist discourse sat up structures of passive defence around areas regarded as essential; the family, women and home and the most influential one was the symbolic shield of the sexual unavailable women (Kandiyoti 2000). This nationalist response seemed to be significantly double; secular and religious with each side supporting the other. In the public realm men could compromise themselves with the new order of things, but at home men continued an atmosphere steeped in the past. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk adopted the Swiss Civil Code in 1926, and together with other fundamental changes i.e. the dress revolution, he challenged the legacy of the separation between the male - public sphere and the female - private sphere. The Civil Code of 1926 was persistent but in 2001 with a fragile majority

it went through major changes. More persistent is the significance of marriage and how it still is a markedly family affair largely coloured by practical, long-term concerns for the household. In the rural areas of Turkey marriage is predominantly a manifestation of an arrangement between two <u>families</u> and not between two <u>individuals</u>, while the practices in the urban areas and big cities constitute a confusing multitude of different solutions. If I should suggest a typical aspect in common of the various practices of understanding of how marriage is a family affair, it must be the careful planning and listing of the desired qualities at the future partner, from his/her level of education to his/her style of conversation. The whole process of getting married seem to be guided by this careful planning of all eventualities that marriage might bring and is not uncommon to do this together with your mother. Marriage is an important decision because it signalise the transition to an adult and responsible life, marriage means establishing your own family.

Traditionally through marriage the woman is absorbed in the man's family and is supposed to cut her emotional bonds with her family of origin. She will call her mother-in-law 'mother' and her father-in-law 'father' because they constitute her new family. The tradition of labelling parents-in-law as 'mother' and 'father' is also common practice among the urban families, but the bond between the women and her family is regarded as natural and continues. The relation to parents-in-law usually develops into an emotional strong and influential relation also for the husband.

Another general aspect of marriage is that it is sought to be a frame for experiences of intimacy and sexuality. Intimacy and sexual relations between men was quite common and not regarded suspiciously in the Ottoman Empire. But with development of a sexual morality based on a denial of female sexuality men's intimacy and virility implied an immanent double relationship to sexuality; limited to women and whose sexuality not where to be public. There is a tradition of authoritarian and patriarchal patterns profoundly

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[18] The *Tanzimat* period is of central importance when understanding the special character of contemporary Turkey's social and cultural patterns. *Tanzimat* as I have explained earlier is the Ottoman term for *reordering* or *reorganisation* and refers to a set of modernising reforms, which introduced important changes in the legal, educational and administrative structure of the Ottoman Empire. After two centuries of military defeat and territorial retreat, Western-oriented Grand Viziers acting under the disguised guidance of Western powers carried out these reforms. They had far-reaching consequences for the Ottoman society, including the rise of a Western looking, centralised, bureaucratic elite and the relative loss of the powers of the *ulema* (the religious authorities), who saw their monopoly over the legal and educational system being gradually eroded (Kandiyoti, 2000).

rooted the Turkish society that prescribes the hegemonic masculinity paradigm. These patterns are reproduced through essential institutions such as the family, education and the military. Where there for leftists any alternatives to marriage like the institutionalisation of the co-living unit in the Scandinavian society?

Among leftist I noticed a profound concern for the quality of love, both its promises and difficulties that I have not met among more conventional groups of men. Every time we sat down the same thing happened; after the first usual comments i.e. How are you? What did you think of the meeting? - the agenda changed and they started to talk about their contrary feelings of love in relation to women. Sometimes it seemed difficult to separate their ideas of women and love from politics and these topics seemed to be intricately intertwined. Love and politics seemed to go hand in hand. Any discussion of love seemed to touch upon political aims as when Volkan supported the change of the civil code and argued that it might help loosening the relations between men and women. It seemed that their personal political project very much was attached to the feminist movement and to their ideas about women and sex. In my understanding this involved that their personal political project implied resistance to categorise women as asexual human beings. This idea was inherited in *Kemalism* ideas that formed a kind of state-socialism in the meaning that there was only 'one' truth and that was the national truth. Since the new Turkish republic in 1923 women participated in the public sphere in difference from the previous Ottoman Empire where women in general were perceived as a man's property – first the father then the husband. It is important to add that this separation between private and public sphere inherited from the Ottoman Empire that trough tradition has been continued until today never reached the same level in the rural areas as in the cities. Carol Delaney's book *The Seed and the Soil* (1986) is an example of the gender understanding in a small village. She describes how the house and the neighbourhood were women's domain and her main message in the book is the connection between reproduction, gender and religion. And in the cities there are also huge differences between the different layers of the population depending on what tradition that have been common in their *memleket* - their homeland, and their migration to the cities. Among others is Diane Sunar's article on the middle class family *Change and Continuity in the Turkish Middle Class Family* (2002). She concludes that: *"even if collectivistic or communal values have not disappeared they have been heavily moderated in the urban middle class by a new emphasis on love, personal fulfilment and happiness"* (2002:235). In what ways is the leftists' focus on

women's sexuality both as a result of this development, and at the same time a beginning of new masculinity constructions?

The concern for and emphasis on love in the case for my informants also seemed to be a search for autonomy. As such, this witnessed a development with similarity to many Western European countries where search for individual autonomy has entered the intimate relationship between men and women (Giddens 1992). Even if love mainly was discussed on the private agenda it was more than just a private concern. Love had become an ethical, public discourse that transcended the differences between the private and the public. Leftist wanted to re-define the discourse on women, but this time focused on women's sexuality as natural and not as a denial or covert form from the sexual unavailable women. Their struggle to redefine love and sexuality seemed to depart in a long tradition in Ottoman classic literature and in religious mysticism. Within this search for autonomy how was masculinity negotiated? To comprehend my informant's relation to and importance attached to love as a part of their project to alter masculinity I would like to explore how they defined *love* different form *love in marriage*. These two understandings of love reflected two different Turkish words for love: *AŞK* and *SEVGİ*. How does leftists' male habitus predetermine their redefinition of virility and manhood? And in what respect are leftists' negotiations of masculinity reproducing traditional patterns of hegemonic masculinity?

Love, intimacy and seduction

My informants' understandings for love in the meaning of *AŞK* related to intimacy and were a search for the uncommitted love, desire and passion. The cultural understanding of *AŞK* historically implied intimacy and solidarity between men, but this seemed to be altered from the late Ottoman period and peaked with the secularisation of Turkey. That the relations between men could develop into intimate feelings that were naturally accepted is one of the themes in Orhan Pamuk's historic novel *My name is Red*, but also other sources describes a similar cultural tradition. New and revolutionary ideas had been influential since around 1850. And with the new republic in 1923 men's intimacy was linked to women and institutionalised even stronger through the Turkish Civil Code of 1926 where monogamous marriages were made compulsory, because the

republic aimed at altering most of the culture that represented the past. With Mustafa Kemal Atatürk Western ideals and values was mixed with a nationalist awakening that were to be internalised in the Turkish population. The new republic legitimised itself through entrance of the state into the family with laws of inheritance; into the workplace with the institution of a twenty-four hour day and secular weekend; into religious authority with the formal acceptance of women into public life and into the very way of thinking through the change from Arabic to Latin alphabet. In today's contemporary Turkey women is a natural part of society and many of civil servants are women (SIS 1999). Women form a major part of the workforce and inhabit typical female jobs like nurses, and teachers. So even if Anthony Giddens depicts Western society, his analysis of how the contemporary definition of love is linked to female emancipation and autonomy with some restrictions, is illuminating for the Turkish society. Having said this I immediately would like to add that his analysis mainly serves a function on the sphere of the Turkish culture that is influenced by the Western culture. Giddens claims that men have been excluded from the reformulation of romantic love: *"Men, like women, fall in love and have done so throughout the recorded past. They have also over the last two centuries been influenced by the development of ideals of romantic love, but in a different way than women. (…) The connection between romantic love and intimacy were suppressed, and falling in love remained closely bound up with access: access to women whose virtue or reputation was protected until, at least, a union was sanctified by marriage* (1992:60). Giddens claims that men are interested in love because it gives access to women. This only seemed to address a part of the in the leftist context in Istanbul. Seduction and access to women seemed to be a part of the hegemonic masculinity paradigm and connected masculinity to virility. But my informants were struggling against this very paradigm because they were stereotyped by it.

Even if seduction in general is understood as a positive value among men, my informants seemed to disparage seduction and 'one night stands'. To seduce a woman was not unambiguous for my informants, because as much as they disparaged it, it seemed to constitute a part of their habitus as men and not as leftist. Leftists searched to establish a sphere that allowed renegotiations of masculinity in the tension between political conviction, a genuine desire to challenge the power behind hegemonic masculinity, and their male habitus.

Pierre Bourdieu explores the male gender in his book *The Masculine Dominance* (1999). With an ethnographic point of departure in the Algerian tribe of Kabylia he describes how the male habitus incorporates the objective social structures such that the

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individual is brought up with and educated under and how these structures develops as mental structures. Bourdieu claims that the male individual is impelled by the mental structures that urge the man to be virile and this virility is deeply rooted in the male habitus (1999). Virility signifies the physical expression of male dominance. Bourdieu does not want to except the men from guilt only that a struggle to liberate women from male dominance must be followed by an attempt to liberate the men from the similar structures that makes them contribute to force their dominance on women. He continues and claims that the fuss around the Viagra-pill when it conquered Europe witnesses that the anxiety for the virility and its physical manifestations in no way is an exotic peculiarity that only can be prescribed Algeria or Mediterranean societies. For me Bourdieu's analysis is difficult to transfer directly because my informants contested the importance of virility and claimed to be victims for same dominance themselves. They distanced themselves from virile expressions like 'one-night-stands' and this was an essential part of their leftist identity.

But if I read Bourdieu's analysis of virility as an analysis of *doxa* – as the hegemonic and unquestioned masculinity that describe the male dominance, it is an analysis of the Turkish society and its societal education of men trough schools and military. As such many of the male rituals especially in the military that involves regular manhood tests aiming to strengthen the virile solidarity, and in this way Bourdieu's analysis can be read as an analysis of the Turkish society as patriarchal and authoritative. The male habitus that Bourdieu describes might be understood not in individual terms but as a description of a <u>common male habitus</u>. If this interpretation is valid, it draws attention to leftist ambiguous position as men and the dominance that automatically was prescribed them because they represented 'men as a group'. In this interpretation there are parallels to Connell's definition of hegemonic masculinity (1994). Connell described men's different positions towards the hegemonic masculinity paradigm and how some groups were suppressed by the hegemonic norm in the same way as women were. Leftists' male identity seemed to be constituted as a kind of 'group identity' that had been subordinated and marginalised by the hegemonic masculinity paradigm but at the same time it emerged as complicit. By this I mean that their negotiations of masculinity took place in the tension between their group identity and at the same time they seemed to be involved in a reproduction of the hegemonic masculinity through the institution of marriage, because marriage was incorporated in their habitus through its function as a male rite-de-passage.

Marriage between tradition and love

As I said above, almost all my informants claimed they didn't want to stay single forever. Yurtkan, Mehmet, Emre, Onur and Bumin - told me that it was only a question of when they were going to marry and not <u>if</u> they were to marry or not. My divorced informants; Volkan and Farih were speaking about the value of being single, but claimed they probably would marry again. Taner; the unmarried told me that he was ambiguous about marriage because it implied a lot of responsibilities, but at the same time marriage would give him a different status.

> TANER: … you see… I look at my friends … married friends… and… really… I mean… they <u>are</u> more… what can I say… more… mature maybe… they have a different weight behind their words… but… maybe this sounds weird… but you know… there is a difference… maybe it isn't in what they say… maybe it is how they say it… or maybe it is in my mind? …

Marriage seemed to be an inevitable stage in life. But paradoxically marriage occurred as both inevitable and voluntary at the same time. In seemed that aspects of tradition was essential, the fact that through marriage they occupied a different position in society. They seemed to be regarded as mature, adults after they married. In this sense marriage seemed to be a rite-de-passage. But marriage as a rite-de-passage did not appear totally unambiguous. Respect for tradition seemed to be rooted in respect for family and parents and in this sense it might be understood as a part of the male habitus. In Turkey there is little tradition for developing political opposition based on popular movements – as for example the feminist movement did in Western Europe. Since the Ottoman Empire there has existed a fundamental suspicion of social or political movements and this was continued by the republican Turkey and maybe even extended in practice after the introduction of parliamentary democracy in the mid 1950'ties (Özdalga & Liljeström, 2002). Many of the political crises that three times after the first free elections have resulted in military interventions may be seen as arising from a deep-seated patriarchal and elitist social structure that can be observed in everyday life. These are for example the relationship between parent and child/ teacher and student/ or between married spouses men and women where the authority is the first. A part of my informants' leftist identity was to reconstruct this and both politically and personally they struggled for a more egalitarian and democratic Turkey. Along this struggle it seemed that tradition and voluntariness was two parallel discourses working side by side. Yurtkan told me that for him it was unthinkable to stay single:

> YURTKAN: … you know how it is… I mean… how can you imagine not to marry? I don't understand those who claim they won't… really I can't… I mean I can… but … when you marry it becomes a different story… excuse me, but it is difficult to explain …. I am sorry that I cannot give you a simple explanation… it isn't easy… if I were to choose again… would I marry? ... I probably would … you see… there are so many things connected to marriage… marriage is a thing you do both for your family and for yourself…if you understand…

Yurtkan had difficulties giving a simple explanation to what marriage meant to him. He claimed that *'there are so many things connected to marriage'* and he referred to both tradition and to the voluntariness. Then he analysed marriage in the Turkish society:

> YURTKAN: …it is probably like this in most societies… I mean it is not only in Turkey that marriage is important… but you see… here it's something different… because of the tradition in Turkey it is almost impossible only to live together. You see… in Turkey if you don't marry... that's similar to a Muslim wedding… and the woman is not protected at all… you see… this is Turkey… marriage protects women… that is why religious marriages not are legal… it doesn't give any protection… so you see… if you live with a woman without marrying her… everybody will be… you know… it is very difficult… most for the women… but for you too… how can you defend yourself? How can you say that you support the feminists? ... how can you say you protect women and speak of equality?

Yurtkan linked both tradition and voluntariness to his identity as civilised, that again was a major part of his political identity as leftist. As leftist and pro-feminist he was loyal to women. But marriage appeared paradoxically because it was inevitable but defined negative. They felt they were forced to marry, because there was no real alternative to marriage. In spite of this marriage in the meaning of being a rite-de-passage was not only positive; it seemed to alter the male personality:

> YURTKAN: … I mean… when you marry you become kind of… you become…more a man maybe?...but you have to be careful… your gained status does not continue for long…

This can be illuminated by Bob Connell's definition of moments of engagement as: *"the moment when the boy takes up the project of hegemonic masculinities as his own"* (1995:123). Bob Connell used this concept when he discussed men who attempted to reform their masculinity because of feminist criticism. This illustrated the contradictions inherent in hegemonic masculinity and how it worked for leftists. The moment of engagement referred to in what extent my informants took up the norm of marrying, and how this influenced their masculinity.

This is exemplified by the Western influence to be civilised. The discourse of being civilised was linked to their male identity because it was a kind of re-defined virility or manhood.

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In this meaning being civilised was very important among leftist, and the following quotation showed that civilisation and marriage mainly was a male project:

> IRFAN:…you know… when I speak with my female friends they hardly talk about getting married… it is strange… because when I speak with my male friends…it is as if… as if… they think they have to marry to stay civilised…they know it doesn't work like that… but still…

As we can see Irfan claimed that his male friends linked marriage to civilisation. Marriage among leftist became civilised because it manifested itself in opposition to the rural and religious context where the male authority is the rule. According to a Muslim religious marriage men can have more than one wife and can divorce by claiming in front of witnesses that the wife is 'free' three times. This urge for civilisation was based on a wish to interpret cultural differences by integrating them into a linear theory of evolution or modernisation. When applied on the marriage as an institution, this perspective defines the religious marriages as traditional in a rural society and the secular marriage as urban/traditional representing a society in transition to be fully developed and modern. As far as I could understand this idea was widespread and seemed to be an influential aspect behind leftists' ideas.

They had internalised the idea that marriage was necessary for women both as a continuation of this idea originated in the modernisation theory, but also for pragmatic reasons. Yurtkan clarified this when he explained how marriage appeared among his male peers:

> YURTKAN: … you see… besides tradition and your parents…I mean… of course marriage is your decision…but it is also important how marriage is regarded among your friends…specially male friends…because her it is a different discourse sometimes… I mean… of course… we know we are leftist… we act civilised... that cannot be questioned… but you know… it is a bit strange… you have probably heard us talk about it… I mean… when you marry you're … you are somebody's husband… it's different… you know… I mean beside parents in law and all that family stuff… you are not a free man any more… I mean… you should surrender to anybody… marriage is to surrender in a way…

Above Yurtkan expressed that among leftist marriage was a contradiction between being civilised on the one side and being free on the other side. Both being civilised and being free were main aspects of their value assessment.

Marriage seemed to be a 'civilised trap' for my informants. If they resisted marriage but wanted a long-term relation with a woman, they were in danger of neglecting women's situation and the importance of marriage for women. Rejecting marriage implied

a danger of being represented as the rural and ignorant 'Other'. All my informants married for reasons 'outside themselves'. They claimed they married because there was no alternative. This might be understood as the force behind social norms and Bourdieu's analysis of how the male habitus is reproduced and incorporated in society's basic institutions as marriage/family, school and military. In this meaning paradoxically it seemed to encourage my informants unconsciously to continue along hegemonic masculine identity instead providing them with a mean to be able to break apart from it.

The male provider role…

Another widespread ideal attached to men is the duty to provide for the family. In difference to many Western European countries in Turkey a part of the provider duty is survival. Economical obligations appear different because of the total lack of social security. The male provider role is also influenced by the fact that men's salaries in general are higher than that of women's (SIS, 2000). All the men in my material except Irfan were concerned to provide for their families. When they were talking with their male friends I understood that economical responsibilities were essential. The male provider role related to their male identity and not to whether their wives were working or not. As Emre told me:

> EMRE: …I really hope my wife doesn't <u>have to</u> work…. If she wants to that is a different thing… but it's much more economic if she stays at home when we have children…. It is very expensive to find day-care and … the day-care you can find might not be very good….right now she is working… we don't have any children… but when we get children…

They seemed to perceive being the provider as a duty. This duty was increased when they had children. Late in the fieldwork I met Mehmet on the street and we sat down for a cup of tea. His wife had been pregnant when we first started to meet but now she had given birth. I understood from what he said that his economical responsibility strengthened when they had a child:

> MEHMET: … you know… before we had our child everything was different… you know all of a sudden all of the responsibilities are <u>yours</u>… you know… you have a child… it's my responsibility to pay the rent and most of the expenses with the flat … I mean… her salary is her own… I mean… she bought a lot of stuff for the flat… and of course… but… that's her money… she could do what she wanted with it…I mean … still it's my duty to cover the expenses… you know… women's salaries are lower in Turkey… whether you like it or not… my salary covers our expenses…

Mehmet was clear that it was his responsibility to pay for the regular expenses, and even while his wife was working it was *'her'* and *'their'* money, where her salary was regarded as an extra attribute but it was <u>her</u> money that she could decide to spend as she liked. My informants' salaries were regarded as <u>common property</u>, but I question whether their wives were aware of the amount they received, because several times I observed a reluctance to admit what they earned. This might also have been a part of the widespread ethical ideal not to brag about economical advantages that is especially pronounced within the leftist context. This made me aware that it seemed to be more that 'the provider image' converged with the male ideal than duty and responsibility. The others confirmed this. Yurtkan had most responsibilities with his two children and a non-working wife. He claimed:

> YURTKAN: … you know… my wife worked to support me so that I could get my degree… it is… I mean… she sacrificed herself for me… I mean I was the one who <u>should</u> take care of the family … it is my duty … today we live of what I earn … she uses her credit card … and I pay for it (laughing) … that's how it is … that is her economical 'liberty' – actually it is terrible… she is very careful using money… I never ask her how she spends it… I cannot do that… that is how it works here in Turkey… (laughing) …not exactly as Norway, I guess...

Yurtkan quotation clarified how he experienced his duty to provide for his family. They both wanted, that men and women were equal, but regarding economy men *'had more duty than women'* to provide for their family. This might be seen paradoxical and conflicting with their leftist identity based on egalitarian and democratic ideals, but I will use Yurtkan to illustrate how the image of the sole provider was linked to male identity more than the leftist identity.

> YURTKAN: … you know… even if my wife went back to work… I would think that it would be my duty… it is… this is one of the difficulties being a man… I mean… you know how it is in Turkey… if she were working… I wouldn't be much of a man if I expected her to pay for me… maybe one day if she earns more than me… I can accept that we share the responsibilities… it is not that I think it will ever happen… but if it did… we could share…

This quotation clarified how the provider role was essential for him and Yurtkan claimed he *'wouldn't be much of a man'* if he expected <u>her</u> to pay for <u>him</u>. There was not a question of sharing economic responsibilities before his wife would earn more than he did. Yurtkan exemplified how my informants seemed to regard their economical ability as a source to achieve masculinity. But the male provider identity was not unambiguous:

> YURTKAN: … you know… this is just how it is… but I am not very happy with it… I mean… I think of myself as a responsible man … but am I happy to be that man? I don't know… really… it is so difficult… you see… you have to get rid of old hang-ups… I mean as a man… you know… I do it because I think it is the right thing to do… I mean… we all do… but practically it means that I have to work all the time… I work a lot… I know… but it makes me feel good, responsible, as a man I mean… or not necessary… I mean maybe more as a person… yes … I mean… oh, now I am not sure what I think anymore… these are so close connected that it is difficult to separate them… I mean I don't like to say it… but I mean… actually it is as if it becomes a different thing when you have told it to somebody… anyway it doesn't make any difference… I have to pay... but… it is a kind of a duty…

Yurtkan was uncertain about the male provider identity and questioned the masculinity prescribed to it. On the one side he challenged and contested traditional gender patterns and on the other side he continued these patterns. He was drawn between the idea that he appeared masculine by being a provider and the idea that men and women were supposed to be equal and share responsibilities. This can be understood by looking at how hegemonic masculinity seemed to be internalised in their habitus. Their ambiguity towards equality derived from their habitus. Because they in the Bourdieu's line of analysing, had incorporated the surrounding morality since their childhood, by experiencing how men worked, how their fathers brought money to the household – childhood experiences that further was incorporated through the historic discourse. Yurtkan used the word *eski alışkanlıklar* – 'old hang-ups' referring to how he had been socialised as a boy. He felt uncomfortable when he reflected over that he had said, but felt obliged by a duty to provide for his family. In this sense the male dominance Bourdieu describes seemed to be exemplified. The male provider identity had become internalised in their habitus that served to strengthen their male prestige and appreciation. In spite of their leftist identity money and economical capital seemed to be a mean for most of my informants to measure their success as a man.

While the role as provider <u>in marriage</u> seemed to be experienced as a duty and a burden, spending money <u>in a flirt</u> seemed to tangle other aspects of the male identity. I will return to this later in the dissertation.

Marriage and freedom?

Because there was no real alternative to marriage my informants seemed to choose to marry. But it seemed that the understanding of marriage as a rite-de-passage was not unambiguous but influenced by a multitude of understandings of marriage life. Going

through my interviews I realised that my informants sometimes talked about marriage as a family affair, and sometimes how marriage only concerned the individual. Yurtkan spoke of these two conflicting aspects of marriage:

> YURTKAN: … marriage means establishing a family and it concerns your family… I mean… to decide to marry isn't easy…you think about your family… and her family… and her friends…and her work …of course you don't marry only because this… I mean… you marry because you want to marry … to marry is a choice…

Yurtkan seemed to refer to marriage as an institution and the importance marriage had for his family. His family's wishes or values seemed to be a part of his decision, and he respected that for them tradition seemed to be important. So his decision to marry was neither a decision simply concerning his individual liberties nor a duty to his family and respect towards their value assessments. There appeared to be a parallel discourse of tradition and voluntariness:

> VOLKAN: … I married because she wanted to… I mean… of course I was in love with her… just that … you see… she wanted to get away from her family and marrying is a way to do that…you know…as a woman you cannot just start to live with a man…I mean… you know how the tradition is here in Turkey… still it was my choice to marry her…but I felt different after I married…it did something to me as a man… it made me feel different…both more a man in a way, but also less …

Volkan claimed that he married because of several reasons. Partly his wife wanted to get away from her family, partly because of tradition and partly it was a choice he had done. He also explained that he felt changed when he married that seemed to confirm the idea of marriage as a rite-de-passage that altered those who enters it. Volkan both felt 'more a man' and 'less a man' at the same time. This referred to two contradictory ways of being masculine. In the following I will draw upon Michael Herzfeld's Cretan material and Peter Loizos' Greek ethnographic data (Herzfeld 1985, Loizos 1994) to illuminate these contradictions of marriage on men. In Herzfeld field study the neighbourhood and the house were female domains. This implied that men appeared in the houses only by virtue of their relationship to women but that they didn't feel at home in these domains. The male domain was the coffee shop. He claimed that they felt at home in the coffee shops because it offered a space other that their wives' houses. In Herzfeld analysis men are forced out into a public space. In the coffee shop a certain form of masculinity was encouraged. The masculinity encouraged among men in the coffee shop was narratives of the free and uncommitted man (1985). Peter Loizos that writes about masculine sexuality in Greece found the same distinction. He defines these men as 'men of spirits': *"In their discourses*

on being male, they emphasised the notion of the autonomous man, who does not spend his spirit in calculation. He may be married, or he may have chosen to remain unmarried, but if married he is certainly not <u>domesticated</u>" (1994:77, my underline.)

Both Herzfeld's and Loizos' studies were done among men in a village where men and women lived separate lives. As such they are depicting a different culture that the one my informants were living in, since my informants socialised both among men and women. But there were similarities that might be analysed independent of the gender composition. My informants wanted to be *ÖZGÜR* – free, an idea that fitted the style of 'the men of spirits' and tended to have a male *dost* or a 'friend of the heart' that they spent time with. Especially drinking seemed to be essential and every evening if possible. They felt domesticated by marriage and family life because their wives urged them to stay home and to pay more attention to the relationship. But they would not:

> YURTKAN: … my wife always wants to make plans… what are you doing tonight? Etc… I never ask my wife if I can go out, because usually I don't make plans for it… it just happens… then I want to go of course… I call her and say that I will be late…

Men should be out in public, having opinions and taking part. That seemed to be the essence of being leftist and an aspect of the leftist identity that converged with the male identity. They would joke with those they termed *KILIBIK* - the domesticated men. These were men who stressed their constrained conditions as responsible householders with obligations to support women and children. I was surprised when I heard how they described these domesticated men, because in my eyes this seemed to be close to how they described their own situation, but understood that the ideals were depending on the context. The ideal of being responsible seemed to relate to the male ideal as a provider used in family contexts or when women are present. While the ideal of being out in the public, to have opinions and to take part seemed to be an ideal among the peer group. Apparently the ideal of being free took precedence above the ideal of being responsible an aspect that indicated that their identification with the peer group had more importance that the identification with the family. Therefore it seemed essential that Yurtkan claimed he would not ask his wives for permission to go out, rather he would simply inform her that he was. It seemed that the concern to be responsible 'lost' if it conflicted with a possible evening out with friends – especially if the invitation came from a *dost* - 'a friend of the heart'. Their dilemma seemed to be that there existed two contradictory leftist ideals for men of '*being responsible'* on the one side, and '*being free'* on the other side. They followed different ideals for masculinity depending on the context.

The ideal of being responsible seemed to relate to the ideal of an evolution towards the modern society and as such a kind of mean to reach a 'civilised life'. But if it came in conflict with the other ideal of 'being free' it seemed to loos much of its importance. But it seemed that instead of being two <u>incompatible</u> discourses they were two <u>parallel</u> discourses they continuously had to relate to:

> VOLKAN:… there is something strange about love… when you don't have it you want it… when you have it… you make plans for how to end it…because… when you are in a relation with a women… a marriage… like I was… you have to be responsible… that's what marriage is about… isn't it? I am afraid that when I marry again I feel that I have to be responsible again…

In Volkan's case the responsibility that came with marriage apparently was not unambiguous. The responsibility gave him status as civilised, but at the same time this responsibility threatened his relation to his peer group. Establishing a family seemed to imply a threat to masculinity because it implied a change of focus from the peer group to the family. The dilemma of being *ÖZGÜR* – free or being *KILIBIK* – domesticated seemed to be reinforced and marriage seemed to represent a contradictory rite-de-passage where a fear of that all the 'fun things in life' will end with being mature and responsible. To marry and establish a family meant to become settled and stationary. Their parents' lives appeared as vivid and terrible examples of this:

> MEHMET:… My parents were not in love with each other… they lived two different lives… and my mother always had to adopt my father… she never lived a life for her own … she was living for her children…

Mehmet's image of his parents' marriage was not a happy one and my other informants had similar experiences. The love that developed in marriage seemed to be in opposition to freedom.

> VOLKAN:… I have this very strange idea… even if know that marriage and love are two different things…I don't know… I want it to be different… I haven't lost believe in love… even if I know that I risk myself… I haven' learned… even if I know I risk myself I appreciate the intimacy it brings…

The lack of freedom in love seemed to be related to a loss of autonomy. Love in this sense became a loss of self. As a man the loss of self seemed to be a loss of the subjectivity that was the very point of departure for <u>being</u> a man. Being married implied being in a situation where they lost their subjectivity – or lost themselves. In this sense appreciation of the masculine freedom did not appear as an alien cultural discourse, but they experienced a threat to the existence of their gendered subjectivity. If they were not free,

were they then <u>men</u> or <u>anybody</u> at all? At the same time love was developing for the male self and here is Zygmunt Baumann definition guiding: *"Love is about adding to the world – each addition being the living trace of the loving self; in love, the self is, bit by bit transplanted to the world. The loving self expands through giving itself away to the loved object. Love is about self's survival-through-self's-alterity"* (2003:9). This paradox seemed to appear between love and marriage. Love in marriage was understood as commitment and a self-sacrifice that contradicted the male urge for freedom that intrinsically seemed to be a part of the male subjectivity.

Cultural understandings for LOVE

> Passion is secularised, taken out of *amour passion*, and reorganised as the romantic love complex; it is privatised and redefined.

<div align="right">Gidden (1992:175)</div>

The discourse of love seemed to be a public issue and was discussed as current political topics, economy or other existential questions were. Love seemed to be a gathering issue among my informants. A very good reason to meet would be talk about the difficult relations to women and love. In company with their *dost's*[19] - 'friends of heart' love seemed to be in focus. They would '*gather to talk over a glass of raki[20]*' where they '*talked about love and politics'*.

   In Turkish there are two translations for the English word LOVE; *sevgi* and *aşk*[21]. I was guided to this distinction by the following conversation:

> VOLKAN: …My wife wanted to be loved… (*SEVGİ*)…. Women whom have not experienced love in their family they search for *SEVGİ* through marriage…but that's not that I want… I mean… AŞK is something different…. when we [men] are together and talk of love we never talk of *SEVGİ* … we talk about AŞK..

> VOLKAN: … you know what… I think it changes when you marry… then you kind of become conform … you know…I agree… *SEVGİ* is a different feeling than AŞK …

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[19] In the translation to be 'friends of heart' lies that dost's are special friends. Their relations to *dost's* were special and in my experience more intimate than male Western friendships.

[20] Raki is a Turkish anise alcohol. It is mixed with water and turns milky white. This is the reason it is also called 'lion milk'; lion because it is regarded as a drink for men, milk because of the colour.

[21] Pronounced ASHK

VOLKAN:… do you believe in AŞK?...

VOLKAN:… Yes! Don't you?...

The notion of SEVGİ was related to love in marriage and the negative aspect of commitment or sacrifice. The love that develops in a marriage was described as a kind of a compulsory love, it was compulsory because of the commitment and the sacrifice that almost was intrinsic in it. In opposition to this *AŞK* connoted a positive and more uncommitted love. *AŞK* means: '*love, amour, passion*' while SEVGİ means: '*love, affection, compassion*' (Turkish-English Dictionary. Redhouse 1968). The two words for love in Turkish might seem synonymous but looking closer to their meanings the difference becomes obvious. While the old word for SEVGİ; *MUHABBET* etymologically goes back to the <u>divine love</u> a man was supposed to have to God, *ASK* relates to passion and the <u>mundane love</u> between human beings.

These two Turkish translations for love were guiding according to understand how love must be understood as an essential part of my informant's male identity. The Islamic philosophers were influenced by the Greek thoughts and were searching for a parallel to the pair EROS/AGAPE. Since love in the meaning as SEVGİ (in the Ottoman-Turkish language the form was *muhabbet* (Arabic mahabba) related to the love for God it demanded a sacrifice of self and it is it attitude of soul which implies devotion and 'love for God'. According to Islamic philosophy *muhabbet* (or the original Arabic form mahabba) *"corresponds to the Greek agape"* (Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition, 2001, p. 279). In modern Turkish language muhabbet has developed into the notion of SEVGİ and does not only describe the love between a man and a woman, but comprises the love from a mother to a child, the love between family members, and the love and affection between friends. In this meaning of the word SEVGİ among my informants is given a negative and fix meaning, a kind of love that demands commitment and self-sacrifice.

The notion of *AŞK* has a different origin and a different religious-philosophical history. *AŞK* (originally '*i<u>sh</u>k*) in its most general acceptation describes the irresistible desire *"to obtain possession of a loved object or a being. It betrays, therefor, in one who experiences it (the 'a<u>sh</u>ik), a deficiency, a want, which he must supply at any cost in order to reach perfection"* (Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol. IV, 1990, p. 118). I find it interesting that the value of the pair of *AŞK* and SEVGİ seems to be opposite the Greek pair of EROS and AGAPE, and in spite of not being a religious notion, as far as I can understand this is

related to the philosophical origin of the word *AŞK*. The Islamic philosophers were socially and historically influenced by and admired the classical Greek philosophy. When they established the Islamic philosophy, in Turkish *felsefe* – this was *"a continuation of Greek thought, but no perfect continuity, since the Arabic-speaking Muslims were not a part of the movement in which philosophy was developing"* (http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ei/falsafa.htm Source: from the Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1999.) Leaning on these sources of the encyclopaedia of Islam the notion *AŞK* have had a different meaning than that of *EROS*, in spite of the parallels between the two. Although non-kuranic, this word attained a considerable importance in Arabic literature in the broad sense, and *"in analysing it we come to recognise the conditions in which Arabic-Islamic thought developed"* (Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol. IV, 1999, p. 118). With the development of the Islamic philosophy the notion of *AŞK* became intellectualised. *"It became the spontaneous, lucid, and methodical stretching out towards supreme happiness (…), for which the intellect freed from the illusions of knowledge transmitted through the senses, takes on the meaning of the pure good. The more the wise man advances in his passionate quest for the one True One, the more he feels growing within him the ineffable joy, the absolute pleasure, which are secured through the contemplation of the perfection and beauty of the necessary Being."* (Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol. IV, 1999, p. 119). According to this quotation the irresistible desire – *AŞK* – implied a question that preoccupied the human mind to such an extent that religious philosophers took part in the definition of the causes, the manifestations and the aims of love. Whatever the differences of the opinion about its content *"'ishk is one of the characteristics of mediaeval self awareness, obsessed with the quest for the eternal, the transcendent and the sacred* (Encyclopaedia of Islam, vol. IV, 1999, p. 119).

In the light of the above clarification of the philosophical and historic roots of the notion *AŞK*, it gives meaning that my informants value the feelings of *AŞK* higher than the feeling of SEVGİ. In this discourse *AŞK* become equivalent to the notion LOVE used in our liquid modern society. The desire to experience *AŞK*, was a desire to experience the uncommitted love. The urban culture seemed to comprise both a valuing of fix and durable bonding between human beings and at the same valuing the looser bonding that modern society demands. The ties in the liquid society *"must be tied loosely so that they can be untied again (…)* (Baumann 2003, back cover). The emphasis on *AŞK* might have been a kind of renaissance of an old tradition with focus on uncommitted love and desire.

To conclude the negotiations of masculinity among leftist takes a specific form in the tension between their historic traditions and contemporary discourses existing side by side.

Historically these tensions can be traced back to the *Tanzimat* period (1839 – 1876). This civilising process that started with *Tanzimat*, and was developed under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the republic from 1923 has been fought out in an uneasy triangle involving Islam as the foundation of the Ottoman Empire, Westernisation and nationalism. Its most explicit expression appeared in how marriage was regarded as a rite-de-passage through which they achieved a position of responsibility that was essential to the male identity. In spite of their leftist identity's urge for freedom and resistance against settled and stationary value assessments they admitted that marriage still functioned as a rite-de-passage. But immanent in the understanding of marriage as a rite-de-passage was also the tradition of seeing marriage as an institution for women that seemed to imply a different level of involvement in marriage from men than from women. Marriage played its most important role in the family context or towards the girlfriend's/wife's family and implied that the sexual moral that prescribed that women's sexuality must be controlled by men that was immanent in their history, was re-established and continued. This both legitimated and affirmed that their negotiations of masculinity primarily took place in their peer group especially among friends-of-heart – *dost's* that seemed to constitute the essential in these negotiations.

When the martial law introduced after the military intervention in 1980 was removed from all levels in the society in 1986, the feminist movement established its place in the public discourse. And its struggle was as much aimed at the socialist tradition as it was against reactionary and/or Islamist forces that constituted their political oppositions. This movement that in Turkey started approximately 10 years after their European sisters questioned the development of the sexual unavailable women and the determining place it has had for the understanding of gender and sexuality. This process may be understood as a civilising process where intimacy, virility and manhood where challenged and redefined within a triangle of contradictory ideals; the inherited Ottoman culture based on Islam, Western ideals with a main emphasis on laicism and finally emerging the nationalist discourse. Like all processed this also changed in articulation, but it never seemed to abandon its authoritative and patriarchal patterns that appeared to be almost inherent. The feminist movement challenged exactly these patterns when they challenged the widespread understanding of the sexual unavailable women. Today these patterns pinpointed by the

feminist movement also seemed to have challenged a certain group of men, namely the younger generation of male leftist and their subjectivity because by questioning female sexuality they questioned the essence of male dominance. Within these tensions they try to catch up with different demands on men immanent in the feminist discourse, but they are caught in two parallel socialist discourses, the ideal for freedom on the one side and the ideal of responsibility on the other side. These two contradictory - but parallel discourses, seemed to relate to different contexts, while the first was important regarding the peer group and especially important was their *dost's* - friends of heart, the latter related to women and the family context. Since there are no alternatives to marriage, it becomes inevitable. But the widespread understanding of marriage implies an ambiguous duty for men to be the economical provider of the family. The leftist has higher ambitions concerning the quality of their marriage that are founded in their desire for passion and uncommitted love. But they are troubled with the duty of the male provider that seems to be inherent in their male habitus as a married man because it attributes them an adult's responsibility.

Most young men in urban Istanbul are disposed for the history immanent in the nationalist discourse that constituted the ideological background for the understanding of women and sexuality, but leftist were further troubled by their ethical involvement in the feminist movement. The paradox for leftist was that the nationalist discourse of the sexual unavailable women at the same way was immanent in their socialist tradition. The leftist constructions of masculinity emerged in the tension between their great-grandfathers life at the coffee shop and their mothers domesticated sphere. The younger generation - like my informants, constituted the first group of men with a genuine wish to dissolve the legacy of patriarchy and authoritarian control because they these patterns also affect their position as leftists. But at the same time they seemed to be squeezed between their historical context, the feminist tradition and their own ambitions of 'a free life' that they articulated in their ideal of uncommitted love. The male friendship with *dost's* – friends of heart, was essential because it re-affirmed their free, autonomous male subjectivity in a space where they felt challenged by their own feminist assessments and knowledge. These male configurations might be addresses as a kind of 'coffee shop masculinity'.

Inherent in their male habitus was the specific history of Turkey understood as civilising process that re-defined men's virility and intimacy, but also new developments like the feminist movement that seemed to have a profound influence on the male subjectivity rooted in freedom. Marriage appeared as a 'lived paradox' because of its

inevitable nature that at the same time implied a loss of freedom that was so essential to the male subjectivity. This results in a desire to redefine *SEVGİ* - love in marriage into *AŞK* – the uncommitted love and passion.

Sexuality; resistance and negotiation

> Sexuality becomes a property of the individual the more the life-span becomes internally referential and the more self-identity is grasped as a reflexively organised endeavour.
>
> Giddens (1992:175)

Introductory I will try to give some general understandings of sexuality in everyday life in Turkey. In urban Istanbul where differences and social variations are easier to spot than converging patterns and similarities, so this can only be very schematic and superficial. Still it might be important with a cultural framework to structure the particularity of sexual negotiations among leftist.

Many studies point out that sexual behaviour has been considered a social responsibility rather than a matter of romantic personal choice (Koçtürk 1992, Tekeli 1993, Kandiyoti 1989, 2000). The family strictly regulated sexuality and puberty signalised that both men and women were ready to be married. To fully comprehend this we need to o back historically. With the decline of the Ottoman Empire almost all groups from Islamists who advocated a return to the *Shari'a* laws, to westernists who favoured a radical break with Islam used the conditions of women as an indicator of the moral health of society. The awakening cultural nationalism was created around women's emancipation condemning certain aspects of Ottoman patriarchy such as polygamy and the seclusion of women.

Another aspect to understand sexual behaviour contextually can be illuminated by the idioms of honour and shame. Honour and shame construct various masculinities in terms of the control of women's sexual behaviour. Nancy Lindisfarne (1994) claims that the idioms of honour and shame represent an idealised rhetoric that affirms male superiority over women more than existing as an unambiguous empirical category. She reveals through a thorough analysis of different practices how the honour and shame idioms not prevent premarital sex from taking place it merely seems to prescribe that they need to take precaution and create a reality that 'fits' this idealised world. An important question regarding honour and shame can be traced in classical literature, where rhetoric presents virginity as an all-or-nothing attribute. As such paradoxically seduction of virgins is not merely a widespread idiom that conveys a notion of an almost heroic virility, but this also seems to define the very essence of maleness (Lindisfarne, 1994). For instance

Boudhiba writes of visions of paradise as *"an 'infinite orgasm' where men experience eternal erections and have repeated intercourse with huri's[22] who after each penetration, become virginal again"* (Boudhiba 1985, in Delaney, 1991:319–320). Nonetheless sexual experimentation and even premarital sexual intercourse is not uncommon. To reproduce the ideal of virginity practical arrangements to secure the female virginity like hymen repair are effectuated. The practice of hymen repair raises a question about the relation between notions of virginity and the masculinity they construct. A Spanish saying goes; 'If all Spanish women are virtuous and chaste and all Spanish men are great seducers and lovers, someone has to be lying' (Lindisfarne, 1994). According to Şirin Tekeli (1990) the republic continued this approach and women's emancipation developed into an item of official state ideology. This developed to what she describes as 'state feminism'[23]. But it is important to remember that models for 'respectable' independent womanhood were entirely absent in the Ottoman context where women totally were absorbed into the family's responsibility. To achieve an understanding for sexuality in contemporary Turkey it must be included in its historical and spatial contexts.

The idioms of honour and shame refer to a general understanding of sexuality derived from the Islamic construction of sexuality in a patriarchal society. Still in this dissertation it refers to the understanding of sexuality that leftist opposed to and by referring to these idioms I do not want to suggest a framework to understand their own sexual behaviour. These idioms might be understood as factors working behind the development of the sexual unavailable women that rose as the female ideal with the republic. The fact that women no longer were to veil might paradoxically have dictated new forms of Puritanism that could be mobilised as *symbolic shields* in a society where femininity was incompatible with a public presence (Kandiyoti, 1989). In the first decades

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[22] Huri, Arabic Hawra' , plural Hur in Islam, a beautiful maiden who awaits the devout Muslim in paradise. The Arabic word hawra' signifies the contrast of the clear white of the eye to the blackness of the iris. There are numerous references to the houri in the Qur'an describing them as "purified wives" and "spotless virgins." Tradition elaborated on the sensual image of the houri and defined some of her functions; on entering paradise, for example, the believer is presented with a large number of houris, with each of whom he may cohabit once for each day he has fasted in Ramadan and once for each good work he has performed (Encyclopaedia Britannica Online, http://search.eb.com/)

Some theologians, such as al-Baydawi, preferred to give the houri a metaphoric interpretation. It has also been suggested that Muhammad reinterpreted angels he saw in pictures of Christian paradise as houris.

[23] See the discussion of how this development was influenced by the Islamic understanding of sexuality under Chapter 5.

of the republic, the modernity of the new state was articulated through images of women that paraded in shorts and bearing the flag, in school or military uniform, or in evening dresses in a ballroom. From 1924 to 1950 the Turkish single-party system continued to define women within these images and 'this modern woman' became a central icon in the republic. This development had long-term effects in establishing the legitimacy of a female presence in the public sphere (Kandiyoti, 1997). Yet the primary role of women continued to be defined in a rhetoric language that described women as those of enlightened motherhood and childbearing. It was this 'state feminism' that launched women into the public sphere and put formal equality on the agenda, but lacked a simultaneous development in the sexual morality. The 'modern' women would have to create a new set of signals and codes that would enable her to function in the public sphere without being assaulted. Unlike the veil *"which, by concealing the wearer, confirms her unquestionable femaleness, the severe suit and bare face of the women civil servant can emit powerful messages of sexual unavailability by de-emphasising femininity and projecting a 'neuter' identity"* (Kandiyoti, 1997:126). In this way the management of femininity and sexual modesty became part of the symbolic armour of 'modern' women and thus incorporated in the female habitus, and the republican development of the asexual women functioned as such a *symbolic shield*. In general the sexual moral and the control of sexual behaviour might be said to be a family responsibility ruled by the idealised world of honour and shame. Following the leftist sexual understanding appeared as a form of resistance to this idealised version of sexuality.

What Tekeli (1990) called 'state feminism' that had created 'the sexual unavailable women', and when the Turkish left was hailing these practices it reproduced an understanding of sexual behaviour as social responsibility. For the Turkish left the concept of *BACIM* was meant to imply 'the sexually unavailable women', neither a mother nor a sister but as a symbolic sister – a female comrade. By this the Turkish left reproduced the *Kemalist* sexual moral codex without much critical reflection. Many social researchers have pointed out that this seemed to be an extension that of an ideology where women were perceived as a 'dangerous materials' along with alcohol, gambling and drugs (Berktay, 1993). In this way the male elite in the Turkish Left reproduced a mean to suppress women in the name of protection of solidarity and revolution. In her article '*Has anything changed in the way Turkish Left understand women?'* Fatmagül Berktay (1993) explores how this sexual morality can be traced back to the monotheistic religions where women were regarded as 'the root of all evil'. It is common today to think that this

approach yet was another subtle way for men to control women's sexuality. It was exactly this development the younger feminist movement was struggling against when they addressed women's sexuality.

This led me to understand for the leftist women's sexuality was an arena of resistance and thus an important part of their political project. During my fieldwork the principal at Istanbul University[24] wrote an open letter to the editor in one of the biggest daily newspapers, where he defended teachers' right to effectuate virginity testing and this letter revitalised the question of virginity testing. It was common that if a responsible person preferably a civil servant in a responsible position – like a teacher or a head master - doubted the virginity among the female students he could effectuate a doctoral examination. From the different reactions this entailed among leftist I realised that the questions of virginity was an issue of political importance rather than an issue that explained their sexual morality:

> VOLKAN: …You see, it is much more dangerous not to speak about sexuality. This is one of the things we really have discussed, but we need to discuss it all the time. A school headmaster or the head-master could until a couple of years ago question whether a girl was a virgin or not and request a medical examination… it was terrible…we have done so many actions against this…

When I talked to the other informants they expressed similar reactions. In mid 1990'ties a feminist student group at Bosphoros University arranged different actions against virginity testing[25] but this didn't stop the practice. The head master's article revitalised the conflict and many of my informants produced political statements as members of different lawyers associations claiming this practice had no legal reference. This was one of several struggles fighting the questions of virginity together with their female comrades.

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[24] Istanbul University is the biggest in Turkey and the post as principal is in practice a very influential position. The principal has an important position also in YÖK (**Y**üksek **Ö**gretim **K**urulu - the Council for Higher Education) that besides their formal work also discuss and forego with examples how different ethical problems should be solved.

[25] *Talking and Writing our Sexuality: Feminist Activism on virginity and virginity testing in Turkey* by Ayse Gül Altınay , *Women and Sexuality in Muslim Societies, pp. 403 – 411, WWHR, 2000*

Sexuality as resistance

Sexuality, appropriately expressed, is out main source of happiness and whoever is happy is free from the thirst of power

Giddens (1992:160)

For this group, addressing women's sexuality seemed to be an important part to negotiate a new male identity. They claimed that to get <u>men</u> to talk openly about women's sexuality and stop denying sexuality as a natural part of life, was an important contribution to the struggle for the liberation of women that would promote more egalitarian and democratic Turkey. Irfan clarified this:

> IRFAN: … you know… it is difficult to do anything if a woman accuses you of being a man!… you cannot do anything… sometimes you are misunderstood… but at least it is better now than it used to be…I think… we have come a long way… we have to contribute to this struggle ourselves… it is not only a question for women… we have to be alert to our male friends and… it is difficult… but this fight is the most important in my eyes…

As we can see Irfan expressed the importance that men discussed women's sexuality. When I debated this with my other informants they agreed. In the following I will mainly refer to Volkan and Yurtkan because they were my main informants, but they also represent two different groups; namely married and single men. Volkan was divorced and single, and Yurtkan was married. By using a single and a married man as examples I hoped to reveal possible differences between them, but I was unable to spot any differences in their sexual morality.

Two aspects of sexuality came up in during my fieldwork:

1) Sex seemed to be regarded as essential to good health and
2) Sexual intercourse was a source of pleasure for both men and women

…. and finally a major question occurred; had there been a renegotiated recognition of homosexuality?

The following observation was informative for the two first aspects. Volkan was teasing Can, one of his married female friends:

> VOLKAN: …you should drop him [Can's husband] by now… I am sure he doesn't satisfy you… (laughing)…you should really consider my offer… I mean… I am much better than him (laughing)… he is my friend… that's how I know what kind of guy he is… (laughing and looking over to where his male friends where sitting)

Volkans friendly teasing of Can had a double meaning. Volkan hinted that – Cans husband – that at the same time was one of Volkans friends – was not 'man enough for her' and by this he questioned his virility. But saying '*I am sure he doesn't satisfy you*' also referred to that Volkan thought it natural that Can have a desire for sex. Since Can's husband was not present to me that he turned over and looked to where his male friends where sitting was a way to assure himself that his words were perceived as a joke. Can immediately answered that <u>she</u> was perfectly happy:

> CAN: … you seem so nervous Volkan… are you sure you are ok? I think you should have some sex…I get all I want and I am feeling fine! (laughing)… can't you find somebody…

I can only guess but if a similar conversation had occurred in a Western context, it might have been understood as promiscuous and totally out of place. But for my informants this only produced a slight grin and – in my understanding – a 'juice' answer. Can's answer implied that she interpreted that Volkan was nervous and that he teased her because he himself lacked of sex. This referred to a widespread understanding of sex not departing in political ideology or idealistic rhetoric but in its cultural expression and valid for both men and women. Emilie Olson writes about this in her article *Duofocal family structure and an alternative model of husband-wife relationships* (1982). She describes how young men who suffer from "*repeated headaches and apathy or its like*" (1982:61) were advised by a doctor to engage in sex. These kinds of nervousness, like headaches, apathy and restlessness were assumed to disappear with marriage. The conversation between Can and Yurtkan confirmed how sexuality both was perceived as a joy for both sexes but also how it was considered to be vital to a good physical condition. And Can's answer implied exactly that sex was thought as a cure for light nervousness.

To illustrate how sexual intercourse seemed to be a source of pleasure a conversation between Yurtkan and Sibel was illuminating. Sibel was a bit older that Hid and one of his very good friends. Yurtkan and Sibel were playfully teasing each other for having too much sex. They spoke in loud voices and were laughing:

> YURTKAN: …your look tired…you should try to get some sleep during the nights… you know …you don't have to (gesticulating with his hands)…don't you ever get enough? (laughing)

> SIBEL: … oh yeah… you are not much better yourself … are you becoming too old?… are you getting out of shape?… (laughing)… your wife is still young and full of life I can see…

Ciğdem Kagıtçıbası is one of the researchers that have explored how sexuality seemed to be perceived as natural all from childhood. In her book *Sex Roles, Family and Community in Turkey* (1982) contains several articles all well based in ethnographic studies. She explains how genitals of both sexes '*are greatly admired as organs of beauty and pleasure'* (1982:59) by referring to how old women were delighted when they were snatching the penises of little boys dressed in loose shirts that exposed their genital. And referring to girls genitals she explains how her neighbour called her two – year old daughter genitals *'seker kutu'* – a sugar box (1982:59). By being a mother of a boy at 7 I have experienced similar episodes several times both from my Turkish parents-in-law but also among our friends. I recognise the sexual loose, teasingly tone from my own personal network. Based in how their practice and openness towards sexuality constituted a totally different world than the politically idealised version of the asexual women, I interpreted that my informants used sexuality as a mean to negotiate masculinity. Referring to Foucault one of their aims was to alter the political discourse of sexuality that reproduced a male elitist opinion because this discourse also seemed to reproduce fixed versions of masculinity.

Flirting with women…

As I described above the leftists had a mutual teasingly sexualised tone between themselves and their female friends that not necessarily was perceived as a flirt. The female friends were not necessarily very political active but belonged to the same cohorts as themselves, were married and either the same-age or a bit older. But when they were flirting with younger and fairly new women to the network the context was difference and it became more than teasingly sexualised tome, it was defined as a distinct flirt. Even if their actions towards their female friends also were sexualized, there was a clear difference in how they referred to the flirt with younger women. I experienced several times that new women were introduced, and every time the same thing happened. Since I spent a lot of time together with Volkan I will again use him as an example. He would pay attention to the woman, ask her about herself and give her compliments. He might drag his chair next to her. When I told him how I observed the situation he agreed and told me that the sexualised tone between him and his female friends had a different character than the one he had when his was flirting because it appeared more exiting, even if there were similarities. Volkan told me that a part of the flirt was to *'touch each other, being intimate*

and use a sexualised body language'. I asked him about the danger of being stigmatized as a 'fucker' or 'uncivilised' but he told me that:

> VOLKAN: … a flirt does not necessary mean that I will have sex with the girl…this is a central part of the game…

As we can see the flirt had to be performed delicately not to be misunderstood. This didn't seem to be a major problem for my informants – they knew the rules of the game, and Volkan and Yurtkan were among the 'masters'. They saw the flirt as a game:

> YURTKAN: …flirting makes me young…it makes me feel like a man… but I am not unfaithful to my wife…it is just a game… telling a women that she looks very nice, or that she is very sexy is stimulating…it creates a tension... this is what it is about… you have to feel the tension…

Yurtkan revealed that the tension and excitement was a major part of the flirt, without attraction there would be no flirt. The feeling of being verified as a man was something they wanted, and maybe even needed. Bumin explained:

> BUMIN: …when I am flirting with a woman… of course I am attracted to her… I want to feel that I am a man…isn't that what all men want to? I feel very good when a woman tells me that I am attractive or handsome… or… I mean… she doesn't have to say it… but if she does…it makes you feel great!

It seemed that the flirt gave a feeling of being affirmed as a man and related to pleasure because it reaffirmed a male identity they easily could recognise. Even if their everyday life seemed to be predominantly political and their personality primarily related to a political identity, the affirmation they achieved through a flirt seemed to re-establish their masculinity. Or maybe they didn't experience any threat to their masculinity because it was continuously affirmed through the flirt.

This tension they searched for in the flirt might be understood as a sexual satisfaction in itself. Besides this sexual tension the leftist also used the flirt as a space to affirm their male identity or habitus. As Volkan said touching and using body language was important, but mutual compliments seemed equal important. They told me that in a flirt the '*giving and receiving compliments'* was an essential part of the game. Bumin explained how he experiences a flirt:

BUMIN: … I love to flirt… it is very attractive because it is so… I don't know… it expresses such freedom… I do it everywhere… in the bank… at work… it is no harm…but it makes me feel masculine…it makes me feel good… you know… if you tell a girl that she is sexy… I mean… if you really think she is… she usually says something nice back to you… this is how you do it… maybe we men start…but we couldn't do it if the women weren't following up…

As we can see from above, flirting were related to the feeling of *'being masculine'*. Volkan's following quotation informed me of his concrete efforts during a flirt. This guided me to interpret the flirt as a different way of performing masculinity. It revealed how he related his role as a protector to his man identity:

VOLKAN: ... I will light her cigarette… I will pour more wine in her glass… I will hold the door for her…maybe I will buy her a flower from the passing flower-salesman… I will I pay for her dinner… you know… I will be gallant to her…I will treat her as my princess …I will spend money on her… I will protect her (*sahiplenirim*) …you know…

As we can see Volkan's efforts to be a man were related 'to pour her wine, hold the door for her and to be gallant'. He would be 'spending money' and 'protecting' the woman he was flirting with. His choice of words was interesting because it referred to a different conceptualization of women than I had heard earlier. His words gave me associations to a remote romantic ideal where men's protection of women almost was a holy task. To me it seemed that the leftists consciously choose this as a strategy and usually got positive response that affirmed his male identity. The flirt appeared as a kind of 'arena' or a stage where my informants could be masculine. At a stage you can play different roles without changing personality and the audience will applaud. This gives you a feeling of content and pleasure. As such with the flirt leftists created a space where they could play out different masculinities with a secret or maybe unconscious aim to affirm their male identity. Irfan's situation was different from Volkan and Yurtkan in many respects, but illuminating the same aspect:

IRFAN: … Havva catches me sometimes when I am flirting… I am not aware that I flirt myself… it is just so fascinating… maybe because it allows me to do things I cannot do with Havva or other friends…it is as if… this sounds strange probably…but it is as if I feel free to play that man I want when I flirt… I can be a different man… I can … it is a kind of a therapy maybe… for men that spend a lot of their time with feminists… (laughing)

As we can see Irfan related the flirt directly to his political identity. This made me aware of an idea based on differences between the two sexes seemed to be used in a negotiation for a construction of masculinity. My informants could in praxis perform a

gender identity referring to stereotypical sex differences and by this strengthened their male identity. The positioning of themselves along traditional ideas of masculinity in the flirt was one way to negotiate masculinity.

The flirt seemed to be innocent and might also be understood as a kind of cultural model for interaction. As such it might function as a point of departure for various social relations. As I have described the sexualised tone between friends was one form of flirt that seemed to be a natural part of everyday life, and the sexualised flirt with unfamiliar younger women had a different character without necessitating sexual intercourse. The teasingly sexualised tone between friends and the curiosity towards homoerotic relations paradoxically was both resistances against stereotypical understandings of men and sexuality but also a space where conventional masculinity was a part of the negotiation of a new masculinity.

To summarise I interpreted flirt with women as a conscious strategy my informants used to get strengthened a certain aspect of their male identity. The sexual tension in the flirt was important without involving a promise of sex. More important than the sexual aspect of the flirt was how the flirt constituted a space to affirm traditional gender identity. This was experienced as positive because without destroying their political identity the affirmative aspect of the flirt was experienced as a waterhole where they could 'fill up'. What seemed to be the essence of the flirt was that it gave my informants a free space where they could perform traditional gender roles to be affirmed as a man, without involving other aspects of the hegemonic masculinity paradigm. Flirting with women seemed to be a legitimate way to affirm male identity using traditional gendered strategies.

Ibne[26]: feminizing men but flirting with them at the same time

In the following I would like to explore two aspects of sexuality that seemed to be unique for the leftist I spoke to; an inversed form of feminising other men, and the paradox of the homosexual relation.

I was used to situations where men used *ibne* to each other and Volkan also explained that I should not put any special meaning to it:

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[26] İbne derives from the Arabic form ibn' that literary means son

> VOLKAN: …you know… we do it all the time… it does not mean anything… or I mean it is a way of man's talk… we just use it… it is like a joke or something… when somebody calls you *ibne*, you tell him *ibne* back… it is just like that… no harm meant… but this is just how it is between friends…

As Volkan claimed this was how it was used among friends. *İbne* is widely used as a swearword between friends. The Turkish word for homosexual is *eşçinsel* (literary: *eş*-homo, *çinsel* – sexual), but this word is only used to describe the group of declared homosexuals and not connote anything else. The English word homosexual has another translation in Turkish: *ibne* and refers to the passive part in a homosexual relationship. *İbne* is most commonly used as a swearword and do not necessarily imply a sexual relation. In Turkey there are many other ways of subordinating men to other men and they are all used in different contexts in everyday life. Besides the use of *ibne*, the reference to weakness/strength or to youth/old age are significant in the language and I have seen them used in many situations though my time in Turkey. Also other studies from Latin America confirm this way of subordination among men by differentiating between the active penetrating masculine man and the passive or the penetrated (Archetti 1999, Prieur 1994). In the Turkish Penalty Code the judge have the possibility to give a milder punishment if *ibne* has been used during an assault (Turkish Penalty code, 1983).

Referring to previous studies and my knowledge of the Turkish society the way of feminizing other men by calling them *ibne* was not a special thing for my informants. Many seem to apply this as a '*way of speaking'* and not as anything significant for the leftist, I will in the following focus on a usage specific to the leftist, namely the inversed version. It seemed that my informant used *ibne* as a resistance to contest sexuality and stereotypical images of men. The following conversation between Mehmet and Onur on neo-nationalists illustrated this:

> MEHMET: …of course, we are *ibne*! …would you like to be men like them …they regard themselves as men…. they think they become men by torturing and beating up people that use their brains and not their dicks! …compared with them … yes I am *ibne* …we all are

…and Onur's answer:

> ONUR: …well, I would rather say that they are *ibne*. …they think they become men by calling us *ibne*! …but we know it is the other way around....

There were many similar occasions were they used *ibne* in its inversed way. Their friends that were declared homosexual were also referring to themselves as *ibne*. This might be understood as a mean used by suppressed groups aiming to remove the negative

connotation of the word by applying it to themselves. During fieldwork a cruise ship with homosexuals had been refused entrance by the local port authorities in Izmir. This, of course created a lot of publicity. One day I was strolling around with Volkan we met one of the declared homosexuals; Tarık:

> VOLKAN: … it is typical with that ship… the true face of the Turkish society comes up… Are you going to arrange any protests here in Istanbul?

> TARIK: … we have already… didn't you know?…we have written statements… we are trying to find the person in the administration that actually prohibited the ship to enter the port… we knew this ship was coming… and we will go to Izmir… they couldn't even say that we were *ibne* … so we will tell them *'We are ibne'*...

Here *ibne* was used as a conscious part of their political discourse probably because they believed that adopting the idiom they could address the discriminating sexual morality it implied. The cruise ship was finally allowed to enter the port and the local municipalities made an official excuse and met the passengers with flowers.

The leftist openness around sexuality and their inversed use of *ibne* indicated resistance. Immanent in the idiom *ibne* there is a consciousness of power and domination that suppress others. Foucault's famous quotation *"where there is power her is resistance and because of this, resistance is never in an external position according to power"* might be illuminating to understand sexuality as a mean of resistance (1995). Bente Nikolaisen's study of feminism and resistance in Istanbul describes a demonstration against prostitution where the feminists shouted: *"We are all prostitutes!"* (1993). Movements for homosexuals in America adopted the idiom 'gay and in Norway 'homo' is used by homosexuals referring to themselves aiming to create an *inverse ratio*.

The question of whether homosexuality had been renegotiated grew out of some of the discussions we had on when we were talking about feminising other men. During the different discussions we had on sexuality I experienced that leftist seemed to be curios about having sex with a man. What I have is fragmentary and somewhat indirect, but it seemed to offer an answer to my question about their sexual curiosity. Hid and I had a beer at a local cafe and we couldn't do the interview because it was too noisy and Yurtkan was tired. We had just seen some transsexuals on the street and the started to talk about how they were ill-treated. We talked about stories about how they were raped and beaten and that they got little protection from the police. Yurtkan told me that he met many transsexuals in his work at the Human Rights Foundation. We continued to talk about

sexuality and during the conversation I understood that Yurtkan was curios about having sex with another man. He said:

> YURTKAN: …you know how it is… I mean… homosexuals… do you know they have a normal orgasm? … it isn't anything different… I mean… I don't really know, but from what I understand… (clearing his throat) … why should it be so different to have sex with men… I mean… I can find a man's body attractive …

When I asked him if he had sex with a man he was reluctant to answer. Still I felt I was on the lead to something, and it made me curious to find out whether my other informants expressed a similar curiosity.

I hoped I could get a good occasion to talk to Volkan when he invited me to a huge private party. The guests were a mixture of younger and older leftists, homosexuals, journalists and intellectuals. I think Volkan felt responsible for me because he had invited me, and introduced me to all his male and female friends. I soon found out that I had common friends with some of the guests and talking to them Volkan relaxed. As the evening proceeded the flirting increased, but this was not new to me. Later in the evening when I went over to talk with Volkan I witnessed a semi-open flirt between Volkan and a man. I cannot recall the exact words, but they were challenging each other talking about sex and homosexuals. Another friend also listening said addressed to the other man, whom I later understood was homosexual: "*…it seems to me that he wants you!"* And addressed to Volkan: *"...come on…don't be so constipated…"* When I later asked Volkan about this man, he just told me that he was a good friend and that he had known him for some time. When I asked directly if he had had sex with him, he avoided the subject and started to talk about something else. But when we talked about it hypothetically Volkan expressed the same curiosity I had observed talking to Yurtkan.

None of my other informants would admit they had had sex with a man, but they didn't refuse it either. When we discussed it hypothetically they seemed to be open to sex with men. During my fieldwork until now I had been able to confirm my field-observations with own experiences and knowledge to the Turkish society. Smaller differences occurred but I explained these as generation-differences. But I had never experienced a similar curiosity for bi-sexuality. I spent some time discussing my 'discovery' with some of my feminist friends and they told me that they were not surprised. They seemed to be aware of this development and they welcomed it, as one of them said: *'It has only been us women who openly have tried out sex with women – so it's about time!* I call flirting with men 'bi-sexual curiosity,' and this curiosity seemed to be one of the signals that individual

sexuality was an arena to be contested. Their curiosity towards homosexuality seemed to define a new way to negotiate masculinity as their resistance against the hegemonic assessment for how men were supposed to be men.

This can also be explored through Giddens glasses: *"Sexuality is a terrain of fundamental political struggle and also a medium of emancipation, just as the sexual radicals claimed"* (1992:181). And with the essence of plastic sexuality that separated sexuality from reproduction, sexuality gain its quality *'together with its aura of excitement and danger, from the fact that it puts us in contact with these lost fields of experience'*(ibid:181). Departing in lesbian sexuality he suggests that the homosexual relationship evolves as a domain 'free of pressure', and thus idealised as an emancipated version of sexuality, and what in retrospect might appear as the characteristics of a women-to-women sexual relationship *'could actually provide a model for ethically defensible heterosexual activity'* (ibid:144). He further argues that male bisexuality is *'characteristic for the sexual behaviour of men today that it is as 'orthodox' a form of sexual orientation as heterosexuality* (ibid:146). Immanent in the homosexual encounter there is an uncommitted promise that articulates 'an ethical defensible model' of emancipated sexuality. Sexuality serves as a metaphor for the changes immanent in the transformation of intimacy and is focused on the expression and the experience itself. The homosexual relation serves as a metaphor for the search for autonomy that is immanent the generalisation of plastic sexuality. This seemed to be illustrative for the experiences of homosexual affairs, even if it might seem that they wished to conceal the details. While Giddens suggest alternative conclusions to the increased acceptance of homosexual relations as a disguise for a male flight form the connections which *'link sexuality, self-identity and intimacy'* I argue that for leftist it emerged as an arena for resistance rather than flight, because of its egalitarian components. The quality and attraction to homosexual relations might have been in the juncture between danger or excitement and the egalitarian aspect and the promise of autonomy which is absent from most heterosexual involvements. Giddens continues: *"By its very nature, its permits power only in the form of sexual practice itself: sexual taste is the sole determinant"* (1992:147).

As far as I know there are no references to homosexuality in the Turkish Law. Curiosity for sex between men and the fact that they were flirting with men might occur as natural if we look to historical references and the tradition of Persian and Ottoman Literature. A famous Turkish historian, Mehmet Kalpaklı has done extensive work on Ottoman literature (1997). He explores love scripts that are highly appreciated and

perceived as the cultivated symbols of divinity in the Ottoman Literature tradition. The poets educated in the art of writing poems were highly respected and the education regarded as the highest education a man could undertake. These love-scripts or poems are called *gazels*[27]. In mystical songs and mystical poems the love of man for God is often embedded in the metaphors of the romantic and passionate love of a man for a woman. Kalpaklı's book shows us that many of these love scripts surprisingly enough actually were deriving form love between men. This offers a historical context for the curiosity the leftist expressed towards sex with men.

The Danish sociologist Henning Bech (1997) suggests that the contemporary society is influenced by what he calls 'a homosexualisation'. This refers to how androgen patterns like men dying their hair, or different cloth fashions aiming to soften the division between male and female cloths. David Beckham the famous football player is a front figure for these developments. He dresses rather androgen in long shirts instead of trousers, he carries tattoos and represent a sport that are supposed to symbolise 'manhood' or fixed ideas of masculinity, and paradoxically he defended that he had to take care of their children when his wife was giving a concert. In other words he challenges all the fixed values attached to a professional football player. These kinds of developments have emerged from symbols and signs previously attached a homosexual culture thus Bech's conceptualisation. In a 'conversation'[28] with İskender Savaşır he suggested how the gay and lesbian or queer theory had been influential for the development within the feminism's emerge after the 1980ties, and this might offer an answer to the particular of leftists constructions of masculinity and their curiosity for homosexual experience. Through feminism's struggle for sexual emancipation homosexuality and bisexuality have occurred as legitimate alternatives, and within the leftist, intellectual context there are several openly declared homosexuals or even individuals openly declared bisexuals.

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[27] As I have tried to illuminate under my account of ASK, the question of love preoccupied men to such an extent that all from Desert Arabs, men of letters, great intellectuals, theologians, mystics etc. made statements of the causes, the manifestations and the aims of love. The gazels must be understood in the light of the importance of love.

[28] This was an 'e-mail conversation' dated 11th June 2004 where İskender Savaşır upon my request, clarified the historical development of sexual emancipation according to his own experiences.

Maybe the paradoxical pursue of uncommitted love experienced in the bisexual encounter represents the ethical defendable model of emancipated sexuality that emerged so complex in the heterosexual relation.

6. CONCLUSION

In this dissertation I have analysed male identity and masculinity constructions focusing on their immanent paradoxes and ambiguities. I studied a group of radical, intellectual young men in Istanbul in order to examine whether their masculinity configurations could identity a 'crisis' of hegemonic masculinity. I assumed that such a 'crisis' – if present – could be traced among such a group, and I observed several contradictory and ambiguous dimensions that not easily could be defined within the hegemonic paradigm.

I have analysed contradictory masculinity constructions through Bob Connell's hegemonic masculinity concept to examine whether these ambiguities could be traced back to contradictions and paradoxes immanent in their male identity. My main argument was that alternative and fluid constructions of masculinity – like the masculinity constructions that appeared among my informants challenge and confuse rather than confirm the power embedded in the hegemonic model. The reading key to my analysis has been the tension between shaping and confusing existing perceptions of male identity.

Historical developments dated back to the end of the 18th century carried significance for contemporary configurations of masculinity because the reforms of this period initiated a process that still in ongoing where fixed ideas of gender were questioned and challenged. This process was at its peak in the vacuum that emerged among socialists in Turkey after the fall of the communist world in 1989. In this particular epoch feminism flourished and the feminist movement gained increased influence in the public discourse. Along with the increased political pressure after Turkey officially was named as a candidate for EU accession in 1999, existing understandings of gender roles have been further challenged in the public debate. My fieldwork and interviews aimed to enlighten contradictory dimensions of leftists' masculinity constructions to analyse how they 'did masculinity' and how certain practices was prescribed meaning as being masculine. I aimed to illuminate the complex and intriguing balance between leftist political and male identity as competing and contradictory, but not mutually excluding dimensions of their

male habitus. By this I mean that what might occur as 'masculine' in one context might not be 'masculine' in another –these different contexts together constitute the everyday of left men in Istanbul. The empirical analysis works through three different aspects of the ambiguity immanent in male identity.

First I examine and argue that women's sexual emancipation as it has advanced among feminists, have provoked a process of men's sexual emancipation that implied challenging authority and hierarchy embedded in their male identity through the historical context. Sexuality was their main tool of resistance and through sexuality they contested authority and hierarchy as well as they challenged the legitimacy of hegemonic masculinity. As such leftists' constructions of masculinity seemed to point to an increased challenged of patriarchal patterns and traditions rather than a confirmation of hegemony, authority and hierarchy.

The next dimension of masculinity carrying inner contradictions was their relation to love and marriage. Their ambiguous relation to marriage seemed to undermine marriage as an institution but simultaneously it was linked to their male identity. Paradoxically marriage in many ways sustained its valued as a rite-de-passage because it had been socialised in the male habitus through time. Here I argued that the particularity of leftists ambiguous masculinity can be traced back to cultural understandings of love which especially emphases the uncommitted love as a male discourse immanent in the male habitus as a search for freedom and autonomy. But leftist married – and often several times – because there was no legitimate alternative to marriage. In *Transformation of Intimacy* (1992) Giddens claims that the pure relationship today only will be continued as long as it gives satisfaction to each part and implicit in this we will experience drops of happiness. According to Giddens, today there are equality in emotional giving and taking and thus experiences of love have gained importance. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) goes a bit further and suggests that love has become the new religion in our society. In *Liquid Love. On the frailty of human bonds* also Baumann (2003) brings love to the agenda but according to him love is a struggle that never will bring happiness and satisfaction alone, love will emerge together with despair and Baumann sees relations as 'mixed blessings'. Baumann is not as optimistic as Giddens and claims that love will be exchanged if it does not give full satisfaction. The distinction between *AŞK* and *SEVGİ* my informants expressed was contradictory embedded in leftists masculinity constructions. On one side casual relations based on *AŞK* provided freedom and independence that was essential to male subjectivity, but *SEVGİ* that symbolised love in marriage on the other side provided a

civilised male identity that also was essential to their male habitus. This resulted in various configurations of masculinity that received their expression in the tension between what I have called 'coffee shop masculinity' and their relation to the feminist movement. Leftists' masculinity constructions offer an alternative to the tensions Giddens (1992), Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) and Baumann (2003) describes in the modern society. They are critical to the socialist tradition of the asexual women, and they fight for liberation from the very authoritarian and hierarchical patterns immanent in their male identity that only allowed a denied female sexuality.

Finally I analysed how sexuality emerged as a terrain of fundamental political struggle freed from reproduction carrying essential meaning for leftists because it its egalitarian aspects. Sexuality, I argued had become an arena for resistance against authoritarian and hierarchical patterns embedded in the idea of the cultural available role for men. The struggle for sexual emancipation carried similarities to the Freudian-Marxist current that emerged in the aftermath of the 1968 in Europe. This current seemed to have gained importance in the leftist environment with the collapse of the communist world and the simultaneous increased significance to the feminist movement.

I have argued that my informants various masculinity arrangements were both struggles for men's sexual emancipation for and simultaneously liberation from authoritarian and hierarchical patterns embedded in the Turkish society. Both historical understandings of sexuality and the significance of uncommitted love emerged as parallel discourses immanent in leftists masculinity constructions instead of being double standards. As parallel discourses they coexist and are given meaning in the context they constitute. Bourdieu's concept of habitus has been especially important in my analysis because it carries the traits of a male culture internalised over time. I argued that leftists ambiguous and contradictory configurations of masculinity could be traced back to an identity embedded in a distant history where male intimacy and solidarity was legitimate. Thus masculinity did not appear obvious and transparent as the hegemonic masculinity paradigm suggest, rather leftists' particular masculinity challenged the very idea of fixed perceptions of gender and illustrated that change had occurred.

My informants' ambiguous and contradictory masculinity constructions formed the quintessence of this dissertation. Leftists carried with them both authoritarian and egalitarian practices and their particular masculinity could not easily be defined within idealised versions of masculinity. Their redefinitions of masculinity symbolised a resistance against and contested the hegemonic masculine tradition immanent in the

cultural available male role. Several studies on gender in Turkey explore these hegemonic aspects, but this study indicates that hegemonic masculinity in Turkey is not easily identified. Similar to the transsexuals in Kandiyoti's study, leftist seem to have developed a particular male behaviour but different from her study, the leftist masculinity does not appear neither as subordinated nor complicit, rather I argued that their masculinity could be traced back to paradoxes and ambiguities that obscured and challenged the hegemonic system of perception. Sometimes their masculinity configurations appeared as continuing a traditional male role like in the flirt with women, sometimes they were challenging and contesting authority like their struggle for sexual emancipation and sometimes they were almost transgressing the heterosexual norm, like their curiosity for homosexual experience. This illustrated that constructions of masculinity carried signs of change and that fixed understandings of gender were altering.

My informants put little emphasis on the virility and the instrumentality of the sexual act in their relations to women. On the contrary they were concerned not to appear as 'fuckers' because of its reproduction of the cultural available role for men. For them a flirt was an expression of their easiness with sexuality rather than a first step of seduction. Instead their relation to sexuality constructed the situation as egalitarian and opened up for a possible sexual intercourse without focusing on virility as a male expression. Both heterosexual and homosexual sexuality emerged as a sphere for resistance against repression. As such as Giddens suggested sexuality was a terrain of fundamental political struggle. A contradictory element in this struggle was the significance of male solidarity exemplified through what I have called male 'friends-of-heart'. These friendships implicated a particular solidarity that tolerated misbehaviour like getting drunk and make a fool of oneself, with delicacy and strengthened rather than threatened their male identity.

Leftists' constructions of masculinity are both contesting the power immanent in the idealised version of hegemonic masculinity as well as they are continuing certain hegemonic aspects. Theoretically power embedded in the hegemonic masculinity paradigm work in a static way shaping subordinated- or complicit versions of masculinity, but I argued that among leftist in Istanbul masculinity constructions rather referred to aspects that were not integrated in such an idealised version. This might also be traced back to the complex historical development in Turkey. In Istanbul, like in Cornwall and Lindisfarne's (1994) argument there were many coexisting hegemonic masculinities, but neither of these referred to clear and idealised values – they rather challenged the foundation of the perception of masculinity. According to the prophesy of leading sociological theoreticians,

love and sexuality in contemporary society are confusing and ambiguous concepts. Empirically I found that leftists' particular masculinity contained both variability and fluidity. Leftists' masculinities symbolised the tension between contemporary versions of what I have called 'coffee shop masculinity' and their engagement in the feminist movement through their challenging of fixed and idealised versions of sexuality.

A phenomenon that has emerged during the last years in Turkey is new Islamists groups emphasising differences between the sexes and a concern for a 'loss of moral'. They have gained considerable support in the population and offer an answer to the search for closeness and care in the contemporary society. The question of plurality of masculinity constructions might be confronted with lack of legitimacy if these groups gain further significance.

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