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COUNTER-LEARNING UNDER OPPRESSION

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by
Ilhan Kucukaydin

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The dissertation of Ilhan Kucukaydin was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Daniele D. Flannery
Associate Professor of Adult Education
Thesis Advisor
Chair of Committee

Patricia A. Cranton
Visiting Professor of Adult Education

Holly L. Angelique
Associate Professor of Community Psychology

Kenneth B. Cunningham
Associate Professor of Sociology

Edgar I. Farmer
Professor of Education and Department Head for Learning & Performance
Systems
Acting Professor-in-Charge of Graduate Programs in Adult Education

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study utilized narrative analysis to explore and better understand the counter-learning of an oppressed Kurdish woman, Zelo, from Turkey. The study looked specifically at the process of developing counter-learning under multilayered oppression from her childhood through the present. The theoretical frameworks of critical constructivism and Marcusean critical theory provided the lens which guided the study. Whereas critical constructivism was utilized to analyze adults' counter-learning under extreme oppressive situations, Marcusean critical theory was used to analyze the socio-political context in a greater scale and its impact on the oppressed.

A series of semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted. The focus of the data gathering was Zelo's past and present experiences under various layers of oppression to explore the phenomenon and gain more insights.

The major findings are related to two key inseparable phenomena: the nature of oppression and the dynamics of counter-learning. This study revealed that oppression is not only multi-layered, it is also multi-dimensional. In addition, oppression creates its own vital cultural components that play a crucial role in both feeding back the system of oppression and maintaining it, and also creating subjective and material conditions to resist the given ways of knowing, learning, sensing, feeling, and being. Some of the components are culture of creating a caretaker, culture of silence, culture of objectification, culture of double bind, and culture of learned-hopelessness. This study provided many insights into counter-learning. Zelo's narrative revealed that through her daily struggle and circumstances, she learned to conceptualize, problematize, and politicize daily oppressive occurrences. She usually did this without deliberate

articulation of it. Engaging with counter-learning, Zelo also learned to make meaning out of seemingly innocent and apolitical experiences. For example, motherhood, in her hands, became subversive rather than submissive; collective rather than individual; and it has become empowering rather than empowered by third parties. Zelo also saw and felt the power of words and concepts. She began distinguishing words and giving them socio-political meaning. In addition, engaging counter-learning not only restored her self image that was derogated and damaged by the oppression but also increased her self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-respect. Furthermore, she experienced transformation, which manifested itself morally, spiritually, and politically. Finally, the data indicated counter-learning was emotional, symbolic and imaginative. Based on these findings, implications for adult education theory and practice are discussed. Included are suggestions for future research on counter-learning under oppression.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to all oppressed people who relentlessly counter-learn and resist dehumanization.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of a research study focused on the counter-learning experience of oppressed people within their socio-economic and political context. This study focuses on people's daily lives under extreme oppression in which almost every aspect of their lives are predefined and dominated by the oppressive culture and the political system: how they make meaning of their lives and how they counter-learn. Included in this chapter are an introduction, conceptual framework, purpose of the study, problem statement, research questions, and overview of the research methodology. Finally, the chapter also includes the significance of the study, definition of terms and assumptions, and limitations.

Background Information

"But we must not be silent or we, too, will share the blame."
Allen (1991)

In Istanbul, Turkey, despite their illiteracy, despite their being silenced as an ethnic minority, as a woman, as a mother, and as a father, despite their scarce educational and social opportunities, despite the risk of being taken into custody, despite the high possibility of being tortured or even killed, hundreds of people used to get together and hold up the pictures of the disappeared. They got together on Saturdays to protest the Turkish state terror. They were called the Saturday Mothers. Besides those whose loved ones were last seen in the hands of security forces, there were other people who were there just to support the gathering and demand justice for all. They were vowing to carry on this act until the disappearances stopped and until those who were responsible for

those heinous acts were brought to justice. Unfortunately, they had to discontinue the protests in 1999, due to increasing random arrests and torture during police interrogations (Baydar & Ivegen, 2006). They met 200 Saturdays. Thirty people were arrested on the first meeting (Tanrikulu, 2003). On the 172nd protest, 157 protesters were arrested (Hurriyet, 1998). The Kurdish mother who asked authorities the whereabouts of her disappeared son might have not even known how to write and read; she perhaps had never heard of Rousseau's social contract, had never pondered what a constitution means, and what the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was. However, she may know and learn much about everyday life, even though no educational institutions would recognize her learning nor can she articulate what she learns.

We know what happened to their loved ones. We know how some people turned their fearful eyes aside when others' sons and daughters were taken away by the security forces. We know how these mothers were socialized to keep them mute, how their gender, their intelligence, and their cognition were degraded. We know why they had improper education or had no education at all. We, however, do not know how they came to know and use these big and abstract concepts and terms. How did they come to demand justice and peace?

I met Zelo in a protest like one above. It was a Peace Mothers (Baris Anneleri) gathering. The Peace Mothers were formed by mostly Kurdish mothers whose children were either in the Kurdish Nationalist movement or in the Turkish Army. Zelo was once illiterate. She was there to claim a cessation to the "Turkish dirty war." Her son and daughter were in the Kurdish movement. She wanted them to return home. She said that

she did not want anybody from both the Kurdish and Turkish parties to die. I was amazed with her wisdom, her knowledge, and her conviction for justice and peace.

When I started to study Adult Education years later, I remembered Zelo and wanted to learn more about the learning of people who had similar oppressive experiences as Zelo's. The remaining parts of this dissertation are about the type of adult learning that takes place under oppression, which I call counter-learning under oppression (CLUO).

Oppression and Counter-Learning

When a system of oppression and repression is fed and supported by the state's dominant ideology and its security forces on the one hand, and socio-cultural norms, values, and practices on the other, it impacts all social spheres. All aspects of everyday life are centrally and systematically predefined: what to read, what to learn and not to learn, what and how to write, how and with whom to socialize. Yet, despite some of their inhumane practices, oppressive systems never accomplish total submission of the masses. In fact, they inevitably beget their opposition. Extreme oppressive political systems and their practices may stop various things from functioning as they should in a society, but they cannot put an end to learning, because, as Habermas (1975) argues, we have "an automatic inability not to learn" (p. 15). Under extreme oppressive conditions some learn to be conformist, silent, or obedient. Others resist accepting the reality that is imposed by the oppressive political system and construct their own reality; they counter-learn. They learn to recognize the oppressive system's ideological political projects and learn how to challenge them.

Foley (1999) argues that this type of learning in the contradictory nature of everyday life goes unrecognized, but a significant amount of learning occurs in people's

everyday practices. He further notes, "Some of the most powerful learning occurs as people struggle against oppression, as they struggle to make sense of what is happening to them and to work out ways of doing something about it" (Foley, 1999, p.1).

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of counter-learning under cultural and political oppressions which form the social sphere of life. Because it has never been studied from this perspective, it is imperative to initiate a supposed definition of CLUO: counter-learning is an individual and social learning or unlearning process that works against indoctrination and may encompass rational, emotional, lingual, moral, and behavioral manifestations. Counter-learning is a negation of submission to the given reality.

Complexity of Learning and Its Paradigms

The concept of learning is central in any epistemological endeavor and is usually conceptualized based on the epistemic belief of knowledge. Because learning has an organic-dialectical relationship with knowledge, when educators attempt to examine learning, as Pratt (1998) claims, they inevitably approach learning from their own educational philosophical perspective and their own understanding of knowledge. There are almost too many definitions and types of adult learning in the literature (though sometimes they overlap): self-directed learning, life-long learning, experiential learning, informal learning, incidental learning, tacit learning, transformative learning, and critical learning are just a few. As a result, the adult education literature (AEL) in terms of learning paradigms is vague and to some extent even chaotic. There is not even a common consensus among adult education scholars on how many learning theories adult education has and how they should be organized (Merriam & Cafferella, 2006).

Numerous reasons can be enlisted to explain why the AEL does not have any unified understanding of learning. The AEL may be so bewildering for several reasons. First, it has related terms, issues, and problems that are interwoven. Second, there is not one particular form of learning that has no relation to other forms of learning; every learning experience encompasses various forms of learning, which are usually interrelated. Third, there are almost too many defined learning forms and these forms, are examined from different perspectives and frameworks. And finally, because learning is so complex in nature, each attempt at definition usually fails to capture its complexities that are inherent within learning. Even though Yang's (2003) holistic view appears to be an attempt to integrate the all possible facets and layers of adult learning, learning still remains with its many unknown and unrelated aspects.

It is evident that the nature of learning is multifaceted (Taylor, 2005), contested (Foley, 2004), and defies any simplifications (Merriam & Caffarella, 2006). Therefore, this ambiguity should not be perceived as negative; in fact, it should be seen as a richness of the adult education field, because each one of the theories offers different assumptions and insights about learning. As Yang (2004) posits, diverse theories and models of learning provide a strong knowledge base for the field. Nevertheless, Yang (2003) tries to put an end to the "paradigm wars" of learning theories by proposing a holistic theory of knowledge in which learning is viewed as both social and individual activity with three interrelated facets (explicit, implicit and emancipatory) and each of the facets has three layers (foundation, manifestation, and orientation).

Various Approaches to Learning and Ways of Organizing It

Each learning theory approaches learning from a central assumption. The behaviorist perspective, for example, defines learning in relation to the concept of observable and persistent behavioral change due to the experience of the individual (Driscoll 2002; Gagne, 1985; Ormrod, 1999). Cognitivists, like behaviorists, define it as an internal activity, but unlike behaviorists, they add the cognition in the learning process. Mayer (1982) distinguishes three distinctive characteristics of the cognitivist perspective. First, duration of the behavioral change is longer; therefore, learning is perceived as a relatively permanent change in the behavior. Second, the content and structure of knowledge in memory is the locus of the change. Third, the learner's experience is central in behavioral change, rather than physical condition or physiological intervention. The constructivist paradigm, on the other hand, defines learning as "willful, intentional, active, conscious, constructive practice that includes reciprocal intention-action-reflection activities" (Jonassen & Land, 2000, p. v).

Even though AEL includes various ways of defining the concept of learning, most of the definitions have some commonalities such as behavioral change and experience (Foley, 2004; Merriam & Caffarella, 2006). In addition, most of the definitions also approach learning at the individual level (Yang, 2003). As a result, most commonly accepted definitions include the following shared assumptions: learning is a result of one's interaction with the environment and it is a relatively permanent change in behavior and cognition (but the changes should not be related to a temporary anatomical or physiological state of the body such as illness or drug use) (DeSimone et al., 2002; Hergenhahn, 1988). Moreover, contrary to the earlier behaviorist approach, which only

recognizes the observable changes, contemporary approaches recognize the non-observable sides of learning. For example, under oppressive societal situations, individuals could learn how to act upon the oppressive practices in order to turn them into more humane practices, but this does not necessarily lead individuals to demonstrate an observable behavioral change.

Another Way of Organizing the Learning Paradigms for CLUO

Besides various definitions of learning, ways of organizing the existing learning paradigms vary. For example, Hilgard and Bower (1966, cited in Merriam & Caffarella, 2006) organize learning theories into two major groups: stimulus-response theories and cognitive theories. Knowles (1974) groups learning theories based on their worldview as organismic and mechanistic. According to how they conceptualize knowledge, Mezirow (1996), based on his interpretation of Habermas, classifies contemporary adult learning according to three paradigms: objectivist, interpretist, and critical. Tisdell and Taylor (2000) create a rubric based on the learning orientations' emphasis the centrality of the individual or the social context. For this study, on the other hand, adult learning paradigms are grouped based on their stance in relation to the dominant framework: liberatory learning paradigms (LLPs) and non-liberatory learning paradigms (NLLPs). For example, NLLPs (such as humanist, liberal, and progressive) consciously or unconsciously work within the dominant framework of political, cultural, and educational value system. LLPs (Freirian, critical feminist, and critical constructivist paradigms), on the other hand, deconstruct the dominant framework, challenge the status quo, and promote a fundamental structural change.

Besides these two groups' (liberatory and non-liberatory) own common denominators, there are also three other reasons why their political stances were chosen as criteria. The first reason is based on some assumptions of this study on CLUO. One of the assumptions, for example, is that since CLUO, at least semantically, involves being a "counter," it might/should have some issues with the political stance of learning, such as the dominant way of knowing, feeling, thinking, and acting. The second reason is so that I would be able to discuss the learning paradigms' underpinning assumptions about the concept of learning in relation to the structure of the dominant framework or ideology. The third reason is so that I can determine which paradigms (or combination of them) might offer help (in terms of theoretical foundations and insights) specifically for exploring CLUO. In Chapter Two I discuss these two groups' underlying assumptions in depth, and then I seek to determine where these orientations might be a help or to what degree they could help this study to better understand CLUO.

After laying out and organizing related adult learning paradigms, it must be noted that while there is no direct research on CLUO, there are two types of literature in adult learning that offer some insights. The first is Freirian pedagogy, which offers a theoretical framework that provides concepts and visions for social transformation, consciousness, and empowerment of the oppressed people. However, its focus is more on teaching rather than learning. In addition, class-based oppression is central in Freirian pedagogy rather than layers of oppression including gender, class, race, and other diversity categories. The second is informed by Freirian pedagogy, feminism which shifts the focus not only from class to gender but also from societal relationships to personal relationships.

In summary, even though the concept of learning is complex and contested, and even though CLUO has never been studied from a perspective from which this study looks at it, AEL still offers concepts, visions, and insights to explore the concept of CLUO. For example, despite learning paradigms' different socio-political stances in relation to the dominant framework, their contributions to the evolution of the concept of learning are undeniable. As a result, an appropriate theoretical framework that could help analyze micro and macro levels of the context in which CLUO is developed is promising.

Theoretical Framework

Feyerabend (1978), one of the most controversial philosophers of science, suggests eclectic approaches to scientific inquiry. He claims that there is no single approach that is significant enough to portray the whole of knowledge development. Agreeing with Feyerabend, I use an eclectic approach in this study; critical constructivism and Frankfurt School-based critical social theory are combined to explore adults' counter-learning experiences under extreme oppression. The integration of these two diverse theoretical perspectives provides a better framework than either one alone could provide. These two theoretical perspectives are especially crucial for this study because the nature of this study requires micro and macro levels of analysis. Critical constructivism is utilized to analyze adults' counter-learning under extreme oppressive situations while critical theory is used to analyze the socio-political context on a greater scale and its impact on the oppressed. Both of these theories are discussed in detail in Chapter Two, although their significance and theoretical assumptions are briefly presented in this section.

Critical Constructivism

Critical constructivism is grounded on the major assumptions of constructivism: the world is socially constructed by the knower who has both apriori (cognitive potentialities, such as schemas, brought by birth) and aposteriori (gained by social interaction after birth) abilities to actively learn and construct his or her knowledge and meaning based on prior experiences. For constructivism knowledge and meaning construction is a dynamic process in which individuals constantly structure and restructure their experiences “to give meaning to...[the] events and ideas in which they find themselves caught up” (Candy, p. 254). As a result, even though people have the same or similar experiences, their understanding, meaning making, and explanation are personal, subjective, and diverse.

Cognitivist and social constructivism are the two prominent paradigms in constructivist theory. While cognitivist constructivists pay their primary attention to cognitive development process and try to explain how knowledge is constructed from a biological perspective, social constructivists approach to development of cognition from socio-cultural perspective. However, even though these two viewpoints recognize the role of social context in the process of knowledge and meaning construction, they do not sufficiently pay attention to the socio-political context and its role. This neglecting of political context leaves a gap in our knowing process. For example, these two viewpoints' explanations would not be satisfactory to help us to understand better why the oppressed masses support a political party and consent to economic and political policies that are manifestly against their interests or why advertisement successfully persuade millions to buy the same product while our experience with it supposedly

different, subjective, and diverse. Critical constructivism appears to fill this gap by revealing the role of dominant ideology and its power structure in the process of knowledge construction and meaning making. In other words, critical constructivism includes the power dimension and socio-political context into constructivist epistemology.

Oppressive structure, according to critical constructivism, plays a crucial role in how we perceive the world. Critical constructivism aims to ask critical questions to expose how “how do dominant discourse, moral codes, religious norms, linguistic codes” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 10) are produced and manipulated to impact the way we perceive the world. By doing this, critical constructivist theory assumes to create possibility for the oppressed to sharpen their consciousness and feel empowered.

I have briefly discussed constructivism and introduced critical constructivism from a general perspective to inform the reader about critical constructivism’s core assumptions and its roots. I now turn to critical theory, particularly the Frankfurt School and its general characteristics. Then, within the Frankfurt School, I will focus on Marcusean theory, specifically its view on how oppressive society creates a one-dimensional man by demanding the total existence of individuals (not only their labor but also their souls and identities) and what the possibilities are for the one-dimensional man to liberate himself.

Frankfurt School-Based Critical Theory

The term critical theory is used to refer to the Frankfurt School whose members were socio-political analysts. Their theories, in the simplest form, were grounded on the idea that Western civilization, particularly capitalism, failed to fulfill the promises of

emancipation and liberation. In fact, instead of creating a truly human condition in which reason and human potential could grow, the Frankfurt School believed that civilization and reason brought barbarism, as it was seen in Auschwitz, Germany. Therefore, the central departure point of the Frankfurt School's critique was this betrayal, and the task of progressive science and philosophy was to pursue the unfulfilled promises of modernity since the enlightenment.

Within the Frankfurt School's theoretical framework, knowledge is treated as an outcome of reason. Its production, dissemination, and its impact on the masses play an important role in the schools' socio-political analysis. Its members perceive knowledge as historically and ideologically constructed phenomena for the benefit of certain privileged classes or groups. As a result, the aim of the Frankfurt School is to confront injustices, challenge the status quo, and critique the oppressive and exploitive social structures to reveal the truth about masses' being oppressed, deceived, and alienated. In order to achieve this goal, critical theorists assert that the oppressed have to be emancipated.

The oppressed are emancipated by transforming oppressive circumstances into non-oppressive ones for themselves by themselves (Freire, 1972). As a result, critical theory perceives learning as a political act that "help[s] us separate out 'truth' from 'ideology' and understand how our social, cultural, and political contexts have shaped our thinking" (Newman, 2000, ¶ 12). Moreover, beyond understanding the oppressive conditions and generating new forms of knowledge, critical theories propose theory-based action (praxis) to emphasize changing the oppressive situation since we cannot transform the world just in our consciousness.

According to the Marxist perspective, this emancipation is strongly related to class consciousness and class struggle where individuality and subjectivity are overlooked. While the Frankfurt School is predominantly influenced by Marxist philosophy's analytical categories, such as false consciousness, commodification, alienation, praxis, and emancipation (Brookfield, 2001), its members usually reject Marxist economic determinism and question the proletariat's revolutionary role in the process of liberation and freedom. Instead the Frankfurt School deemphasized the role of economic relationships and focused on the issue of "how subjectivity was constituted and how the spheres of culture and everyday life represented a new terrain of domination" (Giroux, 2001, p.11). Moreover, its members focus on the media, culture, language, power, and emancipation. As a result, they were concerned more about the human potential. According to Marcuse (as cited in Kellner, 2001), critical theory "is to define the highest human potentialities and to criticize society in terms of whether it furthers the development and realization of these potentialities, or their constriction and repression" (p.14). Thus, in the most general sense, critical theory's aim is to dismantle those sociopolitical, cultural, and economical oppressive structures that limit the individuals' potential. How does this occur? What are the factors that promote this? Marcuse's critical theory provides directions to examine the socio-political influence of society over individuals to understand the dynamic relationship between oppression and individuals.

Herbert Marcuse

Unlike other members of the Frankfurt School, new forms of social control were central in Marcusean theory, a new social control that produces a *one-dimensional man* and *society without opposition* (Kellner, 2001). In *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse

(1964) analyzes the conditions that create mass conformity in a society. According to Marcuse, all available apparatuses, such as mass media, culture, and advertising, are used in an effective way that dominant mode of thought can invade individuals' most private space, which is the inner dimension of the mind and the self. This space is the center of "the 'inner' dimension of the mind in which opposition to the status quo can take roots" (Marcuse, 1964, p. 10). By invading this inner dimension, oppressive power coerces individuals into unconsciously internalizing the dominant values. They lose their ability of negation and become one-dimensional. Yet the dominant power is unable to invade everyone's inner dimensions of the mind. When even domination is totally institutionalized and sophisticated, there is still hope for liberation. (This is the most important thing that critical theory has given us.) Specifically the Marcusean framework with the emphasis of inner revolution seems to offer powerful insights for this study to understand the counter-learning under oppression. Despite the dominant power's sophisticated and complex web of strategies and practices, Marcuse does not leave individuals powerless and passive; he offers ways for individuals to liberate themselves. For example, emotional, intellectual, and lingual detachment from dominant discourse is one of the most powerful ways for liberation (I discuss this and other ways for liberation in Chapter Two in more detail). This detachment is potentially revolutionary because in order to take back our invaded inner dimension of the mind, "it is necessary for adults to experience a fundamental estrangement from commonly accepted ways of thinking and feeling" (Brookfield, 2005, p.196).

Conclusion

It is important to note that one significant difference between constructivism and critical theory is in their approach to knowledge. Critical theory, from the Marxist tradition, asserts that knowledge is historically and socially constructed, but knowledge at the same time is a reflection of the material world in which culture and ideology play a crucial role. In order to attain knowledge, human agents engage in a dialectical relationship with the material world. Constructivism, however, fails to explain the relation between knowledge and the material world. As a result, a combination of these two frameworks promises greater opportunity to explore the phenomena under study. There is ample evidence in the literature to support the point that constructivism and critical theory have some commonalities and collaboratively they could provide a better framework to approach some social phenomena (Brookfield, 2000b; Dougiamas, 1998; Matthews, 2000; Spicer & Fleming, 2001). For example, in the Highlander Folk School the constructivist approach was combined with critical theory to help learners critically analyze their experience in collaboration along with deconstructing the ideology (Brookfield, 2000a).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the dynamics of adult counter-learning under extreme oppressive situations in which almost every aspect of people's lives are predefined and dominated by the oppressive culture and the political system to maintain dominant ideology and its hegemony.

Problem Statement

Faced with extreme social and political oppression from a cultural and political system, most people avoid confrontation with the system's inhumane tactics, strict cultural norms, and values that aim to ensure social control and to silence the dissidents. Yet some people, recognizing the personal costs and understanding the limited possibility of success, challenge the oppressive and repressive system. Challenging the system, for this study, does not only refer to those who take an active role in the process of challenging the status quo. Challenging the system sometimes may well be very individual and private, ranging from simply not "buying into" the dominant way of thinking to reading oppositional ideas. Standing up against the system of oppression involves different ways of thinking, feeling, speaking, and acting other than the repressive system imposed. Yet again, no matter how peaceful, individual, and distant from being a threat to the system, any oppositional form does not guarantee immunity from both cultural and political brutality. Why do these people risk their lives? How do they understand and interpret the oppressive projects and practices? What factors play a role in their decision to stand up against oppression? What do they learn? How do they form their ideas that oppose the dominant perspectives and value systems or how do they counter-learn? How significant is the role of learning in their journey? The literature reveals that we do not know enough about them to understand and explain their acts (such as Sigel, 1989; Thalhammer, 2001).

Despite the important contributions provided by the adult education field to understanding the complexity of adult learning, counter-learning under extreme oppression is one of the unexplored areas. Hence, even though learning is almost one of

the preconditions of social movements, political participation, and emancipation, there is an absence of studies conducted on adults' counter-learning experiences before their participation in a movement. Therefore, an analysis is needed to examine counter-learning under oppressive conditions and inform adult education theory and practices. Studies that collect and analyze the oppressed people's counter-learning experience in their daily life under various oppressive conditions are crucial to understand this learning that is more complex, and different from, learning in formal settings under relatively normal conditions.

Research Questions

This exploration into the dynamics of adult counter-learning under extreme oppressive situations was driven by the following major questions:

1. How do individuals counter-learn while almost every aspect of their lives is predefined by the oppressive system: what they are to read and write, how and with whom they are to socialize?
2. How do adults make meaning of their lives under oppression?
3. How do adults' prior and present experiences with oppression play a role in their forms of thinking and learning?

Methodology

As this study attempted to explore and understand the oppressed people's counter-learning experiences under oppression, a qualitative design was the most appropriate approach to examine these experiences. Strauss and Corbin (1990) describe qualitative research as "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of

statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (p. 1). Rather than quantifying, qualitative research is interested in understanding how people make sense of their lives in relation to specific phenomena in a particular time and context (Merriam & Associates, 2002). By valuing meanings, especially the subjective meanings of participants, qualitative inquiry offers opportunities to understand social phenomena about which we do not know very much or phenomena that we do understand but need to acquire new perspectives, or to gain more in-depth information that may be difficult to convey otherwise (Strauss & Corbin).

Narrative and Narrative Analysis

There are various kinds of qualitative research. Narrative analysis was the most appropriate kind of qualitative research to seek to better understand the phenomenon of this study, which was people’s counter-learning experience under extreme oppressive situations. Because narrative analysis literature is very diverse, it is important to define how this study fits within the realm of narrative research. Thus, I define the term “narrative” first and then briefly examine narrative analysis as a research method, and finally, I provide my rationale on why narrative analysis was chosen.

Narrative

Narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting (think of Carpaccio's Saint Ursula), stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news items, conversations. Moreover, under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative. All classes, all human groups, have their

narratives. . . narrative is international, transhistorical, transcultural: It is simply there, like life itself. (Barthes as cited in Franzosi, 1998, p. 517)

This broad definition of narrative tells a lot about what narrative is, but it does not tell us much about it in terms of narrative analysis as a scientific inquiry. As Riessman (1993) states, some definitions are “so broad to include just about anything” (p. 17) like the one cited above. The literature on narrative analysis does not have a consensus on the definition of the term “narrative.” Polkinghorne (1995) defines the term from both broad and narrow perspectives. In its broad definition, narrative is any form of discourse that consists of meaningful, integrated, and coherent statements. Yet it is usually prosaic. In its broad definition, it is a “linguistic form that preserves the complexity of human action with its interrelationship of temporal sequence, human motivation, chance happenings, and changing interpersonal and environmental context” (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.7). Hinchman and Hinchman (1997), on the other hand, define narrative in the human sciences realm as a discourse “with a clear sequential order that connects events in a meaningful way for a definite audience and thus offer insights about the world and/or people’s experiences of it” (p. xvi). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) provide another broader approach to narrative. They use the term narrative to refer to the participants’ stories and the entire narrative research process, including interpretation of the stories.

These definitions emphasize some key features of narrative that underpin the importance of it from the social science perspectives. These features emphasize that narrative is a sequential, meaningful, and inherently social story that is produced for a specific audience. However, Elliott (2005) informs us that some scholars, such as Polanyi (1985), White (1987), and Lebov and Waletzky (1997), believed that narrative is more

than these features. For example, Lebov and Waletzky define six separate elements, which are typically used to construct a story by the narrator for himself or herself and for a specific audience. These elements are:

the abstract (a summary of the subject of the narrative); the orientation (time, place, situation, participants); the complicating action (what actually happened); the evaluation (the meaning and significance of the action); the resolution (what finally happened); and lastly the coda, which returns the perspective to the present (pp. 8-9).

In addition to these inherited structural elements, there are various types of narratives in the literature, such as oral history, autobiography, and political narrative. Narrative's type is important because it implies how data will be perceived and handled. For example, a research study that defines narrative as life story might have a significantly different approach to the data and its analysis than another study that defines it as autobiography, in which esthetic dimensions might be a central concern in the process of analysis. As a result, it is crucial to assert how this study delineates narrative. Narrative, for this study, is defined as a counter-learning narrative, which includes narrators' reflections about their life experiences (interview transcripts) In Chapter Two an in-depth conceptualization of the terms "narrative" and "counter-learning narrative" will be discussed.

Narrative Analysis

The diversity within the realm of narrative research results in a very long list of various types of narrative analysis, such as life stories, life histories, personal accounts, oral history, ethnohistory, Latin American testimonies, and political narratives (Casey,

1995). However, there is no argument over the fact that narrative analysis is a systematic study. It utilizes various narrative materials, including subjects' stories or narrations (Lieblich et al., 1998) to understand and explore the research question. Examining the narration does not mean a literal interpretation of the story. It requires a systematic approach in which the researcher analyzes it from different angles such as how a story flows; what information is included, excluded or omitted; and what information is emphasized (Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992). Therefore, narrative analysis is an investigation of a story about how individuals make sense of their lives in conjunction to the surrounding context (Reisman, 1993).

According to their contribution to the field and the way they approach the narrative, Lieblich et al. (1998) classify narrative studies into three groups: 1) studies that utilize the narrative to explore the research question; 2) studies that research the narrative itself, rather than its contents, such as its structure and various linguistic analysis; and 3) studies that focus on philosophical and methodological aspects of the field. This study falls into the first group because it concentrated on the participant's narrative for examining her counter-learning process within her context. In other words, this study used narrative as a means for studying the research question. Therefore, people's counter-learning experiences in relation to the broader oppressive sociopolitical and cultural context was one of the core materials of this study. Because people usually do not recognize their learning in their daily lives and usually do not articulate it, it would be wrong if this study focused directly her counter learning experiences. Therefore, the narrative was focused around the narrator's personal, cultural and political realities that are subjectively constructed throughout her life spans. It is important to state that the term

“subjectively constructed” does not solely refer to a one-way construction by the narrator’s “I.” It should be understood in a dialectical relationship between an individual narrator and his/her socio-political and economical context in which the social actor and the material conditions dynamically define each other.

There is one more important issue that needs to be mentioned: focusing on people’s counter-learning experiences under extreme oppressive situations might stimulate the readers’ free association, and the readers might think this study is a kind of testimonio (a Latin American genre of narrative which is centrally focused on oppressive and repressive atrocities told by a witness with an emphasis on popular discourse). It is important to state that because of the political content and atrocities involved, peoples’ counter-learning experiences might overlap with many features of testimonios, but this study focuses on peoples’ life experiences to explore their counter-learning rather than what they witnessed. This is also not to say that testimonio tellers do not have learning experiences. This is perhaps just a technicality revolving around the term “testimony.” It is very possible that people’s counter-learning experiences might be considered as testimonio, but this study approached the participant’s experiences as a personal account, not necessarily a testimonio. Moreover, I am sure testimonios are rich in terms of people’s learning and might offer many insights for adult learning (this issue is important and it deserves more articulation; therefore, I examine this issue in detail in Chapter Two). Yet, the most important question still remains unanswered. Was a narrative analysis the best fit for this study? Now I turn to present my rationale for choosing it as a research method.

Rationale for Selecting Narrative Analysis as a Method

There were five important reasons why narrative analysis was chosen as the research methodology of this study. All these reasons were strongly related the goal of the study which was to explore counter-learning experiences under an extremely oppressive and repressive social sphere.

The first reason was the belief that people's everyday learning (including counter-learning) is embedded in people's life experiences and usually unrecognized and unarticulated. When people narrate these experiences, they reveal some previously unrecognized elements of learning and meaning making. Narrative analysis is a powerful way to reach these experiences and explore how people make meaning, how they learn, and what is involved in the process of learning (including the emotional and cognitive aspects of that learning).

The second reason was that because people's experiences under extreme oppressive situations are usually suppressed by fear, narration provides people a relatively symbolic and coded way to express themselves. Narrative analysis opens a window to people's symbolic and metaphoric ways of voicing themselves, which include invaluable data to explore their counter-learning experiences.

The third reason was related to the constructivist framework. Narrative analysis and constructivism share major theoretical assumptions about constructing subjective realities. Since critical constructivism was one of the theoretical frameworks of this study, narrative analysis contributed a great deal to better understand how people construct their reality through narration and how they deconstruct dominant discourse.

The fourth reason why narrative analysis was chosen as a research method was the importance of the context in the process of counter-learning. Narrative analysis usually focuses on individuals' narratives in relation to the socio-political and economical context in which they live. Therefore, counter-learning narratives promise information and insights for understanding the relation between context and learning.

Finally, narrative analysis as a method was important for this study because narrativization (the act of narrating) is another way of knowing, constructing, and reconstructing reality. Narrativization provides opportunity for the individuals to understand their past experiences in which learning occurs, but it has usually gone unrecognized. These reasons are also be analyzed in Chapter Three in more detail.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected from Turkey, a country that has a long history of oppression and state terrorism towards the dissidents and Kurds, an ethnic minority. Besides its state-sponsored terror and official oppression and repression, Turkey's religiously ingrained cultural structure, which includes multi-layers of oppression, also made Turkey a significant place for this study.

Since the primary objective of this study was to better understand the phenomenon of counter-learning, and since the study involved some risks for the participants, I decided to collect the data in as much detail as possible. In other words, I valued descriptive and in-depth information. This perspective is in line with narrative research. Therefore, a purposeful sampling with only one participant was chosen. The participant is a once illiterate Kurdish woman, Zelo, who experienced and still experiences the Turkish state terror and multiple oppressions and takes active roles in

oppositional activities. Zelo was contacted and asked for her participation in the study. She was informed about the possible risks of participating in this study, and the researcher's strategies that aimed to minimize her risks were also explained. The data was collected by telephone.

Data Gathering

A series of semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted. The focus of the data gathering was Zelo's past and present experiences under various layers of oppression to explore the phenomenon and gain more insights. Moreover, Zelo's counter-learning experiences under multilayered oppression from her childhood through the present were the central concern.

With the participant's permission, interviews were audiotaped. Each interview was recorded on a separate cassette and labeled. After each interview, the recordings were listened to and notes were taken. The transcripts of audiotapes did not include any identifying information to ensure the participant's safety and confidentiality. Particularly, the participant's identity was kept anonymous, and a pseudonym, Zelo, was assigned her. All interviews were in Turkish, which is both the researcher's and the participant's native language. Eight interviews were conducted. In addition, at the participant's suggestion, her oldest son, her brother-in-law, and one of her friends were also interviewed.

Besides collecting interview data, supplemental data were collected through exploration of cultural artifacts (poems, songs, and political jokes) and readings about historical and political realities of Turkey and other oppressed societies. The participant was asked if it were possible to give the researcher an artifact, what she would have provided to the researcher as a supplemental artifact. She said that she could have given

her white lecek (or tulbent), which is a non-religious head scarf and was used as a symbol of the Peace Mothers. Finally, as Merriam and Associates (2002) suggest, a research journal was kept throughout the study to record the researcher's reflections, questions, and decisions related to issues during the data collection.

Criteria for Qualitative Research

Riessman (1993) states that the notion of validity and related procedures come from a positivist paradigm and are irrelevant to narrative studies. She claims that a narrative "is not meant to be read as an exact record of what happened nor is it a mirror of a world 'out there'" (Riessman, p. 64). The trustworthiness of the interpretation of narrations, however, is a critical issue in narrative studies. Riessman distinguishes at least four ways of approaching trustworthiness of narrative studies. They are persuasiveness, correspondence, coherence, and pragmatic use (each is discussed in detail in Chapter Three).

Significance of the Study

This study of the counter-learning experiences of oppressed people was significant on multiple levels. First, this study held a personal significance. I am a victim and a survivor of Turkish oppression and repression. One of the most powerful sources of my strength in the process of resistance and survival was learning. Learning the oppressor's language, strategies, and political projects helped me analyze the oppression. This also equipped me to recognize various realities, the reality that was systematically imposed on me as an ideological project and the reality that I constructed from my own dilemmas: the dilemma of fear or courage, the dilemma of remaining humane or becoming inhumane.

Even though I have been out of that oppression for years, this past oppression defined to a large extent the personality and perspectives that I have today. I am highly empathetic of individuals who live in oppressive and repressive political systems. Moreover, I feel I have gained more knowledge about oppressive situations over the last ten years. I now have a different lens to look at the oppression and my own experiences. As a result, as a researcher embarking on my own process of introspection, regarding my counter-learning experiences is valuable for me. Furthermore, I am trying to keep my hope alive for a peaceful world. Exploring the counter-learning experiences of other oppressed people profoundly matters to me. I have always wanted to understand what enables the oppressed people to relentlessly resist dehumanization, how they counter-learn, make meaning of their daily experiences, and construct their own reality in order to evoke change and remain humane.

Second, the study of counter-learning under an extreme oppressive situation provides knowledge and insights into the complexity of adult learning. This study may assist adult education theorists and practitioners in understanding the importance of the material and subjective conditions of a specific context in which any forms of struggle against dehumanization happen to be the almost only way to remain human and humane. Therefore, studies of this nature are needed to examine adult learning under oppressive and repressive conditions to contribute to creating more egalitarian, more inclusive, and more humanized theories and practices of adult education.

Third, this study is significant to other fields that analyze oppressive social situations and their impact on society and group dynamics. For example, political science and political sociology, although they are not primarily interested in adult learning, are

highly engaged in attempts to understand political mobilizations under various socio-economical and political conditions. Hence this study offered knowledge and insights for both of these areas of study, because as Foley (1998) states, “For people to become actively involved in social movements something must happen to their consciousness – they must see that action is necessary and possible” (p. 143).

Finally, this study holds significance for oppressed people under cultural and political oppression and repression. By the information and insights that this study offered, the oppressed people may be inspired to construct their own world critically. The results of this study may help them to analyze the dominant discourse and its rhetoric. Data analysis of this study may also be a source for oppressed people to find ways to identify the constraints that are embedded in their given and unquestioned assumptions and values.

Definition of Terms

The following terms used throughout this study are identified below.

1. Counter-learning: For the purpose of initiating this study, counter-learning is an individual and social learning or unlearning process that works against indoctrination and may encompass rational, emotional, lingual, moral, and behavioral manifestations.

Counter-learning is a negation of total submission to the given reality.

2. Oppression and political repression: Oppression is a multidimensional phenomenon. It has economical, political, cultural, psychological, racial, and gender-related dimensions. Most of these dimensions are reciprocally related and they usually co-exist. In the most general term, oppression refers to “unjust use of power by the more powerful against those less powerful and more vulnerable by virtue of their social

position” (Mansbridge & Morris, 2001, p.2). Oppression, as used in this study, is defined broadly. Generally oppression, by definition, applies to groups rather than individuals (Mansbridge & Morris) emphasis is put on its being systematic and hidden (Frye, 1983), and violence is usually symbolic (Bourdieu, 2001), as is the case in women’s oppression by a patriarchic social system. In some other forms of oppression, however, characteristics of oppression are altered by the context. For example, in some situations oppression involves more direct violent measures carried out by the state’s security forces and state-sponsored paramilitary groups against people for their political view that potentially challenges the status quo and is perceived as subversive by the authorities. Duff and McCamant (as cited in Booth & Richard, 1996) define repression as “the use of governmental coercion to control or eliminate actual or potential political opposition” (p. 1206). Manifestation of violence, in this form of oppression, includes murder, torture, disappearances, etc. Even though oppression appears to be well organized at the beginning, the more it involves physical violence, the more it gets out of the hand and becomes messy-dirty war. It becomes more perplexing to understand who is doing what and why. It

- targets both individuals (community leaders) and groups (ethnic or ideological groups)
- is both systematic (top-down; same method of tortures and tools) and to some extent is random (unknown murders and arbitrary arrests, etc.); no one becomes immune
- is physically violent as well as psychologically damaging and

- is both hidden (clandestine torture chambers) and purposefully visible (mutilated bodies found on the streets).

This form of oppression is called political repression. Political repression aims to maintain the historical oppression and to quash any effort of oppositional idea-formations by eliminating the dissidents. This also intimidates the bystanders. As a result, while oppression under relatively normal conditions tries to restrict certain groups of people's ability to participate political life, political repression is more about wiping out oppositional ideas along with people.

3. State Terrorism: The use or threat of violence by the state or its agents or supporters, particularly against civilian individuals and populations, as a means of political intimidation and control (i.e., a means of repression) (Sluka, 2000). State terrorism is a universal social phenomenon that includes common practices or strategies such as random arrest, unfair trial, torture and extrajudicial killings, disappearance, and legal immunization of perpetrators. It would be practical to state that in various literatures (such as political science and political sociology) the terms "state terrorism" and "political repression" are usually used interchangeably depending on the subject matter.

4. Social Movements: Conceptualization of social movements is complicated as there are various approaches and various types. Therefore, for this study Morris and Braine's (2001) definition of liberation movements is taken as a model. According to Morris and Braine, the goal of this type of movement is to defeat the system of domination. The movements are also formed "almost entirely by the individuals whose daily existence is negatively impacted by those systems" (Morris & Braine, 2001, p.34). The members of these types of movements are also usually from oppressed groups and

their belonging to the group is usually from birth, such as race, gender, ethnicity, or social class. “Because of this long-standing state of oppression and segregation, such groups usually have developed both a culture of subordination and an oppositional culture” (Morris & Braine, 2001, p. 34).

5. Critical Theory: The term critical theory, in this study, is used to refer to the Frankfurt School whose members were socio-political analysts. Notable figures in critical theory are Horkheimer, Benjamin, Adorno, Fromm, Marcuse, and Habermas.

Horkheimer defined the term critical theory for the first time in his 1937 essay in which he claimed that critical theory’s aim is to critique and change society as a whole. One of the most important contributions of the Frankfurt School is its distinctive mode of critique that is in the center of its knowledge production. In other words, critical theory’s “essence lies in immanent critique” (Harvey, 1990, p. 3). Critical theory by highlighting the contradictions “pushes ideas and frameworks to their limits” (Leonardo, 2004, p.12).

6. Ideology: Ideology is a “ mental framework – the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation –which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, define, figure out, and render intelligible the way society works”(Hall, 1996, p. 26). Members of the Frankfurt School approach to term “ideology” from a Marxist perspective, which perceives it as a distortion of reality, but they also focus on its role in communication (i.e., Habermas).

7. Hegemony: Even though the term was first used by Lenin, Gramsci (1971) developed and popularized it. According to Gramsci, hegemony is a political power that feeds not only from authority and armed forces but also intellectual and moral leadership. While authority and armed forces represent the coercive force, intellectual and moral

leadership represent the cultural force. Having control over these two forces grants a social group to become ruling class. A ruling class forms and maintains its hegemony by creating cultural and political consensus through formal and informal organizations and institutions such as school, media, family, and union. These institutions and organizations are where hegemony is exercised by allied classes and social groups for the benefits of the ruling class. The important point here is that hegemony formalizes power in a society in a way that power appears abstract and therefore not connoted to any individual.

8. Oppressed: Despite the common understanding of the term “oppressed” which includes even oppressors (a torturer can be considered as oppressed and even as a victim), this study uses the term “oppressed” to refer those who experienced multilayer of oppression and chose to challenge the status quo as opposed to those who submit the authority.

9. Newroz: It means “*new day*” and is a forbidden Kurdish celebration.

Assumptions of the Study

1. In order to understand adults’ counter-learning, it is crucial to understand and analyze the dynamics of oppression and repression in relation to socio-economic context.
2. Adults’ counter-learning under extreme oppressive situations has unique characteristics that are different from adult learning under relatively normal conditions.
3. By studying the oppressed people’s past and present learning experiences under oppression, this study can provide information that will help us to get a better understanding of their learning.
4. This study was based on the assumption that the counter-learning of the oppressed is socio-politically constructed.

5. Other factors of human learning such as emotion and cognition inform counter-learning under oppression.

Limitations of the Study

1. This study explored one person's experiences within a specific oppressive culture and political system (Turkey), and therefore the results may not apply to other settings or contexts.

2. The interviews were conducted on the phone as requested by the participant for political reasons. This inhibits observation of non-verbal cues during data collection.

3. Due to traumatic experiences and fear of further reprisals, the participant did not want to reveal some pertinent information in detail. I, however, tried to minimize this limitation by using my knowledge about the Turkish and Kurdish cultures, and as well as my knowledge of the political culture of Turkey. Because I was born and raised in Turkey, I benefited from my insider perspective in the data collection and analyses process. This unique perspective allowed me to know how and what questions to ask. This perspective of knowing the general mannerism of speech of the culture also allowed me to know how to interpret and translate the verbal and non-verbal data collected through the interviews. Nevertheless, I tried very hard not to allow conversations to be colored by my presumptions. I frequently checked with the participant as to whether I understood her correctly. Sometimes she was expecting me to know and understand without her going into details. Sometimes, because of her limited vocabulary, she was unable to come up with a correct word. At other times, she was unwittingly revealing clues about her cognition and emotions and some hidden ideological and cultural meanings in her narrative.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a brief background of the study. The conceptual framework articulated the lens, which guided the study along with the purpose statement, statement of the problem, and research questions. Chapter Two outlines the literature that informed the study from the areas of adult education, history, and sociology. The adult education literature provides information about adult learning and reveals what is missing. While the historical literature provides information about Turkey's history to help me understand the historically embedded related issues, social critical theory helps me analyze its context and its effect on the society and individuals. Chapter Three details the rationale for the methodology used for the study and expands on the rationale for my choice of methodology. Chapter Four presents a biographical sketch of the participant. Chapter Five presents the findings of the study. Finally, in Chapter Six, I discuss the conclusions, discussions, and recommendations pertinent to the study.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter, there is a comprehensive review of the literature related to the three areas that informed this study: Frankfurt School-based critical theory, critical constructivism, and contemporary adult education literature. The first section provides contextual information about the Frankfurt School and Marcuse, one of the members of the school. Included is a historical and theoretical background of the school and Marcuse's critical theory, which questions advanced industrial societies as a whole and its new ways of exercising social control that create one-dimensional men. The second section reviews critical constructivism, which is the second theoretical framework of this study. The third section examines contemporary adult education with a focus on the dialectical evolution of learning paradigms. Because CLUO, as a concept, is absent in the literature, this section includes other areas of studies indirectly related to CLUO. They are outside of adult education literature, and learning is not their interest, but they are valuable in terms of providing insights about people's lives under oppression. The final section reviews the related studies that have potentials to inform CLUO.

The Frankfurt School

Chapter one began with illustrating a great disappointment and frustration of our civilization and modernity. Despite its technological and scientific advancement, our civilization failed to fulfill the promises of a peaceful world. Humans always have a strong belief that reason is the only path to world peace and a more humane world. It is frustrating, however, to see that reason fails to create a better world. It is hope-crashing to see barbarism still exists in various forms; it is hidden and ruthless in democratic

societies; it is shamelessly visible under military regimes; and their bloody measurements are being justified for the sake of “national security” with the consent of the masses.

The Frankfurt School’s theoretical departure shows some parallels with this study, which is driven by an intense feeling of awe at those who challenge the brutal authority by putting their total existence at risk on one hand and the despicable-barbaric side of the reason and its use against humanity on the other. In their 1947 Preface to *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno (1994), for example, began their analysis by posing a question: “Why mankind, instead of entering into a truly human condition, is sinking into a new kind of barbarism” (p.xi). Frankfurt School scholars analyzed the existing modern condition by focusing on reason, its potentialities, and whether it was being used in a reasonable way or not. They emphasized that even though reason had a great triumph, it had a darker side too. All human tragedies and catastrophic social events were evidence to its dark side. It was also evident that 17th and 18th centuries’ Western Enlightenment, which was a total challenge to irrationality, superstition, and tyranny of dogmatic knowledge of the Middle Ages, failed to fulfill its promises of human liberation.

The Frankfurt School and Reason

Historically the importance of reason comes from 17th and 18th centuries’ Enlightenment philosophies. Enlightenment thinkers (such as Descartes, Rousseau, Voltaire, and Kant) had a strong belief in reason. Reason was the only power to liberate the human from nature and societal oppressions, such as taboos, dogmas, and authoritarian practices. Reason would enable us to conquer and transform nature. Our control over nature would be greater and we would be closer to happiness and freedom.

With reason's potential we would also achieve liberation through disengagement of previously oppressive social and epistemological structures. This power would create "conditions in which individuals could be free to exercise their own reason, free from the dictates of rationally indefensible doctrine and dogma" (Fagan, 2005, ¶ 5).

However, the Industrial Revolution and emerging capitalism brought a drastically different tone onto the stage. In the process of manipulating nature (physical and social), "men became material just as nature as a whole is material for society" (Kellner, 1989, p. 97). Reason had been used in a way that it had become an instrument that dominated scientific and administrative thought. Adorno and Horkheimer (1979) called this instrumental rationality, which represents dominant ideology and its logic that dominates people's everyday of living, acting, and thinking. Traditionally this rationality was idealized and claimed to be value-free and efficient (such as positivism and logical empiricism whose main assumption is that any statement that is not based on observable and measurable facts is meaningless). Frankfurt School scholars opposed this notion and claimed that it was a form of ideology and might result in legitimizing any dehumanized administration that dominates humans and nature and the relation between them. In other words, reason was "incorporated into the very structure of society....used to strengthen rather than transform the system...[and the] Enlightenment had turned into its opposite and turned from being an instrument of liberation to domination" (Kellner, n.d. b, ¶ 14). This rationality would allow the administration to reduce everything to a set of quantifiable variables. Marcuse (1978), another Frankfurt intellectual, called this a "reification of reason, reification as reason" (pp. 205). By this rationality, people's everyday lives have been invaded and turned into a commodity with market value.

Reason has been bastardized and put in service of the capitalist project in a way that it has been dehumanized. Reason, instead of liberating man from nature, has come to objectify the man who is himself a part of nature. As a result, reason and the way it is being used are supposed to be central to the society and its civilization, because reason was the only faculty that allows us to realize the distinction between *what is* and *what should be*. It also allows us to create or destroy.

Auschwitz and Reason

Auschwitz was a sufficient living example symbolizing the capacity of modernity and reason: the slaughter of human beings, the killing of children by the Nazis was justifiable for the Nazi ideology. For the Frankfurt School, Auschwitz was rational but not reasonable (Friedman, 1981). Auschwitz was manifesting the horrible combination of evil and reason. More directly, Adorno and Horkheimer (1979) would say that reason had become a form of anti-Semitism, and enlightenment had become a form of bureaucratically and rationally organized brutality. Reason and enlightenment, together, created a form of barbarism with a modern mask. Dreams of wealth had turned into a delusion; poverty and misery formed people's lives and future. Barbarism, violence, and intolerance had replaced the dream of peace and freedom. Auschwitz showed that when reason's darker side becomes a tool for an authoritarian system, barbarism would be inevitable. There would be less room for human freedom, for being more human, and for reason to be a progressive force rather than a destructive one (Friedman, 1981).

It can be easily seen that reason itself was not the concern of the Frankfurt School, it was the way it was being used. The School's members never denied reason's positive and progressive potentialities. However, its vulnerability to be abused or misused in the

wrong hands, such as with the Nazis, was the big concern. Thus, the relation between reason and brutality in our modern era had to be examined. “[T]echnology as the very embodiment of reason” (Friedman, 1981. p. 190) was rightly chosen by the Frankfurt School for this examination. Technology was crucial, because it was the most tangible evidence of reason.

Upshot of Reason: Technology

Before going further, it is important to understand how the Frankfurt School conceptualizes technology, because technology is important in the Frankfurt School’s analyses of civilization. Based on Hegelian and Marxist assumptions, its members claim that there is a dialectical relationship between humans and nature. Civilization is the product of these relationships, and technology is an indispensable means of it. Humans, as active subjects, shape, determine, and dominate the physical world around them by their mental (or intellectual) and physical activities according to their needs. The use of reason and physical activities inevitably forms technologies that give power to human beings over nature.

Technology is an end product of reason. It is meant to be beneficial for human needs. In the realm of culture, technology’s role is two-fold. First, it is being used to accomplish the task for which it was actually created (such as automation and mass production). The second function was more subtle: it was to create as well as reinforce the dominant mode of thought and behavior pattern. Kellner (n.d.a.) quotes Marcuse’s argument in which Marcuse contends that technology forms a "mode of organizing and perpetuating (or changing) social relationships, a manifestation of prevalent thought and behavior patterns, an instrument for control and domination" (§ 6). For the Frankfurt

School, technology was not only a tool reifying consciousness and objectifying life, but it also was a kind of destructive immanence terror. In *Eclipse of Reason*, Horkheimer (1974) claimed that terror is technology's distinctive character in its relation toward nature. However, while Horkheimer positions himself as very pessimistic about technology, Marcuse's approach to technology and its potential is more optimistic. Marcuse (1964) believed that empowering and liberatory potentialities are implicit in technology itself. He believed that the existing form of instrumental reason could be transformed in a way so that it could generate "a new science and technology which would be fundamentally different, which would place us in harmony with nature rather than in conflict with it" (Feenberg, 1996, p. 46). However, under the reign of modern technological rationality, technology is turned into a controlling machine that dominates people's everyday lives and dominates every aspect of society. The Holocaust experience demonstrated how destructive reason and its technocratic outcome could be. For example, the Holocaust was an "abstract exercise in engineering in which the central logistical problem was how best to arrange the extermination of large numbers of objects [Jews] that possessed no concrete, unique existence for them [Nazis]" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 164).

Technology has not only the will, but also the ability to avenge itself upon man in the most brutal ways conceivable. The power of Nazi Germany rested not merely on the Nazi's will to hurt, but on the potential within technology (and within technology's own dynamic will) to inflict suffering through the rational organization of the social and physical mechanisms of terror. (Freidman, 1981, p. 189)

Auschwitz made a need visible: a need to revise some philosophical, scientific, and epistemological assumptions and methodologies to begin rethinking the meaning of domination, hegemony, and emancipation (Giroux, 2001). The Frankfurt School was a response to this need with its members' keen critique based on a different attitude toward society as a whole. This attitude distinguished its theory from traditional theories. In order to accomplish a better functioning social structure, while traditional theories were leaning toward serving to maintain or reforming the existing structure, the Frankfurt School created a meta-theoretical critique of the traditional theories from an ethical standpoint and suggested a radical transformation of the existing arrangements (Jay, 1996).

Frankfurt School members focused their analysis on any socially and ideologically grounded irrationality of reason in the existing society. By doing so, they had created both a school of thought and a dynamic process of critique (Giroux, 2001). The Frankfurt School's systematic analysis of culture, technology, reason, authoritarianism, hegemony, ideology, and human liberation can be best understood from their core assumptions on how they perceived the relation between humans and nature (or between reason and object).

Tyranny of Positivism

While reason was central to their critique, the Frankfurt School scholars turned their attention to areas where reason was predominantly used, such as philosophy, natural sciences, and art. They did so because philosophers, scientists, artists, and other intellectuals knew that there was something terribly wrong at Auschwitz,

but their methodologies, their rational procedures, did not allow their personal revulsion to be turned into scientific principle. Their methods required neutrality. Revulsion was reduced to value judgments. Since moral values were viewed as irrational, and the irrational has no place in the scientific mode of thought, our social scientists had to be open to the suspicion that there was nothing demonstrably wrong with Auschwitz. (Friedman, 1981 p.16)

In short, Frankfurt School scholars saw that the instrumentalization of reason and the methodological and epistemological tyranny of positivism served to establish a single order in which approaching reality in any other way (such as subjectivity) was excommunicated. Adorno and Horkheimer (1979) describe this as “enlightenment is totalitarian” (p. 24).

This is not to say that the Frankfurt School’s theoretical project was to blindly attack positivism. In fact, the Frankfurt School believed that in order to prevent any formation of totalitarianism or authoritarianism in any system, reason and its capacity of critique are crucial. Moreover, its capacity of critique has to be fully enabled and genuine intellectual freedom has to be established. In other words, the Frankfurt School did not have any problem with positivism itself; it had a problem with what positivism had become. For example, Marcuse (1964) recognized that “positivism is a struggle against all metaphysics, transcendentalisms, and idealisms as obscurantist and regressive modes of thought” (p.172), but the Frankfurt School believed that positivism “had emerged as the final ideological expression of the Enlightenment... [and] became the enemy of reason rather than its agent” (Giroux, 2001, p.13). It became the enemy of reason because reason’s critical faculty was almost totally denied by positivism’s social function

(Friedman, 1981). “Philosophical thought turns into affirmative thought; the philosophic critique criticizes within the societal framework and stigmatizes non-positive notions as mere speculation, dreams or fantasies” (Marcuse, 1964, p.172). As a result, positivist ideology posed a threat “to the notion of subjectivity and critical thinking” (Giroux, 2001 p.15). Nonexistence of the ability of critique leads either to conformism or totalitarianism, which create a cultural sphere in which blind obedience to the oppressive state ideology and official nonsense are valued. This will produce torturers and mass killers. Barbarism thrives.

Authoritarianism and the Individual

Members of the Frankfurt School closely witnessed the Holocaust. Perhaps they did not experience the brutality first hand, but they saw how a fascist state utilized reason and its apparatuses to create a mass culture. They saw how the millions submitted themselves to fascist culture and authority without questioning. They witnessed how a loving father and husband went home from work at Auschwitz, sat and ate dinner with his family (with blood on his hands) and managed to go to sleep peacefully without feeling any guilt. It was as if he were trying to prove the infamous Fascist Italian motto: “Me ne frego!” (I don’t give a damn!) (Wikipedia, 2005).

The Frankfurt School Institute started analyzing fascism and its impact on individuals and society in the early 1930s. *Authority and Family (Studien über Autorität und Familie)*, edited by Horkheimer, Fromm, and Marcuse, was published in Paris in 1936 after Hitler's takeover in Germany (Jay, 1996). *Authority and Family* was as the culmination of their study on fascism (Kellner & Roderic, 1981). In this study, the structure of an authoritarian state was analyzed. How a society is dominated by the

authority of capital was central. They concluded that authoritarian experience dominates everyday life in which human beings lose their control over their social and economical circumstances and they become an object. In this analysis they found family as an institution a powerful socialization agent that in many ways was symbolizing (and mirroring) the structure of an authoritarian state and reinforcing the dominant economic and political structures. Father, for example, in the household, represents the authority or the state. Growing up by obeying the father as an authority figure will create potential for a child to become a good (!) soldier, a productive (!) worker, and a good (!) citizen. This also suggests how society reproduces its class structure and inflicts its ideologies and practices on individuals.

Human Psyche, Society and Socialization

In the 1930's, it was perplexing to understand Nazism, its hypnotic power on the masses, and its inhumane practices. Difficulty was coming from the absence of a theory that would allow scientists to analyze the Holocaust experience at both the micro and macro levels. There were almost two antagonist theories, and they were to be combined in order to make sense of all of those irrationalities. They were Marxism and Freudianism.

The Marxist interpretation of Nazism was very dominant among social scientists and intellectuals, but their analyses were too far away to fill the gap between micro and macro analysis, because they were ignoring human factors. Fromm criticized Marxist approaches for perceiving Nazism just from an economic structure (simply seeing it as an end result of the means of production). Freudian theory, on the other hand, was almost too mystical and asocial in its perception of individuals as almost isolated beings, apart

from society. While historical materialism (Marxism) was prioritizing economic forces to analyze societal life, psychoanalysis was primarily focusing on instinctual and psychological forces. The Frankfurt School struggled to synthesize these two virtually antagonistic theories.

Thus, for the school, there were Marxist theories' inability to analyze human psychology and its psyche on one hand and various attacks on Freudian theory's being ahistorical and apolitical on the other. Burston (as cited in McLaughlin, 1996), for example claims that Freud was "a shrewd critic of historical materialism" (p. 245). This implies a common perspective toward Freud; Freud was a petty bourgeois intellectual and his theory had little to say about sociopolitical and economical social structure. Not agreeing with critiques of Freudian theory, Fromm believed that Marxism itself was not theoretically prepared to deal with "humanity's powerful propensities for violence, lust for power, and yearning for submission" (McLaughlin, 1996, p. 245) and yet psychoanalysis was powerful in understanding conformist and destructive human potentials inherent in the fascist era (Fromm, 1969). As a result, Fromm became one of the first who synthesized Marxist and Freudian theories and developed a theory of Marxist social psychology (Kellner, 1991).

Fromm believed that Marxism and Freudianism were compatible since individuals' and groups' instincts could be studied from a socio-economic perspective. For example, studying how socio-economic structure influences and shapes individuals' instincts was a valid study, because even though instincts are biologically given, they are socially modifiable. According to Kellner (1991), Fromm finds psychoanalysis valuable (especially its categories such as ego, super-ego, and id) in revealing sources of irrational

behavior patterns in societal life such as family, religion, tradition, politics, and education. Fromm believed that especially the characteristics of sadomasochism were useful to understand the authoritarian personality within the dynamics of authority and submission.

In 1950, Adorno and his associates conducted an experimental study to find the roots of authoritarianism in the individual. They developed an “f-scale” to determine authoritarian values of individuals in their psycho-sociological dynamics and labeled what the scale was measuring as “authoritarian personality type.” Primary characteristics of this type were similar to those of the sadomasochistic type who

submits to dominant authorities and higher powers, but in turn lords it over those below him or her in the social hierarchy. The masochistic character derives pleasure both from submission to higher authorities and from imposing authority on lower strata. (Kellner, 1991. ¶ 23)

Starting from the 1940’s, the schools’ critique of mass manipulation through an authoritarian family was extended and included technological advancement in communication, especially radio and its use to create deliberate propaganda (Weiner, 1979). This created some variation in the school’s approach to some concepts, such as the family and father’s role in the socialization process.

Vicissitudes of the Concept of Socialization

By following Adorno and Horkeimer’s points of view on the father and family’s role in socialization process for reproducing the authoritarian type, Marcuse extended the scope of the process of socialization. Marcuse, in *The Obsolescence of the Freudian Concept of Man* (1970), argued that, based on the classical psychoanalytical model

Adorno and Horkheimer overlooked the advancing technology and its use as an apparatus of total control of individuals while having placed a great emphasis on the father and family's influence on individuals' mental and social development. For Marcuse, historical changes made this Freudian-based conception of socialization obsolete. He, for example, enumerates some of the outcomes of the historical changes as "transition from free to organized competition, concentration of power in the hands of an omnipresent technical, cultural, and political administration, self-propelling mass production and consumption, subjection of previously private, asocial dimensions of existence to methodological indoctrination, manipulation, [and] control" (Marcuse, 1970, p. 46). Due to these changes, he argues, the father and the father-dominated family is no longer the primary agent of mental socialization. Their role as an agent of socialization has been weakened by society's direct management of the mind through the society's ideological and cultural apparatuses, such as mass media, schooling, and the entertainment industry, including sports. In advanced industrial society the father and mother are seen as too busy earning a living. Family becomes a matter of legal responsibility. This resulted in the declining family's role to enforce the subordination of the pleasure principle (id) to the reality principle (ego). This subordination process that involves the struggle against the father as authority figure is very crucial in the process of mental development in which the individual becomes oneself through internalizing all repression and liberation. Yet this struggle also prepares the individual for the outside world and strengthens him to become himself "with but also against the other" (Marcuse, 1970, p.46). What develops in this process is the power of negation which is an ability to build and protect a personal and subjective realm through dynamic contradictions of everyday life that puts the

individuals in tension between conflicting realities such as autonomy and heteronomy, freedom and repression, and pleasure and pain. However, this ability becomes impaired if the individual does not go through certain struggles. For example, by the weakened father as an authority figure the child does not have to go through the rebellious and attainment struggle. As a result the child becomes independent from the father, since the father is not strong enough to be a primary socialization agent. However, the individual finds a ready-made world and is caught unprepared. An individual who has “grown without much struggle appears as a pretty weak entity, ill equipped to become a self with and against others, to offer effective resistance to the [external] powers that now enforce the reality principle, and which are so very different from father (and mother) – but also so very different from the images purveyed by the mass media” (Marcuse, 1970, p. 50). In other words, individuals’ critical rationality (i.e., power of negation) is not sufficiently developed. For Marcuse, the individual whose power of negation was deprived will first strive to find his own identity but more likely will submit himself to the dominant modes of thought and behavior and assimilate his self to the others’ ideals. Inevitably, this abolishes the possibility of being an autonomous self and creates a space for the administered society to produce and reproduce a static identity for the masses, an identity that is one-dimensional.

One-Dimensional Man and Marcuse

One of Marcuse’s most important works is his book called *One-Dimensional Man*, published in 1964. *One-Dimensional Man* is a critique of advanced industrial society, which is

irrational as a whole. Its productivity is destructive of the free development of human needs and faculties, its peace maintained by the constant threat of war, its growth dependent on the repression of the real possibilities for pacifying the struggle for existence individual, national, and international. (Marcuse, 1964, p. ix-x).

According to Marcuse (1964), contemporary society has become “richer, bigger and better” (p.ix) than ever before. It is affluent, and is well functioning. Marcuse argues that in order to establish, maintain, and reproduce its inherently repressive social order, advanced industrialized society uses its full intellectual and material capabilities throughout all formal and informal channels rather than open repression and terror. It cloaks, however, its aggressive and oppressive face with a democratic façade and with all deliberate and sophisticated methods of manipulations through maximizing scientific and technological efficiency. It mostly accomplishes this through “the systematic organization of needs and wants” (Marcuse, 1968, p. xiii).

Human needs and wants, according to Marcuse (1964), are historical and have always been preconditioned. He further distinguishes human needs as true and false. False needs are those that are created by the external forces that individuals have no control over, such as media and advertisement. In order to understand why these false needs are oppressive, we need to recognize their nature. False needs are almost self-inseminators and can never be totally satisfied. “No matter how much such needs may have become the individual's own, reproduced and fortified by the conditions of his existence; no matter how much he identifies himself with them and finds himself in their satisfaction, they continue to be what they were from the beginning” (Marcuse, 1964, p.

5). In other words, individuals unconsciously internalized these needs in a way that those needs become indistinguishable from individuals' true-basic needs. Moreover, individuals see their happiness with a considerable reliance on satisfaction of those needs. Individuals in an advanced industrial society "recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment" (Marcuse, 1964, p. 9). People's self-esteem and self-confidence are shaped by Calvin Klein and Victoria's Secret. These needs are repressive so much so that they make the true needs (such as nourishment, clothing, and lodging) secondary. If a relativist disputes and asks who determines what are true and false needs, Marcuse's answer would be the autonomous individuals who are not indoctrinated and manipulated, because if the individuals "are kept in-capable of being autonomous, [if] they are indoctrinated and manipulated (down to their very instincts), their answer to this question cannot be taken as their own" (Marcuse, 1964, p. 10). As a result, replacement of false needs by the true ones is a powerful way to total domination because false needs have a suffocation effect on the true needs that demand liberation.

In order to maintain its repressive structure, the affluent society demands our total existence not just our labor in the assembly line, not just our identity, not just our consciousness, not just our body; it demands our total body-mind-and-soul. When individuals buy into its rational irrationality, Marcuse (1964) claims that the concept of alienation becomes questionable because the "false consciousness" is not false consciousness anymore, "the subject [individual] which is alienated is swallowed up by its alienated existence" (Marcuse, 1964, p.10). This alienated existence becomes reality. Everything, including thought, becomes one-dimensional. Then, "a comfortable, smooth,

reasonable, democratic unfreedom prevails” (Marcuse, 1964, p. 1). Moreover, along the way, possibilities of potential opposition are being foreclosed. Dominant ideology invades individuals’ most private space, the inner dimension of the mind and the self. This space is the center of “inner freedom” in which “opposition to the status quo can take roots” (Marcuse, 1964, p. 10). By invading this inner dimension, oppressive power makes individuals unconsciously internalize the dominant values, lose their ability to negation, and become one-dimensional. There would be almost no place for critical rationality to grow. Ability of negation is impaired. The possibility of opposition is eliminated and the masses’ consent is secured. A society without opposition is created.

One-Dimensional Society

A one-dimensional society has some distinct characteristics that differ from non-developed or third-world countries. These characteristics are closely related to the tactics and strategies that are used to create the one-dimensional society. They usually aim to eliminate dissent or prevent formation of oppositional ideas and reinforce mass conformity.

In a one-dimensional society all forms of critique take place within the dominant framework. Any critique that is outside of the previously defined boundaries, Marcuse (1964) claims, is either treated as speculation, dreams, fantasies or neurotic and impotent. Moreover, for the sake of propagation of a free-democratic society, other forms of oppositions (not fundamentally radical ones) are neutralized by utilizing various strategies and methods. “The more rational, productive, technical, and total the repressive administration of society becomes, the more unimaginable the means and ways by which the administered individuals might break their servitude and seize their own liberation”

(Marcuse, 1964, p.10). Marcuse argues this in-depth in his article called “Repressive Tolerance,” in Wolff’s 1965 book, *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*.

The Orwellian form of language use, for example, is one of those methods to create the one-dimensional society. Orwellian language refers to a deliberate manipulation of language in politics and societal sphere by rhetoric to mask the truth and/or distort the information. Marcuse (1964) explains its commonly used form in advanced industrial society as follows “for example, thesis: we work for peace; antithesis: we prepare for war (or even: we wage war); unification of opposites; preparing for war is working for peace. Peace is redefined as necessarily, in the prevailing situation” (Marcuse, 1964, p. 96).

Another strategy is creating a priori-like mental categorization to pacify the opposition: for example, dictating to the masses how to respond to injustice or oppression could be a powerful strategy. South African revolutionist Steve Biko’s righteously angry statement illustrates this well: “Not only are whites kicking us; they are telling us how to react to being kicked” (Hensher & Younge, 2006, ¶ 20). In advanced industrial society while various forms of violence are practiced and reinforced in its institutions (mental hospitals, prisons, military, etc.) and state-sanctioned paramilitary groups operate violently, non-violent protest is praised because it would not be a threat to its fundamental existence. Ironically, though, there are numerous illustrations of situations where we witnessed many peaceful and non-violent demonstrations brutally crushed and suppressed in Turkey, in Argentina, in Chile, and in the United States (especially in the Deep South).

Lastly, the media is used to drag all oppositional ideas into the established framework. For instance, Marcuse (1965) points out how media presents and treats the stupid opinions with the same respect as the intelligent ones: It is worthwhile to quote here what he says about the use of:

the stupid opinion is treated with the same respect as the intelligent one, misinformed may talk as long as the informed, and propaganda rides along with education, truth with falsehood (Marcuse, 1965, p. 94)

If we try to pull all those subtle and “unsubtle” tactics together and try to summarize what it is the core characteristic of being one-dimensional, I think Brookfield’s (2005) answer says it all. He states that it is cyclical. It is cyclical especially when oppositional ideas are stated within or are dragged into the predefined framework. “Any question we ask always brings us back to the same point where we affirm the validity of the current system” (Brookfield, 2005, p.190) because when we speak, as Marcuse (1964) states, we also speak the language of our oppressors or our benefactors’ language.

Thus, a one-dimensional society, for Marcuse (1964), reproduces its social structure in the individual and creates its own mental structure among the underlying populations; a mental structure that tends to obey and reinforce the fundamental assumptions and requirements of the system. “In this mental structure are the deep individual, instinctual roots of the identification of the conformist majority with the institutionalized brutality and aggression” (Marcuse, 1970, p. 170). This mental structure is most importantly convoluted with neurotic characteristics, especially the sadomasochistic character that Fromm developed.

It is evident that even though an advanced industrial society has a different social structure and new ways of implementing control, it still has a strong affinity to barbarism and reliance on the existence of sadomasochistic type as reservoir when it is needed. Marcuse (2001) illustrates this with an example: “the mother of three students at Kent University declares that her sons should be “mowed down” if they do not obey the guards” (p. 172). This shows us how sadomasochism can go to such a level of madness that its barbarism does not recognize even kinship (sons, daughters, husbands, wives, etc.).

Pessimism – Reality - Hope

Marcuse, in most of his works, seems very bleak. He draws a very depressive scene in which virtually there is almost no place for hope. After arguing how false consciousness becomes true reality, for example, he even claims that there is no persuasion, no theory, and no reasoning that would work to awaken individuals from their one-dimensional world. However, embedded in his dialectical perspective, it is hard to claim that he is pessimistic and hopeless. Marcuse (2001) argues that acknowledging the dominant power is being greater than ever and being ready to be used against any potential opposition is not being pessimistic. It is just being realistic. We have to understand that a one-dimensional society does not want individuals to see and analyze what is going on around them. It does not want its illusional reality to be dismantled. As a result, if there is a realistic analysis, dominant discourse makes the analysis appear almost virtually identical to being pessimistic. On the contrary, Marcuse claims that in the face of brute socio-economic and political facts being pessimist is “a positive force in the will not to compromise” (p.140) the oppressive dominant project. Refusing and criticizing the

given realities, which are oppressive and dominating, is a positive act. Opposing common sense, which can be a numbing factor for our intellect, is a beginning to recognize what is wrong with the existing structure, a beginning to see what is alienating us, a beginning to see the all distorted, ill-equipped forms of thinking that we unconsciously take and let them run our everyday lives. Aronowitz (1999) states that Marcuse's pessimism "was tempered by what the philosopher Ernst Bloch termed the 'principle' of hope, a principle because it is the a priori condition for intervention into the social world; without hope intellectual pessimism degenerates into quitism and thereby becomes an agent for the naturalization of the given society" (p. 148). Aronowitz further states that Marcuse was also an activist who, despite his old age, never hesitated to join a demonstration or a protest. As a result, Marcuse "exemplified Gramsci's dictum: pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the spirit" (Aronowitz, 1999, p. 134).

After examining Marcuse's life and his critical philosophy in which he is very consistent with his words, his methods, and his socio-political stand, asking questions such as "Now what?" or "What should be done?" become almost absurd. It is, especially if we expect him to give us a universally valid, descriptive, and self-help-like guidance toward liberation. First of all, we have to understand that for Marcuse, the "philosopher is not a physician: his job is not to cure individuals but to comprehend the world in which they live - to understand it in terms of what it has done to man, and what it can do to man" (Marcuse, 2001, p.183). This is not to say that philosophy's task is to just describe what is out there and leave everything as it is. Kellner (2001) states that for Marcuse philosophy is to play a progressive role and to develop subversive concepts against the oppressive ideologies in a way that ameliorate the struggle for existence and autonomy.

Philosophers should be concerned with human happiness and freedom. They should also have a conviction of the importance of transformation of society's material conditions for a better world to live in. As a result, even though Marcuse does not offer us one-size-fits-all-guidance for liberation, he provides hints for true human freedom and liberation.

Liberation

Thus far I have tried to demonstrate Marcuse's understanding of the advanced industrial society and how it is well functioning despite of its oppressive structure. I shall touch again on some of its core characteristics first and then try to outline the options of a one-dimensional man for liberation.

The one-dimensional society is created by the use of consistent irrationality that presents itself as rational and it is accepted by the masses as reality. Individuals live in an artificially alluring but illusorily happy world and do not recognize it. Most importantly, they do not even want to know whether they are in a dream that has nothing to do with the reality. In the case of any catastrophic event that might force them to question their lives, they submit themselves to the authority. Their sadomasochistic character comes to the stage. They do not feel responsible for any heinous acts. They do not feel guilt for not doing anything to make it right. They keep living in their delusional illusion, and they love their unfreedom as if it was a true freedom.

The one-dimensional society is created and reproduced in the one-dimensional man's mind. A one-dimensional man is produced through the use of various sets of congruent strategies. These strategies are an end product of a sophisticated and deliberate utilization of an evil side of reason and technology that serves to dominate modes of economical forces. These strategies involve domination of instinctual impulses,

systematic manipulation of needs and wants, alienating working life, and enforcing a discourse in an Orwellian language form which makes the authoritarian-dominant discourse immune against contradiction (Marcuse, 1964).

Even though it is beyond the scope of this study to present strategies for liberation that Marcuse ambiguously suggested, I feel that I must at least mention some of them. First, Marcuse suggests a radical break from existing oppressive modes of production rather than a slow-smooth restoration. This break will generate a new form of science and technology as means for liberation, not domination. This is important because Marcuse strongly believes that reason and technology include all material and intellectual capacities of humanity, and have potential to liberate people and create a non-oppressive society.

Second, in order for the one-dimensional man to liberate himself, he needs to face his falsified happiness (unhappiness) and unfreedom; he needs to demand his autonomy, his inner self and his true needs. For Marcuse, distancing oneself from the dominant discourse and dominant value system (dominant ways of learning, acting, thinking, talking, and feeling) is one of the crucial pathways. The one-dimensional man needs to find his own true self and reclaim his liberation in a new language in which words, syntaxes, propositions, logic, and concepts allow him to communicate to the world for himself and for others and without alienating others.

Last, for Marcuse, aesthetic perception is one of the avenues that would help individuals see what is wrong with the existing system. It would help them to negate the existing unquestioned social order. According to Marcuse (1978), art is potentially revolutionary. It is revolutionary, because it is autonomous in nature, but this does not

mean that all works that claim to be an art form are necessarily revolutionary. They are not revolutionary when they are forcibly or artificially created in an art form. Marcuse claims that a work of art should not be considered as revolutionary just because it is written for the revolutionary classes of forces or for the sake of revolution. "In this sense, there may be more subversive potential in the poetry of Baudelaire and Rimbaud than in the didactic plays of Brecht" (Marcuse, 1978, p. xiii). Art's liberatory potential only resides in its own aesthetic dimensions, its authenticity and in its autonomy. As a result, a work of art should not be dictated or driven by any party, any groups or any authoritative ideology.

True art is subversive. It reveals the real world that is suppressed and distorted by the oppressive ideology. Art requires "reshaping of language, perception, and understanding so that they reveal the essence of reality in its appearance: the repressed potentialities of man and nature" (Marcuse, 1978, p. 8). Thus, art negates the reality while presenting it as never been presented before; it keeps a mirror to the given reality to see its ugly side in a beautiful form. Art does not only show the appearance of the material world but also shows the dominant alienated social, economical and political relationship while transcending them. "Thereby art subverts the dominant consciousness" (Marcuse, 1978, p. ix).

Even though Marcuse (1978) analyzed high level artistic works (such as Balzac, Baudelaire, Becket, Brecht, Dostoyevsky, and Goethe) to illustrate art's liberatory potentialities, to me, he does not mean that individuals have to be artists in order to break their rusty chains from the given reality. As Brookfield (2005) argues, the aesthetic provides a new sensibility to individuals; this new sensibility, then, provides a new

political consciousness, which is very important for liberation. However, Marcuse is aware that art alone is not a precondition for revolution. He declares that “art cannot change the world, but it can contribute to changing the consciousness” (Marcuse, 1978, p.32). As a Turkish poet, Hasan Huseyin, wrote

I know
 poetry is not water in a flask
 neither bread in a bag
 nor bullets on a belt
 but again
 it might help those to endure
 who run out of water in their flask
 who run out of bread in their bag
 and who run out of bullet in their belt

Even though it sounds like Marcuse only focuses on the individual level of art creation, he also values aesthetic representations that are formed anonymously in the struggle for existence and liberation. For example, for Marcuse the slogan “Black is beautiful” is a powerful negation against the very foundation of white supremacy. It is “a systematic linguistic rebellion, which smashes the ideological context in which the words are employed and defined, and places them in the opposite context – negation of the established one. Thus, the blacks ‘take over’ some of the most sublime and sublimated concepts of Western civilization desublimates them and redefines them” (Marcuse, as cited in Brookfield, 2005, p. 182).

In short, even though Marcuse was never clear about a universal emancipation or liberation of individuals, I could argue that liberation is not simply involved only with cognition, consciousness, instinctual drives, or acquiring new sensibilities; it is a complex combination of some of these factors or a combination of all as a whole. Yet Marcuse (2001) in *Cultural Revolution* sounds sure of one thing; that is

to achieve a qualitative change in the individual and social existence, [the revolution] must be a vital *need* of the individuals....the sensuous need ... which sees, hears, smells, tastes, and touches the injustice, exploitation, ugliness, the cheat and stupidity of the established society – not only as one’s own, but also as the other’s doing and suffering” (p. 135; emphasis is original).

Why do individuals not feel a need for revolution or liberation? A general trend is to see individuals’ lack of awareness as a problem. Another general belief is that individuals being uninformed is a problem. Therefore, if individuals become aware of the social, economical, and political dynamics and how these impact their own lives, or they are sufficiently informed, they will develop the need to have a revolution. Marcuse, however, believes that individuals are aware and informed, and there are many things that they can do, but they do not want to react or respond. Thus, it would be wrong to claim that people are powerless, even though advanced industrial society’s power is undeniable. But they can still do something. “They can vote against warfare administration; they can come out en masse to protest and demonstrate its will as sovereign...but it seems that they don’t want to, that they do not have the real wish, the need to read or see or hear anything that contradicts the accepted truth or falsehood” (Marcuse, 2001, p. 169). In other words, the

trouble, for Marcuse, is not knowledge or awareness or consciousness raising, it is a matter of will.

Perhaps one of the reasons that people are quiescent is the separation of mind and body since the beginning of the Western Enlightenment. Another reason could be the way one-dimensional man's mind is formed by the state apparatuses and this formation's impact on his/her process of knowing. In a one-dimensional society where knowledge becomes like a dairy product that must be consumed daily, where one-dimensional man has no control over the knowledge production, where all forms of critique take place within the dominant framework, where individuals' ability of negation has been turned into a quiescing, and where knowledge is alienated from people's identity, it is not surprising to see disassociation between knowledge and will.

Nonetheless people's relentless struggle and pursuit for existence continues. Critical constructivism, perhaps, should be recognized as one of the attempts to seek to re-associate the knowledge and will.

In the following section I introduce critical constructivism, which is another theoretical framework of this study, along with critical theory. First, because critical constructivism is a form of constructivism, I provide the theoretical and historical roots of constructivism. Then I briefly examine the contemporary constructivism by analyzing its relation to Cartesian dualism, realism, and rationalism. I discuss its most dominant paradigms (cognitive and social constructivism). Finally, I describe critical constructivism with its distinct assumptions from other forms of constructivism.

Constructivism

In order to gain a better understanding of critical constructivism, its theoretical roots, constructivism, should be examined. Constructivism views knowledge as a human construct. In a simplest form, according to constructivism, knowledge is actively constructed by individuals; it is not something that is “out there” to discover, or passively received, or waiting to be discovered. Thus, “knowledge cannot be taught but only learned” (Candy, 1991, p. 270). So if knowledge cannot be taught, how do we learn? Constructivists believe that learning is not something that is written on the human mind as if it is a “tabula rasa” or a “blank slate.” Learning is “a constructive process that involves actively seeking meaning from (or even imposing meaning on) events” (Candy, 1991, p. 271). Knowledge construction is a dynamic process in which individuals constantly structure and restructure their experiences. By doing so, individuals “try to give meaning to, or construe, the perplexing maelstrom of events and ideas in which they find themselves caught up” (Candy, 1991, p. 254). As a result, even though people have the same or similar experiences, their interpretation will be personal, subjective and diverse.

Theoretical Roots of Constructivism

Theoretical roots of constructivism are usually referred by others (such as Kincheloe, 1991; von Glasersfeld, 1984) to the 16th century Italian philosopher, Giambattista Vico, who emphasized the importance of knowledge construction. We find some constructivist implications in his treatise (von Glasersfeld, 1990) and in his dictum in which he asserts “the truth is the same as the made” (Chiari & Nuzzo, 2003, ¶ 1). What he meant by that was that in order to know a thing, humans have to make the thing.

This is the only way for humans to know the thing's content and components. In other words, he believes that when we construct knowledge of things, we better understand their nature.

I, however, believe that constructivism's roots can be traced back to early Greek philosophy where knowledge and its relation to the material world as a philosophical problem were systematically examined for the first time. In ancient Greece, while many philosophers perceived knowledge as rational, objective, absolute, and true-reflection of the objective world, the Sophists questioned the sources and criteria of knowledge. They judged the existing world of reality and suggested that everything was relative based on people's empirical experience through their senses. Plato informs us of this earliest form of constructivism in a fragment called Protagoras. Protagoras claimed, "Man is the measure of all things, of those that are in so far as they are, and those that are not in so far as they are not". What this means is that Protagoras opposes the notion of the existence of universal truth and deduces that the only criteria to judge the reality are individuals' subjective experiences based on their senses. Thus, people's perceptions are the measure of all things and individuals construct their own reality. In other words, constructivism is inherent in the idea of knowledge. There would be no knowledge without human beings. We define knowledge and create knowledge, so it has to be "constructed."

Contemporary Constructivism

Contemporary constructivism, on the other hand, is based on the work of Lewin, Dewey, Vygotsky, and Piaget (Candy, 1989). Similar to the Frankfurt School's stance, contemporary constructivism as methodology, theory, and a research paradigm

challenges the sets of assumptions of dominant pedagogies, particularly objectivist pedagogy, in which Western Enlightenment's cold reason is inherent. A reason that

- only values the factual, measurable, and verifiable propositions as meaningful,
- rejects any other ways of knowing and declares their meaninglessness,
- never values the role of immaterial side of knowing, such as emotions, imaginations, and intuitions, and
- finally, a reason that separates the knower from the known (Kincheloe, 1991) and the mind from the heart.

The separation of knower and known comes from Enlightenment philosopher Rene Descartes' Cartesian dualism in which mind and body/matter are perceived as utterly distinct. Thus they are detached, although their interaction is evident. This detachment, according to Cartesian dualism, is necessary to eliminate or minimize the human factors (i.e., perception and subjectivity) in the attempt to discover natural and social laws, because natural and social realities exist independently from the human intellect. This dualism has also become a foundation for realist and rationalist assumptions. Moreover, these two schools of thought had a great impact on the objectivist epistemology in a way that their assumptions are deeply embedded. By recognizing realist assumptions, objectivist pedagogy contends that there is a knowable, universal, valid, and external reality independent from us. In addition, by accepting rationalist perspectives, objectivist pedagogy also contends that this reality can only be known by a priori forms (brought by birth, independent from senses) of reason. Constructivism rejects both of these approaches and posits itself as an alternative. Contrary to realism, for example, constructivism claims that reality is not absolute or universal. In contrast to rationalism,

on the other hand, it argues that in the process of knowing, a priori forms of the intellect are inseparable from other forms and functions of intellect (i.e., sensations, feelings, emotions, and desires). Therefore, constructivism can be seen as an attempt to integrate this disintegrated body and mind. Knowledge, therefore, is defined as an evolutionary result and ongoing dynamic process in which mind and body are not separated entities, rather their structure and functions are a compatible- congruent whole.

Even though constructivism was able to bring attention to the issue of the mind and body's wholeness, it caused some ambiguity in the literature about its scope. For example, while some believe that it is an epistemology, others claim that it is ontology. Despite the common assumptions, constructivism is not only an epistemological theory, because it is involved with other philosophical thoughts and schools, such as realism, rationalism, and ontology (a philosophical study of being), it should be recognized as a "worldview" (Kincheloe, 2005, p.8): a worldview that explains meaning making, knowledge acquisition, and (subjective) reality. In other words it is more than an epistemology. Perhaps this is a reason that we see some ambiguity in its use in the literature. For example, literature has various forms of constructivist understandings and these understandings are elaborated by attachments of different adjectives in front of the term "constructivism," such as cognitivist, social, empirical, humanistic, information-processing, post-epistemological, and radical (Good et. al., 1993). Moreover, while these conceptualizations have some common-overlapping assumptions, some of them have distinctive characteristics (Ishii, 2003). However, the most dominant paradigms of constructivism are cognitivist and social constructivism.

Cognitive and Social Constructivism

Cognitivist constructivism is based on Piagetian cognitive development. Piagetian theory approaches the cognitive development process from a biological perspective in which development takes place in stages. Because Piagetian theory involves various areas, I will focus on one of the main areas that directly influenced cognitivist constructivism. This area is called adaptation.

Piaget was interested in knowing how we adapt to our environment. Adaptation is biologically driven and we intrinsically seek to find balance between schemes (a priori) in our mind and the environment (Huitt & Hummel, 2003). In other words, adaptation is related to resolving cognitive conflict, which is a discrepancy between what we already know and what we are experiencing in the moment. In order to achieve adaptation, we use assimilation (constituting new information into preexisting schema) and accommodation (forming a new mental structure based on a new experience that does not fit in any existing one).

Social constructivism, on the other hand, has its origins with Lev Vygotsky's socio-cultural approach to development of cognition. Because Vygotsky's theory has many similarities with the Piagetian theory, it will be clearer for the reader if I provide his theory through comparison with Piagetian views. It would be impractical, however, to cover all similarities and differences here. As a result, for this study, the comparison is selective.

Both Piagetian and Vygotskian theory "believe that cognitive development involves qualitative transformations of thought patterns rather than gradual growth of existing patterns" (Hamilton & Ghatala, 1994, p. 253). Moreover, these transformations

emerge from contradictions, i.e. conflict between new and old schemas or ideas. Despite these similarities, Vygotsky's approach differs from Piagetian theory. While they both acknowledge the importance of social factors in the process of cognitive development, Vygotsky emphasizes the social influences more than Piaget does. Vygotsky asserts that cognitive development cannot be understood out of its social environment in which the individual is embedded (Hamilton & Ghatala, 1994). "Vygotsky emphasized how much social institutions, tools, and technologies (e.g., schooling, language and symbol systems, mnemonic strategies, calculators, computers) influence the individual thinking" (Hamilton & Ghatala, 1994, p.254). Moreover, Vygotsky is concerned with how individuals internalize the given realities through culturally developed tools, language patterns, and thoughts and make sense of their world. In other words, Vygotsky (1978) claims that, society, more specifically community - including its spoken, written, or implied language - plays an important role in the process of meaning making. Thus, we can conclude that for social constructivism language and thought are inseparable. If they are inseparable, then language and knowledge are inseparable as well. Thus, based on these assumptions, social constructivism emphasizes more the culture and context in cognitive development and how individuals understand what occurs in their daily lives with a strong connection with their language. As a result, social constructivism approaches reality, knowledge, and learning from the notion of human construct in relation to the social environment of the individuals.

Even though both cognitive and social constructivism consider the role of social context, neither one of them sufficiently pays attention to the socio-political context through which knowledge is constructed. They fail to include the importance of power

structures in the process of knowledge construction. Moreover, they fail to recognize that even though individuals construct their own knowledge, give meaning to their experience, and restructure their previous knowledge, knowledge is never constructed in isolation from the socio-economical and political context (Bourdieu, 1971; Freire, 1970, 1985). As Foucault (1977) argues, knowledge is formed and socially constructed under conditions of power. In addition, after discussing constructivist domination in mathematics, Zevenbergen (1996) argues that constructivism ignores the political context. He further explains that certain conceptualizations in mathematics education are ideologically dominated. For example, teaching the Western construct of time is closely related to capitalist ideology. "For students whose culture is different from that which is represented in formal schooling, the construction of meaning will be more demanding when it is expected they should construct meanings similar to those represented in the formal school context" (Zevenberger, 1999, p. 110). In the same vein, Phillips (1995) informs us that feminist scholar Sandra Harding has similar concerns about the neglected socio-political factors of constructivism by claiming that dominant groups, in stratified society, determine and even set limits to what persons can understand about themselves and the world around them. Hence by neglecting the socio-political aspects, constructivism alone is insufficient to explain how people construct their consciousness. Moreover, its assumptions reinforce the existing social structure. By adding the power dimension and socio-political context to the epistemological concerns of both cognitivist (Kelly, 1995; Piaget, 1972; von Glasersfeld, 1989, 1993) and social constructivism (Cobern, 1993; Solomon, 1987; Tobin, 1990), critical constructivism appears to be an

attempt to close this gap. It should be noted that this gap does not indicate any antagonist conflict between these points of view.

Critical Constructivism

Critical constructivism is grounded on both the notions of constructivism and critical social theory. Based on the Frankfurt School's critical theory, critical constructivism does not leave out the dialectical relationship between consciousness and history (Kincheloe, 1991). Critical constructivism claims that all oppressive formations are historically given and consciousness is under the influence of these historical forces. Thus, critical constructivism "is concerned with extending human's consciousness of himself or herself as a social being in light of the way dominant power operates to manage knowledge" (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 10). While asserting existence of subjective reality and its construction by humans' active participation, critical constructivism represents the constructivist notion. However, it also recognizes the influential power of socio-political structure on individuals' ability to create their own consciousness. Even though critical constructivism values the power of individual human agency in the process of social change, it also acknowledges that people are often unable to realize how much the dominant ideology and the power structure mold their perception (Kincheloe, 2005). As a result, analysis of this complex knowledge production in the midst of an unparallel and unjust oppressive socio-political context is at the center of critical constructivism.

Critical constructivism aims to expose oppressive power dynamics in the knowledge production in a way that enables individuals to reconstruct their authentic selves by asking fundamental questions, such as "whose interest is being served by this

particular knowledge...[and] how the dominant discourse, moral codes, religious norms, linguistic codes, and other visible and invisible cultural cues impact the way we perceive the world” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 11). As a result, critical constructivist assumptions provide potentials to sharpen our consciousness and empower us to “step back from the world as we are accustomed to perceiving it” (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 11) and see the possibility of another way of knowing and being human, more fully human. In this vein, a critical constructivist analysis of the personal is crucial. An authentic- independent self-construct of knowledge is empowering. It is in a way that it does not only unveil the ways of our existing consciousness is shaped, but also it reveals a new form of knowing (Kincheloe, 1991).

Critical Constructivism and Analysis of the Personal

Since Cartesian dualism separated thoughts from feelings or vice versa, feelings and other immaterial ways of knowing were designated “as an inferior form of human consciousness” (Kincheloe, 1991, p. 31). On the contrary, constructivists claim that emotions are an inseparable part of the meaning making process throughout the individuals’ lifespan in which consciousness continuously develops. As Mahoney and Lyddon (1998) state, emotions are somehow preconditions for the human faculty for making connections between past and present experiences. As a result, analyzing the personal is undeniably crucial in the process of knowledge construction as it involves emotions along with thought. Kincheloe (1991) claims that critical feminist theory offers invaluable insights for critical constructivism. The critical feminist theory points the importance of our personal selves, thoughts, emotions and all our senses in the process of knowledge construction. Authentic-independent self-construct (the personal) is

empowering in a way that it not only informs us how our existing consciousness is shaped by historical and cultural forces, but also reveals a possibility of new forms of knowing.

Feminism reveals the connection between gender and ways of knowing (Kincheloe, 1991) through offering a new mode of analysis to approach to life, politics, new ways of asking questions, and searching for answers to transform the women's everyday relations that define their existence (Hartsock, 1979). Individuals are to build their analysis from the very existence of their everyday lives, or, as Hartsock would say, from the ground up. They do this, not only with their reason but also with all their senses and emotions. Besides feminism, Kincheloe (1991) also informs us how other thinkers, such as Polany, Kierkegaard, and Gramsci emphasize the importance of immaterial ways of knowing along with reason. For example, according to Kincheleo, Polany defined personal knowledge with the knower's passionate participation in the act of knowing. Soren Kierkegaard, on the other hand, emphasized subjectivity and personal construct in relation to emotions and passions. According to Kierkegaard, Kincheloe writes, subjectivity is the most important connection between the knower and the known. As individuals "grow passionate about what they know, they develop a deeper relationship with themselves. Such a relationship produces a self-knowledge that initiates a synergetic cycle – a cycle which grants them more insight into the issue being investigated" (Kincheloe, 1991, p. 41) and opens a door to discover a new dimension of knowing.

One Clarification

Because constructivism (with its various forms) has almost become the most commonly accepted learning paradigm, its assumptions naively appear to be uncritically

taken for granted, treated as an unshakable belief to establish premises that take the reader directly to the unappeasable conclusion as if they are mathematical axioms (in logic, it is a proposition that its truth is assumed to be self-evident). This naïve assumption could be misleading.

It would be beyond the scope of this study to argue this issue with all its parameters. However, I would like to illustrate this possible fallacy with an example. According to Fox (2001), one of the central claims of constructivism is that learning is an active process. For him this statement implies that all learning is an active process, as if passive learning or another way of learning does not exist or is not possible for the human intellect. First, he states, the term “all” is over generalizing and conflicting with constructivism’s central stance, which opposes the realist notion of reality that reality is universal and absolute. This is a contradiction. The second is related to the term active and how it is used. For Fox (2001), this active nature is not clear. When learning is defined with this term, it refers to humans’ active participation in the learning process. If active participation involves everything, including the engagement of our peripheral and central nervous systems, then we should claim that not only humans but also animals actively learn because we know that in the behaviorist mode of learning (in which organism is conditioned by dualism of stimulus and responses) animals adapt and learn actively. For example, Skinner’s rat is active when it learns to press levers and keys to get food (reinforcements). If the term “active” in learning refers to a conscious participation in the process, “conscious participation” is still too vague. Thus, the term “active” needs to be redefined with clearer boundaries and parameters. In an oppressive society, the dominant ideology indoctrinates the masses. Indoctrination implies peoples’ unconscious

learning capacities and is called “false consciousness.” If unconscious learning or passive learning is not possible for humans, then all related scientific areas have to reexamine their findings and assumptions.

Critical constructivism approaches knowledge construction from a more dialectical perspective. For example, it assumes that if knowledge is constructed it can be deconstructed and reconstructed. Critical constructivism distinguishes ideologically installed knowledge from individuals’ critical constructs. For example, dominant values, discourses, and common sense are usually unconsciously (passively) acquired by people in the socialization process and their meanings are somehow similar and shared by the masses. For critical constructivism, this form of knowledge is socially and ideologically constructed knowledge and needs to be deconstructed by individual agents who consciously, actively, and deliberately critique.

Adult Education Literature

In Chapter One I noted that adult education and adult learning have been studied for a long time. In the current literature almost too many learning theories and orientations can be found. Scholars have been trying to develop general theories to explain adult learning, but none have developed a comprehensive theory of adult learning. In other words, as Brookfield (1995) states, the field of adult education is still far away from a universal understanding of adult learning with its various cultural, political, and individual characteristics. While the holistic view appears to be an attempt to put an end to the “paradigm wars” (Yang, 2003) between various learning approaches and theories, adult learning still remains with its several unknown and unarticulated

aspects. As is mentioned in Chapter One, the CLUO is one of the unexplored areas of adult learning.

The purpose of this literature review is, therefore, to critically evaluate the adult education literature with respect to adults' CLUO. In Chapter One, I briefly examine learning theories and their definitions of learning. The common assumptions that dominate the current understanding of the concept of learning are also discussed. I present the various ways of organizing learning paradigms from the literature. Then I group the learning paradigms based on their stance in relation to the dominant framework into two: non-liberatory learning paradigms (NLLPs) and liberatory learning paradigms (LLPs). In this section, I emphasize the importance of the context in the process of learning first, because it is assumed earlier that CLUO is strongly related to the socio-political context. Finally, I examine the two paradigms that I grouped to reveal to what extent their insight might inform CLUO.

A Key for Learning: The Context

Context is a very important entity in any educational theory that tries to better understand the phenomenon under study. The greater the importance given to the socio-economical and political context within which learning occurs, the greater our understanding of the social phenomenon. Yet as noted in Chapter One, most adult education literature conceptualizes learning at an individual level and this inevitably results in failing to recognize the importance of the social, economical, and political context in the process of learning. For example, in most definitions of learning, the term "environment," within which the learner interacts refers to a specific learning environment and a given learning-activity. However, the learning environment cannot be

“limited [to the] learning activity itself” (Tisdell, 1995, p. 1). When considering a learning environment, such as a formal learning, Tisdell claims, it needs to be kept in mind that the learning environment is not limited to the classroom, the instructor, and the institution. All of these environments are situated in a wider societal context in which socio-economical and political projects and their implications determine and define the individuals’ daily experiences and therefore their learning process. For example, even though individuals’ learning styles are mostly assumed as internal and very personal, they are inseparable from the social and cultural context. Flannery (1993) claims that learners usually acquire their learning styles and strategies “to meet the needs of the teacher, the subject matter, and the classroom structure” (p. 79) which cannot be viewed independently from the larger socio-economical and political context. At least since 1968 when Philip Jackson (1968) coined the term “hidden curriculum,” it is a well-established fact that curriculum, or schooling in general, is not purely about learning the subject matter. Rather, schooling is about transmitting norms and values as well as imposing the ideologically constructed dominant way of knowing, learning, feeling, and acting on the learners. By recognizing the United States’ capitalist ideology, Foley (2004) asserts that the majority of American adult education literature works within the positivist and/or the interpretive paradigms in which political and economical dimensions of adult learning are neglected and ignored. This negligence serves to reproduce and maintain the established oppressive structure. He further claims that the literature in the U.S. overemphasizes “educational technique” and approaches the concept of learning from an individualistic psychological perspective.

Domination of this positivist ideology in AEL resulted in marginalization of other forms of learning. For example, particularly when these forms of learning are related to any oppositional and reactionary learning, such as in radical social movements or labor movements, they attracted less attention from the mainstream academia and were pushed to the margin. Because of this, theorization of any form of oppositional learning and their documentation was ignored (Holst, 2002; Longman, 2000). According to Heaney (1993), this marginalization created two paths for adult education: “One has facilitated democratic reflection and action through a critical identification of issues; the other has served to domesticate learners, ignore contradictions, and adjust minds to the inevitable conformities of a mass society” (pp. 19-20). This separation is important to show how dominant ideology (the larger context) affects adult education theory and practice. It is also important to recognize the tensions of these two paths from a historical perspective in which their political stance is vital for a more democratic educational theory and practice. For example, in today’s political and economical turmoil, theorization of learning that could promote possibilities for full empowerment and emancipation for the oppressed is crucial. It is needed

- when a new form of fascistic tendencies begins increasing in both advanced industrialized and developing societies
- when total submission to the authority is routinely praised
- when irrationality is perceived as rational
- when silence in a society is perceived as an indicator of good citizenship
- when oppression is seen as a normal, everyday activity
- when state-sponsored terror has become easily justified and

- when the media vernacular becomes the language of the ordinary person, as in Orwell's Oceania where language's core function is to control thought by reconstructing grammatical rules, words, synonyms, antonyms, and syntaxes, so that, "War is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength."

However, in terms of the historical development of "learning" as a concept, this separation and subordination of one perspective over another are ineffective, because each perspective contributes information to shed light on the complexity of learning. In other words, despite their oppositional political camps, they are mutually interpenetrative, their findings are interrelated, and accumulation of their findings and insights eventually will help to constitute new insights for the growth of the body of adult education knowledge. Therefore, their differences in terms of learning paradigms should be seen from their primary focus. These differences on their focus do not refer to any antagonist conflict, in fact they should be seen as compatible pieces of a whole that complete each other. For example, while one's focus is on cognitive aspects of learning, another's could be on the contextual aspects of learning, but they work within the same domain, adult learning. Perhaps this is one of the reasons that learning paradigms overlaps.

After a general dialectical analysis of AEL from both a political stance and historical knowledge development, now I turn to non-liberatory and liberatory learning paradigms and critically examine their historical and theoretical roles in adult learning from both their political stance and their contributions to the historical development of learning paradigm. There are three adult specific dimensions of learning in AEL (Merriam, 2005), and they are the pillars of adult learning (Merriam, 2001). They are Knowles' andragogy, self-directed learning (SDL), and transformational learning (TL).

Merriam (2005) separates TL from the other two based on the notion that instead of focusing largely on adult learners and their characteristics (as in andragogy and SDL), TL focuses on adult life experiences and the cognitive process of meaning making that lead individuals to change - change that is recognizable by the individual and others. As a result, Merriam includes Freirian pedagogy in the TL category, since it involves individuals' change through their meaning making. For this study, however, because Freirian pedagogy challenges the dominant framework, in contrast to Mezirow's individualistic transformation, and sees the change through tensions of opposites, Freirian pedagogy will be examined under the LLPs category. However, the AEL has diverse and contradictory perspectives about Mezirow's stance in relation to a dominant framework (whether his TL theory belongs to the critical paradigm or not). For example, while Brookfield (2000) calls Mezirow's TL a theory in progress, Taylor (2005a) describes seven perspectives on transformative learning theory: psychoanalytical, psycho-developmental, psycho-critical, social-emancipatory, cultural-spiritual, race-centric, and planetary. Moreover, even though in his response to Inglis, Mezirow (1998) acknowledges the importance of socio-cultural and political context in the process of learning and social movements as powerful agencies for transformation, he is not so clear about a fundamental social change through TL. Therefore, since Mezirow's TL theory is blurry in terms of its positionality (or because it is on the boundary), it is not reviewed in this study.

Therefore, while humanist paradigms including Knowles' andragogy and SDL, are examined under NLLPs, critical paradigms including Freirian and feminist pedagogy will be examined under LLPs (it is important to note that since critical constructivism is

examined under the theoretical framework, it is not examined again here in order to avoid redundancies).

Learning Paradigms

Non-Liberatory Learning Paradigms. As defined in Chapter One, NLLPs are those that work within the dominant framework. Malcolm Knowles' andragogy (a framework for teaching adults differently from children) and SDL's underlying assumptions are largely derived from humanist philosophy.

Within the dominant framework, humanist assumptions stress the importance of individuals and their needs. According to Elias and Merriam (2005), humanism perceives individuals from the following presumptions: humans are inherently good, free, autonomous, responsible for themselves and others, capable of making decisions based on their needs, and they have almost unlimited potential for individual growth. These assumptions influenced and played an important role in the conceptualization of some learning models, such as self-directed learning, self actualization, and lifelong learning. Learning, in the humanist paradigm, is viewed through psychological lenses. The primary concern is on the individuals and their needs and wants. Individuals are also seen as homogenous; they are different only in terms of their needs and personality, not in their socio-cultural background (Tisdell & Taylor, 2000). In this paradigm, the socio-cultural and political context in which individuals live is either presented as limited to the learning environment (which is isolated from its historical roots) or never mentioned and therefore overlooked.

Andragogy and Self-Directed Learning (SDL). Merriam (2001) asserts that Knowles' andragogy and SDL are the pillars of adult learning theory and the first two

attempts to define adult education as a unique field. They also have become an important part of adult education's identity. According to Pratt (1993), for example, andragogy is the first window adult educators utilized to look at the adult learners and see the characteristics that are significant in their learning. For Houle (1996), on the other hand, andragogy's most significant contribution to the adult education field is that it informs and invites adult educators to get learners involved in their own learning process and create a supportive learning environment to promote fruitful learning.

Andragogy has five central assumptions. These assumptions are strictly related to the characteristics of adult learners. Through these assumptions, Knowles aims to differentiate adult learning from child learning. Knowles' assumptions portray the adult learner as an individual who

- (1) has an independent self-concept and who can direct his or her own learning,
- (2) has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning, (3) has learning needs closely related to changing social roles, (4) is problem-centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge, and (5) is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors. (Merriam, 2001, p. 5)

After several debates and discussions in the 1970s and early 1980s about the validity of andragogy as a theory of adult learning, Knowles was led to revise andragogy's assumptions (Merriam, 2001) and started focusing on the andragogy's first assumption, which refers to the notion that when adults mature, they become more self-directed learners. This focus serves to develop the earlier descriptive and linear version of SDL (such as Houle's 1961 and Tough's 1967 and 1971 works) to a more comprehensive learning model. For example, while the earlier model was suggesting a linear model

moving from diagnosing the needs to identifying the resources and evaluation of the learning outcomes, the later model was less linear, more interactive and more inclusive of other factors such as the nature of learning and the learning context (Merriam, 2001).

Even though andragogy and SDL's great evolution in a relatively short period of time should be considered as an important contribution for knowledge development, they both have received several critiques. These critiques can be put under three areas: methodological, learner characteristics, and political. Methodological critiques usually revolve around the question of whether andragogy is a theory of knowledge, education, training technique, or a model and a set of assumptions. The second area of criticism, which is still going on today, concerns the assumptions that are attributed to adult learners. For example, the assumption that adult learners are autonomous or self-directed has been criticized in that adults can be independent in one situation but dependent in another situation. In addition, believing that self-direction and independence are universal and enable the learners to take control over their lives regardless of socio-political, economical, and cultural constraints seems ideal but naïve. Similarly, adults' motivation has also been criticized. Adults' motivation can be external, for example, if the stake is to keep the current job in a training session. Finally, the biggest critique comes from the political side that poses a critical question about the absence of socio-cultural and political context in the (self-directed) learning process. Brookfield (1993, 1996), Collins (1996), and Griffin (1987) are just a few who critique SDL because of its disengagement from the socio-political context. Although most critiques (such as Brookfield's and Collins') recognize the humanitarian aspects of SDL, such as perceiving the individual with his or her human potential, and treating others with respect and

dignity, they find its humanitarian ideals fictional, naïve, and not realistic. Thus, their critiques vary but usually range from the postmodernist approach to the critical approach. For instance, Brookfield (1996), by using postmodernist analysis of the term “self” in self-directed learning, claims, “The self is seen as a free floating, autonomous, volitional agent able to make rational, authentic and internally coherent choices about learning while remaining detached from social, cultural and political formations” (¶ 3).

As a result, without a clearly defined political stance, any educational paradigm or theory is vulnerable to be shaped by the dominant ideology since non-political space does not really exist either in the social world or in education. For example, it can clearly be seen that under the reign of capitalist ideology, andragogy and SDL’s assumptions in the lifelong learning model have become a political discourse, a repressive political apparatus serving capitalist interests that require exploitation of labor for the surplus value. It was embedded in the ideology of vocationalism and took a kind of oppressive form, pushing people to the further margin while they have already been subordinated (Bosheir, 2005). Learning is narrowed down and viewed as skill acquisition. It becomes a tool of economic repression; individuals have to learn or update their knowledge in order to keep their jobs, to produce more, and to produce faster. When lifelong learning discourse enhanced with the notion of self-directedness and self-motivation gained a common acceptance, companies made a big cut from the training and development departments because they no longer needed to provide training; since people are intrinsically self-motivated, self-directed, and since computer and Internet technologies made learning possible in any time and from anywhere, they can learn themselves in their own free time (outside of work). As a result, learning becomes a production tool of economic and social

oppression rather than an avenue of self-actualization, self-development, or self-empowerment.

Humanist Learning Paradigms. Since nothing endures in the universe but change, since everything is in constant change, it is erroneous to seek an absolute truth. Learning theories, like all other theories, should be seen from this perspective, that theories are seen as just attempts serving humans' quest to reach a better life, a better level of understanding the physical and social world. Truth is not an end. Truth is the process of seeking it. Thus, all learning theories have to be analyzed from this historical and dialectical perspective. In spite of their all shortcomings, their contributions to the evolution of the body of knowledge should never be discarded or devalued. Even if one (theory) is totally wrong, which is hardly the case, it should still be recognized for its contribution, which would at least be showing what was wrong.

Theories are about asking questions of the world (physical and social). The answer that they offer usually perpetuates new questions. Therefore, they open new windows to the world and to the new theories.

Historically andragogy and SDL are important milestones in the quest of adult learning. First of all, dialectically, in contrast to the behaviorist and deterministic views on learning process, in which learners are seen as passive receivers, andragogy and SDL challenged that position and provided an alternative framework. Placing the learners in the midst of decision making for their own learning, for example, is ultimately political and empowering. It is even revolutionary. Perhaps, because of this, critical educators attempted to problematize and reclaim SDL (such as Brookfield, 1996, and Collins, 1985). Moreover, by valuing adults' past life experiences as a rich resource in a learning

process, andragogy and SDL can be considered providing one more avenue for adult education theory to better understand adult learning.

Liberatory Learning Paradigms (LLPs)

Unlike NLLPs that are content with the given reality and work within the dominant framework without questioning sociopolitical, economical, and cultural values, LLPs take the social problems into account and challenge the roots of the social ills. For example, while SDL aims to help individuals to fulfill their individual needs or while progressive paradigms try to utilize education to reform society, LLPs do not find these as a solution for the historically embedded societal problems and suggest fundamental structural changes. Sarachild (as cited in Weiler, 1991), a feminist activist and scholar, describes these paradigms' goal clearly:

We were interested in getting to the roots of the problems in society. You might say we wanted to pull up weeds in the garden by their roots, not just pick off the leaves at the top to make things look good momentarily. (p. 457)

LLPs focus heavily on structural and power issues revolving around education and learning. LLPs believe that knowledge is historically and ideologically constructed for the benefit of certain privileged classes or groups. In addition, this knowledge is presented to the masses as universally valid. Thus, this ideologically constructed knowledge creates "false consciousness" among the masses. However, "hegemonic consent is never completely established" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000, p. 283), because as Foucault (1980) posits, "There are no relations of power without resistances; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of [hegemonic and oppressive] power are exercised" (p.142). As a result, the

LLPs aim to confront injustices, challenge the status quo, and critique the oppressive and exploitive social structure to reveal the truth about masses' being oppressed, deceived, and alienated.

LLPs' aim is not only to create awareness among oppressed people but also to show how to facilitate ways to liberate themselves. In other words, their intention is empowerment and emancipation by raising consciousness through bringing in "radical doubt into sedimented modes of thought" (Mumby, 1993, p. 24), because people "unconsciously accept things as they are, and in so doing, reinforce the status quo" (Merriam & Associates, 2002, p. 227). Thus, learning is seen as critical reflection on and challenge to existing oppressive reality, because essentially learning is a political process that leads transformation through contradiction of new and old patterns of knowledge, values, and thoughts.

Elias and Merriam (2005) describe three sources that inform LLPs: anarchism, Marxism, and Neo-Freudianism. Anarchist and Marxist thoughts oppose the institutionalized, state-sponsored education and learning. Their objection is based on the notion that schooling serves to reproduce societal class structure and systems' human-type who is indoctrinated and internalized the dominant values. While anarchists suggest elimination of schooling from society in order to prevent the systematic destruction of individual autonomy, Marxists takes different positions: some Marxists perceive schooling as a battlefield in which ideologies clash but it is primarily utilized as a state apparatus by the dominant ideology (Althuser, 1971). Therefore, LLPs extensively critique school and schooling. They view schools as a mirror of society's class structure (Anyon, 1980; Willis, 1977), as a form of social control (Apple, 1986; Bowles & Gintis,

1976) as a land of race, class, and gender discrimination (Giroux, 1996; Kozol, 1991; McLaren, 1994). Neo-Freudian thought, on the other hand, especially the Frankfurt School, sees the schooling as a part of repressive and authoritative socialization process in which sadomasochistic personalities are produced.

Despite NLLPs' focus on the individuals who are perceived as isolated from historical forces that define their subjective and material conditions, LLPs perceive the individuals and their conditions within their historical and dialectical unity in which there is tension between the "self" and "society." Even though the individuals appear to be passive objects of historical forces and existing realities that deterministically shape their realities, they are in fact active subjects, because they are deeply involved in the process. Therefore, they have power and ability to change the given reality and its direction. The most powerful way to do this is to become conscious about the historical forces that are dehumanizing them (Freire, 1970, 1973). Dehumanization is embedded in every social sphere including school, family, work, and even personal relationships. For example, neither school nor learning is neutral. Education "either domesticates by imparting the values of the dominant group, so that learners assume things are right the way they are, or it liberates, allowing people to reflect critically on their world and take action to move society toward a more equitable and just vision" (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999, pp. 324-325). Thus, the more the individuals realize and recognize the dehumanizing forces that define their oppressiveness, the more they are likely to become active actors, become free, and become more human. This process is called conscientization by Freire (1970), which is a core concept in his approach to learning. This process deepens awareness and individuals' capacity for both personal and societal transformation.

In contrast to NLLPs' naïve humanism, LLPs' humanism is more powerful because their humanist and optimistic assumptions grow out of dialectical contradictions. For example, LLPs define humanism from historical examination of given realities' dehumanizing nature and characteristics. As a result, learning is the only way to become conscious. From this perspective, learning involves the rational and emotional effort of deconstructing the oppressive, non-dialectical (fixed) forms of knowledge. In this form, learning is a political act, not just a mental activity to learn a set of skills to get a better job and then believe that personal fulfillment is achieved. For LLPs, learning is an endless process that requires humanization of all. Individual humanization is just a step toward the total humanization in which all other forms of oppression and practices that reinforce and maintain the oppressive status quo are eliminated. Even though this sounds utopist, LLPs do not find anything negative in the notion of utopia. Rather, they think utopia is a kind of motor of development, because utopia is a mental and emotional formation that not only manifests the unhappiness in relation to the existing reality but also is a subversive and powerful imagination. As Tett (2005) beautifully states, utopia is not a place that does not exist, it is a place to be desired. Moreover, Freire (1985) justifies being a utopian by declaring, "To be utopian is not to be merely idealistic or impractical but rather to engage in denunciation [naming the problem] and annunciation [negating the existing structure by suggesting a new forms of relationships]"(p. 57). Freirian pedagogy and feminist theory convert utopia into a reality:

- a reality that in which learning is a process of consciousness raising against unparallel distribution of power, exploitation, alienation, discrimination, oppression, and injustice

- a reality that empowers and emancipates the oppressed to promote personal-mental-psychological-social transformation so that they can challenge the status quo by implementing theory into practice (praxis)
- a reality that minimizes, if not totally eliminates, the power differences between the learner and the teacher. The teacher is someone who is also oppressed. In the learning process he ideally suggests, not dictates, what and how to learn.

Moreover, the teacher and students are both learners. They learn together through dialog.

Freirian Pedagogy. Freire's ideas are shaped out of an oppressive and repressive social and economical context in which poverty, illiteracy, and oppression define the lives of the masses. His educational philosophy is a total negation of traditional education. Freire, in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), by using capitalist ideology's banking concepts, creates an analogy to distinguish his educational and learning theory from the traditional pedagogy. This is crucial because capitalist ideology is the one that is in the nucleus of all forms of oppression. For example, capitalist ideology creates poverty for the sake of surplus value, creates a false consciousness in which all inequities, discriminations, repressions, alienations are justified in a way that convince the masses that this given reality is natural, normal, absolute and life as it is with a bold underlying assumption that it cannot, should not, and shall not be changed. Since banking is the one of the tangible representations of capitalist ideology, Freire describes the existing pedagogy by using the banking analogy in which students are empty accounts (an object to be filled and passive in that they have no control over their account) of dominant ideology and knowledge needs to be deposited. Knowledge, on the

other hand, is equated with the money. Learning is an ability to hold the knowledge that is imposed (transited) upon the students. Students need to memorize the information and internalize the existing values without questioning. In contrast to this traditional understanding of learning, Freire suggests a “problem posing” model in which teachers and students learn together by a dialog. Ideology critique and analyzing the given reality are central in his learning. Moreover, besides intellectual and rational examination of the given realities, the learners are also expected to reflect critically, so that unity of theory and praxis is achieved.

Freirian theory’s contribution to the historical development of the body of knowledge is invaluable. By capturing attention and placing itself in intellectual debates, discussions, and research, Freirian theory has already accomplished its historical responsibility. Besides its historical contribution, its theoretical framework provides very rich mental tools for adult education to approach learning from a broader perspective. For example, its extensive analysis of the context in the process of learning is almost a “must” in the contemporary literature. Any study that includes the broader context as an important factor influencing the learning process automatically increases its validity and trustworthiness. Moreover, Freirian concepts enriched adult education’s language. By using his concepts, adult educators deepen their vision and analysis of adult learning. Some of the concepts are dialog, critical consciousness, culture cycles, culture of silence, praxis, mystification, and problematization. For a glossary of Freirian terms and concepts, see Tom Heany (n.d.).

Even though Freirian pedagogy’s invaluable contributions to the field of adult education are very important, it has certain weaknesses. According to Elias and Merriam

(2005), his theory is too abstract and rarely gets beyond generalities and abstractions. Secondly, they reckon his theory fails to recognize the dark side of humanity. In other words, his humanism is too optimistic, utopian, and almost divine. Thirdly, his view of knowledge is blurry when it comes to the dialectical relationship between thought and praxis. One of the Freirian assumptions is that when people realize how oppressive structure impacts their reality (in the consciousness level) and see their interest (salvation) is dependent on an engagement in social activity, they automatically participate in an activity for a social change. Elias and Merriam do not agree with this claim. They argue that it could be the opposite; when people see the full impact of oppression, they might well become more entrenched in their oppressive thinking.

Another critique comes from Newman (1994a, 1994b). Newman asserts that instead of examining the oppressed, Freire should have examined the oppression and suggested strategies to struggle against the oppression because Newman think that “self-reflection,” for example, is little help for the oppressed.

Freirian pedagogy is heavily focused on teaching rather than on learning. Even though Freire’s theory recognizes various models of learning (such as institutional and non-institutional learning models), it fails to offer us insights about how oppressed people’s learning occurs. The same thing is true for the general adult education literature. For example, radical or critical educators have been studying learning in various oppressive contexts, but their focus is on learning within social movements (Foley, 1999, 2001; Hart, 1990; Kilgore, 1999). Moreover, because they focus on learning in the movement, their focus (intentionally or unintentionally) shifts away from learning to “teaching-learning” paradigms in social movements where not only people are already in

the process of critical reflection and individual transformation, but also where structured programs, curricula, and objectives exist (Foley, 1999). The Office of Human Rights, Amnesty International, Worker Unions' offices, labor colleges, and Folk Schools (i.e., Highlander Folk School in the USA, and other Folk High Schools in Europe) can be given as examples where these kinds of educational practices take place.

The tendency to look at learning from a teaching paradigm might be coming from the pedagogical notion of popular education, which is very common in social movements. Freirian pedagogy, for example, mainly focuses on and is constructed around structured educational settings; it has a tendency to change everyday situations so drastically in a way that everyday experiences even become pedagogical (Smith, 2005). In a similar vein, Torres (as cited in Smith, 2002) argues that even though Freire's starting point might be non-formal, his examination of the educational situations continues to be formal. In other words, Freirian pedagogy is "curriculum-based and entails transforming settings into a particular type of pedagogical space" (Smith, 2005, ¶ 10). Its involvement with a sort of predefined set of curricula is conflicting with its fundamental notion of dialog that Freire proposes it as an alternative to banking education. For example, perceiving the learner as someone who needs to be empowered and emancipated implies a presumption that the learner is an object of the educational process rather than a subject. Even though Freire proposes some non-hierarchical relationship between the teacher and the students in which both become "simultaneously teachers and students" (Freire, 1970, p. 62), the educator is the one who empowers the oppressed learners or leads them to critical consciousness. As a result, it can be claimed that Freirian pedagogy is mostly involved with teaching rather than learning and it does little to inform learning.

Another weakness of Freirian pedagogy, parallel to Newman's critique mentioned above, is related to its conceptualization of oppression. When we examine Freire's writings, we do not get a clear understanding of what oppression is or what being oppressed or living under inhumane conditions looks like. We can only infer, by using our logical reason, that humanization is non-existence of dehumanization, which does not tell us so much about it either because we do not have a clear understanding of what is being humanized.

What Freire neglected to do was to engage in a deeper analysis of oppression itself through sociopsychological lenses. For example, it is a great Hegelian analytical argumentation that Freire maps out the dual-relativeness of being oppressed and oppressor in an almost dead-end cycle by pointing out that one might be the oppressor in some situations and be oppressed in another. Freire informs us that the oppressed envies his/her oppressor's consciousness and wants to be an oppressor, even though the oppressed has always suffered by the very consciousness of the oppressor. This analysis, however, does not tell us what is really going on in the everyday lives of the oppressed. Without knowing anything about their daily interaction in the world in which rootless-brutal oppression and repression dominate the day, it is hard to comprehend what is going on in the oppressed consciousness. For example, the objective of dominant groups is to impose their interpretation of reality and their political project on oppressed groups and try to make the groups' members adopt the dominant interpretation by any means necessary. Therefore, challenging this system involves a high risk of severe punishment and life threatening consequences. Under extreme oppressive situations getting together as a community, talking, and trying to increase each other's consciousness are considered

terrorist acts and involve a high risk of massacres or mass-arrest by the security forces or militias; reading certain books in one's bedroom before one goes to sleep is considered as a subversive challenge; talking politics with friends is equal to carrying a bunch of TNT in one's pocket. On the contrary, reading Freire almost creates a peaceful mental image in which the oppressed come to a meeting like they go to a picnic where they engage in games, activities, and dialog. Freire does not inform us about what it looks like being oppressed and challenging the dominant system. In order to help readers to picture a typical oppressive condition, I would like to give some snap-shots of the situation. In an extreme oppressive situation, for example, fear becomes the dominant ruler. A regime of fear traumatizes society as a whole, and it opens a deep wound in the soul of community; widespread torture, disappearing, extrajudicial killings, and arbitrary arrests form the societal atmosphere of everyday life. In this stage we see torture victims become torturer or they are recruited by the death squad as hit-men, doctors attend torture sessions, and academics justify the brutal regime. At the same time some people risk their lives resisting dehumanization of the regime of fear and brutality. Therefore, without really examining the lives of the oppressed under oppression, it is simplistic to talk about both their desire to become an oppressor and their motive to "read the world" and change it.

Finally, Freirian pedagogy also has some shortcomings for not paying attention to other layers of oppression in society, such as gender and race. This critique comes from the feminist perspective, although it has its roots in traditional critical pedagogy and Freirian pedagogy. Feminists claim that Freirian theory fails to recognize "the interlocking systems of oppression involving gender, race, and class" (Elias & Merriam, 2005, p.179). Feminism believes that critical theory's failure in recognizing diversity

categories, such as gender, race, and ethnicity can be found in its patriarchal rationalist reason, which heavily influences traditional critical theory and pedagogies. Feminist critique generally focuses on Freirian pedagogy's patriarchal and rationalist language, and heavily class based analysis. While doing so, they try to vocalize the silenced voices of women by shedding light on women's everyday oppressive experiences.

Feminist Theory. Like Freirian pedagogy, feminism "is based on assumptions of the power of consciousness-raising, the existence of oppression and the possibility of ending it, and the desire for social transformation" (Weiler, 1991, p. 455). However, in its historical development, feminism could not establish a unified, coherent body of theory. Feminism was derived from individual women's very personal daily oppressive experiences. As a result, today there are many forms of feminisms. Tisdell (2005), for example, describes twelve different feminist formations: liberal, radical, socialist, Marxist, cultural, postmodern, post-structural, post-colonial, global, and third-world feminisms. They all, however, according to Tisdell (1993), work to change the oppressive societal structure and create new opportunities for women and share some common themes such as "how knowledge is constructed, voice, authority, and how to deal with differences (particularly based on gender, race, ethnicity, class, physical and mental ability, or sexual orientation)" (p. 62). It is striking, though, not to see emancipation in Tisdell's categorization, because most people would assume that emancipation is a shared theme. However, Tisdell (1993) claims that even though the focus of most feminist orientations is on empowerment and the emancipation of women, not all of them deal with oppression, power relations, and emancipation. Thus, this diverse body of literature, as Briskin (1994) argues, should be considered as a standpoint. This will help to

understand various feminist interpretations. In order to examine them, however, we need to find a helpful way to organize them. While Maher (1987) groups them into liberatory and gender model feminism, Tisdell (1995) put feminist theories into three categories: individually focused feminist theories (including liberal and psychoanalytic feminisms), structural feminist theories (including radical, Marxist, and socialist feminisms), and post-structural/post-modernist feminist theories (including feminisms that emphasize positionality, multiple construction of truth, and some forms of socialist feminisms). However, since this study concerns the political stance of theories in relation to the dominant framework, socialist feminist orientations will be in focus.

Socialist Feminism (SF). In a simplest form SF is an attempt to combine Marxist and feminist perspectives by reinventing Marxism and creating “a model for the rest of the left in developing theory and strategy” (Hartsock, 1979, p. 59). Even though SF declares itself as “a mode of analysis, a method of approaching life and politics, a way of asking questions and searching for answers, rather than a set of political conclusions about the oppression of women” (Hartsock, 1979, pp. 58-59), SF shares some concerns with Marxism: they both oppose the dominant discourse that oppresses women; they both try to understand the world not in terms of positivistic statistic ways of knowing but in terms of dialectical and historical antagonisms, and they both seek ways to overthrow oppressive systems through liberating the oppressed people (including men and women) (Ehrenreich, 1976). Thus, with its Marxist perspective, SF primarily focuses on the injunction of gender and class inequalities. This allows the theory not to leave several important factors out because of the notion that it is impossible to separate women issues from people’s relationships with the means of production in a capitalist society and

capitalist ideology. Ehrenreich (1976), for example, criticizes radical feminism for perceiving things only in relation to male domination and aggressiveness. Ehrenreich claims that radical feminism does not go any farther by just focusing on male supremacy and “it remains transfixed with the universality of male supremacy-things have never really changed; all social systems are patriarchies; imperialism, militarism, and capitalism are all simply expressions of innate male aggressiveness. And so on” (¶ 13).

SF, like other LLPs that take on the task of liberating the oppressed, has to build a pedagogy that “validates differences, challenges universal claims to truth, and seeks to create social transformation in a world of shifting and uncertain meanings” (Weiler, 1991, pp. 449-450) through learning. Even though giving a clear pedagogical vision of SF is a daunting task, it requires at least an attempt to lay out its general assumptions and methods.

Feminist pedagogies, in general, built up their pedagogical perspectives by criticizing Freirian pedagogy. This critique not only resulted in filling the gaps that were left over by Freire, but also widening the perspectives related to some pedagogical issues. For example, reexamining the teacher’s role brought a new perspective. While the teacher, in Freirian pedagogy, is a “generic man” (Weiler, 1991, p. 454) who has no specific characteristics attached to it such as gender, race, class, and age, feminism claims that the teacher cannot be an abstraction but is a particular person with certain associations to the socio-historical world. In other words, the teacher’s common interests with the oppressed does not necessarily eliminate the power issues between the teacher and students. The teacher’s gender, class, race could still reflect oppressive power differences in the learning environment. This resulted in (from my perspective) a

spontaneous and authentic formation of “learning groups” which did not have “the teacher.” This group formation was called consciousness-raising. The consciousness raising groups were unstructured, local, and did not have any formal guidelines. Moreover, they did not have anything but their experience, because women had nowhere to turn but their own experiences. Furthermore, the most important characteristics of these groups were two; they focus primarily on sharing of experiences and feelings and they were leaderless (Weiler, 1991). (It is important to state that this leaderless formation became the bases for intellectual discussion when the feminist notion was tried in institutional and hierarchal settings such as universities where the teacher as a leader was required.) Nevertheless, as it can be easily accepted that including women’s daily experiences with a connection to the oppressive structures which define their lives without excluding emotions is a total negation of not only Freirian and other left wing rationalism but also a negation of the whole Western tradition of thought, which obviated any involvement of emotions and individuals’ experiences from the learning process. By utilizing Gramsci’s notion of the organic intellectual, SF empowers women and encourages them to theorize their daily experiences. SF claims, “Theorizing is not just something done by academic intellectuals but that a theory is always implicit in our activity and goes so deep as to include our very understanding of reality” (Hartsock, 1979, p. 57). This opens a window to women to either accept the historically embedded oppressive categories imposed upon them or refute these categories and start building a critical understanding of their own reality.

Leaderless groupings in consciousness raising, on the other hand, are very radical and even fundamentally anarchistic; even the simple interpretation of being leaderless

can easily be extended to another level where more subversive questions can be asked, questions such as why not a leaderless society, leaderless family, leaderless church, and world? This leaderless notion is also congruent with the Gramscian notion of the organic intellectual. Since women are potential theorists, intellectuals, and activists, they no longer need to be taught. They can learn alone as well as with others.

According to Hartsock (1979), just focusing on individuals' everyday experiences is not sufficient for transformation; it needs to be taken to another level in which a second area of focus required: integration of personal and political. This integration will inevitably bring a reexamination of the self or identity. Since the self is a historical and institutionalized construction in the socialization process, deconstruction of the self necessitates a change in identity. Thus, the concept of individual, which is shaped by the dominant ideology, needs to be changed first. Women cannot change the oppressive structure without changing the identity given to them. The identity that is imposed upon women is a form of violence itself. For example, the existing acceptable way of being women in a society (it is almost universal) requires them to put up with men's violence for the sake of family. Thus, change in self and change in social structure "are simply two aspects of the same process. Each aspect necessitates the other" (Hartsock, 1979, p. 62). This unity of identity, the way of knowing, and contextualizing of knowing brings a powerful aspect to adult learning. As Gramsci (as cited in Hartsock, 1979) states, this unity through which a multiplicity of dispersed wills, with heterogeneous aims, are welded together with a single aim, both general and particular. Operating in transitory burst (in emotional ways) or permanently (where the intellectual base is well rooted, assimilated, and experienced that it becomes passion) (p. 62).

In short, SF pedagogy is revolutionary in its nature because it builds its theory and practice by negating all forms of oppressions that are historically, culturally and ideologically attributed to the oppressed (not just to women and not just to peasants). Socialist feminist critique involves all humanly available avenues. For example, it criticizes oppressive forms by a rational, dialectical, historical perspective. When dominant patriarchal understandings accuse women of being emotional, SF builds a politics of emotion and defends being emotional. When dominant discourse involves gender biased terms and concepts, socialist feminists negate the discourse by utilizing linguistic analysis.

Thus far, I have examined two groups of adult learning theories from both historical and theoretical frameworks based on their political stance in relation to the dominant framework. It is clear that adult learning is multidimensional, multifaceted, and contested. There is not one single approach. However, adult education from dialectical and historical perspectives has only one body of knowledge: adult learning. No matter from what orientation or from what philosophical perspective a theory looks at learning and examines it, it offers some insights and information to the adult learning framework. Adult educators need to be in a mental set that requires them to respect and honor all of the historical development of adult learning. No matter how apolitical behaviorism is, still its contributions are indispensable in any attempt to explore and better understand adult learning.

My review of literature revealed that most adult learning paradigms somehow lose their focus on learning and consciously or unconsciously get into the discourse of education and its broader context. This is not to say that they should be separated, but

somehow after analyzing the context most studies fail to come back and look at the adult learning with the contextual synthesis that has been done (at least this is what I feel about it and I experienced the same difficulty myself; it was so difficult to focus on the learning paradigms while dealing with other aspects of learning).

It is clear that adult learning seems more problematic when approaching learning from the perspective of power relations, particularly where an extreme oppression and repression with its all-full capacities (social institutions and arm forces together) form adults' daily lives. This study assumes that CLUO is not more complex than any other learning but very different and it calls for more attention. I say more attention because some adult educators study learning from a closer perspective. For example, Foley's (1999) work, *Learning in Social Action*, is one of the recent studies that pay attention to learning in social action. Foley uses case studies from various geographical places, such as Australia, Brazil, USA, and Zimbabwe and includes diverse social actions such as women movements, workers movements, and environmental struggles. Foley does not only call our attention to universal characteristics of adult learning but also informs adult educators about the importance of learning in non-educational contexts, i.e., in various types of social movements.

Foley (1999), by focusing on learning in social action, directs our attention to a broader spectrum of adult learning, which is usually associated with institutionalized provision and course-taking activities. He defines learning from the broadest perspective by interweaving the course of human life and learning, which manifests itself in various forms. Foley, in order to widen the conception of learning in social action, combines formal education, incidental learning, and informal learning. This combination includes

almost all human activities in which some kind of learning occurs. In order to analyze learning in struggle, Foley analyzes learning in connection with political economy, micro-politics, ideology and discursive practices.

Foley's (1999) work offers many insights for this study. However, his focus is learning in the struggle and in the social movement. As I argued above, when people decide to engage in a struggle, I believe that they have already gone through some kind of social, emotional, and intellectual transformation. After participating in a movement, individuals' learning might evolve drastically either by experience or social interaction with others, and/or structured guidance or instruction provided in the group. However, for this study, my intention is to examine individuals' counter learning experiences under oppression separate from social movements. How people learn or unlearn oppressive ideologies and discourses, how they construct or re-arrange their existing consciously and unconsciously internalized values and knowledge in a way that allows them to form oppositional values and knowledge are some of the key questions of this study. Moreover, I presume that counter-learning is liberatory and empowering but not necessarily a learning that triggers an observable action or leads individuals to engage in a social action.

This literature review also reveals that this study requires an eclectic approach incorporating many learning paradigms (including their insights, assumptions, and concepts) from the adult education field and also some other related areas of study, such as political science and political sociology. After examining these two types of literature, I will try to blend all necessary concepts and insights into the theoretical framework of this study (critical theory and critical constructivism) to better understand CLUO.

In conclusion, CLUO is another form of adult learning, and it has not been studied from the perspective that this study takes. A significant amount of human learning occurs in the contradictory nature of everyday life outside of institutionalized settings (Foley, 1999), and it is not completely separated from formal learning. It is crucial for adult education to understand the dynamics of learning in general and its organic relationship to the everyday counter-learning. This study does not assume that CLUO is more complex than learning in formal settings under relatively normal situations or in the organization of social movements but does assume that CLUO has different dynamics of learning including multiple dimensions and involving emotions, cognition, spirituality, love, and hope.

Pertinent Studies

There are several studies that collect and analyze people's experience in their daily lives under various oppressive conditions. Case studies, narratives, bibliographies, testimonial narratives and content analysis are some of them. Studies from South and Central American countries (such as Chile, Argentina, Guatemala, and Colombia) especially offer insight into counter-learning. For example, classic testimonio called "*I... Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Women in Guatemala*" (Menchú, R. & Burgos-Debray, E., 1984) is an authentic story of a Mayan woman under oppression that gives us insight into how she learns, interprets the reality and make sense of her world. Another valuable document is Feitlowitz's (1998) book "*Lexicon of Terror: Argentina and the Legacies of Torture*". Her research is based on six years of work including interviews with peasants, intellectuals, activists, and bystanders who witnessed, survived, and resisted against Argentina's dirty war that cost more than 30,000 civilians life from 1976 to 1983.

Knudson (1997), in his article, titled "*Veil of Silence: The Argentine Press and the Dirty War, 1976-1983*," informs us of the media's, specifically the press' role in reinforcing the existing repression. A few challenge the human rights violations by taking a high risk of arrest, torture, and murder. Knudson tells us how Jacobo Timmerman, publisher and editor of *La Opinion*, a liberal newspaper, raised its voice against the military regime and landed in one of the several clandestine torture chambers for 30 months. He was later released only after vast international pressure and was sent to exile. Then, he told his story as a testimony in his book, entitled "Prisoner without a name, cell without a number." One of the *New York Review of Books* staff, Michael Walzer, writes "It is impossible to read this proud and piercing account of [Timmerman's] suffering and his battles without wanting to be counted as one of Timmerman's friends." In addition, the *New York Times* review says "His testimony [is] gripping in its human stories, not only of brutality but of courage and love; important because it reminds us how, in our world, the most terrible fantasies may become fact".

Another study that promises help to understand CLUO is Suarez-Orozco's essay (1990) where he articulates "a psychosocial semiotics in the study of responses to the political terror that has engulfed much of Latin America" (p.353). Suarez-Orozco utilizes a psychosocial mode of analyses of the materials that are collected (by using the Thematic Apperception Test) among new arrivals from Central American countries to the United States. His aim is to explore how people respond to the extreme situations of state terror in different cultures with their own formal structures or grammar. He also explores some other related questions such as what kind of psychological mechanisms are involved in such responses to terror.

Another pertinent study is Thalhammer's (2001) experimental study on political mobilization against the repressive regime. In this quantitative study, the author analyzes people's life histories under state terror. The author utilizes in-depth interviews with 78 people who lived in Argentina during the state terror (28 non-activist and 50 activists). She determines 87 variables for each activist and 79 for nonactivist, then runs λ^2 test to find significant patterns. By comparing stories of those who are activists and those who are conformists, she discovers that most explanations of related studies in the political science literature fail to explain most episodes of political involvement. Her study suggests that a combination of individuals' experiences in relation to past and current repression play a key role in determining who would take the risk and stand up against the injustice. This study also offer four types of activists: affected activists (advocates), indirectly affected activists (altruists), affected nonactivists (beholders), and indirectly affected nonactivists (bystanders).

Finally, another study is an anthropological metanarrative study conducted by Green (1994). In this study the author specifically examines "the invisible violence of fear and intimidation through the quotidian experiences of" Guatemalan (Mayan) people (especially Xe'cajian women) under military terror. Green explores the nature of fear and terror that pervades Guatemalan society and how people understand it, experience it, and cope with it. While she is examining how one becomes socialized to terror, she offers valuable insights. For example she states that while people learn to accommodate themselves to terror and fear, "low-intensity panic remains in the shadow of waking consciousness. One cannot live in a constant state of alertness, and so the chaos one feels becomes infused throughout the body" (p. 231). The body becomes testimony of those

who were oppressed. Even though the oppressed learn to stay quiet for survival, they cannot ultimately be silenced; their body testifies against the injustice; they turn “their bodies into weapons to speak out” (p. 240); when their mouth shut, their eyes will tell the truth, their headaches, their folkloric songs, even in jokes.

In order to better understand how counter-learning occurs under oppression, it is crucial to understand the material and subjective conditions of the specific context in which any forms of struggle happens to be the almost only way to remain human and humane. By attending to context, ideology and discourse within oppression, researchers can highlight the stories and learning experiences of the oppressed (Foley, 1999). Therefore, studies of this nature are needed to examine counter-learning under oppressive and repressive conditions to contribute to creating more egalitarian, more inclusive, and more humanized practices of adult education. I hope this review has provided some critical insights into the aspects of adult counter-learning and will lead to deeper scrutiny.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, a review of the literature, related to the five areas that inform this study, was presented: Frankfurt School based critical theory, critical constructivism, contemporary adult education, other related areas of study including political science and political sociology, and pertinent studies from various fields.

In the first section of this chapter I provided contextual information about the Frankfurt School and Marcuse, one of the members of the school. Included is a historical and theoretical background of the school and Marcuse’s critical theory, which questions advanced industrial societies as a whole, and these societies’ new ways of exercising social control that create the one-dimensional men. I also examine authoritarianism and

the individual by highlighting oppressive societal structures' role in producing sadomasochistic personality types and its characteristics. Then, I argue that Marcuse's perspectives on the possibility of the one-dimensional man's liberation.

In the second section I introduced critical constructivism, which is another theoretical framework of this study, along with critical theory. First, I provide the theoretical and historical roots of constructivism. Then I briefly examine the contemporary constructivism by analyzing its relation to Cartesian dualism, realism, and rationalism. I discuss its most dominant paradigms (cognitive and social constructivism). Finally, I describe critical constructivism with its distinct assumptions from other forms of constructivism that could provide insights to better understand how people construct their counter-learning.

The third section examined the contemporary adult education. I briefly review learning theories and their definitions of learning. Their common assumptions that dominate the current understanding of the concept of learning are also discussed from both historical and theoretical frameworks based on their political stance in relation to the dominant framework. I present the various ways of organizing learning paradigms from the literature and group the learning paradigms into two: non-liberatory learning paradigms (NLLPs) and liberatory learning paradigms (LLPs). I emphasize the importance of the context in the process of learning first, then I examine these two paradigms to reveal to what extent their insight might inform CLUO. My examination makes it clear that that adult learning is multidimensional, multifaceted, and contested. However, I argue that adult education from dialectical and historical perspectives has only one body of knowledge and no matter from what orientation or from what

philosophical perspective a theory looks at learning and examines it, it offers some insights and information to the adult learning framework. For example, I argue that no matter how apolitical behaviorism is, its contributions still are indispensable in any attempt to explore and better understand adult learning.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with the purpose of the study. Then it outlines the fundamentals of the qualitative research, narrative analysis, research questions, background of the researcher, and sampling procedures. This chapter also provides information about data collection methods followed by verification procedures.

Research Purpose and Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine the dynamics of adult counter-learning under extreme oppressive situations. There is an absence of research in the literature conducted on adults' counter-learning under extreme oppressive situations in which almost every aspect of people's lives are predefined and dominated by the oppressive culture and the political system to maintain dominant ideology and its hegemony. Studies are needed to help us to better understand how people under extreme oppression counter-learn: how they negate the existing oppressive ways of being. How does counter-learning lead adults to radically depart from internalized oppressive way of learning, thinking, feeling, speaking, and reacting? How do adults make meaning of their lives in a way that becomes an antidote to all oppressive measures that dehumanize them?

Studies that collect and analyze the oppressed people's learning experience in their daily life under various oppressive conditions are crucial to understand the counter-learning that is very different than learning in formal settings under relatively normal situations. Therefore, an analysis was needed to examine counter-learning under oppressive conditions and inform adult education theory and practices.

Overview of Research Methodology

For this study, the qualitative paradigm was chosen and narrative analysis was utilized as qualitative inquiry method. Even though it existed prior to the positivist paradigm, historically, qualitative research emerged when social scientists (especially scholars of the Chicago School in the 1930's) realized that quantitative representations of data were insufficient to understand human experience and action (McEldowney, 2005; Riessman, 1993). Quantitative inquiry is limited in its ability to contribute to an understanding of social phenomena. Qualitative inquiry, on the other hand, explores, explains, or describes a social phenomenon of interest and provides an in-depth understanding (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). As a result, qualitative research is centrally concerned about meaning which is socially constructed by human agents through their interaction with both the material and social world.

Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive in nature (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). While participants' accounts involve their subjective interpretation, qualitative researchers' attempt to understand participants' narration, for example, also involves interpretation. Thus, meaning is not something that exists "out there" for qualitative researchers to discover. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue, qualitative research has a strong relation to values and value judgments. For extracting meaning from the data, qualitative researchers have to interpret the phenomenon and understand it within the system of meanings to which it belongs (Outhwaite, 1975). This does not necessarily, though, require a rigid separation of the researcher and the researched. As feminist scholars, Ellis and Berger (2003), claim, researchers need to "acknowledge their personal, political, and professional interests" (p.469). At the same time, while

researchers construct the reality of the inquiry, they have to approach and interpret the data with respect for the realities that have been created by the participants.

As a result, as this study looked at how the oppressed counter-learn in oppressive situation and how they make meaning of their experiences in oppression against dehumanization, narrative analysis as a type of qualitative research was chosen to inquire into the phenomenon of this study.

Conceptualizing the Term “Narrative”

In chapter one, I have defined the term “narrative” by using some definitions from the narrative literature for both introducing the term to the reader and opening a space to define how this study understands the term. However, the term requires more in-depth analysis because otherwise, it could be oversimplified and misleading. For example, narrative could be understood simply as a “banal story of every-day life” (Lebov, 1997, ¶ 3) told by a person. In fact, a narrative is more than a story when it becomes an object of scientific inquiry.

I examined various articles and books and rendered the term “narrative” in the table below. In this classification, the terms “story” and “narrative” are used differently. The term “story” is used to refer to almost all forms of storytelling as a generic term, while the term “narrative” is used to refer to those stories that are the object of a narrative investigation.

Table 1: Narrative and Realm of Experience

| Realm of Experience | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Pre-linguistic</i> | Linguistic (verbal and visual) | | | |
| No story or narrative exists yet. | <i>Story</i> | | Narrative | |
| | Banal Story | Professional Story | Dominant Narrative | Ordinary People's Narrative |

I created this categorization (Table 1) by asking some questions to differentiate various types of oral and visual forms of communications (i.e., artifacts) that people use to tell their stories and construct their social realities. The first question was about finding the root of the concept of narrative. This led me to the human experience. Without an experience there is no social reality, and therefore, no narrative. By adapting Riessman's (1993) levels of representations of narratives, I defined two realms of experience: pre-linguistic and linguistic. Riessman uses phenomenology as a starting point to define pre-linguistic realm of experience. The pre-linguistic realm (physical and social realms that are outside of the subject), she writes, is already there independently before the subject begins reflection. It is there as an "inalienable presence" (Merleau-Ponty, as cited in Riessman, p. 8). At this level, the subject "experience[s] this world from the 'natural attitude,' taking it for granted, not thinking about and analyzing it" (p. 9). This realm is a space without time, without value, without judgment, and without language. Therefore, the story or narrative does not exist yet. When the subject attends to this realm and "make[s] discrete certain features in the stream of consciousness-reflecting, remembering, recollecting them into observations...scan [the environment] and isolate certain images... [the subject begins making] certain phenomena meaningful" (p. 9). The

subject and the story are in the linguistic realm of experience now. When reflecting begins, all required mental faculties are involved in the process of meaning making. However, in this phase the story is raw with all its ambiguous representations. It is non-formed and messy. When the subject tries to tell the experience for the first time, it might still be messy and relatively non-formed. I, by borrowing Lebov's (1997) term, label this as banal story of every-day life. Then based on how the subject processes the experience, the story transforms; it might become a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end; it might become a novel or diary or poetry or testimonio.

The story in the hand of a gifted (professional) story-teller transforms dramatically. A "story-teller is someone who can make something out of nothing [metaphorically speaking,] who can engage our attention with a fascinating elaboration of detail is entering, amusing, and emotionally rewarding" (Lebov, 1991, ¶ 3). The story takes various forms here, such as myths, folk-tales, fairy-tales, sagas, epics, poems, novels, and fables. They are well-formed and contain various hidden and/or obvious messages and information ranging from natural history to morality.

Finally, I categorized the last column as narrative, which has two distinct types: dominant narrative and ordinary people's narrative. I grouped them together under the same column because both have some shared historical, ideological, and methodological contradictions and dynamics.

I use the term, dominant narrative, to refer to the dominant discourse of ideology which dominates the totality of knowledge in a society. Dominant narrative is studied by philosophers, sociologists, and educators. These studies take various labels such as ideology critique, discourse analysis, and rhetoric.

Dominant narrative operates congruently with other political apparatus (school, media, and work) to create “false consciousness.” This consciousness presents itself as universally valid and feeds itself with the mass consent. Approaching narrative in relation to the dominant ideology resonates with the postmodern approach to knowledge construction, especially, postmodernist Jean-Francois Lyotard’s term “grand narrative,” which he coined in his 1979 work, *The Postmodern Condition: A report on Knowledge*. For Lyotard, the function of grand narrative is to legitimize the dominant norms and values. In this sense it is hegemonic and oppressive because it excludes other forms of narration and pushes them to the margins. For example, earlier when I examined the Frankfurt School’s perspective towards modernity, I stated that the Frankfurt School believed that when positivism became the only valid approach to knowledge while disregarding other ways of knowing, it became oppressive. Thus, under the rule of capitalist ideology, positivism has become a part of the grand narrative of capitalism. Dominant narrative is like the Oceania’s official language (the repressive society in Orwell’s novel *1984*) that does not only provide a restricted communication channel for people to communicate and express their world views but also makes it impossible for any contradictory idea formation. As Marcuse (1964) claims, the dominant narrative (although he does not use the term “dominant narrative”) makes itself immune to contradiction so that it becomes an oppressive obstacle for humans potential to grow. According to Marcuse, in order for human potential to grow 1) intellectual freedom (free individual thought from dominant narrative), 2) political freedom (free from politics that individuals have no control over it); and 3) economical freedom (free from being

controlled by economic forces) are necessary conditions. In short, dominant narrative is predefined and shaped by the dominant ideology. Its goal is to reinforce the status quo.

Why is the dominant narrative important? There are two reasons: First, it has a great impact on scientific methodology, its discourse, and knowledge production. For example, Enlightenment philosophy and emerging capitalism starting from the seventeenth century created their grand narrative that reason was the only acceptable source for knowledge and scientific inquiry; there was no room for emotions, for example, in the realm of knowledge. This dominant narrative dominated all the scientific discourse in the West for centuries. Second, grand narrative determines ordinary people's belief systems and values in a society in a way that anything outside of this narrative receives negative attention. For example, when the grand narrative is in favor of a war, any narrative related to peace is perceived as unpatriotic. Or when the grand narrative justifies all human rights abuses for the sake of "national security" or unity of the "nation-state," for example, human rights narratives are treated as subversive and militancy so that torture, disappearances, and assassinations of human rights' activists would be justified.

As a result, grand narrative, in this sense, does not recognize personal or individual narrative as a valuable source of knowledge. Traditionally, in order for the grand narrative to recognize any data as valuable or scientific, the data has to be coming from a study that was conducted according to positivist method and strategies. For example, a group of individuals (not an individual) could be studied, along with predefined and controllable variables, and the results can be explained in a statistical or testable way so that the researcher, by using the data, could make generalizable

assumptions to a certain population. This non-indulgent cognizance of knowledge and science inevitably pushes the previously oppressed people and their lives to the margins. However, narrative analysis and research undertake the oppressed individuals' life-experiences as a goal for several decades (Chase, 2005). Narrative analysis brings the uniqueness of each individual's experience to the front and highlights it (Polkinghorne, 1995). Its challenge to the hegemony of positivistic paradigm could be interpreted as empowering both social science methodology and the oppressed by being a venue for their voice.

Despite the oppressive form of the dominant narrative, the object of narrative research is ordinary people's stories; stories that take a narrative form in the process of the research. I differentiated "story" from "narrative" to point out that in the process of research, the story is inevitably shaped by many factors; story transforms; its meaning shifts; and its tone changes. It would not be a banal story anymore. I will explain this transfiguration of the story by using Riessman's (1993) example that demonstrates the dynamics in the process of telling an experience. Riessman states that in telling a story to the listeners, the individuals re-present their experiences that are already formed to some degree "with all the opportunities and constraints the form of discourse entails" (p. 9). In the period of telling, the individuals "describe the setting, characters, unfolding plot, and stitch the story together in a way that makes [their] interpretation[s] of the events clear" (p. 10). When the listeners listen, question, and ask for more detail, the individual, in turn, "refashion the events in response to their [the listeners'] cues and, to make the importance of the scene real for them, expand on what the moment means in the larger context" (p. 10). Eventually, the tellers and the listeners create a narrative together. In this

process of interaction, Riessman writes, the meaning of the story shifts and becomes reformed and most importantly, the story even “might have taken a different form if someone else were the listener” (p. 11), such as a researcher rather than friends. Moreover, in the process of telling, the story might also be shaped by the individuals’ desire to present their “selves” to the listeners in a certain way. For example, an individual might want to be seen as a catalyst, a victim, or a hero. Because of these and many more factors that are involved in the process of telling, the story inevitably transforms dramatically. I assume these factors could be even doubled in the research process. For example, telling a story to a friend could be different than telling it to a researcher. The former act of telling is more likely to be not well formed and not so detailed, unless the listener asked. Moreover, the researcher’s status, race, class, and gender might also be crucial factors affecting the telling. Furthermore, the research’s significance and goals, known by the teller, might impact the story formation. As a result, when it is told in the process of research, the story is not a banal story anymore. In the narrative research process, a story might become more intact, more organized, and more contextual. Even its voice could shift. For example, in some situations a narrator’s voice might shift and become a “we” account rather than an “I” account (as it can be found in some testimonios, another form of narrative).

This way of conceptualization makes clear the common characteristics that are attributed to the term “narrative” in the literature. Narrative, with these characteristics, is a distinct form of discourse and differs from the banal form of story. Thus, narrative

- is subjective and is actively constructed by the teller through interaction with another. In other words, a narration is not an objective account of “what

happened.” It is not a mirror, it is more re-presentation of the past events through the existing conditions (or levels) of consciousness. Constructing a narrative form from one’s past is really filtering the event with the person’s present eyes, emotions, and mind;

- is created for particular audiences and for specific purposes;
- does not only describe what happened but also present the content with emotions and reflections;
- makes the “self” (the narrator) the protagonist (Chase, 2005)
- challenges the hegemonic positivist understanding of knowledge creation, which usually only look at a group of individuals’ common properties (Bruner, 1986), rather than a unique experience of individuals; and
- “among other things, explains, entertains, informs, defends, complains, and confirms to or challenges the status quo” (Chase, 2005, p. 657).

Including all these attributes, narrative, for this study, is labeled as counter-learning narrative (CLN). Because CLNO is presumably involved in oppositional idea formation that has a strong connotation to oppression, power structure, emancipation, and social change, CLN might have overlaps with testimonio, another form of narrative in which repression, oppression, human rights crimes, and atrocities are central. However, for this study, participants’ narratives should not be considered as testimonios, even though some of the CLNs might sound like testimony. Hence, examining testimonio in comparison with how this study conceptualizes CLN is crucial.

Testimonio and Counter Learning Narrative (CLN). Testimonio, as a form of narrative, has developed in Latin America (Tierney, 2000a). It is a narrative account of a

participant or witness who has had direct experience with human-rights violations such as torture, extrajudicial killings, and disappearances. It is a form of writing that has a strong political intention of social change. It is a “life history imbued with intent” (Benmayor 1991, p.173). The text, in testimonio, becomes a manifestation of struggle against structural oppression and repression. Even though the testimonio is written from a first-person voice, it has a strong implication for the oppressed mass. In testimonio the self is not a self in an individualistic sense; it is rather a collective-self engaged in struggle (Gugelberger & Kearney, 1991) or “a plural-self” (Sommer, 1988). For example, in her narrative, Menchu (Menchu & Burgos-Debray, 1998) emphasizes that her story is not only hers, but it is also the story of all poor Guatemalans. The connection of individual and mass is crucial in testimonio, because otherwise it might be turned into an autobiography (Beverly as quoted in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 541).

Despite their overlaps, there are some differences between testimonio and CLN. First, while testimonio is about one’s life experiences with a strict focus on the injustices and violations perpetuated by the state or other state-sponsored groups, CLN, besides state-sponsored terror, focuses on other layers of oppression and repression as well. The layers of oppression are ones that are historically dominated by the traditional culture and religion, such as gender-based oppression. Second, even though it is not clearly defined in the literature, “a direct experience or witnessing” to the atrocities seems a crucial criterion in order to be considered as testimonio. In CLN, experience is taken broadly and, in a way, “direct” experience is not necessary. For example, hearing of atrocities or thinking of the possibilities that could happen to the individual is recognized as experience with oppression and repression. Third, testimonio is usually both an

eyewitness account of “what happened” and one’s emotional and ideologically driven response towards it. It is not directly and specifically about one’s meaning making or learning. CLN, on the other hand, is revolving around an interest in learning; more specifically, one’s counter-learning experiences; how one makes sense of his/her world under oppression; what insights and information one’s counter-learning experience offers to obtain a better understanding adults’ learning in relation to oppression and repression; and how oppressive experiences shapes one’s learning. Fourth, testimonio has a strong political intention of social change; it is a scream! It is a manifesto! It is a slogan spewed out in the face of the oppressor. It is a mark of shame on the forehead of modernization and history. Like testimonio, CLN might well have a strong political intent for social change, but, this is not necessarily the case. Adult education and critical pedagogy literature informs us that knowing does not necessarily lead individuals to emancipatory learning, social action, transformation, or provocation of a strong will or intention for change (Foley, 1998; Imel, 1999; Inglis, 1997; Marcuse, 2001). Fifth, in testimonio the narrator (or teller) is the writer. The researcher’s role is ambiguous. Tierney (2000b) claims that the researcher’s role in testimonio “has been erased, although one still hears the voice of the interlocutor” (p. 106). The researcher, in testimonio, is usually just an organic recorder who does not claim any interpretation. In CLN, narrators are the participants who tell critically reflect on their experiences. They are not writers. The researcher is the writer whose task is to listen, understand, and interpret the narrations to explore the counter-learning elements. While the researcher’s voice in testimonio is supportive and “pushes the narrator’s voice into the limelight “(Chase, 2005, p. 665), in CLN, the researcher develops both supportive and authoritative voices and utilizes them

where they are necessary or appropriate. It is important to note that authoritative voice does not mean an authoritarian attitude or a disrespectful approach to the narrators' voice. It is a technique that the researcher uses to separate his/her voice from the narrators' voice (Chase, 2005, p. 664) in order to open a space for interpretation, because the researchers have different interests from the narrators. For example, a narrator's aim could be using his narration to propagate his/her opinion whereas the researcher is interested in exploring the research question. Thus, the researcher has to separate his voice from the narrator's voices and interpret them based on the study's theoretical framework. Thus, in CLN, the researcher not only supports the narrator's voice by providing introductions, epilogues, and commentaries, but also uses an authoritative voice. Finally, although testimonio is written from the first person voice, the "self" is usually a collective and a devoted "self" who is engaged in a struggle. In CLN, participants might use "I" as "we" or vice versa to refer to the oppressed group in some occasions such as communal form of resisting or demonstrations, but again it is not expected that the participant refers to the "collective-self" when talking about s a learning experience.

Now that I have conceptualized the term "narrative", defined and labeled narrative specifically for this study in order for it not to be confused with testimonio, I turn to narrative analysis as a research method.

Narrative Analysis

Theoretically narrative analysis is informed by both phenomenology and hermeneutics. Hermeneutics' emphasis on interpretation and context and phenomenology's emphasis on understanding the essence of lived experiences inform

narrative analysis (Patton, 2002). As a result, according to Patton, narrative analysis is driven by these two core questions: “What does this narrative or story reveal about the person and world from which it came?” and, second, “How can this narrative be interpreted so that it provides an understanding of and illuminates the life and culture that created it?” (p. 115). In other words narrative analysis focuses on the narrative of the individual and his/her world and how the narration can be interpreted to understand the life and culture from which the narrative is derived. Therefore, narrative study’s focal point is the overlapping of individuals’ narrations and their socio-economic, cultural, and political milieu. Narrative analysis examines peoples’ narratives in conjunction with the context to understand how people think, learn, act, and make meaning of their lives in their own contexts. Bruner (1994) beautifully states that “a life is not ‘how it was’ but how it is interpreted and reinterpreted, told and retold” (p. 36). As a result, narration, (or story telling) as a metaphor, is crucial in understanding the dimensions of narrative analysis. Narrative analysis, in this sense, is a kind of narrativization too. In other words, “Narratives are interpretive and, in turn, require interpretation” (Riessman, 1993, p. 22). The researcher, by analyzing the participants’ narrations, re-tells their narratives by creating order, rearranging events, and constructing the text. As Riessman (1993) states, narrating “is what we do with our research materials and what informants do with us” (p. 1).

From the narrative analysis stand point, when a story is told, it is full of data, but the data is latent, embedded in the narrators’ actions and cultural elements. Therefore, the data does not reveal or speak for itself. That means that a story, as it was told, is a raw material and needs to be examined. A story is the representation of one’s own constructed

world in which the narrator's identity, memory, logic, emotions, spirituality, and consciousness are deeply embedded. Narrative analysis, therefore, is about composing the content in a systematic way in relation to its context so that it becomes an intact and well-formed whole.

When researchers analyze a narrative, they not only study the narrative itself but also examine the way it was narrated and why it was told. Thus, narrative analysts need to question how narrative flows, what information is included, excluded or omitted, what information is emphasized, and how the narrator positions himself or herself in the narration; does the narrator stance as a victim or a catalyst in the narration? (Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992)

However, in order to analyze the narrative the researchers need well defined approaches to analyze the data. Biographical, psychological, and linguistic approaches are most commonly used to explore the narratives (Merriam and Associates, 2002). While the biographical approach analyzes the narrative through the participants' ongoing interactions, life events, and etc., the linguistic approach focuses on the structure of the narrative from a linguistic perspective in which the researcher sees clauses rather than themes while analyzing the data. The psychological approach, alternatively, pays more attention to motivation, thoughts, and the cognitive process of meaning making in relation to biological and environmental influences.

Within narrative, there are also models that define and determine how the data is perceived and how it will be analyzed. These models are usually based on the narrative's structure which holds together the various elements of narrative.

Structural Models

Riessman (1993) states that since Aristotle's *Poetics*, in which narrative is defined with a hierarchical and linear order; beginning, middle, and end, scholars tend to seek a sequence in narrative. This tendency is problematic however, because not all narratives have to have a sequence. In fact, it would be less problematic if this tendency were more concerned about structure, rather than chronological sequencing. Sequencing in any interpretative research paradigm inevitably requires a form of linearity; while it is very difficult to find a perfect linearity in people's lives, structure requires narratives to be a whole. For example, a narrative could begin with an end, then develop through the middle and end with the beginning. Denzin's (1989) definition of narrative is a good example of the sequential understanding of narrative.

A narrative is a *story* that tells a sequence of events that are significant for the *narrator* and his or her audience. A narrative as a story has a plot, a beginning, a middle and an end. It has an internal logic that makes sense to the narrator. A narrative relates events in a temporal, causal sequence. Every narrative describes a sequence of events that have happened. (p. 37)

The narrative analysis literature includes other ways of approaching a narrative.

Riessman (1993), for example, identifies three structural approaches to narrative:

chronological, consequential, and thematic. The chronological approach is suggested by

Labov and Waletzky. This approach is similar to what Denzin (1998) describes above.

According to this approach, a narrative is a story with a chronological sequence such that its "order cannot be changed without changing the inferred sequence of events in the original semantic interpretation" (p. 17). Events and actions in the story move in a linear

way as if each event is a response to the question “and then what happened” (p. 7). Consequential sequence is another approach, which proposes that links between events are not necessarily supposed to follow a chronological order. One event could call another in the process of narration. Combination of events, regardless of their chronological order, could provide more meaningful information. For example, in a narrative, a current event (such as arrest or protest) could call an earlier event related to struggle of oppression and then this earlier event could call another event which might occur in the middle. Finally, thematic sequencing is an “episodic narrative [which] is stitched together by theme rather than by time” (p. 17). In thematic organization, the researcher usually “generates a typology of concepts, gives them names or uses ‘native’ labels, and then discusses them one by one, illustrating with descriptive detail”(Glesne, 2006, p. 183).

Even though the literature commonly has these three approaches, most studies approach narrative from the chronological perspective or they “treat narratives as discrete units” (Riessman, 1993, p.17). In terms of culture and context, this is specific to the Western culture. Culture and context strongly influenced how people structure their narratives. The researcher’s culture also affects the way the researcher hears the narration. Riessman (1987) so rightly points out this issue by stating that “Western, white, middle-class interviewers seem to expect temporally sequenced plots and have trouble hearing ones that are organized episodically.” Even though I could not locate any study about how cultural and lingual differences shape and determine the structure of narration, especially a comparative study between Western and Eastern or Middle-

Eastern, this is a very important issue and calls for more attention. Since this study is situated outside of Western culture, I kept this factor in mind during the research process.

Another important point with the chronological approach is to make sure it is used when it is appropriate. Researchers cannot assume that all narratives have a sequential order. Glesne (2006) asserts that when chronology of events or their timing is critical to the study, then this technique is appropriate. For this study, I explored people's counter-learning in their life spans and in their oppressive context. If I had assumed that CLN was sequential, this assumption might have misled the study. First, it may have been difficult to hear narrations that were not sequential. I may have ended up losing a lot of valuable data. Second, if I, without questioning whether this technique was appropriate for my study, accepted this approach, I would have unknowingly or knowingly assumed that counter-learning was sequential too. This would have been a terrible mistake because this study was about to explore the characteristics of counter-learning. Not exploring it and making the assumption that counter-learning was sequential would have been methodologically and theoretically erroneous.

My argument related to the chronological approach reveals another important point. The point is that its structure is crucial in choosing an appropriate approach for analysis. Riessman (1993) indirectly implies that sometimes the researcher has to see how the narrative was structured (or whether it was structured at all) to select an appropriate approach. For example, in her own research, one of her co-researchers collected the data for the study in which it was assumed that the data would be chronological and a model was chosen accordingly for analysis. However, when Riessman looked at the data (narrative), she realized that the narrative was not

chronological at all, its structure was completely different, and then she decided to use thematic approach instead. As a result, at this point for this study I preferred not to select an approach for data analysis until I saw the data and how it was structured.

Rationale for Choosing Narrative Analysis

Bickman and Rog (1998, as cited in Lieblich et. al., 1998) posit that narrative analysis can be a best fit when the research question deals with the “real-life problems,” and it can be considered “real-world measures” (p. 5). People’s counter-learning, as assumed for this study, is a process rooted in real-life and its everyday problems. As a result, approaching people’s lives from a narrative point of view, exploring their experiences and their meaning making, are very relevant to the evolution of their counter-learning.

Narrative analysis is a powerful way of understanding experience. The experience is what the researcher studies (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) because the meaning, the knowledge, and the emotions that the researcher seeks to better understand humans and their world, are immanent in the experience. This means that the core of experience is internal, subjective, and private. It is very important to recognize that experiences related to atrocities or traumas are harder to talk about and listen to. Riessman (1993) recognizes this by stating, “Survivors of political torture, war, and sexual crimes silence themselves and are silenced because it is difficult to tell and listen. Rape survivors, for example, may not be able to talk about what they experienced as terrorizing violations because others do not regard them as violations” (p. 3). However, it may be easier when the source of trauma is from the state, when it is ideological and political. For example, talking about a rape committed in a police interrogation is relatively easier than a rape occurred within

family, or in a workplace. In any case, narrative analysis, therefore, requires collaboration between researcher and participants in order to reveal the meaning of the experience. Particularly for this study, collaboration is very important, because telling a story involves risk. This collaboration, Clandinin and Connelly assert, is “in over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus” (p. 20). Peoples’ counter-learning experiences include valuable data. Even though narrating the atrocities is difficult and takes a great deal of trust, it is still possible for people to talk about their experiences. When people narrate their experiences, they will create images, myths, and metaphors that carry valuable information. The researcher reveals all this valuable information with collaboration and this will contribute to our understanding of people’s counter-learning with other possible insights about adult learning.

Bruner (1990) states that narrative is the universal way that people utilize to make sense of their experiences. Making sense of experiences and manifesting them in various verbal and nonverbal forms (such as story, art, poem, folk tale, and song) are strongly related to some universal human faculties, including memory, language, imagination, emotions, reason, and intellect. These aspects of human activities are recognized by narrative framework in the process of narration, which is strongly related to knowledge construction and learning. As a result, taking a constructivist stance to explore peoples’ counter-learning was consistent and promising for this study. In this sense, constructivist framework and narrative analysis did not only tell me about the participant’s rational reasoning, knowledge construction, cognitive rearrangements, but also the intellectual faculties’ relation to her emotions because narrating one’s own story is an individual in-

depth process that includes cues to individuals' emotional states and perceptions as well as to their particular historical, cultural, and political context.

Another reason why narrative analysis was a good fit for this study lies in the context, which is central in understanding any human activity. The context, in this study, was an oppressive and repressive social structure in which living or even witnessing the injustices, oppressions, and atrocities is troubling on one hand, but telling them out loud (narrating) is another. As Riessman (1993) states, "the political conditions constrain particular events from being narrated" (p. 3). In extreme oppressive and repressive societies, history is rewritten; evidence and witnesses of the criminal acts are to be eliminated. Under these conditions, telling a story is not just about a personal account. It is a social, historical, political, and even judicial account. Narratives are indispensable resources for those who are interested in unofficial, unfilled history, which is never told by the official history. Telling a story is about documenting the oppression against the official history, against the will of an authoritarian state. It is about archiving the past for the future. It is about resisting to forget. It is about demanding justice. It is about reconciliation. And above all, telling a story under repression requires extraordinary bravery, dedication to justice, strong moral values, political consciousness and praxis, and transformation from given realities. Moreover, narrating experiences also can be considered another learning experience. Thus, telling a story is another way of knowing, another way of reconstructing the reality, and another way of challenging the oppressive structure. It might also be empowering and emancipating for both the narrator and the audience, because by telling their stories, people might find a channel to make their voices heard, since one of the central projects of oppression is to silence the oppressed.

Moreover under extreme oppression, a narrative itself (telling what is being witnessed) can be considered as praxis and a counter-oppressive manifestation in an extraordinary bravery that could powerfully influence the silenced people to develop empathy, sympathy, and possibly lead them to take a stand and seek to gain more control over their lives. As Plummer (1995) rightly states “stories gather people around them” (p.174).

Research Questions

This exploration into the dynamics of adult counter-learning under extreme oppressive situations was driven by the following major questions. a) How do individuals counter-learn while almost every aspect of their life is predefined by the oppressive and repressive system; what they are to read and write, how and with whom they are to socialize? b) How do adults make meaning of their lives under oppression? c) How do adults’ prior and present experiences with oppression play a role in their forms of thinking and learning?

Site Selection

The data was collected from Turkey for several reasons. Turkey is a state that has a long history of oppression and state terrorism towards dissidents, the Kurds, and other minorities. Historically, Turkey has been dominated by oppression and repression to maintain its status quo. Both the military oppression and cultural oppression are historically embedded.

Torture or ill-treatment has long been routinely inflicted on people detained for common criminal offences as well as on political charges. "Disappearance" and extrajudicial execution are new patterns of violation which appeared in the early 1990s and have since claimed hundreds of lives. (Amnesty International, 1996)

In addition, because I, as the researcher, was born and raised in Turkey, I benefited from my insider perspective in the data collection and analyses process. This unique perspective allowed me to know how and what questions to ask (for example sometimes questions about the participant's sexual experiences or life were asked indirectly so the participant did not feel uncomfortable due to her cultural upbringing. This perspective of knowing the general mannerism of the culture, also allowed me to know how to interpret and translate the verbal and non-verbal data collected through the interviews.

Background of the Researcher

I am a victim and a survivor of Turkish oppression and repression. One of the most powerful sources of my strength in the process of resistance and survival was learning. Learning the oppressor's language, strategies, and political projects helped me analyze the oppression. This also equipped me to recognize various realities; the reality that was systematically imposed on me as an ideological project and the reality that I constructed from my own dilemmas: the dilemma of fear and courage, the dilemma of remaining humane or inhumane.

Even though I have been out of that oppression for several years, this past oppression defined to a large extent the personality and perspectives that I have today. I am highly empathetic of individuals who live in oppressive and repressive regimes. Moreover, I feel I have gained more insights about oppressive situations. I now have a different lens to look at the oppression and my own experiences. I have learned that being physically away from possibility of suffering through a direct violence or of suffering through being witness the violence is not enough for my wounds to be healed. It is in deep my heart, in my deep consciousness and conscious. I not only put several years but

also I put the North Atlantic between my memory and me, but it did not help. As Cavafy, a Greek poet, wrote

You won't find new horizons, you won't find other seas.

The city will pursue you, all the streets you stride

will be the same. In these same precincts you'll go grey,

for it's always at this city you'll arrive -

in these same house you'll decay.

Never hope for other places - there's no road for you, no berth.

By ruining your life in this small patch of ground,

you've shattered it throughout the Earth. (Cavafy, 1910)

Being away does not guarantee a peaceful home for those whose wounds are deep in their existence.

For the last several years I have been questioning why I am unable to forget. The 1980's and 90's are still in my memory so vividly, fearful and horrified. My traumatized past does not allow me to forget and to move on in my life. Historian Zakhor (1989) claims that forgetting occurs when people fail to transmit what they experienced in the past to the present. I could not fail myself not to remember. I could not forget.

Then I pondered, how about my country, my people? If I am a micro-cosmos of my country, then it has wounds too, deeper wounds in its collective memory. Is peace possible for my country with those open wounds? State sponsored terror did not solve the problems, but rather impregnated it for new catastrophic and anomic consequences; it created a culture of violence; torture has become a normal everyday practice of police

stations; it is being applied those who are not even political. Honor killings, lynchings, and street gangs seem to like taking the state sponsored terror as their role model. Killing and dying are being idealized; even in soccer stadiums crowds scream “we came to die!” Then they die for their teams, kill, and get killed.

For the last several years I have observed that systematic state sponsored terror traumatized my society. It opened wounds in society’s psyche, body, and memory which elucidate the impact of atrocities (Martin-Baro, 1994). Official impunity, corruptions, cover-ups, increased irrational nationalism, and lack of an independent system of justice do not help a society to recover. It worsens the culture of violence, creates a rigid social framework (Lira, 1991). It creates political polarization and widens the gap between the communities. Arditti (1999) states that systematic terror damages at least three generations: the victim’s parents, the victim, and the victim’s children. The literature is full of studies that emphasize that forgetting is not the cure for wounds gotten from the state sponsored terror and atrocities (such as Bennet, 2003; Lira, 2001; Martin-Baro, 1994). Forgetting is, to some extent, reinforcing, facilitating, and justifying impunity. It is an obstacle to a true democracy.

For the last several years I realized that time is not the remedy for trauma, forgetting is not the answer (although it is not doable sometimes). Remedy is reconciliation. Reconciliations require recognition of all those sufferings. It requires the truth, requires recognition of injustice, and requires a stubborn demand for the justice to be served.

For the last several years I realized that no terror can last long unless cultural elements of the country (social norms and values) directly and indirectly support the

forms of terror and provide a fundamental basis for justification. I have learned that state terror and cultural oppression and repression are not separate entities. They have strong dialectical relationships.

For the last several years I have learned that being physically away from the danger and doing nothing will not heal my wounds. Doing nothing is turning me into an accomplice. I have to do something. I realized that I could be the voice of those who risk their well-being for a better world. I could be a channel for their voices to be heard. Their voice is the witness of history, their sorrow, their bravery, their hope, their epistemology. I realized that I could be their life-long student who tries to learn how they learn.

As a result, as a researcher embarking on my own process of introspection regarding my counter-learning experiences is valuable for me. Furthermore, I am trying to keep my hope alive for a peaceful world. Exploring the counter-learning experiences of other oppressed people matters profoundly to me. I want to discover what enables them to relentlessly resist dehumanization; how they counter-learn, make meaning of their daily experiences, and construct their own reality in order to evoke change and remain humane.

Participant Selection Procedures

For most narrative analysts, a central concern is about “which voice or voices researcher should use as they interpret and represent the voices of those they study” (Chase, 2005, p. 652). Since the primary objective of this study is to better understand the phenomenon of counter-learning, and since the study involves some risks for the participants, I decided to collect as detailed data as was possible. In other words, I valued descriptive and in-depth information. Narrative analysts would rather have one

participant with an “information-rich case” (Patton, 2002, p. 230) than a large sample with poor information. Narrative analyses based on the experiences of one person is a common analysis method in, especially, education, narrative psychology, and counseling psychology (e.g., Abramson, 1992; Merriam, 1988; Miller, 2000; Platt, 1988). The value of narrative analysis and working with as few as one participant is that the analysis of the story and the experience provides with breadth and depth of information that we usually cannot achieve in research methods that utilize a higher number of participants (Todres & Galvin, 2005). Therefore, this study was conducted with one person. In other words, the sample was purposeful and due to some limitations that are coming from the nature of the study (it is political in nature and risky), one participant, with whom I was familiar, was identified. The participant has directly and indirectly experienced state terror and multiple oppressions, and engaged in oppositional activities. Since this study was intended to explore counter-learning experiences and meaning making of the oppressed, the participant’s engagement in organized or unorganized oppositional activities was important. This was an important criterion for me, as a researcher, to at least assume that the participant has engaged in developing some form of counter-learning and developed some counter-hegemonic consciousness. Thus, a primary concern in the process of participant selection was to find a participant who experienced multi-layers of oppression and relatively engaged some kind of oppositional activities, such as thinking, feeling, and speaking. I valued finding an “information rich case.”

Despite all my desire and effort to collect as much and detailed information as possible and all the safety measures I took, the participant did not think it was safe to talk about certain things on the phone. I respected her but I asked if there was anybody else to

contact and talk about those things. She gave my contact information to her oldest son, one of her friends, and her youngest brother-in-law. Then they contacted me via e-mail and we talked about how we would correspond with each other. Then I collected data via the Internet. Because emails and chat programs are not encrypted and are vulnerable to hacking, for data collection, I used collaborative software which is password protected and does not have data transmission like chat or email programs do. In addition, all correspondence occurred online. What this means is that the users did not have to download any file to their computer. Therefore, it promised a greater safety in the communication. For example, no one could retrieve any data related to the communication from the user's local machine, because it was never downloaded.

Despite all sensitivity to include every resource available to have in-depth information, traditional research paradigms still skeptically approach studies conducted with one subject or a single participant because of their concern about trustworthiness and generalizability of the results. However, this positivist way of treating human subjects or individual lives as just measurable variables inevitably poses a problem which is ending up objectifying people, alienating them from their lives, and most importantly missing very important information. In other words, traditionally and historically this objectification of human subjects resulted in neglecting people's lives, feelings, emotions, and their mental schemas formed out of their contesting and conflicting daily struggle. Hence, valuing information-rich single participant studies, on the one hand, promises to enable us, not to alienate individuals from their lives, and on the other hand, enables researchers and methodologies to capture subtle knowledge within peoples' lives. Therefore, this study, among other research genres, such as narrative psychology,

autobiography, and political testimony, did not overlook or devalue the single-subject research design. It valued being able to have thick and descriptive information about the phenomenon under study.

In the qualitative research paradigm, having only one participant in a study, as I explained above, is theoretically considered acceptable, but still produces questions about trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is an issue in certain genres of research such as testimony and other political narratives that are involved with oppression and repression (see Tierney, 2000 for a fine argument about trustworthiness in some qualitative research genre). It is my unsystematic observation that usually those skeptical attacks or accusations target those who were already oppressed. Interestingly, accusers usually are unable to build a case or find a reason for the oppressed to lie. There is no stake for the oppressed to distort reality. And most importantly, as researchers we know that narrative is not about the truth, it is not even about facts. It is about personal account of experience. As most people would accept, “truth is relative to experience, perception, imagination” (Brittin, 1995, p. 105). Therefore, Tierney (2000) states, at the end, the reader will decide if the text, or narrative, is trustworthy or not.

Trust

Trust is very crucial issue in any research study. Particularly in this study trust is extremely important because this study did not only ask about participants’ personal stories (might include some traumatic events, such as torture, sexual harassment or rape, or even being witness to some similar atrocities), but also asked the participant to reveal information that might have caused some problems between the participant and security forces or authoritative state. As a result, the participant’s identity was kept anonymous

and a pseudonym was assigned. This is also another reason why I went to someone who I was familiar with and somehow knew her positionality in the political spectrum.

Data Collection Procedures and Methods

In this study, I contacted the participant by telephone to determine her interest in participating in the research. I explained to her the study's purpose, and its significance in the first contact. She agreed to participate in the study, and then a time was set to collect her verbal consent on audiotape and start the interview process. The interviews were semi-structured in-depth interviews so that pertinent information relating to the research topic could be gathered.

Combinations of the participant's past and present experiences were the focus during the interviews to explore the phenomenon (counter-learning) and gain more insights. In particular, the participant's counter-learning experiences under multilayer oppression from her childhood through the present were the main focus.

All interviews were conducted in Turkish that is both the researcher's and the participant's native language. By the participant's permission, interviews were audio-recorded. A maximum span time for each interview was set due to the possible intensity of the stories. Each interview was recorded on a separate cassette and labeled. After each interview, the recordings were listened to and notes were taken. Then, the interviews were transcribed verbatim. I, as a researcher, was aware that there was a high level of risk involved in this study. Therefore, in order to secure confidentiality and minimize the possibility of self-disclosure, tapes were destroyed after transcription. The identity of the participant was kept strictly confidential throughout the study. Moreover, any information related to details of place or events that could identify the participant was removed.

Furthermore, as Merriam (2002) suggests, a research journal was kept throughout the study to record the researcher's reflections, questions and decisions related to issues during the data collection.

Data collection spanned four months and included eight interviews with the participant, two interviews with the person from her party, two electronic (digital) communications with her son and one of her brother-in-laws. Each one of the phone interviews lasted not less than 30 minutes not more than 1 1/2 hours. Data collection was concluded with a final interview, which was to check with the subject for her story's accuracy.

Questionnaire/Interview Details

In order to conduct a sufficient interview, it is important that the interview should resemble the flow of a conversation (Wolensky, 1996), but a framework of questions is necessary to guide the interviews. This study used the following framework:

1. Demographic information of the narrator
 - Gender, class, ethnicity, parents and marriage, education (both formal and informal), and biographical information and their relation to cultural and political structure and practices
 - Attitude towards general values altruism - selfishness (in socialization process)
2. Oppressive experiences
 - Gender, ethnicity, and political orientation related oppressive practices
 - How do you describe what oppression is
 - How do you deal with it / respond to it/ feel about it.

3. How did narrator involve with politics?
 - Life experiences and memory (important events: milestones), role-model(s), etc.
 - What impacted on forming a personal world view?
 - How apolitical life is described.
 - What is the significance of political involvement; describe.
 - What is gained or lost or sacrificed?
4. Counter-learning
 - Meta-cognitive insights: how do they describe how they learn?
 - How do they value learning?
 - Early memories: norms or values (cultural, religious, legal) accepted (or not) blindly and what were the consequences.
 - How were politically loaded abstract concepts learned and where and when they started making sense? And when did they stop making sense.
 - What role did their learning play in deciding to take an action against oppression? Did learning help emotional part (such as fear) of decision making? How?
5. Questions related to future
 - What is your dream?
 - What would like to see happening?
 - What will happen?

By using this informal framework, a conversation-like-interview was encouraged in a way that might help the narrator feel willing to share her experiences. This helped me

in retrieving more information and helped me to better understand counter-learning that occurs under extreme oppressive situations.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis process began at the proposal stage of this study. As this study looked at the counter-learning experiences of the oppressed people from larger socio-economical, political, and cultural perspectives, integration of historical, cultural, and psychological approaches were utilized. This notion of integration is based on the assumption that learning does not occur in a void. Any learning has its roots with its historical, cultural and psychological context. For example, learning some abstract concepts, such as justice, has to be understood in its specific historical and cultural context and in the learner's cognitive construct: How it is defined, how and why. In narrative inquiry it is important to present vital information related to the context, so that the reader feels the atmosphere in which the narrator lives in. As a result, for this study cultural and socio-historical information had to be integrated. This integration allowed me to better analyze the data. Moreover, along with all supplementary documents, journals, and notes, all written materials taken during interviews were also be reviewed to reveal any underlying assumptions, patterns, or themes.

Nevertheless, during the interviews and during the data analysis I still had to be extra careful. The reason for that was related to the way we communicate with one to another. We, all humans, assume certain things when we communicate with someone. We assume that the person we talk to understands us and knows what we are talking about. We also assume that we understand what the person is talking about. During the conversation we use several venues to tell what we are trying to say; we do not only use

words and their literal meanings; we use our body, our voice; we use analogies, metaphors, and allegories. Instead of consistently interrupting the person to check to see if we understand correctly, we usually assume and attribute our understanding to meaning frames in our mind and say, “Okay,” or do something to send a message to the person saying that we agree or we understand what we are being told. In fact, this is the source of many misunderstandings. This is crucial particularly in a communication with an oppressed person whose language development was deficient due to oppression and repression. Therefore, I was trying very hard not to allow conversations to be colored by my presumptions. I was constantly checking with the participant as to whether I understood correctly. Sometimes she was expecting me to know and understand without her going into details. Sometimes, because of her limited vocabulary, she was unable to come up a correct word. And sometimes, she was unwittingly revealing clues about her cognition, emotions that she was not aware of, and some hidden ideological and cultural meanings.

I sometimes, on the other hand, rephrased what she said and I asked her whether that was what she said. Sometimes, I reminded her of words or concepts. Sometimes, I persistently forced her to put her feelings and thoughts into her own words. Sometimes, trusting my knowledge, my experience, and my gut feelings that came from my similar oppressive experiences, I assumed what she meant. And finally, I sometimes translated what she said into another phrasing to reveal the ideological and cultural sub-meanings.

Verification

The trustworthiness of a narrative account, states Riessman (2003), “cannot be evaluated using traditional correspondence criteria” (p. 342). She further claims that

neither any formulation, nor universally accepted approach exists to validate an interpretive work. Brittin (1995), in the same vein, claims that validation of narratives is irresolvable because narrative truths (not “the truth”) are “relative to the experience, perception, imagination, and underlying motives of the person or persons claiming it” (p. 105). Thus, especially when narratives are related to extreme oppressive and repressive situation where legal documents are absent or not even issued; where murderers and torturers are immune; and where victims are too intimidated to issue a legal claim or collect physical evidence about being tortured or raped, verification becomes almost impossible. Even though, in narrative analysis field there are scholars (such as Lieblich et al., 1998; Riessman, 1993) who suggest a different set of procedures or approaches to evaluate its trustworthiness, it should not be considered as too radical to claim that the notion of validation needs to be seriously reevaluated especially for some politically sensitive studies. Perhaps the validation process should be more flexible for those studies in which stories are about atrocities that most people would not believe even though they witness the very same atrocities with their own eyes.

Nonetheless, this study utilized Riessman’s (1993) suggestions, even though they were not ideal. She suggests four ways of approaching the validation of a narrative study: persuasiveness, correspondence, coherence, and pragmatic use. These four criteria were employed to verify the trustworthiness of this study.

Persuasiveness

Persuasiveness is about whether the interpretations of findings are reasonable and convincing. Persuasiveness is increased when interpretations or theoretical claims are confirmed with evidence from narrators’ accounts. Rhetoric of writings and readers’

responses are two distinct but interrelated strategies. When they are used, the narrative's credibility is strengthened. In this study, the participant's responses were utilized by having a group (peer review) read and reflect upon the interpretations. This was accomplished by collaborating with a peer reviewer throughout the study.

The peer review group was purposefully selected from various groups of people including adult education faculty, an American writer who is in a process of conducting a research in Kurdish culture in Turkey for her own new novel, and a Kurdish political asylee in Switzerland. Because the political asylee did not know how to read and understand English, I translated the narration and the findings and read them in Turkish on the phone. The Kurdish political asylee confirmed the accuracy of the cultural interpretation based on his best knowledge on Kurdish culture and what the narrative provides. In addition, the asylee also confirmed the findings related to the cultural components that oppression creates.

Correspondence

This criterion is to assure the credibility through member checks. Simply, the investigator takes the interpretations back to the participants and asks if the interpretations are adequate. However, affirmation of interpretations by the participants is questionable, because "stories are not static, meaning of experiences shift as consciousness change" (Riessman, 1993. p, 66). Nevertheless, it does not matter if the narrators agree or disagree with the researcher's interpretation, asking them to review the transcripts and reflect on them with their ever changing perspective and consciousness should be considered beneficial for the analysis process. Despite its being disputed, this criterion was utilized via phone in this study because a written form could have caused

some risks. As mentioned above under the data analysis procedure, I was aware of the limitations of the communication mediums (language use and telephone). Therefore, I, by constantly checked with the participant as to whether I understood her correctly, tried hard not to allow conversations to be colored by my presumptions. In addition, reading the transcript to the participant in Turkish provided further clarification for me and for the participant. For example, even though there is a Turkish definition of the English word, empowerment, as a concept which has a deeper and broader meaning it does not exist in Turkish. Therefore, I had to explain what the word empowerment means in the transcript. As a result, the participant was pleased that she had given an opportunity to reflect on my narration of her narrative and my interpretations. Even though she confirmed the accuracy of most of my observation and interpretation, she disputed some of them.

Coherence

Riessman (1993) informs us of three types of coherence that are posited by Agar and Hobes. They are global, local and themal coherence. Ideally, she further claims, the interpretations must be more than ad hoc, “as ‘thick’ as possible...[and] relating to all three levels” (Riessmann, 1993. p, 67). Global coherence refers to the narrators’ goal. When individuals narrate their experiences, they usually have a reason or motivation. For example, as I mentioned when I discussed the similarity and differences between testimonio and CLN, individuals might tell their stories to document the atrocities as opposed to official history. As a result, it is important for the researcher to recognize narrators’ interests and motivation. Local coherence is about how the narrators narrate their stories and determine the structure of the narratives, such as language use including the use of analogies, allegories, metaphors, poems, novels and other literary tools.

Finally, themal coherence is related to the recurrent themes that create a meaningful unity in the story.

Pragmatic use

This last criterion is about whether the study has a potential to become a base for other's study. This study offered important information and insights for not only to adult education but also other interdisciplinary areas of study, such as sociology and political science.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provides a review of the purpose of the study, statement of problem and the research questions. Included is a comprehensive explanation of the methodology, overview of the narrative analysis research design, and a description of the background and qualifications of the researcher. Also provided is a thorough discussion related to the participant selection procedure, data collection, ethical methods related to confidentiality of the participants, methods of analysis, and strategies utilized for verification of the study.

Part II

Part II includes the fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters of this study. Chapter four offers macro and microanalysis and the story of the participant; chapter five includes the macro analysis of the context, Turkey, and the findings from the participant's life story. Finally, the last chapter, chapter six, provides a discussion of the results.

Chapter 4

MACRO AND MICROANALYSIS

The intention of this study was to examine the dynamics of adult counter-learning under extreme oppressive situations in which structural factors (cultural, political, economical, and religious oppression) and oppressive practices and tactics are inflicted on people to both maintain the dominant ideology and its hegemony and eliminate dissidents.

It is a commonly accepted notion among many adult educators such as Freire, Foley, Mezirow, and others, that human experience is not only formed and altered by the context but also by subjective conditions. However, human experience usually comes into existence (cognitively structured) through written or oral narrative in which emotional, sociological, and epistemological particles are embedded, transformed into a myth, an analogy, and allegory, or in a folkloric song, or sometimes hidden behind laughter that makes one blush or sometimes hidden in a look turned away, faraway. Thus, narrative analysis is one of the keys to enter into the labyrinth of individuals' messy, unordered, unarticulated, experiences and provide us with insights.

In order to better understand the nature of counter learning under oppression with a particular culture, it is necessary to inquire into people's narrative, which includes and provides detailed information about the participant's life experiences, and the particular socio political and economical context in which the experiences take place. In this chapter, the participant's life under oppression is told in relation to which factors contributed to and played an effective role in her development of counter learning.

As indicated in Chapter Three, in this chapter a macro analysis of the context (Turkey) is conducted. Before the macro analysis, however, the relevance of Marcuse's critical theory for Turkey is discussed. Finally, after the macro analysis, the participant's narrative is told.

Marcusian Analysis and its Relevance for Turkey

A complete macro analysis of Turkey from Marcusian theory's perspective has to engage in enlightenment philosophies and science (i.e., Hegel, Marx, positivism and rationalism) without excluding their dialectical relations to early Greek and medieval roots, political developments (i.e., liberalism and secularism), economic developments (i.e., industrial revolution and capitalism), and cultural developments (i.e., religious, moral, ethical, and folkloric tradition) of the West. However, for this study, I restrict my argument and explore Marcusian theory and its applicability to Turkey's context from the standpoint of creation of a one-dimensional society.

It is assumed that there are several factors supporting the use of Marcusian theory as a framework to perform a macro analysis of a non-Western Turkish context. The reader needs to know that the reason I argue Marcusian framework and its applicability for Turkish context is to clarify three common misconceptions that might raise some

questions about the applicability. The first misconception is the tendency of believing that philosophical concepts and projects are context specific. I argue that even though the context is important, philosophical projects and concepts are universal as well. The second misconception is about the affluent society's terroristic potentials. Some people might assume that because Marcusean analysis is strictly related to advanced industrialized societies' non-terroristic ways of social control and domination and since Turkey utilizes terror and fear to secure the social control, Marcusean analysis does not apply to the Turkish context. I, however, argue that the affluent society is a terroristic society and the Marcusean analysis never dismissed the society's terroristic potentials. Finally, the third misconception is about global dimensions of technical rationality. It is mostly assumed that technical rationality and total administration, which play a crucial role in the creation of one-dimensional society, only belong to advanced industrial societies. I negate this assumption by claiming that neo-liberal and global capitalist ideology is a nation-less ideology and in order to succeed and maintain its hegemony it needs to share its knowledge of effective ways of creating a one-dimensional society on international and intra-national levels with developing ally countries.

Concepts and Their Universality

There has been a great deal of debate over whether philosophical and scientific constructs are thoroughly context specific. Even though it would be out of the scope of this study to engage in this debate, it is important to state that in various literatures many conceptualizations based on the Western context are presented as an exclusively Western phenomenon (Jaggar, 1998). However, it is argued here that, crucial though the context is, concepts like freedom, reason, knowledge, good, and evil, as Marcuse (1968-1969)

claims, are "universal projections and evaluations" (p. 42) of philosophers. Therefore, even though Marcuse's analyses are based on an examination of specific advanced industrial societies' contexts, the concepts of freedom, liberation, and autonomy, have universal applicability as ideals. Nevertheless, the Frankfurt School is "an intellectual project for the liberation of all humankind" (Brookfield, 2005, p. 274). Despite the universality of abstract concepts, some methods, tactics, and strategies, in relation to manipulation of humans and domination of social lives of people, manifest universality as well. For example, today's marketing and advertising industries campaign to create false needs in global markets (not only in local markets) and persuade consumers to satisfy their "false needs" by buying certain products, also manifest universal use of persuasion and manipulation. Finally, Marcusean analysis is also about how cultural dynamics play a role in both creation of a one-dimensional society and a possibility of liberation. Therefore, although context is crucial, cultural dynamics' role in societies to produce one-dimensional man appears as a universal construct.

Terrorist Potentials of Advanced Society

The civilization with its capitalist dynamics failed to fulfill the promises of modernity since the enlightenment. The enlightenment, with the re-discovery of the great power of the reason and mind, had promised that freedom, autonomy, and liberation of all people were possible with the utilization of reason and technology. In fact, instead of creating a truly human condition in which reason and human potential could be realized, the Frankfurt School believed that civilization created social anomalies and catastrophes and reason failed. Modern capitalism and its dehumanizing technical rationality were to be blamed for this failure. In other words, according to the Frankfurt School, modern

capitalism not only fails to provide a better life for humanity but also brings barbarity through the irrational use of technological rationality and new ways of exercising social control that promotes a one-dimensional society. For Marcuse, advanced industrial society shifted its technique and methods and used more subtle ways to gain a social control over the masses because these subtle ways were more effective. For example, the oppressed (Marcuse would say the alienated) did not have a “false consciousness” anymore to defy against and demand a “true consciousness.” The oppressed is “swallowed up by [his/her] alienated existence” (Marcuse, 1964, p. 11). Most importantly, the oppressed does not think that he/she is being exploited, alienated, and dominated anymore. For the oppressed “[t]here is only one dimension, and it is everywhere and in all forms” (p.11). In other words, the affluent society creates conditions for “*happy submission*” in which oppression and domination is not achieved through the use of overt political and social repression. The affluent society achieves the social control through the subtly utilization of political-economy and cultural dynamics. By doing so, the affluent society’s repressive ideology penetrates into the individuals’ consciousness and individuals deeply internalize the oppression. According to Marcuse (1967) affluent society has the following characteristics:

- (1) an abundant industrial and technical capacity which is to a great extent spent in the production and distribution of luxury goods, gadgets, waste, planned obsolescence, military or semi-military equipment - in short, in what economists and sociologists used to call "unproductive" goods and services;
- (2) a rising standard of living, which also extends to previously underprivileged parts of the population;
- (3) a high degree of concentration of economic and political power,

combined with a high degree of organization and government intervention in the economy; (4) scientific and pseudoscientific investigation, control, and manipulation of private and group behavior, both at work and at leisure (including the behavior of the psyche, the soul, the unconscious, and the subconscious) for commercial and political purposes. (p. 248)

Yet all these characteristics are interrelated and make the social control more subtle and more effective in a way that people tend to believe life as it is; individuals live their life like a cogwheel of a bigger machine and they perceive all social contradictions as irrational and any social mobilization for a change impossible (Marcuse, 1964). And most importantly, these characteristics are not free from terror. Terror is deeply embedded in an advanced society's reason. Even though the affluent society does not seem despotic or authoritarian, in fact it has two faces: democratic on the surface and totalitarian in essence. Marcuse's works are a comprehensive analysis of this totalitarianism, which utilizes all available channels (media, science, consumerism, language, and culture) for exploitation, control, and domination. Kellner (1990) states that Marcuse intentionally uses the term "totalitarian" to reconstruct the existing political cold war discourse in which the use of the term was deliberately associated with only fascism and communism. What were the differences between communist (mainly referring to Stalin's Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and fascist totalitarianism and advanced capitalist societies' totalitarianism? On his critical reflection on Orwell and Marcuse, Kellner (1990) finds a profound difference between the two:

Whereas in *1984* [Orwell's book], it is coercion, overt political repression, even torture and murder, which constitute the crux of the society's instruments and

strategy of social control, in Marcuse's analysis it is more the instruments of culture, mass persuasion, manipulation, consumerism and controlled gratification that function to integrate individuals into advanced capitalism and to produce what Marcuse calls "one-dimensional society" and "one-dimensional man" (§ 52).

However, the distinction between these two great works (Orwell's *1984* and Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*) is not as clear as it appears. It would be an over simplification if one accuses Marcuse of failing to anticipate examination of openly coercive political repression of the society like found in Orwell's *1984*. I would like to argue (perhaps to speculate) that Marcuse possibly did not think that an analysis of terroristic societies was needed since Orwell's elaboration and problematization of openly administered oppression and repression was adequate. Open repression was well known and culminated. What was emerging and less known was the subtle ways of domination in which depoliticized technical rationality was in use with the full power to eliminate oppositional idea formations that would threaten the existing social order and potentially transform the advanced society. What Marcuse might have seen was that affluent society tended to use overt terror internally as an instrument because its "soft" subtle techniques were a part of propaganda against the socialist block. In other words, Marcuse certainly recognizes the terroristic face of the affluent society and claims that the affluent society does not operate with terror and "effectively function... under normal circumstances" (Marcuse, 1970, p. 86). For example, Marcuse discussed the affluent society's terror when he argued about violence in the Deep South, Vietnam, and the imperialist projects of the modern capitalism. He stated that when the students in the United States of America, which is an affluent society, went to the Deep South from the North to help

African Americans to register to vote, they saw how this free, democratic, and affluent society really looks; “what the sheriffs are really up to, how murders and lynching of blacks go unpunished though the criminals are well known” (1970, 86).

In the cold war discourse, capitalist society had to appear to the world that it had a genuine freedom and welfare in contrast to totalitarian Soviet. In other words, it was not the case that the advanced industrial society was not terrorizing its own society because human lives and potentialities were valued in its instrumental rationality. It was just capitalist ideological counter-propaganda against communism. Therefore, it would be false to claim in any way that Marcuse failed to recognize the terrorist potentials of advanced capitalist societies. In *One-Dimensional Man*, he states that

For 'totalitarian' is not only a terroristic political coordination of society, but also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination which operates through the manipulation of needs by vested interests... Not only a specific form of government or party rule makes for totalitarianism, but also a specific system of production and distribution which may well be compatible with a "pluralism" of parties, newspapers, "countervailing powers," etc. (1964, p. 2-3)

Thus, an affluent society is not free from terror. It reserves the power and resources for terrorizing when it feels threatened. For example, a one-dimensional man is not only a happy conformist man but also a resource – a hit man if needed- for terror. A one-dimensional man is a modern fascistic type who is very similar to Fromm's (1941) sadomasochistic type who obeys the higher authority and in the meantime oppresses others who are under his authority. For example, in today's corporate world, there is an emphasis on increasing the value of the company's stock, rather than prioritizing

employees' well-being. As a result, when middle-aged or younger managers are hired to lay off workers and hire others who might cost the company less money, these managers deliver these expectations with a rationale that they are contributing to the overall advancement of the company and do not worry so much about how they might have affected individual employees' lives. They do not realize, or do not want to realize, how much they are alienated, how much they have become one-dimensional, and how much they have become a part of the exploitative machine. Therefore, the existence of more non-subtle terroristic methods in Turkey does not put Turkey out of scope of the Marcusean analysis just because Marcuse's affluent or advanced industrial society internally uses subtle forms of terror.

Advanced Capabilities of Greater Collaboration in a Globalizing Capitalism and Imperialism

Even though Turkey is chronologically in an earlier stage of industrialization, even though its economical and political structure has traditional and authoritarian particles within, its ideological and structural framework comes from neo-liberal and globalist ideology. Marcuse (1964) stated that advanced industrial societies distinguish themselves by "conquering the centrifugal social forces with Technology rather than Terror" (p. x). What he failed to mention was that those societies, in order to maintain their hegemony and domination in the international arena, have to market and share whatever they conquer to the developing countries through both terroristic and non-terroristic ways. Therefore, Turkey, while being a developing non-western society and being a West-dependent state, resembles and has many characteristics seen in the affluent society that Marcuse analyzed.

However, when attempting to elaborate Marcusean analysis' relevance for Turkey, I will not get into the very controversial argument of modernity and westernization. Neither will I argue whether or not Turkey is a western country at a time when Turkey's accession to EU (European Union) is a politically, economically, and culturally contested debate. Neither will I argue modern Turkey's identity in relation to Western culture from polysemic modernization theories' perspectives. I shall confine my argument to the notion of the ways of social control or creation of one-dimensionality is being exercised by the dominant classes and the state in a harmonic collaboration in contemporary Turkey. I will also argue that modern Turkey, in collaboration with the West, utilizes all techniques and strategies (both terroristic and non-terroristic) to create a Turkish version of the one-dimensional man.

What enables Turkey to effectively utilize those oppressive techniques, tactics, and strategies is crucial. It is developing technological opportunities, the global market economy, and the capitalist ideology that requires countries to collaborate. Therefore, I have to argue that today's neo-liberal and globalized world has made Marcusean analyses more relevant than ever to examine developing countries like Turkey. Technological and ideological advancement of capitalism has globalized its ideology and made strategic, economical, political, and geopolitical collaboration possible, if not mandatory, on the transnational level. This collaboration was to secure and enhance the status quo through creation of one-dimensionality at both individual and societal levels. For example, in 1970s and 1980s, Latin American countries secretly signed an agreement to wage a total war against supposedly communist dissidents. One of the well known collaborations was Operation Condor which was an agreement between Latin American military

governments, their secret police, and military forces to eliminate the oppositional forces. Operation Condor was also secretly supported, funded, logistically backed, and intelligently aided by the U.S. (McSherry, 2002). For example, besides training torturers in the School Of America's, the U.S. also educated free-market economic advisors of these countries (Wertz, 2005).

Turkey, in order to maintain its status quo, had three military coups from the 1960s to the 1980s. In addition, after 1984 there was a shadowy covert war against Kurdish minorities. In all these four periods of militarist and ideological repression, the U.S. and Western countries such as Germany, France, and England, and some of their economic organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, supported and aided Turkey's repressive regime. These supports and aids, of course, were not just militaristic; they also included theoretical and practical knowledge of social, political, psychological dimensions of social control and creation of a desired-type of citizen that Marcuse analyzed. In fact, without those "*non-terroristic*" tactics, weapons alone would not be effective. In other words, besides "*terroristic*" aids to military, the West or imperialist world equipped allied Turkey to shape people's consciousness and produce a one-dimensional man by utilizing dynamics of cultural and economical factors. For example, affluent society's accumulated experiences and cultures of advertisement, marketing, art, and entertainment were implemented into Turkish society and they came to determine not only what people buy, but also how they define themselves and their world. They defined themselves with the music they listen to (Rock n Roll or classical or Arabesque), with the brand of shoes they jogged in (Nike or

Converse), what brand of car they drove (Mercedes or Honda), what dishwasher, what refrigerator, what TV they had at home.

Defining themselves with what people possess becomes a need to be satisfied. When this occurs, it becomes repressive. When it becomes repressive, satisfying these needs becomes a way to be happy and a pleasure way of submission. This was what Marcuse depicted when he analyzed the advanced industrial society in the 1960's. Marcuse wrote "The people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, happiness was option for people via their needs that were manufactured and superimposed upon the people by the total administration" (Marcuse, 1964, p. 9). The advertisement industry targets a worldwide audience, not only a specific western audience. The image of McDonalds is universal and calls individuals to satisfy the very same need; eat with an image. In order to achieve this, McDonalds sells not only french-fries and burger but also Turkish shish kebab in Turkey.

Even though Turkey was in an early stage of industrialization, even though it did not traditionally have experience from feudality to capitalism as its counterparts, it was capable of internalizing and absorbing the advanced societies' technological rationality because a well trained advanced capitalist social administration was in power in Turkey. It was constraining individuals' freedom with their commodified needs. Conformity and perpetuation of the status quo was secured because all human faculties with an ability to critique were effectively banned, condemned, and declared to be subversive through systematically promoted one-dimensional thought. Having one-dimensional thought revolving around satisfying false needs of individuals and always being ready to serve as a human shield for predestined high ideals of the Turkish State as a common

denominator, promotes people to develop a sense of unity. A happily submissive mass was ready on demand to be mobilized to terrorize the predefined enemy.

In conclusion, there are several factors supporting this study to use the Marcusian theory as a framework to do a macro analysis of the Turkish context. Now, I will turn to a macro analysis of Turkish society in which relevance to the Marcusian framework will also be seen in more details through specific examples.

A Macro Analysis: Turkey

The following demographic information about Turkey was presented on CIA's official website (2007) where detailed facts about different countries in the world are published and periodically updated.

Demographic Information

Geographically Turkey is located between Europe and Asia, to the north of the Middle East. It has land in both Europe and Asia. Turkey is surrounded by Syria, Iran, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, the Black Sea, Bulgaria, The Aegean Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea. On the other side of the sea to the west is Greece, and to the south is Cyprus.

The population of Turkey is close to 72 million. It is estimated that 25% are younger than 15 years old, 68% between 15 and 64 years old, and 7% are 65 and older. Besides Turks, other ethnic groups reside in Turkey. It is estimated that 20% of the population is Kurdish. Other ethnic groups are Armenians, Jews, Gypsies, and Arabs. The official language is Turkish. The majority of the population are Sunni Muslims. The Turkish government reports that literacy rate is higher for males (95.3 %) than the females (79.6%).

Turkey's economy is 35% based on agriculture. Modern industry, however, holds a bigger portion of the economy. Textile and clothing is the largest industrial sector. While the private sector is rapidly growing, the Turkish state still controls and manages a big part of transportation, communication, banking, and industry. The overall economy is growing and becoming strong, however a high deficit in the budget and high debt to other countries slows the economic progress. About 20% of the population live below the poverty line. Over a million workers work abroad and send money home. The unemployment rate in the country is over 10% and another 4 % are underemployment.

Turkey has been a member of the United Nations since 1945 and became a member of NATO in 1952. Turkey became an associate member of the European community in 1964. In 2004, Turkey's application to join the European Union was accepted for consideration. A decision is expected in 2014.

Political History: Terroristic-Social Engineering

An historical overview of the Turkish state is essential to portray its oppressive and repressive measures that have been inflicting into the Turkish society and specifically towards political dissidents and Kurdish people. Turkey's oppressive structure is rooted in its history. After overthrowing the last relics of the Ottoman Empire, the new Turkish Republic took two countries to itself as a model; New Soviet Socialist Republic and old France. Authoritarian, single-party rule and statist (a political formation that refers to state's significant intervention in societal matters) economy were taken from the Soviet, whereas the model of strict secularism and strict centralized state were taken from France (Rouleau, 1996). Even though being inspired by these models seemed to be and were

justified as necessary to create a nation state, there was "a vicious circle of fear-violence-decay almost from the beginning" (Gerger, 1997, ¶ 3).

After the independence war, the first thing Kemal Ataturk, the founder of Turkey, did was to introduce some radical political, social, and economical reforms. These reforms aimed to a brisk transformation from a traditional society to a westernized nation of state. This rush for transformation, however, involved not only an indiscriminate adaptation of western values and codes, including penal codes from Mussolini's fascist Italy (Human Rights Watch, 1999), but also the creation of a national bourgeois class, without concerning for the nations' hundreds years of tradition, custom, and subjective and material conditions. These top-down and coercive reforms served to create an authoritarian and oppressive structure that would create a distinctly centralized state. These reforms have become a base for Turkey's official ideology (also called Kemalist ideology). While they were regarded as fundamental and unchangeable principles guiding the republic and were stated in the constitution (Library of Congress, 1995), they inevitably created polarization and a widening gap between ruling elites and ordinary citizens (Gerger, 1997). The Turkish state's fear of its own people's progressive potentials lies in this polarization. This insecurity imperatively, Gerger (1997) argues, would lead ruling elites to embrace nationalism and militarism on the one hand, shunning democracy, dreading popular participation, and violating fundamental human rights on the other. For example, in early 1930's, any oppositional political formation (no matter how much peaceful they could be) and any declaration of ethnic identity other than "being Turkish" that was identified by the Kemalist ideology were perceived as a threat to national unity.

Religion

Kemalist reforms were a kind of historical intrusion between the people and their past, their culture, and their identity. In order to transform the society into a Western-like nation state, structural changes were put in action. The new republic soon was declared to be a secular state. Secular, however, did not mean freedom from government's domination over people's belief system. It was actually a new form of state control over religion. The state was assigning imams and approving anything related to religion. Nationalist discourse was overwriting all other cultural and religious discourses. Besides structural changes some non-structural changes were supposed to be implemented, and they were inevitable for success. Along with institutional changes, as Delaney (1994) beautifully stated, "The head was a prime target" (p. 159). The people had to go through foundational changes. They had to think differently. They had to even dress differently. Instead of the fez, ottoman headgear for males, for example, men had to wear the brimmed hat. For women, headscarves were banned. These reforms are signs of oppressive and top-down impositions of the new republic. However, even though these reforms were a Western makeup on the country's Muslim face, they have been found sufficient on the international arena so that Turkey was recognized as a Westernized country.

These top-down inflictions were the beginning of the separation of the nation. On the one side the Kemalist, Westernized, and *bourgeois* elite, on the other side the illiterate, non-Westernized and suppressed Muslim mass. The end result of this repressive separation was an elite group who has little, if anything in common with ordinary Turkish people, peasants, and workers. As Ahmad (1993) stated "...between the rulers and the

ruled who found they had less in common with the new elite which seemed to live in a world totally different from their own...And yet the rulers claimed to be populist” (p. 92). Therefore, even today, most of the misapprehensions about Turkey and its relationship with Islam come from here (Erdogan, n.d.) because even though Islam has been made invisible on the Turkey’s international political stage, Islam is and has always been very powerful in the cultural spheres. In other words, no matter how Western-looking the Turkish republic is Islam is historically ingrained in the Turkish cultural fabric. Islam has always been prevalent in the public sphere and has been one of the determining factors in most people’s interaction with each other or even with the world. There is nothing to be surprised about here. What is surprising is that the secular Turkish state did not protect its citizen from Islam’s everyday oppressive practices. The state has appeared to be only caring about the Kemalist ideology and principles. In other words, while the state announces itself secular, the laws, the police, the courts, and the government institutions fail to impose the separation of the state and the mosque. For example, if a person does not participate in Ramadan and does not fast, the person can easily be subjected harassment by co-workers, boss, or the administration in the workplace. If the person complains to the police or to the courts, the person will more likely experience more harassment from these institutional bodies. In another example, until 1999, forcible virginity testing was legal which shows collaboration between the state and Islamic morality to exercise power over the women’s body and sexuality. One of the several Human Rights Watch reports (HRW, 1994) indicates that even women applying for government jobs were subjected to the virginity clearance. Moreover, the principals of schools had the power to send “suspected girls” to the doctor for a virginity check. In

order to be suspected, being seen walking with a boy in the school yard or on the street is enough. Furthermore, because moral norms and values are usually rooted in an Islamic patriarchy, women's behaviors are further restricted and be subjected to be used against them. For example, a rapist received reduced sentences when he claimed that the victim was wearing tight blue jeans and the tight blue jeans seduced him. Furthermore, again until very recently the state neglected honor killings in the areas where the level of education tends to be low. For decades honor killings were not even publicized. The courts would provide a significant reduction in the sentencing; if for example, a father killed his daughter to "clean his family's honor."

As a result, whereas the Turkish state controls and suppresses Islam for outside world in order to be seen with its Western makeup, it uses Islamic discourse and cultural elements to maintain its hegemony within the country. Therefore, Islam, in the Turkish state's hands, is used and kept as an auxiliary emergency device which is executed when it is needed to maintain the status quo.

Militarism

Among other institutions, military plays a very crucial role in Turkey for maintaining and reproducing its ideological hegemony. In order to understand how oppressive and repressive projects were carried out, it is necessary to take a closer look at the Turkish Military. Thus, military's relationships with Kemalist ideology and corporate capitalism within the Turkish culture will be discussed in this section.

As a profession, Turkish military's historical roots might be traced back more than five centuries (Library of congress, 1995). Besides of this historical background, traditional culture in Turkey "recognizes and accepts the legitimacy of the military as an

arm of the community” (Tachau & Helper, 1983, p. 18), the arm that functions like the iron fist in a velvet glove. Traditionally, the military is considered as the representation of the state. The state is perceived as Devlet Baba (father state). The father state is a supreme and self-ruling body that is independent from the people. It is the father who has ultimate legal and traditional rights as well as normative responsibility to protect the nation from not only external but also internal threats. Therefore, this responsibility grants the military a right to punish and sometimes even kill the people in order to maintain the social order. As a result, there is a very strong ground for justification if the state terrorizes its own people. In other words, the military’s solemn duty is to maintain the status quo rather than serve people.

Turkish Military and Politics. As an important requirement to build a westernized democracy, Kemalism puts armed forces at a distance from civil functions of government (Library of Congress, 1995; Tachau & Helper, 1983). Engaging in politics is forbidden to active-duty officers. However, this separation from daily parliamentary politics should not be taken literally because regardless of its status, the military is the only ultimate guarantor of Kemalist norms and ideologies (Poulton, 1999). For example, the National Security Council’s (MGK, Milli Guvenlik Konseyi) members and the staff commanders are permanent members of the senate, and have control over the presidency. Consequently, MGK’s interests have to be regarded and respected in every stage of the decision-making process (Ergil, 1975; Jacoby, 2003). If not, the threat of intervention is always on the table. Thus, MGK’s interests cannot and shall not be ignored by any government. In other words, there is no authority other than the military in the final analysis to be able to decide what is best for the country. Furthermore, the army is the

only true owner of the country. Mustafa Kemal himself stated in his speech: “When speaking of the army, I am speaking of the intelligentsia of the Turkish nation who are the true owners of this country” (Ankara Turk Inkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü, 1952, p. 226). When the army is defined as the true owner of the country, it is hard to talk about democratic participation of the people and their progressive potential in the process of change.

Turkish Military and Transnational Capitalist Ideology. The military’s positionality in economic-polity is another motivating factor to be questioned in order to understand its gross brutality towards its own people, because it would be too naïve to perceive the military’s actions from only the notion of national security. Jacoby (2003) asserts that Turkish militarism in all three coups (1960, 1971, and 1980) “has sought to enhance its economic position by institutionalizing closer ties with both domestic industrial capitalism and the international neo-liberal order” (p. 669). For example, following the 1960’s intervention, in order to place itself closer to the emerging bourgeoisie, the military established the Army Mutual Assistance Association (AMAA) in 1961 (Jacoby, 2003). By 1975, this organization “subsidized over 19,000 homes, advanced 35,000 personal loans and amassed tax-exempt assets in excess of two billion Turkish Liras” (Vaner, as cited in Jacoby, 2003, p. 677) According to Jacoby, by 1996 the AMAA “had acquired interest in highly capital-intensive sectors of the economy such as the automotive industry (with Renault and Goodyear), aggregate extraction and processing stock speculation (with Axa), military aircraft construction (with Lockheed), and weapons manufacture” (p. 677).

Moreover, despite Turkey's well-known and well-documented enormous human rights violations, by the end of the 1980's, Turkey had become the world's third largest recipient of American assistance (Helsinki Watch, 1992) and "received more than \$4 billion in economic aid" (Jacoby, 2003. p. 679). Jacoby (2003) noted that in return, "Turkey has become the world's biggest purchaser of military hardware and the United States' most important customer" by 1994 (p. 679). Furthermore, the defense ministry budget in Turkey exceeded the combined allocations for education and health. For example, according to Ministry of Foreign Affairs web site, the defense ministry's budget in 1995 equaled to 11.4% of the national budget (MFA, 2004).

The September 12 Coup and State Terrorism. In order to rationalize the September 12, 1980 coup, dominant discourse promulgated that Turkey was polarized and fragmented in the 1970's between the left and the right wing political groups, which resulted in an anarchic turmoil. Even though the state-sanctioned ultra right was the one who employed the violence towards not only the left but also to certain minorities (i.e. Alewis and Kurds), the left was to blame. Ahmad (1981) argued well this fact by stating that "the origins of organized terrorism are to be found in this period [1970's] and the responsibility for it falls squarely on the shoulders of the right" (p. 20). Despite the evidence, the right continued to deny its role in the terrorism of the 70's, always blaming the left. One of Prime Minister Demirel's statements reflects the relationship between the state and this cold-blooded murderer organization (named Grey Wolves), which is a youth branch of neo fascist party called Nationalist Action Party (NAP) (for more information on NAP and its politics of fear see Yavuz, 2002):

They [the Grey Wolves] are our children, it does not matter if they have gone a little overboard; they are nationalist and anti-communist youths and no great harm can come from them. (Ahmad, 1981, p. 20)

In fact, the left was naïve. It was more Kemalist than Marxist and most importantly peaceful and democratic at the beginning (mid 60's). The left's central notion, for example, was for an independent Turkey against American imperialism, which was rooted in one of the Kemalist principles - independence. Gerger (1997) claims the left's position in Turkey as:

The Turkish Social Democracy calls itself the 'National Left'. To be sure, the resemblance to 'National Socialism' is not only semantic. The non-Kemalist Left, on the other hand, is too small, divided, isolated and oppressed to be a viable force in the foreseeable future to initiate change by itself. (¶ 52)

Due to the ultra right's provocative violent attacks, the left felt the need for self-defense. Armed struggle had become an only option for some of the university students to protect themselves from state-supported attacks and illegal organizations. This characterized the 1970's as a political turbulence (Tachua & Heper, 1983) with "anti-systemic armed groups from both ends of the political spectrum fighting each other on the streets" (Poulton, 1999, ¶ 6). Violence left "more than 5,000 people dead and 20,000 injured from 1977 to 1980" (Lombardi, 1997. p.196).

However beyond violence, the main reason for the coup was perhaps something else. It was perhaps the perceived threat to the dominant ideology from the left because the left had created a possibility for hope and emancipation to those who were poor and oppressed. If the reason was the violence and people, it has to be asked why the coup did

not come much earlier than 1980 (Ahmad, 1981; Tachau & Heper, 1983) since many people were being killed on a daily basis on the streets. If it came earlier, the coup “could have certainly saved many more [lives]” (Ahmad, 1981. p. 5). Even though we have no way of knowing for sure what was the real reason for the time of intervention, the coup’s proved to result in harsh, inhumane, and gross measures towards the left and the poor (Ahmad, 1981; Mephram, 1987) lead me to believe that it was not for the good of the people. Perhaps for the first time, masses started seeing that the life that they had was not their divine and unchangeable destiny. The masses found out that the life they had was a result of exploitive economic and oppressive political practices of the state for the benefits of certain social classes. Perhaps for the first time, masses were empowered and their self-confidence increased because of the left’s struggle. Consequently, the hopes of the people increased for the possibility of a change and for creating a better society. Their will to join the process and play an active role was also aroused. For example, leftist union organizations gained increased membership and power. As a result, union workers and university students were the main targets of the coup since they were the backbone of the progressive movement and the emancipation of Turkey.

September 12, 1980 was a turning point in the history of the Republic. People, in the mid 1980’s, joked that Turkey’s history could be divided as BC (Before Coup) and AC (After Coup). The coup had restructured the country irreversibly in a way that the whole society had been traumatized, even though only the left and the Kurds were defined as internal enemies that threatened the fundamental values of Kemalism, Turkish capitalism, and the Kurdish feudal system. Beyond generals-corps’ financial agendas on receiving loan and aid from the World Bank (Birand, 1987; Paul, 1981) and IMF (International

Monetary Fund) (Jacoby, 2003), the coup appeared to be coming not for the people but coming to “neutralize the large numbers of left-wing political activists” (Jacoby, 2003. p. 678), while “the left is not and has never been a threat to the state” (Ahmad, 1981. p.10).

Historically, Turkey's authoritarian culture permeated every aspect of life and violence was considered a primary method for conflict resolution. In comparison to the earlier military interventions in 1960 and 1971, the 1980 coup's repression-in terms of the number of people arrested and systematic terror methodologies used- were significantly worse. The universal characteristic of all the states that use terror is to conceal and cast a shadow over the facts. Therefore, there are no certain statistics or study on the Turkish military and its paramilitary groups' terror towards the people (TAYAD, 2000). As a result, the literature provides some estimated numbers. According to Jacoby (2003), for example, 122,609 people were arrested within the first seven months of the coup and more than 10,000 were in the first week. Hale (1994) offered:

However, it was labour organisations that were most affected. By September 1981, 167 mass trials were underway, of which the majority focused on ‘left-wing’ allegations. By 1983, these had sentenced 39,529 people to jail terms of various lengths (p. 253).

Even though there was not any armed or democratic resistance to the coup (Country Studies, 1995), Ahmad (1993) commented “arrests and trials were the principal features of daily life” (p. 185). Moreover, Mephram (1987) indicated that the newspaper Milliyet estimated that over 300,000 people were prohibited from leaving the country. More than 8,000 who lived outside of the country were also prohibited from returning to Turkey due

to accusation of *disseminating information that would harm the prestige or influence of the state*.

In the early morning of September 12, 1980, democratic organizations including political parties were banned. Martial law was extended to the entire country. At that very moment, it was the reign of terror. Tens of thousands were arrested, tortured or killed, many disappeared and their bodies were never found, and countless people went into exile. It was catastrophic. Almost all police stations had been turned into torture chambers. Fear was constantly being induced in daily life. It was deliberate, systematic, centrally organized, directed from the top, and patriotically and obediently followed and implemented. Because the terrifying torture techniques, and materials-used were almost identical, we can claim that none of the acts were random, individualistic-sadistic, or were acts of a couple of bad apples. By spreading terror, the regime not only prevented the public's supportive tendency towards the left, but also suppressed the general masses. This suppression left a kind of, as Garretton, (1992) states, existential "dilemma of having to choose whether to be a hero or a traitor" or just be a mute-deaf-and-blind"(p. 18). Everyone was vulnerable. Nobody was immune. It was chaotic. It was a catastrophe. Fear was the only aspect forming the atmosphere of daily life:

- Fear of being taken under the custody from anywhere; from home, street, school
- Fear of being tortured
- Fear of being killed, disappeared, and raped
- Fear of being watched; fear of being labeled; and fear of losing family members and friends.

The Coup's Apparatuses

The most influential tools for this were the media, daily incidents, and education.

Media. Mainstream media and state sponsored television stations were the most powerful pedagogical tools that were utilized to create the desired social atmosphere; fearful and conformist. The mainstream media were fully supportive of the coup, thankful, and grateful. There was a rootless campaign that was unleashed to construct a reality into people's consciousness: *the country was about to be destroyed and collapsed by the leftist youth and the labor movement; if the military did not do its duty, it would be catastrophic.* At the beginning, the media was only preoccupied with the campaign of that reconstruction. Then, television (there was only state sponsored TV) and newspapers gradually and repeatedly showed people who were killed by security forces. The state sponsored TV also showed people who were arrested; they were being faced to the wall, their head were down as if they were ashamed of what they were allegedly accused of, and there were always confiscated books, magazines, newsletters and guns laid down on the table. The Turkish flag was used as a tablecloth and the bullets that were supposedly confiscated by the security forces spelled out "Turkish Police" or "Turkish Security Forces". As a result of this visual representation of the "togetherness" of books and guns, reading became almost the most dangerous act within just a couple of months. While there was not any official list of forbidden books disseminated, many books were forbidden. In many cases, people learned which books were forbidden after being arrested for having a particular book. Hundreds of thousands of boxes of books were burned by people in their bathrooms in the middle of September of 1980 as an attempt to protect themselves from getting into trouble. Anyone could easily tell that from the

smoke-covered sky. It would be a sunny warm day, but most houses' chimneys would be smoking.

Even today, so many books are forbidden and journalists, writers, and intellectuals are still under state supported violence in Turkey. For example, according to Reporters Without Borders Organization's 2004 annual report on Turkey (2004) killings, imprisonments, books banning, physical assaults towards journalists, writers, and intellectuals were widespread.

The mainstream media had suddenly and voluntarily become the coup's voice, exaggerated the military and police's successful operations in relation to the war against "subversives", and filtered out what issues would be covered, ignored, or covered in the least read section of newspaper with small fonts to mold public's interest (i.e. sports, sex, western apolitical music, etc.). Newspapers were regularly censored, non-mainstream newspapers and magazines were confiscated, and their journalists and publishers were prosecuted. Although the assaults on media did not stop by the new constitution accepted in 1983 and transition to democracy, between 1983 to the late 1980's there were many publications and journalists that questioned the authorities. A weekly magazine, called *Nokta*, for example, would be able to publish a torturer's confession in 1986.

In the meantime, however, Kurdish problems were getting complex and complete suppression was being administered. While the mainstream media intentionally ignored the facts about human rights violations, those (mostly pro-Kurdish) who did not follow the regulations and censorship were being silenced, subjected to long periods of imprisonment and torture, and forced to exile as a first phase for intimidation. If none of those intimidations worked, the second and the simplest, the most serious, and the most

effective phase was employed: murder. The 1996 Amnesty International's report, for example, indicated "The risk of imprisonment for the written word may be lower for a Turkish journalist or human rights defender of the [early] 1990's, but the risk of being killed is very much higher" (Amnesty International, 1996. p. 6). *Censorship by the bullet* (article19.org, 1992) was employed with increasing regularity and with all official support. Prime Minister Demirel would respond to journalists who asked about journalists killed by either security forces or death squad by stating: "those killed were not real journalists. They were militants in the guise of journalist" (Marcus, 2007, p. 193). According to Article19.org (1992) in the first seven month of 1992, seven journalists were murdered six of them in southeast region where the mostly Kurdish population lives. Furthermore, in the same period, three other journalists were murdered in suspicious circumstances and one was attempted to be murdered. A horrifying attempted murder was described by article19.org as follows:

... **Burhan Karadeniz**, correspondent for the newly-formed daily *Özgür Gündem*, [1992] was shot by an unidentified gunman on 5 August. The wounded journalist was put on a plane bound for Ankara in order to receive emergency treatment. Security police removed him from the plane and meanwhile threatened local doctors in an attempt to prevent them treating the wounded man. There are serious concerns that the man may be paralyzed on account of the delay in medical treatment (article19.org, 1992, ¶ 11) (Bold and italic are original)

Moreover, Amnesty International (1996) states that Turkish authorities attempted to prevent international scrutiny of their human rights record by banning its foreign critics from entering the country.

Foreign journalists and investigative delegations have been removed from the country. Two Amnesty International research delegates have been banned from entering Turkey; one of them was arrested and deported after being held incommunicado for 48 hours. When the Reuters news agency began regular detailed coverage of human rights issues, Aliza Marcus, the staff writer responsible, was indicted under Article 312 for “incitement to hatred”. She was acquitted, but the Press and Information General Directorate refused to renew her press accreditation. Unable to work, she left Turkey in February 1996 (Amnesty International, 1996, p. 13).

More recently, Sebati Karakurt, a mainstream newspaper *Hurriyet*'s reporter, was detained early in the morning of October 15, 2004 by ten police officers from an anti-terrorism unit. He was detained for interviewing a Kurdish militant and writing about Kurdish militants' daily life. The unit also searched his house, treated him as a terrorist, and threatened to keep him in detention for 48 hours unless he gave them the photographs that he had taken (Onderoglu, 2004). Moreover, according to the BIA2's (Network for Monitoring and Covering Media Freedom and Independent Journalism) third quarterly Media Monitoring Report the following violations occurred during the period of July-September 2004:

- two out of six reporters in the provinces of Van and Ordu were threatened
- for 69 journalist, 26 court cases were opened; and
- *Gunluk Evrensel*, a daily newspaper, was charged a fine of 10 billion Turkish liras (\$ 6,700) for publishing a caricature of the prime minister and many more cases

of attacks, threats, detentions, and arrests against media members. (BIA news center, 2004)

Besides journalists, others such as writers, publishers, academicians, and scientists were also arrested for various reasons including insulting the president, supporting separatist organizations, insulting Kemalism, disseminating separatist propaganda, and insulting the moral values of the Turkish Republic. Moreover, numerous books, daily newspapers, and weekly and monthly magazines were confiscated. According to the article19.org, during the first six months of 1992, copies of 12 books were confiscated. Eight of them were written by the Turkish sociologist, Ismail Besikci who spent at least 12 years in prison, and faced many more years in prison because of his research and writings on Kurdish culture, history, and policies. (For more info for Besikci's case, see Munos, 1998)

Daily incidents. Three major strategies were used by the regime to create an atmosphere of fear in daily life. They were violence, random police search, and the feeling of being watched. These three strategies were being executed in the ambiguity of daily life. Everything was so uncertain and anything could happen anytime, to anyone, and in any place. The first and most powerful strategy was the violence: it became so normal to see a black car, mostly Renaults produced by the Turkish military, approach a person on the road. Then, three or four undercover police would get out and start beating the person with their bare hands, their feet, a stick, and/or sometimes with the bottom of their guns and take the person away.

The second strategy was the arbitrary police searches. Police could stop anybody at anytime and ask for identification. If someone did not have it, they would take the

person into custody. Having an ID with you would not prevent anything, though. If they wanted to take a person, they would do so.

Finally, there were the mysterious sounds of walkie-talkies; metallic buzz sounds in every societal area. This included university corridors, cafeterias, restaurants, café houses, and crowded streets. Nobody but security forces were allowed to carry walkie-talkies. This was widely known. As a result, people would get a feeling that they were being watched; even followed. This created a powerful artificial paranoia. Nobody could trust anybody because anybody could have been an informer or undercover agent for the regime. This phenomenon led to a social hysteria of informing others. If a person did not like his or her neighbor, they would call the police and state that their neighbor was acting suspiciously. The rest would be taken care of by the security forces.

Daily incidents in the eastern part, in which the main Kurdish conflict took place, were mostly unknown because it was a region that was concealed to any outsider but security forces. However, it was well documented by the Turkish Human Rights office that daily life was paralyzed by the terror perpetuated by the security forces, paramilitary groups, and the other armed groups.

Education. After the coup, a more fascistic educational system was installed. It was more racist, more authoritarian, more conformist, and more conservative. Traditionally school and education were militarized; therefore, it was not hard to install a new fascistic ideology and add more flavor to it. Customarily in the schools, for example, all students had to rise when their teacher entered the classroom and had to respond to his or her “Good Morning” with “Thank You”. Then students had to recite a long text starting with the phrase “I am Turkish, I am honorable, I work hard.” This text ends with

“I give my existence as a present to the Turkish existence.” The military dictated a set of new higher education requirements too; in all universities, academies, and colleges Turkish History became a mandatory course. Previously the religion class, which was heavily written from the Muslim Sunni sect’s point of view, was an elective. The new system made the course mandatory for even non-Muslim students. Moreover, another course, entitled the *National Security Knowledge* was also mandatory. All of these aimed to produce a desired citizen type; someone who was nationalistic, conformist, and a soldier, because the “Turkish nation was a soldier nation” and “every Turk is born as a soldier”. Even recently, 28 years after the coup, these indoctrinations of creation of a one-dimensional man are still active. For example, Bora (quoted in Altinay, 2004) reviewed the textbooks and concluded that nationalism was presented in the textbooks in a “‘commanding tone’ that rules out the possibility of any critique” (p. 122); it was the case all the time. Altinay’s (2004) interview with high school students from the early 1980’s revealed that none of her interviewees questioned why they had to have that course. It was just always there.

Thousands of new books were written and prescribed for education. They were full of propaganda. There was a Turkish flag on the first page of almost all textbooks in K-12. The language of the books was reviewed carefully and words, terms, and concepts were deliberately selected. Certain words were omitted, as if they never existed; they were replaced with old Turkish words. For example, the term “revolution” was replaced with the old Turkish (Arabic) term “inkilap” which does not have any association to the left, or progression, or a class struggle because the term “revolution” was widely used by the left. In fact, the term “inkilap” was more close to the term “reform” which does not

refer to any structural and fundamental changes. Liberal educators either were arrested, forced to flee from the country, or got fired. The regime encouraged other educators just to be a “real teacher”: someone who does not teach anything other than he/she was asked to teach. Moreover, they were encouraged to report students who had the potential or tendency to criticize the regime to security forces.

Besides elimination of dissidents, restructuring institutions and socio-political life, one of the junta’s central objectives “was to institutionalize a stable neo-liberal regime” (Jacoby, 2003. p. 678). These objectives were accomplished in two years. However, increased poverty (Boratav, 1990) and other social and economical problems appeared with the potential of civil protest. Through international and national capitalist elite’s pressure, the coup’s head General Evren pushed the transitional process to return to democracy earlier than it was actually initiated (Jacoby, 2003). For example, Vehbi Koc, one of the wealthiest men of Turkey, warned the coup not to delay the return of democracy in order not to lose western countries and their financial aids (Arat, 1991 cited in Jacoby, 2003). As a result, in 1982 a new constitution was prepared and went to popular referendum. Before the referendum, it was forbidden to discuss the constitution; especially any critique was strictly banned. Only the National Security Officers could talk about it. The referendum vote took place under the shadow of guns and fear that had been established in two years. There were only two cards to vote: a red card for “No” to the new constitution and a white card for “Yes”. Scarily, the envelope was very thin and white; it was almost transparent. In addition, there were police, plainclothes officers and soldiers waiting in front of the referendum boxes. It was impossible not to be noticed if someone put the red card in the white envelope. Moreover, those who potentially would

have voted nay to the constitution had already disappeared, had either executed, murdered, imprisoned, or fled from Turkey. Under this condition the new constitution was accepted by over 90% of voters. That was a great indicator of coups' success. General Kenan Evren then became president, which came with extraordinary powers. For example, he had ultimate authority to veto any constitutional changes and to outlaw political parties (Mephram, 1987).

Even though this was widely promulgated as a “return to democracy”, it simply was not. For example, Yavuz (2002) claims that the Turkish army never left political governance, rather it institutionalized and embedded its power by consolidating its autonomy within the broader political system. Yavuz further claims that the Turkish military, with its role within the National Security Council, got complete authority to determine the “friends” and “foes” of the political system. This institutional totalitarianism, or “supra-state role,” was the core of the politics of fear. “The military in Turkey has become the major partner in governing and *disciplining* as a guardian of the anti-liberal state ideology: Kemalism” (Yavuz, 2002, p. 203) (italics are original). Transition to democracy was a kind of camouflage for the already militarized society with almost all institutions; it was democracy on the surface with all universally accepted formal requisites (i.e. political parties, parliament, elections, etc.). What lay beneath, however, was a deeply rooted fascistic and authoritarian military regime. The 1982 constitution was the statue of repression with full of democratic discourse in the highlights and their contradictory opposites in the small prints (Mephram, 1987). One example to illustrate this is as follows:

The case of Human Rights Association demonstrates the bizarre logic which is used to legitimate the exclusion from Turkish civil society of any independent political life. This association had its application turned down in January 1987- firstly because protection of human rights is guaranteed in article 13 of the constitution, so that a human rights association is redundant, and secondly because it is illegal for an association to pursue political aims, which a human rights association would invariably do if it were raise issues relating to prison conditions and legal processes (Mephram, 1987, p. 23).

Democracy and Extended Terror

The transition to democracy in 1982 with a new constitution was not a real return to democracy. The army never left political governance; rather, it institutionalized and embedded its power by consolidating its autonomy within the broader political system (Yavuz, 2002). It did not end gross human rights violations either. In fact, new extended patterns of oppression were being implemented in more systematic, more selective, and more brutal ways. The transition to democracy was accompanied by a democratic and neo-liberal discursive veil to the West, an extreme rhetoric of idealized nationalism to the internal masses. For example, Human Rights Watch's report (Human Rights Watch, 2005) stated

Torture remains common in Turkey today. In the twenty years following the 1980 military coup, successive governments maintained a system of detention and interrogation that encouraged torture and protected the perpetrators. As a result, more than 400 Turkish citizens died in custody apparently as a result of torture, with forty-five deaths in 1994 alone (¶ 6).

Outcomes of years of oppression was going to flourish with a widespread conformity and mass compliance on the further state terror against Kurds.

Kurds

During World War I, Kemal Ataturk asked the Kurds' help to fight against European occupiers for establishing an independent republic with a possibility of Kurdish autonomy. However, when the Treaty of Sevres was signed in 1920 and declared the right of autonomous development to Turkey's non-Turkish minorities, including Kurds, (Gunter, 1990), Ataturk dismayed "with considerable Kurdish help" (Gunter, 1990, p. 12) and the treaty "was never acted upon" (White, 2000, p. 70). Instead, "the treaty of Sevres was suppressed by the Treaty of Lausanne, on 24 July 1923" (White, 2000, p. 70). By Lausanne, Turkey as a modern republic was recognized internationally "without any special provisions" for the Kurds (Gunter, 1990, p. 12). Kemalism "had brutally broken its promise to the Kurds and embarked upon a ruthless policy of complete denial of Kurdish existence and forced assimilation" (Gerger, 1997, ¶ 12). This can be considered as the beginning of a racist republic with a phobia of any kind of Kurdish sentiment and any awareness of Kurdish ethnic identity.

Total denial of Kurdish existence and forceful assimilation policies, on the other hand, created wide spread opposition against the Turkish state. Between 1925 and 1939, for example, three major Kurdish uprisings had occurred. All those revolts, however, were mercilessly crushed (Gunter, 1990; Robins, 1993). Bruinessen explained (quoted in Gunter, 1990) what happened after the revolts as follows;

...a systematic policy aiming at detribalization and assimilation of the Kurds was adopted...Everything that recalled a separate Kurdish identity was to be abolished: language, clothing, names (p. 12).

Because it is not my intention to delve deeply into historical issues about Turkey and Kurds for this paper, I will give some historical snapshots to help readers understand the degree of oppression.

- In 1962, Yusuf Azizoglu, a Kurdish and the Minister of Health, built some hospitals and dispensaries in the east. He, then, was forced to resign in the course of “regionalism” (Gunter, 1990).
- In March 1981, Serafettin Elci, former Minister of Public Works was sentenced to two years and three months in prison for making “Kurdish propaganda” in late 1970s (Gunter, 1990).
- Two French doctors were allegedly imprisoned for more than five months because of possessing a Kurdish music tape and a pamphlet on the Kurds in French (Gunter, 1990).
- Ismail Besikci, a well-known Turkish sociologist, was arrested several times because of his study on Kurdish culture and identity (Gunter, 1990).
- In 1991, during her first inauguration, Leyla Zana, the first Kurdish woman elected to Turkey’s parliament was arrested and sentenced for 15 years because she first took the oath of loyalty in Turkish, as required by the law and then she added in Kurdish, "I shall struggle so that the Kurdish and Turkish peoples may live together in a democratic framework"(Amnesty International, nd, ¶ 2).

New Kurdish Uprising. When the mid 1980s arrived, the Turkish left was largely swiped from public sphere. Except those who fled from Turkey, most leftists had many years in prisons and were struggling with the daily routine of torture and bad prison conditions. Meanwhile, in Diyarbakir prison, Kurdish political prisoners were “receiving the harshest treatment from the government” (McDowall, 1985, p. 27) because of their leftist viewpoint, their ethnic identity, and their demands for Kurdish cultural rights. Some journalists, who somehow could manage to attend trials in Diyarbakir, wrote how prisoners were sometimes brought to court in metal cages loaded on trucks and they were in a condition that they were barely capable of walking or standing (Kutschera, 1994).

Despite the state’s confidence that Kurdish nationalist movement in the early 1980’s was eliminated (Legum et al., 1982), Kurds were almost the only group who were resisting against the state repression both inside (prisons) and outside. When Partiya Karkaran Kurdistan (PKK, Kurdistan Workers’ Party, Kurdish armed group) launched its first attack on military targets, the Turkish state was in shock. This was due to the fact that the state and military culturally and historically had always been almost divine and untouchable. In fact, even in the 1970’s turmoil, the military was hardly targeted. Then, in 1984, especially after the brutal military regime of the 1980s, a group appeared to be attacking and deliberately targeting military bases. Most importantly, this group appeared to be threatening the Turkish Republic’s absolute indivisible “territorial integrity” and “national unity”. What was making the situation more difficult for the Turkish state was its dominant racist ideology that did not recognize existence of even such ethnic group; it was a catastrophic paradox. The Turkish state was not even able to name the problem at least in its discourse. Authorities, in the beginning, would not even want to call it

something that potentially could give it an official status, such as Kurdish nationalists, terrorists, guerillas, or subversives. Then they came up with an old word from Ottoman Language- saki (pronounced as shacki). Saki's meaning is close to English word "bandit". Saki was widely used by the authorities and the media for a long time in a way that even its social context was stripped and only its antisocial, apolitical, and primitive features were referred to and put up front. (For a theoretical analysis about whether Kurdish Nationalist movement is a primitive revolt or not see White, 2000).

Consequently authorities continued undermining PKK and its power. It was declared that sakis were just "a handful of terrorist bandits" (White, 2000, p. 192). Gunter (1990) wrote that Turkish sources in 1987 estimated that sakis' number inside the Turkish territory was no more than 300. Approximately one month later the prime minister declared that the number was 3,449. One week later, the prime minister's remarks were reckoned by the same source and it was claimed that: "half of these had been caught or killed thus leaving about 15 hundred left" (Gunter, 1990, p. 80). However, as the Turkish state increased harsh and violent measures to eliminate the PKK in desperation of unknowing how to handle the situation, the PKK continued to grow and found more support from its grassroots which were widely spread all over Turkey. Marcus (1990) wrote about a school teacher's words from Sirnak, a southern city: "in 1984, when the PKK started fighting, maybe 20 percent of the people around here supported the PKK...But now, it's more than tripled thanks to the way the army and the government treat the people here" (p. 42). By quoting from Aliza Marcus, Gunter (1990) states that by mid-1989 a new report declared that number of PKK militants were 5,000. However, authorities kept

using the same derogatory terminology of “saki”, even when the number of armed PKK guerillas estimated at between 10,000 and 15,000 (White, 2000).

Even though repression has always been Turkey’s response to any security conflicts, the Kurdish issue was different and security forces went further to extreme ruinous strategies. Kurds were redefined as the enemy; an enemy that was more dangerous than “communists”. Suddenly, every single Kurd was perceived as a potential PKK sympathizer, terrorist, and/or separatist by the security forces. In the mean time, the dominant discourse defined Kurdish militants as ghost-like creatures with an underlined heavy nationalistic tone and rhetoric. For example, high-ranking military officials, politicians, and the right-wing militias were consistently analyzing and propagating about how militants worked in the region. A colonel’s comment, quoted by Gunter (1990, p. 81) is worth mentioning:

They [the PKK’s militants] sit at the coffeehouses during the day. At night they dig up their guns and attack. When we arrive at the same coffeehouse they embrace us and tell us that we are their saviors.

This and other similar statements resulted in escalating ambiguity, fear, as well as hate in public towards the entire Kurdish population. Moreover, this campaign had also created a very strong base to justify violence against Kurdish civilians and found popular consent.

Dirty War and State Terrorism

*"I am an unsolved murder now where everyone is a little bit of a perpetrator."
Hicri Izgoren, a Kurdish poet.
quoted in Turkish Daily News, June 16, 1998*

After 1984, a state of emergency was declared in 10 provinces where mostly Kurdish people resided. This was the declaration of a “full-scale dirty war” (Amnesty

International, 1996, p. 50). A large range of power and official immunity from prosecution had been given to the security forces (Amnesty International, 1996). Besides the strategies of the 1980s (systematic torture, police brutality, censor, indoctrination, etc. argued above), the Turkish state added new patterns of political repression after 1984 including more systematic torture, disappearances, extrajudicial killings and assassins, and mass killing. All these crimes were carried out by both security forces and proxies. Security forces included police, gendarme, intelligence agents MIT (National Intelligence Organization) and JITEM (Intelligence Service of the Gendarmerie), and Special Forces (with or without uniform or insignia). The proxies included:

- Confessors: These were convicted members of the armed opposition groups. They were unofficially *and* sometimes through torture and by death threat recruited by the security forces (Amnesty International, 1996);
- Right wing paramilitary groups who had strong connections with drug trafficking mafia and JITEM;
- Militants of a Muslim extremist group called Hizbullah (Amnesty International, 1996; Avebury, 1995; Bruinessen, 1996);
- and Village Guards.

The village guard system had a special importance in understanding another part of the dirty war. Village guards were known as Kurdish militias who were hired (armed and paid) among pro-state tribes by the government to “protect” their own village against the PKK because they knew the land, the people and the language. They, however, became a major pawn in the dirty war numbering around 150,000. Village guards not only took part in military operations alongside army units and Special Forces but also

were allowed to steal, kill, and rape with impunity. Moreover, the Human Rights Watch (2002) reported that because the village guard corps had no formal chain of command, no uniforms nor any means of identification; tribal leaders utilized the village guard system to maintain their own feudal supremacy. Village guards were supposed to be villagers who volunteered, yet most were forced to participate by the state. Those who refused to be a village guard were viewed by the authorities with great suspicion and were subjected to threats, torture, disappearance, murder, or may be burned out of their villages. In other words, villagers were put in the center of dilemma; if they chose to join the village guard system, they were at risk of being attacked by the PKK; if they refused to join the system they were the target of state persecution (Human Rights Watch, 2002).

The village guard system's function was three-fold for the state-sanctioned terrorism. One function was to serve as propaganda; as Robins (1993) asserts, it "was to serve the purpose of showing outsiders that the Kurds in the Southeast were far from united in their opposition to the Turkish state" (p. 664). Secondly, it fed the historically embedded hate against the ethnic group in a way that perpetuated Kurds killing Kurds. Finally, it psychologically served to the core goal among other fear instilling methodologies that indented to destroy people's values and self identity. Arming and paying groups of indigenous people by force while propagating that it was voluntary and having them terrorize their own community had a great potential to open a deeper wound in the community's soul that was less likely to heal. Killings, tortures, disappearances, and other forms of terror carried out by someone from the next village who shared the same ethnicity and traditional values had quite a different impact than those that were committed by unknown actors. Its effect was very crucial, especially when the conflict

was about national identity and cultural rights. Another twisting paradox in the village guard system was that even though village guards enjoyed freedom from punishment for their criminal acts, they were never respected by the Turkish Security forces.

Amnesty International (1996) stated that these arbitrary acts of violence, listed above, and power distributions were enough to “convey an extraordinary picture of a slack and lawless security establishment engaging in criminal acts” (p. 114). Even though in this muddle, some could argue that violations committed by some individuals cannot represent the entirety of the Security Forces; in fact, there were so many proven facts indicating the state’s central role in orchestrating all of those vicious crimes. The state’s involvement with terroristic practices was not a new establishment. It was as old as the Turkish Republic. This is called “Deep State” by many authors, writers, newspaper columnists, and political scientists. Phillips (2004) describes the deep state as a shadowy network composed of high ranking military and judiciary personnel, as well as high-level civilian bureaucrats. The deep state is basically an end product of the military’s distrust towards civilian governments and the people within. Moreover, its main goal is to maintain the status quo for all costs, specifically by continuously stirring, spreading, and replenishing fear. Despite all of the brutality and crimes committed and orchestrated by the deep state, the Turkish Deputy Chief of staff, Ahmet Corekci, ruthlessly stated to the Reuters Agency (Reuters, 1995) that Turkish security forces could not end “terrorism” because they were being held back by democracy and human rights.

Corekci’s statement indicates that the Turkish state respected human rights and rejected any involvement of crimes. Consistently, Turkish authorities also proclaimed that allegations of human rights violations were made to damage the Security Force’s

struggle against terrorism (and those, who make the allegations, got arrested, tortured, and assassinated). For example, in December 1994, Mehmet Agar, General Director of Security, claimed that only those, who were interrogated under the Anti-Terror Law, complained about torture and other ill treatment (Amnesty International, 1996). Anti-terror law was a Turkish penal code that had a very vague and broad definition of terrorism including non-violent forms of any political opposition. It also created a total impunity for the Security Forces responsible for their crimes.

Violence against Women

Women experience various layers of oppression everyday around the globe due to socio-political, economical, cultural, and domestic conditions. Because of these layers of endemic oppressions, women's victimization usually is understated (Amnesty International, 2004) in the dirty wars, even though women are impacted tremendously by state sanctioned terrorism. According to Amnesty International's report (2001), methods of sexual abuses are electro-shocks, beating on and squeezing the genitals and women's breasts, and rape.

In a society like Turkey, where cultural norms and values are male dominated, and this domination is being supported and nourished by formal and informal institutions (schooling, family, and religion) and other state apparatuses (military, police, and justice), women sometimes have to pay a higher price just because of their gender. For example, according to Amnesty International's report (2004), the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women declares that violence against women is violence "directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women

disproportionately" (¶ 9). It is a well known fact that discrimination against women and the sexual assault of women are interrelated (Amnesty International, 2003).

Even though men are also subjected to some of these violations, as Thomas and Regan (1994) indicated, women are the most frequent targets of sexual assault and rape. Although the analysis of why women get tortured, sexually assaulted, and raped in an armed conflict can be troubling because of its vast spectrum, we need to understand that sexual assault and rape are historically and culturally embedded acts of gender-based hostility (Neill, 2000). Beyond disgracing humanity, it is hostility towards women as individuals and their communities as a whole.

Consequently, rape or sexual assault as torture methods or weapons of war differs from other methods of torture. The traumatic results of rape not only are physical, but also manifest themselves at deeper psychological and sociological levels (Amnesty International, 2003). Similar to torture in general, rape and sexual abuse are not about retrieving information. They are, most of the time, about intimidation of dissent, humiliation, degrading and destroying both individuals' and communities' identity and integrity. In this regard, rape is more powerful than physical torture. Rape, as method of torture, is a:

sexual invasion of the body by force, an incursion into the private, personal inner space without consent -in short, an internal assault from one of several avenues and by one of several methods [which] constitutes a deliberate violation of emotional, physical, and rational integrity and ... a hostile, degrading act of violence (Brownmiller cited in Blath, 1992, p. 854).

Gingerich and Leaning (2004) argue why rape as a military utilization in war is a uniquely effective tool by stating that when rape is used for the ethnic cleansing and total destruction of the targeted group, it deeply damages the groups' moral integrity that is associated with "honor, chastity, virginity, femininity, masculinity, loyalty, marriage, and kinship, and insert an emanating set of experiences and memories that destroy group bonds through time" (p. 8). In addition, Erdal (1997) states that other physical torture methods do not have the potential to open as deep of a wound in the communities' memory and integrity. She, further, argues that rape also differs from other methods by its poisonous transgenerational consequences for the community due to pregnancy results from the rape.

While all of the human right violations, stated in the previous subheadings, committed in Turkey almost indiscriminately, rape and various forms of sexual assaults were utilized and inflicted in particular against women. Moreover, Keskin (1998), human right activist and a female lawyer in Turkey, stated "women are subjected to a greater range of tortures than men, as, in addition to all the other methods in use, they are prey to "sexual torture", in the form of sexual assault and rape" (¶ 6). As an authoritarian, patriarch, racist and neo-liberal body, the Turkish State has always shown less tolerance to any kind of women's emancipation or women's oppositional political involvement. As a result, women who are social activists, or human rights defenders, or moderators in a conflict, or union workers are more likely to be specific targets for sexual assault, torture, and rape by security forces and police.

Besides the state ideology, Islamic patriarchy traditionally lies behind the enmity of women. If a woman's behavior exceeds the religiously and culturally drawn

ambiguous borders, the woman is perceived as deviant and a threat against tradition and most importantly against male authority. For example, Ilkkaracan (1998) claims that, “customary and religious laws and practices are often used as tools to control women’s sexuality and to maintain the imbalance of power in sexual relations” (p. 66). Bagikhani (2003) claims that stepping outside the logic of these patriarchic norms and values are a perilous gamble, because codes must be enforced. Thus, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that violence against women does not begin in torture chambers in Turkey. It first begins at home. Many women are physically, psychologically, and sexually abused by their husbands, by their own family members, and even by the members of their family-in-law (Amnesty International, 2003; Gulcur, 1999; Ilkkaracan, 1996; Ilkkaracan et al., 1996; Yuksel, 1990). One of the Amnesty International’s reports (2003) about violence against women in Turkey, documents that the majority of women are subjected to marital rape right after being beaten by their husbands. Moreover, while many social norms reinforce men’s violent behavior, many more norms at the same time coerce women to be silent and obedient to their men and submit themselves to the authority of men and dogmatic tradition. As a result, while violence is a given right to men, submissiveness is a given “right” to women. Furthermore, in Turkish culture men are attributed courage, resistance, and bravery and women are seen as weak, submissive and easy to control. In torture chambers, torturers, who are the natural end product of this patriarchic culture and fascistic indoctrination, are more likely to treat women detainees differently. Therefore, beyond the torturers’ nationalistic ideology and obedient professional duty, their individual moral values about women become a driving force in some aspects of torture. During torture and interrogation, resistance and bravery of a man

can easily be tolerated (even in some extreme cases, the male victim is respected by the torturers) or sometimes a degree of bravery is even expected from male victims. However, resistance or bravery of women can trigger powerful reactions. Torturers (who are almost always male) could get angry and frustrated and show no tolerance towards a woman detainee or prisoner who does not submit to the power of the torturer. In these cases, rape usually becomes a powerful weapon that is used to give the ultimate punishment to a woman who challenges the authority of a man and who acts in a confident, independent, and courageous way. As Neill (2000) claims, to preserve the male dominance in traditional societies, rape is seen “as one of the worst manifestations of patriarchy” (¶ 21). One of the high ranking security officer’s response (cited in Erdal, 1997) to the ex-torturer’s confessions published in *Nokta* magazine in 1986 about the use of some objects to rape is exemplar to illustrate Turkish culture’s tie to patriarchy. The officer rejects the accusations of rape and rationalizes it by saying “We have young men like a stud, why do we need a tool to rape” (Bizim koc gibi delikanlilarimiz var. Alete ne gerek var tecavuz icin). This also illustrated that Turkish patriarchy is so sensitive that even the use of an object offends Turkish men’s manhood. When this patriarchic aggression is combined with state ideology, torture sessions sometimes even go beyond rape and might end up with death.

Due to their emancipatory struggle against the oppressive and discriminatory social order, women also are targeted by security forces and police because of their social roles associated with their gender, which culturally represents some moral values such as a family’s and community’s honor or ethnic purity. For example, a woman is used as a torture object just because she is a mother, or a wife, or a sister of the suspect. Women

are tortured, sexually assaulted, and raped in front of the husband or other family members in order to extract information from the male suspect or break the suspect's resistance. In this case, the impact of torture and sexual attacks on women are actually greater, because besides physical and psychological torment inflicted on a woman's body and mind, women are also solely insulted by being used as a tool. A tool that is not valued even as a being but is valued as a symbol of society's morality (honor, purity, etc.), which to some extent oppresses women in the first place.

It is well documented and proven that rape as a form of torture is not a new concept in Turkey. It was used for a long time against political prisoners and suspects even before the Kurdish conflict. However, after the conflict started, its use had increased and it became a systematic practice. A France based organization, The World Organization Against Torture (OMCT, 2001) wrote "according to an August 1998 report by the Office for Legal Assistance Against Sexual Harassment and rape in Custody, out of 59 complaints received, 49 came from the Kurdish region" (p. 59).

Kurdish Cultural Violence against Women and State Violence

Even though all women are under the threat of torture and sexual violence due to Turkey's ideological and cultural patterns of discrimination (Amnesty International, 2003), Kurdish women's situation to some extent is worse than Turkish women. Because of a stricter tribal culture, Kurdish women are more discriminated against, oppressed, and subjected to violence than the Turkish women. Kurds in Turkey that mostly live in the Southeast region are subjugated by tribal culture (for more information on the Kurdish tribal culture, see Gunter, 1990; McDowal, 1997; White, 2000) in which aghas (tribal chieftains or landowners) and the religious head-man (sheik) have the most power to

dominate the clan like big families in the tribe. Many tribal practices are usually unlawful and they could even be considered as human rights violations. According to White (2000), Nikitine who is a well known Russian scholar that writes about Kurds, asserts that “the chief of a tribe is a despot on a grand scale. His authority has no limits. He can dispose of another’s property and order beatings and assassinations at will” (p. 19). However, this tribal system has always been directly and indirectly supported by the Turkish state. Authorities neglected to intrude or at least failed to enforce the law in the region. Nikitine (quoted in White, 2000) claims that the Turkish government did not offer any recourse to these abuses, because the official policy permits the aghas a total authority “on the condition that they deposit something in the treasury” (p. 19).

Another example is provided by Ilkcaracan’s study (Ilkcaracan, 1998) which was conducted among 599 women from the region in 1990:

- polygamy is a widespread practice: one out of ten are polygamists, even though it is constitutionally banned;
- 16.3% of women living in the region are married under the age of 15, even though the Article 88 of the Turkish civil code establishes the legal minimum age for a civil marriage to be 17 for men and 15 for women; and
- half of the women in Eastern Turkey were illiterate, even though primary school education is mandatory by law.

Among other discriminatory practices and factors, women are also subjected to sexual and familial violence and this violence is “widely tolerated and even endorsed by community leaders and at the highest levels of the government and judiciary” (Amnesty International, 2004b, ¶ 6). The most common forms of violence towards women in the

southeast region include beatings, marital rape, female genital mutilation, nose cutting, bride price, forced marriages, polygamy, and forced virginity testing (Pervizat, 2003). Besides those forms of violence, there is also the most dreadful form of violence, which is a form of familial execution of women based on the most primitive social norms in which sexuality-not only women's but also expected behavior patterns- is associated with both the family and the community's honor. This is called "Honor Killing". Human Rights Watch (2001) defines honor killings as "acts of violence, usually murder, committed by male family members against female family members who are perceived to have brought dishonor upon the family. The mere perception that a woman has acted in a manner to bring "dishonor" to the family is sufficient to trigger an attack" (§ 1). Honor killing is committed for a wide range of reasons: marital betrayal, rape, pre-marital sex, flirting, gossip, or "even failing to serve a meal on time can all be perceived as impugning the family honor" (Mayell, 2002, § 12). Pervizat (2003) claims that the state, instead of taking measures to eradicate these forms of violence, rather legitimizes these vicious crimes by deeming them as "family matters" or "domestic situations". For example, according to Amnesty International (2003, § 22) "the Turkish Criminal Code is constructed so that crimes involving sexual violence against women are defined as "Felonies against public decency and family order", as opposed to other forms of assault against the person, which are classified as "Felonies against Individuals."

The primitive cultural pattern of Kurdish tribes is well known by state agents and soldiers and used as a torture method against women. OMCT (OMCT, 2001), states that rape and threats of rape are often compounded by the security forces' taunt that rape would deprive women of their virginity and their honor. Erdal (1997) reports many cases

in which women are threatened to be raped by the state security agents with a specific emphasis on the matter of honor.

Moreover, Amnesty International (2003) states that “in a twisted and paradoxical use of the term, the concept of honour can be used to attempt to silence women who are sexually assaulted” (¶ 1). Amnesty International further writes that in a study published in 2000, 2% of the women who resided in the Kurdish southeast reported being the victims of sexual violence at the hands of security forces. This figure is likely to be even higher due to fear of familial execution and fear of security forces’ retaliation.

Non-Terroristic Social Engineering

Besides these obvious terroristic practices, there were also non-terroristic tactics to make a fascistic and one-dimensional society. One of them was that peace, which as Marcuse (1964) stated as one of the characteristics of an affluent society, is maintained by a constant threat of war. It was always transmitted into the Turkish society so that all Turkey’s neighbors and most of the European imperialist countries had plans to destroy the Turkish State. As a result, Turks had to be aware of this and be alert. By this, every Turk was expected to be happily submissive to the Turkish authorities and rationality. Every Turkish citizen had to be willing to die and kill for the existence of the Turkish state. This usually began as early as from the first grade, if not so from earlier. Every pupil had to recite a long text ending with the phrase, “I give my existence as a present to the Turkish existence.”

In addition, certain social spheres (especially seemingly “apolitical” spheres, such as soccer, pop music, and entertainment) have always been valued more than other areas, rewarded, encouraged, and reinforced. Giddens (1979) calls these similar situations as

ideological fog in which the public's attention is constantly and deliberately distracted and drawn to some other (usually irrelevant) incidents so that atrocities and unlawful acts go unnoticed or disguised. Entertainment and sports, for example, were used in Turkey to thicken the fog. Going to a soccer stadium and showing loyalty to a team was like a practical reflection of both ideological fog and political ideology imposed upon the masses from birth. For example, especially after 1984, the anatomy of cheering for a team had drastically changed. One of the shouts, for example, was the pride of dying for the team (as if for their countries). The crowd was screaming, "Die! Die! Die! We've come to die!" Another one of them indicated killing; "[a stadium name] will be a graveyard to [oppositional team's name]". The police were only watching those who terrorize the city after a defeat, or the police did not do anything or were not able to capture those who would shoot out in the crowd and kill people after a victory celebration. In addition to violence, shouts became political, hateful, and racist. These examples would be more disturbing if it is known how other groups of people were treated by the state, by the police, and by the school. Sixteen teenagers in Manisa in late 1995, for example, were detained because of a suspicion of having links to a leftist organization. They were tortured for weeks. A 14-year-old boy stated what had been done to him in the interrogation room as follows:

I had to undress... They asked questions that were nothing to do with me: When I said I did not know they twisted my testicles. They said things like: 'That's it, your manhood is gone'. Four of them held me by the hands and arms and gave electric shocks to my right thumb, to my sexual organs, to my arms, and to my

stomach. Afterwards I had no feeling in my right foot and sexual organ (Amnesty International, 1996, p. 44).

Another disturbing example was imprisonment of a small group of teenagers for 10 years because they started picketing in front of the parliament and protested the higher education council, which was founded by the coup, known as YOK (Yuksele Oğretim Kurumu).

Finally, while various terrorist actions openly were taking place, non-terroristic measures were being put into action at the same time. On the one hand, consumer goods, imported western products (which in fact were made in Taiwan or other undeveloped countries with cheap labor), pop and alienating rock music, Hollywood movies, and soap operas created an illusion of wealthy western-like life. On the other hand, democratic elections and some exemplary TV or newspaper commentaries put on a show to try to persuade the public of the existence of oppositional thoughts that make people believe that they are living in a free, democratic, and prosperous country. Hence there was no reason to oppose to the status quo and critique the state or military. Those, who opposed or critiqued, must be manipulated by the external enemies.

After conducting a macro analysis of the socio-political context as the basis of understanding better the participant's life, now I turn to a micro analysis of the participant and her life which spans the macro world described above. It is imperative to let the reader know that I constructed the following story out of the several interviews conducted with the participant, Zelo. In other words, I conducted several semi-structured interviews with Zelo about her learning experiences throughout her life. Then, I composed her following story. Readers will hear my voice. However, to make sure that

the story reflects her true story, I constructed my sentences by using the words she used in telling me her story. In addition to this, while telling her story, I sometimes had to intervene with the story and explain some of the cultural concepts that Zelo used because readers from a different culture may not know the meaning.

A Micro Analysis - Zelo's Story

Informal Consent and First Questions

When I asked her if she would like to participate in the study for my dissertation, Zelo asked many questions to grasp its aspects: Why do I want to study oppressed people? Why do I care? Why her? What would her story contribute to my study? She did not seem anxious or nervous or concerned about the study's political content. She left an impression on me that her questioning was more like an effort to understand the study better. She was taking it seriously as if it was her political responsibility, as if it was her "historical duty".

I answered everything she asked. I also explained that she did not have to answer any questions that she did not want to answer, or discuss any topics that she preferred not to discuss. I informed her that she could end her participation in the study at any time by just letting me know. Then, she told me the best times that we could conduct the interviews. Before ending the phone conversation with her, I fell back upon the reasons that she asked many questions, and also since I have known her for a long time I dared to ask her a question. I asked what her motivation was for participating in the study since this study is not directly related to her political activism. I wanted to know her motivation beyond her altruism, beyond just helping an old friend or helping a doctoral student for his study. She laughed hard first. I think she liked the way I asked the question. Then she

mocked me saying “Nothing! What could I expect from your study! From an American educated intellectual?” and told me that she was joking and I told her that I knew. She continued by saying that what she would expect from participating in my study would be the possibility of her story being written and others hearing about what she has been going through.

I have been going through a lot of things. I mean as a woman, as a Kurdish woman, as a mother. I am still going through those things...we [women] have never been granted to say what we think, what we wanted to say. Whenever we try to say something, we were always told to shut up! “What would you know?” they [men] said. We were told that we were women, and then they slapped our mouth! They [Turkish authorities] said you are a Kurd, and oppressed us, killed, tortured us. And that corrupt press, TV, never wrote about us, never made news about us. Nobody heeded to what we were saying. Nobody backed us up. What I am trying to say is that I want our story, my story, written, heard by others. It is not important that the story is mine or hers; everybody’s stories are all alike anyway. All I want or expect is to be heard. That is all.

When I wanted to emphasize and make sure that she understood that I am more interested in her learning journey than her political activism without any hesitation she said it was okay.

Zelo told me that she did not know exactly what year she was born, but she thought she was 49 years old. She is a Kurdish woman with short grayed hair. Dark circles are under her eyes. Her teeth are tinged yellow from smoking. Her height is considered short but when she talks, when her courage and enthusiasm wave in the air,

one would think she is a tall woman. Even though she is in her late 40s, her energy, her idealism, her courage makes her look young. In spite of her agony and the political, cultural, and economical repression that she has endured, her hope, eagerness, and doubtlessness about what she is doing and why she is doing it are unshakable.

Childhood

Zelo was born in a traditional Kurdish family. She is one of nine children from two different mothers. Neither one of her parents were schooled. When her father married a younger woman and brought her home to live with Zelo's mother and siblings, Zelo's mother couldn't take it and left home. Her mom turned to her older brother. Her brother welcomed her but told her that he cannot afford to take care of her kids. After a few days, she goes to her oldest daughter who is newly married and lives in another town. While her mother looked for a place to live, Zelo and her younger brothers had to live with their stepmother for over three years. Zelo was eight years old and was responsible for taking care of her younger siblings while her own mother was gone. She had to drop out of school; she was only in the second grade. "When my mom left home, I became a mom for my younger brothers, four and six years old. I had to take care of them. I had to protect them." Even though her father and her teachers wanted her back in the school, she did not want to go. "I couldn't concentrate ... How could someone go to school with a tangled mind? What was I going to learn with that state of mind?"

She does not have many memories related to her schooling. The only thing that she remembers is a pair of red color shoes (kundura) that her father bought for her when she was in school. One day, she came home and saw the shoes, and she became extremely happy because she had never had that kind of shoes. She had either rubber

sandals (çarık) or rubber slippers. While feeling very excited and happy, she also realized that the shoes were a little bit tight. She paused for a few seconds when she mentioned her shoes' tightness. Approximately 15 or 20 seconds she was silent. I waited in silence. Then she continued

You know, I never told my dad that they were hurting. I was afraid that my father would just take the shoes back and not exchange them for a bigger size. I wore them despite them being tight. Same thing is still going on.

I did not understand what she meant by the last sentence. "You mean do you still buy tight shoes?" I asked. She laughed. "No no! Even though I buy big ones, they still hurt." I still did not understand what she meant by that. When I asked her to explain more, she said that she always remembers those red shoes and their pain whenever she buys a pair of shoes.

Family Structure

Zelo describes her family structure as feudal. Her problems with feudality revolve around mostly women issues, patriarchy, and lack of love. She claims that women in feudal families are treated like slaves who have no right to think or say anything. "They are not worth anything. Women are maids serving men. You have to clean the house, do the laundry, prepare food, do the dishes, take care of kids, and then please your husband." In a feudal society, housekeeping is not just a duty of women expected by the husband, but also by the larger traditional structure. For example, the cleanliness of the home represents both a woman's skills to be a good housewife and also represents a husband's power over his wife. If the house is not being taken care of well by a woman, it means

that the husband is incapable of governing his wife. As a result, the pressure on women is doubled.

When Zelo talks about the lack of love in her feudal family, she talks in a way as if lovelessness is normal. This lovelessness, however, is also confusing and creates a “double-bind” situation in which no matter what the person does, he or she will be deemed wrong or worthless. For example, in Zelo’s culture, women are not valued as individuals but valued as representations of family honor. Women are protected from the outside dangers not because they are valued as individuals but because it is necessitated by the social norms, such as family honor. When a woman misbehaves, she could even be murdered by her own family members. In a feudal tradition, women are protected and cared about, but they are given away for marriage without their consent. Their wishes are not considered. In fact, it is not even recognized that they might or could have a wish: it is never asked what their wishes are.

They [parents] just bring us into this world. That is it. You are a part of the family, nothing else. You are just a part. They do not show you love. They care about you but do not show you love.you make yourself believe that ‘they are my family, they must love me’, then they beat you up. They give you to someone you never consider as husband. They tell you “go and go see your hell, find your misfortune.”

Marriage

When Zelo’s mother settled down in her daughter’s house and began making some money by sewing clothing at home, she started taking her kids from their father’s home. Zelo’s father and the step-mother did not want Zelo to leave. “My dad was getting

lonelier. He, I think, at least wanted to have me on his side. My step-mother on the other hand did not want to lose me because I was a big help despite my little [younger] age.” However, Zelo always wanted to go and live with her own mother. At the end of the third or the fourth year, her father finally let her go to her mother.

In about two years after she was reunited with her mother, Zelo was nearing an appropriate age to be married. Two of Zelo’s cousins, her father’s brothers’ sons, wanted to marry her. They even got into a fight for her. Then a third candidate, another cousin of Zelo, her mother’s brother’s son, came to see her with the intention to marry her. Zelo did not know anything about any of these cousins. Then one-day Zelo’s uncle, her mother’s brother, showed up and wanted to “take” Zelo as a wife for his son. The situation was about to be getting bad. Before it got uglier between parties, Zelo’s oldest uncle’s son, her father’s brother’s son, stepped into this feud as a proxy for Zelo’s father since Zelo’s father was out of the picture. He declared to all parties that Zelo would marry her mother’s brother’s son. “He said ‘I would give her to my uncle [Zelo’s mother’s brother]’. He said he would sacrifice me for his uncle!” Zelo, here, analyzed the situation and showed me the rationale of this custom; “Do you see? He gives me to my uncle and sacrifices me for him. Not even to his son. Because he is the one who wants to take me.” What she means is that Zelo is again treated like an object and just given away based on the person’s social or cultural prestige. In other words, family or, more specifically, Zelo’s uncle’s son, never considered with whom Zelo would marry. They do not ponder or worry about Zelo’s happiness or whether the person is good for her. In this decision, Zelo’s uncle’s, her father’s brother, respectability played a key role, as did his age, his kinship, and his prestige in the community.

In the tribal Kurdish culture, endogamy, which is in this case is a parallel cousin marriage, still exists. In this culture, father's brother's sons have the first right to marry her. But if the father or family wants her to marry someone else, the paternal cousin has to approve this and release her from marrying him. In some cases, if this obligation is infringed, violence can occur between families (for details see Barth, 1954; Bruinessen, 1999, 2000; Yalcin-Heckman, 1991).

Everything was arranged and done in less than two months. "In forty days, he came, he saw me, he approved that I was okay [to be his wife] and 'took' me." Zelo's voice here went down so low that I was barely able to hear her. Then after a short pause, she continued "I wish he had never taken me. I was just 14 years old. I was a child." She still remembers so vividly the many times in the middle of the night she woke up and asked herself who that man was sleeping next to her. She describes the situation as her being in a haze. "No one asked about my opinion. I did not know what was happening. I was confused. I was ashamed." When I asked her why she was expecting to be asked, she said she did not think or expect anything then. Now she looks at her past and realizes that nobody asked her opinion. When I asked her to assume that they had asked and what would her response have been, without hesitation she said she would have chosen to stay with her mother. "I was a child. Do you understand? I was a child. What more would a child need?" What was 14 year-old Zelo thinking or feeling about all those things happening then? "Nothing!" she says. "I knew only that from one house I was going to go to another house... While my friends were still playing [on the streets], I was forced to make a home in a room."

Zelo's description of home is a four-wall-analogy, a reference to prison. As a result, marriage for Zelo meant being transferred from one prison to another, the new prison being her in-law's home.

I did more housework when I married. I went to a family that was bigger than mine. There were many kids, a lot more work to do. But, I was grateful that they accepted me as one of their children, not as an outsider. I helped my mother-in-law to wash clothes by hand for 9-10 people every week. My mother-in-law had three or four kids that were younger than I was. I would even bathe them.

One of the rooms was designated for the newlyweds, the room Zelo refers to as her house. When her husband came home, Zelo set up *sofra* (a piece of cloth that is laid on the floor for meals) for dinner, served food, then cleaned up the dishes, and then when he wished to go to their room, they went to their room.

Her husband was eight years older than her. He told her what to do and what not to do including what to wear. It was troubling for her to accept him as a husband since it was morally strange to her. It was even strange to call him by his first name. "I have always known him as an *abi* (older brother); I used to call him *abi*" says Zelo. In Kurdish culture, it is regarded as disrespectful if younger person calls an older person by his or her first name. Usually other adjectives that define the relationship between parties follow, such as *Ali abi*. However, the real problem for Zelo was seeing him as a husband. It was confusing and shameful for her to call someone "abi" since she had a sexual relationship with him and it was inappropriate to call him by his first name since he was older.

Kurdish women are expected to be ashamed of sexual relationships. Women are not supposed to like it, talk about it, or desire it. So the first morning, after their first night together, Zelo was ashamed to go out to have breakfast. In fact, she was ashamed to go out all day.

Her marriage was traumatic from the beginning and resonates with her understanding of feudality, its lovelessness and its double-bindness. “He married me, brought me to his home, and dumped me there.” Earlier she said that her parents just brought her into this world and left her there. In addition to this lovelessness, she also encountered a similar “double-bind-like” situation in the very first night. “It was our first night, he told me that if I didn’t treat his family right, he would kick my ass out and send me back to living with my family. I didn’t understand why he was talking with me like that. I couldn’t understand why he brought me there and then was telling me to go to my father’s home.”

She does not remember clearly when it started, but she recalls that it was in the very beginning, maybe at the end of first or second month that her husband started coming home late, drunk and violent. “He was not violent at all when he did not drink. [On the contrary] he was a nice caring person when he did not drink. You would not believe that he was the same person when you see him drunk.”

At the beginning when her husband did not come home at night, Zelo would ask her mother-in-law where her husband could have been. She was told that perhaps he had some business to take care of and she believed that for a while. Several nights, when her husband did not come home, Zelo remembers, she had to go to her mother-in-law and asked her to sleep in her room because she was scared of darkness.

When Zelo was beaten for the first time by her husband, she was pregnant. She had become pregnant the night they got married. After the first beating, she asked her mother-in-law why he had beaten her. She was told that it was okay because husbands both love and beat. They sometimes love and sometimes beat. “My mother-in-law was saying that he was my husband, that he had the right to love and beat me. She was telling me to handle him, to not say anything, that he was a drunk.”

Beside the beatings, Zelo’s husband was unfaithful. He was too “charming” and always looking for other women. He had many relationships even before he got married. “His family thought that if he gets married, he would calm down and stop his relationships. But, he didn’t.” This is another way of women’s objectification in Zelo’s culture. In feudal cultures, women are often used as a means of settling tribal vendettas (Berdel) to restore honor. Zelo’s story indicated how marriage was used to tame a wild male. The latter reason is twofold; one reason is to provide males with sexual partners so that they do not have to go out to seek other women (mostly prostitutes). Second, marriage puts pressure on a husband so he might feel obligated to behave responsibly. It is important to understand that women are not empowered to tame the husband though. Women are still subservient in the marriage. They do not have any power to correct their husband’s behavior. Women are just a means. Marriage as an institution has a moral value over husbands and might be effective in changing their behaviors rooted in their bachelor era.

However, marriage was not a silver bullet for Zelo’s husband. “Not even two weeks after he brought me home, he continued his life, went back to his routine [drinking, sleeping around]... I was never happy. I’ve never been happy...” Neither did

she consider telling her husband, “We need to talk” about what he was doing was wrong, nor did she think that it was even a possibility. The reason she never attempted to engage in conversation or think of a possibility to talk to her husband can be seen in the gender socialization of Zelo’s culture. Many times during the interviews Zelo said,

We were brought up with our eyes shut. I was a girl, I was told I didn’t know anything, that I had no rights. Everybody said this, my family, my husband’s family, relatives, everybody: “You are a girl, do not talk”, “you are a girl, it is not appropriate for a girl to talk.”

Moreover, her feudal culture, other formal institutions, and cultural and political practices reinforce this infliction congruently. The message is clear; it reads, “Who are you to have an opinion of yourself?”

Marriage for Zelo became more than just going from one house to another. Besides enduring physical and mental abuse and infidelity, she did more housework than she used to do in her own home. Zelo did not know how to cook, but she tried to learn to perform other tasks around this larger house.

When she was 15, Zelo had a baby boy. “I gave birth at home. They called a midwife. They said they should call my husband. They called him and told him ‘she is sick’.” When I asked her why they say, “She is sick” rather than “She is in labor.” Zelo guessed that because it would not be culturally appropriate; “I do not know. It would be an unmannered thing to do I guess.”

She was happy with her son. “I was playing with my son like he was a toy baby.” But she did not know how to take care of him. She was afraid to bathe him; she did not know how to change him. Zelo was only breastfeeding him at the beginning. But her

mother-in-law helped her and taught her. During the interviews, Zelo emphasized many times that she was learning to be a mother while her peers were playing with dolls. In fact, back then it was not typical for 15 year-old girls playing outside in her culture. Fifteen year-old girls were more likely to be at home; married or about to be married. This seemingly conflicting situation could be explained as Zelo's emotional perception. Zelo might have thought that she was the only one who was forced to get married in that early age, because many times she also told me that she was a child. Based on her chronological age, even though she was meeting the traditional criteria to get married, emotionally she perhaps felt much younger and therefore not ready for marriage.

Migration and Big City. When Zelo had been married for only three months, her mother and siblings moved to a bigger city due to poverty. When they left, she felt lonely. "I thought the world was crashing down on me. My family was thousands kilometers away. For months I would cry." Even though they were not too close by, knowing they are in a reachable distance gave her a kind of comfort and strength to bear her burden. But now they were gone, she was forlorn and felt vulnerable.

On the other hand, Zelo had never confided in her parents about any of the beatings or the cheatings because she believed it would not have made any difference. They would have probably told her to accept it, as he was her husband who sometimes loves and sometimes beats.

When she had been married less than three years, she had her second baby, a girl. When her daughter was six or seven months old, this time her in-laws moved to a big city. Zelo's loneliness grew because she was alone. Her husband began treating her worse than before. "Every night he was beating me to death. Threatening to kill me...to kill my

kids...There was nobody anymore to ask for help...cry to..." In a follow up interview, Zelo realized that in this period, for the first time she tried to convince herself this was her destiny, that nothing could change it; therefore, she gave up. She gave up trying to understand why she was being treated the way she had been treated. She gave up resisting acceptance of the life as it was. She did not have any strength anymore. That was it; this was her life. He was her husband and he had the right to love her as well as to beat her. She told lies when people asked about bruises he had left after beatings.

Did giving up help her? Did her life become easier? Or was it the same? Or harder?

Nooo! Noo! Nothing had changed. In fact it became worse while it did not become better. I became weaker, more scared... much weaker when I was more scared. I was someone who was feeling helpless, hopeless, useless ...nonresistant ...I stopped resisting. When my in-laws were there I was able to resist and oppose him because I knew that my in-laws would come and rescue me when he became violent. After their migration to the metropolitan, I could no longer resist.

Who would be there for me when I cry for help?

Her terror was unbearable. Every night she waited to be beaten and threatened. Giving up, drawing into silence, lying to those who asked about her welfare, and covering up abuse did not help. Her life became worse because this time she was not even resisting. Resisting gives one strength to stand. Since Zelo gave up resisting, she had nothing to hold on to anymore.

She begged her in-laws to take them to the big city too. Then her in-laws had her husband appointed to the big city and Zelo, her husband, and her children moved there. One of his relatives rented them a house so they were able to live close to the in-laws.

Even though she felt relieved from the fear of being alone and of bearing with the terror when her husband came home drunk, she did not feel excited about going to a big city. She attributes this to her “just knowing”. She said, “ I just knew that nothing would be different for me.... I was still living within four walls. I mean I would not even know where the shop is, we [women] would not be allowed to go out by ourselves.”

Unfortunately Zelo’s predicament got worse. She became lonelier in the crowds of the big city. But she said, “Bad is bad. It does not matter that it is one degree less or more.”

She intuitively knew her marriage would not be better when they moved. What she did not know was all the previously supportive tones of her relatives would drastically turn against her. Her in-laws and her family’s supportive words of “everything will be all right” suddenly became hostile and offensive. There could be several reasons or factors to explain this 180 degree-turn. Zelo believes it was mostly related to her socialization. She was expected to grow up and adjust and internalize all the cultural norms. Since she had not shown any improvement of assimilated being into a traditional woman’s role, she would not be tolerated: “Well, I was not a child anymore!” She became blamed for almost everything:

- her husband cheats on her, because she fails to fulfill his sexual needs;
- her husband beats her because she talks too much;
- she does not know how to make him feel like a man;
- she does not know how to handle him;

- she does not obey; and
- she is rebellious.

Then she realized all these things were always there but she just did not realize it. When they said, “Everything will be all right,” they did not mean that problems would be solved (because they knew the problem would always be there as usual) or conditions would improve. What they really meant was Zelo would have to learn to accept things as they were without complaining or questioning. If she perceived the problems as non-problems then there would not be any problem.

However, she never did. Even though she tried to see the things from traditionally expected angles, even though she attempted to make herself believe it as a way of life, even though she submitted herself and her soul, nothing was counted because trying was not enough. All those friendly, protective, caring tones of traditional advisors become the total opposite.

In the city, it did not take much time for Zelo’s husband to be popular in the community and in his job. He became successful and started making a lot of money. This success also brought more cheating opportunities to him: drinking, smoking marijuana, and gambling. He sometimes took Zelo and the children with him to luxury hotels or restaurants for business dinners. Most of these were, however, to cover up his corruption and also most of the events involved flirting with other women. Moreover, most of these events ended up with him terrorizing her including beatings, threats, and verbal abuse.

Politics. Zelo did not know much about problems related to politics and her ethnic identity as a Kurd in Turkey until arriving in the big city. She overheard conversations about how being a Kurd could create detrimental consequences, how Kurds have been

discriminated against, etc., but she was too preoccupied by her dysfunctional marriage to pay attention to those issues. Moreover, women traditionally are not supposed to get involved in political issues. “They do not even ask women who to get married to. How would they allow women to become politically active?” If a woman tries to express what she thinks, for example, she would get a response similar to, “You just shut up! What would a woman know?” A sexist (insulting women’s capability) idiom usually follows “Do not get involved in men’s business with dough in your hands” (Elinin hamuruyla erkek işine karışma): This refers to women’s place, which is the kitchen, and women should be there all the time.

The 1970’s were Turkey’s politically tumultuous years. There was a great leftist grassroots social movement that was supported by millions. “He was a big revolutionary when he was sober,” snickers Zelo when she talks about her husband’s political identity. “It was a fashion, you know, to be or to appear to be leftist at that time,” she adds. However, Zelo believes she liked the leftists’ ideas not because it was fashionable but because she never liked rich people and their life styles. “They steal, rob, exploit, and (like my husband) corrupt, and become rich. Who has become rich by working honestly or by the sweat of their brow?” she asks.

One time, Zelo, her little brother-in-law, little sister-in-law, and one of her younger nephews, secretly sneaked out after midnight and vandalized an imported sports car parked in their neighborhood. When I asked her to elaborate on why they did it, how it felt; she said “I do not know! We just did it.”

Ethnic Identity and Racism. Shortly after arriving in the big city, Zelo experienced the face of racism that was historically, culturally, and politically embedded everywhere

in the city. Her neighbors looked down on her because of her ethnic identity. Her children were bullied by other kids on the streets and in the school for the very same reason. One day when she was talking in Kurdish to her aunt in the bus, a man yelled at them, “Speak Turkish, Turkish!” She was scared and felt threatened. Since then, she has felt uncomfortable talking with someone in Kurdish in public. Even though she proudly speaks Kurdish in public now, the fear is still there. “I am on alert all the time, as if someone will yell at me and tell me ‘Speak Turkish!’.” But again, because of her personal problems, politics and ethnic identity had never come to be a priority issue for Zelo until her children grew up.

Military Coup. Zelo’s children grew up under the military coup of September 12, 1980. Zelo’s oldest brother-in-law, who was a teacher and active in a teacher organization, was detained and tortured for fifteen days. He was accused of harboring terrorists and possessing some leftist books. “Those were phony reasons you know. Who knows how many innocent people were tortured by using those accusations?” One of her uncles’ sons was also detained and tortured. She does not know details about what they went through.

There was fear. Everybody was in fear. We burned books in our bath stove (stove that was used to heat bath water). It was a sunny hot day, and then everybody took a bath. We burned music cassettes [political ones]. Even some pictures: We went through all family pictures one by one. There was one, I remember, we were standing in front of international flags. Because one of them was the Soviet Union flag, we burned it just in case.

In the first couple of months of coup, Zelo's husband was fearful, not because of his political view but because he thought his corruption would be revealed. However, the coup did not take over the state for that. It was to eliminate the leftist dissidents. A couple of months later Zelo's husband saw that there would not be an investigation of him; he felt relieved and returned to his own abusive routine again. Zelo's life, too, went back to its cycle; a humdrum and drone life in which only vital part was the survival mode that Zelo and her kids hold on to.

Suicide Attempt. One day her husband brought a couple home as visitors. Zelo was told that they were going through some kind of economical crisis and depression so Zelo's husband was trying to help them. They stayed almost two months and Zelo was treated like their maid. Zelo also sensed there was also some flirtation going on between the woman and Zelo's husband. One night Zelo could not take it anymore and burst out with her anger, frustration, and powerlessness. Then her husband beat her very badly and threw her out in the middle of the night. She sat in the backyard until the morning. "Thank God, it was a warm summer night. Otherwise where would have I gone in the middle of night? Whose door I could have knocked on to host me?"

After her husband and the couple left for work around 9 am, she went inside to take a nap. She woke up with a blow on her face. Her husband was drunk and beating her badly. When she got a chance, she ran outside and fled to next door neighbor for help. The neighbor's husband came and took Zelo's husband away to calm him down. While he was leaving he threatened her life because she revealed family issues to outsiders and moreover she complained about her husband to outsiders.

Zelo really believed he would kill her. So she returned home and hid her panic and fear from her children. The entire time, however, she imagined the plans he might be making to kill her. She cooked, cleaned and re-cleaned the house. She put her kids in bed around 9 or 10p.m. She thought, "It would be better to kill myself rather than waiting for him to come and kill me! I was not thinking straight. I was not thinking about my kids, step mother that they would have to grow up with. I was not thinking about what might other people think." Around 11 or 11:30 p.m. she went to kitchen, opened the cabinet the first-aid kit is stored in, and gulped whatever medicines she found. On the last pill, her young cousin who happened to come for a sleep over that night found her. He tried to stop her but he could not. Then he ran a couple of miles to Zelo's oldest sister in-law's house for help. She arrived and took Zelo her to the hospital.

Zelo's husband came to hospital in the early morning and took her IV out himself and immediately got her discharged despite the fact doctors told him she needed to stay longer.

I think he promised doctors that he was going to take care of me well at home. He did not tell me anything. Just took me out. I was still under the influence of the pills. He was scared that if my brother heard what I did because of him, they would beat him.... He even threatened me not to tell this anybody from my family.

When he was not drunk Zelo's husband was insecure, cowardly, and non-violent. He was also scared of Zelo's brothers. If Zelo's brothers had heard about the incident, they would have hurt him. Therefore, Zelo's suicide attempt was kept as a family secret. Zelo's parents learned about this incident years later.

Besides Zelo's husband's fear, there was a cultural fear for keeping this incident secret.

If I had died or words had gotten out rumors would have spread out and get out of hand. You know our feudal structure, tribal culture. Words would have gotten around. We did not want to give reason [to gossip]. We did not want to put words into people's mouth. So we just shut it.

Committing suicide is considered shameful and would have provoked many controversies among relatives in this traditional community. Zelo explained well this patriarchic cultural rationale:

They [people] would think about cheating. They tend to wonder with whom her husband busted her.... Do you understand? I mean when does a woman commit suicide? If she has a secret love affair, if she cheats on her husband, if she tarnishes family honor, then she commits suicide. However, people who know me wouldn't think this way but others who do not know anything about what I have been going through would think that I might have done something shameful.

What Zelo vocalizes here are the culturally appropriate reasons of suicide. Any reasons other than she mentioned above would hardly be considered genuine motives. Zelo's unhappiness, years of terror, frustration, hopelessness, depression, etc. would not have been considered appropriate motives for her committing suicide.

The Last Straw

There were two incidents where Zelo resisted her husband again. One was after another very severe beating. When her husband returned home, Zelo could not get up and

greet him due to the injuries he inflicted, so he beat her again. Then she knew her husband was not a normal person.

When I looked at him, I was not seeing a human anymore. How could a person beat another one who cannot stand because of previous beating! Something was broken in my heart. I did not know, and still do not know, what I was thinking. All I was feeling was a mixture of disgust and sickening. And my mind was like foggy and my head was suddenly becoming heavy...We were illiterate you know. He was [mentally] sick. Nobody thought that he needed help. Nobody thought to take him to any psychologist, hospital, or to anyone who could help him.

This incident, however, opened a bleeding wound deep inside of her. It did not form anything at the beginning. It did not trigger anything. It was just a wound bleeding and filling its gully and waiting for its last drop to torrent.

Attempting suicide was the straw that broke the camel's back (Bardağı taşıran son damlaydı) and she adds, "I was not afraid of him anymore. I was not afraid of death. [However] I was happy that I did not die. I did not leave my kids motherless. Nothing was worth it, you know. He was not worth dying for." However, this was not the end of her suffering, but the end of her passivity. It was the end of her submission. "I was not begging him not to beat me anymore. I was not even crying anymore. I was not hiding my bruises."

Raising Children. At the same time, Zelo's children were growing up under her husband's terror. The children were going to another room and shivering with fear when their dad was home. Zelo's daughter showed some disinterest in her school and said she could not concentrate on what was being taught. She also did not want to leave home

because she did not want to leave her mom alone. Therefore, she dropped out of school. She was going to be a housewife, like her mother. Zelo was angry and demanded she return to school educate herself. She did not have to live the life Zelo and her children had to live. But it was no use. Sometime later, her daughter made some friends from the neighborhood. “She became like an ordinary, illiterate, stupid girl. When I realized that she was listening to arabesque music.... that was it. I drew the line. I have forbidden her continuing friendship with her friends....I broke her cassettes. She did not talk to me for three days.” What was wrong listening to that music? “It was not a good music. It was leading youths in the wrong direction.” I asked her to explain what she means by wrong, bad, etc. She gave some examples: “I mean we were seeing youngsters getting involved with drug, alcohol, becoming depressive. They were cutting themselves....This is what I mean. I told my daughter to listen ‘özgün müzik’ [a kind of protest music] or folk music instead because this arabesque music was giving her nothing. In fact it was taking away some good things from her that she had...”

There is another story that had an impact on the process of Zelo’s daughter’s politicization: Whereas Zelo wanted her to be educated, intellectual, and progressive, she also raised her daughter according to feudal norms and values. In other words, she raised her daughter how she was raised because this is what she knew.

Moreover, since Zelo’s youngest brother in-law was naturally (culturally) assigned to discipline Zelo’s children, she talked to him about her daughter and asked his help in educating her. He was a freshman in a university and was a human rights activist. He began to visit Zelo’s house more often, and he brought books, read poems, and took them to movies and concerts. He became a role model for them. In a few years, her oldest

son also got involved in politics; he joined political demonstrations, cultural activities including folkloric dance, and reading groups. He sometimes brought his friends home, and read and talked about politics, including the Kurdish identity. When I asked Zelo why she allowed her son to bring his friends home and talk about politics since this would easily be considered an illegal act by the Turkish authorities, she said she did not/does not think it was a wrong thing to do. “Also at least they were home with me, you know. They were in front of my sight. Should I let them to be like their father? Anything is better than becoming like him, you know,” she said. “My oldest son’s grades even went higher. Even my daughter started getting involved with some cultural associations, started reading books and wanted to go back to school. She even went to a night school [an adult education school].”

All the conversations among Zelo’s son and his friends sounded like mumbo jumbo to Zelo at the beginning. Even though Zelo did not understand the details and some concepts they mentioned, she understood in general what they were talking about. Moreover, deep down, she was proud of her son and his friends. She was happy over all just being with them and knowing that they were safe. “They were not doing anything [wrong]. They were not doing anything shameful.”

One morning she awoke to a big nightmare. It was a Saturday morning. Her sons had a poetry recital at night. They were excited and nervous. Her youngest son seemed to be acting strange but neither Zelo nor her oldest son suspected anything. Then her second son told his older brother that he was going to go to ask a question of one of his friends in the neighborhood and he left. He never came back. After 30 or 45 minutes, Zelo asked her oldest son whereabouts of his younger brother. He said he did not know. Zelo

murmured “He left! He’s gone!” Then Zelo and her oldest son went up to search his room. They found a short note on his bed. The note indicated that he was joining the Kurdish Nationalist Movement.

First I even thought that my son was kidnapped. As if a piece of my liver was torn apart. I sensed that something was going on. I did not tell this anybody though.

What could I tell to people? I cried for days. Our house was like a mourning house. My oldest son was trying to calm me down. I was about to lose my mind. I was angry. I was weak. I did not know what to do.

Sometime later, her oldest son was detained and tortured with one of his friends when they were circulating a political pamphlet against capitalist globalization. A group of undercover police detained them. This is how he described the incident:

They beat us up and put us in their car. Then they took us to a police station.

Beatings continued there. Then they took us and we, altogether, went to our houses. Fortunately, there was nobody in our house but there of them beat me up so bad in my room. I will never forget that. It was a very small room. I could not even protect myself. Then they confiscated my book. Then they took us another police station. We were beaten constantly. But they were beating me worse than my friend. They were asking which one of us Kurdish, and then started beating.

The pamphlet and the political organization I belonged to, do not have anything to do with Kurdishness, but I was getting a special treatment. Then next day an agent came from the capital city. He interrogated me for hours. I was blind folded whole time. Then they took us another station (the one we were in did not want us anymore). Then we were taken to another. In the morning they took us to anti-

terror branch. As soon as we enter in a room a group of police assaulted us again. We did not know where the blows were coming. Fists, kicks were coming down from nowhere. Then they started hitting our heads to the walls. There was another set of interrogations. I was even asked about my younger brother. I told them that I did not know. I told them that he left home because my dad beat him. They did not believe me and told me that I was lying. I told them if they knew where he was, it would have been better if they tell me his whereabouts. At the end of the second day they let us go.

Zelo was very angry with him when she heard what happened to him; “This is a mother’s heart you know,” she says. “You cannot stand seeing your kid gets hurt.” It is a cultural, biological reflex but, in fact, Zelo did not know what else to suggest to him. She did not have any alternative way to lead him.

Then when her relatives learned about her son’s departure, the whole family mourned and accused Zelo of not being a good mother. This was expected and did not surprise her. Zelo, however, surprised everybody by defending her son’s action. Her oldest son described the situation as: “Nobody was expecting her to take the side of her son but also his action. She was happy to see people were shocked. They did not even know what to do. You should have seen them.” Even though her heart was bleeding inside, he said, she was not going to reveal her tears and her inner cry. Instead of being silent and accepting all the accusations, she declared her son as a hero, the bravest person she knew, as a person to be proud of. She even attacked those who criticized her. She accused them of being cowards, being co-opted with Turkish fascist regime.

Divorce. Her son's departure became a turning point. She started listening more critically to the news on the radio and TV for the first time in her life. She started listening to her oldest son and his friends' political and intellectual conversations more carefully. For the first time in her life she wanted to learn. She realized that life in the big city was different from her hometown. She realized that people were more independent. She realized that she did not want to bear with all those beatings, adultery, and mental and psychological insults and abuses.

I remember one night, at around 1 a.m., he came home, beat me up and threw me and my children out on the street. Several times he had thrown me out on the street. My children would open the door for me later.

... Sometimes the kids and I would go to my sister for a few days when he threw us out. A few days later, we would come home.

... I would have black eyes all the time. When the neighbors asked me what had happened, I would say that I had run into the door. I would never tell them what happened.

... I could tolerate the poverty and hunger, I just wanted to be happy. He didn't think I deserved being happy. As if he had married me to torture continuously.

"I wasn't the Zelo who was at the age of 14 anymore," she says. Somehow all the components of her life (feudal culture, layers of hidden oppression and repression over the poor, women, and ethnic minorities, Kurdish national movement, her sons, her sons' friends, civil rights movements, stories of torture, and the mothers of disappeared, etc.) and her unhappiness came across somewhere in her mind and started developing

something. Zelo realized she could not stand her unhappy marriage anymore and she started thinking and talking about divorce.

She began considering about the possible positive and negative consequences of a divorce. “For days and nights I thought about all the things. How could I support myself and my kids financially? I had never worked before, you know.” But mostly what she was concerned about were the social and moral condemnations. She did not know how she would handle the social blame, out-casting, and reproaches that would be brought upon her. She did not have any answers for any of these questions, but she knew she was not happy with what and who she was. She was going to seek a divorce.

First, she spoke with her children and asked if they would live with her. They said they would support her decision. Then, she asked her family to get together and told them, “Just like how you gave me to him, you have to take me back.” Her family opposed her and said they would return her home. Her older brother even got angry and told her that he would not take care of her “bastards.” Even though it was culturally inappropriate for Zelo to talk back to her older brother, she confronted him and told him, “My kids are not bastards. Their father and mother are both known, and I did not ask you to take care of them.” Then her uncle’s oldest son, who was the one who let her marry her husband, called everybody to be quiet. He told everyone he was feeling guilty and added everyone who for years did nothing should have felt guilty as well because Zelo should not have endured this. That was it. Zelo’s family decided to support her. Then, one of her brothers hired a lawyer. She filed for divorce. In two months, she signed the divorce papers.

Life after Divorce

The first couple of weeks after the divorce she stayed with her sister. Then, she decided to go back to her own house and “kick him out.” Zelo explained, “That was my house. Why should I leave it to him? He is the one who must go.” She is still in shock today about how she did this. She says she does not know where she found the courage to kick him out. However, it is interesting that a person like her husband quietly left home without feeling offended, assaulted, or insulted. Did he get drunk and come home and terrorize them again? He did not. Zelo said she did not know why or how that happened. She guessed at an explanation saying, “but he wanted to leave too, you know, because he was living with another woman anyway. He had another home.” Zelo’s oldest son stated similar things. He also added, “We [kids] had been grown up. I was working. My sister was working. We [kids] did not want him either any more. He accepted it easily. I assume he wanted to leave too. I think, he could not stand seeing us. I have never known what he was thinking.”

Zelo’s husband was alienated. He was even making “you” (Zelo and kids) versus “me” separation between him and his family. Zelo’s oldest son said, “He even threatened me once. He told me that he was going to go to the police and report us; about our political involvement and about my younger brother. I told him ‘do not even pause!’ go because, I told him, this kind of thing could only be expected from a dad like him.”

Zelo stayed alone at home with her kids for months; nobody visited her. “Nobody from my family, nobody from my in-laws.” As if, she says, her house was a “plague-house.” She was being blamed for her divorce. She was being blamed for her son’s leaving. She was being blamed for tearing apart the family. This loneliness, though,

allowed her to review her life and think about a lot of things and eventually made her stronger against all those social pressures.

I was thinking about what I should do, could do...I looked around. Everybody was struggling for something; why not me! Why am I afraid? What am I afraid of? Then, a new Zelo was born... I needed to find myself.

Shortly after the divorce, Zelo's husband died of a heart attack. She was blamed for his death, too. Some of her in-laws told her that if Zelo had not divorced him, he would have lived.

Zelo was worried about her finances, so her older brother offered to pay her rent. But as it turned out, her husband had not signed the papers and Zelo's divorce actually was not legally finalized. As a result, with a little help of a lawyer, Zelo became eligible to receive her husband's social security income (Dul ve yetim maaşı). She began living with her children.

However, Zelo's divorce and procuring a small social security income did not provide a perfect living for Zelo. What she knew previously was not helping her to deal with the new problems of daily life. Everyday was a new challenge to her. She was encountering new problems, she was unable to name them and deal with them. For example, her only income besides her husband's social security was her oldest son's salary and even with combining the two incomes, they were coming short each month. Her daughter wanted to work to contribute to the household income, but Zelo did not feel comfortable sending her daughter to work. In addition, she did not allow her daughter to go out to socialize with her peers. She would not allow her to have a boy friend or get involved with any kind of relationship with the opposite sex. One day her oldest son

critiqued Zelo's behavior towards her daughter. Zelo realized that she was raising her daughter in the same way that she was raised: oppressed, marginalized, and passive. But she did not know what to do, how to treat her daughter, how to raise her better. Then, gradually with her oldest son's suggestions, Zelo started changing her manner towards to her daughter. She allowed her daughter to work, for example. In addition to her work, Zelo also allowed and encouraged her daughter to go out and socialize. Her daughter began going to a Kurdish youth association and getting involved with cultural readings, folklore, etc.

One day, Zelo's daughter brought a boy home and introduced him as a friend. Zelo could not explain why she had a sudden thunderstorm in her mind and in her heart when she saw her daughter bringing "a boy" home. She did not know how to react but she consented with silence. Sometime later, Zelo started getting a feeling that her daughter and the boy were up to something. First she thought that they were going to ask her permission to get married, but it was not that. Sometimes Zelo thought about the consequences of her daughter's political involvement; what if she got arrested; what if she was tortured; or killed, or imprisoned, and what if she wanted to go to the mountains to join the guerilla movement. But she just ignored these ideas and tried to convince herself that they were just thoughts. Perhaps she did not know how to react and how to handle the situation. What would she have to do? Should Zelo order her not to go to work, not to see that boy, not to go to the cultural activities, not to read? Zelo did not do anything but waited and waited for what would happen. She did not try to keep her daughter home. Neither did Zelo encouraged nor discouraged her daughter from doing anything. However, Zelo's oldest son thinks:

[as if] My mom and I sent her off. She was on fire (icine ates dushmanu). While a part of me was still in denial, the other part could identify with her cause, with the fire inside... I didn't do anything to stop her. My mom for a time tried to stop her, but she couldn't succeed. My sister was grown enough and she could stand on her own feet, and she was stubborn... She chose the same life that my brother did. They both made an informed decision (bilincli), they had hopes, reasonable or unreasonable... Do we have a better life here now? They have a better life than we do, they are freer than we are, that's at least what I know...

Then, one day her daughter left home with a short note left on her bed. She joined the guerilla movement with her boyfriend.

Zelo found herself in a kind of emptiness after her daughter's departure. "My mind was blank ...All day I was just smoking and drinking glasses of dark strong tea. Did not go to outside. Did not talk to anyone." She does not remember how long she stayed home like that. She had no sense of time. She only remembers that one day suddenly she felt that she had to go somewhere. "I was going to go insane. I had to go outside. I had to find something to do." She went to her older sister's house and stayed there for a couple of days. She felt she did not want to go back to her own home. "It was hard to go back home. As if it was empty." Zelo's daughter's departure was so shocking that people did not know how to react at the beginning. For the first time in her family, a girl was leaving home and going to the mountains. After the shock passed, people's comments, critiques, and gossip developed.

Zelo's relatives blamed her again. According to custom this fault was bigger than the divorce because this time a girl (Zelo's daughter) is involved. Now it is both a gender

and political issue. Zelo's daughter had not only joined the Kurdish movement but also had left with her boyfriend. In Zelo's culture (also true in Turkey's mainstream culture), the family is dishonored if a daughter runs away with her boyfriend. This behavior is highly condemned, and the daughter is usually disowned by the family if not murdered. The culture also considers men as political agents, not women. Therefore, women's involvement with politics is usually discouraged and women are excluded from certain aspects of life. For women to fight for freedom and cultural rights is unthinkable and unimaginable. It is also not common for girls or women join social movements. The traditional culture considers their place to be at home and, more specifically, in the kitchen. Another aspect of the culture is that mothers are blamed and kept responsible for their children's behaviors. Mothers are primary cultural agents especially for girls. Mothers are active transmitters, primary enforcers, and maintainers of cultural values; they have to embrace those values as much as they have to make sure girls acquire everything they need through oppressive socialization process, the same process that victimized them.

When Zelo's daughter left, Zelo was criticized by her relatives for not disciplining her daughter. The critique was harsher than the earlier one. Zelo failed as a mother for not being able to teach her daughter gender-appropriate behavior. Zelo was supposed to teach her daughter that her place was at home and politics was none of her business. Zelo was also expected to teach her daughter that her body, her mind, and her heart do not belong to her; they belong to the culture and family.

A woman's body is one of the most important criteria for family's status of honor. For example, any type of sexual contact outside of marriage is forbidden and most

importantly, brings shame to the family and the community. Even if this contact is against a woman's will, such as rape, the family's honor is still tarnished. Moreover, walking, talking, or running away with a man who is not a close relative are also behaviors that bring shame to the family. The results can range from social outcasting to death.

However, because the Kurdish nationalist movement found support and respect among Kurdish people, Zelo's daughter's departure was not equal to an ordinary "run-away" or another morally unacceptable act. Therefore, most critiques or social condemnation were conducted aphonically and were not as harsh as expected in relatively normal conditions. Most people did not even want to talk about the incident due to the political risk. Nobody wanted to become involved with anything related to Kurdishness. In addition, this incident was not supposed to be revealed to the Turkish authorities and security forces because the result could have been catastrophic. For example, Zelo and her children could have been detained, interrogated, and tortured. The whole family could have even been considered and treated as a working cell of the Kurdish resistance.

The pro-Kurdish Party. Zelo needed to do something. She could not sit home and think about all the rumors, gossip, and shaming. She learned from TV and radio about some cultural associations, including a pro-Kurdish political party and its women's branch. She decided to go to the cultural organization her daughter had attended. She went there for some time, and participated in some of the cultural activities, such as music, dances, and storytelling. While she was still active in this cultural association, she asked one of her brothers, who was involved with the pro-Kurdish political party, to take her to a meeting. Her brother asked her if she was sure about wanting to attend a meeting.

What he meant was the party was under political pressure. Even though the party was a legal party, it was being shut down by the government over and over again. It is randomly searched by the police's anti-terror branch. Books and other documents were confiscated. Its members were arrested, tortured, killed, and eventually disappeared. Even its elected members in the congress were arrested and sentenced to 15 years in prison for their "subversive and separatist" acts. One of them was a woman (Leyla Zana). These prisoners were released after spending 10 years in a prison due to the pressures from the European Union.

Zelo feels that she found a good place where she could become a part of something important. "My children were fighting for human and Kurdish rights, reading about injustices." Zelo realizes that she would feel better if she followed her children's path. As a result, she took over her children's cause. "If I sit home; crying, whining for my life, for my misfortune, I would still feel worthless." She became more energetic. "When I was going to the party, it was like somebody was lighting my way, showing me who I was and where I had come from." She would get up early, do all the housework, prepare breakfast for her kids and then go to the party.

As soon as I sent [my] little one to school, I would leave home. I would listen to people, participate in conversations as I was trying to find my identity. I didn't have my husband's restrictions anymore. I would watch and listen to their conversations at the center. It was a different world... They would talk about why we had to leave our hometown and start living in a different culture. I liked that both women and men would sit together and talk there.

In order to better understand her motivation and its dimensions, I asked her a polemical question. I asked her if she would still go to the party if women were mistreated. She without hesitation answered with a bold “no” and added, “That’s why I went there for months and just sat there and watched.” She watched how people treated each other, how women were being treated, how they shared, and how they made decisions. She observed that people, regardless their gender and ethnicity, were treated with respect.

A few months later, one of the female leaders from the party asked Zelo if she was interested in becoming the women’s group leader in her party’s branch in her town. Zelo hesitated and said she could not do it. However, the woman did not give up on her: “She told me that she had been observing me and could see my potential. She encouraged me. She kept telling me that I could do it.”

Her responsibility as the leader was to meet with different women in the neighborhood and raise their awareness about their culture and rights to empower them. If the women had lived in villages that were burned and emptied by the security forces, Zelo and her branch would provide some kind of orientation to them to get a better understanding of city life. They also provided support in protecting their cultural identity. At the beginning Zelo felt incompetent and she approached the woman who gave this task to her, and said:

you gave me a mission, but I don’t know what to do about it. I didn’t even know how to read and write. She was telling me that I could do it, that I was a mother, that I went through a lot. With my second grade education, I would try to read the big headings in the newspapers and share the information with other women.

When there was a meeting or celebration like Newroz [It means “*new day*” and is

a forbidden Kurdish celebration.], we would try to encourage women to come and participate in it.

Then, Zelo registered at an evening adult literacy program where she learned reading and writing in a few months. She improved her skills by reading newspaper headlines every day. “Since then I read so many books.... I learned a lot of things by myself.” Zelo also learned much at the party by listening to others and participating in conversations. At the party, she was never discouraged when she asked questions. When she read fiction and non-fiction books, she underlined the concepts and words that she did not know and asked others about their meaning. She learned a lot through these dialogues. People in the party were very supportive and encouraging. Most importantly, they respected Zelo’s effort in improving herself in several areas. This fed Zelo’s motivation. Zelo and other members would get together in the party and read and talk. Sometimes they would read together, and those who knew more would explain certain concepts that seemed to be confusing to the rest. Zelo provided an example of these interactions:

Let me give you a specific example. There was a term called “comprador ağa.” I was hearing the term so often. I didn’t know what it was. So I asked a friend to tell me what it was. He gave “Sedat Bucak” as an example [Sedat Bucak is a parliamentarian and wealthy Kurdish landlord in the Southeast of Turkey. His name is also involved in some of the killings, disappearances, and similar unlawful activities that are unveiled in a well known incident called Susurluk]. He told me that Sedat Bucak is a comprador ağa who works with or makes collaboration with the fascist Turkish and foreign bourgeoisie. Then the term started making more sense to me.

“It was not a [classical] teacher-student relationship,” says Zelo; it was kind of a “companion-like” teaching and learning in which respect is central and no one is superior to another.

After a while, Zelo realized that despite all the respect shown towards women in the party, deep down there was still an embedded traditional oppressive patriarchy that existed among the members. “You do not see it at the first glance. But it is there! Still there,” said Zelo. Many of male members had “stereotypical perception of women that women cook, clean, and wait for their husband to come home, that they would wash their husband’s feet. Many of them thought that women didn’t have any business in politics or at the center.” Zelo and other women fought against these kinds of beliefs and assumptions. Women in the party realized that they should prove to the men that they were wrong; they needed to prove that women were capable of carrying on political tasks in both theory and practice.

We proved ourselves to them, they saw who we were, they accepted us, they changed their perceptions. Now, when we [women] enter the room, people get up to greet us. They respect us. [Getting up to greet somebody in Turkish and Kurdish culture is only shown towards people who are respected, and primarily shown towards older men]...I mean these are my experiences. For example, there are young boys and girls in the party; they call me ‘Gorki Ana’ [this refers to the mother character from Russian Author Maxim Gorky’s novel called ‘The Mother’. The mother is a proletariat woman who goes through a socio-political transformation and becomes an activist when her son was arrested for his involvement with socialist movement in late Czar era].

In addition, Zelo also struggled against those who assume that a woman would blindly follow whatever she was told by the party. One story, told by one of her friends, illustrates this well. “It was one of those days that the party was in a financial crisis. We were not able to pay the rent. Party administrators suggested that the women do knitting and crochet to raise funds for an upcoming political gathering. Zelo did not agree with this. She did not agree that spending their time and energy knitting and crocheting was a good idea. She suggested making Tespîh in Kurdish tricolor; red, green, yellow (tespîh means prayer beads but in Turkey, not all tespîhs are used to pray. Some, if not most, people carry tespîh in their daily lives as a stress reliever or just a toy like a fidget toy). Two people from administration could not convince Zelo to do knitting and crochet and she could not convince them either. In the end, Zelo told them they were not only telling her to do fundraising but also how to do it. Then, one of the administrators told Zelo why on the earth did they get her involved with the politics! That was half joke half serious but mostly a compliment to her. However, Zelo was not satisfied. She did not feel a victory yet. She also convinced other women to support her proposal. Finally, the fundraising was a big success. All tespîhs were sold and the party paid three or four months of rent. Moreover, in the next regular administrator meeting when Zelo’s effort and initiatives were recognized and appreciated, Zelo stood up and told the administrators not to underestimate women’s insights. She also criticized administrators’ elitist attitude toward those who did not have a formal education. Zelo’s friend recounts her remarks at that meeting:

She told us “you [administrators] think you know everything but you do not know anything because you always put your head in the books and never take it out to

see what is happening around you. We [women] are coming from the very core of practice. Maybe you think we do not know anything but we know.”

Besides conflicts in the party, Zelo encounters some difficulties in her daily tasks, too. When she went to a Kurdish neighborhood to meet newly migrated families and talk about their orientation to the big city and their social and cultural rights, most of them did not like her speaking Turkish with them. Since Zelo moved to the big city she had forgotten a lot of Kurdish words. Due to the oppression and systematic assimilation on the Kurdish language, Kurds are losing their authentic language, and most Kurds use Kurdish mixed with many Turkish words. Therefore, she preferred talking in Turkish like others who had lived in the big cities for a long time. Then, she realized that “they were right. They would not believe me. They would not find me trustworthy. They would not see me as one of them. So this helped me learn and improve my Kurdish.”

In addition, there were other things that she had to fight against. One of them was wearing a headscarf.

Some people questioned why I wasn't wearing a headscarf. They would consider it hypocrisy that I didn't wear a headscarf and didn't speak Kurdish. I promised them to improve my Kurdish but nothing about the headscarf. I told them that I was a modern person. I explained to them that I didn't believe in wearing a headscarf and didn't want to deceive them by wearing it just because they wanted me to. I told them after leaving their house I would take it off, because it is not me.

Some women, mostly Kurdish, still did not like Zelo. Some said to her face they did not want her to come and visit them. Zelo insisted she would continue to help them. “I would

tell them that I would come through the window if they kicked me out of the door. I would come through the chimney if they kicked me out of the window. I kept visiting them. They all respect me now.”

Sometimes Zelo even goes to Turkish homes to ask them to vote for the pro Kurdish party. She describes these visits saying:

They are like they see a monster as soon as we tell them our party’s name. They shut the door in our face. I do not take it personally. I used to get so upset for days. But I learned. I know why they do what they do. Now I tell them I am God’s visitor [Tanri misafiri] and need a glass of water for God’s sake. Then they take me in and I tell them why we want peace, how we want peace.

Zelo knew that most women were illiterate and have never been in school. She thought about ways to teach them reading and writing. She suggested to party administrators they provide a literacy program. The party financially could not afford this and asked Zelo to apply to the Ministry of Education to provide sources and facilities, but she did not apply. She did not, because she believed that “Even though we were a legal organization, informally they considered us illegal. They would refuse anything we take to them.”

Mastering Discourse. One day, one of her brothers called Zelo and told her that they needed to talk. “I knew that it was not about something good. My brothers would not call me to just chat.” She was worried. Zelo’s biggest concern was related to the traditional values: what if some people gossiped and accused her of sleeping around or reported she was seen with a man or men thereby indicating again her intimate relationship with opposite sex? She met her brother with a lot of things on her mind. She did not know how she would respond if he brought up those kinds of concerns. Her

brother was trying to be polite and nice and told her that he was concerned for her safety and what if she got arrested, tortured, and raped in custody? Zelo became so angry and yelled at him

While your country is under oppression, while all your cultural rights are taken from you, while your people's honor is tortured and being raped in the torture chambers around this land, your only concern is about the thing that is in between my legs, you bastard! You should be ashamed of yourself that you called me for this! My honor is not between my legs! It [honor] is in people's consciousness, in people's hearts, and in people's mind.

Her brother was stunned, could not say a word, and only dropped his head down. After this incident she felt that she was so proud of herself. She thinks that it was a personal revolution for her to find courage to say those things to her brother.

As she was improving her skills, she was asked to be the head of the women's branch in the town. She accepted the offer. Then, she became more involved with the party. She even extended her activism outside of the party. She, for example, participated in other political activities and demonstrations. One of them was an Istanbul-based organization's local branch, which was called Mothers of Peace, whose mission was to stop the civil war between the Kurdish guerillas and Turkish military. Recently she was a delegate of a Human Rights Organization.

Brother-in-law: Reso. Since Zelo told me that there were several things that she could not talk about on the phone and it was okay to talk to her brother-in-law, I collected data from him via the Internet. More detailed information about the method of data

collection from her brother-in-law and other people that Zelo suggested was provided in chapter three.

Zelo's brother-in-law, I will call him Reso, is now a political asylee in another country. He is a college graduate. He is a few years older than Zelo's first son. Reso is close to Zelo and her kids. He is an uncle, he is a friend, and he is a role model for the kids. He said, "I feel like we grew up together with her children. Zelo is like another mother for me. I remember she even gave me a bath when I was a little kid." Reso has more than 20 nephews and nieces, but he said, "Zelo's kids are always special for me. I love them dearly. "

Despite his strong bonding to Zelo's children, Reso remembered with regret that he beat the kids numerous times. "Damn feudal culture!" he said and elaborated saying:

I was given authority and privilege to discipline those kids. I was a kid too, you know. Family assigned me to be a torturer. Of course I did not know that yet. I realized it so late. I was a high school sophomore when I realized that the culture dehumanized me by giving a privilege and authority over these kids. I was supposed to beat them or threaten them or scare them when they were told on me or when they did a wrong thing. But this was not the case all the time. Damn culture! Sometimes I even beat them without a reason. Usually when I was beaten by an older brother, because I could not do anything about it, then I was turning to those who I have power over. I was beating them to feel better. As if I was getting revenge. It was sick. I still feel guilty doing it and I never forgive myself, my parents, and the bloody feudal culture.

Later Reso tried to repair what he did to the kids. He deliberately tried to be a role model for them for their world view and for their education. He tried to educate them by using all available non-traditional avenues. For him poetry, music, and plays were the primary medium to reach them. Reso explained:

I knew that I did not only need to reach their intellect but also to their soul, and their heart. It felt like it was kind of war between me as a role model versus the state and its political apparatus. The kids were being bombarded by the dominant ideology via the media, pop culture, conservative culture, oppressive religion, and schooling. They were teenagers; you need to give them a world view with something enmeshed with their need. Art is great for this reason. First of all, art, by its nature, is rebellious. At least art is always revolutionary in Turkey. It involves love, passion, idealism and that is what a teenager needs.

Reso thinks that he won the battle with the state. None of his nephews or nieces became a fascist or even a so-called “ordinary citizen.” An “ordinary citizen,” according to Reso, is someone who claims to be ideology free and a loyal servant of the state. “I have never told them what they needed to become though. I told them to become someone who had his/her own ideas. I even told them it was okay to be a fascist. But, I said, they needed to be a good fascist who knew what he/she was doing.” Reso believes that he had a great impact on Zelo’s daughter especially when she was listening to arabesque music and was about to become an ordinary girl.

Reso refused to say much about his nephew and niece joining the guerilla movement. He said he never dictated to them which direction to take and was in no position to judge them. “No one has a position to judge them. That is their lives. I believe

they decided freely.” Reso stated he had a great respect for their decision. When I asked him if he knew anything about their departure: how did they do it, who did they have contact with, did someone recruit them, how did they decide, why did they decide, and what happened after they left in relation to the security forces? Reso said that he did not know any of these questions’ answers. He also said that he never wanted to know, explaining:

First, it is useless to know. Second, it is not a smart thing to know. In Turkey, if you are a Kurd, if you are a political person you have to know what you need to know and what you need not to know. You never know what or where your limit is in resisting to torture.

Reso also has great respect for Zelo. What Zelo’s husband has done to Zelo was sick and terrible, he said. Reso believes that Zelo was not the only victim of his terror. Zelo’s husband terrorized the entire family too, and he was sometimes even terrorizing the entire neighborhood. But of course, “Everybody had a place to go at the end. Zelo did not. Zelo had to go to the bed with him.” He always takes Zelo’s side when Reso’s relatives attempt to blame Zelo for all the things that happened. He tells them they are as guilty as Zelo’s husband because they did not do anything about it. Now they are blaming the victim. He sometimes uses religious jargon (although he does not believe in God) to attack them:

I tell them that they all are going to go to hell, if the God exists, and be burned there because of what they did and did not do about Zelo and the kids. I want them to be scared. I know they will not feel guilty. You know I really believe that they, perhaps I should be included, should all go to jail for this primitively

organized abuse. But there is no law in that bloody country. It [existing law] does not work for the oppressed.

Zelo on Daily Incidents

Since this study aims to examine the dynamics of learning experience in everyday struggle, I thought that it would provide more tangible information and insights for me to examine some outcome of her learning; how Zelo uses her knowledge and learning, how she interprets daily incidents, and how she transfers her knowledge from one area to another.

Teacher-Educator. “I am a freshman in the *University of Life*. I learn a great deal every day,” said Zelo when she talked about her education. She seemed like she regretted that she dropped out of the school, but she balanced this feeling by acknowledging she was a good student of life.

She now wants to be an educator, not a teacher. She thinks a teacher is someone who is a government worker and whose job is to teach what the authority asks. An educator, for her, is someone who raises consciousness and lights up the surroundings by knowledge and by practices. And this job of being an educator, according to her, does not require a “state sealed diploma!”

Guardian of a Student. Zelo is very proud of herself that she has become confident about many things in her life. She always states, “Before I was not even able to go to the little store in the neighborhood. I did not know how to get there. We [herself and other women in similar situation] were not allowed to go out. When we go out, we were not allowed to look at surroundings. All the time we were told; this was shame, that

was forbidden...” Now Zelo can even go to school, talk to administrators, and sometimes “stir things up.”

Her youngest son was thrown out of school due to his absences last year. She sought for a way to send him to school again. She asked her friends and others for advice. Finally, she went to one of the activist teachers from a teachers’ union and asked if there was any possibility for her son to go back to school. The teacher told her recently there had been an amnesty for those who were thrown out from school because of absences. Then she went to the school and talked to the assistant principal. The assistant principal and staff assistants did not treat her well. Zelo recounted the incident:

They [school administrators and the staff] assumed that I was an illiterate woman. I had done my research before and then went there. Then I told them there was a recent ordinance, law. They were just trying to get rid of me. I told them that... (I was yelling at them you know)... I told them that they should be ashamed of themselves. You are teachers, I said. You should not lie! You should not treat me like that. Then the principal heard me from his office and came and asked what was going on. I told him what was happening. He invited me in his room. He offered me a glass of tea and told me that I was right. He called his assistant and gave him an order to take care of my issue.

Humanity and Money. For Zelo a prerequisite to be human is to care about people. Helping people, caring about them, sharing with others are important qualities that a person should have. Zelo claims that she loves people, but then she feels she has to add that she does not like those who are selfish, conceited and disdainful. She also does not like those who are conservative, and bigoted. When Zelo talks about the need for

people helping people, some claim Zelo is being much too idealistic and tell her that she cannot do anything without money. However, Zelo elaborated on her beliefs:

Okay! I know money is important too but it is not the only thing to be human, to help people. There are other things to it. Visiting elders and poor, for example, having their coffee that they offer or tea... are these too much? Why do you need money for this? Some people have become obsessed with money. Money is making some of them talk. Because they have some money, they think that they know everything. They do not know anything. They do not know what humanity is about. It is about making someone feel good about themselves, you know... Sometimes I wish and say that if the lotto hit me one day and I will open a business for all these youngsters and tell them it is all yours. But because I think this way, God would not let me win.

Zelo does not only *say* what she believes; she also *does* what she believes. For example, even though she is poor and she has a very limited income, she never turns down anyone who comes to her door. She always shares her food with those who come to her house no matter how little food she has. Last year, Zelo welcomed a runaway young girl who was raped by her father-in-law. This young girl ran away with her boyfriend because her family wanted her to marry someone she had never seen. Then she lived with her boyfriend's family in another city. She became pregnant and shortly after delivering her baby, when she was alone home, her boyfriend's father raped her. She told her boyfriend what happened and her boyfriend beat her, told her that she was lying, and kicked her out. She had nowhere to go. She went to her boyfriend's brother-in-law who suggested she go to the party where Zelo is a member. The first thing the people in the

party thought was to take her to Zelo's home. They promised Zelo that it would only take a couple of days to find a better place for her. She said:

That 'two days' has become two years. I did not even have enough money to put some bread to my stomach. Another stomach was added into my kitchen. Not only that, she had a baby. How could I send her somewhere else? How could I ever tell her 'no'? She had come to my door. Even I know that I was going to die out of my hunger, I would not let them go anywhere. I took care of them as much as I could. She is my daughter now. Now she is working somewhere. She calls me mommy and her daughter calls me grandma.

Sometimes some activist youngsters come to stay overnight. She welcomes them and takes care of them, too, saying:

I would give my dinner to them; I mean whatever I have. I sometimes go to sleep hungry but I do not allow them feel anything. I heard that one day some friends from the party, told these youngsters not to use my house to stay because of my poverty. The youngsters were surprised and told them that "No! We did not feel anything like that. She does not reflect anything on us." I mean what would happen? I mean I would not die by sleeping hungry one night or two.... People have become extremely selfish nowadays you know. They only care about themselves. If someone drop dead just next to them, they do not care. But I care and it is my business.

Crime in Cities. Like most people, Zelo does not feel safe living in the city because the crime rate has considerably increased in the last decade so. Purse-snatching has become, especially, common. She complains about this and takes the argument to

higher level and ties this to racist tendencies increasing in the big cities, which usually feeds itself by scapegoating a group. “This is a racist [attitude]. This has nothing to do with being Kurd or Turk,” she says and continues:

They [Turkish army] burned people’s villages. They [Kurdish villagers] were expelled from their own land. And people came here. Nobody offered any help to them. Nobody reached out to hold their hand to help them. No job! No education! He is hungry! His child is hungry! What will he do! Either will he steal or do violent acts.

Women. Zelo blames the patriarchal culture for the oppression of women and their marginalization in every epoch. She is frustrated rather than being naively surprised when she states, “We have arrived in the year 2007, and women are still oppressed.” For Zelo, the biggest obstacle that is standing in front of women is their illiteracy. She says:

When we get to 13 or 14, they make girls get married to take care of their husband and take care of their kids...in my culture they do not send kids to school. It is a shame to send your daughter to school.

In some Kurdish regions girls are allowed to go to school until they become 13 or 14 years old, which indicates that girls are not kids anymore, they are ready to be women and to get married. Another reason behind not sending girls to school is families believe school or education will make them disobedient, rebellious, riotous, and promiscuous.

According to Zelo, one difference between Kurdish and Turkish women is a Turkish woman’s opportunity to get educated and likelihood to have economic independence. She acknowledges that Turkish women are oppressed and exploited, but

she believes that Kurdish women are oppressed more because of other cultural, religious, and political issues. Zelo elaborated:

In the big cities, women somehow learn how to stand up on their own feet by themselves. They have economic independence. Kurdish women do not even have that right. They do not have economic independence. Kurdish women have historically been enslaved to their husbands. They have been made to beg to the husband. Kurdish women are told that they were not supposed to work because it is unmannerly thing to do.

Because urbanization has not broken the traditional norms yet in Turkey, Zelo is right in her analysis. In fact, even though women are allowed to work and add to the family income, this is not considered as valuable as the husband's work. Actually the comparison between men and women's work is not usually even made. Social norms do not allow women to speak up and say, "I work, too" or "I am a bread winner, too." If a woman does, she will more likely be the target of cultural condemnation. If she has to work, she works without complaining and also she should not neglect any of her household duties: cooking, cleaning, etc. It is the author's observation that this oppressive structure is stricter for Kurdish women than Turkish women due to, as Zelo mentioned earlier, religious and traditional norms. Layers of oppression over women are naturally doubled. Now women are subjected to economical exploitation, possible sexual harassment, and gossip-based physical abuses and in some cases jealousy-based violence by husbands. If a Kurdish woman survives this and attends to any social formation (organizations and meetings) in order to seek women's rights, worker's right, human

rights, beyond cultural condemnation, she will experience the pervasive system of oppression: police force. Zelo commented on the presence of police:

Police sees me as their rival. I know, it is the police's solemn duty to help the system and tradition endure. When I stand up and demand any [structural] changes I automatically become an enemy. They see me as a foe...

Zelo believes that she always knew women were mistreated in society, but nothing else, and describes how she came to understand the extent of that oppression saying:

At the even beginning of my marriage, I was questioning to understand why my husband was mistreating me but I was not able to find a remedy or hope for my situation. I was thinking that it was because this was how it was....If I had education, if I knew how to read, how to explore, I could have found courage and strength to stand up against my husband's abuses. I would not let myself be abused that much. I would divorce him as soon as possible. After divorcing him my consciousness has raised; by kicking him out I accomplished an internal revolution in my inner self. Then I felt myself more powerful and strengthened. Then I said to myself "Wow I could do this!"

Zelo believes that attempting to do something about the situation that oppresses women is the key. Women have to find courage to take risks in order to liberate themselves.

Women, at least, have to teach their men that women are not their commodity. Women are not their whipping posts. Zelo continued to describe her awakening to the levels of women's oppression commenting:

Then I saw many women like me and even some whose situation were worse than mine. She has 10 kids. She has to take care of them, take care of the households,

and the husband, and his needs...And on the top of them, beatings, insults...That is why I have been trying to help women, organize them, trying to remind them that they are human. They are as strong as men. I mean I am trying to illuminate women. But women do not want to get out of from their shell. When I talk to them they say “Mother, what you are saying is right but we are economically dependent to our husbands. Our hands are tied.” Then I tell them, “Go to work then! Get your financial independence.” But they are too afraid to attempt to do something. They do not have courage to get out from their shell. They live in a hell, you know, a hell. That’s why we want girls get education, not to stay illiterate. I mean I do not want any girl get married tomorrow and become a slave for husband. I mean they need to be equal. I mean if a wife is sick, then the husband should take care of kids and households. I mean now a husband comes home and kicks his wife. She is sick you know. She is sick! But he yells at her says, “Get up! Get up, you are not dead yet!”

What can a woman do? Should she go to the police? “No!” says Zelo, and explained:

I did not go to the police either. Let’s say I went to the police, what would the police tell me? The police would have told me that “Go back to your house! Go back! He is your husband. He both loves you and beats you.” A policeman is a man too. He does same thing to his wife when he goes home. He exercises his [given power and privilege] manhood over his wife. She should teach herself, read, and seek for her right. It is risky, I know. And I know some of them cannot do it. She should take risks.

Oppression and Sultanate. Zelo believes that not only women, not only Kurds, but other groups of people including workers, civil servants, even police themselves are getting their own share of grief from oppression and repression. She defines system and dominant ideology in a way that system and ideology gets outside of being so abstract, becomes concrete, and becomes tangible. She describes the system as “those who are in the top of the state.” She calls them *baştakiler* (those who are on the top). “They are the system,” she claims. This way she adds a human dimension to those abstract concepts. Through this way of understanding, she does not define the system as a separate entity and independent from human action. All oppression and repression are coming from the top because *baştakiler* want it. Zelo clarified:

They [*baştakiler*] just care about their stake. They want to protect and keep their sultanate, their reign. That’s why not only Kurds are oppressed, not only women are oppressed. Turks are oppressed, workers, civil servants. The police brutalize workers as well as teachers. Teachers are civil servants like police. But police do not know this; they, like dogs, just attack without thinking. They brutalize everyone in order for *baştakiler* to sustain their sultanate...because the people like sheep. Look! Senior citizens are dying in the waiting lines for their 3-month paycheck. But what do people say? They say, “May the Lord not give any trouble to the state.” They are always thankful. That’s why we are being oppressed....

Education System and Reading Accurately. When Zelo talks about people or the masses, she usually describes them as uneducated (*eğitimsiz*) or illiterate (*cahil*). Sometimes she uses these two terms interchangeably. I told her in Turkey the literacy rate

is not perfect, but a lot of people go to school and people know how to read and write. I asked her to clarify what she means by those terms. It was a quite conversation.

Zelo: I mean educational system has been collapsed. People know how to read and write but they are not able to read accurately.

Researcher: What do you mean by “accurately”?

Zelo: I mean people do not inquire; they do not attempt to learn anything through a keen exploration. People go to school. Their goal is to get a job. A white-collar job. A steady income. I mean everybody only cares about their wellbeing...

Researcher: You were explaining what you mean by “reading accurately.” Do you mean these people know how to read and write but they do not understand what they read?

Zelo: I do not think they do. I mean this is my own opinion. For example, I read two different newspapers. One is mainstream. And then I compare and contrast. Then I find out which one is writing truth and which one is writing lies. There are one thousand lies in them.

Researcher: How do you know who tells lies?

Zelo: They lie about what I am going through! Who else know better than I do what is truth about my experience? Let me give you an example. A couple of months ago we, as the Mothers of Peace, went to visit dead soldiers’ mothers. Newspapers wrote that it was one of the Kurdish terrorists’ plans, a secret agenda. People do not read this news in the paper. The Mothers of Peace want to find a common ground. They want nobody’s kids to be murdered. But the police tried to impede the visit. They [the police] brutalized us, tried to stop the mothers. People

do not see this, do not read this. Accurate reading is to see this but people do not know how to read like this. Later on the police attacked on the mothers again when they were back at the local human rights office. And nobody [newspapers] wrote about it. You know what happened then. Soldiers' mothers like unanimity, they started saying that they do not want peace. They want war. They say they are even willing to give another birth to be soldier to be a sacrifice for the land of Turks. These words are told by mothers! If those mothers read accurately, they would not say that they want their sons to be killed for a country. That made the hairs of my body stood up. How could this happen? This is what the system does. From dawn to sunset media washes their brains. Newspapers are full of lies. Nobody writes the truth. Nobody reads the truth. That is what I mean by saying reading accurately. If someone cannot see this from his/her readings, what value does his/her education have? Nothing! Who cares from how many schools you were graduated! Who cares if you are climbing to the top of your career!

Look at this one. In a press release one of the Mothers for Peace said that she had nine children and she said she did not want any of them to be hurt. You know what those who graduated from universities and those who think themselves as journalists asked her? They asked her why she had nine kids. I told them, "That is none of your business!" And it was not relevant what she was saying you know.

See how education has collapsed? This is what is wanted: people should not think, should not be productive but should be reading empty words. Despite this, of course there are people who read well and analyze well. But, I do not get it; whereas I, a second grade dropout, even can read and see what is happening how

come those who graduated from universities cannot see it? But universities go humdrum. One flat [dimensional] logic. Yet they are supposed to be curious, inquirer, explorer... When I look at them I say to myself I am more intellectual than them....

Fear. I had to ask Zelo several times about her insights about fear, about how she feels when she attends a demonstration or faces the possibility of being taken by police. Zelo has long resisted accepting she has any fear. Fear, for Zelo, is a very negative term; it is disempowering and it is always paralyzing, but she offered this description:

You want me to be candid and tell the truth right? I am not afraid at all. After all those struggles against my husband and his terror, I am not afraid of anything anymore. That [her experience of struggle] gave me more strength, you know. I was afraid of him for a long time. Then I started facing, confronting my fear. If I had stood up against him, everything would have been very very different right now...I know everything could happen; I might be beaten, tortured, raped... I think about them but the other side [her political identity] weigh heavier. Of course, sometimes my hands shake beyond my control...Of course, things happen. For example, last May Day [1st of May - International Workers' Day] a tear gas bomb dropped just in front of me. I was not able to breathe but I continued. I mean I am still out. I was beaten too but never thought of locking myself in.

Feminism. Zelo does not know much about feminism. She heard many times people, mostly men, point out a woman and say that she is a feminist. She asked around what the term “feminism” means. She was told that feminists were against men; they

refused to get married, they aimed to exclude men, they were the enemy of men. She explained her understanding of feminism saying:

If feminism were like that, I am not feminist. I looked at some books but I could not understand. I am not feminist if feminists are like that, you know. I am a human being. I am a woman. A mother. A Kurdish woman. Those books have very heavy words. I do not understand, you know. I do not hate men. I say we should be equal. For example, I have two sons. If I cook dinner, they have to set up the table or take care of the dishes. I mean, I am not against men. But women are being oppressed, so oppressed. One day my older brother asked me many political questions. I answered whatever he asked. I knew that he was up to something or he was testing me. He asked. I answered. He asked. I answered. You know what he told me at the end? He said I knew nothing. I looked at him and told him “Abi [traditional title told to older brother] I answered your questions correctly. Because I am a woman, you said that I knew nothing, didn’t you?” Then he told me, but he could not look at my face you know...He told me that I was enticed, I was out of control and nobody could handle me....

Chapter Summary

Under extreme and multi-dimensional repressive conditions, both resistance and survival take various forms. Because so many individual, societal, and cultural factors determine how’s and what’s and why’s, it is difficult for someone to look from a distance and analyze the phenomenon related to the situation. Therefore, as an insider interviewing with Zelo and having her narrate her own experiences provided rich and thick information. From its richness and details many insightful results emerged. These

significant results were complex and compelling with individual, societal, and cultural factors. Chapter Five examines these findings in detail.

Chapter 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this chapter, findings of this narrative analysis research study are presented in detail. Findings are discussed under one major topic: Counter Learning under oppression (CLUO), which has two subtopics: oppression and counter-learning. Because the two phenomena (oppression and learning) of this study are inseparable, in order to analyze and discuss them, they were treated as separate entities. In addition, while findings of oppressive political and structural contexts are examined from the Marcusean perspective, the findings of counter-learning are examined from the critical constructivist framework.

Introduction

When my daughter was 3 or 4 years old, I realized that I was very frustrated and tired of teaching her about countless little things. She too was frustrated. Her eyes were asking me, “Will this learning ever be over Daddy?” We are unable to give up learning. As long as we are alive, we learn no matter whether we have someone who is teaching us or not. We learn consciously and unconsciously, whether we want to or not. We learn countless things in numerous ways during the course of our lives. We learn what to learn and what not to learn. We learn how to behave based on what is expected from us. We learn how things function. We learn the nature of things.

Therefore, learning is an intrinsic drive. It is sometimes a crucial survival skill under extreme oppressive situations. It sometimes requires a deep psychosocial knowledge and ability to analyze the subjective and objective conditions of the context. It sometimes does not even require any theoretical knowledge, skills or training; the oppressive condition teaches one what to do and how to do it. Sometimes it is

unarticulated, unrecognized, comes from a spring in our heart, like one in the following little story:

A little girl's father was a political prisoner in one of the maximum security prisons. Every possible weekend, she would visit him with her mother. During a visit, the little girl took one of her drawings for her father. According to the rules of the prison, anything associated with freedom was forbidden to be given to the prisoners. Because of this, the administration did not accept her drawing in which there was a dove. Instead, her drawing was torn into pieces. The little girl was so upset. She told her father what had happened. Her father told her that it was okay. She could draw another one, but next time she needed to be careful what she drew. During the next visit, the little girl brought another picture for her father. This time the drawing was approved by the administration. In the new picture there was a tree and several little black dots on the tree. Her father looked at the drawing with a joy. Then he said, "This is so beautiful. What a lovely tree you have drawn. What are these black spots? Are they the fruits?" The little girl leaned towards her father's ear and whispered: "Be quiet! Those are the eyes of the doves. They are hiding."

Sometimes it is a way of life in order to relentlessly endure rootless dehumanization from various directions as my participant, Zelo, experienced. Zelo provided a wealth of information about oppressive conditions, her daily struggle, and her counter learning experiences. From a thorough analysis of the data, multiple findings emerged to better understand the dynamics of CLUO. These findings were related to oppression and learning. As was stated earlier, even though these two phenomena (oppression and

learning) are inseparable, in order to analyze and discuss them I will consider them as separate entities. Moreover, I must emphasize that because the phenomenon under study is complex and intermeshed in multi-layer and multi-dimensionality, at first glance examples and incidents provided may appear similar or retold, but they are not. In other words, the same incident and sometimes the same concept might have various meanings. For example, in Zelo's early socialization, the way she was raised told me how oppression operates, which also told me about Zelo's mental and emotional development and how they shaped counter learning. Therefore, first I will discuss the findings related to oppression, and then I will provide the findings related to characteristics of counter learning under oppression.

Oppression

Finding 1: *Oppression is not just Multi-Layered*

Despite the common assumptions, oppression is not just multi-layered, which implies one-dimensionality. In fact, oppression is multi-dimensional and multi-layered. Each dimension has its own multiple layers and these layers and other dimensions' layers are also interrelated. In addition, all layers should work together in harmony so that oppressive practices become effective and last longer. For example, Zelo's narrative revealed that gender oppression finds its biggest support from the legal structure, then from the religious and traditional values and norms. These institutions and cultural factors are all somehow connected one way or another. This way oppression produces an unofficial knowledge, beliefs, tendencies, and attitudes about social ills. When Zelo was beaten by her husband, for example, she did not think it would be a good idea or a big help to go to the police or court. She believes that a policeman is a man (or a male-

dominated structure) and he exercises the very same privilege at home as her husband does. The police would tell Zelo it was okay for a husband to beat his wife. Moreover, if her husband heard that she went to the police, she would be subjected to harsher beatings. She believes that if she goes to court, the judge would say similar things. Moreover, she cannot go to a religious leader or attempt to interpret religious scripts in a way to stop him. Furthermore, she cannot go to the family. They would tell her to go back to her husband.

In Zelo's narrative, oppression is also dynamic. It has its own internal and external contradictions, and it is able to evolve from one formation to another. Oppression appears to possess this great capacity for self-alteration as long as the dominant hegemonic social structure endures. This means that if the system survives from the internal and external crises, along with the system, oppression will transform and modify itself, too. For example, when Zelo and her relatives moved to a big city, oppressive cultural forms such as norms and values did not disappear. Oppressive forms and schemas are reshaped by the dominant mentality based on the objective conditions. For example, sending women to work outside of the home was an inappropriate thing to do for a family in her town, but after immigrating to the big city, Zelo told me, a lot of women had to go to work in a job that paid money, and going to work for women was not perceived as inappropriate anymore, unless their husbands' incomes were enough.

Traditionally women's paid-work adds more responsibility to women, more oppression, and more economic exploitation. In addition, women still have to go home, cook, and take care of households (the type of work that remains invisible within the economic system. It remains largely the responsibility of women). However, even though

working outside adds another oppressive layer over the top of the other layers, it has the potential to empower women. Zelo believes that working in a paid-job is one, or maybe the only, way for women to take themselves outside of their “four walls.” She also believes that earning income creates opportunity for women to gain self-confidence and demand their humanity. Zelo explained:

But women do not want to get out of from their shell. When I talk to them they say “Mother, what you are saying is right but we are economically dependent to our husbands. Our hands are tied.” Then I tell them, “Go to work then! Get your financial independence.” But they are too afraid to attempt to do something.

Finding 2: *Oppression Creates Its Own Vital Components*

Oppression inevitably creates components. These components play a vital role in feeding back the oppression and maintaining it. In other words, they are visible parts of abstract oppression, which is felt but sometimes cannot be pointed out. Their solemn function is that they not only victimize people, but also turn the victims into active agents who transmit the oppressive norms, values and practices through generations. For example, Zelo has a place in the oppressive system based on her gender, class, and ethnicity. Based on her place she was raised and socialized in a certain way. She was oppressed by her mother, and when she got married she was oppressed by other women and her mother-in-law. Even her mother-in-law participated in the oppression by failing to protect her and telling Zelo that they both cannot do anything to stop the abuse. She also tried to convince Zelo to accept her destiny because there was nothing to do about it. Nevertheless, even Zelo unwittingly exercised the given power in an oppressive way in raising her own daughter.

Conversation with Zelo revealed the complexity of oppression which is deeply embedded within the culture. Oppression is embedded in such a way that sometimes oppressive factors appear to be illusionary or fuzzy to an outsider. They might reveal themselves only if they are seen through oppressed people's experience. For example, from a glance it might be seen as skillful for an eight-year-old girl to complete household tasks, but in fact there is a great oppressive early gender socialization behind this which chains women to their house and to women's traditional roles.

I will now take a closer look at these cultural components. Examining these components will help us understand better how oppression and these components impact Zelo and her everyday experiences.

Culture of Creating a Caretaker. The caretaker role is one of the most crucial gender roles that women have to learn and internalize during their early socialization process. This is the very core of other related forms of oppressive constructions, such as motherhood. A woman is expected to take care of and nourish her children, her husband, and her household. This is to be acquired from very early years. The mother is the one who helps girls to gain this set of skills in an environment in which social mindsets, material and subjective reinforcements and punishments were preset. This will lead a girl to cultivate various social skills and emotions that coincide with culturally and ideologically predefined and valued expected roles. For example, Zelo felt obligated to take care of her younger brothers. Perhaps this was not something she just naturally felt obligated to do, but it was a given responsibility and expected behavior from a girl. This is more striking when I learned from Zelo's account that she dropped out of school to take care of her brothers. How could an eight years old girl make decisions about her life

and education in a culture in which gender and age are decisive variables in determining one's position in her oppressive and repressive social hierarchy? Of course, this does not have anything to do with respecting her decision or empowering her by the family or the parents. It might be related to the family's devaluation of education for girls. Although devaluing girls' education is an important issue, it is more likely that the invisible forms of cultural and social reinforcements require her to sacrifice herself. Moreover, this behavior gives her a traditionally loaded pride. Even now, anyone could easily detect this pride from her voice and her emphasis on certain words when she talks about how she did everything to take care of her brothers.

In addition, she was also a helper for household work. Her work was necessary to be a good girl. She had to be trained to be a good wife when she grew up. Therefore, it is more complex than it looks when her foster mother did not want to lose her and her labor. In other words, both socialization and structural issues are involved in Zelo's labor and training. Without those required household skills it is more than likely that she will not be treated nicely by her in-laws when she gets married. She would be required to do housework in her husband's house. When she was given to another family, not only her body, her sexuality, her fertility, but also her labor was transferred. She would prepare food, serve, and clean up for everyone, including her husband no matter how late he comes home.

Culture of Virtue. Poverty or scarcity is a vital component of oppression. It is one of the required conditions for oppression to be effective. Even though it is not God-given, the oppressed people tend to perceive it as God-given. For example, many suras (sections in the Koran) of the Koran serve to develop this oppressive sentiment (such as Shuras

verse 27, Al-Zukhuruf verse 43-32, and Al-Baqara verse 153, 155, and 156). These suras provide reasons to convince the believers that poverty and scarcity are assigned to the poor by the Lord. According to the sura Al-Zukhuruf verse 43-32, the God created the social hierarchy by “raising some of them above others in ranks” so that people serve one another and there will not be a social chaos. According to Al-Baqara verse 155, on the other hand, scarcity is given to people to test their faith and their limit to see if they worship God no matter how bad the circumstances are. If the poor person passes the test, a good place in the heaven will be reserved. These suras demonstrate well how ideological and economical phenomena of inequalities and stratification are turned into divine construct and they become cultural “truths.”

These and similar suras are embedded in both Turkish and Kurdish sunni culture and everyday life. Therefore for the oppressed, poverty is an unchangeable destiny and unchallengeable reality. This reality is the world which is already just -as God meant it to be. In addition, this acceptance is combined with culturally valued virtues. No matter how bad their conditions are, poor people are expected not to complain about it because world is already just and advocating to change it goes against God. Rather they are expected to be grateful for their conditions. Therefore, poverty or scarcity is an ingredient that serves to teach virtues “just for poor;” being grateful with less, being thankful with what is possessed, being gratified by whatever is given. Having a pair of red shoes for the first time in Zelo’s life and a “four walled room as a home” indicate her poverty level and her insight about the dimensions of poverty. Even when she was as young as eight-years old, she had already known or learned or conditioned that she needed to be satisfied and grateful by whatever she got. Her story revealed that she knew she should not complain

about things. If she does, she could lose things that she already had. For example, Zelo recalled the experience with her new shoes:

You know, I never told my dad that they were hurting. I was afraid that my father would just take the shoes back and not exchange them for a bigger size. I wore them despite them being tight.

Another powerful factor creating the culture of virtue is about giving oppressed people something to feel better for themselves, even though they live in poverty and scarcity. Cultural norms tell the oppressed, “You did a good job. Now give yourself a pat on your back.” Then, the religious values tell the oppressed, “This is what the God wants you to do.” However, poverty and scarcity are too much for the cultural rewards and divine approvals to keep the oppressed being virtuous all the time. The missing dose in this stupefaction is a simple internally driven motivation. This motivation manifests itself in various forms. One of the most common forms is feeling pride. Oppressed people, besides being humble of their poverty and scarcity, should feel proud of themselves. This pride could be a self reward and may be translated into this statement: “Even though I was poor, even though I did not have this and that, I never did this and that.” Another common form is about rejecting or disliking the conditions that the oppressed never had. The oppressed person is convinced that “more is bad.” This inevitably turns scarcity into something to be valued. From another angle, this is also a very simplistic worldview in which the oppressed perceives the social world in a binary mode: have’s and have-not’s. Therefore, any possibility of equality or prosperity for everyone is dismissed. It is not even an option to think about it. At the final stage, this culture of virtue becomes a mechanism that maintains the cycle of poverty and scarcity.

Socializing under this kind of culture of virtue might build a base for an adult to become a passive object, to be de-politicized, and to be someone who is not able to form a better vision for tomorrow. Especially when this virtue is utilized within a regime of fear, it is more likely to create an authoritarian type people. Zelo mentioned those who were poor and suffered in the long waiting lines for their retirement income that they receive every three months. When Zelo approached them and criticized economic conditions and the government relating to their deprived life conditions, they pray for their conditions and for the state, "May the Lord not give any trouble to the state." Of course, this praying might well be another survival skill that the oppressed learned and developed through their life experiences to protect themselves from the state's violence. This praying, however, does not have any empowering or liberating potential for the oppressed unless it is consciously, deliberately, and rhetorically used.

Culture of Silence. Like the culture of virtue, the culture of silence is also about perceiving reality in certain ways and accepting certain given characteristics as they are. While the culture of virtue is more internally driven, the culture of the silence is more externally inflicted and executed by the oppressor. Zelo was always told what to do, what not to do, what to wear, what not to wear, how to sit, how to stand up, and how to walk on the street. None of the institutions, including the government, the state, and her community protected her from the abuse. None of the social and cultural organizations provided a space for her so that she could freely utilize her potential. No legal body recognized her ethnicity, or secured her rights to talk in her native language. Her government and her state, in fact, dictated to her what to do and what not to do. Newspapers and TV stations lied and distorted her reality. She has not been allowed to

have her own ideas. She has never been allowed to share her ideas. Whenever she tried to say something she was

always told to shut up! “What would you know?” they [men] said. We were told that we were women, and then they slapped our mouth! They [Turkish authorities] said you are a Kurd, and oppressed us, killed, tortured us. And that corrupt press, TV, never wrote about us, never made news about us. Nobody heeded to what we were saying... We were brought up our eyes shut. I was a girl, I was told I didn’t know anything, that I had no rights. Everybody said this, my family, my husband’s family, relatives, everybody: “You are a girl, do not talk,” “You are a girl, it is not appropriate for a girl to talk.”

Her feudal culture, other formal institutions, and cultural and political practices reinforce this infliction congruently; the message is clear for Zelo; it reads, “Who are you to have an opinion of yourself?”

Culture of Objectification. Zelo’s oppressive culture also involved objectification of women. Objectification is a process in which an individual is treated as an object and not as a human being who should be an active subject in his or her life in which his or her feelings, emotions, ideas, skills and abilities are recognized and respected. For example, when I claim Zelo’s culture objectifies women, I mean women or girls are not allowed to be “themselves.” They are treated as a tool or object. Through objectification women are also alienated from themselves. Alienation, understood in this study, is an unnatural, sometimes coercive, way of separating things that naturally belong together. In Zelo’s culture, women are alienated from their sexuality, their body, and their mind. This is powerfully seen in Zelo’s account. There are several incidents that Zelo told me about

women's objectification and alienation. One of them was when Zelo talked about her feudal culture and its expectations. She stated that her parents brought girls into the world and they expect them to become a "part;" part of family, part of tradition, part of society, but not themselves. What is important with "part" is that it is predefined by culture, religion, tradition, morality, etc. It is a kind of a social template, which is usually strict and rigid. This way a woman cannot be a *being* and cannot be herself. She is A's granddaughter, B's daughter, C's sister, and family's honor. She is nameless and self-less as if she does not exist as a human being. She is a means of settling tribal vendettas, a sexual object for someone else's son, a breeding machine to serve the continuity of the family's genes through offspring, a traditional pressure in taming a wild man to bond him to home, a scapegoat for all wrongdoings in the family, and a representation of family honor for which people die or kill. She is also a means to be used in a torture chamber to retrieve information from her relatives who are suspected by the police. For example, what one of Zelo's brothers was concerned about was what if she was raped during a possible interrogation. He was not concerned for her health or her wellbeing; he was concerned for family honor, which was represented by Zelo's genitals.

Women are also alienated through tabooing their body and their nature. Women's bodies are usually attributed to sexual connotations, sinful and culturally inappropriate meanings. When Zelo was in labor for her baby, for example, her husband was told that she was sick. He was not told that she was in labor, delivering a baby. When I asked Zelo about a possible reason of not telling him she was in labor, her response was "I do not know. It would be unmannered thing to do I guess." I believe because labor involves distant connotations to a woman's sexual organ, it is not morally appropriate to

pronounce it to men. I also believe that when Zelo's husband was told that she was sick, he was more likely in a coffee house or bar where other men were present. That would make it difficult to discuss his wife's body in front of other men. Another example is that after the first night, Zelo was so ashamed that she could not go outside to eat something. When I asked her why she hesitated to go out, she would not answer my question. She just laughed and replied, "you know why." I said "No, I do not." She was laughing but not telling me why. Then, I took the risk of verbalizing the reason I suspected: "Because you had sex with their son the night before? Was that the reason you were ashamed to go out and make eye contact with others?" She laughed harder with a mixture of shame and embarrassment, and she was cursing in Kurdish at me in the meantime. I am sure she blushed on the other end of the phone line. I am also sure that if a stranger had asked that question, she would have been very angry. This incident told me how oppression objectifies and alienates women to themselves, their consciousness, and their body. It has become taboo for women to talk about sex or any sexual experiences. Therefore, in order to maintain and reinforce its moral system, the feudal system is heavily dependent on controlling women's bodies and sexuality. This oppression is usually internalized in the early years through the socialization process of girls. As a result, even for Zelo, who has been through various intellectual and moral transformations, sexuality is still taboo. Whenever she had to refer to anything even slightly related to sex or women's bodies, she told me something similar to, "You are like a son for me," or, "You are like one of my kids," to lower her shame or anxiety.

Moreover, Zelo could not even hold her baby in front of her father-in-law since a baby has connotation with a woman's body and her sexuality. One day, she and her

mother-in-law were returning home from a visit to a relative. She had her first baby, a few-months old, in her arms. Then, she realized that her father-in-law was walking toward them. Immediately she put her baby down on the street and continued walking. Even though she had been lectured afterward by both mother-in-law and father-in-law about not to do those kinds of things, Zelo said it took years for her to feel more comfortable in front of her father-in-law and other older males.

Culture of Double-Bind. Beyond objectification, degradation, and alienation, Zelo's experience informs us about another important aspect of oppressive practices: double-binding. A double-bind is a situation in which individuals are perplexed under conflicting and paradoxical messages. In other words, a person is in a "no-win" position; no matter what the person does, he or she will be deemed wrong. For example, a "Do not read this!" sign illustrates this point; the person has to read it to know it was not supposed to be read. Or in Orwell's book *1984*, the torture chamber is called *Ministry of Love*. No matter what Zelo does, she is the one to be blamed for all problems: her husband cheats on her because she fails to fulfill his sexual needs, her husband beats her because she talks too much, she does not know how to make him feel like a man, she does not know how to handle him, she does not obey, and she is rebellious.

Double-binds cause tremendous emotional or cognitive harm specifically upon women's souls or psychological integrity. Zelo probably has never heard of the term double-bind, but has been a victim of the experience. Maybe she is unable to use or find strong words or concepts, but she was able to give me clues about how one might feel disoriented, confused, and depressed when he or she is victimized by the double-bind. In

the following excerpt, Zelo describes the double-bind she experienced in her relationship with her parents:

They [parents] do not show you love. They care about you but do not show you love.you make yourself believe that “they are my family, they must love me” then they beat you up. They give you to someone you never consider as husband. They tell you ‘go and go see your hell, find your misfortune...

It was our first night, he told me that if I didn’t treat his family right, he would kick my ass out and send me back to living with my family. I didn’t understand why he was talking with me like that. I couldn’t understand why he brought me there and then was telling me to go to my father’s home.

Besides cultural double-bindings, Zelo’s life has also social and political double-bindings. For example, one might normally assume that one’s right to talk in her native language is granted, respected, and protected. It should be, especially where democracy is claimed as an official ideology, such as in Turkey, and it is stated in the constitution that everyone is free regardless of their ethnicity, religion, and gender. However, Zelo cannot or was not supposed to speak her own language. A man could yell at her and tell her not to speak in Kurdish assuming that he had power over her. If she or a bystander dares to stand up, they would be more likely to be accused of being a separatist or even a terrorist.

Culture of Learned-Hopelessness. Oppression is a mechanism whereby success greatly relies on its effectiveness in creating individual and societal hopelessness. When people fail to stop or fail to escape from oppression, they more likely develop hopelessness. This is a learned behavior and emotional state from unsuccessful attempts to alter their life experience or situation. One of the most important characteristics of

learned-hopelessness is that it creates thoughts and feelings that are translated into both individual and collective consciousness as a very strong form of cliché, belief and a habit of communication and thinking. Some of them are “Nothing and nobody can change this (oppressive) life,” “There is no hope for us,” “For us there is no way out,” and “Whatever we have got is our destiny.” This phenomenon is well manifested in Zelo’s daily life. Zelo said once when I asked her if she hoped for any improvement in her life when she moved to the big city, “I just knew that nothing would be different for me.” Moreover, she was directly and indirectly told several times “*by everyone:*” just accept things as they are; it is okay if your husband beats you; it is none of your business to fight for cultural rights; you should stay home and take care of your children; no one ever accomplished anything, why will you do it! And why cannot you, like others, appreciate and be grateful for what you have?

Living amidst these kinds of oppression has a high possibility of impairing one’s emotional and cognitive state of mind. This state of mind and sense of hopelessness is in fact the very core aim of oppression because the success of oppressive and repressive practices cannot only be attained through cultural, religious, economical, and physical coercion but also through psychological and pedagogical. This way oppression finds its one vital source to feed itself: loyal and convinced followers.

Zelo had every reason to develop a sense of learned-hopelessness. She was surrounded by several factors and these factors were put in place to foil her possible attempts to escape from oppression. One factor was that her life was controlled. Every move she made was watched by someone. Leaving home by herself to visit somebody or to run an errand culturally would not be considered appropriate. She was expected to get

permission from her husband or in-laws to do something. She was also expected to be accompanied by a relative if she was going outside. For example, her brother-in-law took her to visit her father.

Another factor was her being pushed into aloneness. She did not have anybody to turn to for help. Her mother, sisters, and brothers were in another town. Even if they had been in the same town, they would not have done anything. They would probably tell her the very same thing that everybody else would tell Zelo: accept things as they are. In addition, Zelo did not have any friends. There was nobody with whom to make friends. She did not have any chance, opportunity, or possibility to make friends. People around her were usually older and supervising her. They were also active agents of the oppression. They were victims, perpetrators, and sustainers. Even the friendliest one, such as her mother-in-law, would advise her to give up. Therefore, almost everything around her was positioned to break her.

Finally, the last factor, on top of all these other aspects of oppression, is the systematic terror and racist ideological repression, which refuses the existence of her ethnicity along with her gender liberation. Among her children, her brothers, and sisters she is perceived as an enemy and has to live a life in which there is a high possibility of being arrested, tortured, and even killed by known or unknown actors. Her language is forbidden. Her songs and her fairytales are forbidden. She is more likely to be yelled at by a stranger when she talks in her language. Her intellectual, cultural, political, and scientific developments are prevented by both the physical and psychological terror. Even though it took tens of thousands of lives and international political pressure for her state

just to recognize the existence of her ethnicity, claiming her ethnic identity and related social rights is still considered criminal; crying for peace even is a terrorist act.

Learned-hopelessness is potentially the most debilitating obstacle to overcome for the oppressed because it is like a bridge to the dehumanized world. It is a disengagement from resistance. Zelo has been on this bridge of learned-hopelessness a few times, crossed to the other side, but somehow managed to come back. Sometimes people might want to just let go when faced with this kind of oppression. In some respects, Zelo did give up when her in-laws went to the big city. She was too young and too alone, and lonely. However, she realized that giving up resisting, or accepting everything as it was did not help. She felt hopeless and helpless after giving up. In fact, it made the situation more unbearable for her, as she describes: “I became weaker, more scared... much weakerI was someone who was feeling helpless, hopeless, uselessnonresistantI stopped resisting.”

She was on the dehumanized side of the bridge when she treated her daughter the way she had been treated. Her oldest son’s critique helped her to see what she was unwittingly doing. She went back to the humanized side. She survived by taking one day at a time, sometimes a moment at a time.

Zelo’s narrative revealed valuable information about oppression and its impact on her. Whereas some of the components are to enhance and maintain oppression, some of them create opportunity for survival. She began passively resisting oppression then she moved to oppose the status quo for a change. Her decision to engage in counter-learning, despite the many strong oppressive elements, gradually enabled Zelo to be able to play an active role in her own life. Now I would like to turn to see how her narrative will enable

me to analyze the dynamics of her counter learning under oppression, although this does not mean we leave oppression behind us. Oppression is within.

Counter-Learning Under Oppression

Zelo's narrative revealed that while oppression, with both its multi-dimensions and multi-layers, determine the way(s) of thinking and learning that may create conformist learning, it may also create resistance not to learn the given ways of knowing, internalizing, and being. In fact, beyond resistance it may also enable the oppressed to negate the given reality. There can be so many factors lying beneath this counter-productivity of an oppressive situation. Even though oppressive situations seem to be a simple and clear, well-controlled and manipulated environment, they are complicated as well. This study was not intended to find all the possible reasons to explain this complexity; however, it was clear that there was something within Zelo that did not allow her to let go. My in-depth interview with Zelo was not intended to collect data to explain this from psychological or developmental perspectives, but I could not help relating Zelo's relentless resistance to submission by utilizing Freirian ontology. According to Freire (1972), even though both humanization and dehumanization are historical and possible for people, only humanization is people's vocation. Humanization is a priori. However it "is constantly negated [in oppressive situations], yet it is affirmed by that very negation" (p.45). Dehumanizing practices (i.e., injustice, oppression, repression, and violence) are inhumane and do not fit well in our ontological being. Therefore, oppression inevitably creates possibilities for reactionary responses. Most of the oppressive templates were forms of distorted reality, and Zelo was expected to acquire them and internalize them. However, these templates were somehow rejected as if they

were alien materials for Zelo's body or her consciousness. Nevertheless Zelo's a priori vocation, which is to be a complete human, has been negated from the beginning by her context. In other words, her humanization was not completed, her struggle and resistance was to become a more completed human. One way of remaining humane that Zelo chose was to politicize her life and negate the reality. She is still in a process of recovering from being dehumanized while constructing her own reality through struggle by putting her safety on the line. I think her learning will lead her journey and help her toward her humanization to be more complete. Different from Freirian ontology, however, Zelo did not think of humanizing her own oppressors to become more humane, and I do not know if she ever will. The data, however, permitted me to look closer at her counter learning and its characteristics.

Before going any further, it would be helpful to remind the reader that this study's purpose is to explore Zelo's counter-learning under oppression. In the first chapter, it was argued that adult learning in social movements have been studied and most of these studies knowingly or unknowingly ended up focusing on teaching rather than learning. Therefore, this study deliberately focused on Zelo's individual learning. However, this may lead to some misunderstanding. Some could think this study dismissed or overlooked the social aspects of learning. In fact, in order to talk about Zelo's counter-learning, I intentionally avoided articulating any role of the social in Zelo's learning. In fact, if Zelo's narrative is carefully reviewed, it illustrates that social aspects of learning are undeniable. For example, her children's conversations with their friends, her arguments with her relatives, and her interaction with the other members of the pro-Kurdish party are just some examples to persuade the reader to see that her learning does

not occur in a void or in isolation from others. How these social interactions affect her counter-learning is a call for further research.

Characteristics of CLUO

In order to see the characteristics of her learning, I analyzed her words in relation to her oppressive life experiences. Her words, explanations, and interpretations gave me some indications about her counter learning, how she constructed her knowledge and her reality. In other words, I was able to see what she knew, how she knew, how she utilized her knowledge, how she attributed meanings to certain things, and how she analyzed the life events.

Finding 1: We and They

From the very beginning of my interview with Zelo, one thing was very distinct in her account. That was her use of “we” and “they.” Even though her uses of the first person plural pronoun (we) instead of the first person singular pronoun (I) can easily be attributed to her traditional, semi-communal society where being an independent individual is considered inappropriate is partly true, her usage involves more than just the traditional usage of plural pronouns. In the following section, I will examine Zelo’s non-traditional usage of the plural pronouns.

Zelo’s “we’s” and “they’s” referred to various things based on her experiences. “We” referred to oppressed women in general, Kurdish women in her feudal culture, Kurdish people in the Turkish context, and poor people in general. “They,” on the other hand, referred to Turkish authorities, security forces, the male-dominated social structure in general, and Kurdish patriarchy. Therefore, even though Zelo’s use of plural subjects seems to be a form of otherness, it is not. In the most simplistic sense, otherness is about

conceiving of a group of people different from another group of people based on socioeconomic status, education, gender, race, or ethnicity. In other words, otherness usually occurs between groups of people within a dynamic sociopolitical structure and power. Therefore, it is a social and ideological construct. Because it involves power structure, it is usually more than differentiating a group of peoples; it is more about exclusion, devaluation, and discrimination. However, in order not to fall into the contemporary ambiguous condition where words' (and texts') contents have been emptied and where the words' meaning have been bastardized by perplexing and destabilized illogical use of rhetoric, I cannot emphasize enough that Zelo's use of plural subjects (we and they) is not a form of otherness. It is not because Zelo does not have power and resources to discriminate people. She would not benefit by doing so either. What is distinctive and signifying with her use of plural subjects is the consideration of the power and the position of Zelo, who is saying these words. Any coercive attempt to claim Zelo's use of these plural subjects as a form of otherness is as absurd as claiming a Black South African as being a racist when she/he struggles against the apartheid. Again, the way Zelo used the plural subjects was different, however. The prime difference, for example, was that while her "we's" referred to groups of people and their certain characteristics, such as being oppressed, her "they's" did not refer to any group of people. Her "they's" were official or nonofficial institutions, such as the Turkish security forces as a unit, Turkish authorities as a representation of racist and sexist Turkish ideology, or patriarchy. In other words, by using "they" she never referred to the Turkish people or other groups of people as inferior or superior. Consider the following excerpt from Zelo:

Whenever we try to say something, we were always told to shut up! “What would you know?” they [agents of patriarchy both male and female] said. We were told that we were women, and then they slapped our mouth! They [Turkish authorities] said you are a Kurd, and oppressed us, killed, tortured us.

Zelo’s notion of “we’s” were coming from other forms of otherness in which she was discriminated. In her society Zelo has always been an “other” or a victim of “otherness” because of her gender, class, and ethnicity. On account of her gender, for example, she was inferior to men in both Turkish and Kurdish culture. She tacitly learned (or was taught) this in her socialization over which she had no control or had no ability to deliberately examine the meaning of given messages. Therefore, her given otherness was to teach her place in the hierarchy of the society and she was supposed to internalize this understanding. She had to know where she belonged and what she was allowed or not allowed to do. For example, she acquired her gender role through this kind of socialization of otherness. She was socialized to feel embarrassed and shy about holding her babies in front of males, other than her husband, more specifically older males, as if she did not give birth to her babies. In addition to her gender, her ethnic and political identities were inferior to the dominant Turkish ideology and culture. She learned in such a way that she and all other Kurds were not supposed to talk in their native language in public, and this learning has very strong emotional feelings attached to it, such as fear, humiliation, and embarrassment. Therefore, she cognitively and emotionally constructed her notion of “we” as a result of these forms of otherness.

Moreover, by using “we,” Zelo also (consciously or unconsciously) reaches out to other women, Kurds, and other oppressed people who had gone through similar

experiences in their daily struggle. This makes her use of “we” a solidarity force under oppression and helps her voice to talk for others. Moreover, “we” enables her to develop a collective consciousness as a means of surviving and resisting oppression. Collective consciousness will help her to see her individual self in connection to the broader social network along with the social, economical, and political contrasts and tensions. This will gradually feed the hope of altering the given oppressive reality, or at least it will open a window to think about the possibility of the given reality’s transformation or even its total elimination. After “we,” now I will examine her use of “they.”

How did Zelo construct her “they’s?” Oppressive forms including various forms of otherness were always abstract for her. They were invisible. There was no one person or object to be pointed out as a cause of her agony and her unhappy life. Perhaps her husband could be considered a representation of her abused life, but there were some other things involved. It was more complicated than how it appeared. Zelo could not understand why she was treated the way she was treated. She could not find any reason to justify her husbands’ beatings. She did not understand why someone would yell at her and tell her not to talk in her native language; where was that person’s power coming from? She did not comprehend why security forces who were supposed to provide security had become a life threatening force for her kids. These are questions (articulated or not) that require explanation. For Zelo, these are conflicts (disequilibrium) that are to be mentally and emotionally resolved.

Zelo’s “they,” emerged from the complexity of her life when Zelo attempted to explain things herself and tried to make sense of her life. She had to find a name for the sources of her problems: they. Why “they”? Why not something else such as status quo

or feudal patriarchy? Because she had very limited vocabulary, naming those various forces by a plural pronoun was sufficient for her. The world, for Zelo, was like a problem with multiple unknowns, and she was using “we” and “they” as X and Y in an equation to make sense of it. Then assigning “we” and “they” to those unknowns, her world in its complexity becomes more knowable and better comprehensible for her. In other words, usage of “they” allowed her to make abstract and subtle oppressive elements, inherent in her life, concrete and tangible. For example, because it is abstract, patriarchy in her daily life is both everywhere and nowhere. Zelo would feel it, but it would be hard for her to touch it, hard to show it, and hard to believe that it is alterable.

Besides “they,” Zelo also uses other forms of “they” as she advanced her understanding of concepts as she differentiates certain concepts or words. For example, Zelo is familiar with certain political concepts such as status quo, political power, ideology, and dominant culture. However, she does not know the differences between them to use the words effectively to define or identify her problems. These concepts are enigmatic, obfuscated, and too sophisticated for the oppressed Zelo to understand and to use in her daily life. Instead of using those terms and concepts, she borrows a term from the pool of ordinary people’s daily words and she calls them “they.” Moreover, as she advances her understandings, instead of “they,” Zelo sometimes uses another form of “they.” One of the forms was “*Baştakiler*.” *Baştakiler* means those who are on the top and refers to the administration and the authorities. “*Baştakiler* are the system,” Zelo says. I can further add, for Zelo, *bastakiler* are the status quo, and *bastakiler* are the representation of political power.

After examining her use of “we” and “they,” I would like to argue that Zelo’s use of plural subjects should not be perceived or assumed as a simplistic bipolar dichotomy as if Zelo perceives her world as just black and white. It should rather be seen from a learning perspective as a non-linear process where new knowledge is constructed upon prior understanding through her limited conditions but relentless attempts of making meaning about her own world. Therefore, I would rather call her use of “we” and “they” a simplification to comprehend. In addition, through this distinction she becomes aware of power differences, which are very complex and abstract. This awareness, of course, is not just about recognizing bastakiler’s power but also recognizing Zelo’s own power or powerlessness. In other words, this should also be seen as self-awareness, which is a great pedagogical (meta-cognitive) skill and very crucial characteristic of counter learning under oppression.

Findings 2: Multi-Consciousness and Survival:

Under the oppressive culture, there is no doubt that life is about survival. Zelo had three subtle options in her oppressive life to survive: submission, pretension, and opposition. Submission was the most obvious option. Even though Zelo was expected and forced to submit to values and authorities, she never submitted. She pretended to be submissive, but she saw that it was not helping her. She saw that it was, in fact, weakening her. Then she resisted. She refused to submit. This was an emotional and non-rational reaction to the oppressive practices, a form of stubbornness where she was willing to take the possible verbal and physical attacks and assaults to break her. She was fighting back, however; she had to do something to survive.

In order to survive, Zelo had to develop several types of consciousnesses, such as gender consciousness, ethnic consciousness, and political consciousness. Without developing necessary consciousnesses, survival is hard. Zelo had to see the world from multiple-consciousnesses' angles to function and survive. For example, Zelo had to develop traditional wife consciousness, mother consciousness, Kurdish consciousness, and officially defined Turkish consciousness to survive in her daily struggle. Zelo had to see her world both from the oppressor's perspective and from her own perspective. Based on her multi-consciousnesses, she developed skills to see, predict, analyze, and cope with possible oppressive practices to survive. For example, because of these consciousnesses Zelo never thought about going to the police or pressing any charges against her husband. Why did she not do that? She said:

Let's say I went to the police, what would the police tell me? The police would have told me that "Go back to your house! Go back! He is your husband. He both loves you and beats you." A policeman is a man too. He does same thing to his wife when he goes home. He exercises his [given power and privilege] manhood over his wife.

Even though Zelo sounds very rational or factual in the quote above, the way she knew or learned was not rational or factual because she could not know without trying. She may or may not have heard stories of other women. She may have known she could not go to the police from the non-existence of stories about women who went to the police. "I just know it" is a kind of knowing that comes from "the gut" and intuition built upon the successive survival experiences and wisdom gained from living. This multi-consciousness of the oppressed provides foundations to enhance one's vision, perception,

and insights about the dangers or threats to survival. The data contained several good examples to illustrate this. First, for example, Zelo's brother-in-law stated, "In Turkey, if you are a Kurd, if you are a political person you have to know what you need to know and what you need not to know. You never know what or where your limit is in resisting to torture." Second, during the interviews Zelo did not want to talk about certain things on the phone. She was cautious. These kinds of mindfulness and state of suspiciousness are exhausting but necessary for survival. Therefore, the oppressed people are naturally equipped with these special spirits, skills, and senses that help them to survive.

In addition, this multi-consciousness also enables the oppressed to deconstruct the distorted reality. Zelo is suspicious of what the mainstream media reports. She double-checks every day the news for its accuracy with other resources. She does not blindly believe everything that was written or said on the media. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1994) recognizes these types of consciousnesses and skills among the oppressed African Americans and gives it "high status by labeling it a privilege, the epistemological privilege" (p. 59) of the oppressed. She claims that if the oppressed people fail to subtly, deftly, wisely use these skills, they will be destroyed.

Finding 3: Confidence

Oppression is destructive for the oppressed. Among many other harmful practices, oppression creates obstacles for learning. It damages the oppressed people's psyche and self-confidence. By internalizing negative images imposed upon them, such as the inability to learn, oppressed people believe that they do not only not know anything but also they are not able to know and learn anything. When Zelo pondered her options and whether or not she could do certain things to survive after divorce, she might have

reevaluated her abilities and disabled abilities. In order to attempt to divorce, she had to increase her self-confidence or she had to find the courage to risk everything in the face of the possibility of unpredictable catastrophic consequences. It must have been a difficult process for someone like Zelo who had never had any experience in challenging obstacles that require effective use of social, intellectual, and personal skills and abilities or disabled-abilities by oppression. For example, she knew that she had never worked in a paid-job in her entire life; she had to consider about how she would find a job, how she would and could learn the tasks that her job would require. Besides, she had to think about various forms of social condemnation because traditionally it was not appropriate for a woman to work outside of the home.

Deciding to divorce her husband was something for Zelo that could not be undermined because it was totally her own decision and courage. Most importantly, in the end it was a success. Despite this success, her confidence still needed more experience to heal. Another experience was her decision process to get involved with cultural activities, community work, and politics. Another key experience was when she was offered work in the women's branch of the party. Her first response was, "I do not know anything. I cannot do it. I told her I did not even know how to read and how to write." Note that she did not directly refuse the offer. In her response to the offer she sounded like she was expecting a little push, a little trust, a human voice telling her, "I trust you," "I have a confidence in you," or "I know you can do it." When the person who offered the position told Zelo that she had been observing her and she was confident that Zelo could do it, Zelo accepted the offer. With that motivation Zelo registered for an adult literacy program, and she learned how to read and write.

This and similar experiences illustrate how Zelo's confidence has peaked and manifested itself in her interaction with others and with the world. For example, when I contacted her for the first time asking her if she would like to participate in my study, on the other side of the phone there was someone whose confidence was impressive. She, for example, was not afraid of being seen as silly or embarrassed by the possibility of asking a wrong question. She did not hesitate to ask questions at all. She was not feeling ashamed of saying she did not understand. On the other side of the phone there was someone most people would have been surprised about when they were told some highlights from her life story. These were remarkable characteristics for someone who had undergone cultural, political oppression, who was always told "shut up," and "you would not know anything." This was evidence of great self-confidence gained after such an oppressive past and present. Beyond her confidence, there was a pride felt in her voice and in her emphases on certain words. Her confidence and her pride were evident because of her willingness to be oppositional to the dominant culture.

Finding 4: Loneliness or Ostracized from Others

Zelo's loneliness is another important characteristic in her counter learning. However, it was not her own decision to isolate herself from others. In other words, it was not a result of a conscious rational calculation. It emerged from the complex and contradictory nature of her daily incidents. Several factors played roles in this. For example, Zelo's son's involvement with the Kurdish nationalist movement was a challenge to other families, was a threat to the state, and was a risk for other youngsters. Then people pulled themselves away from her. Zelo was abandoned and pushed away by others. Some were afraid to visit her, and just in case, they would not want to be seen

with her. Some others did not visit her; they scapegoated her and condemned her for not being a good woman and a good mother. However, this loneliness resulted in providing a personal space free from oppressive mental, emotional, and lingual practices. Since she was oppressed by dominant culture and ideology, being away from other people, who are active agents of the oppression, naturally detached her from their contagious and poisonous oppressive influences. Certain experiences and decisions she shared during the interview led to the conclusion that perhaps this detachment might have helped her to see or find ways to deal with the dominant ways of thinking, judging, and feeling by which Zelo was oppressed. Each time she came out of this loneliness with very creative and powerful reactions that made her stronger when she stepped into the oppressive world again. For example, for the first time she defended her son and her son's cause. This was a negation of a dominant oppressive cultural and political norm. By defending her son and her son's cause, Zelo was crossing the pre-drawn boundaries for women and mothers; she was stepping out of the preinstalled wired fences for oppressed citizens. Another example is when she came out with a desire to be active in politics despite being a traditional, stay-at-home mom. This was again a powerful break from the prevailing routine of oppressive everyday life.

When a break is culturally and politically subversive or extraordinary, it provokes the oppressor and generates reactions. Even though these reactions are to discourage or to stop the agent, because of the nature of tension in oppression, these reactions would end up being more reinforcing and counterproductive rather than being discouraging. When the oppressed people begin getting this attention, though negative in nature, their lowered self-esteem and self-confidence is fed. The oppressed would feel important, being taken

seriously, being heard, and most importantly the oppressed would begin developing a counter consciousness that makes the oppressed believe that things can be done and can be changed. For example, on the one hand, when Zelo defended her son and his cause, she generated both political and cultural reactions. Zelo had been married for years, she had been abused, battered, tortured, and she had been screaming for help, crying, and begging for a solution. Nobody seemed to care. Nobody seemed willing to even listen to her, willing to even understand what she was crying about. On the other hand, if Zelo claimed her ethnic identity, she would most likely be subjected to interrogation, torture, and trial as a separatist or terrorist. Therefore, for the first time people, both her relatives and others, stopped and listened to her, although they did not like what they heard. For the first time, people tried to be careful or be respectful when they tried to approach her. Zelo might have sensed this caution and liked it. Zelo might have felt that she was taken seriously by others. She felt herself important.

Moreover, it is important to note that Zelo's actions from her loneliness to the "real world" were individualistic and subjective. Since oppression did not allow her subjectivity to form, this subjective reaction was a threat to break the domination. It was also authentic. As a result, her loneliness has become a nucleus of Zelo's becoming. She was separating herself from others, from dominant ways of thinking, reasoning, and feeling. However, one might claim Zelo was lonely her entire life in terms of her personality, relentless resistance, and her stubbornness. In addition, one might claim again that she had been against traditional values before, so why was it different now? The answers are problematization and politicization.

Finding 5: Problematization

Due to oppression Zelo was supposed to be submissive, obedient, and incapable of even identifying - her problems let alone solutions to them; nor was she to possess or exhibit any quality other than those which were culturally expected. However, cultural condemnations, political oppression and repression, a combination of all these and her previous survival experiences including attempts at committing suicide built a massive potential in Zelo. This potential was raw, but it was alive; it was convoluted with feelings, emotions, rational and non-rational insights, knowledge, and various unformed skills. Even though within the cultural realm it was not acceptable nor expected for women to complain about life, this potential enabled Zelo to realize and recognize her unhappiness. She stated various times, "I was never happy. I've never been happy." Or while she was talking about how her family made her get married, she said, "They tell you 'Go and go see your hell, find your misfortune.'" Or when she talked about her husband's abuses she said, "He did not think that I deserved to be happy. He did not allow me!" Therefore, she was aware somehow that happiness was forbidden, or taken away from her, or stolen from her. She posed that she was not happy with how she was treated as a woman, as a wife, and as a mother; she problematized her gender-related issues in her life. If it is bluntly examined, it will be acknowledged that Zelo's awareness of unhappiness in her life was a highly political issue in its nature, but something within her culture prevented it from being political. Her awareness of unhappiness and discontent posed a threat to the existence of the oppressive culture. The culture's response to this threat was to create a negative stigma towards to her womanness, motherness, and her ability of learning and adjustment. In other words, in her culture a

woman's unhappiness was stripped from its political content and reduced to be seen as an apolitical and merely feminine matter in a way that her gender was emphasized negatively. Her cries were not being heard due to the high volume of noise of condemnation. Without even listening to what she was saying, most people were proposing to her the same thing: "Accept things as they are." They were also indirectly suggesting she give up because life was too complex and uncertain for her to know and change it.

However, once she came to realize the unhappiness of her life, this realization and awareness created a fervor within her. This awareness was an early form of politicization and an antidote for depoliticization.

Finding 6: Politicization

*Being condemned is for those who are brave
Neither is this shameful nor forbidden
It is a fact by itself.
Ahmed Arif*

How did Zelo start politicizing things? Did it happen overnight? Was there an "aha" moment? Was it a rational deliberation? The data indicates that it was a process in which many factors were involved. However, her son's departure seems to be a very important incident and a turning point. It provided what she needed such as power of politics and empowerment. Defending her son's act and his cause (the movement) was highly political, and it was almost too extreme and too renowned to be avoided by other actors who wittingly or unwittingly maintained the existing oppression. She unconsciously drew strength from the existing power of the Kurdish nationalist movement and she was automatically being political, perceived political in spite of the

various forms of cultural depoliticization. Besides the movement's political power, Zelo was also getting some sort of abstract social support and transforming from being *just-one-isolated-unhappy-woman* to being a *social-being* who had connections to other groups of people and political bodies. For example, as soon as she declared her respect for her son and her mental, spiritual, and emotional support to her son's cause, Zelo was not alone anymore. Her action made her look like a member of the movement, as if she were taking the whole movement behind her. Therefore, what she was doing this time was different from her earlier acts of problematization. Now she was being taken into consideration by others. She was receiving attention. People were getting angrier with her, for example, and trying to convince her not to talk in a way of supporting the movement because politics was none of her business. Nevertheless, she was at the center of negative and positive attentions, and this was empowering her since she had never previously been taken seriously in her life. In fact, she did not even have to try hard to make things political. It was like an optical illusion in which the background color causes the color of the foreground to be perceived differently. The political intensity of the movement had formed her acts' background color and was affecting the colors of whatever she was doing in the foreground being perceived as political. As a result, her meeting with the power of politicization was spontaneous, tacit, and unplanned; but was not an end result of a rational deliberation nor was it accidental. It was strongly related to her experience with oppression and repression. It would be beneficial to look closely at how Zelo learned and discovered the power of politicization.

When her son left home to join the Kurdish guerrilla movement, Zelo was blamed for not being a good mother; yet she did not defend herself. She did not even try to

convince people that she had nothing to do with her son's political involvement. It would have been culturally more appropriate if she blamed her husband since her son was a teenager (since he was not a child anymore, a woman – not even his mother - would have no power to control him). She did not blame anyone; she did not try to find an excuse or anything – she merely but steadfastly defended her son. Not only that, she even defended his cause. Defending the movement shocked and silenced those who automatically scapegoated her for any wrongdoings. Why did she do that? On top of all those condemnations now she was inviting the possibility of other troubles like police searches, interrogations, and other detrimental consequences for herself and for her other children. She said, "I do not remember.... I do not know why I did it. First, I even thought that my son was kidnapped." Her oldest son told her nobody kidnapped her son; rather he consciously chose what he wanted. She cannot remember how she moved away from the thought of him being kidnapped to the thought that he voluntarily joined the movement. It is interesting that her first reaction was loaded with the dominant ideology's propaganda. It was the Turkish security forces' claim that people were not joining the movement voluntarily; youth were being kidnapped and forced to join. This was consistent with the core of Turkish ideology and dominant culture, which always accuses its enemies (internal or external) with brainwashing the Turkish people. If someone does something wrong, the first thing that is asked of the person is to reveal the names involved in manipulating or brainwashing him or her. In other words, it is an assumption that no (Turkish) person can think, learn, or act outside of the predefined ideals of the Turkish state and culture; if someone does, the person must have been manipulated, abused, or used by an enemy of the state. As a result, defending her son's act and his

cause was a powerful, in fact an extreme, negation towards both the cultural values and the dominant ideology.

Zelo cried for days. She does not remember what happened in her heart and in her mind during that time, but she came out defending his son. Even though it seems she was not aware of her feelings or thoughts at that moment, her oldest son's account reflects that she was happy to see people shocked when she defended the movement. People were shocked first of all because they were not expecting it from a female going beyond traditional boundaries. Second, it was very risky defending the movement. Even though no one was immune from random arrests and brutalities, someone who was seen as actively political was perceived as inviting the trouble. Even walking to a bus stop or having a cup of tea with someone defending the movement was very risky. Hence, people who used to visit her more often were too scared to visit her anymore.

In people's scared and guarded eyes, Zelo felt a power which she might have never felt in her entire life. She liked that feeling. People's cagey avoidance of being seen at her side had changed her image in people's eyes. She was no longer an ordinary traditional woman, and people were not ignoring her anymore when she talked. They were listening to what she was saying. Even though most people around her would probably never like what she was saying, particularly in politics, at least she had become someone they would have to treat her differently than they would treat other women. For example, one day Zelo's oldest brother asked her questions related to politics, she recalled, "as if he was testing my knowledge." Zelo answered all his questions, and then he told her that she knew nothing. Then she asked him why he was saying such things to her. Without waiting for his response, she told him that if she were a man, he would not

dare to tell her the same thing. Whether he showed disrespect to her or not, it was something that he would never do to other women and Zelo knew that; for example, he would not ask his wife what she thinks about some possible solutions to the country's problems. She felt that she was getting special attention from others, particularly from those who were powerful in her family and in the community. In addition, in areas other than politics people tended to listen to her more seriously. For example, her family members, for the first time, took her demand to divorce her husband seriously. Even her uncle confessed that family members were responsible for her unhappiness by not doing anything about it. She gradually felt that this power was generating itself as she acted in the zone of this forbidden and highly risky politicization. Therefore, she followed this power which showed her a way of becoming.

Different from her earlier attempts of problematizing, now she was not complaining about her problems; she was not whining; she was not begging for mercy. This time she was claiming something from people and from the state. Her becoming was beyond just a rational awareness of injustice and oppression. It was about politically demanding her human and civil rights to be fully human. Most importantly, it was not about just herself; through her individual self it was becoming about groups of oppressed people.

Her politicization process revealed that Zelo did not need to master various sets of required skills to be politicized and to be able to politicize her daily problems. However, because she was oppressed by so many layers and dimensions of oppression, she needed something to pull her out from the bottom of layers or something to help, empower, and enable her to get out from the very bottom of oppression. The movement and its political

power and discourses provided what she needed: a space for her to become. She utilized the movement, political, and cultural discourse as a channel to be listened to, to be heard, to be an activist of her own kind. She did not have a well laid out plan, project, well-established theory, or ideology to begin with, although she spent quite a lot of time thinking about benefits and risks when she was thinking about doing something to change things in her life. One condition she was seeking was “respect” in order to join and work with the members of the party.

That’s why I went there [the party] and just sat there for months. I was not even talking, just watching. I looked at how people were treating each other. For months, I watched how they [people in the party] treated women. I would not even step into the party’s door for the second time if I felt that women were not respected.

As a result, she gradually politicized things as she gained attention, respect, critique, condemnation as well as more power, more self-confidence, and more control over on her own life. She was being empowered. As she was empowered she was being liberated. Of course it was not the movement’s own political power making all those things possible and happening as if it were a magic wand. There was something else for Zelo generating power for her and her own cause: the power of negation.

Finding 7: Negation

Negation, in Zelo’s use, was a way of dealing with the problems. It was a language to vocalize her problems. It was a set of actions and its logic against the logic of dehumanization of an oppressive, racist, and patriarchal system. When she could not fit the oppressive practices in her mental schemas to justify them, she concealed their

contradictions by defending or proposing an alternative (antithesis) practice which eventually called for a new synthesis. Zelo's negations were her senses that have developed through her experiences against unfairness, when each time she could not find a reason to understand the mistreatments she received from her husband, from the community, from friends, and from her culture. As it was stated above, Zelo's negation was not just a kind of complaining, was not a kind of weak whining; it was about questioning the given reality and, more importantly, demanding a change. For example, Zelo unilaterally called the family together for a meeting. She did not ask them to find a solution for her problems. She did not ask them what they thought about her marriage. She did not beg them to rescue her. She demanded. She told them, "Just like how you gave me to him, you have to take me back." By acting like this, she was fundamentally negating the dominant understanding of woman type, wife type, and mother type who was supposed to sacrifice her well-being and happiness for her children by keeping the family intact.

Another example of her negation was declaring her son was brave. The 1980's coup d'etat had waged a big scale of depoliticization against the entire society and then a dirty war had been waged against the Kurdish people. This has made it so difficult even to talk about politics and the Kurdish guerrilla movement. While it was risky talking about the movement, declaring her son a hero or brave was a total negation of dominant discourse and *official-myths* in which words such as *hero or brave* were reserved only for Turkish soldiers. By claiming these words to describe her son, she was also indirectly implying and accusing those who oppose or even position themselves as neutral to the Kurdish movement as cowards or traitors. This was also a negation of being "cautious,"

which was a social phenomenon created by the politics of fear that was systematically executed by the state. Because of fear many intellectuals and progressives had stepped back. They had chosen to be silent to various forms of violation of civil liberties. As a result, a kind of discourse and justification system had been created and labeled it as “being cautious.” A further example of negation is Zelo’s redefinition of honor. When her younger brother called her and told her that he was worried about her because if she were raped in a police interrogation, the family’s honor would suffer. She yelled at him and told him that her honor was not between her legs. This was a total negation of traditional and (non-) official view of honor which was historically formed on women’s sexuality. This is very powerful where women’s sexuality was used to oppress women and at the same time manipulate the community.

Finally, when she began treating and accepting every single boy and girl activist as her own son and daughter, she negated the traditional understanding of motherhood. Traditionally women were identified with maternity and motherhood. Because several moral, ideological, and religious constituents were historically attributed to it and these attributed features were praised as if they were virtues, motherhood had become a patriarchic force subordinating women in both peace and in war. While some of the virtues of motherhood were being caring, sacrificial, and submissive, one of them was being patriotic. Despite its several oppressive and repressive forms, Turkish patriarchy has always praised and been reinforced by placing an emphasis on the sacrificial role of mothers during the independence war. Since the Kurdish nationalist movement began, the mainstream media and the military have been campaigning to raise a militarist discourse of motherhood in which women become soldier-bearing bodies. The outcome of the

campaign was mothers who, in Zelo's words, "do not want peace. They want war. They say they are even willing to give another birth to be soldier to be a sacrifice for the land of Turks. They want their sons to be killed for a country."

In Zelo's negation, traditionally defined oppressed and militarist motherhood was turned into a kind of activism. She plied motherhood's universally accepted notion of caring and began considering the young activists as her own children. She was politicizing her motherly concern and expanding her concern to all people, not just those within her political spectrum. She was concerned about activists, Turkish soldiers, guerillas, poor people, and women. For example, Zelo housed a girl who ran away from her family for fear of falling victim to honor killing.

Zelo embraced the motherhood explained above as an identity. It is important to note that she did not use womanhood as a primary part of this identity but used motherhood instead. The society accepts a woman more easily and attributes more credibility when a woman presents herself as a mother rather than as a woman only. For example, if Zelo presented herself as a sympathizer of the Kurdish movement as an individual woman, oppressive norms and repressive laws would have made her social and political life much more difficult. Since motherhood was deeply rooted in tradition and historically used in political ideology as a controlling mechanism of women through its being "holy," "divine," and "sacred," Zelo's motherhood identity provided her both a shield and a license to be a political activist. Basically her activism was being interpreted and accepted as an outcome of "traditional-motherly-concern," not a political metamorphosis of an individual woman. This provided more space for her and inevitably empowered her.

As her activism progressed through this empowerment, Zelo expanded the level and type of her activism. For example, she did not stay on the Kurdish side protesting the Turkish dirty war; rather, she joined other groups of mothers including Turkish soldiers' mothers to protest the war between the Turkish army and Kurdish guerillas. Therefore, traditional motherhood was turned into an emotional, intellectual, and spiritual support towards the activists. It was also turned into a political power to put pressure on authorities to cease the war. Motherhood, in Zelo's hands, became subversive rather than submissive; collective rather than individual; and it has become a source of empowerment rather than enslavement.

Finding 8: Conceptual Learning

During the interviews, Zelo frequently used both abstract and concrete concepts in her analyses of her past and present experiences. Her narrative revealed several related aspects of her conceptual learning and developing a form of her own counter language.

From Zelo's account, I learned that her oppressive culture circumscribed her life from childhood to her marriage: Zelo was only trained to do certain tasks and errands; she was exposed to certain things to know or gain insights but only on specific topics; and she was allowed to learn or explore within the permitted area to complete the daily tasks and duties. For example, as a woman, Zelo was not allowed to go to coffee houses, which are places where only men socialize and play cards and board games. Those games, besides entertaining, help individuals to develop strategies for memory (store and retrieve information when it is needed), develop abstract concepts, and develop familiarity with numbers. In addition, Zelo was not allowed to have any personal or leisure time to develop herself and her potential. She, for example, could not freely read,

write, or draw. As a result, she could only have a limited capacity and vocabulary in order to communicate with others, and be able to transmit the existing values to the next generation. In other words, oppression provided her very limited space to grow and learn. Because her vocabulary and concepts were kept constrained, her conceptual thinking and feeling were undeveloped. However, these hindrances did not stop her learning and knowing.

In addition to her feudal culture, the ethnocentric aspect of Turkish ideology had obstructed her overall language development as well. For example, on one hand, her native language was forbidden under Turkish law. On the other hand, there were very few people around her speaking limited Turkish, which also prevented her from developing her Turkish language skills. Therefore, her language development in both Kurdish and Turkish was deficient. As a result, because Zelo did not have a well-developed and sufficient grasp of concepts and terms, she was unable to understand the world within its complexity; unable to foresee and hope for a better life; and unable to enunciate her problems. One aspect of Zelo's powerlessness against oppression partially resulted from having a limited vocabulary and language skills, which made her unable to elucidate to herself and others what she was going through. In other words, she was unable to describe how she was feeling and what she was thinking in situations, such as, when she was beaten and when she was confused with the double-bind messages. She stated once, "We were illiterate. Our mouths were not able to bring two words together [meaning, in an exaggerated way, women did not know how to form a meaningful sentence]."

After her son's departure, her ways of interacting with the world changed and she found a world in front of her waiting to be learned. Through learning, her vocabulary and

language skills were advanced. She exploited several opportunities to learn. She learned how to read and write. She learned through conversation with others, watching TV shows, listening to the radio, reading newspapers and books, and from her own everyday struggle. As she learned, her level of comprehension deepened. As her learning and comprehension increased, she has gained self-confidence and feels empowered. Her use of political and cultural concepts demonstrated these developments well. For example, despite her belated language development, Zelo used terms and concepts not only appropriately but also in creative ways. When I asked her what she was expecting from this study by participating, she made a joke. She told me, "Nothing! What could I expect from your study! From an American-educated intellectual?" By using the phrase "American educated intellectual," she sarcastically criticized the American education which is usually associated with capitalistic and imperialistic views in the left. This incident illustrates one of the most important characteristics of counter learning under oppression. It is transfer of learning, which is a capability of applying previously learned knowledge to a new or another situation. In the above incident, Zelo successfully transferred her previous knowledge to a new context. In addition, beyond her successful application of abstract political terms and concepts, Zelo also used the terms and concepts in a creative, humorous way. This use of humor also indicates Zelo's other characteristics such as a risk-taking attitude and self-confidence that aided her learning.

An additional example of her use of concepts was Zelo's analysis of her husband's inconsistent behaviors in an era of political turmoil in which being a revolutionary was both a survival skill and fashion. She said that "he was a big revolutionary, when he was sober!" By this, she did not only recognize what the true characteristics of a revolutionary

were but also used these criteria to judge, criticize, and mock her husband. Or when she was trying to make sense of the concept of social class and class struggle, she exhibited a skillful implementation of her understanding from her own observation and experience. “They steal, rob, exploit, and (like my husband) corrupt, and become rich. Who has become rich by working honestly or by the sweat of their brow?” In her analysis and conceptualization, selected terms, concepts, their order, their relevance to her life (when she says “like my husband”) and their political and moral load illustrate well Zelo’s ability to create, devise, and enrich her conceptual models and frameworks for further advanced learning and understanding the world.

Skillful use of such concepts also enabled Zelo to deconstruct her world, both her past and her present. For example, when she told me how her uncle made the decision about her marriage, she demonstrated her ability in deconstructing her uncle’s simple yet traditionally complex sentences and attitudes.

He said “I would give her to my uncle [Zelo’s mother’s brother].” He said he would sacrifice me for his uncle! Do you see? He gives me to my uncle and sacrifices me for him. Not even to his son. Because he is the one who wants to take me.

This analysis clearly indicates that she powerfully deconstructed two things. One, she was being objectified to be given as a present or servant to another without considering where or for whom she would end up being wife. Two, she saw and objected to how the religious and traditional ritual of sacrificing an animal for appeasing God has turned into a normal cultural practice in the words uttered from her uncle’s mouth.

Another characteristic of Zelo's conceptual learning is her conceptual differentiations, which is crucial in counter learning under oppression. In her narrative, when she stated assorted issues that were related to oppression and gender, she skillfully used various concepts attributed to certain aspects of womanhood. For example, while she differentiated Kurdish women from other (Turkish) women, she demonstrated a strong grasp of the cultural and political issues in women's lives within their specific contexts.

One example would be how Zelo discerned between womanhood and motherhood. In the interviews, when she used the concept of motherhood, she amalgamated themes of the universally recognized caring side of motherhood and the motherhood as a political identity. For example, even though she distinguished women from men; Kurdish women from Turkish women; and educated, middle class women from poor and illiterate women, she never distinguished motherhood with any nationalistic identity or theme. When she was explaining her problems with the existing reality, she responded, "I have been going through a lot of things. I mean as a woman, as a Kurdish woman, as a mother." She did not use the term "Kurdish mother," for example. Even though someone would rightly claim that because Kurdish mothers were brutally oppressed and repressed during the Turkish "dirty war" and by the state sponsored feudal patriarchy, the term "Kurdish mother" is distinct and important. In addition, due to the unparallel power structure, usage of the term should not be judged to be a "racist term." Zelo never used motherhood to exclude and polarize mothers and women. She always used motherhood without attributing any nationalistic theme to it. Zelo's involvements with the mothers of Turkish soldiers in seeking a peaceful political solution, and

supporting even American and Iraqi mothers' advocacies to stop the Iraq war illustrate her understanding of mother as a universal being. Her *nationless* approach to motherhood in a war zone also helped her to conceptualize and demand a "peace" within political complexity without bloodshed. Hence her concept of motherhood was a political stance (but not a nationalistic one) against war and oppression.

Nationalism for a mother was unimaginable for Zelo. When mothers of dead Turkish soldiers refused to protest the dirty war; when they declared they did not want peace; when they were willing to be a soldier-bearing womb and willing to sacrifice their sons for the Turkish land, Zelo did not see those mothers as enemy mothers. She did not even blame them. She saw them as oppressed and victims of racist nationalistic propaganda as the following quote reflects:

Soldiers' mothers were in accord with what the media says; they started saying that they do not want peace. They want war. They say they are even willing to give another birth to be soldier to be a sacrifice for the land of Turks. These words are told by mothers! If those mothers read accurately, they would not say that they want their sons to be killed for a country. That made the hairs of my body standing up. How could this happen? This is what the system does. From dawn to sunset, media washes their brains.

Despite her belated and deficit language development, her appropriate, skillful, and creative use of political and cultural concepts in the process of her counter learning illustrate how her intellectual skills were sharpened and enhanced. Her account is full of several successful utilizations of these skills, so it is useful to consider what strategies Zelo used to overcome an oppressive environment and still acquire those skills and apply

them into new situations. Zelo obviously acquired her intellectual skills through learning and metacognitive strategies which she did not learn through formal education. She learned those strategies from her daily experience of survival and struggle of becoming. Her humor, sarcasm, analyses of daily incidents, her reasoning, and problem solving skills illustrate well her intellectual skills. For example, underlining the words and concepts that she did not know while reading was one of her metacognitive strategies. So was her inquiry to learn what those words and concepts meant. Another example reflecting her intellectual skills was about her use of language that I called “counter language of the oppressed.”

Finding 9: Counter Language of the Oppressed

The history of Zelo’s counter language is the history of her counter learning by which she gained her individual, conscious, and political self. Learning one’s native language is a spontaneous and natural process in which an individual is pre-equipped with capabilities such as intellect and emotions. Then the culture, which the individual was born into, provides tools and other equipment to learn one’s language. As mentioned above, because of multi-layered and multi-dimensional oppression, including her officially banned native language, scarcity of resources (books, pictures, music, etc.), and restricted gender-based learning opportunities (not being free to explore or learn, or intentionally not being exposed to certain experiences), Zelo’s language development was deficient. In her insufficient lingual and epistemological development, she only learned and she was taught things that were crucial for survival, not for growing to be able to freely fulfill her own individual potentials. As a result of this, she did not have a language to become herself. She did not have a language to elucidate her problems. She

did not have a language to deconstruct the given reality. And she did not have a language to defend herself. She was not able to construct a good meaningful sentence because her mouth was “not able to bring two words together.” She tacitly knew that words were not just a combination of some sounds; they were very powerful. There must have had a reason that she was not allowed to talk. Perhaps Zelo felt words’ power when she unconsciously used certain words while she was defending her son and his cause. Therefore, to some extent, Zelo’s fight against oppression was a language-war. She was talking with “man’s” political words. She was using “guerilla’s” words. She was using words that the army general uses or the prime minister uses. It was empowering to use such words and concepts. However, learning the meanings of those politically loaded terms and concepts was beneficial, but it did not provide a magic wand in every context. Using the language skillfully was also crucial. She used it in her commentary, in her critique, in her sarcasm, jokes, and in her daily interaction. From her conversation, I was able to detect which words she was using more comfortably and which concepts she just learned. For example, she was not able to use economical concepts fluently, concepts such as class, bourgeois, and liberalism. When she used those terms and concepts, she was not able to complete her sentences; rather it was like she was listing those terms one after another. This indicated to me that those terms were new additions to her lexicon and mental schemas.

One of the very interesting characteristics of Zelo’s counter language was her ability to skillfully master the oppressor’s language and value system. By appropriating the oppressor’s language and value system, she became able to argue her point of view, defend herself and attack someone. For example, when her brother expressed his concern

about family honor in case of possible sexual abuse in an interrogation of Zelo because of her political involvement, Zelo used the same cultural values in her political context with a clever twist to attack him when she told him:

While your country is under oppression, while your all cultural rights are taken from you, while your people's honor is tortured and being raped in the torture chambers around this land, your only concern is about the thing that is in between my legs, you bastard! You should be ashamed of yourself that you called me for this! My honor is not between my legs! It [honor] is in people's consciousness, in people's hearts, and in people's minds.

Finding 10: CLUO is Transformative

An analysis of the data indicated that Zelo's learning journey includes various forms of transformations in her worldview, in her self-image, and in her presumptions that she unconsciously gained through her socialization. Interviews with Zelo revealed that she has gone through very difficult times when she was subjected to dehumanization. She was first stupefied when her husband beat her. She did not mention that she had similar feelings before despite having experienced a separation from her mother, responsibility of little brothers, and having housework despite her young age. She does not know why, but she never accepted the reasons and explanations given by others about the beatings. Since as a researcher, I found it hard to believe that in such a feudal culture a 14-years-old girl had not heard any beatings, I asked her again. I thought that maybe she had never heard of such a thing. Therefore, it was not acceptable for her. She told me she had never witnessed any wife beating incidents, but she might have heard some incidents. It was hard to accept that Zelo, from a very male-dominated tribal culture,

would not have been socialized to be submissive to patriarchy and even to the husband's beatings why was she not socialized to accept the traditional submissive and sacrificial wife role? I asked her several times why she was bothered so much whenever she started talking about beatings. Usually she answered by asking me back, "Why should I have accepted it? I am a human."

I was not satisfied with her answer. Her answer was much more reconstructed and supported by a humanist, though naïve, perception. After the last interview, I listened to the recordings again and again, and I came to understand that it was not the beatings she was not accepting. It was her belief that she was innocent and had not deserved the beatings. During the beginning of beatings she tried to find out why he had beaten her. She looked into herself and tried to find out a reason for the beating, a reason that perhaps could help her to justify it. She scanned all her verbal and nonverbal behaviors: "Had I done anything inappropriate in front of his parents? Had I said anything wrong? Had I sat wrong? Had I stood up right? Had I worn something that I was not supposed to?" Nevertheless she could not find any reason to deserve the beating. If she had done something wrong, would she have accepted the beatings?

Yea! Then I would have said, "Ok!" that I deserved it. But I have never done anything wrong. I do not do wrongs! I mean then, I would have said I deserved it, you understand? Now, with the mind I have now, I would not let him touch me again, no matter what.

Therefore, what she could not accept and what she was not able to comprehend was the beatings when she had not done anything wrong to deserve them.

This finding raised another question. Why does Zelo never do wrong? “That is how we were raised. In our family girls never do wrong.” What she meant is that girls are not allowed to do wrong things. Perhaps consequences would be severe. What are the wrong things she mentioned? Wrong things are those that are her religion and tradition determined: behaving inappropriately in the presence of males and older people, talking back to elderly relatives and the husband, sitting in a way that some body parts are seen, such as legs or breasts, etc. This explains well why she experienced this very intense feeling of stupefaction.

Zelo has internalized the oppression on an extreme level; she internalized the violence but not without righteous reason. She blindly accepted the traditional values and norms in a rigid way that she did not leave any possibility to make even a tiny mistake. She was almost too sure that she did not do any wrong. Therefore, her husband’s beatings were a threat to her confidence that was built out of the oppressive values and norms. If she was not opposed to the beatings, she would feel as if she crossed the norms’ borders, as if she did something “wrong.” Her confidence would collapse.

Besides this psychological state, cognitively, she must have experienced disequilibrium because she did not have schemata in her cognition about a possibility of being beaten without deserving to be beaten. Zelo was supposed to assimilate or create another schema to reach equilibrium; yet she neither assimilated nor created a scheme for beatings. Metaphorically, I imagine her position like the young man in Tiananmen Square standing against the tanks. This pose of opposing unjust treatment seems to bring to bear her resources of stubbornness, endurance, and perseverance. And her stubbornness, endurance, and perseverance are allies in her process of learning.

At the same time her other senses and cognitive frameworks were being challenged and shattered in relation to her husband's beatings. Her existing assumptions about marriage, family, womanhood, and motherhood perhaps became meaningless. Her unquestioned assumptions of a "husband" who was supposed to be loving, supportive, and protective were not fitting the reality of a husband who beat her or threatened to kick her out if she would not treat his family members respectfully. All these odds exacerbated a sense of disequilibrium. Because the level of oppression and the strictness of her cultural values, and other countless factors that paralyzed her, the sense of disequilibrium was kind of another layer of oppression. She did not know what to do. She did not know how to respond. As a wife, was she supposed to be strong and not allow her family to be ruptured? She examined herself: her feelings, emotions, reasons. She tried to make them fit (even though they did not fit anywhere) in an artificial schema that can be translated to "a husband has a right to beat and love" or "this is my fate, my destiny." Nothing worked.

Maybe Zelo did not find courage to do something for a long time; however, she never submitted. She never stopped complaining about her unhappiness, but she stopped begging him not to beat her. By not crying and not begging him, she was not giving him pleasure. "I was feeling worthless after beatings because I knew that he was not going to stop. Why was I laying down my honor in the dirt like a doormat in front of him? Then I stopped crying. I was not crying anymore!" Once she attempted to commit suicide, for example, she had somehow learned to use her own body against him. Then Zelo saw many women were going through similar battering and abuses. Then she saw some women dared to divorce, and then she saw them "stand on their own two feet." Even though it took a very long time she, many times, explored her options of divorce, her

possible actions, her new roles, and possible obstacles of *what ifs* that lay in front of her. Even though she did not mention any plan that she deliberately made before her action, she did things when she felt those were needed to be done. For example, she joined a political party and then decided to go to a literacy program to learn how to read and write. Then she built a new - her own - perspective about life as she lived her life.

Zelo's life experiences also indicated that her transformations did not just occur in survival modes. Sometimes, very good things from the very core of life triggered her emotions, cognitions, and imaginations. For example, Zelo was given a nickname by others in the party, "Gorki Ana," which refers to one of Maxim Gorki's revolutionary characters in his novel entitled *The Mother*. The mother is a proletariat woman who goes through a socio-political transformation and becomes an activist when her son was arrested for his involvement with the socialist movement in late Czar Era. "Gorki Ana" has become Zelo's pride and her model for her theoretical and practical political progression.

As careful readers would easily realize, I have been using plural form of the term "transformation" because I hoped in using its plural form to create a fuzzy feeling in the readers' minds about Zelo's transformative learning within counter learning under oppression. It is hard to pinpoint the time or a specific incident when she had undergone a radical perspective change or transformation. However, one could find many particles and several phases of transformative learning spread through the entire spectrum of her change. Therefore, her entire life should be taken into consideration as a whole, beginning from her marriage to the present, and her dramatic changes are to be analyzed.

In conclusion, this study of counter learning under oppressive situations indicated that cultural, historical, and political conditions play a crucial role in the process of counter-learning. Zelo's story also revealed that it was almost impossible to be free from the oppressive ideological influences, especially internalized ones. Even though Zelo opposed the oppressive cultural formations over women, women's bodies, and sexuality, cultural and traditional norms and values still have power over her. For example, she still would not smoke on the street, although she really needed one, because it is not traditionally appropriate for women. In addition, she feels embarrassed when she says anything related to female sexuality, and she either laughs or puts it in a culturally acceptable form such as, "You are a son to me." However, she became open for more transformation. For example, Zelo treated her daughter in a traditional way: oppressive and conservative. She would not allow her to go out, find friends (especially boys), and socialize with them. However, when her oldest son criticized her way of raising her daughter, she did not resist. She even encouraged her daughter to go out and socialize and even become politically active in the community. This last event also indicates that after experiencing counter-learning experiences and transforming, Zelo has become more open to change and progression. Finally, despite growing up in a loveless family, community, and double-binding culture, Zelo found a joy of her life and happiness through engaging in counter-learning which led her to get involved in a struggle to demand her own humanity, gender and ethnic identity. She found love of life. She loved her children dearly, she loved their causes. She loved all the young activists as if they were her own kids. She shared her meal and her last cigarette with them. She loved herself too. She felt that she was loved and respected by others. Her oldest son describes her:

I think for a human being or a woman who newly, although a little late, discovered herself, she is so happy, energetic, and liberated because she makes her own decisions about her life. Her life is for the first time her own. Of course her two guerilla children's memories give her strength, help her endure, resist, and feel proud. Even though recently she gets tired easily, of course she has gotten old, she will never stop. I know she will in this path. But she will die happy.

Despite the risk of being taken into custody, despite the high possibility of being tortured or even killed, Zelo loves life in spite of dehumanization and oppression. How do I know? I heard that after thirty something years of heavy smoking, she had quit smoking cold turkey because she cares about life more than an old habit. I think I should end her story with one of the greatest Turkish poet's, Nazim Hikmet, poem on living (Konuk & Blasing, 2002, p. 132)

Living is no laughing matter:

you must live with great seriousness

like a squirrel, for example--

I mean without looking for something beyond and above living,

I mean living must be your whole occupation.

Living is no laughing matter:

you must take it seriously,

so much so and to such a degree

that, for example, your hands tied behind your back,

your back to the wall,

or else in a laboratory
in your white coat and safety glasses,
you can die for people--
even for people whose faces you've never seen,
even though you know living
is the most real, the most beautiful thing.
I mean, you must take living so seriously
that even at seventy, for example, you'll plant olive trees--
and not for your children, either,
but because although you fear death you don't believe it,
because living, I mean, weighs heavier.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, findings of this narrative analysis research study were presented in detail. Findings were discussed under one major topic: Counter Learning under oppression, which had two subtopics: oppression and counter-learning. Because the two phenomena (oppression and learning) of this study are inseparable, in order to analyze and discuss them, they were treated as separate entities. In addition, while findings of oppressive political and structural contexts were examined from the Marcusean perspective, the findings of counter-learning were examined from the critical constructivist framework.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the dynamics of adult counter-learning under extreme oppressive situations in which structural factors (cultural, economical, and religious oppression) and oppressive practices and tactics (from simple moral condemnations to random arrest, torture, killing, and disappearances) are inflicted on people to both maintain dominant ideology and its hegemony and eliminate dissidents. This study was based on the assumption that under extreme oppressive situations, counter-learning is socio-politically constructed and holistic. Further, in adult education literature, specifically in critical adult education literature, adults' learning is studied within social movements (Foley, 1999, 2001; Hart, 1990; Kilgore, 1999). Moreover, because the studies focus on learning in the movement, their focus (intentionally or unintentionally) shifts away from learning to "teaching-learning" paradigms in social movements where people are not only already in the process of critical reflection and individual transformation, but also structured programs, curricula, and objectives exist (Foley, 1999). Therefore, this study was an attempt to study adult learning under oppressive situations and its characteristics without losing the focus from learning paradigm. In addition, it was hoped that the findings would inform the body of adult education knowledge with new knowledge and insights into the complexity of adult learning.

This chapter offers conclusions drawn from this inquiry based on the literature reviewed in Chapter Two and makes recommendations for future research in the adult

education field. It also offers suggestions for adult education theorists and practitioners based on the findings of this study.

CLUO and Oppression

The literature review of this study found that the concept, oppression, was not well studied in the literature. There were a few comprehensive studies, such as Frye (1983) and Young (1992), but they were dated. It was even difficult to find a comprehensive and commonly accepted definition of the term. Frye (1983) states that the term, oppression, is a powerful and dangerous term as well as one of the most (knowingly and unknowingly) misused terms. Oppression, she continues, is “a system of interrelated barriers and forces which reduce, immobilize, and mold people who belong to a certain group and effect their subordination to another group” (p. 33).

Oppression resides in the very core of complex socio-economical and political hegemony. It is a dominant force in power (Frye, 2003; Grosz, 1994; Mansbridge & Morris, 2001; Young, 1992), privilege (Rios, 2000), and in systematic and hidden forms of violence (Young, 1992). However, these attempts to conceptual oppression were mostly concerning women’s liberation and gender equality. In other words, learning was not their primary concern at all. In addition, even in the recent literature, the term oppression and its relation to learning were almost a non-concern or were taken for granted. Moreover, in adult education literature, some Freirian concepts were taken as comprehensive and significant resources in understanding the relationship between oppression and learning. Although, as stated in Chapter Two, *Pedagogy of The Oppressed* is far from offering insights about an oppressed person’s daily life.

This study provided invaluable data in supporting theoretic and practical endeavors of unveiling the term of oppression with its many faces and dimensions. Zelo's narrative provides ample evidence about what oppression is, how it operates, and most importantly what it produces. While some of the findings of this study are congruent with the existing literature, some others are unique and significant.

One of the congruent findings is that oppression is a systematic, cultural, and political phenomenon. It is not an isolated extraordinary incident in which one oppresses, subordinates, and abuses another. In Zelo's life, oppression is about harmonic working relationships between patriarchal feudal culture, its moral tradition, its religion, and relatively industrialized, democratic institutions and organizations and their oppressive and repressive practices. Zelo's experiences are evidence of how modern Turkish law and the Turkish justice system work together with the unlawful and unconstitutional Kurdish feudal norms and values, and how this relationship sacrifices and wastes individual lives for the sake of maintaining and reproducing hegemonic the status quo. Living in these complex systems of oppression is a life which

is confined and shaped by forces and barriers which are not accidental or occasional and hence avoidable, but are systematically related to each other in such a way as to catch one between and among them and restrict or penalize motion in any direction. It is the experience of being caged in: all avenues, in every direction, are blocked or booby trapped. (Frye, 1983, p. 4)

Despite most of the studies' claims and assumptions, this study found that oppression is not just multi-layered which assumes one dimensionality. It is also multidimensional. For example, Zelo is oppressed because of her gender (layer), but she is also oppressed

because of her class related gender (dimension: working class women), ethnicity related gender (dimension: Kurdish women), and education related gender (dimension: illiterate women).

One of the most significant contributions of this study is in regards to the cultural components that oppression creates. Oppression inevitably creates these components which play vital roles in feeding back the oppression and its maintenance. In other words, they are visible parts of abstract oppression, which is felt but sometimes cannot be pointed out.

In the literature some of these cultural components might be found, but they are mostly within feminist literature, the preponderance of which is dated. For example, culture of caretaker was mostly problematized in the 1970's and the early 1980's along with the theme of motherhood. For example, one of those feminist scholars who pointed out how girls are raised as a caretaker and how this is used against them in their adult lives to oppress them again is Audre Lorde. Demanding and expecting women to educate and tame their husbands, Lorde (1984) claims, is another form of oppression.

The culture of double-bind in relation to oppression is found in Frye (1983) who claims that the *double-bind* is one of the most omnipresent characteristics of the oppressive world. She describes this as situations in which the oppressed people are given very few options to choose from, but whatever option is chosen the oppressed people will experience some kind of punishment, deprivation, or a similar negative outcome. For example, although Zelo's life and even her existence is made unbearable, it is still expected of Zelo to be happy, appreciated, and thankful. Her entire life was reduced to a lose-lose situation for Zelo. No matter what Zelo does, she is the one to be blamed for all

problems: her husband cheats on her because she fails to fulfill his sexual needs; her husband beats her because she talks too much; she does not know how to make him feel like a man; she does not know how to handle him; she does not obey; and she is rebellious. Moreover, she never feels sure about certain things. For example, she never truly knows and feels whether she is loved, cared for, and valued. She has to live a constantly ambiguous life.

Another congruency with the literature is Freire's (1970) culture of silence. By culture of silence Freire refers attributes and characteristics of oppressed people that have been historically created by the oppressor and oppressive forms in the socio-cultural context. Because of this culture, one who is oppressed is never allowed to voice what s/he thinks and what s/he feels; while the oppressed is told what to do without explanation, s/he is also told that s/he does not, cannot, would not, will not know, as if they are not capable of learning and knowing. After this kind of infliction, the oppressed person develops a doormat-like-self who believes that s/he is incapable of thinking, learning, talking, and controlling what is happening in her/his life. The oppressed individual is to blindly and faithfully accept and abide whatever happens. Oppressed people internalize all those negative images that are imposed upon them. Creating the culture of silence is one of the effective ways of alienating the oppressed so that the oppressed people's potentials are castrated and restricted from language development to comprehension. Everybody tells Zelo that she is a woman and that she does not know anything. Moreover, her feudal culture, other formal institutions, and cultural and political practices reinforce this infliction in coordination; the message is clear; it reads, "Who are you to

have an opinion of yourself?" In addition, according to Freire (1970), the culture of silence is also a process of making the oppressed dependent and self-depreciative.

Freire (1970) claims that in order for the oppressed to overcome these forms of oppression, the oppressed needs to realize what has been done to him or her. For example, when the oppressed realized that he or she is dependent, it is the beginning of getting courage to overcome the dependency. For this study, this assumption seems too rational. For example, one of Zelo's experiences with other oppressed women tells me that cognitively knowing is not enough to get courage. Zelo recognizes that these women know what has been done to them, but they are too afraid. This tells me that cognitive realization does not necessarily lead to gaining courage. This is how Zelo narrated the incident:

I have been trying to help women, organize them, trying to remind them that they are human. They are as strong as men. I mean I am trying to illuminate women. But women do not want to get out of from their shell. When I talk to them they say "Mother, what you are saying is right but we are economically dependent to our husbands. Our hands are tied." Then I tell them, "Go to work then! Get your financial independence." But they are too afraid to attempt to do something. They do not have courage to get out from their shell. They live in a hell, you know, a hell.

This is how Zelo was once upon a time. Zelo knew for a long time what had been done to her. Zelo felt the inhuman treatments deep in her heart for a long time, but knowing in and of itself was not enough to gain courage. Oppression does not reside in reason, although it has a seat in the control chamber. Oppression goes deeper than reason. It

infuses itself into our veins. It blends into our blood stream. It becomes part of our identity, our root, and our vision to see the world. Therefore, its antidote is more than a rational awakening or consciousness raising or raised awareness.

Finally, the last significance of this study is about the culture of virtue and the culture of learned-hopelessness. The literature review of this study did not find studies that have congruent findings with these. Even though I believe that the culture of virtue might be in close relationship with the socio-cultural context, it is one of the oppressive particles that is firmly rooted beyond reason; it is rooted at the bottom of consciousness.

Learned-hopelessness is another cultural component. It is different from other components in a sense that it does not go deeper into the consciousness. It resembles a behavioral learning. It particularly looks like a classical conditioning. It can easily be simulated by even a little victory against oppression. However it is fragile and sensitive too. One failure, for example, could easily bring it back. Therefore, in order for the oppression to fully function, the culture of learned-hopelessness needs to be constantly reinforced.

CLUO and Constructivism - Critical Constructivism

The data analysis of this study revealed two major results related to constructivist literature. The first major result is a combination of several findings that are grouped together and it is that most of the dynamics of CLUO are congruent with constructivist learning theories. The second result is related to what critical constructivist theory encompasses.

One area of congruence with the reviewed literature suggested by the findings is the role of experience in learning. Experience is one of the central components of

constructivist learning (Brookfield, 2005; Phillips, 1995; Tobin & Tippins, 1993; von Glaserfeld, 1993). Zelo's life experiences under oppression are both the resources and stimuli for her learning. Even though the events were oppressive and aimed to make Zelo dehumanized, the ways she interpreted and constructed her experiences prevented Zelo from being submissive to oppression. For example, she never normalized the ways that she (and other women) was treated. She never accepted the oppressive practices as a natural part of everyday events. The events could not make Zelo be submissive because she constructed her understanding by critically analyzing and reflecting on the experiences. Of course, the social and cultural forces of her context played a very important role in determining the ways she constructed her world. Mental and emotional filters and tools that she constructed to make meaning out of her own context are restricted by her subjective and objective material conditions. For example, it is almost unimaginable to expect her to put up with all those forms of verbal, physical, psychological, societal oppression and repression for a long time. Her cultural forces would not allow her to do anything else but stay home and wait for the husband to return home to terrorize the home. If she had even the slightest opportunity to find a social, emotional support from the society or other societal organizations, I am wondering, how would she have responded to the years of abuse? Would she have divorced her husband earlier? Would she have gone to the police to press charges against him?

Another area of congruence with the reviewed literature suggested by the findings is her way of construing knowledge. As its metaphoric name (**constructivism**) aptly implies, constructivism perceives learning as a process in which new knowledge is built upon an existing knowledge (Cobern, 1993; Yager, 1991). Zelo's narrative revealed that

her previous learning experiences played an important role in her learning development. For example, when I looked at the concepts that she used, I realized that she was very fluent and articulate in using certain concepts. She was halting, however, in using some other concepts, such as economical concepts. Her concept learning trajectory tells me that she hears or encounters the concepts first, then comprehends in what context they are being used, relates them to other concepts that she already knows and she starts using them until she fills them in with her own construction. For example, it took her a long time to learn the term “comprador aga.” However, when she matched the term with a living example from within her world, then she never forgot what that meant.

This and other learning experiences of Zelo also indicate some of her learner characteristics, such as self-directedness and metacognition. Candy (1991) states that some characteristics of learners, like active inquiry, independence, and individuality are crucial in the constructivist learning process. Therefore, self-directedness is particularly compatible with it. Zelo’s self directedness in her learning venture is noteworthy. I do not have any specific data to prove her self-directedness, but I have peripheral data which enable me to provide some argument related to how she gained her self-directness. Her life story revealed that despite her very young age, she showed initiative; she learned fast; and she was skillful. For example, she took care of her brothers and did some house chores when she was eight years old. In addition, she never mentioned that other women (neighbors and in-laws) complained about her skills that were traditionally expected from women. If she were a dependent learner, she would have been more likely to be mocked or condemned by others, and I believe Zelo would have added one of them in her narration. Therefore, I infer that she somehow managed to learn to be an effective self-

directed learner. I also learned from her story that even in her first readings of books, she was underlining concepts when she did not know their meanings. This leads me to mention that besides her self-directedness, her metacognitive skills are also noteworthy. Metacognitive skills are abilities that enable individuals to recognize and assess how they learn and how they perform effectively (Peters, 2000; Rivers, 2001; Schraw, 1998). Therefore being metacognitive requires active and conscious acts over her own cognitive processes in her learning or problem solving. Being aware of one's strength in learning is a powerful ability. Since constructivism emphasizes similar activeness in the process of construction of knowledge, constructivism coincides and aligns with metacognition.

An interesting and unexpected finding of this study was Zelo's long-lasting, in fact never-ending, disequilibrium, when she was beaten by her husband for the first time. She did not have any schema for being beaten without an adequate reason. She asked around (particularly to her mother-in-law) to find an answer to overcome the disequilibrium, but she could not find any reason that she deserved the beating. Therefore, neither did she adjust her existing schemas (assimilation) nor create a new schema (accommodation) to adapt. Since adaptation to new challenging conditions is biologically driven, any disequilibrium intrinsically requires an immediate balance between mind and the environment (Huitt & Hummel, 2003). Otherwise, as Murray (1998) claims, disequilibrium creates a great emotional impact on individuals and creates anxiety, frustration, depression, and anger. However, Zelo's narrative did not reveal anything about how she has overcome her disequilibrium or whether she has ever overcome it at all. Her disequilibrium triggered a social and political transformation in her *lifeworld* (her world as lived). It led her to challenge the given reality. She declared

that she was not going to learn that it was okay to be beaten without a reason. Rather, she found other bits and pieces of ideas and morals to support her stand. She constructed her vision with humanitarian philosophy. She affirmed that ill-treatment of women or beatings of women were inhumane: “Aren’t I a human?” she said.

The second major result is specifically related to critical constructivist theory’s critical side. In the process of the data analysis of this study, critical constructivism was tried to be utilized as an epistemological lens to understand counter-learning and its dynamics. However, I soon realized that while cognitive constructivist and social constructivist epistemologies offered knowledge and insight into understanding the counter-learning processes, critical constructivist theory offered a framework that enabled me to decide where I should situate counter-learning in relation to its socio-political context through which counter-learning comes to existence. Kincheloe (2005) states that critical constructivism is much more than just a theory of learning. Because it “involves theoretical work in education, epistemology, cognition, and ontology” (Kincheloe, p. 7), it should be considered as a worldview; a worldview that aims to reveal subtle and complex relationship between a knower, known and socio-economical power structure. Without understanding how unparalleled power structure and oppressive practices play a dominant role in our learning, our attempt to understand human (particularly adult) learning will inexorably remain insufficient because we will not be able to see how the oppression sets limits to the oppressed people’s learning.

The first finding of this study in relation to counter-learning, for example, was Zelo’s construction of her social world. The finding indicates that based on her perception of power structure she separates her world into two: we and they. What is

distinct between her “we” and “they” is the unjust and unequal power that comes from cultural and historical dynamics. Even though, at first glance, this separation could be seen as a simplistic dichotomy, it is not a simple separation. Perhaps it was at the beginning of her learning process. However, this separation seems to be a nucleus of her future learning; a conceptual framework to be taken as a reference when a new meaning is constructed; and a power that makes her learning extended. By revealing and knowing how dominant power operates to manage and manipulate the knowledge, critical constructivism seeks to extend human consciousness (Kincheloe, 2005). In the light of this distinctive separation, Zelo was able to create multiple consciousnesses to survive. Although these multiple consciousnesses were surviving tools at the beginning, later in Zelo’s hand, they have become more than a set of surviving tools; they have enabled Zelo to deconstruct the given reality. In addition, the more she deconstructed the oppressive culture and structure, the more she gained power over her life against oppression and endured.

Another congruency with the findings of this study is one of the central critical constructivist notions which suggests individuals should “step back from the world as [they] are accustomed to perceiving it” (Kincheloe, 2005). Even though, it was not Zelo’s active and conscious decision, Zelo’s separation from the world, its active agents, its oppressive and stiff values, and its discourses helped Zelo in her counter learning. She turned her loneliness, which was supposed to be a punishment and condemnation, into a powerful experience and she came out with a strong pose against the oppressive formations. Again, it is imperative to emphasize how Zelo’s detachment from the dominant ways of living, thinking, and sensing has become an empowering experience,

and was not a purely rational one. It was a combination of all emotional, rational, and other epistemological processes of which we are mostly not aware. As Zelo reported, “I do not know how I did it, but I did it.”

Finally, the findings also support another crucial component of critical constructivism, which is analysis of the personal. Drawn from feminism, critical constructivism gives a special attention to the role of the personal in the process of meaning making and knowledge construction (Kincheloe, 2005). Analysis of the personal is crucial because it provides us other ways of knowing besides reason. Its denial would lead to a conceptualization of learning without the role of individual, emotions, gender, and other non-cognitive factors in the learning process. Zelo’s personals, such as her gender, her gender related social roles, her ethnicity, and her daily experiences with the oppression, are sine qua non in her counter-learning. Without analyzing these factors, such as her gender and gender related qualities like motherhood, I would have ignored a big part of her counter-learning which occurs in her interaction with the world, with the cultural dynamics, and with the other cultural agents of oppression.

CLUO and Adult Education Literature

The critical evaluation of adult education literature germane to this study grouped adult learning paradigms based on their stance in relation to the dominant framework: liberatory learning paradigms (LLPs) and non-liberatory learning paradigms (NLLPs). Regardless of their stance, however, this study recognized their contribution to the body of adult learning theory and practice. The findings of this study are compatible with theories from both of these groups of theories. For example, Zelo’s counter-learning indicates that her several learner characteristics match with the adult learner

characteristics of Knowles' andragogy and Self-Directed learning theory. Zelo, for example, is an independent, self-motivated learner. In addition, she uses her past experiences as a reservoir for her new learning. Moreover, her learning needs are also closely related with her social role and identity. However, all her characteristics are in a dialectical relationship with her subjective and material conditions in which the social actor and the material conditions dynamically define and affect each other. For instance, material conditions pushed her to the margins, and condemnations left her alone. However, Zelo turned the loneliness into a detachment from oppressive discourse, and she was empowered. Different from other none-liberatory theories, this study indicates that Zelo's counter-learning has a strong dialectical relationship with the cultural and political context.

Findings also indicated some parallelism to the liberatory learning paradigms. Some of the findings resemble Freirian pedagogy's concepts such as the culture of silence as the following quote indicates: "We were brought up our eyes shut. I was a girl, I was told I didn't know anything, that I had no rights. Everybody said this, my family, my husband's family, relatives, everybody." This quote of Zelo's above is typical of what Freire (1970) explains with the term culture of silence in which one who is oppressed is never allowed to voice what s/he thinks and what s/he feels; while the oppressed is told what to do without explanation, s/he is also told that s/he does not, cannot, would not, will not know, as if they are not capable of learning and knowing. Everybody tells Zelo that she is a woman and that she does not know anything. Moreover, her feudal culture, other formal institutions, and cultural and political practices reinforce this infliction

congruently; the message, as mentioned earlier, is clear: “Who are you to have an opinion of yourself?”

The oppressor historically knows the importance of learning and knowing in order to maintain his hegemony and domination. As a result, learning and knowing are so central and crucial in the oppressive structure. In order to keep the oppressed subdued, learning and knowing must have been predefined and controlled by the oppressor. Learning and knowing which exceeds the pre-drawn boundaries, therefore, is a political act for the oppressed. However, the very same act of the oppressed is subversive for the oppressor. When Zelo began learning, her knowledge and skills were tested to see if there was a way to pull her down again. Her older brother tested Zelo’s knowledge by asking several political questions. All his questions were answered by Zelo and finally her brother told her the very same cliché that Zelo has heard for her entire life; “You do not know anything.” Moreover, when Zelo opposes his degrading efforts towards her and told him that because of her gender he was treating him this way, then her brother’s target shifted to her cultural and moral structure. Zelo told that incident as follows:

One day my older brother asked me many political questions. I answered whatever he asked. I knew that he was up to something or he was testing me. He asked. I answered. He asked. I answered. You know what he told me at the end? He said I knew nothing. I looked at him and told him “Abi [traditional title told to older brother] I answered your questions correctly. Because I am a woman, you said that I knew nothing, didn’t you?” Then he told me, but he could not look at my face you know...He told me that I was enticed, I was out of control and nobody could handle me.

The Turkish state's approach to the oppressed people's learning and knowing is not different from that of Zelo's brother. The state considers subversive those whose learning is beyond the acceptable norms and forms. In fact, the Turkish state goes further to blame outsider (enemy) forces in indoctrinating and using those who have oppositional ideas against the status quo. This is more degrading and insulting to the capacity of the oppressed people's faculties of learning because it does not give a chance and even acknowledge the slightest possibility to the oppressed to learn or know by themselves.

Another similarity within the findings of this study with the Freirian pedagogy is Zelo's realization of her unhappiness and talking about it with others. Freire (1970) calls this denunciation, which means naming the problem. Why is this important? It is, because the oppressed is not supposed to complain about his/her life. Naming a problem indirectly indicates that the oppressed is not happy with the given reality. This also indicates that the oppressive practices were not effective and calls a tighter control or more oppressive measures that need to be taken into consideration. For the oppressed, the act of announcing a problem is a big leap. It is empowering. When Zelo did not show any improvement in her attitude towards seeing her problems as non-problems, condemnations and oppressions were increased. However, Zelo did not give up, and more pressure only resulted in strengthening her resistance.

The bigger problem for the oppressor after an oppressed is engaged in annunciation is an act of denunciation, which is not only an oppositional attitude against the oppressive norms and practices, but also taking a stand to suggest solutions for the problems and demanding a fundamental change. The Freirian concept, annunciation, is also congruent with the findings of this study with a little more detail. In this study, the

oppressed Zelo announced the problem, then found out other related problems, and then politicized the problems by carrying them from an individual level to a societal level. This allowed her to make the problem politicized. After that, finally she negated by demanding, not even suggesting, a change. In Freirian pedagogy, it seems that details or nuances in transformation between stages were bypassed.

Adult educators also claim that most of our learning occurs without noticing it (Candy, 1991; Foley, 1998, 2001; and Newman, 1994a), without being taught, and without articulating it. This unnoticed learning is formed in the complexity of life and during the everyday struggle against dehumanization. Because this type of learning is often formed in the surviving mode, the knower neither has time to plan it out in detail, nor reflect upon it. It is a mix of emotive, intuitive, and rational knowing. It springs from daily experiences. For example, Zelo did not want to talk about her son's political involvement on the phone because she did not feel it was safe. In addition, her brother-in-law, Reso, told me he did not know anything about his nephews' and nieces' political involvement. He said that it was useless to know and learn those kinds of things and it was not a smart thing to know them either. He added that a Kurdish or a political person in Turkey has to know what to know and what not to know. Therefore, these kinds of learning are crucial for survival. Zelo's suspicion about the possibility of phone tapping or Reso's incisive approach to what to know or not to know is both tacit and implicit to the oppressed. In another incident, I asked Zelo why she did not go to the police, and here is how she responded:

Let's say I went to the police, what would the police tell me? The police would have told me that "Go back to your house! Go back! He is your husband. He both

loves you and beats you.” A policeman is a man too. He does same thing to his wife when he goes home. He exercises his [given power and privilege] manhood over his wife.

Even though Zelo sounds very rational or factual in the quote above, the way she knew or learned was not rational or factual because she could not know without trying. She may or may not have heard stories of other women. She maybe knew from the non-existence of a story about women who went to the police. “I just know it” is a kind of knowing which comes from “the gut” and intuition built upon the successive survival experiences and wisdom gained from it. The oppressed just knows where the mines are laid. One of Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot’s (1994) African-American subjects, whom she interviewed for her book, entitled *I’ve Known Rivers*, vividly described this knowing:

It means that you know danger without having to be taught...it is what June Jordan calls ‘jungle posture’ ...what Ntozake Shange calls ‘the combat stance’ ...You know where the minefields are...There is wisdom... You are in touch with the ancestors...and it is from the gut, not rationally figured out. Black women have to use this all the time, of course, the creativity is still there, but we are not fools...we call it ‘epistemological privileges of the oppressed’. (p. 59)

This epistemological privilege enables the oppressed to see, feel, and understand the given reality from their own perspective distilled from their own experience. The epistemological privilege is less likely to be distorted by the dominant discourse and indoctrination because it is based on facts and it is fed by the culture of resistance, myths, stories, songs, and poems.

Finally, different from other adult learning theory and studies, this study offers a framework in which learning under oppression is the main focus. As the critical review of adult learning literature of this study revealed in Chapter Two, adult educators either study learning within the social movements (Foley, 1999, 2001; Hart, 1990; Kilgore, 1999) or their focus is more on teaching than learning; or, I have to say, their focus (intentionally or unintentionally) shifts away from learning to a “teaching-learning” paradigm in social movements where people are not only already in the process of critical reflection and individual transformation, but also structured programs, curricula, and objectives exist (Foley, 1999). Therefore, this study offers unique insights about learning. One of the unique insights that this study offers into adult learning research and practice is a trajectory of an oppressed person’s learning in relation to a specific sociopolitical and cultural context without avoiding its complex, messy, conflicting, and contesting nature. Zelo’s narrative revealed a bare-learning which stems from her life without any institutions, any curriculum, any teacher, any predefined goals and tools other than life itself. Within this trajectory Zelo’s learning is a complex evolving process. It is both linear and nonlinear. It is nonlinear in a sense that there is not a beginning or ending point of her learning. In addition when she learns one thing this learning emerges with many other related learning(s), assumptions, and feelings. It is linear in a sense that in order to learn a concept, Zelo has to acquire a knowledge-base that would help her learn this new concept well.

Another noteworthy aspect of this study is that it sets itself apart from the other neo-Marxist critical learning theories and studies. Critical theories have been criticized for being heavily dependent on reason in a way that resulted in neglecting other forms of

knowing. In adult learning theory and practice, rationalist forms of knowing have been criticized and studies suggested other non-rational ways of learning and knowing. For example, starting from the mid 1980s there have been several theoretical arguments and experimental studies in attempt to bring a consideration of non-rational ways of knowing into adult learning (Imel, 2003; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Some of the studies and theoretical arguments are: emotional nature of rationality (Taylor, 1996), emotion and intuition's role in learning (Brookfield, 1987), emotional intelligence and intuitive understanding (Leicester, 2001), soul-learning (Dirkx, 1998), the power of feelings (Dirkx, 2001), and the subconscious (Scott, 1997). In addition, O'Reagan (2003), in her empirical study with online learners, presents a crucial relationship between emotion and cognition. However, critical theories largely remained strictly rational. Even though critical constructivism recognizes other ways of knowing, my literature review could not locate any empirical study exploring other ways of knowing besides rationalist knowing and examining within a critical framework. The literature review of this study revealed that since the Enlightenment, especially with the undeniable role of body and mind dualism of Descartes, reason has been accepted as almost the only meaningful way of knowing. This is still effective even today. Reason has become an instrument that dominated scientific and administrative thought. Frankfurt School scholars called this instrumental rationality, which represents dominant ideology and its logic that dominates people's everyday living, acting, thinking, and learning. In other words, reason was "incorporated into the very structure of society....used to strengthen rather than transform the system...[and the] Enlightenment had turned into its opposite and turned from being an instrument of liberation to domination." (Kellner, n.d., b, ¶ 14). It is this rationality

that allows the administration to reduce everything to a set of quantifiable variables. Marcuse (1978) called this a "reification of reason, reification as reason" (pp. 205). This is especially important for critical constructivism because it is this instrumental rationality that put our other immaterial ways of knowing in an inferior position (Kincheloe, 2005). Our immaterial, or non-cognitive, way of knowing is crucial in the process of meaning making. The findings of this study suggest that emotions, feelings, and reason are inseparable. In fact, emotions and feelings are somehow preconditions for human faculty for making connection between past and present experiences (Mahoney & Lyddon, 1998) in the process of learning. In Zelo's counter-learning, emotions' and feelings' roles are crucial. In her strong conviction for peace and justice, in her desire for learning, in her counter-learning, and in her even non-learning, emotions are almost central. For example, when oppression creates a double-bind situation, Zelo's experience with disorientation, confusion, frustration, and depression cannot be separated from her desire to learn and deconstruct the normative structure. In the same vein, hopelessness is presented to the poor and the oppressed in various non-hopelessness forms. Dealing with this pre-formed and pre-enforced hopelessness requires emotional and spiritual effort along with reason and logic. For another example, it is crucial to mention how Zelo utilizes the traditional notion of motherhood for her own political cause as well as how she turned it into an emotional, intellectual, and spiritual support towards the activist when she considers herself as mother of all. As a result, her narrative indicates that the driving force in her learning is more her emotional response to oppression, rather than her intellectual curiosity.

Another unique finding of this study is the way that Zelo constructs her own world within its complexity without ignoring the power structure; the use of “we and “they.” This finding is surprising because my first reaction to this finding was, “Well, we all do this.” Then I asked myself if we really do this the same way that Zelo did. The answer was striking: when most people do this, it serves the status quo. It is taken for granted. It reinforces the social structure and strata. It sets a commonly accepted distance between “we” and “they.” It somehow normalizes the separation. When one superficially inquires who the “they” are, it does not take the person anywhere because “they” are nobody. “They” are no-person; they are everywhere but nowhere. So when an idea comes to existence to fight against the injustice, the oppressed people would feel themselves as Cervantes’ (2003) Don Quixote who is in a war with the windmills that he believes to be ferocious giants in his delusion. The way Zelo uses the “we” and “they,” however, is different. She turns the “they” into a tangible living body rather than an abstract untouchable, invisible, and almost divine celestial body. Zelo brings them to life, gives them a name and a face; they become knowable; they become visible. They are the root of the problems. They are the obstacles to being liberated.

An important aspect of this study is that it suggests that counter-learning is holistic. In Zelo’s learning none of the pedagogical and epistemological assumptions can be isolated or overlooked; Zelo learns rationally as well as socially, spiritually, and emotionally. Critical learning theories’ epistemologies usually suggest empowering the oppressed by utilizing a critical reasoning and rational discourse. However, Zelo’s empowerment in this study was not rational; it was not an outcome of a deliberate calculation. Sometimes, for example, she felt empowerment from people’s negative

condemnation towards her. At least she felt that people heard her, saw her, and held her in esteem, although they may have simultaneously condemned her.

Reflections on Marcusian Theory and Marcusian Analysis

Although Marcuse and his critical theory were utilized as a framework to conduct a socio-historical macro-analysis of the oppressive context, this study offers additional insights into the Marcusian framework. The most significant insight is his theory's usefulness and particularly its relevance for analyzing the societal context in our contemporary world. Kellner (2005) argues that "in the present conjuncture of global economic crises, terrorism, and a resurgence of U. S. militarism, and growing global movements against corporate capitalism, and war, Marcuse's political and activist version of critical theory is highly relevant to the challenges of the contemporary moment" (p.3). Therefore, Marcuse's activism, his theory and his relentless critique of all forms of oppression and domination might well be an invaluable guide for new emerging activism and oppositional movements against the wide array of dehumanizing oppression and repression.

While Marcuse's theory was not a lens to explore CLUO, during the data analysis some of his concepts related to learning came across, specifically inwardness and distance. These concepts were also recognized by Brookfield (2005) when he claims that Marcuse has much to offer adult learning theory. Distance, for Marcuse, is one of the very crucial ways to expunge the oppressive effects of the dominant ideology which penetrates into our consciousness and makes it possible to deeply internalize the oppression. Zelo, my participant, was left alone a few times by others for various, mostly security reasons. This distancing from common people (natural agents) was also

distancing from their infectious effects because they are the ones carrying out the oppressive discourse. However, each time Zelo came out from this distance and loneliness by negating the oppressive values and norms.

This study, through use of a Marcusean lens, also exposed what makes ideology and oppression so powerful. It revealed that ideology and oppression's roots go deeper, deeper than our reason. Marcuse would say that domination is rooted in our instinctual structure. This is very important because Marcuse wants to focus our attention on our inner space which is beyond reason. When we internalize the oppressive values and norms, basically we allow the external forces (culture and political economy) behind those values to invade our very private space. It is this private space that may enable us to become ourselves. This private space is an inner dimension of our mind that includes very unrefined power of opposition to the status quo and negative thinking. Therefore, this inner space is a combination of both reason and non-reason elements. The loss of this space results in loss of individuality. Marcuse calls this "mimesis: an immediate identification of the individual with his society" (Marcuse, 1964, p. 10). As can be seen here, mimesis is not an adaptation or adjustment for an individual; it is an end of being an independent and free self. It is becoming a type that is desired and defined by the society or status quo. Hence, domination and oppression work well as much as they keep the individual irrational. Because it is irrational, it is hard to dispel it rationally. This implies that much of the adult education theory and practice is based on a fallacy. Adult educators still heavily rely on reason and tend to believe that we can persuade the oppressed that they are oppressed by rationally critiquing the society, although this does not mean elimination of reason at all. What Marcuse tells us is that when oppression is

internalized, it is hard to be examined rationally and critically, because the oppressed no longer feels the oppression as oppressive; in fact, the oppressed attends to oppression mimetically and voluntarily join into his/her own process of domination (Agger, 1988). Utilizing a heavily rational critical-discourse without translating it into a language that the oppressed can rationally understand and emotionally feel is potentially a threat to oppositional spirit (Brookfield, 2005). Therefore adult educators need to attend to translating our rational, critical discourse into a language that communicates to the oppressed in their daily lives. For example the term “comprador aga” meant nothing to Zelo until she translated it into a person (personification) who was very vivid in her mind and in her everyday struggle.

Insights and Suggestions for Adult Education Research, Theory, and Practices

Pertinent to Adult Education Research

By exploring an oppressed Kurdish woman’s counter-learning under an extreme, multi-layered and multi-dimensional oppressive societal context in which her life and her learning occur, this study offered a perspective on the learning of the oppressed, which previously has not been studied. This study shows that focusing on the individual within the cultural and political surroundings, without neglecting the role of subjective and material conditions, provides richly descriptive and invaluable data to understand the adult counter learning under oppression. Factors affecting and sometimes shaping individuals’ learning do not begin in the classroom, though their experiences in the classroom are important. It begins in the cultural realm into which individuals are born.

Therefore, in order to better understand how counter-learning occurs under oppression, it is crucial to understand the material and subjective conditions of the

specific context in which any forms of struggle provide virtually the only way to remain human and humane. By attending to context, ideology and discourse within oppression, researchers can highlight the stories and learning experiences of the oppressed (Foley, 1999). As a result, studies of this nature are needed to examine counter-learning under oppressive and repressive conditions to contribute to creating more egalitarian, more inclusive, and more humanized practices of adult education. This study, by attempting to approach adult counter learning without neglecting socio-cultural and political factors, provides some critical insights into the aspects of adult counter-learning for deeper scrutiny.

In addition, people's narratives in oppressive situations include many clues about their everyday learning which are usually unrecognized and unarticulated. When people narrate these experiences, they reveal some previously unrecognized elements of learning and meaning making. In addition, because people's experiences under extreme oppressive situations are usually suppressed by fear, by shame, and by cultural condemnations, their narrations are full of relatively symbolic and coded ways to express themselves, how they see the world, and how they make meaning. Narrative analysis of this study provided opportunity for me to enter the participant's symbolic and metaphoric ways of voicing herself, which included invaluable data to understand her counter-learning experiences.

Finally, this study approached the participant's narrative from a chronological (life story) perspective. This allowed me see the participant's constructive learning path as well as her ways of deconstruction of the oppressive values, structures, and practices.

Insights Pertinent to Adult Education Learning Theory

This study draws attention to dialectical relationships of adult learning theories. This study suggests that none of the pedagogical and epistemological assumptions and none of the learning theories can be or should be overlooked because they in one way or another contribute to the body of adult learning. In particular, the holistic approach to adult learning appeared to be quite promising in understanding adult learning. Most of adult learning occurs rationally as well as socially, spiritually, and emotionally. This is very crucial for particularly critical learning theories and epistemologies that usually suggest empowering the oppressed by utilizing a critical reasoning and rational discourse. Even though some critical adult educators and revolutionaries (such as Freire, 1970; Gramsci, 1972; and Marcuse, 1968) have touched upon non-rational dimensions' (such as love, hope, fear, and anger) roles in learning and developing consciousness, they neglected to conduct comprehensive analyses of those ways of knowing.

Insight Pertinent to Adult Education Practices

This study also contributed insights relevant to adult education practices. By attending to the individual within oppressive socio-cultural, economic and political contexts, this study revealed that adults' past and present experiences (in the way they internalize the oppression, the way they interpret and make meaning of their lives, the way they choose to struggle, fight, co-opt, or submit) are an essential part of their learning and unlearning framework. These cumulative experiences are the major forces that shape and guide adults' current and future learning. Therefore, adult educators who work with those under oppression need to be aware of these issues and their possible impact on the learners' academic performance. For example, Zelo was interested in

learning the political discourse that she often heard or witnessed being used; and, which she thought would be helpful in many ways for her, such as making meaning out of her experience, putting her vision in a more meaningful framework, and helping her to function. Her needs were simple and practical. Therefore, for example, trying to teach her economy-politics of oppression or globalization would be too abstract and would turn her motivation off. This is not to say that oppressed people require a personalized curriculum; however, perhaps content should be kept in a relevant range with the oppressed people's daily struggle.

This study showed how oppression and its sub-cultures (such as culture of silence, virtue, caretaker, etc.) interoperate to dehumanize the oppressed people through damaging their confidence, transforming them into objects, and destabilizing their emotional and mental abilities. This is the most powerful way of dominating the oppressed. It is a way making the oppressed dependent. Oppression destroys the oppressed people's self-confidence, self-efficacy, and self-image. As a result, in the process of learning showing trust and confidence to the oppressed people's ability and capabilities are crucial. When their collapsed self-confidence is fed by a co-learner or a teacher (who might be seen as knowledge-authority figure at least at the beginning), their motivation and learning will more likely increase. In other words, perhaps adult educators need to look at the beginning process of learning as a healing process of wounds which internally have been bleeding for a long time.

Adult educators should design activities around everyday contradictions of the oppressed people's lives. The activities should also be designed in a way that they can easily be related to the oppressed people's lives, especially to their context within an

historical framework. In addition, the oppressed people have to be given an opportunity to reflect back to those problems. Solutions of the problems in the activities should also be found collaboratively. As Freire (1970) suggests for the solutions a prescription should not be given because any prescription indicates impositions of one's truth on another. In addition, prescribing also reinforces conformity and further replacement of the previous oppressor's image with the new one. Finally, activities and the learning process also should be recognized as tools to help the oppressed to develop an emotional and hopeful worldview.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study adds to the body of knowledge for adult education and answers specific research questions surrounding counter-learning under oppression. However, as is the nature of all qualitative studies, the findings are not generalizable and in this case, reflective of only one participant investigated. As such, more research remains to be completed on this topic.

First, the participant of this study represents a certain demographic profile in relationship to age, socio-economic status, gender, and education. Therefore, further research should replicate this inquiry by using various gender, age, socio-economic status, and education under similar situations to determine if the findings of this study are consistent. Moreover, similar studies also should be conducted in other oppressive cultural settings, such as in the Middle East, South Africa, Central America, and in the North Americas including the USA and Canada. Such studies would offer additional insight into the unique aspects of the counter-learning of oppressed people. Such studies

may also offer additional insight into promoting a global struggle against dehumanizing practices of oppressive cultures and advanced capitalism.

Second, this study showed that oppression creates its own vital components which play crucial roles in determining the oppressed people's social places where their abilities and visions are restricted sometimes beyond their control. Therefore, these components determine how oppressed people's meaning making, learning, and counter-learning can take place. Most studies are guided by their researchers' almost axiomatic assumptions. For example, a humanistic framework stresses the individual's almost unlimited potential for individual growth, autonomy, and capability of making decisions for their own lives (Elias & Merriam, 2005). Moreover, this philosophical view perceives individuals as homogenous; they are different only in terms of their needs and personality, not in their socio-cultural background (Tisdell & Taylor, 2000). It feels good to give some power to the individuals, to empower them against the odds and oppression; however, this goodwill should not create a tendency for overlooking the socio-cultural and political context's undeniable power and role over the individuals. As such, a humanistic approach should not be another layer of oppression over the oppressed by expecting the oppressed to take the responsibility of his/her own life despite the whole system of oppression and repression. For example, an unhappy and oppressed woman who has entered the traditional marriage may not be able to leave her husband due to inadequately developed potential and lack of social support to stand against cultural and traditional norms and values. The woman may not find strength to decide to be autonomous and take responsibility for her own life and others. Therefore, more studies in this area need to be conducted to explore ways to help oppressed people in the process of their liberation and

their counter-learning because our confidence in their “unlimited abilities” provides a small amount of help, but nothing else.

Third, there is a tendency in the literature is to take for granted some general statements by philosophers such as the notion that if there is oppression, there is counter-oppression. This premise, however, has not been given the attention it deserves in the adult education literature due to the tendency mentioned above. However, adult educators still need to study this phenomenon to determine under what conditions, how, and to what intensity opposition takes place, how some individuals counter-learn and choose active involvement in the oppositional (individual and group) activities , and how some individuals counter-learn but choose not to act upon the oppressive conditions. In addition, more work also remains to be done to continually refine the relation between the individuals and the ever-changing socio-historical and political conditions.

Finally, learning is one of the most multifaceted, ambiguous, and contested human activities and it manifests itself in various forms (Foley, 1999). Counter-learning is one of them. It is a form of empowering learning. It is a type of learning that provides support (albeit a little) to the historical hope of the possibility of emancipatory learning. This study revealed many faces of this specific learning. This study revealed that many specific topics need explicit attention to better understand the counter-learning under oppression. One of them, for example, is the role of acquisition and development of an oppositional discourse and language in the process of counter-learning. This includes concept learning, both tangible and abstract. Another topic which needs to be studied is multi consciousness, such as gender consciousness, ethnic consciousness, and political consciousness. The way these are developed and utilized is promising for enlightening

the nature of counter-learning. Finally, more cross-discipline study needs to be done to enhance our understanding of the process of problematizing, politicizing and negating during a counter-learning process. These studies, of course, need to pay special attention not to neglect the relation between this process and other mental, emotional, and cognitive dynamics.

Epilogue

In one of his first articles, Mezirow (1978) mentions a Greek mythological character, Sisyphus, whose punishment by the gods was to push a boulder forever to the top of a mountain. When Sisyphus would reach the top of the mountain, the boulder would roll down again and again. Mezirow calls our attention to these types of absurdities in adults' lives in which adults without questioning try to complete the socially constructed tasks. Besides these absurdities in adult's lives, this study calls our attention to injustices and oppression in adults' lives which another Greek character, Prometheus cannot stand. The Greek gods possess fire and enjoy the heat whereas the mortals (people) shiver in the cold winter nights. Prometheus steals the fire from the gods and gives it to people hidden inside a fennel-stalk. However, Prometheus is captured and punished to be tied to a pole on a mountain where an eagle would eat his heart (or liver). The eagle, however, never could consume his heart because his heart is ever-regenerating.

For Mezirow (1978), adults' lives include absurdities, challenges, and dilemmas for which previously learned, culturally preformed and given ways of resolving appear to be ineffective. To the degree to which adults are able to reassess their assumptions and meaning perspectives, and find another way of coping with these challenges, they transform. For this study, by engaging counter-learning the oppressed adults not only realize the absurdity of being a conscious or unconscious agent of oppressive cultural and ideological structure, but also realize their unhappiness within the given reality. They realize that they are being dehumanized through oppressive and repressive practices; they are being dehumanized through their everyday, seemingly innocent and natural practices.

Consciously or unconsciously they engage with counter-learning and problematize their everyday problems, politicize them, and demand a structural change for a just world.

They transform and want to transform the world as well. They want to save Sisyphus too because they come to know that they cannot be free without saving those who suffer by oppression. They work to end Sisyphus' suffering by not dictating what to do. They try to do so by offering their insights to work together to change the system so that no one, even the gods, has the power to punish one as Sisyphus was punished.

Because their certain abilities were historically, systematically, and culturally disabled through oppression, the oppressed people have come to believe that they do not know anything and they are unable to learn. However, learning is one of the most vital ways of survival for the oppressed, but they are mostly not aware. For example, there is ample evidence that they have learned to learn quickly, otherwise they would not survive. However, they hardly ever get a chance to critically and whole-bodily reflect on their learning experience. When they do, the process of counter-learning begins. Hence, their counter-learning is response to oppression.

Counter-learning is a way of rational, emotional, lingual, moral, and behavioral resistance to dehumanization on both individual and societal levels. It is a way of unlearning in which the oppressed comes to subsume and replace the old inflicted ideological oppressive knowledge that was learned unwittingly. It is a way of becoming. It is a way of developing a new more independent identity, a whole person, an individual who builds community. It is empowering and liberating. It is a way of reclaiming humanity. Finally, it is a way of remaining humane.

Remaining humane sometimes requires taking a risk to join a public demonstration to condemn the ongoing war or in another situation to demand justice for those whom you have never met and will never meet because they disappeared at the hands of the security forces. In an oppressive society security forces are the eagle eating humanity's ever-generating heart. Even though some might interpret this ever-regeneration as an eternal punishment, I interpret it as being immortal; being a source of hope which will never stop pumping blood. As long as the heart regenerates itself, hope will be alive. As long as there is oppression, there will always be people who would stand up against injustices and demand fundamental changes.

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Appendix

RECRUITMENT LETTER

My name is Ilhan Kucukaydin and I am a doctoral candidate at Penn State University—Harrisburg. As part of my course work at Penn State, I am conducting a research study that explores how Turkish adults learn from their daily experiences.

To be in this study you need to be between the ages of 20 and 60. Your participation in this study is voluntary, so you do not have to participate if you don't want to. If you choose to volunteer for the study, you do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer, or discuss any topics that you prefer not to. You can also end your participation in the study at any time by just letting me know.

If you decide to be in the study, you will be asked to participate in two interviews with me that will last approximately 1-2 hours each. You will also be asked to bring some pieces of art, prose, or other cultural artifacts that are personally meaningful to your sense of self and representing your learning. Discussion of these items will provide an opportunity for deeper exploration into their relevance and significance to you. Interviews will be conducted during a 4-month time period (November 2006- February 2007), and at a time that is convenient for you. The interviews will be tape recorded (audio only). The only people who will listen to the tapes are me, my advisor (who is on the faculty at Penn State-Harrisburg; however, no one will know your identity except for me. The tapes and typed transcripts will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in my home and will be destroyed 3 year after this study is concluded. If the research is published, no information will be written that will identify you.

There are no risks to participating in this study; however you may feel slight discomfort at times since I will be asking you a few questions about yourself, your relationships, and your experiences in life.

If you participate in this study, you might deepen your understandings of how you make meaning of your life and how you learn. You would also be assisting me in my effort to contribute to adult education body of knowledge.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. If you would like to volunteer to be interviewed, or if you have any questions about participating, please contact me (Ilhan Kucukaydin) at (717) 566 3157, or via email at iuk2@psu.edu. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Daniele D. Flannery at (717)948-6219, or ddf3@psu.edu. Thank you for your time and your consideration of this request.

Vita

Ilhan Kucukaydin

Education: Pennsylvania State University, D. Ed., Adult Education, 2008
University of Houston, Master of Art in Instructional Design, 2000
Aegean University, Bachelor of Science in Psychology, 1987

Professional Experience: Database Administrator/Webmaster, School of Behavioral Sciences and Education - Penn State University-Harrisburg

Multimedia Specialist, Pangaea Multimedia Communication Corporation, Boston, MA.

Webmaster for Journal of Classroom Interaction

Philosophy Teacher, Ankara, Turkey

Presentations: *Transformative Learning of a Kurdish Woman.* Seventh International Transformative Learning Conference, Albuquerque, New Mexico, October, 2007

A Database Driven Online Application: Quality of Writing. National Writing Project – Urban Sites Network Conference, Washington, DC., April, 2007.

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