TOWARD AN ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE STATE:
UNSETTLING EFFECTS OF THE SEPTEMBER 12 COUP ON
THE ÜLKÜCÜ MOVEMENT IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the effects of the state violence on political subjectivities, and the reformations of the State. More specifically it examines the interviews and memoirs by members of the ultranationalist (ülkücü) movement in Turkey about their prison and torture experiences during the 1980 military coup. It demonstrates different ways their encounters with the State violence are understood, and incorporated into oppositional or loyalist discourses. The project employs two methodological approaches, genealogical and anthropological. For the first, the historicity of the coups is provided, and different dynamics of power are laid out. For the second, the State is regarded both as an entity and a notion, and the relationships between the political subjects and the State are investigated with paying attention to the instances from daily life. In doing so, this thesis offers a perspective to the scholarship on the coups in Turkey which has predominantly been crafted by the political science studies. It challenges the notion of the State as reified, rational, and in the Turkish case, “guardian” of the Nation.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1 The approaches to the coups based on political science

The scholarly analysis of the coup d’états in Turkey has predominantly employed an approach based in political science.¹ This kind of inquiry maps out the structural dynamics of a takeover, and explores the resulting transformation of politics and the state. It closely watches elections, leaders, various elite groups, and their relations. Unsurprisingly, the recurring military coups that took place in Turkey every ten years between 1960 and 1980, as well as other “coups” in 1997 (the “postmodern coup”), and 2007 (the “e-coup”), and the subsequent “transition to democracy” debates constitute a rich series of cases for such an analysis. Among these, the 1980 coup attracts particular attention because it thoroughly restructured the political system and the society at large. In addition to a new Constitution, the military rule put in force new central authorities controlling university education, media, law, and other parts of the social organization. Yet, the basis of the takeover and its legitimacy vis-à-vis the sovereignty of the nation lie at the heart of its popular reception and of any scholarly analysis.

¹ To cite a few (Hale, 1988; Heper, 1988; Heper & Evin, 1988; Schick, 1987).
The state’s monopoly on violence is acknowledged most often when it is directed against the spread of violence in society. In political science discourse regarding the 1980 coup, this event is seen as a key point for understanding what the State in Turkey was, who claimed it, and how its actions can be evaluated. The general consensus is that the military’s intervention was based less on the increasing violence among civil groups and more on the Republic’s deviation from a “state tradition”. In other words, the military reacted against the dissolution of the central state authority and the emergence of particularist politics during the 1970s, a phenomenon of which the result was violence. The military emerged as the State, the “guardian” of the “integrity and unity” of the nation which was facing all sorts of challenges and criticisms. Hence, the coup recuperated and expanded “the realm of the state” and “stateness” was recovered through the coup. This critical approach appreciates the military both because it stayed in power for a short time and because its actions led to the consolidation of democracy.

Even though this critical perspective expounds the intentions and relations of the major political actors, i.e. the military, it leads to several key distortions. First, it employs a binary model of polity (similar to anthropological perspective) in which “the State” and government are separate but coexist through an intricate division of labor. Nevertheless, this approach perpetuates binary oppositions in which “the State” represents the higher interests of the nation, its integrity, and its character, while the government deals with short term issues and particular interests. The first is seen as “transcendental,” and

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2 An exception to the political discourse mentioned here is [include title here] (Mazic, 1989).

3 Political scientist Metin Heper defines the state in a way that perpetuates this binary: “The defining feature of the state, formulated in political rather than legal terms, is not the degree of penetration, one of the cardinal features of the traditional approach of the issue of the state, but the autonomy of the state elite from the political elite” (Heper, 1988, p. 1).
“moral”; the latter is “instrumental,” and “particularist” (Heper, 1988). This view is supported by historical accounts of the “state tradition” handed over from the Ottoman rule to the Turkish Republic⁴. The argument implied in these documents is that subjects of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious empire were incapable of self-regulation without the state’s guardianship. So were the citizens of the Republic. Hence, here this binary comes to illustrate a deep sense of mistrust towards the people and their forms of self-governance, which has kept being reproduced throughout the century-long political developments, as well as in their scholarly analysis.

“The army’s greatest problem, it appears, was not in dealing with the terrorists, but with the politicians” (Hale, 1988, p. 174). According the political scientist William Hale, and to many others, the fatal conflicts in the everyday Turkish life of the 1970s were a reflection (or continuation) of the rifts among politicians in the parliament. In many similar accounts, depictions of the era are full of the personal animosities among the leaders of the major parties (the Republican People’s Party (RPP) and the Justice Party (JP)), opportunism within the radical parties, cancelations of President elections, and all other sorts of parliamentary “deadlocks.” Similarly, the junta itself never refrained itself from blaming the politicians, without mentioning their names, for their “selfishness” and “ineptness.” Rendering political authority to the politicians in parliament not only simplified ideological divides among different groups and denied the agency and plurality of the political movements “in the street,” but also brought a top-to-

⁴ (Heper, 1985)
down trajectory for political mobilization. The 1970s were far more complicated than the caricatured descriptions of the era often found in scholarly descriptions.

Invoking the use of violence in a situation of political chaos entails two things. First it creates a negative connotation regarding the very notion of the “political,” as described above. Second, such an understanding of the polity necessitates a non-parliamentary authority to weigh in. When the death toll reached twenty per day, the parliamentary disunities and failure to establish coalitions seem “luxurious.” The politicians’ blindness to the consequences of their actions constituted the major case for the military takeover. Hence a “non-political” power would be required to resolve the chaos. In the Turkish case, the ideal authority that could quell the violence could even be a single person; historian Kemal Karpat infers from his comparison of Atatürk’s philosophy of government with that of Kemal Evren’s (the chief of staff): “the dominant philosophy in both eras was that governmental authority should be exercised strictly in conformity with the political requirement of rulership, eschewing social, economic, or ideological considerations. The ruling of society, according to this philosophy, was a political art. Power and authority were to be reposed in a supreme and wise authority, which might be even a single person so long as that person exercised this authority faithfully for the welfare of the nation and community” (Kemal H. Karpat, 1988, p. 152).

Why was it the military that emerge(d) as that “transcendent” power, not spoiled by “politics,” as the core of “the State” that would “save” the nation? Here the political science approach relies on the self-representations of the military, and takes it as a completely rational and unified actor. The military embodies the continuity, traditionalism, and strength from the Ottoman Empire onwards, and it has emerged as a
class-in-itself with a high degree of unity, cohesion through education, and power to reproduce itself (Karabelias, 1999). Most of the scholars of this approach acknowledge that the military maintained a balanced impartiality vis-à-vis the politics since to do otherwise would be illogical for its own legitimacy. For instance Ahmet Evin (1988) points to the awareness among high-ranking officers that the military could not long remain uninfluenced by the conflicts of civilian institutions, a lesson learned in the aftermath of the first coup of 1960. This is not to say that there were not “hardliners” and “moderates” in the military, as many scholars agree, yet during this era they succeeded in maintaining a unified position and avoiding polarization. Furthermore, the military “preferred” to inaugurate the process of transitioning to a civilian regime as soon as possible, contrary to its counterparts in the Latin America or the Middle East, which established permanent military regimes. The military’s invocation of Atatürkism (not even Kemalism, which sounded too “ideological”), as the most generalized and loosened “ideology” ever, was according to acclaimed political scientist Metin Heper, a justified attempt to “develop a new pattern of normative ethics”: “In a recent book by the chief of the general staff, entitled Atatürkism: Book Three (1983) heretofore little-mentioned quotations from Atatürk are found not only on the state and the principles of Atatürkism, but also on such topics as tolerance, division of labor, and the like” (Heper, 1988, pp. 8-9). All of these reinforce the myth that the military could and did stay out of politics in the “normal” times.

In addition to its reliance on the military as a rational and consistent actor, political science discourse accesses people’s perceptions in very restricted ways. People’s admiration for the military and practice of associating it with the State has been
frequently reiterated, and regarded a “truth.” Here we see an uncritical acceptance of the myth that the Turkish nation is a military nation. Hence, the military and “the people” are predominantly depicted as unified bodies with no racial, gendered, ethnic, or ideological differences. Furthermore, “the people’s” relationship to the military is described as one of a mix of fear and reverence, yet this is also not reported with a consideration of the wide-spread terror of the military junta that substantiated the political climate of early 1980s. Thus, the main sources of evidence become election and referendum results (the 1983 elections, and 1982 referendum for the Constitution and the endorsement of the chief of staff Kenan Evren as President), which were severely restricted by military measures of voting, and the general precariousness of the polity. Nowhere in this scholarship have these factors found expression.

Furthermore, the discourse’s ignorance of militarism as an ideology present outside the military itself as an institution is striking. Militarism as an ideology often goes unexplored. Hence scholars neglect to explore how militarism sustains the powerful status of the military in society, how it perpetuates particular notions of identity, the State, history, and how it shapes our everyday lives and political imaginations. Similarly, the circumstances shaped by martial law and the state of emergency ruling are not integrated into these analyses. Instead, these analyses move from one political leader to another, whose “charisma” is given extraordinary explanatory power, i.e. from Kenan Evren to Turgut Ozal.

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5 For a detailed account of the maintenance of this myth see *Myth of the Military-Nation* (Alt nay, 2004).
6 Some exception certainly exist (Mazic, 1989; Parla, 1993).
In political science discourse, coups in general are taken as temporary regimes with particular limits in time (as demonstrated by the elections) and, thus, authority. Thus the investigations of the consolidation of or transition to democracy are indispensable to coup scholarship. Some scholars problematize the clear-cut distinction between civilian and military regimes; for instance, Ergun Özbudun (2000) cites the “exit guarantees” that the military powers instill into particular mechanisms, especially into the constitution, so as to be able to justify their intervention during the processes of consolidation of democracy. He also notes the presence of the military haunting politicians: “disunity among civilian political forces over the proper role of the military gives the latter a powerful incentive to intervene in politics and to attempt to maintain or increase its political influence” (Özbudun, 2000, p. 117).

The predominant conception of the consolidation process derives from a sort of democracy (and politics) based upon political parties. Yet, the notion of democracy here emphasizes consensus over conflict. Nilüfer Göle, an acclaimed sociologist, celebrates the “new phase of democracy” in Turkey because “as ideological confrontations over systemic preferences (mostly over socialism versus capitalism) abates, conflict over “grand” issues in the abstract were replaced by debates on more immediate problems. Issues such as pollution, public health, and tourism began to be considered important items on the political agenda” (Göle, 1994, p. 214). According to Göle “real” democracy found its shape and voice through the emergence of i) the “entrepreneurial spirit” with the introduction of the market economy, ii) Islamist politics on the grounds of their reactions to the modernism, iii) identity politics, i.e. feminists, GLBT, etc. (1994, pp. 218-219). These new parameters of democracy, inspired by Western liberal democracies, do not
seem to be leaving space for understanding the ongoing state of violence against political prisoners and “marginal” groups, nor the contradictions of the neoliberal regimes.

1.2 Anthropology of the State and the Coups

In Turkish culture, separation between the State and the government is a key element. Yet, it would be misleading to take the clear-cut division of labor depicted in the political science discourse at face value. While it is possible to think of the State as an historical bloc of military and Kemalist elites, it would be inadequate in understanding the complexities of the State in Turkey. Among the perceptions of the State, the most cited one is the “Father State,” which is assumed to have eternal powers that can reach to each one of its citizens. Associated with Atatürk (literally meaning the “Father of the Turk”), the Father State is sacred, pure, and potent. Yet, according to a recent research project on the “perceptions of the State,” there are other images of the State, which are: i) the State as the engineer of the top-to-down modernization process, ii) the State of the Enlightenment/Republican project that prioritizes responsibility over the right and imagines a collective homogenous citizen-subject body, iii) the Security State that emanated from the fear of chaos (or statelessness) and uncertainties of the migrating populations of the period between 1854-1980, iv) the State that is different from the government and is a power that is eternal, abstract, sacred, and unspoiled, v) the “deep” State as an “internal” and extra-legal secret core group that sustains the continuity of the State. This research broaches several questions. How does the State appear to citizens in relatively tranquil times? What factors shape the formation of such perceptions of the
State? How are these images of the State maintained? Even though there has been increasing scholarship on the State in Turkey (Alt nay, 2004; Navaro-Yashin, 2002; Özyürek, 2006), this wide array of meanings attached to the State and subsequent questions requires further exploration.

Since it clings on the idea of a State whose hands are more or less “clean,” political science discourse does not assist us in inquiring about the specifics of the rule of the Turkish military during and after coups, the apparatuses by which they are upheld, and the resulting legal and economic readjustments, It finds a moral basis and a transcendental purpose to the intervention. Similarly, historical accounts (Ahmad, 2003; Erik J. Zürcher, 2004) are quite state-centric in the sense that they typically emphasize violence, insecurity, chaos, anarchy, and so forth in their descriptions of the pre-coup era. These are inadequate in understanding both the inconsistencies of the hegemony of the coup and its multiple effects on people and communities.

On a broader level, this project explores an anthropological approach to the state in the post-coup political and cultural environment. Rather than reproducing the binary between state and government in essentialist and interlocking ways, this approach views the state as cultural and political dynamic. Anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot provides a pertinent strategy for the investigation of the State pertaining in this project. He contends that states, which have come to be identified narrowly with nations or governments, cannot be grasped through self-definitions, or through their ideological or cultural packages, but instead through their effects. These effects are i) the *isolation effect*, or the mutual “masking” of socio-economic conflicts and the production of atomized individuals, societies, and new forms of homogenizations; ii) the *identification*
effect, or the production of feelings of belonging to a particular group, society, or movement as equal members; iii) the legibility effect, or the production of discourses and techniques for governmentality; and iv) the spatialization effect, or the production of boundaries and control of spaces including the dynamics between the local and the global (Trouillot, 2001, pp. 126, 131-133). Writing in an era where emerging global and local institutions, movements, and processes seem to replace the state, Trouillot warns that state power is redeployed in new sites in hitherto unconventional ways, which necessitates anthropological investigation of such effects “without prejudice.”

In addition to tracing the effects that mold the cultural and political lives of people, one can analytically understand the state as a form that holds together “an incoherent, multifaceted ensemble of power relations and a vehicle of massive domination” (Brown, 1995, p. 174). Anthropologist Begoña Aretxaga adds that the state is both an entity and a notion, which has the subjective dynamic of connecting people to “their” state. According to Aretxaga, the state-as-form is “the notion of a powerful state devoid of content, which then serves as a screen for a variety of identifications and as a performative mask (Abrams 1988) for a variety of power discourses and practices” (2003, p. 395). Hence, the State does not only hold a centralized form of power, as Gramscian analysis would prove, but it is also built upon a subjective relationship with the people, including but not limited to the “discourse, narratives, and fantasies generated around the idea of the state” (Aretxaga, 2003, p. 395).

The notion of “stateness” (p. 1) is also instrumental in thinking about the concentration of views of what state is held to be. Since the state does not constitute a mere centre of power, but instead a locus of intermingling, inconsistent dynamics and
practices, where would its boundaries be drawn, or “where does state begin, where does it end?” (Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p. 9). One of the anthropological responses to this question is to investigate the roots of the presupposition that communities are essentially backwards or conservative with questions such as: “how have the opposition and the boundaries between state and communities come into being; which differences and identities that have been subsumed are the main opposition to the state; how are relations organized and negotiated across the boundaries; how are communities represented, and by whom?” (Hansen & Stepputat, 2001, p. 25). These practices of redrawing the imagined boundaries and linkages between the state and the community also determine the very terms of the political in a way that give insight to the political communities with emphasis on their ways of becoming, their differences, and their various representations. Such an insight opens up a space for the discussion of the everyday life practices, as well as the performances, and the identity-formations of the political communities.

1.3 The ülkücü movement and the State

The State, either as “Father” or “Cruel” State, lies at the intersection of several questions on the 1980 coup. In this project, taking the anthropological approach to the analysis of the state, I dwell upon the intricate connections between the remaking of the Turkish state, politics, and the self (identity-formation). To do so, I focus on an ultranationalist group, the Idealists (ülkücüs), which had been one of the agents of the 1960 and 1970s political mobilization in Turkey. Particular phases in the movement’s history provide insights into the formation of the state both as an entity and a norm. In
this project, I particularly explore two phases, the late 1970s and the post-coup period. In the first period the ülkücü movement gained extraordinary strength, and in the second, it underwent identity-related and ideological challenges. Methodologically, I i) conduct a genealogical analysis of the coup as a form, and as a repetitive event in Turkish history, ii) perform a close reading and discourse analysis of the ülkücü’s autobiographical narratives about state violence and the impact of the events of September 12, tracing the intricacies of “stateness” back and forth in these texts. Memoirs, newspaper interviews, and web pages will constitute the material for analysis. The amount of published material increased particularly in two periods: the first immediately after the loosening of the censures (1984-89), and second in the 2000s when debates around September 12 increased, various media became more available, and after NAP’s electoral success in the 1999 elections⁷. In these narratives, I trace the emergence and disappearance of Statist and anti-Statist discourses. In line with the methodological concern of this project, I develop an integral outlook to the inmates’ ideas and their experiences of encountering with the State, from violent encounters to the most ordinary and routine elements of their daily lives.

Despite poor documentation, it is acknowledged (but not explicitly discussed) that intensive state violence targeted leftist militants during the junta regime of the 1980 military coup. A similar consensus does not exist for the sufferings of rightist militants. Until very recently, they rarely criticized the junta era, or talked about themselves in its prisons being tortured. When compared to the leftist experience, both the number of the

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⁷ In the 1995 elections, the NAP could not pass the 10% threshold to enter the Assembly. In the 1999 elections, however, it succeeded in raising its votes to 18% and became the second party in the Assembly.
rightist militants, and the “intensity” of the treatment they faced differ. Overall, 650,000 people was taken into custody, and 230,000 people were tried. Of the many joint trials from this period, the joint trial of Nationalist Action Party (NAP) and Ülküçü Organizations took five years and eleven months, while Revolutionary Youth trial took twenty-four years (Akp nar, 2005, p. 172). Eight rightist and eighteen leftist militants were executed. Yet, when one of the former ministers from the NAP, Agah Oktay Güner, stated during the trials that, “[their] ideas are in power, but [their] members are in jail,” it became a popular statement among the ülküçüs as the epitome of the “injustice” they endured. Some ülküçüs managed to find seats in the new governments of the post-coup era (even though some were accused as “traitors”), and they, as well as other bureaucrats, and even the imprisoned leader Türkeş himself, conveyed the complaints and demands of the imprisoned militants to state authorities and enabled changes in their prison conditions. The junta never eschewed expressing its abhorrence of the “communists” whom it saw as the “microbes” that the body should expunge. In contrast, though, the rightist militants were viewed as “sons of this country” who had overstepped the limits and thus had to be re-disciplined (Evren, 2000). The junta leader (Chief of Staff and the President) Kenan Evren made this clear in his public talks; in the two or three years after the coup, while he had no mercy to the leftist movements in general, his accusations of the right were saved for religious fundamentalists. The ultranationalists (ülküçüs) disappeared from the “list of enemies”, even though many militants stayed imprisoned till

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8 In another talk, he identified those who were detrimental to the national unity: “[“Abettors of the external forces that aim to turn country back to September 12”] engaged themselves in a fixed ideology, with brains washed. There is nothing you can do to these. Cut their heads, still you cannot separate them from these perverse ideologies. … [added to these are] those who are daydreaming, unaware of Turkey’s specificities, and resist this Constitution on the basis that it is not compatible with countries with democracies of 200 years” (Evren, 2000, p. 78).
1987 or later. In the meantime, leftist militants did not have such a protection, and most of their organizations were virtually eradicated⁹.

Hence the “impartiality” image that the junta regime insisted on keeping and relied upon for its legitimacy was at least deceptive. Nevertheless, as many testimonies reveal, torture and imprisonment left many rightist militants deeply traumatized, and created a profound rift between the state and its “loyal” activists. Their families, some of whom had to view their tortured bodies, had no means to protest or to heal their wounds. These “intimate” encounters with the State, and its bare power, initiated the process of personal and ideological transformation for some of the militants. In the absence of a class-based analysis that they could utilize to understand the military regime, their questions and desire to “understand” were urgent and painful. The loaded processes of questioning, confrontation, creation, mourning, healing, and so forth did not find expression in the ülkücü politics easily. Only the twenty years after the coup, their voices have started to be heard more widely.

⁹ There are no comparative studies on the right and the left’s experiences vis-à-vis the state violence. One of the most striking works on the leftists’ coup experience is published in two volumes by journalist and researcher Ertuğrul Mavioğlu, composed of his interviews with inmates, former military officers, doctors, prison guardians, and prosecutors (Mavioglu, 2005).
CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE COUPS IN TURKEY

In this section of the thesis, I will give an historical account of the period between
the 1950s and 1980s, particularly revisiting the circumstances within which each coup
occurred, and looking into how the coups brought new mechanisms to the state
machinery. As political scientist Cem Eroğul rightly puts it: “once the military-civilian
balance is disturbed, and military men acquire influence in administration, it is indeed
difficult to send an armed power back into its barracks” (1987, p. 119).

The first military coup d’état was on May 27, 1960. Intellectuals, students,
academics, journalists, etc. celebrated the coup, and called it a “revolution.” The
intervention overthrew the Democratic Party (DP), which had indeed adapted
authoritarian measures toward the oppositional and critical voices. Nevertheless, a less
mentioned aspect of the coup was that it marked the point whereby the military became
more integral to the political system systematically.

The DP was the second party established after 23 years of single party rule of
Atatürk’s Republican People’s Party (RPP). During the single party regime, state
machinery and the party (RPP) merged almost completely (Erik J. Zürcher, 2004, p. 221).
Nevertheless this could not thwart the DP’s sweeping successes in one after another
of the parliamentary elections of 1950 (52%), 1954 (57.5%), and 1957 (47.9%). Their
campaign would use the slogan “Enough, let the Nation/People speak,” and accordingly they would define themselves as the representatives of the “popular will” (*milli irade*). In realizing its goal, the DP implemented a mixed economic policy of state-centered developmentalism and partial-liberalism (İnsel, 1995, pp. 204-206; Erik J. Zürcher, 2004, p. 224). The post-war reconfiguration of international relations helped this new NATO member country to receive huge amounts of credit, which the DP used for the development of the agricultural sector in congruence with the demands of mostly rural voters (Erik J. Zürcher, 2004, pp. 224-225). Thus, rural areas not only became more accessible with the newly-built roads, but also came under the close scrutiny of the public because of the rapid change they were going through. The genre of “village literature” grew significantly during this period, documenting the details of the transformation that the newly introduced machinery created in the life of the village people. The cities changed dramatically too as seasonal and then permanent workers migrated to the cities for a relief from their landowners, and for better conditions of life and work. These major developments also changed the parliament’s design; landowners, businessmen, managers, and entrepreneurs found seats as DP deputies (Yeşilada, 1984, pp. 26-28). In this climate, democracy became a buzzword, closely associated with the DP and its charismatic leader Adnan Menderes.

Nevertheless, the DP’s rule also had authoritarian character. Menderes was using Islamic symbols extensively, and strengthening nationalism by exhibiting a xenophobic attitude toward the Greek Cyriots and the Greek communities in Turkey. As early as 1954, the NYT ran a head article entitled “Turkey is Moving Backwards” which claimed: “[Menderes] is destroying the freedom of the media… He imprisons those who criticize
him… He represses the political opposition… He had promised the right to strike to the workers… Nevertheless he punishes the workers even for short strikes.” One year after, in September 1955, the Istanbul pogroms occurred, targeting the 150,000 members of the Greek community. Menderes’ response was to scapegoat the communists.

The army’s relationship with DP rule was key to the development of the coup plans. After the Independence War of 1923, the army was supposed to return to their barracks. Atatürk, a graduate of military school himself, had made it clear that any military officer who wanted to participate in politics had to resign. However this could not be realized immediately, given the fact that the majority of parliamentarians and members of the RPP had military backgrounds. That is why when it came to power in 1950, the DP removed high ranking officers from their positions due the fear of a military coup (Eroğul, 1987, p. 107).

Rising from its economic deprivation vis-à-vis the rising bourgeoisie from the rural areas, the army’s discontent with the ruling regime had grew in the later years of the 1950s. The lives of its members were influenced by the deterioration of the economy and the priority given to investment in the agriculture sector. Added to this was their decreasing privilege in the society. Historian Kemal Karpat’s interviews with the officers conducted in the early 1960s demonstrate the military officers’ economic deprivation: “Many officers I interviewed after the Revolution complained that in the 1950’s some landlords would not even bother to show them houses for rent, for “they could not afford it”; some store owners looked annoyed at the prospect of showing expensive items to this impoverished group; waiters with an eye on tips preferred to serve rich customers; and even mothers, who had once been highly honored to have officers as sons-in-law, often
advised their daughters not to marry men with ‘shiny uniforms but empty pockets’ (1970, p. 1663). Karpat’s interviewees also give further insight: “One revolutionary officer described the psychological impact of these developments to me in the following terms: “you must understand the special psychology of the military if you want to grasp the real causes of the Revolution. We, the military, are brought up with a keen sense of honor and absolute faith in our code of ethics and our superiority. For you civilians a general is a top officer; for us he is a kind of demi-god, the symbol of our values, an ideal rank toward which all the young officers strive. What would happen to this value system if younger officers should see their general open the door and bow to a civilian minister?” (1970, p. 1664). None of these suffices to explicate the military’s return to the political realm, but the interviews give a sense of how the officers perceived their status in the society, and felt the “threat” of further desperation.

Hence, motivated by ideological as well as material concerns, the military intervened on May 27, 1960. It was more the low ranking officers who led the takeover, receiving support from some of their superiors. They formed the Committee of National Union (CNU) that would determine the process for the transition to the civilian regime. Among the Committee members, Colonel Alparslan Türkeş, who would be the legendary leader of the ülkücü movement, led the radical wing that argued for the continuation of

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10 Karpat also names the 1960 coup as a revolution.
11 Zürcher argues that the involvement of the officers in politics was a side-effect of the military’s modernization process in the 1950s, which entailed the use of high technology machinery, recruiting of personnel with engineering and communications background to higher positions, and the officers’ participation in the NATO exchange programs where they had an opportunity to see the “advancement” of Western armies and societies (Zürcher, 1993 2004, p. 239)
the military regime for an indefinite period time\textsuperscript{12}. However, given the fact that the very presence of such an extra-military organization imbued with the authority of the Grand National Assembly undermined the military hierarchy, no one, including the high rank officers, supported this argument. Eventually CNU ousted those radical officers, and founded a Constituent Assembly in 1960 to write a new constitution and new electoral laws that was comprised by itself and a representative assembly that included political parties (except the DP), professional organizations, student groups, and representatives of the provinces (Eroğul, 1987, pp. 120-121).

Two contradictory undercurrents influenced the period between the 1961 elections and the second military coup in 1971. On the one hand, the new constitution widely recognized the freedoms of organization, activism, and expression for universities, media, unions, political parties, and many other public arenas. The political climate shaped under these developments paved the way to the mushrooming of political organizations, including radical politics both from the right and the left. The newly founded Justice Party (the successor of the DP) and the RPP continued to dominate the central politics\textsuperscript{13}. Yet the emerging parties of the Workers’ Party of Turkey (WPT) from the left, the Nationalist Action Party (NAP), and the National Order Party (NOP) from the right were quite influential, and sometimes even key in the assembly calculations. All

\textsuperscript{12} For the radical wing’s (or “the fourteens”) other arguments about the reorganization of the social and political life, see (Poulton, 1997, pp. 137-138).

\textsuperscript{13} In the 1961 elections, the Republican People’s Party (RPP) polled slightly more than the DP’s successor Justice Party (JP), with 36.3\% and 34.8\% respectively. This being first period of semi-civilian rule until the 1965 elections, the parties established erratic coalitions. In the 1965 elections, the JP had a sweeping victory (similar to its predecessor the DP): 52.9\%, while the RPP could only take 28.7\% of the votes. The head of the JP, or the new leader of the central right politics, was an engineer named Süleyman Demirel. With Demirel, a new class of people joined the DP/JP’s base, who were “self-made men from the countryside” (Erik J. Zürcher, 2004, p. 251). Also, with the 1961 elections, military personnel were given right to vote.
had their own youth organizations carrying out politics in the universities, work places, and at large. Within itself, the left was separated to two fronts on the debate about whether Turkey should be viewed as a feudalistic or a developing country, and whether the revolution could happen in collaboration with the army forces or against them. The right had not posed a significant threat to the status quo since the Islamist NOP was marginal and the ultranationalist NAP based its politics on the counter-leftist position.

The other important dynamic of the 60s was the increasing militarization of the public sphere and politics. The military’s anxiety regarding the DP (or of populist democracy) was not over. In order to guarantee their position vis-à-vis the CNU, the high ranking officers established an unofficial committee: the Armed Forces Union (AFU) “with junta oriented tendencies” (Eroğul, 1987, p. 122). One of the lessons they took for themselves from the 1960 coup was the need to reinstitute the military hierarchy. They also strengthened their position vis-à-vis the government by establishing the National Security Council (NSC) and giving it a Constitutional status. Even though the council’s role was defined as that of “giving advice” to the government at the outset, it gradually held tremendous power by obtaining the status of a central mechanism that “decides” on national security affairs through subsequent martial laws and the military coups of 1971 and 1980. In order to ameliorate the military personnel’s economic situation, Army Mutual Assistance Association (OYAK) was created in 1961. Despite these developments, the result of the referendum for the new Constitution was worrying for the

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14 Only during the EU accession processes could the military members of the Council be replaced with civilian ones, and its role be finally undercut.
15 OYAK has become one of the most profitable conglomerates in Turkey; in addition to a bank, it owns over forty firms.
military, because only 61.5% of the people gave their approval. In the meantime, there was the strong possibility of another coup (Eroğul, 1987, p. 125). Nevertheless the majority party leader Demirel, differently from his predecessor Menderes, “choose” to reconcile with the military. The “price” was “more autonomy to the armed forces,” from the Minister of Defense and the government (Erik J. Zürcher, 2004, p. 251) . Furthermore the government relied on military power to curb the growing violence in the struggles between the right and the left (Dodd, 1983, pp. 11-12). Nevertheless, this would soon prove to be a “vicious circle,” as the military would never find the authority granted them sufficient.

The military intervened for the second time on March 12, 1971. It was in the form of a memorandum, after which the government resigned, and the military assigned a new government to facilitate constitutional reforms, and “security” measures. During two years rule of the new government, one third of the 1961 constitution was amended with harsher measures, with the argument that that much liberal constitution was a “luxury” to the Turkish people (Ahmad, 1993, p. 152).

The initial aim of the coup seemed to restore the hierarchy within the military, especially after thwarting a planned coup by the leftist officers on March 9, 1971\(^{16}\). Yet, there are two interrelated and broader explanations for this coup. First, it is argued that the military had economic motivations. Fragile coalition governments and increasing polarization within and between the right and the left had undermined state authority, whose role in the import substitution industrialization model had been decisive (Keyder, \(^{16}\)For a detailed account of the fractions in the military (which came to fore most clearly in the 1970 coup), and the dynamics between the “radicals” and “moderates” in the military with an institutional analysis perspective, see (Vaner, 1987).
1987). The military needed “law and order” because OYAK was a big investor in the market: “OYAK devotes more than half its assets to industrial and commercial investments, deliberately implanting itself at the heart of a particular type of development founded upon middle class consumption, import-substitution industrialization in the form of the establishment of assembly plants, and partnership with foreign capital” (Vaner, 1987, p. 253). The composition of the transitional government, mainly managers and technicians experienced in OECD, World Bank, and NATO, is held to prove the point (Ahmad, 1993, p. 150).

Second explanation derives upon more political dynamics. The military, again for the purposes of “law and order” increasing became anxious over the rising class-consciousness and unionization among the urban proletariat, the internal transformation of the leftist movement, and the radicalization of student protests. Added to that, the workers’ movement gained strength, because with the growing industrial sector, and subsequent internal migration to the cities, there was a dynamic and crowded urban worker population. Hence the society went through significant phases first time in the history of the republic. In 1967, the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (DISK) was established as an alternative to the state-dominated Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türk-İş). In 1969, Turkey’s “Bloody Sunday” occurred; a student died when the police intervened in the peaceful protest of the DISK and the students against the arrival of the US’s 6th fleet in Istanbul. The government’s attempts to limit the DISK’s activities resulted in the largest and most radical demonstration of the worker’s movement on June 15-16, 1970. The police killed three demonstrators while trying to
dissolve the march, and the successive turmoil resulted with the imposition of martial law in Istanbul and Kocaeli for three months.

Not only workers’ movement, but also the politics in the parliament was on the move. The emergence of “left of center” politics deviating from the Republican line and from Kemalist populism was another factor that alarmed the military. A new political persona of the 1960s was Bülent Ecevit, a poet and journalist who won the leadership of the Republican People’s Party (RPP). The cruelty of the military junta of the 1961, which resulted in the hanging of former Prime Minister Menderes and two of his ministers had raised eyebrows of many including some RPP members. From the party’s side, there was a need to change the traditional image of the RPP as elitist and arrogant (Ahmad, 1993, p. 157). The new base of the party should embrace the massive working class and immigrant populations. RPP started to receive outcomes of its new attitude; in 1973 elections it won the majority of the votes (33.3%) and formed the government (Ahmad, 1993, p. 159). The RPP was one thing, yet the leftist politics in Turkey made a major breakthrough with the establishment of the socialist Workers Party of Turkey (WPT - Türkiye İşçi Partisi) as early as 1961. It is generally acknowledged that the internal debates of the short-lived party constituted a “laboratory” of the leftist politics in Turkey. As Zürcher (1997) confirms, “it never managed to attract more than 3 per cent of the vote in a general election, but (…) by its existence it forced the other parties to define themselves more clearly in ideological terms” (p. 259). Immediately after the 1971 coup, the prosecutor opened a case against the WPT accusing its members of generating “communist propaganda” and supporting Kurdish separatism.
The third factor that constituted a “reason” for the intervention was the radicalization of the student movements. A student-based organization, the Revolutionary Youth (Dev-Genç) had tens of thousands members within and outside the universities. From this platform, many factions emerged; the Turkish People’s Liberation Army, the Turkish People’s Liberation Party-Front, the Turkish Workers and Peasants’ Liberation Army were major ones. Urban guerrilla warfare involving bank robberies or kidnappings became quite widespread. A report ("MB", 1995) prepared by military intelligence services for the President in 1972 shows to what extent the leftist student organizations constituted a threat to the “integrity of the state”. Ninety percent of the approximately two hundred-page report gives detailed information about these organizations. The ultranationalist youth groups, then known as “commandos”\(^\text{17}\) were not mentioned at all. Under martial law declared after the coup, the Revolutionary Youth was banned, and all meetings of professional associations and unions were prohibited (Ahmad, 1993, p. 151).

On the way to the 1980 coup, the military had been investing in promoting itself as the “savior” of the country from all sorts of terrorism. It had repaired internal divisions by ousting over a thousand officers. Before the coup, it was already in power during the martial law declared on December 12, 1978. Ecevit led government had to put in force after the series of pogroms against the Alevite citizens in Malatya, Bingöl, Kahramanmaras, and then in Çorum (all then Alevi-populated cities in the Central and East Anatolia) provoked by ülkücüs militants (Erik Jan Zürcher, 1997, p. 277)\(^\text{18}\).

\(^{17}\) Commandos were known as members of Ülkücüs Hearts, and Nationalist Action Party youth branches who had received arms and physical training to “fight on the site.”

\(^{18}\) Ülkücüs refuse to have taken any part, and claim that “external powers” played the final game, which was the conflicts on the religious grounds, to “divide and rule” the country. Yet, no pogroms could be achieved without the popular support.
Nevertheless, martial law did not eliminate violence as the death toll reached twenty for a day. Added to that was the assassination of major figures, including Nihat Erim, the prime minister of the 1971 junta’s government, Abdi İpekçi, the editor of the daily newspaper Milliyet, Ecevit’s consultant, Gün Sazak, vice-secretary of the Nationalist Action Party (NAP), Doğan Öz, the public prosecutor, who was filing a report on “counter-guerrilla” unit19, Prof. Bedrettin Cömer, while he was investigating right-wing terror squads active in Hacettepe University, Kemal Türkler, the founder and first president of DISK, and others.

The military’s complaints of restricted authority continued, and there was virtually no criticism of the military from the Parliament. A constitutional law professor, Zafer Üsküül, observed that in all of the martial law discussions in the parliament, the parties accused the government, instead of the military. It was clear to all that under martial law the services could not or did not perform their duties, but they saved all their criticisms for the government (Uskül, 1989, p. 215). He also contends that the politicians did not consider coup a possibility: “[E]veryone in the Grand National Assembly agreed that terror targeted the State, and martial law was the last resort to thwart the terror and save the State. This view was presented by all the spokespersons of the groups in the Assembly” (Uskül, 1989, p. 211).

In the meantime, the instability and political violence gathered more and more interest from the international public, to which the military felt the need to respond. After the Iranian revolution, Turkey was now key to the broader geopolitics in the region (cited

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19 “Counter-guerilla unit” was a paramilitary organization whose activities before the 1980 are yet to be disclosed. It is also said that ullahçiler militants partook in those units as well.
from Birand Ahmad, 1993, p. 174). Journalist Jim Paul quotes a top NATO official in June 1980 on the importance of Turkey to the Western countries: “‘the single greatest concern of the NATO command in the Mediterranean is the precarious state of the Turkish economy’” (Paul, 1981, p. 4).

On September 12, 1980, the Turkish Armed Forces announced that the society had been surrounded and contaminated with extensive terror, and the governors could no longer maintain the public order. The assembly and the government were dissolved, the parties were closed down, and all kinds of political activities and organizations were outlawed. The Constitution was suspended, and three newspapers were closed down. The National Security Committee (NSC), formed of five generals, took the role of the government. The head of the Committee chief of staff Kenan Evren became the President for seven years, after two years of rule in the Committee. On the day of the coup d’état the Chief of General Staff, Kenan Evren would write in the honour book at Atatürk’s mausoleum the following words:

“Our August leader,
Today, when the Turkish Armed Forces, the loyal and undaunted guards of the Republic you founded and the principles you established, in which you had always trusted, had to take over the administration of the country to say ‘halt’ to those who failed to protect the regime and your principles and who pushed the country, which you have left in national unity and togetherness, into more and more darkness and helplessness every day and to revitalize your principles and democracy, we once again remember you with gratitude, and bow with respect in your presence” (Konseyi, 1982, pp. 234-235).

It was the third time that the military seized power. This time “chain of order” was fully established, and the commanders guaranteed “never going back to 1970s.” The Committee declared that in the case of a conflict with the Constitution, NSC’s laws and decrees would be regarded as Constitutional articles.
The junta’s one of the first tasks was to declare its loyalty to the IMF policies, and NATO membership. Before the coup, the JP government had already announced a new economy plan, named “January 24 measures” in consultation with the IMF and his economic advisor Turgut Ozal. It was a major readjustment in the Turkish economy, based on the primacy of export and competition. Yet only after the coup the measures could be implemented. Known as the “generals’ miracle,” the opening of the country to global capitalism was gradually accomplished. In the meantime the military curbed social and economic rights significantly. It put forward series of policies, “[it] reduced real wages, severely curtailed workers’ rights to unionize and to strike, extended the work-week and the work-year, and legislated retraction of severance pay, seniority rights and social insurance benefits. In the agricultural sector, the government has depressed agricultural support prices, dismantled cooperatives, curtailed credits to small and middle farmers, legislated changes export-oriented agribusiness and installed incentives to attract foreign capital and technology” (Kara & Kum, 1984, p. 23). It is being wide discussed across the disciplines to what extent was the coup sine qua non of the January 24 process.

The military fought another total warfare against its politically organized citizens. The chief of staff Kenan Evren made several speeches across the country in order to introduce the new Constitution, ask for their approval in the referendum. He emphasized two points; one was that “we have never been against the workers. How could we, we are all sons and daughters of middle class families. We know what we have to suffer. However we are also not against those who earn a lot with their honor and honesty. … We are not against wealth. You shall not be either” (Evren, 2000, p. 117). The other message he urged to convey was related to the very terms of the “new” politics: “It
should be known that these two problems [anarchy and terror] are like microbes in an organism. When the body is strong, these microbes remain inactive, they cannot be influential, damage the body. However, like it happens to the human body, when the body weakens, immunity and endurance shrink” (Evren, 2000, p. 180).

In the meantime, the state machinery was working in full capacity to oust the “microbes” from the nation’s body. Human Rights Association (HRA) declared that approximately 650,000 people had been detained on political grounds. They were kept under custody from ninety to one hundred and fifty days. 171 people were killed by torture, and 49 people convicted capital punishment were executed. Over one and a half million people were filed, together with processes of marking and following them in their close environment. 388,000 people were not given passport, and 14,000 were expatriated. The number of the political refugees amounted to 30,000. Nearly fifteen hundred thousand people in public sector were dismissed, more than that were forced to resign (Öndül, 2007)\(^\text{20}\). Added to that was the years-long martial law conditions\(^\text{21}\).

\(^{20}\) Additional numbers regarding the legal cases related with the coup: cases for 1,683,000 people were filed. The prosecutor requested execution for 7,000 people. 517 people were executed. 98,404 people were accused of membership in illegal political organizations. 388,000 people were denied passports. 14,000 people were expatriated. 30,000 people fled abroad as political refugees. 300 people died with no cause identified. 171 people were documented of dying by torture. 937 movies were banned. 23,677 associations were closed down. 3,854 teachers, 120 university faculty members, and 47 judges were dismissed. The newspapers could not publish for 300 days. 39 tons of newspapers and journals were burned. 14 people died in hunger strikes. 16 people were shot “while escaping.” 95 people died in armed conflicts. 73 people were given “natural death” reports. 43 people committed suicide (“Darbenin bilançosu (The results of the coup)”, 2000, September 12).

\(^{21}\) On the authorities imbued with the martial law governorship and the police: “The police would have been entitled to engage freely in telephone tapping, the interception of mail and the searching of homes; to hold arrested persons, uncharged, for 48 hours; to use firearms virtually at their own discretion; and to arrest people merely on suspicion that they were contemplating a felony. ... What most worries still-unpersuaded Turks is the wide-ranging "morality" powers given to the police. These reflect the Islamic principles held by many members of the government. Broadly speaking, the police can now arrest anybody whose behaviour offends public morals” (“Hard Law”, 1984).
Hence the 1980s was marked by intensive state violence on the one hand, and the rapid adaptation of the society to the changes brought by the economic integration to the global capitalism. Cultural critic Nurdan Gürbilek, writing in the late 80s, describes the duality of these coexisting dynamics in the following words:

“It was on the one hand a period of rejection, denial, and repression, on the other a period of opportunities and promises in which people’s desires and appetites had been stimulated with unprecedented intensity. (…) In terms of institutional, political and human costs, the 80’s were one of the heaviest periods of recent history, but at the same time, a period of lightening up and liberation, of being freed from political burdens… For a brief historical moment, political repression and the glitter of shop windows, the horror of war and the cultural rise of the provinces, torture and the call to individuality, the obligation to be silent and the appetite to speak shared the same stage” (Gürbilek, 1993, p. 9).
The ülkücü movement grew out of several organizations that have roots in the anti-communist climate of the post-World War II period and the rapidly politicizing climate of the post-1960 coup era (see Chapter 1). Yet, at this stage the movement put forth more of a reactionary politics, than an ideologically-grounded one. Until the legendary leader Alparslan Türkeş personally involved in the organization of the movement, the young militants employed a mixture of nationalist, fascistic and anti-communism discourses, and scattered across various associations. In the 1970s, organizations with “ülkücü” in their titles became widespread and increasingly popular. The movement was centralized around the Nationalist Action Party (NAP) led by Türkeş, and emerged as a strong political dynamic with its student and associational branches. After the huge blow of the 1980 coup, the party and the movement tried to recover ideologically and organizationally. As the NAP’s position in the parliament fluctuated in 1994, 1999, 2002, and 2007 elections, ülkücüs have been going through series of internal debates, which initiated a big rupture in the movement in 1994 when a former ülkücü leader Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu and his friends exited the Türkeş circle for a new party. Hence main tensions within the ülkücü movement include the relationship between nationality and religion (whether one supersedes the other), the imagined and ideal relationship with
the State, multiplication of ülkücü identities with the neoliberal turn in Turkey and their integrity to the movement, ideological adjustments to the changing dynamics in the society.

A majority of the scholarship and journalism on the history and politics of the ülkücü movement was done by “outsiders,” especially by the leftists (Tanil Bora & Can, 1994, 2004; Çakır, 2003; Feyizoglu, 2000; Tusalp, 2001; Yanardağ, 2002). Thus, ülkücü writer Hakk Öznur’s six volumes work Ülkücü Movement (1999) is a major improvement and source of pride. Öznur, a member of the first Ülkücü Hearths, and currently the Vice Secretary of the Grand Union Party (Büyük Birlık Partisi) is a prolific writer-researcher with eulogic biographies on the leading figures, as well as volumes-long disparaging works targeting the left and the Kurds. This particular series is designed to be informative and responsive; each volume covers a different subject, bringing together, sometimes repetitively, news, articles, photographs, speeches, conference papers, and statements published from 1948-1980 about and by the ülkücüs. The third volume in particular “Accusations, Conspiracies, Provocations, Agent Provocateurs, Agent Provocateur Line: The Aydinlîk Movement” responds to the arguments regarding the ülkücü militants’ involvement in the Bloody Sunday (1969), Maras, Sivas, and Malatya pogroms (1978), contr-guerrilla units, and in the assassinations of journalists and persecutors (1978-1981).

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22 Among these works, Tanil Bora and Kemal Can’s two volumes of meticulous research are pioneer works on the topic.
23 Grand Union Party (GUP) was founded in 1994 by the ullahs who departed from the Nationalist Action Party. The reason for the departure was a quest to concentrate more on religion.
The ülkücü columnists, academicians, and writers all acclaim the book for its “encyclopedic value,” and for recovering a part of their history that had been forgotten. They also celebrate the work for its “objectivity”, and “historical accuracy.” One says that the book will be “taken by the “youth” of [his] generation as a “family album” full of pains” (Alkan, 1999). While most of the reviewers account how the work made them recall the environment in the 1970s, none of them asks about a follow up work on the post-1980. Nevertheless, neither the author, nor other ülkücüs point to the necessity or possibility of such a project. Critical distance from the history may not have been achieved yet, it also seems that the fact that diverging accounts of the past will emerge, is troubling to some reviewers.

In this chapter, I trace the history of the ülkücü movement from 1960s to 1980. I benefit from “outsider” texts to the extent that they provide richer analysis and connections to the larger political environment. I consult to the “insider” texts whenever I present the terms of the main tensions and how they develop into the politics of the movement. The late 1970s necessitates particular attention, since it was when the movement had reached the peak point in power and popularity.
3.1 Ülkücü Organizations

Here I explore three traditions of ülkücü organizations. First is Turkish Hearts (*Türk Ocaklağı*). Founded in 1919, the Turkish Hearts are one of the first “grassroots” nationalist organizations; on their website it self-identifies as, “The oldest NGO that ties Turkey’s past to its future.” While nationalism became widespread among the intellectuals, the Hearts were initiated by students of the military medical school (Sarnay, 2000, p. 48). Even though they claimed loyalty to the new regime of the Republic, they were shut down in 1932, and remained closed until the Democrat Party granted permission to re-open in 1949 (Can, 2000). In the 1960s and 70s, it closely worked with the Ülkücü Hearts and the intellectuals and the youth branches of both collaborated particularly in their struggle against communism (Can, 2000, p. 336; Öznur, 1999b, p. 22). In the symbolic realm, the Turkish Hearts had the grey wolf as their emblem. After the 1980 coup, the Turkish Hearts organization was closed down since every other organization was forced to do so; nevertheless when they resumed their activities in 1984, the Prime Minister Özal, with other bureaucrats, visited the association. This was an obvious affirmation of its activities. Some of the members of the Turkish Hearts faced challenges from the ülkücü movement and the Nationalist Action

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24 Another important organization contemporary with the Turkish Hearts was the National Turkish Student Union (*Milli Türk Talebe Birliği*). It was a crucial organization, founded in 1924, in which most of the ülkücü leaders were involved. After the establishment of the Ülkücü Hearts, and because of an internal struggle between Islamist and ülkücü groups, the ülkücüs left the Union in 1969, and afterwards it became less influential among students (Feyizoglu, 2000, pp. 20-25).

25 I could not find a reference for the number of the Turkish Hearts before the 1980 coup, nor an approximate number of their members and their profiles. Nevertheless, a crude distribution of work with the Ülkücü Hearts could be said to exist; while the intellectuals gathered around the Turkish Hearts, the youth organization was being done in the Ülkücü Hearts.
Party (NAP) during the 80s and 90s, because of this closeness to the government (Öznur, 1999b, pp. 37-42). With the election of the current president, Nuri Gürgür, the rifts between “traditionalist” and “revisionist” ülkücü were overcome (Öznur, 1999b, p. 42). Currently, the Turkish Hearts have more than 70 branches, and their publication Türk Yurdu (Turkish Homeland) is an important venue for nationalist and ülkücü intellectuals. They have also been given the status of “Associations of public good,” a designation that has several benefits and privileges.

The second organization is the University Students Culture Association (Üniversiteliler Kültür Derneği – UKD). In the post-1960 era, there appeared various groups that identified and used the name “ülkücü” in their activities and titles. The UKD was founded immediately after the 1960 coup, because the “Turkish Hearts were about to be banned, and the 27 May junta applied psychological pressure and terror upon the members of the Hearts” (Öznur, 1999b, p. 127). The nationalists at the universities, mostly graduate students and assistant professors, who would be “the intellectuals” or “the trainers” of the ülkücü movement intended to establish this club (then turned into association) to be an “ideational and cultural, instead of political” (Öznur, 1999b, p. 127) space that would be an alternative for leftists’ groups various intellectual formations. Galip Erdem, the name-father of the “ülkücü” identity, was among the founders of the Association. This group, from 1965 onwards, was expected to dissolve itself by Türkeş, the leader, because he wanted the members to join his party and become involved in the political realm as well. According to Öznur, the group resisted until they closed the Association “voluntarily” in 1977 (Öznur, 1999b, p. 131). In the meantime, the members
of the UKD were not marginalized from the movement; on the contrary, they became very influential figures.

The third organization, and the strongest one, is Idealist Hearts (*Ülkü Ocakları*). The first ones were established like university clubs at the faculties of Law, Language, History, Geography, and Agriculture in Ankara in 1966. For the initial period, they endeavored to settle a new concept “socialist” nationalism,” and tried to differentiate it from national socialism, which proved to be difficult over time, and had to be abandoned in late 70s. Their political discourse entailed anti-capitalism, anti-communism, etatism, and nationalism. Here are some key sentences from this group’s first declarations:

“In Turkey, the current order is imported, and this is the major cause of the current disorder in our country. The main issue is to bring Turkey a new order. ... The capitalist powers/governments and their accomplices which are the causes of the current chaos still dominate Turkey” (Öznur, 1999b, p. 226).

“Ideals are aspirations that were born out of the mixture of reality and dream that understands the present by looking at the past, that give acceleration to the nations, and that are worth dying for. Ideals are the spiritual food to the nations. Turkish Ideal is that Turkish nation shall become the most progressive and superior to the other nations with its full and unconditional sovereignty and independence over the Turkish lands” (Öznur, 1999b, p. 227).

“Those who believe that following Karl Marx, Lenin, Mao and their methodologies in order to be a socialist (toplumcu) shall understand that real socialism (toplumculuk) will realize by loving the nation, and the country, being respectful to their traditions, sacred values, by sharing their problems” (Öznur, 1999b, p. 228).

“We are socialist (toplumcu)! Because the majority of our Nation is struggling for its survival under very poor conditions in the 20th century. One the one hand, Anatolian people burn cow dung for heating, on the other hand dead investments irrelevant to our nation’s needs such as sports centers, stadiums, opera houses are being built” (Öznur, 1999b, p. 230).

Shortly after the establishment of these first Ülküçü Hearts, many others followed. They were centralized and gathered under the umbrella organization the Ülküçü Hearts

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26 “Socialist” has two translations in Turkish. One is “sosyalist” as it corresponds to its English meaning; the other is “toplumcu,” which meant a more conservative understanding of society, focusing on not changing it, but on preserving its values, as used by the *ülkücü*. 
Union (Ülkü Ocakları Birliği). They became popular outside university campuses in 1970, when they joined a televised debate with the leftist organization, Revolutionary Youth (Dev-Genç). After the program, the President of the Republic’s appreciation of their position empowered the movement. He said “they are patriotic youngsters. They are struggling against the communists” (Öznur, 1999b, p. 307). In 1977, they already had more than 1500 branches all over the country, and hundreds thousands of adherents (Landau, 1995, p. 152).

Most of the ülkücü historians portray the members of the Hearts and the ülkücü adherents in general as the “children of poor families” (Öznur, 1999b). researchers Tanlı Bora and Kemal Can (1994), leftist writers of a two-volume work on the ülkücü movement provide more detailed analysis of the members’ profile. According to their survey from the interviews and biographies published in the major journals of the

27 After the Idealist Hearts Union was closed down by the martial law commandership of the 1971 coup, it reopened with the name Ülkücü Hearts Association (Ülkü Ocakları Derneği) in 1973, and its branches were reactivated promptly. When the Hearts faced trial in 1978, they had to dissolve the organization; hence the new name was the Ülkücü Youth Association (Ülkücü Gençlik Derneği). When martial law was settled on 13 cities in Central Anatolia, they closed the branches in those cities in order to show their support to the martial law commandership (Öznur, 1999b, p. 543).

28 For further empowerment, the prominent ideologist of the pan-Turkism, Nihal Atsız, gave the ülkücü militants advice regarding their life styles. According to him, the Turkish nationalists should enroll in military school, teacher’s college, or political science faculties, because they were the central locations to “educate” or indoctrinate people. Also, in making their decisions about marriage, they should not fall in love, but instead find someone of whose genealogy they were certain. Needless to say, they should have as many children as they could (Atsız, 1976, pp. 5-6). Atsız had a wide audience as a novelist; his novels inspired the youth in forming a symbolic world, especially on the “grey wolf” legend. He had more radical ideas indeed, but his ideas were later found “extreme” even by ülkücü leaders. He had disputes with Türkeş, the leader of the Nationalist Action Party, whom Atsız blamed for pacifying the movement with religion. Nevertheless his legacy among the militants, especially through his novels as new versions of the “grey wolves” legend.

29 Another ülkücü group parallel to the Hearts was the Association of the Young Ülkücüler (Genç Ülkücüler Teşkilatı). It aimed to expand the Party’s base to high schools and secondary schools (Landau, 1974).
movement, they differentiate ülküçüs in the countryside from those in the cities. The first group had learnt by heart the official Turkish nationalism and had grown in Islamic culture, but what moved them to activism was their reaction to the rapidly changing society and culture that was spreading in waves from the cities towards the peripheries. Hence, the youth who crowded the Hearts had the primary concern to preserve the “familiar atmosphere” they were used to, and they saw the cosmopolitan/university culture to which they saw communism as the cause of the threat to their very existence. They had support from some villagers, artisans, and traders, yet their elders had the aspiration to transfer to the central party (Justice Party) after they gained experience in the Hearts and Nationalist Action Party. The adherents had close ties to each other, which further enhanced their sense of an “organic” community, and the Hearts locations were spaces for socialization and continuation of an Islamic lifestyle (Tanil Bora & Can, 1994, pp. 65-67).

While Bora and Can find the mass in the countryside “naïve,” they find the ülküçüs in the cities to be less “innocent.” The militants were originally from the countryside; some were second- or third-generation immigrants, some came to the cities to attend the university. In the absence of intense communal ties, they were harshly threatened by the cosmopolitan culture, poverty and other social inequalities. Hence, the ülküçü identity through which they gained a reputation, respectability, and social environment was a life buoy to them. In the 1970s, the ülküçü identity would evolve into a subculture, which was composed of a blend of “adventurism, values of masculinity,

30 In Turkey, the social unit “countryside” (taşra) corresponds to small municipalities (kasaba) and undeveloped cities where in which cities and villages are mixed. It does not include the village, which still has a meaning of its own.
violence, being a man-at-arms, man of cause” (Tanil Bora & Can, 1994, pp. 67-68). The leader cadre was composed of retired military officers, bureaucrats, and emerging bourgeoisie from the countryside. The intellectuals or the “trainers” of the group were former members of the Turkish Hearts, the University Students Culture Association, or the first Ülkücü Hearts.

Even though the Ülkücü movement tried to mobilize other age and class groups so as to be able to present itself as a “national”/popular movement, it remained mainly as a youth movement, which was closely linked to the Party (NAP) and to parliamentary politics. It was clear to the militants that they were backed by the party and established in its cadres, as well as backed by the leader former Colonel Türk eş himself, who had ties with the military. Ülkücü vocational groups were established generally after the 1971 coup, after those of their leftist counterparts, such as the Union of Ülkücü Professors and Teachers, the Association of Ülkücü Workers, the Association of Ülkücü Technicians, the Association of Ülkücü State Officers, the Association of Ülkücü Villagers, the Association of Ülkücü Financers and Economists, the Association of Ülkücü Ladies, the Community of Ülkücü Journalists, the Association of Ülkücü Traders, the Cooperative Association of Ülkücü University Assistants, the Association of Ülkücü Medical Students, and the Union of Ülkücü Police Officers. Among them, the Confederation of the Nationalist Workers’ Unions had the role of uniting the others, as well as providing a strong alternative to the increasing class-consciousness among the workers and to the strengthening leftist movement. Organizing the workers was imperative in order to lend the movement a solid basis; in their own words, they should “withdraw from the literary issues, and have thoughts, ideas that would address social problems on real basis” (as
cited in Akkaya, 2002, p. 133). A brochure published in 1973 during the electoral campaigns explains how the workers’ organization was instituted into nationalism while trying to avoid the socialist terminology: “National interests are above the interests of all individuals and groups. In the nationalist movement, work and capital are not accepted as two enemies fighting and destroying each other, instead they are received as two brothers complementing each other. The crucial thing is achieving peace between work and capital under the powerful and just hands of the state” (as cited in Akkaya, 2002, pp. 136-137). Nevertheless, the ülkücü ideology was not strong among workers and in the villages, over which the left had more support.

Amidst the attempts to expand, the youth was regarded as the locomotive of the movement, and they were quite aware of this (Tanil Bora & Can, 1994, p. 73). They were the ones that entered the street fights with the leftists, and the ones that were dying. Even though the movement was organized through strict hierarchies, the youth’s seeming autonomy from the party (NAP) was/is a disputed issue. To some extent, the leaders of the party could utilize this image to give the impression that youth organization was indeed a “reaction” to the communist attacks in the universities. Nevertheless, it was also a public secret that the party leaders insisted on centralizing the Ülkücü Hearts and youth organizations, as well as the Turkish Hearts (Can, 2000; Landau, 1974; Öznur, 1999b). The leaders of the youth, who were not among the “intellectual” cadres, later became the most legendary personas; Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu, Haluk Kırcı, Abdullah Çatlı are typical examples.
3.2 Ülküçü Politics

Within stalemate of the ülküçü movement that caused the breaking up of the movement at various periods of time, a persistent issue is religion. The anti-communism mission had sustained unity among the nationalist currents until the 1971 coup. Most of the militants acknowledged that what drove them into the movement, was “communists cursing their values and traditions” (Dereli, 1996)\textsuperscript{31}. Nevertheless, as the military re-emerged now as a force that targeted the leftist militants, the ülküçü movement had to reconsider its ideology and organization. Communism, socialism, and the leftist militants would still be the fundamental enemies. Nevertheless, since the military took over their essential mission, they were forced to define their ideology in detail, which brought dormant issues to the surface. The most pressing issue was religion.

According to the militants, religion came to fore as a sign of maturation of the movement, as a dormant element that substantiated their identity, a test of sincerity, and a way of survival amid the turmoil of the era. While some of the militants in the Ülküçü Hearts accepted that religion was an issue of transformation, “The movement moved from the reaction to an atheist movement, to becoming a religious movement itself” (Dereli, 1996, p. 158). One militant explains it in broader terms: “after these years [1977] Islam was not one of the “secondary factors that constituted the Turkish nation”\textsuperscript{31}.

\textsuperscript{31} The anti-communism was a formative factor, but this is more telling about the reactionary character of the ülküçü movement, rather than its substance. One of the former heads of Ülküçü Hearts asserted that if communism was not that powerful, the ülküçü movement would still emerge not because of its own dynamic, but because “Turkey is a rapidly developing country, and thus its enemies also increase due to the geopolitics of the country…” (Dereli, 1996, pp. 206-207).
anymore; it became the backbone, the center, the mother to the cause … The issue was not anymore “what is the role of Islam for the elevation of Turkish nation;” it was “what is the role and importance of the Turkish nation within the circle of Islam? What is the sphere of service that Turkish nation provides within the boundaries of Islam?” (Dereli, 1996, pp. 184-185). Yet, some rejected the idea of transformation to replace it with “coming out:” “I do not think this was an ideological transformation. This is how I see it: Ülkücüs did not expose at all their belief and Islamic thought at the beginning. This feeling was one of the cornerstones of the movement, but was not exposed. There is no atheist in the Ülkücü Movement” (Dereli, 1996, p. 215).

One of the former leaders of the Ülkücü unions, Ali Bayram, argues that the youth embraced religion as a life style, while the party cadres remained distant to it:

“At the beginning of the 1970s, there were ones among the youth that did not perform the daily prayer, did not fast, drank alcohol, had girl friends. … However from the mid-1970s onwards, the youth started to learn and apply the Islamic principles into its life quite sincerely, and thus cleared itself from these defects. And they succeeded. But, unfortunately during the mid-1970s, there were people either in the Central offices of the Nationalist Action Party, or its branches in the cities and municipalities, who did not fast, drank alcohol, had woman friends, and even did not go to Friday prayer. Deriving upon these differences in lifestyles, they [party people] did not try to establish any sort of ideological pressure upon the youth. Maybe these people had benign spirits; maybe they believed in what young people defended, but could not apply to their lives” (Dereli, 1996, p. 57).

The militants construed the growing religious consciousness in various terms. One was ideological warfare, “After knowing Islam only narrowly through the family, environment, and the traditions, our people started to learn it completely and systematically. … One other reason was external. This was the criticisms pertaining to Islam from political or non-political religious environments to our movement. The studies concerned to respond these criticisms contributed to the intensification of Islamic discourses within the movement after 1976” (Dereli, 1996, pp. 58-59). More
dramatically, it was a need for “survival”: “Also, I mentioned that this was a period in which “the martyrs increased.” This really had a major impact on the aforementioned transformation. A cause, an eulogy was looked for to the death. That was found in Islam, in the notion of martyr[dom]” (Dereli, 1996, p. 185). Another put a similar quest in following words, “You question yourself everywhere, during the funeral ceremony, while going to a fight, a struggle… Okay, you are in the struggle, but why these people will die? For a dry cause of ethnicity (kavmiyet)? Is this a struggle between two tribes for cats and dogs? Then, they started to feel the existence and relevance of the religious motifs more and more” (Dereli, 1996, p. 209).

In the final years before the coup, ülkücü writers kept a cautious and at the same time an alarming tone addressed to the Armed Forces (the military). After the declaration of martial law in 13 provinces, including Istanbul, the ülkücüs had been told to cooperate with the commanding offices. It was declared that ülkücüs passed their “right to self-defense” to the military, who was “the protector of our national independence, not of the powers, it only serves to the nation” (Öznur, 1999a, pp. 120-121). Nevertheless, opposition to the governing Republican People’s Party (RPP) persisted. A journal of the Ülkücü Hearts, Young Friend (Genç Arkadaş), told (1979) its readers that “the government [RPP] struggles to keep the power in its hands. … The tortures, which we believe are happening outside the knowledge of the martial law commanders, still continue. … Ülkücü Youth will resist the attacks in the cities outside the martial law region without causing any events detrimental to our national union” (Öznur, 1999a, p. 133).
It can be seen that the discussions around the re-politicization of the military, its role, and “impartiality” intensified at this period. There were numerous analyses and evaluations of the previous coup periods, with the emphasis on “lessons learned.” One of the ülkücü intellectuals, Necmettin Hacıeminoğlu, insisted that “the RPP government have been attempting to seize that “castle,”” and if the commanders were not cautious, the army’s situation would be similar to that of TRT (the state media institution), the police department, and some law offices (Öznur, 1999a, p. 359). He also criticized the military as being “obsessed” with the impartiality image: “it is crystal clear that the sporadic allegations of “backwardness”, “religious fundamentalism”, “Sharia-ism” are nothing but political games. They are fraud. … But, the biggest fear that our soldiers, intellectuals and some politicians have is to be called “rightist.” It is apparent that our General boggles to be called “rightist” by the progressives, if he only strikes at the leftists, not rightists” (Öznur, 1999a, p. 374).
The military coup of September 12, 1980 has been a watershed to all political movements, and the ülküçü movement was not an exception. Around 600 ülküçü militants were tried only at one of the major joint trials, “The Trial of Nationalist Action Party (NAP) and Ülküçü Organizations.” The trial was initiated on April 29, 1981, with the charge that NAP and the ülküçüs “tried to change the constitutional order by force, in contravention to the principles of republicanism and democracy, toward the rule of the state by a single individual; armed the population of Turkey against each other and led it towards massacre, caused massacres, and participated in them, and established armed organizations to commit crimes described in Articles 141, 146 and 149 (of the Turkish Penal Criminal Code).” The prosecutor asked capital punishment for two hundred and twenty defendants, and among them nine were executed. The other convicts, including the leader (Başbuğ) Alparslan Türkeş, were given from two year to life long sentences. Among the incarcerated in Ankara prisons, 67 percent had rural origins, and 44.9 were younger than twenty. As one of the researcher claimed, very few leaders of the party were imprisoned, except Türkeş (Taşçı, 2005, September 14).
Many ülkücü militants went through ninety days of interrogation with torture, long term incarcerations without trial, years-long surveillance, death under custody, extra-legal executions, or due to “unknown” reasons. The bulk of ülkücü militants were interrogated in Harbiye, Gayrettepe (Istanbul) detention centers, and Police schools. Even though they were scattered to various prisons across the country, the most notorious one was Mamak Military Prison’s C-5 ward in Ankara. Inspired from St. Yosef’s story of stubborn and patient suffering with the expectation of eventual justice, the militants called themselves “Yusufiyeliler” (those sharing the Yusuf’s fate).

In the following part, I will explore two types of narratives. The first is a cluster of interviews compiled in the book “September 12 and Ülkücüs” (1990) by Muhammed Bahadir, and online at ülkücüs’ websites. These interviews with the ordinary members of the ülkücü movement focus on what happened after the coup, i.e. the processes of interrogation, trial (and all other legal processes), and the life in the prisons. Even though the narratives are fragmented and short, they give a sense about the initial shock after the coup, and the painful processes of encountering with hitherto unseen “faces” of “their” own State. Second, I analyze Rıza Müftüoğlu’s memoir Soldiers of the Clubs (2000). The narrative intends to negotiate the violent memories of twenty years past with the concern of achieving a rapprochement with the State driven by his position as a trainer and a leader in the movement. It also hints at the ways in which the coup experiences play out or disappear in the reconstruction of the politics of the movement.
4.1 Early narratives of state violence: intimate encounters

The book *September 12 and Ülkücüs* is one of the earliest accounts of the coup by the Ülkücüs. Muhammed Bahadir conducted fourteen interviews with Ülkücü militants then in Bursa prison, who at the time of the interview had additional ten to forty years to prison terms to serve. The interviewees’ ages ranged from thirty to forty, and almost all of them had non-urban backgrounds. Their education status varied between high school and college. Some had to suspend their university educations. Their roles in the movement were not specifically mentioned; only two or three of them are widely known activists/militants, and none of them is a “trainer.”32 The questions focus on the three phases of the post-coup experience, interrogation, trial (and all other legal processes), and the life in the prison.

Each phase of the Ülkücü experience was a different “opportunity” for the state officials (including the military officers) for image making; for the junta, it was crucial to give an “impartiality” image (See Chapter 1). Thus, during the suspension and rewriting of the Constitution from September 12 to October and November 1982, the junta rule aimed to establish “law and order” by relying upon a rhetoric of full and consistent functioning of the state machinery upon *all* politically organized groups. Yet, torture was one of the “banalities” of the era, one of the mechanisms whereby the State crafted its authority. It was not that Ülkücüs had not known (indeed they did very well) how state violence worked. Also compared to the leftists, they had not had much experience of interrogation, trial and imprisonment. Yet, now themselves being exposed to torture and

32 For the explanation of the activist and trainer separation, please refer to Chapter 2.
all sorts of state violence contradicted the very idea of the State for many ullahcüs as “transcendental” and “just.” In the absence of any tradition, knowledge and strategies to resist to state power, the prisons and interrogation centers turned out to be intimate encounters with the State for ullahcüs militants. Routine beatings, strict regulations on eating and sleeping, clothing, reading, documents, as well as torture constituted the bits and pieces of this encounter.

Almost in all of the interviews in Bahadir’s collection, and many others ullahcüs point out the difficulty of coming to terms with the degree of cruelty the soldiers and state officials exercised. One of the interviewees in the book, Süleyman Kalayc, quotes his conversation with a soldier. The soldier chats with him without knowing that he was one of the “creatures” they were supposed to “eliminate.” It was a shock to Kalay that soldier, as an ordinary “son of this country” (“and not even a professional torturer”) was comfortable with what he saw, did, and approved. He concludes “what I clearly understood was that we were not human beings in their eyes” (Bahadir, 1990, p. 26).

Similarly, ullahcüs Erdinç Çelik’s words reflect the short-lived hopes and the bitter reality:

“[in the military vehicle, while being taken to the custody] the soldier keeps his promise. He does not do any injustice. He is a heart-believed patriot. At the very least we share the same feelings and thoughts. This was the common view of the group. The justice will be restored.... But not much later we would understand that these were only raw fantasies. We were facing an enshrouded war and occupation. Our enemy did not attack from the outside anymore, it did from inside of us, and at our backs. Our own brothers were desperate, duped, aggressive, destructive, and deceived with money... No matter his name is a soldier!” (Çelik, 2008).

One of the most immediate ways to unravel their feeling of betrayal and resentment was to identify the “enemy.” Personification of the torturers, albeit in caricatured or stereotypical ways, was one of the strategies that helped them realize what was happening. Many militants quoted conversations with their torturers, and how they
tried to argue with them in vain. (Similar conversations also do not generally exist in the leftists’ narratives). One of the interviewees of the book, Sabahattin Civelek gives a description which is more or less common with others:

“There is no sign of sacred values such as love, compassion, or mercy in their hearts. And sadism infiltrated into their spirits, their hearts turned them into stones. … they do not have peace in their family life since it is built on deaths, tortures, and blood. In fact these murderers have no ordinary family life at all. The frequent news in the media about the police suicides and family massacres are results of this observation. Ninety percent of the individuals at the police department have weak personalities, and inferiority complexes. They use people without power to satisfy their complex. They are well aware that these people cannot do harm to them. They also become servants for wealthy people for their small interests. Leaving aside the exceptions, they generally have rural backgrounds, and come from poor families. They aim to obtain a job in the state, and “turn the corner” in order to break away from the poverty they suffered in their childhoods. Hence they deem permissible every sort of illegality in order to realize their dreams. The corruption in the police department is another face of this reality. Also, again except a minority, they lack the moral values of our nation. Rather than realizing the mire they were in, and trying to get out, they tried to overcome their stress with drinks. They must be treated, and the panacea is spiritualism (maneviyat)” (Bahadir, 1990, pp. 80-81)

Even though Civelek gives a mixture of class-based and psychoanalytical analysis, the mere focus on the police department, instead of a broader perspective including the soldiers, army officers, and commanders is significant. The police was an apparently politicized force since there emerged two fractions in the department establishing their own associations in the 1970s. Yet the difficulty to criticize the long-trained army personnel was possibly a harder task.

Another form of the encounter was the legal documents and processes. One of the interviewees Zihni Açba, who also published two books on the coup,\(^\text{33}\) recounts “friendly-looking” officers asking him to accept a list of accusations to “avoid further

\(^{33}\) Var olacakız Eylülere Ragmen (We will continue to survive despite the Septembers, 1990) is a novel on the interrogation and initial period in the prison. Zulum Kalesi: Mamak (Mamak: the Castle of the Cruelty, 1991) is an autobiographical account of the Mamak prison, where the majority of the ülkücü militants stayed. While the first book is available, the other one is out of print, and hard to find.
trouble.” He refused to do so, because “if one were to decide upon the paper, I was certainly someone to be destroyed” (Bahadır, 1990, p. 36). Even though there were some events in the list that he was involved in, he refused to comply. This was more or less the same for other militants, they refused to “sacrifice further,” and give the State the chance to “clean” itself from the mess.

The encounter through the law was not devoid of contradictions, intensification of feelings of betrayal and resentment. Until the final indictment was declared, the ülküçüs did not really believe that they would spend long time incarcerated. Yet, the execution of an ülkücü militant, Mustafa Pehlivanoğlu, as “early” as October 7, 1980, was an “inconvenient truth.” Also being “categorized” as “traitors,” as if they were equivalent to the communists, was another heavy reality. When the prosecutor announced the thousand-page indictment accusing the NAP and the ülküçüs of attempting to topple down the state to establish a totalitarian regime and fomenting terror and violence, it became apparent that there was no easy exit. The leader cadres and the trainers accused particular officers (“Evren and his friends”), including the prosecutor Nurettin Soyer, for being biased, and tried hard to show their ideological affinity to the junta; for instance Türkeş stated in his defense that the rationale of the intervention had been so close to what they had been arguing before that “many naïve citizens were curious whether an ülkücü prepared the coup declaration” (Türkeş, 1981). However, in the prisons different views circulated and painful experiences were translated into “challenging” questions. As one of the interviewees of Bahadır’s book, Hüseyin Yurdakul, confirmed, they were well aware that torture was a policy of the state, the soldiers themselves told them that they received training to see the prisoners as murderers and enemies of the state, and treat
them accordingly (Bahadir, 1990, p. 64). It could be said that the trial process was the initiation of the rifts within the movement.

One of the hardest episodes of the ülkücüs’ encounter with the State is torture in the interrogation centers, and prisons. It was the most “inhuman” of what was happening. Thus most of the torture narratives, of the leftists and the rightists, reconstruct the period as a “struggle for not losing their humanity.” Açba describes torture as “not the physical coercions that could even result in death, but a totality of treatments that can make someone alive yearn for dying” (Bahadir, 1990, p. 32). Therefore “resistance,” albeit in varying ways and degrees, was from the beginning coded on the ground of “humanity.”

An example to the inhumanity of the torture was a deeply felt fear of “losing manhood” that made the militant “yearning for dying.” Some ülkücüs give explicit details about the torture to their male organs, and the subsequent feelings. Açba is one of them: “the voltage moved up and down. At each down I relaxed, at each up as if all my internal organs came forward to my mouth. Yes, they were not going to kill me, but a sharp anxiety sparked in my brain, the fear of losing my manhood surrounded my whole self. I was about to go crazy. Because I previously had no knowledge about this. And I thought my testicles were cut off. And also my interrogators were laughing at me saying “if you were to speak, this would not happen, now you are impotent”” (Bahadir, 1990, p. 43).

Such a challenge to the masculinity of the ülkücü subject intensified the “shock” of the degree of the “cruelty” and distance to humanity of the torturers.

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34 Kenan Evren, the Chief of Staff of the 1980 coup, claimed in an interview in 2007 that he had not [personally] told anyone to torture anyone [any particular person]. Yet his attempt to clear himself from the obvious revealed as he added that “there was torture in the police stations before September 12, was not it? It was there in all of the stations. … In September 12, we just freed the hands of the police, in order them to work at ease.” He backs up his argument with a justification that Germans, British, American, French and others used torture: “At the time, everyone did torture
According to the militants’ accounts, in the prisons, as the third phase of the ülkücü experience, “banal” violence accompanied to the circulation of more “radical” ideas about the State. In the prisons, militants grasped that the State was not sacred, transcendental, or just. It was a machinery that aimed to “swallow” them up. The ülkücüs came to understand the state not as a “father” anymore, but something more outsider than they could have imagined. How could they make them sing the national anthem as a way to torture? Why did they forbid the daily prayer? Why would they beat someone in front of his family?

The daily life of the militants for the first seven to eight years entailed routine violence. The militarist system was tried to be established in the prisons, from the forced wearing of inmate uniforms to walking, greeting, eating like soldiers or military prisoners. The militants found it extremely “contradictory” that they were tortured to sing the national anthem, and that they were beaten up to read the Testament (by Atatürk) properly and to memorize and recite the Address to the Youth (by Atatürk) eagerly. Zihni Açba brings forth one of the cracks in their connection to the statist discourse, which was the denial of its own terms: “They could not explain this [to us]: why would we become Atatürkist? … Really, what is Atatürkism? A form of a regime? … I think it has only one meaning and function, which is the name of the justifications to the cruelty done when the powers protecting and sustaining the order lost their powers of sanction” (Bahadır, 1990, p. 64). He moves the challenge one step further, to the questioning the very legitimacy of the intervention, the absoluteness of the authority of the State: “Is not the coup itself an illegality? They claim that “laws can be suspended for the survival of the
nation.” Where do they take this right and authority from? And what do they accuse me of” (Bahadir, 1990, p. 36)?

The popularization of the Islamic discourse within the ülkücü movement can also be grasped through the dilemmas starting from this period. Even though the state elites, especially Kenan Evren, employed a more Islamized discourse (Kadıoğlu, 1998), Islamization of the movement was a more radical break from the “state tradition” which claimed to have a strictly secular basis. According to Zihni Açba, September 12 intervention was nothing other than the continuation of the Batil regime, meaning both false belief and Western in Turkish: “We claimed the ideal for this world and the other. We yearned for happiness in both of the worlds. This was the thought that changed the dungeons of the infidels to the stone madrasahs of Yusufiye. …Having comprehended this, we became more conscious, and sharp, we established the tomorrow’s revolt in our thoughts” (Bahadir, 1990, p. 65). Another interviewee Süleyman Kalayc asserts that even the slogan of the 1970s “damn the order, long live the state” embedded this “tendency,” of which the sovereign powers were quite aware (Bahadir, 1990, p. 21).

Besides the “ordinary” instances of interaction between the State and the militants, the junta aimed to put a broader disciplinary mechanism in place to which both sides resisted. Collaborating with the military, some psychologists and sociologists conducted surveys and conducted experiment on the political prisoners. The aim was to map the “anatomy of the terrorist.” Subsequent experiment was entitled “mix them,

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35 Kalayc mentions the role of “external powers” in the takeover. The outsiders were then identified as those “developed countries” who try to impede the people of Islam to empower.

36 The research was led by Prof. Turan İtil, and Prof. Ayhan Songar. One of the consultants of the junta, Prof. Aydın Yalçın, who was also involved in the research and made its presentation with a colonel at an international conference, summarizes their result in the following words: “Majority of the terrorists are
make peace.” According to the plan, the leftist and the rightist militants would stay side by side, eat together, and their actions would be observed. They were also enforced to fill in questionnaires, and answer doctors’ questions. The stated aim was to “help the inmates to leave aside warfare, and learn living together.” However, all of the militants understood it as a part of a project to “pacify” or “dehumanize” them. As Açba explains “how would a believer and an infidel could stay together? How could I sleep side by side with those who shot me or my friend” (Bahadir, 1990, p. 61)? According to Haluk Kirci, another interviewee of the book, the authorities aimed to stir further psychological devastation among the groups, and find a pretext to increase their oppression. He states that this made them watch over every small act in order to preserve the “separation” (Bahadir, 1990, p. 116). The experiment was withdrawn shortly after at some prisons due to the increasing fights between the groups; it was abandoned in Mamak only after seven years. The effects of the experiment are not further reflected upon in Bahadir’s interviews. Yet it was clear that this experimentation fed into the radicalization of the opposition to the State.

young men. A significant amount of them are students. They have generally migrated from the rural areas to the cities. Their families are poor and uneducated. They are not aggressive types. The ratio of the neurotics is not significantly more than the general population. They have timid personalities; their IQs are lower than other prisoners. Their families have more criminals than the other prisoners’ families. In that sense, there is no difference between leftist and rightist terrorists. However, rightist terrorists are optimist, the leftists are pessimist. According to the sexual satisfaction, the condition of the terrorists is better than the normal group. They also do better in social satisfaction. … [these results] reveal that these people could have partook in other violence events even if there were not any terror events” (A. Yaç, 1987, p. 179; S. Yaç, 1989). Such analytical “dept” of the research gives clue to the other project they conducted. Yet, it was a unique collaboration of the experts and the military in the country’s history.
4.2 Looking back from the 2000: it was worth for my country! (*helal olsun!*)

The flourishing of the multiple kinds of texts on the *ülkücü* experience of September 12 coup stems from various dynamics internal and external to the movement. One of these documents is *The Soldiers of the Clubs* (2000), by Rıza Müftüoğlu. The memoir of the writer’s two years in Mamak prison sparked controversies and debates, as it aimed to reveal “untold stories,” such as the *ülkücü* military officers’ assassination plans of Kenan Evren. Müftüoğlu was known as the “right-hand” of the leader Türkeş, and he later served as a NAP deputy in the parliament between 1991-1995, and was also the vice president of the party. He published another book, “the Nationalist Movement with its Deep Pages” in 2006, in which he discussed the ten to fifteen years of the party after the coup with the claim of “unraveling the truths of the era.”

The narrative in *The Soldiers of the Clubs* has an eclectic content; one hundred and fifty pages book includes notes from his prison diary, philosophical statements, stories from the prison, verses from the Quran, and letters of the author to his wife. Even though, as a prisoner, his experience is limited due to the time spent and the degree of his “crime,” this enables Müftüoğlu to take several positions and roles. First, he as the “participant observer,” who also had the opportunity to give consultancy to many *ülkücü* militants for their legal cases, asserts his general observations about the prisoners, the rightist and the leftist, and makes truth claims. He as a (former) “trainer,” participates in conversations with the prisoners on the current political situation, and gives them advice.

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37 In the indictment, Müftüoğlu was accused of creating financial funds to the movement, and being a part of the “trainers.”
on how to comprehend and respond to the coup. As a member of the NAP, he integrates his criticisms to the party and to movement in general to the narrative. In parallel, he also narrates about his “elderly” role in the prison, how he needed to give advice to the youngsters, who “came to him” with challenging questions such as:

“The soldiers carried out a coup. They put forward our reasons. We were about to celebrate this, then we were sent to the prisons. It is not very important to stay in the prison, but we are poor people. I am married and have two kids. How will they find heating during the winter? My brother, what price are we paying? I swear to God I would not say a word if the communists led the coup. But look at this situation. There is no explanation” (Müftüoğlu, 2000, p. 140).

Furthermore, Müftüoğlu enjoys the position of being “beloved,” whereby he expresses his love and admiration to his wife who was a strong women working hard “outside” to ameliorate their prison conditions. Finally, quite extensively, he narrates the joy he started to take after being introduced to reading Quran, the practice of zikr (a form of religious ceremony), and daily prayer. This provides him a vast space for philosophical contemplation on conscience, love, remembering, death, and the “divine light” (nur), and, he even associates them with political terms such as democracy, human rights, and torture. Therefore his “political” conclusions embody an interesting tone of naivety, such as “What if there was love in Mamak? Humanity? If those ruling here had broader horizons, would we be dealing with the PKK trouble for years after September 12? What about others [problems] we will deal with in the future (2000, p. 31)?

In this narrative, the feelings of betrayal and resentment of “being used” converge with the attempt to a reach a rapprochement with the State. Müftüoğlu’s multiple positionality in the text enables the opening of “erratic balances” where he re-moulds the
relationship between the ülkücüs and the State. He explains his main motivation in writing the book as the unattained justice and the threat of forgetting:

“I wrote this book. Because, I wanted the oppressor to be convicted at the least in the public conscience. I wanted those who are not informed, who have not gone through the regulations of the time to know that era. I wanted them to understand how it feels like to recite totally the Testament which begins as ‘I am Turkish, I am righteous, and hardworking, respect to elderly, love to young in front of their elementary school age kids, under the shade of the clubs, beside the fences…” (2000, pp. 3-4).

In that “mission” what would the State’s role be? What was its role in the coup? How would that State be understood? How could “the soldiers of the State” turn into “the soldiers of the clubs”?

One way of reconnecting with the State is to employ its own discourse. The Turkish State in the 1980s, similar to other authoritarian regimes of the Cold War era, utilized the continuing violence, insecurity, and “external powers,” as the justification of its extraordinary policies. Müftüoğlu does a similar thing when he contemplates about the State. In one of his letters to his wife, Müftüoğlu wrote to his wife how he was frequently “confused” on this coup: “when I analyze what happened to me, feelings of meaninglessness and desperateness encapsulate me. Well, after my deep feelings of belonging to my State and to my nation outweighed. … What I fear most is that since the external powers will continue to wage the psychological war and run its ideological occupation, can they divert the idealists who wanted to devote themselves to the state and the nation with no gains or expectations to the lines of self-interestedness and opportunism” (2000, pp. 71-72)? Hence he reconnects with the “fatherly” eye of the State, and with the “devotional” discourses of the 1970s. This is a shared world-view, and common language, which did bring the ülkücüs and the State together on many occasions before the coup. It certainly did so in the aftermath of the early phases of the coup.
Another example to the reproduction of the statist discourse is to externalize the problem. In the 2000s, conspiracy theories regarding the actors and reasons behind the 1980 coup acquired tremendous popularity and acceptance. Müftüoğlu also broached the argument, yet with paying particular attention not to hurt the feelings of pride of the ülkücü, and not to undermine their agencies. It was clear to him that “power centers” abroad had connections in the country, and that they were provoking the fights in Turkey. Yet, the State’s fault (here he specifies the State as the governments and the commanderyship of the martial law) was to have waited for the “best” time to intervene, instead of taking preventive action, and being “just”: “even more than the leftists those who had not used their might to put an end to this fight in a legitimate manner. (2000, p. 19). The State was unjust because it could not differentiate those who aimed to destroy the State from those who fought for the State in order to protect it from the attacks of the Soviet-led communists. In order to prove his claim that after talking to many ülkücü militants “I observed that the majority of them did not commit a crime for the sake of committing it, that they did so for the sake of the cause even though they knew their act was wrong. This was how they were “guilty” before the law” (2000, p. 19). When asked, they absolutely rejected taking any orders from abroad. Thus, the State failed to be just in this case, but it was a “mistake” that it would one they realize, and maybe recuperate.

According to the nationalist theories of the State, State represents the highest achievement of the Nation, and the Nation is the power that guarantees its survival (Tan l Bora, 2006). In Müftüoğlu’s presentation of the State and the Nation are indispensable entities. Its transcendental identity belongs to the nation: “We all, besides being members of a political party, were indeed people who became part of the national reflex of the
Turkish people” (2000, p. 41). According to him this becomes clearer at times of “crisis.” For example, he appreciates his friend’s refusal to testify at a hearing held by human rights committee from Europe investigating torture in Turkey (2000, p. 70). According to Müftüoğlu not collaborating with such a committee was a matter of “natural honor” as well as personal maturation for the ülkücüs, as opposed to the leftists who did not have such values and kept “whimpering.” The proper place to turn to was the Turkish court, even if it was assigned by the military.

Müftüoğlu’s narrative resembles the early narratives in terms of how torture was central to the prison experience. He himself did not tell anything in the court because “his wife was among the audience.” But a friend of his recounted how he was tortured on his sexual organs. He also mentions how the prison commanders played loud music in order to prevent them from hearing the screams of the leftist women being tortured (2000, pp. 141-142). Nevertheless, different from others his narrative does not contemplate upon the daily, routine, ordinary instances of State power, rather he either finds them merely “illogical,” or gives them anecdotal value. As in this example,

“In Mamak, everything was aloud. Reporting, question, demand, March of Independence, counting, sports, whatever comes to the mind. Each interaction with the soldier, and every command of the soldiers, were aloud. Certainly the aim was to humiliate the human honor. Or imposing the power over others, who had less physical power. Or the logic of the illogical” (Müftüoğlu, 2000, p. 55).

In other instances, they are “funny” moments that help them adapt to the prison circumstances.

Even though these instances gave the inmates the opportunity to build up small tactics, in the Soldiers of the Clubs resistance, both as a possibility and a notion, evaporate. Consideration of resistance is one of the ways confronting the State, and
Müftüoğlu persistently avoids such a confrontation. The way he “understands” the hunger strikes in the prison explicates this. Although the right to say “‘I fought for you but you smashed me, it would be better if I die’ belonged to the ülkücü” they did not do hunger strike, while the leftists, “paradoxically” “threatened the very State they intended to destroy with their own death” (2000, p. 73). He did not realize how inmates came very close to the death because of “his” State, and how death became the last option for the continuation of the life. He did not even know that some ülkücüs (Haluk Kirci for instance) also went on hunger strikes.
“It is precisely the coming together of reason-and-violence in the State that creates, in a secular and modern world, the bigness of the big S” (Taussig, 1992, p. 116)

Two questions inspired this project. First is about the ways September 12 coup is conceived within the Turkish public. I was questioning the representations of the 1970s where violence dominated the whole picture. I found them “State-centric” in the sense that they emphasized chaos, anarchy, uproar over the power dynamics and the agencies of the political movements. Hence, first chapter is an attempt to investigate these complications while paying attention to the reconstructions of the Statecraft. In delving into the hegemony of militarism and state authority, I followed Philip Corrigan’s advice to pay attention to historical circumstances. He maintains that “no historical or contemporary form of ruling can be understood 1) as or in its own discursive regime or image repertoire terms; 2) without investigating the historical genealogy, archeology, origination (and transmutation) of those terms as forms; 3) without an awareness of “Abroad,” as in the “learning from ‘Abroad,’” which is so evident, both as positivity or as the negativity of the impositions of cultural-political imperatives; 4) in ways that silence the genderic and racist features of ‘politically organized subjection’” (Joseph & Nugent,
1994, p. xvii). I traced the coups on May 27, 1960, March 12, 1971, and September 12, 1980 as \textit{forms} with paying attention to the “alternatives dynamics” the statist discourse tends to silence.

Second question that inspired this project is about the ways that the sovereign power to decide between the norm and the state of exception is sustained in post-1980 Turkey. Coup occupies a fragile position in the public’s perception and experience of politics; it is both outdated and an impossible, and real and sharp. It was as if because of the absence of military armament in the “coup” of 1997 and 2007, they could not succeed being “coup,” but “softer” interventions. I was aware that such a blurring was also a consequence of militarization in society, led most visibly by the military as the institution through the practices of military service, etc., but also through more insidious forms of infiltrations into the daily language. One methodological approach to this question would be employing “anthropological” perspective, and I consulted ultranationalists’ (\textit{ülkücü}) experience of the September 12 coup for utilizing that approach.

The second chapter provides historical background of the \textit{ülkücü} movement from early 1960s to 1980. It investigates the transformation of the movement in terms of ideological maturation and political mobilization. In doing so, I endeavored not to make a mere representation of the movement in terms of the culture of hierarchy, the leader cult, and “ideological” shortcomings. Instead, consulting to the texts by \textit{ülkücü} researchers, I brought forth the main tensions, dilemmas, and changes in the movement in the course of it becoming the alternative political movement to socialist movement in Turkey. Throughout this analysis, it became apparent that \textit{ülkücüs} did favor for the military by
heart for its historic role as the guardian of the Nation and the State. Yet the issue of religion was a dormant matter within the movement, upon which the coup touched with unsettling effects.

Anthropologist Kay Warren states that “the problem for the anthropological study of state terrorism – given limited access to the original events and the ambiguous status of memory – is to represent the terms of conflicting rationalities and existential dilemmas in situations where power is dramatically skewed” (2002, p. 386). In the third chapter, I wandered around those terms as they were inconsistent, affective, existential, and challenging the State through examination of ülkücüs narratives of the September 12. I focused on encounters, real or imagined, in the prisons, and detention centers that enabled the ülkücüs militants to relate with the State. Aretxaga’s proposal to think stae both as a notion and an entity guided the analysis of these encounters. Insignificant details, ordinary instances, and routines of the daily life constructed the intangible spaces of encounter pertaining to this project. In order to do so, I employed close reading and discourse analysis, albeit in fragmented forms. In order to be able to elaborate on “memory”, I observe that it requires more texts, interviews or memoirs, with reflections of the “present.” The texts I examined here did very scarcely allow such an inquiry.

It was intriguing to see how the state violence directed against themselves opened a new chapter in the ülkücüs’ understanding of the State. Before the coup, the ülkücüs and the state did collaborate on many issues. Ülkücüs’ bonding to the State had been strong, from very practical pragmatic concerns to affective ties of admiration, reverence, devotion, pride, and prowess. This is beyond the scope of this paper, but suffice it to say that the relationship was on more consistent, “rational,” and pragmatic terms, then the
one in the aftermath of the coup which had a more sense of “encounter” rather than a relationship. This was a real encounter, not a merely imagined relationship anymore. In the September 12, there appeared a face of the State that was profoundly troubling for that relationship, and simultaneously imagined and real.

I focused on two types of texts; the first was open interviews with inmates on their experiences of, and thoughts on the coup compiled by Muhammed Bahadir. The interviewees dwell on the sense of betrayal and resentment, as they went through all the stages of the state violence. In their attempt to come to terms to what was happening, they used the method of looking at the other in the eye. What they saw did not help them to reconnect the State, but put them in distance. Being a victim of the state violence illuminated their grasp of the State, it was transferred from a highly symbolic realm to a concrete one, making them see how inconsistent, irrational, it can be. In the narratives I examined, the resistance was emerging, first on the grounds of “humanity” and then more ideologically circumscribed discourses opposing the Kemalist regime. I contend that these narratives embody the ongoing tensions and the affects of the unrecovered memories, which created rifts within the ülkücü movement in the post-1980 era.

The second text I analyzed is The Soldiers of the Clubs, by Riza Müftüoğlu. It is a epitomic text that represents the attempt to come to terms with the State. It is an attempt to do justice to the violence memories and restitute loyalty to the State. Nevertheless Müftüoğlu resorts to a State which is abstract and often unidentified. In doing so, he “sees like a state,” employing the discourses the State would claim. In the former narratives, whenever the ülkücüs conceived the state as a notion, its sovereignty was challenged. There was nowhere an utterance of the state as transcendental or just. In
Müftüoğlu’s text, however, the notions of justice and rule are made further abstract by the integration of the Islamic philosophy. I contend that such an effort stems from various positions Müftüoğlu holds, which made him “close” to the State. Hence as the initial narratives had a sharpening tone, this later one had a “softening” one vis-à-vis the State.

There are further questions that still requires inquiry. For example, what will be the forms and notions of the ülkücü movement’s future involvement in the state-making processes? Can or could ülkücü narratives of state violence have unsettling affects on other victims of state violence? What would it mean to establish a “textual” or “extra-textual” dialogue with members of this movement?

There are also some broader questions an anthropological approach could bring a different perspective. The anthropological analysis of the coup is scarce. Existing works are generally oral history narratives conducted by the leftist researchers. Yet the coups are intriguing events historically and culturally. First they are laden with striking dilemmas. In Turkish case, some of these dilemmas are: i) the gradual integration into global culture of the post-Cold War neoliberal world, and the civil war between the military and the Kurdish guerilla group (PKK) starting in the late 1980s; ii) the flourishing of discourses, images, and messages related to sexuality (particularly those on the “liberalization of sexuality), and systematic sexual violence against the political and Kurdish militants under custody, prisons, and war-time rapes in the militarized zones; iii) the emergence of a second wave feminist movement (by the ex-leftist women militants) and the dissolution of political organizing, intensified state surveillance, and denial of the political as such, iv) the revival of the Kemalist regime by the military, and the return of the ban on headscarves at universities and other public institutions, and the parallel
spread of Islamist discourse within state institutions, elites, and public discourse, v) the emergence of subcultures, identity politics, and the depoliticization of youth particularly at the university level, vi) more than fifteen years of “states of emergency” in certain regions, democratic reforms via the European Union accession process, and so forth. These dilemmas and many others shape the post-coup politics and culture in Turkey, which necessitates further exploration in the form of diverse disciplinary and interdisciplinary studies.


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