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Demonstrating Dance: Women's Mobilization of Horon as Protest in Turkey

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Demonstrating Dance:

Women's Mobilization of *Horon* as Protest in Turkey

A dissertation completed in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Philosophy in Culture and Performance

by

Sevi Bayraktar

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Women's Mobilization of *Horon* as Protest in Turkey

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Doctor of Philosophy in Culture and Performance

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor Anurima Banerji, Co-Chair

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Choreographing politics

My dissertation examines how activists mobilize folk dance as a political force in contemporary Turkey. Over the last decade, the prevailing Turkish government has turned authoritarian and attempted to regulate practices of everyday life by marginalizing large segments of the Turkish population, particularly women. This research explores how dissenters who self-identify as women from diverse ethnic, economic, and political backgrounds use folk dance as a tool for resistance against the coercive policies of the state. I argue that by reconfiguring Turkey's folk dance heritage for their current political aims and by re-choreographing national space in opposition to the official state apparatus, activist women reclaim the public sphere and subvert hegemonic discourses about Turkish national identity, neoliberal economic development, and conventional conceptions of the female body.

The dissertation centers *horon,* a popular dance rooted in the eastern Black Sea region and widespread across the country. In my investigation of this dance, I combine multiple methodologies, including choreographic analysis, ethnographic inquiry, archival investigation, discourse analysis, and media research. This interdisciplinary perspective allows me to elucidate how dissenting women transmit and transform standardized choreographies of the dance by creating novel movement vocabularies, making stylistic innovations, and thereby composing their own narrations of history and culture, which are otherwise unregistered in the mainstream political discourse in Turkey. The project demonstrates how aesthetic activity produces changes in society through the staging of new choreographic acts in public space.

Across the dissertation chapters, I explore anti-government protests, environmental movements, and cultural rights activism in Turkey and move between bodily, urban, (trans) regional, and national scales of analyses. Each chapter introduces and conceptualizes a dance technique as a set of choreographic tactics performed in these protests. Chapter One questions the authenticity and ownership claims of horon as a Turkish cultural heritage and examines its institutionalization as a national folk dance genre. Chapter Two looks into how dissenters scatter in Istanbul as a choreography of survival, in response to the state's use of violence in centralized public spaces. Dance collectives enable activist to create smaller-scale assemblies when they are deprived of the right to public assembly. Chapter Three analyzes improvised collective movement practices of urban protesters, choreographed to enhance solidarity and mitigate cultural, gender, and political differences, which are typically reinforced by the institutionalized modes of horon. Chapter Four brings together political symbols and posters, song lyrics, and movement analysis to detail how urban and rural activists compose horon choreographies between Istanbul and the Black Sea region to effectively register the dance as a political agitation.

In this work, I explored a relationship between dance and political efficacy in times of vulnerability and political crisis, and analyzed how women's improvised interactions in folk dance circles help create pedagogic spaces in which activists learn from and mentor each other during political action. This study is the first critical project to engage with folk dance as an explicitly political force in Turkey, particularly those forms mobilized by dissenters. Most importantly, it documents how activist women speak, move, and act in solidarity to expose and persistently challenge the politics of conflict and state violence. I seek to pay tribute to, and even further inspire, the enduring struggle of women in Turkey and beyond.

The dissertation of Sevi Bayraktar is approved.

Can Salih Açıksöz

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2019

This dissertation is dedicated to “Academics for Peace” of Turkey.

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First and foremost, I want to thank all the activist women in Turkey, whose courage and determination have inspired and continue to inspire me. To me, documenting their relentless struggle to create an egalitarian, progressive, and democratic society is the most important achievement of this study. Many activists offered me their trust and shared their perspectives, histories, and experiences about women's politics in Turkey. Many of my research participants were or have become friends in time, and I have been fortunate to meet them. I prefer not to mention names here as I have chosen to anonymize all my research participants, but those of you who read this certainly know that my thanks are addressed to you. I will always be proud of knowing you and learning from you.

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2017 "Choreographies of Resistance in Istanbul-Gezi Park Movement." In *Performance Art in the Public Sphere*. Edited by Ana Pais, 95-107. Lisbon: Orfeu Negro.

2014 "Education of Mothers in Turkey: Discourses on Maternal Propriety and Neo-Liberal Body Politics on Motherhood." In *Motherhood in the Age of Neoliberalism*. Edited by Melinda Vandelbend Giles, 223-237. Brandford, ON: Demeter Press.

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Demonstrating Dance:
Women's Mobilization of *Horon* as Protest in Turkey
Sevi Bayraktar

Dissertation Introduction

July 6, 2017

Istanbul

Today, I am excited to join Adalet Yürüyüşü*, the March for Justice, in its twenty-first day in Yalova, a city located in the thirty-five miles southeast of Istanbul. It is the last stop of the march which started in Ankara, the capital of Turkey, and was planned to end in Istanbul, the financial and cultural center. It was organized by the main opposition, the Republican People's Party (CHP), against recent detentions and imprisonment of their MPs by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). Hundreds of thousands of people participated in the demonstration, including politicians from the pro-Kurdish opposition party, Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP); bar associations; non-governmental organizations; environmental initiatives; grassroots groups; and labor movements. Independent feminists and women's organizations join the march today to commemorate Pippa Bacca, an international performance artist known as the "peace bride," who was raped and killed in Yalova by a driver who offered her a ride.*[1]

After changing three buses, I arrive in Dilovası, a small town on the way to Yalova, and meet my friends in the feminist group during the lunch break of the march. A live band composed of two musicians and a singer perform folk tunes, and I dance together with other activists. The band plays horon *music from the northeastern Black Sea region of Turkey; a person who is familiar with the dance style leads our semi-circle as we replicate her steps. Then, the band plays Kurdish* halay *tunes from southeast Turkey and we keep dancing. I am*

[1] Known as Pippa Bacca, Guiseppa Pasqualino di Marineo was on tour to promote world peace symbolically wearing a wedding dress and hitchhiking from Milan to Jerusalem—until she was killed in Gebze, Yalova, in 2008 (Povoledo 2008).

experienced in these two types of dance because they are mostly deployed in protests performed against the government in the city. However, when the musicians play a specific folk tune for a folk dance called ellik *from Sivas in east Turkey, I do not join the group because the dance seems complicated to me as I have not seen it in other protests. Finally, the band plays a* semah *tune, a ritual performance of* Alevi*, an unorthodox Islamic sect in Turkey. This music often creates a heated debate because some activists consider Alevi music and dance as signifiers of their marginalized identity and decide to perform it in political movements, but others often disagree with this approach by arguing that semah is a form of prayer and cannot be performed in public for political purposes. A similar discussion occurs in this event: While some dissenters perform to the tune, others get angry with the band, reminding them of its ritual value, and urge the band members not to include it in their repertoire of folk dance.*

Once the lunch break is over, we head off. The highway is closed in the direction of Istanbul, but we see and interact from a distance with people in the cars coming from the city. Some drivers indicate their support, while some protest the demonstration by honking their horn angrily, swearing, or threatening the marchers. The weather is hot, and it feels even warmer on the highway. On both sides of the road the police are standing in their brand-new uniforms in beige and green colors. The police vehicles are ready to attack, particularly in those locations where the AKP supporters are waiting for the group to approach. As we move forward, I see different groups wait for us on the side of the road, and I make sure to note the different symbols gestured by various people's hands and fingers: the supporters of ultra-nationalist and right-wing Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) perform their "wolf" symbol alongside the AKP followers doing the "Rabia" symbol, with four

fingers aligned.[2] *Besides these two groups, there are also other raised hands, belonging to the people working in this industrial hinterland of Istanbul. These workers, mostly supporters of the HDP, are not able to join the procession, yet show their support by standing along the marching route and making peace signs with their hands. I know where I can be more cautious and where I can be more relaxed by assessing the hand gestures in the space behind the police corridor. We walk quite fast without stopping anywhere until we reach the place where the demonstrators plan to spend the night. When we arrive, folk tunes are played once again, this time with the accompaniment of* davul *and* zurna*, the drum and the shrill pipe, the most common instruments used in the Turkish folk dance. Activists begin dancing in smaller groups, trying to relax before they return to the burning highway tomorrow.*

Figure 1.1: Activists dancing during the March for Justice.
Yalova, 6.7.2017. *Still from video.*

[2] The finger gesture known as "Rabia" is invented by the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in 2013 to refer the political motto of his Justice and Development Party: "one nation, one state, one homeland, and one flag." The sign is also used by pro-Morsi protesters during demonstrations in Egypt's Rabia al-Adawiya Square in 2013 (Perlmutter 2013).

Over the last decade, Turkey's prevailing government model, uniting Islam and capitalism, turned into an authoritarian regime and attempted to regulate practices of everyday life by marginalizing large segments of the Turkish population, particularly women. Consequently, women have become preeminent actors in Turkey's contemporary protest movements. This dissertation explores how women from diverse ethnic, economic, and political backgrounds recontextualize folk dance, as a mode of resistance through which to achieve political momentum in Turkey. I particularly focus on horon, a social dance rooted in the northeastern Black Sea region of Turkey and popular across the country. I argue that by reconfiguring Turkey's folk dance heritage for their contemporary political aims and by re-choreographing national space in opposition to the official state apparatus, dissenting women reclaim the public sphere and subvert hegemonic discourses about Turkish national identity, neoliberal economic development, and conceptions of the female body.

In this Introduction, I will primarily provide an overview of this project and then detail each aspect in consecutive sections. In these sub-sections, I will first explain the relevant background on Turkish history and politics, and then, discuss about the institutionalization process of horon by referring to a literature on folk dance in Turkey, including historical and empirical data, such as the change of the dance names and discussions of the repertoire-building. Third, I will elucidate my theoretical approach by building on scholarship in dance studies, anthropology, and political philosophy. Fourth, I will explain the combined methodology that I used in this research, and finally, I will give a brief summary of my chapters.

Throughout the dissertation, I mainly ask, how do progressive women in Turkey mobilize folk dance in protest and create public assembly at times of political crisis and vulnerability? Subjects of this research are progressives who self-identify as women and citizens of Turkey from various political, economic, social, and cultural backgrounds. The

majority of research participants are progressive secular Muslim women in addition to women from LGBTQI+ organizations and ethnic and religious minority groups including the Kurdish, the Roma, the Hemşin, the Laz, the Pontian, the Georgian, and the Alevi, who are opposing the state regime. I use "activists," "activist women," and "dissenting women" throughout this study as a shorthand to refer to this grouping of different women who are using dance for protest purposes against the Turkish government.

Dance is a unique prism through which to understand the impacts of public political opposition in Turkey. My project elucidates the significance of dance for grasping a broad range of social and political phenomena, and demonstrates how aesthetic activity produces changes in society through the staging of new choreographic acts and tactics in public space. Dance and choreography have been formative in shaping notions of modernity, gender morality, citizenship, and nationhood throughout the twentieth century, not only in Turkey and the Middle East,[3] but also globally, in Africa,[4] Asia,[5] Europe,[6] and in the Americas.[7] Many dance scholars have shown that choreography reflects the cultural and political structures of the social systems they are examining, and that it has variously responded to, reproduced, or interrogated those structures. Building on this literature, I address choreography as both an object of analysis in the field of dance and as a heuristic that allows for the theorization of non-dance bodily acts as "choreographic" (Foster 1995, 1998). Such a treatment of choreography allows me to examine the strategic maneuvers of the state and

[3] See Öztürkmen 1998, 2002; Potuoğlu-Cook 2006; Shay 2002, 2006; Van Dobben 2008; Van Nieuwkerk 1998.

[4] See Comaroff 1985; Castaldi 2006; Kringelbach 2013.

[5] See O'Shea 2007; Shapiro-Phim 2008; Wilcox 2012.

[6] See Cowen 1990; Felfoldi 1999; Giersdorf 2013.

[7] See Burt 2007; Daly 1995; Novack 1990; Rosa 2015; Savigliano 1995.

selected corporeal decisions of activist women in terms of how it reflects their social, cultural, and political identities.[8]

I explore five choreographic techniques, devoting a chapter to examine and elaborate each of them in my dissertation. I start by investigating "choreographies of dispersal" as a concept that I develop to underscore both survival tactics of dissenters and violent maneuvers of the state forces in urban Turkey. While the police aim to disperse activist events in central areas of Istanbul, such as Taksim Square, the iconic national center of grassroots activism, dissenting women disperse towards the peripheries to continue their political activities, in an attempt to keep working outside direct scrutiny of the authorities. In a scattered protest-scape, they rehearse alternative forms of public assembly through their folk dance collectives temporarily created at the moment of action. In addition, I explore how "precision" is employed in institutional folk dance education in Turkey. By visiting folk dance associations, state conservatories, private studios, and grassroots organizers in both Istanbul and the Black Sea region, I demonstrate how the horon choreography is differentially divided into units and taught through an emphasis on precise attitudes that are designed to make the dance look more "authentic." Such precise choreography serves to differentiate and separate ethnic and cultural communities, as their miniscule differences in dance take on significance for supposedly reflecting their identitarian differences. I further scrutinize how these differences are transformed by activists via what I call "techniques of imprecision." My conceptualization of imprecision refers to choreographic manipulations of the institutionalized dance techniques by activist women and LGBTQI+, who aim to establish political alliances and to negotiate their power both within and across dissenting movements

[8] My approach to identity is similar to that of Joan Scott (1991), who argues that identities as well as subjects are constituted through experience that is conditioned within a culture and represents particular ways of seeing in that culture. She prioritizes visibility of the experience as a way to critique power provincially. I also examine how folk dance experience of activists in Turkey helps them negotiate gender, ethnic, and political identities.

in public spaces. I also introduce the concept of "techniques of accentuation," which I use to analyze activist women's hyperbolic execution of supposedly "feminine" movements and attitudes in dance as a critique against the heteropatriarchal practices among leftist revolutionary groups. Lastly, I analyze "bricolage" as another technique used in horon performances in rural and urban protests. I apply the term as in the arts to argue that by bringing together different materials from a variety of sources such as flyers, photographs, lyrics, movements, and traditional props in addition to banners and political signs, activists disorient the police and provide the audience with a fresh perspective on the political cause. These five techniques can be also considered as the sets of choreographic tactics which are alternatively applied during protests in order to improve the ability of improvisation under the rapidly changing circumstances and against the hardships of the political action.

By deploying folk styles, activist women draw on a recognizable repertoire of dances that were regulated and stabilized by state elites during the first decades following the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Folk dances were popularized in the big cities after waves of rural migration to urban areas in the 1950s and used as political instruments during the workers' strikes in the 1960s—yet those folk dance groups were mostly composed of male workers who were familiar with particular dances because of their place of origin. In the 1970s, leftist revolutionary organizations professionally used folk dances as a means of communication with rural migrant workers to propagate their political causes. These dances were largely institutionalized in 1975 with the establishment of the Turkish Music State Conservatory involving pivotal folk music and dance departments. Unlike the trained and disciplined collective body monolithically represented by the 1970s' left-leaning organizations, grassroots movements in the 2000s have used folk dancing to claim political, ethnic, sexual, and gender identities and constitute new subject positions in public space. In the late 1990s, folk dance has been used for multiple purposes by grassroots groups

advocating social justice and human rights for ethnic and religious minorities, low-income populations, women, and LGBTQI+ individuals; they have used dance to blockade the police, spread courage among fellow activists to stand up to an authoritarian regime, learn about the cultural practices of suppressed ethnic groups, and transform their emotions into forms of public and political mobilization by generating and circulating anger, mourning, and joy through their performance of dance. Dissenters demand pluralistic societies by multiplying folk dance styles and transforming the unifying dancing body that was presented by both nationalist and leftist political projects of earlier decades. This ethnographic study zooms in this contemporary era of folk dance and shows capacities of the dissenting choreographies as social and political action.

I organize my investigation by primarily detailing one of these choreographies: the horon dance and its various styles. The horon types which I address are mainly those pervasively used by contemporary activists in urban and rural protests. I also mention the halay, another social dance widespread in the Kurdish towns of eastern and southeastern Turkey. Although the halay has been performed in political demonstrations since the 1990s, halay dancers have been marginalized following the closure of the "peace process" (2009-2014) between the Turkish state and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) that has fought for political recognition in Turkey since the 1980s. Consequently, horon styles have come to be even more widespread during demonstrations in the western cities of Turkey.

Turkish folklore researchers and scholars register folk dances of ethnic communities such as the halay and horon and dances of minority religions such as the semah of the Alevi as Turkish folk dance in opposition to concert dances such as ballet, or dances associated with popular entertainment, such as belly dancing (And 1964, 1976; Ataman 1975). Horon is typically danced in circles, semi-circles, and lines in traditional contexts. Although participants align their bodies in various ways, the organization of the dance is called by its

practitioners “horon halkası” (“horon circle”). In this study, I also use “horon circle” as a generic term to define any horon collective unless the particular arrangement of the dancers needs to be explained for my analysis. Moreover, if dancers join an ongoing horon performance, they define their participation as “getting in the circle,” by taking the hands of two other dancers and adjusting the step pattern and pace as the dance continues. If they leave before the dance ends, activists should be “getting out of the circle” by slightly stepping back and uniting the hands of the dancers on either side. In a horon circle, dancers typically hold hands and extend their arms forward in straight lines, often at the shoulder level. When they bring their arms down, their shoulders sway back and forth as they twist their torsos. They pull their knees backward, creating a bouncing gesture, and step on the right and left foot alternately, tapping the ground and effecting a percussive sound. The leader improvises movement sequences. When it is an open circle, the leader may hold a prop such as a banner or a handkerchief; but, in a close circle, it is hard to differentiate the leader from the followers. The leader determines the pace and the energy, typically with the aim of creating maximum joy among the group members and pleasing the audience with their harmony and synchronization, for which performers are expected to be focused and attentive while dancing. Leadership is a temporary position and ideally anyone can claim it, but the elders are generally expected to take the leading role in traditional settings, whereas competent dancers are often expected to guide the group during protests. Therefore, the circle motif, while representing equality and solidarity among group members, also works with notions of hierarchy, rendering it a complex space. Followers are expected to be proactive in entering and exiting the dance circle and encourage each other by shouting cries that resemble the neighing of a horse, “eiu ihihihuuu!” Their cries ideally energize the crowd and invite participation. In the mountainous landscape of the Black Sea region, where the houses are scattered and nature can be wild, people use similar cries to point out their location and call

each other. The musician is positioned at the center of the horon circle to accompany the dancers; and they all may continue performing for many hours until everyone is exhausted.

My examination of horon in Turkey involves not only these traditional iterations of the dance but also, and mainly, its performances in contemporary social movements, including political movements such as the Presidential Referendum rallies in 2017; feminist and queer movements such as Women's Day and LGBTQI+ Pride marches in 2016 and 2017; and environmental justice movements such as the protests against the "Green Road" highway construction and the Cerattepe mining project. As I move between Istanbul and Black Sea rurality, I invite the reader to join my journey between these two locations. My movement in the dissertation between the urban and the rural also aligns with the movement of many activists who reproduce horon as a performance of dissent. I argue that through their immediate political actions, flyers, poster announcements, solidarity demonstrations, and dance collectives, protesters transform a traditional genre into a resistance dance. Each chapter reveals different aspects of this transformation by scrutinizing how dancing bodies perform and challenge the narratives of history and culture in urban, national, and transregional contexts. I thus consider multiple scales of action across my chapters such as bodily scale, community scale, city scale, regional scale, and national scale.

Geographer Neil Smith describes "scales" as "building blocks of spatialized politics" (1992, 66) which are not given but produced under specific social and geographical conditions. Smith builds on Henri Lefebvre's idea of "space" (1991) which is a social and political product of people who shape it through their everyday activities. Lefebvre argues that while the capitalist system creates its space as a system of knowledge in which the society operates, individuals who live in this spatial order also have agency to reproduce it. Smith's idea of scales draws on this conceptualization of the production of space and demonstrates how an abstracted multi-scalar spatial production serves to reproduce

inequalities in the developmentalist discourse, but also how it can be used to analyze capital and its subjects in different spatial formations. Building on Smith's argument, I also found that different scales which are nested and interlaced work together in important ways.

I further extend on the idea of scale to define political assemblies in different sizes. The great scale public assemblies such as social uprisings can be composed of hundreds of thousands of people in Turkey, and the political opposition usually aims to create such large-scale meetings against the dominant power. However, people are often able to create medium-scale assemblies, which are public political gatherings performed as marches, sit-ins, and "press statements."[9] The third scale of assembly refers even smaller groupings such as folk dance collectives as I examine in this dissertation. I call this last category "minor assemblies" or "peripheral assemblies," which can be performed by a few people. These minor assemblies often compose within larger ones, but they also move independently; particularly when political public gatherings are banned, these peripheral formations still mobilize the audience. To analyze different scales regarding their spatial qualities and magnitudes, I integrate multiple methodologies in my research including choreographic analysis, ethnographic inquiry, archival investigation, discourse analysis, and media research. Such an interdisciplinary perspective provides me with the ability to move analytically along and in between different organizations of bodies on a variety of scales.

My research differs from the existing literature on the horon in Turkey in many ways. First of all, Istanbul Technical University State Conservatory's Folk Dance Department has one of the most comprehensive archives on folk dance research because it has a database of B.A. and M.A. students' final projects and theses. However, among several projects on the

[9] In her comprehensive research where she examines the social movement repertoire of Turkey in the 2000s, political scientist Ayşen Uysal finds that the vast majority of protests in Turkey are in the form of "press statements" which are often accompanied by marching and sometimes by sit-ins (2017, 184-185). She explains how "press statement" has been "invented" as a form of protest in the 1990s: According to the Code 2911, "press statements" did not require permission prior the event; thus activists could defend themselves in the court saying that they were not demonstrating but reading a press statement, and they were acquitted (187).

"horon," the majority of those limit their analyses to Trabzon dances. I found a few theses on Hemşin-style but none on Laz horons. These studies often refer to the Turkish origins of the dance and prove their claim by making analogies between the pastoral Turkish life style and horon movements (Kemhacıoğlu 2010, 22). These studies register, code, and analyze the dance without referring to any explicit political context. Some categorize the dance according to tempo and movement qualities (E. Gül 2010; Özarslan 1995; Yahyaoğlu 2009), while others make distinctions based on whether they are danced in a "high" or "low altitude," mountainous or littoral, Black Sea region (Kemhacıoğlu 2010). A folk dance teacher in Istanbul, Egemen Köseoğlu (1994), claims that horon culture is disappearing due to urbanization and migration from the countryside to the city. His study examines "horons of Çamlıhemşin," a town in Rize province, and avoids developing a comparative perspective by differentiating Hemşin and Laz horons in this area. In fact, musicologists and folklorists often categorize and analyze eastern Black Sea horons based on three provinces: Trabzon, Rize, and Artvin, the major cities of the eastern Black Sea. Similar to Köseoğlu, other Turkish researchers also centralize cities rather than ethnic communities in their examinations of horon since the early Republic (Saygun 1937; Ataman 1975; Cihanoğlu 2004). Other folk dance researchers focus on one horon style as the prototype of the Black Sea, such as Akçaabat or Hemşin style (Gedikoğlu 2012; Topaloğlu 2005). These studies also fail to include a reference to non-Turkish words in horon performances; however, I noted vocabulary from Laz, Hemşin, Georgian, and Greek languages are used particularly during the singing segment of the horon and in the commands that the leader uses to change the movement sequence.

Building on this literature, my work fills a significant gap in horon research for many reasons. Primarily, this is the first critical project to engage with folk dance as an explicitly political force in Turkey, especially with the forms instrumentalized by activist women in the

public sphere. It is also the first comparative study of the various ethnic stylings of horon in Turkish and English scholarship including Hemşin and Laz horon styles. Moreover, unlike the studies mentioned above, I have registered and used local terminology to define and describe the horon, involving both Turkish and non-Turkish vocabulary, and referring to its practitioners' understanding and conceptualization of the dance to create my categories of analysis. By examining re-contextualizations of the horon to generate new political tools, which are built on historically legible techniques, my dissertation speaks directly to the ongoing struggle of progressive women against the policies of the authoritarian Turkish state and reveals non-violent alternatives to the politics of war and violence in areas of conflict.

Turkish Politics and History

The Turkish Republic was formed succeeding the Ottoman Empire in 1923 and differentiated itself from the Empire through its emphasis on modern and secular politics.[10] The sultanate had to be abolished in 1924 to consolidate single-party rule under Mustafa Kemal's Republican People's Party (CHP) until the multi-party period in the 1950s. Between 1960 and 1980, Turkey experienced three breakdowns of its parliamentary regime, all of which critically wounded its democracy. Among the military juntas which took political power, the 1980 intervention was particularly significant because not only did the military outlaw all political parties until 1983 and put hundreds of thousands of people in prison, but it also created groundbreaking economic and political projects by implementing liberalism and free-market economy against the previous welfare state model and promoting Islam against left-wing political tendencies that arose in the 1970s (Günay-Erkol and Şenol-Sert 2017;

[10] Amy Singer argues that despite such Republicanist efforts to impose a rupture between the Ottoman imperial past and the Turkish republican present, Ottoman legacies have remained at administrative and social levels, such as the central role of private philanthropy "as a vehicle for shaping culture and society" (2011, 557). Similarly, in *Becoming Turkish* (2011), Hale Yılmaz scrutinizes the first two decades of the Turkish Republic and demonstrates the uneven and incomplete character of the nationalist reforms, particularly those requiring change in the dress codes, the language, and the national holidays.

Karacan 2016). For example, graduates of *Imam Hatip* high-schools, which are vocational schools to train government-employed *imam*s (leaders of worship in local mosques) had gained the right of entry to all university departments, which increased the number of students in these institutions. Despite religiosity was fostered against leftist politics, the military issued memorandums in 1997 and 2007 to "warn" elected leaders about religious extremism, one of whom was the current Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. After the coup, the emerging political model aimed to bridge liberalism and Islam, which some scholars conceptualized as "Islamic liberalism" (Tuğal 2016) and others defined as just a new phase of "nationalist populism" in Turkey (Bora and Canefe 2002, 660-662). This model was supported by the "neo-Ottomanist" notions of multiculturalism (Taşpınar 2008, 15), which was often expressed in culture and arts aligned with a nostalgic reenactment of the Ottoman history and traditions (Çınar 2001; Karaosmanoğlu 2010).

The Ottoman Empire had been a dominant power in the Middle East, and ruled over an area adjoining the Mediterranean and Black Seas, comprising of modern-day Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Albania, Moldovia, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, and Israel/Palestine. It had created a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, in which different populations, such as Turks, Kurds, Arabs, Armenians, and Greeks formed a composite culture. The Ottoman nation system, which divided the Ottoman population into religious groups called *millets*, shaped the dominant understandings of Turkishness and nationalism and continued to be influential in the early decades of the Turkish Republic.

The millet system was a legal and economic framework which provided religious communities with a degree of autonomy in spiritual as well as certain administrative and judicial matters. The head of each millet, assisted by a council composed of clerical and lay members, was in charge of its administration. Christians and Jews could thus maintain their communal identities and often important social positions in the economic and social life of

the Ottoman Empire. However, because these communities were dependent on the Ottoman Sultan, their position was precarious (Hourani 1947, 20-21). Due to high taxes imposed on non-Muslim communities and increased Turkish nationalism among the ruling elites of the Empire, as well as a new wave of nation-state formations in the Middle East and the Balkans beginning from the late nineteenth century, there was a continuous process of conversion to Islam in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[11]

During the subsequent establishment of the democratic republic, the emergent Turkish regime sought to create a homogeneous nation, highlighting specific religious (Sunni Muslim) and ethnic (Turk) values as the distinguishing characteristics of the Turkish nation. This type of nationalism became "a fundamental principle of political organizations under the leadership of bureaucratic elites according to the model of a nation state" (Karpat 1973, 116) and consisted of the Turkish nation as an imagined ethnic community (Anderson 1983; Çağaptay 2006; Keyder 2003; Özyürek 2007). As the ethnic identity of Turkishness became constitutive for the republic, Turkish was considered its only official language, which was made into law through the "language revolution" in 1928, with the adoption of a new Latin alphabet in literary education by the National Assembly (Chapin Metz 1995). The language revolution was followed by a "Turkification" process, requiring the change of all non-Turkish names such as the names of cities, streets, landscapes including valleys, plateaus, and rivers as well as non-Turkish names of folk dances, including horon styles.

A close view of the process of changing dance names would be exemplary to analyzing certain problems of "Turkification" regarding folk dances, and particularly the

[11] In his essay on Islamicized Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, Turkish historian Selim Deringil mentions the great impact of the Ottomon-Russian war in 1877-1897. After the defeat, the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamit and state elites were afraid that the last pieces of land left in Anatolia would be given to Armenians who became the last non-Muslim minority in Ottoman Empire who had not yet claimed their status as a nation-state. This fear resulted in massacres of Armenian populations in different parts of Anatolia in the 1880s and 90s. Based on Ottoman records, Deringil shows that some Armenian villages converted to Islam in order to avoid massacres against non-Muslims, but this created confusion among the Ottoman administrators who discussed whether to recognize these as "real" conversions (Deringil 2015, 120-121).

horon. While non-Turkish horon names were replaced by their Turkish equivalents, some of them were not easily translated into Turkish because they included proper nouns. For instance, horon names in the Greek Pontian *Romeika* language are usually based on the town in which the dance prevails. Therefore, horons called, for instance, Tamzara, Seranitsa, Machuka, Kousera and Togialidikon, refer to the former names of Pontian towns located in today's Trabzon province. Horons may also be named based on their pace and tempo in Romeika such as *Tik* (can mean slow or straight), *Omal* (generically means calm), *Di-pat* (two-foot), *Letsi* (slow) and *Letsina* (fast). In some cases, both the name of town and pace are used together, such as Tik Machuka and Omal Kars. Lastly, the lyrics or the genre of the song can inspire the dance names, such as Etere and Patoula (Öztürk 2005, 529-531). Folklore researchers renamed these dances in Turkish, even though they involve proper nouns, with reference to their movement vocabulary, pace, and the political trends of the day. As a result, horons were categorized differently in Turkish, and they were given names such as the "plain horon," "comfortable horon," "hop horon," "lower horon," and "the nation's horon" (Ataman 1976, 71; Gedikoğlu 2012, 31).

Turkification in language was extended to the Turkification of all ethnic and cultural identities in Turkey. Consequently, non-Muslim communities such as Armenians and Greeks were assumed to be non-Turks signifying "unassimilable" citizens, while the Muslim Kurds and Laz were considered "Turks," a term referring to their "assimilability." Although Kurdish and Laz native languages were different from Turkish, they were seen as "teachable" subjects of the nation state. In the following decades, these Islamicized ethnic groups were expected to speak only Turkish to prove themselves as "full" citizens of the state. The Laz used their native *Lazuri* language only "at home" without creating any "trouble" by publicly claiming it whereas Kurds demanded public education in Kurdish language and became the prolonged "enemy" of the Turkish state and "pseudo-citizens" of the Turkish nation (Yeğen

2009). Connecting the ideal of Turkishness with the ideal of the citizenship in Turkey, historian Soner Cağaptay states, "since only Turks are full members of the nation and considered loyal citizens, this perception [of Turkishness] is key to joining the mainstream society of the country. On the other hand, not being regarded as a Turk leads to the stigma of being an imperfect citizen" (2006, 1).[12] Political scientist Füsun Üstel's work on the pedagogy of citizenship from the nineteenth century's Ottoman Empire to modern Turkey demonstrates that the education system has been designed to create patriotic and self-sacrificing citizens from its very foundation to the present what she calls "militant" citizens. Üstel explains that in the early decades of the Turkish state, the "other" was associated with the "enemy" that was constituted as the source of "threat" and "danger;" and after the mid-twentieth century, this "enemy" has come to refer an "internal threat" (2002, 277-278).

Today, the state defines the norm of a good citizenship as "yerli ve milli," or "native and national" (Duran 2017). According to the president Erdoğan, a proper citizen of the Turkish republic should be equipped with both local and national values, the key requisites for privileged access to power and resources in the society. Erdoğan's assessment of "nativeness" defines a model for citizens that privileges right-leaning political subjects with Islamic and conservative values, who can reproduce the government's ideology. Those who

[12] In the twentieth century, the Turkish Republic at its genesis implemented a democratic system combining national cultural heritage with self-proclaimed secular and modern values of the West, yet perpetual conflicts between secular actors and politicized Islamic groups left enduring traces in Turkish society. In European political thought, secularism is often defined as the gradual separation of "almost all aspects of life and thought from religious associations and ecclesiastical direction," a process that developed in England in the sixteenth century with the transfer of political power from the religious arena to the state and legal cases from religious to secular courts (Sommerville 1992, 112-117; Esposito 1995, 20). In Turkey, the Kemalist strategy in the early 1920s legitimized another understanding of secularism which is that the state institutions exclusively control and regulate the space of religion (Çınar 2005; Göle 1997; Korkut and Eslen-Ziya 2018; Navaro-Yashin 2002).

are not aligned with the dominant political discourse are considered "foreign" and even "hostile" subjects, or "internal enemies," of the Turkish state.[13]

In this study, I am using dance to ask who has the right to claim to be "native" and also a "national" of Turkey. Moreover, what are the criteria to link these categories? How does folk dance participate in the reconstitution of hegemonic power and serve to challenge it through the same "authenticity" discourse? I argue that originality claims have rendered some groups more "native" and "national" than others, providing them with a level of privilege to claim "full" citizenship. The same discourse has disqualified others, such as non-Muslim or non-Turkish speaking communities, in their engagement with citizenship.

Mesut Yücebaş (2016) investigates the discourse of "native and national" as the essence of the new national identity under the current AKP government. Yücebaş suggests that an occupational group composed of merchants and craftsmen is the subject of this discourse in the current context. This new citizen, the merchant, Yücebaş argues, is constructed as "entrepreneurial, brave, and traditionalist" as well as an ardent supporter of proper "communal ties" and "social solidarity" under the populist, conservative, and nationalist ideology of the AKP government in power since 2002 (2016, 249). This privileged group of entrepreneurs is often composed of men because the "traditionalist" ideology of this dominant class prevents women from becoming businesspeople due to their assumed gender role, under patriarchy, as housewives and mothers.

Some historical and anthropological accounts of the Mediterranean also support this argument as they refer to merchants as members of an elite class who are mobile and unbounded by geographical and ideological borders (Schreier 2017). Merchants historically occupy a space between inside and outside the nation as they are considered both native and

[13] See Turkish President Erdoğan's recent statement, blaming Boğaziçi University, a top-ranking institution of higher education in Turkey, for "not being national and native enough" to show enough international success (Sputnik 2018).

foreign to the countries in which they conduct business. They can enter private places such as homes, and their interaction with the household members are accepted by a larger public. This kind of freedom of movement attributed to the merchant excludes women who are conventionally associated with the home, an enclosed and limited space. The merchant as a male character free to move inside and outside between various locations is the principally targeted subject of the "native and national" discourse in Turkey. The ideal citizen represented by this notion disregards women's experiences and privileges the participation of men in the national space of politics. Women protesters' contestatory folk dance practice is extremely important in this context, because it serves to challenge hegemonic notions of citizenship, as women cross the boundaries between home and the street, the urban and the rural, the aesthetic and the public spheres, claiming agency by demonstrating dance to express not only their political demands but also their anger, lament, and joy.

Folk Dance Literature and History of Horon in Turkey

My approach to folk dance is informed by the well-known term "invented tradition" of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983), who argue that traditions are often of recent origin and changeable, even if they present themselves as timeless and stable. Raymond Williams' concept of "residual" culture is also helpful to my analyses. Williams demonstrates that dominant culture expresses and verifies certain experiences, meanings, and values as "residual practices" which were formed in the past and are still engaged in the present moment on the basis of traces of previous social formations (1978, 122). For instance, the idea of rural community is predominantly residual in that it lives in dominant constructs of urban society as a fantasy of the exotic. Folk dance is linked to this fantasy by representing a common practice of a "pure," "authentic," and "homogenous" rural culture. Cultural anthropology and dance studies scholars have critiqued such nostalgic approaches to the

"folk" and investigated dynamic relationships between folk performance and its affirmation as well as denial of state power (Buckland 1983; Giersdorf 2013; Öztürkmen 2001; Shay 2002, 2006). Theresa Buckland identified folk dance as an ideological construct developed in the late eighteenth-century due to industrialization and modernity. Buckland argues that among the educated middle class, the "folk" was constituted as referring to the country, as opposed to the town, and it was assumed to be "isolated from modern civilization, closer to Nature, and through oral tradition and geographical stability, closer to the past" (1983, 316). Anthony Shay's *Choreographic Politics* (2002) *and Choreographing Identities* (2006) also illustrated how ethnic identities are represented referring to political contexts in state-sponsored folk dance concerts. Other researchers have examined how folk dances were "invented" as part of the nation-state ideology. For example, Anita Cherian (2009) elucidated how government-sanctioned categories of folk art in India reinforced the ideas of the nation and national development by promoting a particular understanding of culture that is prominent in the foundation of the modern state. Likewise, in her comprehensive study about the institutionalization process of folk dances in Turkey, Arzu Öztürkmen (2001, 2003) traced how People's Houses, the state institutions serving as teacher-training schools and cultural centers in villages in the 1940s and 50s, were the main agencies for collecting and coding the traditions until the mid-twentieth century. Although many of these scholars have critiqued conventional understandings of the "folk" and "folk dance," they have not offered a conceptual alternative, nor did they undertake minute choreographic analysis of such forms. They have thus taken the risk of relocating non-professional practices of folk dance to the space of "traditional culture," assumed to be outside of the modern and the urban. My research builds on this body of literature yet avoids nostalgic and exoticizing approaches towards folk dance, and also fills a critical gap by re-contextualizing folk dance as an urban as well as a rural genre.

My project also adds to feminist scholarship about Turkey and the Middle East by analyzing women's agency to contest the authoritarian politics of the state.[14] Researchers have recently investigated the political revival of folk dances in the Middle East considering the current era of deportation and marginalization.[15] Area studies scholars have examined the role of folk traditions, such as poetry, music, and provincial knowledge in social movements in the context of the Arab Spring (2011-2013).[16] Despite these valuable contributions, gender and agency, particularly how women deploy traditionally-coded performances in political action, are still waiting for further research and analysis.[17] In addition, feminist ethnographers have developed works on mostly professional dancers in the context of the Middle East. These studies show that women performers in cities are directly affected by shifting economic and political conditions. Karin van Nieuwkerk (1998), for example, has conducted historical and ethnographic research on female *raqs-sharqi* dancers in Egypt and the changing cultural and spatial conditions of their performance practices in the late twentieth century. In addition, Öykü Potuoğlu-Cook's ethnography (2006) of the belly-dance community in Istanbul has addressed how urban and "cultural" gentrification has been experienced among dancers working in different parts of the city. In her study on female dancers in Iran, Ida Meftahi (2013) has examined the ways in which women's bodies have provided evidence for competing representations of modernity, urbanity, and Islam, and how

[14] Feminist scholars from Turkey and the Middle East have demonstrated that discourses of tradition, modernity, and nationalism historically invested in women's bodies as assumed symbols of political and cultural values (Abu-Lughod 1998; Baron 2005; Kandiyoti 1996; Najmabadi 2005; Sirman 2002, 2005; Tekeli 1995).

[15] See Karakeçili 2008; Kaschl 2003; Nyberg 2012; Van Aken 2006.

[16] See Makar 2011; Rice and Hamdy 2016; Simon 2015; Swedenburg 2012.

[17] Some recent contributions examine women's participation in uprisings and politicization in everyday life. For example, Maria Holt and Haifaa Jawad (2013) examine how women negotiate violence and patriarchal structures through the use of faith and traditional gender roles in a number of Arab states. Similarly, Frances Hasso and Zakia Salime's (2016) collection demonstrates how women corporeally challenge heterosexist discourses and disrupt gender roles in a variety of contemporary protests across the Middle East. Other scholars also investigate the women's role in the Arab Spring (2010-2012) and beyond (Abubaker 2014; Khalil 2015; Shalaby and Moghadam 2016; El Said, Meari, and Pratt 2015; Richter-Devroe 2018).

gender identity was constructed for the Iranian theatrical stage and popular cinema in the last century. While demonstrating how a complex constellation of forces attempts to regulate female dancing bodies in distinct cultural contexts, these important studies have furthered our knowledge about how women mobilize political agency through their choreographic decisions and how they struggle with other social forces. My project adds to this body of literature, showing that by reconfiguring folk dances endowed with heritage status, dancer-activist women transform already-coded practices as new and oppositional political instruments.

Institutionalization of Horon

Figure 1.1: A montage history of the institutionalization of horon on Cavit Şentürk's office wall at the State Conservatory, Istanbul Technical University.
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As mentioned earlier, from the late 1920s to the 1970s, the state institutions collected, codified, and regulated the folk dances of non-Muslim and non-Turkish minorities as well as

the majority dances of Muslim and Turkish communities as a corpus of traditions echoing a glorified Turkish national culture and history. Turkish state elites repurposed these dances to cultivate the idea of a disciplined, youthful, and homogenous collective body of the modern nation. When regional folk dances were nationalized, all existing or perceived "foreign" elements in their repertoires, such as non-Turkish names, narratives, costumes, and props, were also replaced with their "authentically" Turkish counterparts. In this period, how to conceptualize "folk dance" in reference to a national past became one of the most debated questions. First, "dance" was a Western word, implying Western genres such as ballet and ballroom dances. Second, its Turkish equivalence, "raks," was often used to define dances for public entertainment, with a specific reference to belly dance. As a result, the term "oyun," or "play/game," was used in the 1920s to define folk dance, and "folk dancers" were named "players." For example, Mahmut Ragıp Gazimihal, the first well-known ethnomusicologist of the Turkish Republic, registeres folk dances of eastern Turkey as "Şarkî Anadolu Oyunları," "Eastern Anatolian Plays," which he examines under two categories: *bar* and horon (1930, 7).[18] Renown Turkish folklorist Metin And also uses "oyun" in his earlier works (1964) although he prefers to use "dance" in his later works (2012, 117). And makes connections between Central Asian shamanic dances and Turkish folk dances to legitimize the word "oyun." He claims that both genres require theatricality, music, sound, and forms of performing arts in addition to dance that does not meet this rich content of "Türk halk oyunları," i.e., "Turkish people's plays."[19] However, he finds this term inappropriate as well, arguing that folk dances are not performed by the entire nation; they are in fact very much

[18] In these early notes, Mahmut Ragıb Gazimihal never mentions the term "halay" to refer Kurdish dances, yet later this genre dominated the folk dance repertoire. Halay has corresponded the principle dance genre of three large regions including eastern, southeastern, and east-central Turkey; whereas, the term "bar" has come to be used in reference to Armenian circle dances in the northeast.

[19] The term "folk" is synonym of "halk" in Turkish, or "the people." Until the multi-party period in 1950, Turkey's only political party, the Republican *People's* Party (CHP), used the "people" to signify a homogenous Turkish nation. This republican ideal has since been contested; and a recent example is the *Peoples'* Democratic Party (HDP) which demonstrated an opposition by pluralizing the noun "people" in the party title.

provincialized and differ from village to village; so that he offers to call them "Türk köylü dansları ve oyunları," or "Turkish villager dances and plays" (1964). Şerif Baykurt participates in this discussion in the late 1960s, suggesting that "dance" should be considered as a subsection of "oyun" because dances are aesthetic bodily movements performed to the rhythm of music, but plays can be also used for sports, theatre, children's games, shadow theatre, and so on (1976, 110-111). Nevertheless, the term "dance" did not receive much acceptance among a larger group of elites and researchers, and subsequently "Türk halk oyunları" became the institutionalized name for folk dances. Dance scholar Berna Kurt points out how "dance" and "play" are constructed in opposition to each other (2017, 15-16), which is a phenomenon recently challenged by a new generation of folk dance researchers who offer the term "Anadolu dansları," "Anatolian dances," and "geleneksel danslar," "traditional dances," as a third way (Ünlü 2009, vii). In this dissertation, I use "folk dance" and "traditional dance" interchangeably, not as a definitive political positioning but to help the reader focus on empirical and theoretical analyses rather than terminological discussions.

Debates on folk dance terms, practices, and education continued on from the first decades of the Turkish Republic when the horon was standardized and imagined as representative of a unified Turkish culture of the Black Sea region. Horon was investigated as an object of academic dance research for the first time by young teachers of the Akçaabat branch of the People's Houses in the eastern Black Sea area. Although the Houses were closed, the academic and urban public interest in traditional dance increasingly continued in the following decades. In 1972, Cavit Şentürk, a student at the Istanbul Technical University (İTÜ), visited his hometown in the eastern Black Sea region to collect horon dance movements and styles with the intention of codifying them and creating a dance to represent Turkey in international platforms. He went to Trabzon to observe horon rehearsals conducted in Akçaabat's People's Education Center, the successor of the local People's House. After

accumulating and analyzing these dance materials, Şentürk choreographed a national horon dance based on this data that he gathered in Akçaabat and its surrounding villages, where the Greek Pontian music and dance styles were dominant. Şentürk's choreography, accompanied by *kemençe*, a stringed-bowed instrument common in Trabzon, represented Turkey in international dance events from 1964 and throughout the 1970s, and received several awards. Professor Şentürk has since received prizes for his contributions to the field and he continues to serve on the faculty of the Department of Turkish Folk Dances at Istanbul Technical University. After its national and international reputation was established, Şentürk's version of horon, regarded as synonymous with authentic Turkish choreography, has continued to serve as the fixture of the national folk-dance repertoire.

Şentürk's choreography is aligned with two major trends in the representation of folk dances in Turkey: regional homogenization and gender division. During the institutionalization of folk dances, the geography of Turkey was theoretically divided into seven regions, and each having an attributed cultural homogeneity represented through particular folk dance genres. While Şentürk's horon version has become the representative of the Black Sea region, the Aegean region in the west has been associated with solo dances called *zeybek*; Inner Anatolia in central Turkey has been characterized by *kaşık havası*;[20] and the Eastern and Southeastern regions located along Turkey's borders with Syria, Iran, and Iraq have been mostly represented by a group of selected Kurdish circle dances generically called halay in Turkish, and *govend* in Kurdish, meaning "dance."[21] In these regions,

[20] A peer dance performed with a pair of spoons in each hand of the dancer, who makes rhythmic sounds as she hits the spoons together.

[21] In the 1930s, these regions hosted the establishment of Inspectorates-General (Umumi Mufettişlikler), regional governorship whose authority prevail over all civilian, military, and judicial institutions under their domain. These inspectorates aimed to sustain authoritarian rule in large areas. The first inspectorate-general was established in 1928 in the southeast, and others followed in the 1930s. The idea was to divide the country into six large regions, which would be ruled by appointed governors. This would optimize the country's administration by decreasing the number of provinces. However, in practice, the Inspectorates were created only in regions that were considered strategic or turbulent areas by Ankara, such as Thrace, the southeastern Turkey

different cities are characterized by different dance styles of their respective genres. With this unifying idea of regionalization, for example, several horon styles in the Black Sea, such as those performed by Islamicized ethnic minorities, such as the Hemşin and the Laz, were suppressed in the national discourse and modes of dance representation because these forms were reminders of the non-Muslim and non-Turkish pasts of the region.

Another consequence of the centrality of Şentürk's choreography has been a codified gender-based division that became the norm in the execution of the dance. Particular movement routines have been distinctively performed by male and female groups in folk dance stagings and competitions in adherence to Şentürk's horon. In the eastern Black Sea region, however, each town or village has its own particular gender dynamics which are reflected in the local manifestations of the dance. For instance, in Kavrun plateau, it was not until 1975 that women were dancing together with men. Up until the 1970s, during social events such as weddings, women danced horon with each other, using private rooms in big houses called *bulma* in the Hemşin language, whereas men danced in the living room called *hayat*[22]; on occasion in hayats, both men and women crossed paths and danced together. On the other hand, according to my conversations with interlocutors in Amlakit plateau, men and women danced together even earlier than the 1970s. They could dance together only during the day because evenings were reserved exclusively for men's dancing activities. When men got together in the evening to dance at a public café, called "horon çardağı" ("horon bower") women often watched them from their seats located outside of the cafe.

These detailed examples show the lack of uniformity in horon practices even among communities that belong to the same ethnic group and live very close to each other, such as the Hemşin communities of the Kavrun and Amlakit plateaus. In this respect, progressive

where Kurdish insurgencies and local tribalism were prominent, and the eastern Black Sea from Trabzon to Caucasian border with the Soviet Union (Cağaptay 2006, 47-48; Yeğen 2009, 600-606).

[22] "Hayat" is a common word in several languages, including Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and Hindi.

women's use of folk dance as a mode of political action also sheds light on multiple histories of the dance during which participants may use specific props such as socks and headscarves with ethnic motifs, or play a song and chant slogans in their native languages. My study shows how activists use choreographic strategies to vary each dance by introducing or combining diverse styles; blending genres attributed to different regions in the official discourse; improvising new phrases and spatial organizations; re-aligning themselves in alternative spaces; and selectively exaggerating and accentuating specific movements to communicate a pluralist social and political imagery of Turkey.

Figure 1.2: Regional distribution of folk dance genres in Turkey,
TÜFAK (Tourism Folklore Research Association).
http://www.tufak.org.tr/bolgeleregorehalkoyunlarimiz.html.

Color Codes:
Brick Red: Bar
Orange and **Purple:** Dances performed with spoon
Blue: Zeybek
Yellow and **Green**: Halay
Dark Green: Horon

Etymology of Horon

Horon has been a controversial dance primarily because of the etymological discussions regarding the word "horon." Some Turkish folklorists refer to the term as a word for "haystack" in Turkish dialects and claim that horon is originally a tradition of Turkish-

speaking nomadic people from Central Asia (Cihanoğlu 2004, 22; Kırzıoğlu [1986] 2014). Similarly, Sadi Yaver Ataman (1975) argues that horon is related to the word "Hor-Kor-Hori" meaning "chorus" and "repeating" in the Yakuts, a Turkish-speaking tribe in Central Asia. He claims that the term "kor" means "line" in Turkish dialects and refers to circle dances in those cultures.

Other researchers suggest that the word "horon" comes from the Greek language because "horo" in ancient Greek texts refer both "dance" and a group of dancers, or chorus, who sings (Öztürk 2005, 529-531). This definition aligns with the quality of horon in which dancers also sing during their performances. The Greeks colonized the shores of what is now part of the Turkish Black Sea region around 400 B.C. and the area was dominated by Greek-speaking communities over a thousand years until the occupation of the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth century. Because of this influence, Turkish linguist Özhan Öztürk argues that the Greek word "horo" was adopted by the other communities living in the eastern Black Sea region to their mother tongues with minor variations such as "horon," "horan," and "horomi." The dance is recognized as being rooted in this area.

Musical Instruments in Horon

Various cultural communities in the Black Sea influence horon dance and music, such as the Turks, the Greek Pontians, the Laz, the Hemshin, the Posha (a Romani group), and the Georgians. Performers represent particular iterations of horon with the support of musical instruments. In protests, the most common instrument is *tulum*, a type of bag pipe, popular in the eastern Black Sea region from Rize to Artvin provinces at Turkey's border with Georgia in the northeast. Although not much used in protest, kemençe is the most widespread instrument in Trabzon province and the main instrument of the standardized horon. Besides kemençe, davul and zurna as well as accordion can accompany horon dances in different

areas. The use of different instruments also defines the cultural and political geographies of the region.

Musicologist Gözde Çolakoğlu Sarı (2016) describes two distinct identities of kemençe. One is its physical identity: the bottle-shaped wooden body and the way its strings are played. The second identity is its social identity, which is characterized by the culture in which the instrument is used. Sarı's categorization is helpful to unpack discourses about social identities of musical instruments in the Black Sea. While kemençe is commonly identified with conservative, radical nationalist, and right-wing political values in Turkey, tulum is associated with left-leaning political movements, and a grassroots struggle against the mainstream power. Tulum has been included into national folk music repertoire and played in the state radio and television only after wearing a red fabric cover with Turkish flag ornamentation in the 1950s which became a typical cloth cover of the instrument until the 1980s. Associated with Hemşin and Laz communities, tulum has been the "other" of kemençe, which is presumably the characteristic of Turkish heritage of the Black Sea region. Particularly in the last two decades, prevailing musicians and bands from the area such as Kazim Koyuncu, VOVA, and MARSIS in addition to environmental activists introduced a variety of tulum music and horon styles to a larger public. Tulum has highlighted as a "protest instrument" also because of its high pitch sound quality marking the activist presence in public space. My examination of horon choreographies in and outside of their referred cultural geographies demonstrates the hardship of talking about a single, homogenous, and authentic horon genre that we can call the Turkish national folk dance, even if the dance has been used to perpetuate nationalism in addition to its use by activists for dissenting purposes.

Theorizing Dance and Choreography

Dance studies has expanded its theoretical scope by highlighting choreography as an organizing system within a particular logic that is inherently political and cultural.[23] Choreographic analysis provides me with interpretive tools to examine the decisions women have made in protests against spatial and temporal manifestations of power. It serves as analytical lens to theorize how cultural identities, such as gender identity, are simultaneously constructed by power structures and contested through means of movement (Foster 1995, 1998). Recent developments in dance literature remind us that choreography is not a universal rubric, but has to be understood in terms of its local manifestations (O'Shea 2007; Banerji 2019; Giersdorf 2009). In *Worlding Dance* (2009), dance scholar Susan Leigh Foster examines the historical evolution of choreography in the West, arguing that choreography is a social and cultural rather than a universal phenomenon, nullifying attempts to find common cross-cultural criteria for movement analyses.

Established definitions of choreography often refer to purposeful stagings of structured, embodied movements that aim to communicate an idea or create meaning for an actual or conceptual audience for both aesthetic and social reasons. Several scholars have used choreography in an expanded sense to theorize political, social, and gender identities in various contexts. Jens Richard Giersdorf (2013), Ramsey Burt (2008), and Judith Butler (1993) analyze choreography and performance to explore how masculinity and femininity are produced and negotiated. Christina Rosa (2015) investigates choreography in relation to nationalized and peripheralized identities in Brazil. These writers show the capacity and agency of gendered bodies to defy their conventional roles through their actions. In a similar vein, Randy Martin's use of the concept of choreography shows how dance, as an aesthetic practice, creates mobilization and agency by inviting participation from the "audience"

[23] See Cooper-Albright 1997; Dixon-Gottschild 2003; Foster 1986, 1995, 2003; Franko 1995; Lepecki 2006; Manning 2004; Martin 1998; Novack 1990; Tomko 1999.

(1985, 1998). My study brings all these strands together, exploring choreography as a social, political and aesthetic practice that unites a collective of activists, artists, and audiences.

In my study, improvisation that activists use both in protest and horon dance appears as a crucial choreographic tactic combining political and artistic practices. Improvisation in a protest that do not involve dance has similarities with and differences from improvisation in the dance. Activists carefully examine the surroundings in both situations and assess corporeal signs to anticipate the next move in a protest scene. I would describe a range of variables that an activist examines before and during a political action, which can be grouped as "protest space," "actors," and "conditions of possibility" of protest. For the space, an activist may delineate possible routes for hiding and escaping in case of the police attack, by examining the street (narrow or large? even or uneven? empty or populated? dark or well-lit?) and its intersecting alleyways and dead-ends; buildings in the street (orderly or disorderly? tall or short? gated or publicly accessed?); and restrictions of the protest site (park borders, monuments, bus stops, etc.). Second, the actors located in this space are considered, such as the police, military, and other authorities (and areas blocked by police barriers) and the range of protesters, with possibly different agenda and motivations. Some groups may want to physically resist the police, which would increase the potential of clashes, random violence, and arrests. Also, if the security forces are armed and wear gas-masks it indicates the potential use of bullets and pepper gas. If there are plain-clothes police with cameras, this indicates that they might later open prosecutions against people who they identified in the video. A protestor also often knows which merchants in the area are friendly to their cause and which ones are hostile. Finally, they make an assessment of recent political conditions to anticipate how these actors might behave in a given space. For this reason, a dissenter may scan recent news on social media to understand the legality or illegality of the demonstration, which is often a blurred category in Turkey; check recent statements by officials and

politicians; and review how the event is covered in the mainstream media. In addition, a brief research into the legal duration for being remanded in custody and one's legal rights under custody would be useful. Activists assess all these variables and even more prior, during, and after the protest and develop improvisational strategies to increase the possibility of moving under restrictions and diminish any possibility of physical harm or detainment. An experienced activist thus uses certain streets, buildings, and shops; moves alongside certain groups and avoids others; assesses corporeal signs of the police examining barriers, gas masks, and police vehicles; and informs herself about the relevant political risks and rights.

Dancers bring one more layer of improvisation into this scene as they improvise both in horon circles and as part of the larger protest where they cooperate also with non-dancer activists. A dancers' ability to improvise and her cooperation with other dancers and non-dancers would increase each time she participates in a protest. Dancers use or manipulate conventional movement qualities, bodily alignments, musical components, and horon poetry to manifest political statements and create new social meanings. For example, they compose closed and open circles to block the police vehicles or work machines; replace traditional song lyrics with popular slogans and political expressions; and improvise traditional clothing and props to make commentaries on issues related to environment, dispossession, gender, ethnicity, and nationalization. Nevertheless, unlike those who perform conventional forms of protest, activists who use horon dancing are not always under the threat of custody and detention because there is still more room to legitimize the dance as a non-political and traditional activity than the direct defiance of marching in the street.[24]

[24] Dancing in the street is a popular entertainment in downtown areas of Istanbul due to plenitude of street musicians playing tunes in a wide variety of genres and particularly folk tunes. People randomly gather around these musicians, dance, and sometimes disseminate their videos. Therefore, collective dance in the street is somehow normalized and accepted by the mainstream urban public. In the Black Sea, similarly dance is part of the popular culture and people frequently dance horon in weddings, celebrations, and other social events.

The dancemaker Daniel Nagrin defines improvisation as a choreographic mode for dealing with unpredictability, as "an exercise in attuning to an uncertain existence for the improvisor and for the audience that accepts this vision of contemporary living" (1994, x). In their collection of essays on improvisation in dance, Ann Cooper-Albright and David Gere also stress the question of "uncertainty," arguing that improvisation foregrounds what to do at the moment of decision-making and how to attend to different bodily energies. When dancers make particular choices at moments of uncertainty, they rely on a movement memory cultivated through regular and even daily practice (2003, xv). They also open up themselves, their bodies, to a range of other possibilities. Cooper-Albright argues that improvisation gives us the ability to respond at the moment of difficulty because it can teach us how to create a shared space with others and live in an unstable world (2003, 257) as it demonstrates "a willingness to cross over into uncomfortable territories, to move in the face of fear, of what is unknown" (259-260). Improvisation thus requires bodily mindfulness and awareness of one's surroundings to guess what might happen next. It opens up this unknown terrain into a range of possibilities which might not be even imaginable before departing from the familiar and reliable structures.

The practice of "contact improvisation" [25] provides an excellent example of dancers' decision-making strategies in this terrain of unpredictability. Cynthia Novack (1990) discusses how dancers used contact improvisation techniques in the United States during the 1970s in response to social and historical events, such as civil rights movements, anti-war demonstrations, and student uprisings. The dance not only participates in the social acceptance of these events but also produces changes in society. For instance, touching, sharing weight, blurring differences between amateur and professional dancers, and lack of

[25] Contact improvisation is a partnered dance developed by Steve Paxton in the mid-1970s through an exploration of how bodies move when they are in stillness or when they are falling. Its improvisation aimed to find ways to continue moving and interacting in unfamiliar situations during the dance.

dominant leadership ideally cause practitioners to question social institutions and concepts such as sexuality, gender roles, freedom, skill, and art (115). Moreover, an openness to participating in contact improvisation and no-fault-dancing reverse a dominant perception identifying dance with skill and virtuosity and creating hierarchies among dancers. The participants in contact improvisation bring everyday life into dance as they raise and answer questions in their collective interaction. They touch other bodies without being explicitly sexual, through which they raise questions about family, kinship, sexuality.

Danielle Goldman (2007, 2010) also looks at contact improvisation motifs as conceptual parallels to the training that 1960s' civil rights activists received for purposes of nonviolent resistance. She analyzes the "Freedom Riders," a diverse coalition of activists who toured the country by bus to protest racist inequalities. The activists were trained extensively in corporeal techniques to prepare for situations of confrontation, when those who opposed their agendas might exercise violence against them. Goldman analyzes how these trainings in improvisation brought "flexibility and perpetual readiness" for shifting constraints and helped activists to gain confidence in finding possible ways to safeguard themselves while nonviolently interacting with others in impromptu circumstances (2010, 5). Because of their meticulous preparation on improvisation techniques, human rights defenders could move spontaneously and creatively to make a political impact even when they were dragged, insulted, and harmed by others. For example, Freedom Riders rehearsed "falling" to protect the body from harmful attacks. They also performed "going limp" and making their bodies deliberately heavy to demonstrate their physical non-cooperation with authorities trying to make arrests or remove them from the scene of protest (2007, 63). Goldman discusses how contact improvisation also uses techniques of falling and working with gravity among its methods, and thus shares certain common movement vocabularies with nonviolent protesters, although the goals of the two constituencies are markedly different, She argues

that training in improvisational techniques helps practitioners ready themselves for ever-shifting surprises of the protest space and dance partnering, noting that these actions can be "instinctually or consciously designed" (69), and that improvisation is associated with a spontaneously-developed activity derived from one's educated instincts.

My research also indicates that horon provides activists with a certain level of responsiveness during protests, yet the choreography is not intuitively and spontaneously performed; rather, its improvisational quality is constantly developed by performers during demonstrations in rural and urban settings. The sets of choreographic tools that I discuss and conceptualize in this project such as "dispersal," "imprecision," and "accentuation" enable activists to improvise new forms of assemblies while disorienting the police and negotiating the terms of the assembly among each other. I theorize these tools as cultivated bodily "techniques" which can be applied individually and collectively when needed in action.

Several dance scholars have explored the concept of "technique" in relation to the body and its organized action in a given space and time. In her article, "Choreographies of Protest," Susan Foster (2003) examines how activist bodies move and interact within a collective. By analyzing historical examples within the social movement repertoire of the United States, such as 1960s' civil rights sit-ins, the 1980s' die-ins by ACT UP against HIV+ discrimination, and the 1999 protests against the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle, Foster suggests that physical training and learned bodily techniques, including quotidian movement, serve as the basis of collective political actions. Her analyses demonstrate how activist bodies work together, read each other's movements, and create new meanings through acting collectively and tactically against the status quo.

While Foster shows how protesters stage, rehearse, and cultivate corporeal techniques to challenge the normative power, Susanne Foellmer (2016) provides a contemporary example from Turkey to demonstrate how artistic practice can migrate into ephemeral forms

of political protest. Discussing a specific example from Istanbul's Gezi resistance, Foellmer examines performance artist Erdem Gündüz's standstill gesture, which ignited a nationwide wave of protest in Turkey. Gündüz stood still for eight hours in Taksim Square when the right to public assembly was suspended by the authorities in June 2013. Other people soon gathered around him and noted the power of his action; he was named *Duran Adam,* the "Standing Man," in the media, and the standstill gesture was multiplied and performed by the masses across the country in the days following this event. Foellmer argues that Gündüz's standing performance brings everyday life into arts and political intervention by blurring the boundaries between dance, politics, and quotidian action.

Randy Martin is one of the pioneer scholars also connecting dance, politics, and culture (1985, 1998). He argues that dance is much more than a corporeal activity because through exploring and problematizing foundational categories such as space, time, tempo, energy, flow, and force, dancers shed light on the kinetic foundations of modern society (1998) and they also critically analyze and intervene in it (2011). Martin contextualizes dance as a key area of the political in which contested social and political discourses and practices become visible through dancers' movements. Further, he defines the dance ensemble as a form of ideal community because in a performance space, artists and audience members assemble to "manufacture a social body" (2011, 29). If the dancers' experience is part of a collective body in motion, then the technique must be grounded in the "quotidian physicality of the public" (1990, 175) which is provincial and intrinsically diverse (21). My study builds on Martin's conceptualization of dance as a political activity and furthers it by examining the choreographic details of these dance events and asking how non-professional dancers develop and rehearse a movement vocabulary derived from both quotidian and folk dance techniques to mobilize the public and encourage participation in social action. Martin's use of technique

as a tool for both controlling citizens and challenging the norms of the political order is also foundational for my discussion.

In "Techniques of the Body," Marcel Mauss (1973) explores diverse uses of bodily "techniques" in the course of everyday activities, such as walking and swimming, and argues that there is no singular technique which defines human activity as a universal phenomenon, but that techniques of the body are provincial and change from one society to the other. Furthermore, although these techniques are not homogeneously executed within different social contexts, there is a governing strategy behind them which makes certain formations reiterable by multiple bodies. Mauss examines, for instance, polite and impolite positions of the hands at rest (72): An English child would keep her hands off the table when not eating, but a French child has no idea about sitting up straight and probably puts her elbows on the table. Mauss also notes that people from different backgrounds can walk with their fists closed, similar to those in a military march. He thus underscores how a body's characteristic ways of moving resonate with the prevailing aesthetic and political values of its cultural contexts and how these forms of moving are learned and circulated within a society (73).

Pierre Bourdieu (1990) draws on Mauss and suggests the notion of "habitus," which mostly consists of "unconscious" improvisations in everyday conduct rather than conscious following of the rules. According to Bourdieu, the capacity to improvise is a social learning process in which the "rules" of the society are internalized and practiced. Repeated and affirmed performances of particular repertoires shape the unconscious dispositions of habitus. Bourdieu's conceptualization refers to a corporeal history of a social class, "internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history;" the product of the past that is actively present (56). Therefore, people express mastery at the movement level through their historically learned practices, even though they seem unconsciously organized. One's habitus does not only generate products such as thoughts, perceptions, expressions, and actions, but it also

composes “common sense,” the norm, so that we think that we know the most reasonable practices. Habitus ensures that the active presence of past experiences guarantees the “correctness” of practices performed in the present. Thus it reproduces a disciplinary power that constructs, constraints, and controls the body and its gestures within a set of norms.

Michael Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1995) elucidates that these aesthetic and political norms change over time, thus resulting in a continuous shift determining the optimum technique for controlling the body in the West. He argues that since the eighteenth century, the era of modernity introduced a specific form of control of the body: “discipline.” This “type of power” (215) is based on precisely calculated regulatory mechanisms to constitute an effective, productive, and subjugated body aligned with the ideals of liberal capitalist society. Foucault examines power as a relational phenomenon, which operates in the everyday conduct of the body through the technology of discipline that is the “meticulous control of the infinitesimal power of the active body;” (137) or a “political anatomy of detail” (139). Therefore, both a diligent observation, examination, and correction of the body at the everyday level and the subject’s normalization and internalization of these rules are necessary to create constant subjugation, which Foucault calls “docility” (137). The body is then defined, shaped, and trained by the modern institutions, such as the army and the school, through disciplinary technologies, and it also obeys, responds, becomes skillful, and increases its forces and competencies to align with the commands of power.

While both Foucault and Bourdieu focus on the reproduction of the normative power, Michel de Certeau’s concepts of “tactics” and “strategies” (1984) significantly guide my study to differentiate techniques employed by dissenters versus those implemented by institutions of power. De Certeau distinguishes “tactics” from the “strategies” that he associates with totalizing discourses and meta-narratives as ways of governing. Strategies are architectural, based on place, and thus related to the oversight of property. Yet, “tactics” are

articulated in the details of everyday conduct. They are related to time more than to space since "a tactical space is already the space of the other" (1984, 37). Hence, tactics necessitate mobility; unlike strategies, a tactical space cannot keep what has won, in which sense it can never possess property. De Certeau defines "tactics" as a system of "microbe-like operations proliferating within technocratic structures" (30).[26] The five techniques which I conceptualize and discuss throughout my dissertation operate as bodily tactics rooted in everyday actions and used to challenge the normative organization of bodies in public space. As opposed to strategies used by the police such as blocking highways, enclosing the public squares, and dispersing activists, I consider progressive women's tactical dispersal in urban space and their folk dance assemblies at sites of protest to be counter-maneuvers against the totalizing power of the state. By using several techniques separately and simultaneously, activists transform the hegemonic spatial order in the public sphere and reconfigure the national space for their political aims.

Key Political Theories

I employ the insights of key political theorists to further explore the relationship between bodily technique, resistance, and power. In this context, I draw from Michael Foucault's concept of biopolitics to discuss how populations are regulated in the age of modern, liberal governments (Foucault 2007, 2008). Foucault refers to particular historical conditions of modernity in which the management of the polity became one of the fundamental questions in Europe in the eighteenth century. Foucault argues that the control of the "population" appears as a new political concern. According to the liberal empirical

[26] James Scott's "weapons of the weak" (1985), referring to less visible, subtle forms of everyday resistance against oppression and domination, also speak to de Certeau's "tactics." They jointly inform my study as activists develop and use these choreographic techniques in their demonstrations as the weapons of the weak against the organized and hegemonic power of the state.

norm, the population regulates itself naturally, and all we need is to secure it. Hence, population requires a security apparatus based on scientific methods to ensure that it will work properly within a territory (2007, 69). Biopolitics emerges as a regulation and distribution of living by calculating, measuring, and comparing populations, yet also allowing the removal of some elements for its better functioning. In Turkey, state policies have extended biopolitical control over new spheres of life within the last two decades through the introduction of digital identities, compulsory identity numbers, and "e-state" accounts which enable citizens to access and manage their judiciary, financial, and health-related files. Although these technologies objectify and regulate the control, they are also intertwined with arbitrary use of power. For example, one may learn that they are accused of insulting the president through expressing an opinion on social media only when they are stopped by the police during a random identity check. They may be detained although this information has not been registered on the e-state.

Such arbitrariness in the judicial order renders the theories of Giorgio Agamben and Achille Mbembe relevant to my research because the current Turkish state applies not only biopolitical security and control but also politics of death through examples of siege, detention, extrajudicial torture, targeted political murders, and killings. Agamben argues that sovereign states create "states of exception" where regular juridical norms are suspended, and political targets thus violated with impunity in the name of protecting the state (1998, 2005). The politics of death, what he calls "thanatopolitics," is the basis of the logic of the sovereignty that is not based on managing or fostering life but bringing the sovereign power back to give death, establishing its authoritative social and political order (1998). While in Foucault's biopolitics as the operation of the governmental system relies on "letting people die," Agamben's thanatopolitics focuses on the state's self-attained right to "kill" people. Similarly, Mbembe's (2003) "necropower/necropolitics" suggests that the government

operates through segregating and mass killing people since some populations are constructed as disposable because of their race or ethnicity, construed as an essential biological or cultural difference. In this vein, Judith Butler's theory of "grievability" (2009) investigates how bodies are produced in the era of the war-on-terror as "disposable," whose lives are not counted as mournable. Butler claims that biopolitics and violence operate through certain bodies iteratively, and in each iteration, this violence becomes the normative condition of marginalized bodies, whose lives do not register as having value. Other scholars in dance and performance studies have also analyzed how bodies use kinesthetic and spatial configurations to constitute alternative political spaces against the operations of power that invest, control, observe and also produce the categories of the disposed and disappeared.[27]

One of these writers is André Lepecki (2013), who developed the concepts of "choreo-politics" which is the transformative quality of movement as it activates, invents, seeks, and experiments in opposition to the repressive power, "choreo-police," which controls, regulates and imposes its will on bodies and their movements. When this normalizing power creates spaces of circulation, the dancer reclaims spaces for mobility by converting restrictive areas into fields of freedom. Lepecki's conceptualization is useful for my attempt at looking at the movements of the dissenters and the police to understand how they maneuver in relation to each another. However, although Lepecki engages with choreographies performed by professional dancers, all my examples involve the practices of activists who dance non-professionally, and in some cases, dance only during protests. Moreover, in Turkey, where the people's right to public assembly is curtailed by the authoritarian state policies coupled with extreme police violence, dissenters perform alternative ways to conduct their political activities, such as scattering as small groups in the city, and mobilize spaces outside of the central public area. They form temporary and minor-

[27] See Dabashi 2012; Lee 2014; Schneider 2011; Taylor 1997.

scale public assemblies by using folk dance practice in political demonstrations. They then learn and cultivate dance techniques, contesting among each other as well as creating forms of solidarity and support (Hardt 2011), and also improvise cultural affiliations and experiences of citizenship within a collective action (S. Joseph 1999).

In a fragile, shifting, and immediate public space oscillating between "life" and "death," biopolitical choreographic manipulations by both the Turkish state and dissident populations are performed in the course of assembly and, as I argue, also of dispersal. In this regard, I find Hannah Arendt's notion of "politics" (1973, 1998, 2005), which has recently been revisited in a number of works in social sciences and dance and performance studies, to be particularly suggestive.[28] Arendt defines "politics" as "plurality," a relational space which individuals with distinct political practices can create through their interactions in the public sphere. When they gather and move forming assemblies, people relate each other in various ways and gain power against totalitarian structures. Feminist political philosopher Chantal Mouffe (2000; 2007) yet criticizes Arendt's approach of plurality claiming that it lacks bringing enough antagonistic conflicts into politics (2007, para 11). Mouffe claims that Arendtian envision of public sphere is closer to liberal democratic approach which assumes a harmonious ensemble and consensus when all perspectives are put together, which is, to Mouffe, impossible because every order is the outcome of previous hegemonic practices. In contrast, Mouffe sees public space as the battleground of different political projects that are confronted. Her concept of "agonistic pluralism" acknowledges an inevitable political conflict due to intractable differences of political actors who contest and combat as adversaries. Unlike "antagonists," agonistic actors would avoid imposing a singular view and recognize the institutions which enable them to compete to persuade others. In this context, aesthetic interventions, what Mouffe calls "artistic activism," (2007) serve as counter-

[28] See Hardt and Negri 2017; Butler 2015; Lepecki 2013; Laermans 2008; Puar 2007.

hegemonic involvements because they make hegemonic social and political relations visible while promoting dissensus. Such critical art practices would thus foment agonistic struggle against domination in multiplicity of social spaces. In Turkey, activists' folk dance practice can be considered an example of an "artistic activism" which occupies the public space to disclose and challenge the workings of the current hegemonic social and political system.

Similar to Arendt and Mouffe, Georg Simmel also theorizes on political interactions among people in the public sphere. His idea of "sociability" is based on the definition of society as the collection of separate individuals, which he defines as "constellations" (1971). In these constellations, one of the unifying political values is to create "joy" through interacting in the public space, which has also appeared as a significant theme in my interviews with progressive women. The politics of joy and hope which activists mobilize via horon performances has become a significant tool for these activists to be able to move under the current conditions of Turkey's public sphere that they often describe as "depressing," "violent," and "oppressive."

Methodology:

The volatile political environment in Turkey today has created fragmented and discontinuous narratives of political resistance. A constant struggle between possibility and impossibility of performing protests in central public spaces due to extreme violence rendered improvisation a necessary tool for both the street activists and myself as a researcher. During my fieldwork research between November 2016 and October 2017, I participated in twenty-six protest events and political demonstrations in Istanbul. During these events, I watched dances in person, and moved alongside women's groups. I marched with activists, signed petitions, and joined press statements, and participated in dances at demonstrations. Uncertainties of the protest space also defined my research technique: I met

my collaborators often at protest sites because circulating emails about my research might put me and my interlocutor in danger and jeopardize their confidentiality. When I talked to protesters, I usually asked them to meet another time to talk about their dancing in protests. Some of them gave me appointments to talk longer; others wanted to talk on the spot, and we went to a nearby teahouse from where we could see the protest space and go back there when needed; some activists strategically invited me to other political meetings as a condition of giving an interview so that I could be gradually involved in their activist practice.

Overall, I conducted my ethnographic investigations in Istanbul and the northeast Black Sea region of Turkey during twenty months of fieldwork between 2014 and 2017, in addition to four months of follow-up research in 2018 and 2019. I used semi-structured and open-ended interviews with activists, folk dance teachers, folklore researchers, dance and ethnomusicology scholars, and musicians as key sources of data for my project. In the mode of participant-observer, I joined folk dance classes in six different institutions in Istanbul and practiced in a variety of localities in the Black Sea region. The data gathered from these sources showed multiple accounts and complexities of the choreographic process, disclosing important discourses about horon dance-making and protest actions. I wrote field notes reflecting a "sensual gaze" (Stoller 1989), which captured my experiences in terms of smell, touch, hearing, and seeing. I used "walking" as a methodology that yields ethnographic data and allows me to engage with layers of such senses (Pink 2009; Hammergren 1996; Roach 1996; de Certeau 1984). Walking, alone or with an interlocutor, in a protest site helped me to interpret the spatial context of the dancing activity and the physical culture of the city influencing the form, sequence, and configuration of the dance and protest movements.

The insights of feminist ethnographers guided my methodology as well, who suggest that knowledge is generally incomplete, partial, and particular (Abu-Lughod 1990b, 2000; Visweswaran 1994; Haraway 1991); using multiple research methods in a polyvocal fashion

helps an ethnographer to grasp more layers of the phenomenon under scrutiny. Lila Abu-Lughod's "ethnography of the particular," which refers to the immediacy of being in the field by actually producing conversations at the everyday life level, was important to my study (2000: 262). I am a Turkish woman and feminist activist born in the northwest Black Sea region where the inhabitants have no idea about horon in opposition to the mainstream assumption that considers horon as the common knowledge of the Black Sea. In addition, my positionality as a doctoral student in the United States brings me closer to the position of what Abu-Lughod calls "halfie" ethnographer, who locates herself both inside and outside of the culture she is studying. I aimed to open up human relations in the field to a critical, subjective, and reflexive analysis to go beyond the object-subject dichotomy in the research process. By building on the Linda Tuhiwai-Smith's "decolonizing methodology" (2012), I continuously questioned how my research would serve activist communities and precipitates further examination of the potential of progressive women's protests to create democratic spaces in Turkish society and politics.

Although both men and women practice folk dances, I limited my inquiry to activist women and chose participants belonging to different cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. The grassroots organizations and activists represented in this study involve a range of dissenting political perspectives: left-leaning groups including the Revolutionary Party, the Continuous Revolution Movement, the Rainbow Movement-Laborer's Committee, the Socialist Party of the Oppressed, and People's Houses; political bodies including the Turkish Architectures and Engineers Association and Academics for Peace; Kurdish feminist organizations, such as Women's Initiative for Peace and Kurdish Patriot Youth; environmental grassroots organizations, including Northern Forests Defense, The Black Sea is in Riot Platform, Fırtına Initiative, Arhavi Nature Protection Association, Green Artvin; feminist and LGBTQI+ groups such as members of the former Istanbul Feminist Collective

and Istanbul-LAMBDA; independent feminist, queer, and transgender activists; activist music groups such as Rhythms of Resistance; anti-government Islamist groups, such as Muslim Women Against Violence Against Women; and finally, women from the main political opposition parties, the Republican People's Party (CHP) and Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). All my interviews were conducted in terms of the UCLA IRB conventions and protocols (#15-000917). In each conversation, I referred to activist struggle as a shared common question between myself and my collaborators through which we brainstormed and thought together about the possibilities and potentials of dance in a political action. Having a shared ground to develop strategies of protest helped me unsettle hierarchies in the fieldwork process (Visweswaran 1994). For obvious political reasons, all research participants' names have been changed by the author of this dissertation to maintain the confidentiality of the participants' identities. The bulk of my interviews were conducted in Turkish in addition to a couple of interviews in English and one in Greek with the help of a translator. I translated all the interviews conducted in languages other than Greek and English, and I am responsible for any possible misinterpretation and mistranslation issues.

My method of historical research is informed by Diana Taylor's study of "archive and repertoire," since the repertoire, or the embodied memories composed of gestures, movements, songs, and other corporeal forms of transmitting knowledge, complements the insights found in the texts and artifacts stored in institutional repositories. By drawing on key texts in dance and performance studies, my project further investigates representations of the dancing body that have been constructed in historical documents, and puts such images into dialogue with today's dancing female activists. I used archival research to understand the historical context and continuums among dance practices, particularly those performed in public spaces. I surveyed collections of journals, newspapers, photographs and posters, among other items, in the Istanbul Research Institute and the Istanbul Ataturk Library. To

ground my claims about current Turkish policy and uprisings, I also looked at the Turkish and Kurdish feminist publications such as *Pazartesi, Jiyan, Roza,* and *Amargi (*1995-2016). New York Public Library's Performing Arts digital collection, the Getty Museum Archives, and British Library online database have been my other sources to access further data.

The fourth and last method I employ is media analysis, that includes a scrutiny of visual, digital, and audio documentation. Activists in *Film Mor*, an organization of feminist film-makers in Istanbul, and *Halkevci Kadınlar* (women's group of the left-wing grassroots organization the People's House in Ankara) were very generous in sharing with me their archival footage, which helped me analyze the process of collective dance-making in the street, as well as individual applications of movements among activists. To examine visual material, I considered haptic and optic perspectives in relation to choreographic analysis. The optic perspective is a bird's-eye view that displays and exhibits the "other" within a supposedly "objective" scene in which the viewer's distance from the subject is aligned with scientific measurements. In this way it creates a "truth" about the subject within a discursive framework. Haptic perspective, on the other hand, grasps the particular by creating a tactile closeness with the other. As Aparna Sharma suggests, in contrast to the flatness of the optic perspective, the haptic perception dissolves the lines between the viewer and the viewed, eliminating power hierarchies between the two (2015, 147). In this research, choreographic analysis provides such haptic perspective as I examine fragmented and incomplete nature of dissenters' movements and executions of the dance. I also use the optic view to analyze how dance groups move in general in public space. My interdisciplinary method and perspective allowed me to capture the richness and multidimensionality of the phenomenon under study.

Dissertation Chapters:

My first chapter, "Whose Horon Circle is This? Contested Choreographies of Authenticity and Techniques of Precision," examines horon at the regional and national scales. It historicizes debates among different cultural communities in the Black Sea region concerning the origin of horon. This chapter starts with visual and textual analyses of two early twentieth century postcards, depicting horon scenes at public squares during the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. I use postcard images to unpack and explore the construction of ethnic and cultural identities in Turkey as well as choreographic components of the horon. While mapping the eastern Black Sea region based on horon practices of various ethnic groups, I show how these communities struggle over definitions of the dance genre, as they argue that it represents the virtuoso skills, strong communal ties, and courageous attitudes of their respective ancestors. These contested histories of horon, I argue, are reflected in the dance technique, in which minuscule details differentiate these communities from one another, preventing from performing alliances in a larger social and political context. As such, manifestations of cultural difference are performed through invented and repetitive acts of "precision" in dance as conveyed through the experts at state institutions, such as conservatories and folk dance associations. I further problematize the singular and homogenous narratives of horon and demonstrate how traditional dance is choreographed based on such "techniques of precision" to prove the authenticity and indigeneity of peripheralized communities in Turkey. Such imagined truthfulness, reproduced through the dance technique and choreography, renders several cultural groups, whose horon styles are different, as "inauthentic" or "fake." As such, reconfigurations of the dance as an identity marker create hierarchies among citizens regarding their legitimacy in belonging to the nation. To explore the criteria, I investigate horon choreographies at folk dance institutions, state conservatories, cultural centers, and dance studios in Istanbul, and conduct a nuanced analysis of the technique, its regional and gendered variations, and ways of teaching.

My second chapter, "Re-Choreographing the Urban Space of Protests: Dispersal and Assembly of the Political Dissent in Istanbul," brings together dance and performance studies with political theory in its discussion of public assembly and dispersal on an urban scale. This chapter sets out the cityscape of Istanbul as a central site of protest in relation to activist practices and associated dance performances which mobilize what I call "tactics of dispersal." In response to the maneuvers of the current Turkish state, which limit, block, and damage or annihilate central public spaces where demonstrations occur, activists deploy "dispersal" as a counter-maneuver to survive under severe oppression. Rather than centralizing social movements in public squares, dissenting bodies disperse toward the peripheries of the urban center, when producing conventional forms of public assembly is no longer an option due to the state's use of extreme violence. They create minor assemblies at these peripheral neighborhoods, which Silvija Jestrović defines as "inner exilic spaces" (2013), to continue their political action. Dispersal is theorized, therefore, not only as an oppressive maneuver of the state, but also as a tactic for unsettling power. I argue that the activists recast the exigent circumstances of dispersal produced by the authorities to creatively reorganize themselves in peripheral urban spaces which might temporarily escape state surveillance. In this context, I analyze how horon, and also halay, performances allow dissenters to create alternative forms of peripheral public assemblies at times of political crisis. My chapter elucidates the ways in which dissenters reconfigure public space by constantly negotiating how to act and relate to each other in dance circles, which in turn enable them to rehearse and strategize counter-maneuvers in a larger context of protest. In this regard, when activists form lines, circles, and semi-circles, and develop ways of moving and interacting in folk dance collectives in social action, they also rehearse ways of situating themselves in relation to the larger body of protesters. Being part of a dance group requires a great deal of decision-making, such as determining when to join and when to leave the circle

or line, how long to keep dancing, whether to lead or to follow, among whom to dance, whether to hold hands with specific people and for how long, how to vary styling, pace, and energy to be in unison with the group, and how much effort to use in the development and maintenance of coherence and unity. Activists make immediate decisions both individually and collectively during the dance. Temporality, spatial configurations, and the arrangement of bodies change each time people gather to form a horon circle.

My third chapter, "'Techniques of Imprecision': Choreographing Agonistic Politics in Women's Grassroots Movements in Istanbul," focuses on both the city scale and the body scale in analyzing how women and LGBTQI+ grassroots activists deployed horon during Turkey's Presidential Referendum protests between February and June 2017. In contrast to the homogenizing effects of the techniques of precision, participants of social and political movements deploy varying styles and include distinct movement vocabularies and individualized ways of execution in their dance practices. They add new gestures or transform the old ones, complementing their political statements. I argue that in opposition to the official and nationalized forms of the dance, in which precision and virtuosity are highlighted as distinct markers of ethnic, racial, cultural, and sexual identities and utilized to prevent diverse groups from creating political alliances, activist women enact dances "imprecisely"—by changing the gendered qualities of movements, mixing forms, styles, sequences, bodily attitudes, and vocabularies from pedestrian movements and other dances—to establish a participatory and diverse kinesthetic space for political action. When women use folk dance in political demonstrations, they create temporary assemblies by performing what I call "techniques of imprecision," based on both intentional and unintentional choreographic manipulations of the institutionalized forms. Their specific deployments of the dance intervene in the patriarchal imagery of a gendered body moving restrictedly in public space.

The examples I discuss in this chapter correspond to Chantal Mouffe's concept of "agonistic politics," a pluralist democratic form which constructs "the other" not as an "enemy" but as an "adversary" to be challenged and persuaded to find resolutions of disagreements. Mouffe's conceptualization does not aim to domesticate or eliminate antagonism, unlike the ideal of "unity" of the oppositional forces that is promoted by liberal democracy; instead, it provokes adversaries to negotiate, and even "combat" for, their causes. Dissenting women's dances, as examples of "artistic activism" (Mouffe 2007) based on agonistic encounters, foment discussion, negotiation, negation, and solidarity as well as rivalry and contestation in both their political and aesthetic engagements with the state institutions as well as with others in the dissenting group. I argue that through "techniques of imprecision," activist women challenge the official folk dance discourse by bringing new meanings to qualities which are attributed to the feminine body—such as passivity, demureness, inward orientation, and tenderness—by blending them with so-called masculine movement qualities, such as holding an upright stance, wide-open legs, high energy, and exalted jumps, kicks, and arm movements, and generally occupying a broad spatial span. Alternatively, when they dance within and together with leftist and revolutionary political groups, activist women and LGBTQI+ protesters often highlight a conventional "femininity" by using choreographic tools, which I conceptualize as "techniques of accentuation," to manifest a political critique against the homogenizing hetero-patriarchal practices of their potential allies within the dissenting group. Therefore, activist women tactically coopt as well as redefine prevailing ideologies of gender in their dance demonstrations.

In the fourth and the last chapter, "Horon in Environmental Movements: Re-assembling Tradition Between the Urban and the Rural," I examine the regional and transregional scales by scrutinizing activists' roles in the transmission of horon. Dissenters perform the dance during political events against current neoliberal developmentalist projects

in the Black Sea region which cause serious ecological damage. Specifically, I analyze environmental movements against three "mega-projects" in northeast Turkey: the "Green Road" highway project (2015); the Cerattepe mining project (2016); and the Arhavi Hydroelectric Power Plant project (2014). Protests held against these plans at local sites are expanded through "solidarity demonstrations" performed in big cities such as Istanbul. Both *in situ* resistance in the Black Sea area and solidarity protests in Istanbul use horon as a shared ground of activism between rural and urban publics. I analyze how dissenters re-contextualize horon to establish ties between activists in a transregional context. My examples show that tradition does not move uni-directionally from the rural to the urban, or from the urban to the rural in other cases, but requires bilateral action between the two locations in order to effectively register as communal agitation.

In this chapter, I frame "bricolage" as another technique that activists apply to disorient the police under uncertainty of protest situations and create new political meanings by using the material at hand in unfamiliar ways. I apply the term "bricolage" to refer a collection of things from different sources and contexts. Though juxtaposing images, bringing together flyers, props, lyrics, and movements, and inserting objects into the regular order of things, activists disclose how the myths are constructed and create their alternative configurations and narratives. A detailed analysis of lyrics and poetry further provides significant insights on how activists convert traditional folk songs into political chants. I employ the concept of "performativity" to discuss how these lyrics generate mobilizing political force.

In the Conclusion, I sum up my data and analyses and suggest ways to further discuss the "connectivity" of these grassroots movements in transregional and transnational contexts. By providing a glimpse on how the "audience" members interpret these dances—how they assess, evaluate, and define codes of ethnicity, gender, and politics while they look at a folk

dance performance—I indicate the potential for further work on the reception, transmission, and transformation of the dance in a wider geopolitical context.

In the dissertation as a whole, I argue that activists resist the current policies of the authoritarian regime in Turkey by finding alternatives to mobilize the public and create peripheral assemblies, expanding the limits of the social movement repertoire, and using the national space in creative ways to accomplish a politically connected grassroots community. Informed by theories in the fields of dance and performance, political philosophy, gender studies, socio-cultural anthropology, and Middle East studies, my research scrutinizes how activist women reshape folk dance heritage as a political tool and claim urban space to subvert hegemonic discourses about Turkish national identity, neoliberalism, and conventions of the female body. At the current moment in global history, in which populations are differentially segregated, maimed, killed, and made to disappear under rising waves of nationalism and authoritarianism, my dissertation suggests approaching dance as a relevant field of study to discuss social and political movements and documents progressive women's attempts to create pluralist public spaces in Turkey and beyond.

Chapter 1

Whose *Horon* Circle is This?
Contested Choreographies of Authenticity and 'Techniques of Precision'

Figure 2.1: Postcard showing horon dancers upright, Trabzon (1890-1910).

Figure 2.2: Postcard showing horon dancers bent at waist, Trabzon (1890-1910).

Two different black-and-white picture postcards from the early twentieth century depict a *horon* dance scene in a town square in northern Turkey. In each, dozens of men, who form the horon circle by holding each other's hands, pose to highlight one major choreographic pattern in the dance. In the first postcard, dancers stand close to each other with an upright posture. Their arms are stretched forward in straight lines above the shoulder level, their hands placed on top of each other, supported by straight arms and a stiff torso. The second postcard illustrates the next movement where the dancers are bent at waist. These two postcards also show two oppositional movement patterns in the dance: In the first one, the legs of the dancers are parallel to each other, strengthening the upright posture of the dancer, whereas in the second, the dancers lean forward, the right or left foot steps forward. In both, the performers dance in a closed circle with two musicians at the center, who are also male; one of them plays a large drum hung around his neck with a strap, and the other plays a flute-like instrument that is hard to recognize from the photograph. The dancers and the musicians are surrounded by hundreds of audience members, also all men, who are not standing in any particular order. The closed circle prevents the audience from seeing the intricate footwork of the dancers, whose bodily tension reveals how forcefully they stamp their feet. The dancers do not seem to be part of a professional dance group with their seemingly ordinary outfits. They wear mostly black pants and layered clothes on top. Their shirts are in plain colors and they wear a piece of cloth in various patterns wrapped around their waists. Another piece of cloth is wrapped around their heads with the tail-end of the cloth dangling towards the shoulders.

Both photographs are taken in the Trabzon province of northern Anatolia, perhaps by Turkish photographer Osman Nuri who was active in Trabzon in the late nineteenth century, and edited as postcards by a Greek-Ottoman artist, J. Mouratides. They were reproduced within series between the 1890s and 1908 prepared by famous publishers of their time, such

as Austrian Max Frehtermann as well as Greek Theodore Stylianides and the Kakoulis Brothers. French Orientalists circulated these postcards with French captions. Although the captions may differ depending on the editor or publisher, these two examples have been the most popularly circulated ones from the early twentieth century.[29] The photographs are likely to be staged; dancers may have paused to facilitate the task of the photographer, and the audience may have taken advantage of this moment to look at the camera, reflecting back the gaze of J. Mouratides. The dancers, the musicians, and the audience together create a sense of community, which I am viewing from a bird's eye view, along with the photographer who stands on an elevated plane to capture the scene.

Although I have seen these two postcards multiple times, I had not paid attention to their choreographic components until an ethnomusicologist colleague asked me about them. He had seen one of these images on a website about Armenian cultural heritage and was wondering which Armenian dance was represented here. In fact, the postcards have recently appeared on websites about various cultural groups from the Black Sea region, such as the Armenians, the Greeks, and the Laz. All of these websites claim that the images represent the traditions of their respective communities. My colleague and I were left wondering who owns the history represented in these postcards. Specifically, what would be the criteria to examine the participants in this frame? Do the dancers speak for a particular ethnic/racial group, or are they simply a group of dancers interested in the genre? How and why do different ethnic communities from the Black Sea region—largely marginalized politically and socially in Turkey and neglected in the mainstream folk dance literature—claim ownership of the dance

[29] In *The Colonial Harem*, Malek Alloula (1986) collected, arranged, and annotated picture postcards of Algerian women and men which French colonizers produced and circulated in the early twentieth century. He shows that the photographs served to reproduce stereotypical depictions of the East by Western colonialists; the postcards reflected a French man's "phantasm of the Oriental" (1986, 5). Mouratides represents a similar phantasm by reflecting the "colonizer's gaze" in his capture of the frame from above. As opposed to the tactility of haptic visual experience, which allows us to see the detail and the particular (Marks 2002), the optic bird's eye view aims to display and exhibit objects under examination through its holistic perspective. The experience of the colonizer thus resonates with an optic experience (Sharma 2015, 144-145).

depicted in these images?

This chapter explores these questions to problematize singular and homogeneous narratives of horon and demonstrates how marginalized communities choreograph the traditional dance to prove their nativeness in their relationship with the Turkish nationalism. It also shows that reconfigurations of the dance as an identity marker affirm members of certain ethnic communities as authentic subjects and thus create power relations and hierarchies among them. As discussed in the Introduction, since the early twentieth century, state elites have nationalized and institutionalized minority dances as symbols of a glorified Turkish past. They created new categories and criteria to define folk dance which helped them exclude these minority dances from this national repertoire or include them as representatives of a unifying Turkish national identity. In this regard, folk dances were used to prove one's imagined proximity to Turkishness, which has been constituted as both an ethnic category and a category of national citizenship.

Yet, the photographs tell us more than the relationships between nationalism, dance, and politics. The nuances of these photographs can be analyzed by using Roland Barthes' visual method of "studium" in photographic reading (1981, 26-28). According to Barthes, "studium" indicates historical, social, and cultural meanings extracted via a detailed reading of the photograph, through which one can make a larger analysis of power relations. In this sense, the two postcard photographs not only provide information about the performance of traditional dance in an Ottoman city, but also show the representation of the public sphere as a gendered space at the turn of the twentieth century. The second photograph provides no information about the place as the dance is decontextualized from its environment, while the first one indicates, through a number of houses in the background extending towards a hill in the distance, that the city is a relatively large one. In the first postcard, right behind the men's dance circle, on the second floor of a big building, two women are sitting next to the window,

their bodies across from each other, looking down towards both the camera and the men dancing below their window. Dancers, musicians, and audience members are all men, and they all look at the photographer, who is also male. Because the two women are located off the center of the frame and they are covered with white burqas which are the same color as the window frame, it is hard to recognize them at first sight. They seem like the fugitive audience of the horon performance: they are both included in and excluded from the public sphere. Their location at the margins of public space is depicted through their positioning at the window, a threshold between the inside and the outside. They do not seem to have access to the street because the building has no visible door within the frame. The Ottoman society's urban milieu is depicted as a male-dominated space in which women are involved only partially, not as active participants but as mere observers. This scene is in contrast with the current feminist recasting of horon in Turkey and women claiming the dance in the public space as a form of political participation and activist engagement with politics.

In this chapter, I approach bodies who are partially absent and marginalized in Turkey as active agents of history. In the first section, I examine the postcards described above to map minorities in Turkey's Black Sea region beginning from the early twentieth century. I analyze the fragmented data presented in the postcard, such as the image, text, musical instruments, and choreography, to discuss the cultural and political geography of the region, in which several ethnic groups claim their belonging to the nation through legitimizing their provincial horon style as the original source of the national genre. I also cite various horon narratives used as proof of such legitimacy. Next, I investigate how cultural differences are constructed and represented through minor differences in the dance technique. I use the term "narcissism of minor differences" conceptualized by Sigmund Freud (1961) to discuss how communities with similar cultures differentiate themselves from one another. Lastly, I explore how dance teachers and trainers both in Istanbul and in the Black Sea region teach

the horon to their students. Because these trainers teach the dance differently depending on what they see as meaningful choreographic units, I question which criteria are used to establish these units in multiple pedagogical contexts. For instance, how do trainers discuss the space, tempo, rhythm, gender alignments, movement qualities, music, syntax, and metaphorical imagery associated with horon? I argue that a targeted quality of expertise and virtuosity is established through the repetition of "precise" execution of movements. I call all these arrangements in folk dance education in both institutional and organizational contexts, including conservatories, private dance classes, and cultural associations, "techniques of precision," underlining exact, extremely detailed, and perfectly calculated manners. Through techniques of precision, not only do folk dance associations innovate cultural differences and deepen the existing ones, preventing marginalized communities from establishing alliances with them, but also, specific dance instructors establish their own criteria of authenticity and nativeness through the reiteration of the choreography.

Mapping Ethnic Minorities in the Black Sea

During my conversations with several members of the Laz community,[30] an ethnic group in Turkey with origins in the Caucasus, I was told that the image on the postcard shows their competency in dance. Similarly, on websites discussing Armenian cultural heritage, many people claim ownership of the postcard images, referencing the dances of the Hemşin, another Islamized Caucasus community that speaks an Armenian dialect. Moreover, both Greeks and Turks use this image in their tourism brochures and video clips highlighting their

[30] In the Black Sea Encyclopedia, Özhan Öztürk defines "Lazi" as a term that members of an ethnic community from the southwestern Caucasus and northeastern Turkey use self-referentially since the antiquity (2005, 757). According to anthropologist Michael Meeker, in opposition to this self-referential use of the word "Lazi," the word "Laz" has been used by outsiders inclined to connect various regions and peoples of the eastern Black Sea and classify them as a single group (1971, 320-321). In this text, however, I use the term "Laz" instead of "Lazi" because my interviewees have defined themselves as the "Laz" of Turkey, and occasionally the "Muslim Laz" and the "Turkish Laz."

cultural heritage. Each of these communities argues that the dance in the frame represents the virtuoso skills, strong communal ties, and courageous attitudes of their respective ancestors. How can we then analyze the image to understand and contextualize these claims?

For my analysis of the photographs, I use Gillian Rose's "critical visual methodology" (2001) by looking at the technological, compositional, and social production of the images. According to Rose, cultural significance, social practices, and power relations are embedded in the visual image, and we therefore can produce and also challenge these power relations through understanding and intervening in ways of seeing it. Following her methodology, I examine the fragments of information provided by the photographs such as the text, musical accompaniments, and choreography represented in the postcards. By analyzing these components, I not only unpack how meaning is created in these postcards but also discuss the ethnic, historical, and geographical dynamics of the Black Sea region and provide a structural analysis of horon by amalgamating the various styles seen in the region. Rather than illustrating and assessing their "truth value," I focus on deciphering the discourses they represent and reproduce, and so that Rose's critical visual method helps me to understand nuances of the dance scenes that these postcards represent.

The Caption

There are two texts on the postcards: the printed caption of the scene presented in each black-and-white photograph, and the handwritten message of the postcard owner. I am interested in the printed text because it shows a broader discursive framework by indicating the perspective of the European colonizers in the Ottoman Empire. Roland Barthes (1977) calls this type of interaction between text and image the "anchorage" (38-41), which allows reader to choose among the possible readings of the photograph, in the sense that the text fixes, or "anchors," the interpretation by naming the intended message, which is a discursive and ideological product. As such, the caption of the photograph directs the viewer towards a

pre-determined meaning of the scene.

The first postcard reads, in French, "Salut de Trébizonde: Costume National" (Greetings from Trabzon: National Costume). Although there are common features among the attire of the dancers in the photograph, such as dark-colored pants and plain tops, the clothing is not uniform, nor is it clear whose costume is being represented as the city of Trabzon is not a representative of a "nation" of the Ottoman Empire. On the second postcard, the "nation" is defined specifically, namely, "Danse Nationale Laze" (Laz National Dance). This caption leads the viewer to assume that those photographed are members of the Laz nation.

The caption which references "the Laz" is thus helpful in providing some context, showing how different ethnicities were recognized and depicted in the Ottoman Empire. The Laz are a minority population neighboring other ethnic communities in Turkey's Black Sea region, such as the Greek-speaking Pontians, the Armenian-speaking Hemşin, and the Georgians who speak Georgian language. The Laz have historically lived under the rule of several states, such as the Pontian, Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman regimes, converting from polytheism first to Christianity and then to Islam. Today, both the Christian Laz in Georgia and Russia and their Muslim relatives in Turkey speak Lazuri. From the sixteenth century until the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the northeastern Black Sea coast of Turkey was called the Laz *Sancak*, a semi-autonomous province in the Ottoman administrative system, which may be a reason why the postcard caption homogenized the dancers as members of the Laz nation.

Despite the Laz expressing their distinct cultural and linguistic features, their agency has been denied, reduced, and/or belittled in modern Turkish national narratives. The term "Laz" has been colloquially used in Turkish as a form of denigration, to indicate a person who speaks a funny dialect and acts contentiously (Meeker 2002). The Laz sociologist

Nilüfer Taşkın argues that the Laz have recently been included in the Turkish imaginary but only as part of the "national entertainment," as subjects of ridicule or as agents of music and dance (2016, 192). Through cultural denigration and also due to the impacts of an accelerating Turkish nationalism in the twentieth century, the Laz have been associated with the "not-yet" or "less than" proper Turk as Turkish ethnic identity was the norm of citizenship. Thus, minorities from the Black Sea who did not want to be considered "Laz" claimed to be Turks with regional characteristics, and distinguished themselves as being *Karadenizli* (the *Black Sea Turks*), an explicit regional classification (Meeker 1971, 322).[31] A distinct regional identity is hence used to emphasize one's "indistinction" as a proof of their belonging to the nation.

Certain minority groups further used the term "Laz" to point out their compatriots whom they thought were Islamized or Turkified. For instance, Catholic Armenians considered the Islamized Hemşin to be "Laz Armenians" (Hachikian 2007, 158). Similarly, following the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, the agreement between the Greek and Turkish nation-states made the exchange of Greek and Turkish populations compulsory (Hirschon 2003); as a result, Greek-Ottoman citizens from Anatolia were forced to leave their homeland and suffered atrocities and hardships. Yet, discrimination and difficulties in adapting to their new locales continued. In Greece, relocated Pontians were called *Lazoi*, a Greek appellation with similar derogatory connotations (Hachikian 2007, 159). Both in Turkish and Greek societies, the relocated people were labeled according to their place of origin, such as *Turkosporoi* (*Turkish seed*) in Greek, *Rum tohumu* (*Greek seed*), *gavur* (*infidel*) and *yerli*

[31] Similarly, state elites defined Kurds are as the "mountain Turks." As I mentioned in the Introduction, Kurds prioritized their language as evidence of their non-Turkishness. Consequently, the Laz have been depicted as a "domesticated other," who would not demand their cultural rights or become antagonistic to the state, as the majority of the Laz have been vocally loyal to the state; whereas Kurds have been seen as "hostile others" and the primary "internal enemy" of the Turkish state. By the mid-1990s, the Laz intellectuals and activists raised their voices against Turkish nationalist policies and have come to demand cultural rights.

(*native*) in Turkish (Iğsız 2008, 465). In both Greece and Turkey, the term "Laz" was used pejoratively also to identify populations of *mübadil*, the exchanged people.

In light of these intertwined histories of competing claims, the "anchor" of the text, "Laz National Dances," does not provide completely reliable data about the ethnic identities of the people represented in the postcard. Lazness is not only a historical and cultural phenomenon but also a discursive category and subject to power relations.

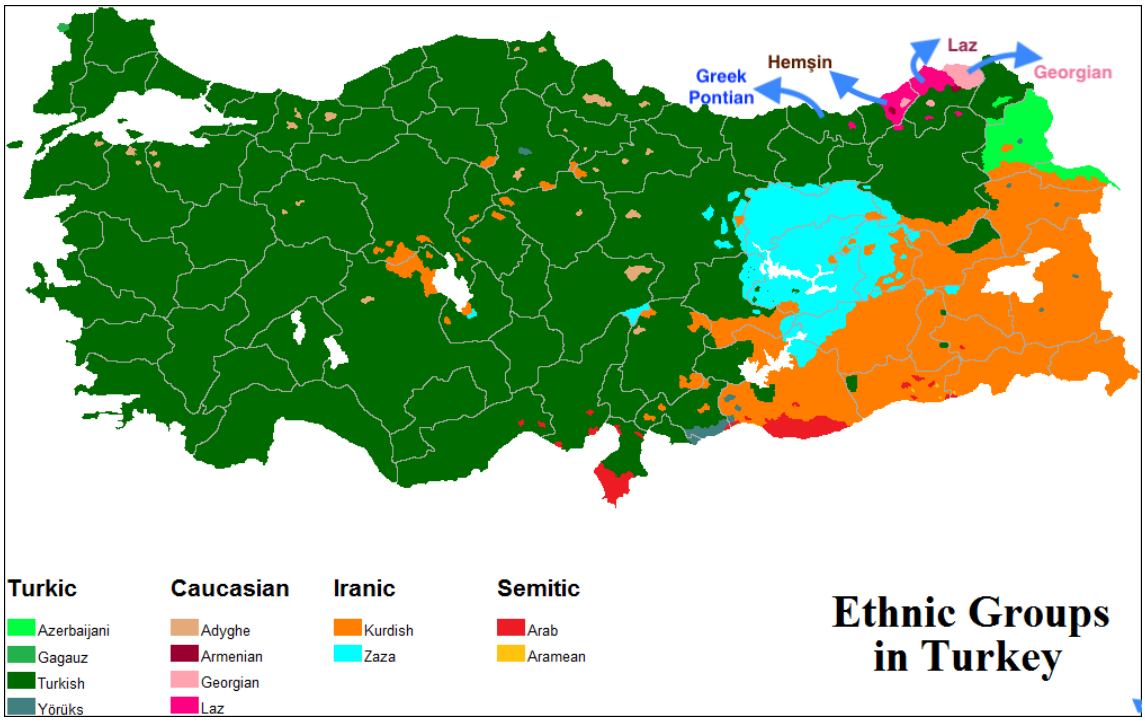

Figure 2.3: Ethnic minorities in the eastern Black Sea, including the Pontians, the Hemşin, the Laz, the Georgians, and the Turks. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minorities_in_Turkey#/media/File:Ethnolinguistic_map_of_Turkey.jpg (CC BY-SA 4.0). Author's additions are on the upper right corner of the map.

The Musical Instruments

Alongside the text, the musical instruments visible in the postcard may provide important hints to examine meanings in the image, although they are hardly recognizable. At the center of the photograph, there are two instruments: a large bass drum and a wind instrument. While several communities in the area use the big drum known as davul, my informants from both Hemşin and Pontian communities claim that the Laz do not use a wind

instrument to accompany their horons. Decoding the wind instrument may become an essential key to understanding the group, because Pontian dancers are typically accompanied by zurna, a shrill pipe, whereas Hemşin-style dances are often performed to a *kaval*, a shepherd's pipe or a double reed pipe, often found in the highlands of the eastern Black Sea and called "Karadeniz kavalı," "the Black Sea kaval." Dancers perform particular iterations of horon with musical support, and the musician changes the rhythm and musical form depending on the dancers' energy.

Different instruments correspond to the cultural-geographical context where particular horon types are performed. For example, in Trabzon province, kemençe usually accompanies horons. In highland villages of Trabzon, davul and zurna are occasionally added to kemençe. In Artvin province at the northeastern corner of Turkey, however, the accordion is more common. Tulum is widespread on the coast just past Rize, east of border with Georgia. In my interviews, performers who enjoyed dancing to the accordion expressed that they felt unable to dance to tulum or kemençe music. Similarly, dancers from Trabzon stated that they found tulum too loud as an accompaniment to their dancing and others from the neighboring town of Rize opposed this statement, as they perceived kemençe too monotonous for dancing. Such divided musical territories of horon imply historical, political, and sociological complexities in the making of cultural identities in in the Black Sea region because Turkish, Pontian, Hemşin, and Laz communities are in contest over their horon dance and music styles.

The tulum is particularly important as the most common instrument used in protests. It made of the whole skin of a goat, which is called the "bag." The openings of the neck and forelegs are tied close or are utilized for holding the pipes. A bag is usually enclosed in a cloth bag-cover, decorated with a Turkish flag in the 1960s when the tulum was played on state television for the first time. The bag is inflated by blowing air into it and played with its wooden pipe called a *nav*, which classifies it as a reed instrument (Baines 1960, 15). The reed

vibrates as air under pressure is allowed to escape through it. To produce sound in the pipes, the player presses upon the inflated bag with one arm, usually the left one. Controlling the wind in the bag requires much practice and experience. An experienced tulum player may even sing to the accompaniment of their pipes, re-inflating the bag between the verses. Tulum is often performed as a solo instrument and accompanies traditional dance and songs.[32] In his fieldwork notes from the early twentieth century, composer Adnan Saygun introduces the instrument what he calls "tulum zurna." He writes that this instrument is a conundrum which should be resolved because it did not influence any other places except the coast of the eastern Black Sea and Artvin (1937, 44). Saygun suggests supporting and disseminating the tulum, and even composes a piece for piano called *Horon* that bridges the traditional tunes with Western musical elements (1964). Despite his efforts, the tulum has not become part of the repertoire in Turkish state conservatories. The instrument continues to be learned through a master-student relationship, which paves the way for differentiation between artists, depending on the style of their teachers.

Meanings assigned to instruments in the region are often constructed through political discourses—such as, as I mentioned in the Introduction, the tulum having rebellious connotations in opposition to the kemençe, which has heavily used in pro-state events. Similarly, the accordion and the kaval have been discursively constructed as in some ways oppositional. The accordion was part of the Western musical tradition and introduced to the Turkish audience in the nineteenth century during the modernization period overseen by the Ottoman Empire. Alongside some other Western instruments like the violin and piano, the accordion was also introduced by non-Muslim populations such as Georgians, Circassians, Armenians, and Thracians, who popularized the instrument in musical productions. It was

[32] The tulum has recently begun to be examined as a scholarly topic at Turkish universities. A recent master's thesis by ethnomusicologist Oğuz Yılmaz (2017) explores the Hemşin-style tulum and offers a notation system.

eventually added to the orchestration of folk dances in the first half of the twentieth century (Albayrak 2000, 69). Unlike the accordion, the kaval has never been an urban instrument; neither was it added to the national folk dance and music repertoire. Instead, known as the shepherd's pipe, it was identified with rural life and thus considered a sign of backwardness and primitivism in the modernist discourses of the twentieth century. Because the instrument is often played to accompany the Hemşin-style horons, its links with Armenian culture resulted in its exclusion from national representations of folk dance in Turkey.

The Hemşin cultural geography covers the highlands of the major Laz towns on the eastern Black Sea coast. The Hemşin are defined by two competing ideological parties. The first group is described by a Turkish folklorist, Fahrettin Kırzıoğlu ([1986] 2014), who argues that the Hemşin were initially a Turkoman tribe which came to the Black Sea in the eighth century CE from Central Asia via the Caspian Sea over the Caucasus. The second group is described by Armenian historian Levon Haçikyan (1996), who argues that the Hemşin are one of the ancient Armenian groups who forgot their identities under the process of Turkification and Islamicization. According to him, in the eighth century CE, a noble Armenian family called Amatuni, fleeing the heavy taxes demanded by Arab rulers, came to northeastern Anatolia. The new town built by one of the sons of the Amatuni family, Hammam, was called "Hammamshen," meaning "built by Hammam" in Armenian (Simonian 2007, Alt 2005). Because the local abridgment of the name Hammam was Hamo, the community was then called "Hamo-shen" (Tom Bozigian, Personal conversation with the author, Los Angeles, February 20, 2018).

Although Hemşin is the name of a town in Rize province, the community's cultural identity is not limited to being rooted in this location (Öztürk 2005, 506). The Hemşin people in Turkey, whether or not from this town, call themselves *Hemşinli*, "from Hemşin," indicating an imaginary motherland in which a specific cultural identity has flourished. This

cultural identity is still a source of deep pride for community members. One of my interlocutors from Çamlıhemşin, Veysel, said, "They call us Laz, but we are totally different from both the Laz and the Turks of Rize, because our level of education and the richness of our culture demonstrate high civilization" (Çamlıhemşin, 7.27.2017). The people from Hemşin (and also Çamlıhemşin) are also called the West Hemşinli or the *Baş* (principle) Hemşinli in some sources (Simonian 2007). Due to the wars between Russia and the Ottoman Empire beginning in the seventeenth century, several peoples migrated from Hemşin to villages at the Georgian border, and are today called the East Hemşinli. The northwestern provinces of the Black Sea region, such as Düzce and Sakarya, also hosted Hemşin settlers due to wars and demographic regulations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Community-building in these new locations were necessary to survive at times of war and scarcity of resources as well as under increased nationalism and hatred towards "the other." Another member of the Hemşin community told me that "[t]he main occupation of the Hemşin is *gurbetçilik,*" (Vice, 3.30.2019) living in a foreign land in order to earn money for their families left in homeland.

Figure 2.4: The distribution of the Hemşin in the Black Sea region.

Ethnic groups often subjected to demographic regulations, living and working in foreign lands, and marginalized within the nation-state, such as the Hemşin, largely avoid

highlighting their distinguishing cultural features in these new locations. The Hemşin-style tuning kaval can be considered one of those cultural components signifying a presumed Armenian identity, thus disregarded until recently.[33] Similarly, Turkish and Pontian musicians, particularly those from the highland villages of Trabzon, play the davul and the [zil] zurna, as do performers in neighboring Kurdish and Armenian towns. Therefore, the musical accompaniments of horon are crucial when examining the various communities and how their cultural and artistic productions speak to the broader context of political and ethnic identities in relation to Turkish national identity; yet, the instruments seen in the postcard provide us with limited information for definitively interpreting the identities of the dancers.

The Choreography

Other aspects to consider are the choreographic patterns and structures of horon, such as the alignments, postures, and positions of the dancers in the postcard photographs. To analyze the dance scene, I would briefly explain the horon structure below by conglomerating elements from different horon styles to give a sense of a typical horon performance.

The horon circle: Participants hold each other's hands and face towards the center. In horons danced to kemençe music, hands are often held on top of each other and arms lifted; however, in Hemşin and Laz horons danced to tulum music, hands are often held palm to palm with fingers interlaced. Both in Hemşin and Laz horons, arms are usually held down at the side. Individuals equally stand next to one other. In traditional iterations of the dance, inexperienced performers such as children and neophyte dancers, practice the steps at the end of the line; they are thus placed at the farthest point from the horon leader (colloquially and locally called *horoncu*, *horanci*, or *horon vurduran* in Turkish) or they form a separate circle until they are accepted into the adults' horon. Being admitted to a horon circle is considered a

[33] Local rock groups, such as VOVA and Meluses, have recently integrated Hemşin melodies and language in their music and popularized the instrument once again.

"rite of passage," a transformative event through which young community members, particularly boys, prove that they are individuals, active agents in the public and political life of their communities.[34]

Horon structure: The major parts of a Pontian horon are *düz* (straight), *yen(i)lik* (newness), and *sert* (hard), also known as *aşağı alma* (pulling down). In Hemşin and Laz horons, the main sections are colloquially called *fora*, *savuş*, düz, and *oyna* (see below) by their local practitioners. In eastern Hemşin horons, there is an additional section which some local dancers call *tiksir* (sneeze), which is considered the cathartic moment of the dance. During a horon performance, the group changes the pace, energy, tempo, and movement patterns in accordance with the leader's called commands. These commands, which may not make literal sense but they indicate specific movement patterns, include *dök asaği* (pour down), *vur iceri* (hit-into [step in]), *al yüksek* (take up), *siya dur/çık siya* (stand/up siya), *tek bas tek* (single step), *geri bas geri* (step back), *alkış* (clap), and *sağa/sola düş/yat* (right/left fall/lie). As opposed to the staged versions of folk dances, these sections are often improvised in traditional settings and their sequences may vary. The leader's commands ideally bring energy, joy and enthusiasm by creating an effect of surprise.

Participants step once to the right and once to the left while keeping their positions during fora. Their bodies sway in a slow-paced motion, allowing a moment of rest as the arms are down. Dancers also create a bottom-up momentum by raising their knees with each step; bodies undulate in unison. In fora, singing may vary: one person sings, and others repeat each line; two or more people sing, and another pair or group of people respond; or one person sings, and others perform the chorus.

[34] Anthropologist Patricia Riak (2007) argues that by the symbolic use of the "circle as totality," circle dances are envisioned as the embodiment of secular solidarity rituals in Greece. These dances were constructed in the height of the Greek nationalism in the post-Ottoman period, so that they were imagined as the bearers of ancient Hellenistic traditions (Bottomley 1992, 219), signifying communal resistance against both Ottoman and European rules, while constructing a "heroic self" as part of this collective culture (Riak 2007, 55).

In savuş, the tempo accelerates a little and the arms come to waist level while dancers keep holding hands. The feet execute three consecutive walking steps, three to the right and three to the left. In this position, the lead dancer, the horoncu, may want to energize the dancers and command them to perform various gestures, such as clapping, tapping the ground with their toes, or raising their arms high. The highlight of this segment is the parallel arms moving to the right and to the left. Individuals may introduce their personal stylings by gesturing at the end of each sequence.

In (*al)* oyna, the arms are up and lean forward. The feet execute small steps to the right and to the left. In Laz horons, dancers step their right foot to the right and then place their left foot next to the right. They then execute the same movement with the left foot to the left. In Hemşin horons, on the other hand, when they step to the left, they execute three small steps as if bouncing on the left foot to the tempo of the music, often in double time. This three-step movement is the main difference between the Laz and the Hemşin horons in this pattern and thus defines ethnic and cultural identities. In both versions, this movement warms up the dancers, animates the participants, and facilitates finding individual as well as collective harmony and rhythm.

*İşle***,** or *içeri vur,* is a major part within the oyna segment. It is often performed fast and towards the end of the horon or before any fora segment. The arms are bent at the elbow performing an upward stirring motion; they make full and half circles in both clock-wise and anti-clockwise directions. Simultaneously, the right or left foot accentuates the first step by stomping to the front, towards the inside of the circle, and the dancer executes three consecutive steps as if running in place. When a dancer stomps, the clockwise direction of the arms is switched to the counter-clockwise for a little while and then goes back to the clockwise direction again with the running step.

Finally, the apex moment of the dance is considered tiksir (*sneeze*) in east Hemşin,

çök (collapse) in the Georgian towns of Artvin, and *aşağı alma* (take down) in Trabzon province. I call this section *tiksir* as shorthand for all three variations. Although the Turkish equivalent of the word sneeze is "tıksır" it is pronunced as "tiksir" in the local dialect which I use in this text to remain faithful to its use among the Hemşin community. In this segment, the tempo accelerates to its highest speed, during which the dancer creates a brief suspension that provides pleasure in its simultaneity with the temporary silence in music. In western Hemşin styles, this is followed by a movement where the dancers walk to the right for four counts and to the left for three counts with the addition of a bounce from the pelvis while slightly lifting the right foot up on the fourth count. In this movement, the arms go twice to the right, once to the left, and once towards the center as the dancers keep holding hands to balance and support each other's weight. This particular pattern is performed particularly in western Hemşin villages.

Improvised styling, or *çalım*: The segments described above are predetermined today when the horon is performed as a staged choreography or taught in state conservatories, dance courses, and cultural centers. In such institutional contexts, there is almost no room for the improvisation that is arguably a fundamental aspect of the horon. Many practitioners in the Black Sea locality as well as those among the Pontian migrants in Greece mentioned in our conversations that horon cannot be danced in strict unison as everyone should introduce their personality to the dance in one way or another. However, in the folk dance institutions some of these individual stylings that have been recorded through fieldwork research in different periods are coded and fixed, and added into the repertoire as "figures" to be performed by the group members in unison. Depending on the group energy, experience level of the participants, and the styling of the leader, the horon structure and components may vary. The leader decides the horon styles and their sequencing and how to make transitions to the next course of movements. Several styles may be combined together to create a flow of

the horon to answer the needs of the participants. For example, the leader may decide to make the group perform a *yüksek* (high) Hemşin style followed by a Bakoz style, a horon involving high jumps and a fast tempo, if the energy level is high enough and the group is mostly composed of young people, for instance. The same leader may decide to add a fora segment between these two styles to provide the dancers with some time to rest. When people move together, small, varying steps are often used alongside energetic jumps, hops, and bounces. These individual interpretations are locally called çalım (a Turkish word also used by the Greek-Pontian dancers) and provide the dancer with a certain degree of freedom within the technique. A range of çalım movements are recorded in traditional settings, stylized, and executed in unison as part of horon choreographies in state institutions.

In the postcard images, a viewer can see multiple çalıms and unique interpretations of each performer. Dancers stand upright in the first image and lean forward in the second, which shows a choreographic sequence of two opposite patterns, yet they all pose in different positions, showing their individuality and diverse ways of movement interpretation. Instead of all looking in the same direction, some dancers look to the right and others to the left; some put their right foot forward and others the left. Not all of them have a straight bodily posture: Some are bent at waist and others look at the ground. A folk dance teacher from Trabzon interpreted the choreographic patterns of the dancers in the photograph and depicted the scene as "something that looks like horon" (Tonya, 9.4.2018) because although the dancers seem to execute one pattern, they all perform it differently. Due to their çalıms serving as expressions of individuality and the plurality at the level of movement execution, the cultural identities are hard to identify because the dancers may or may not be part of a monolithic ethnic group.

Origin Narratives of the Horon

After examining the two postcards, the various claims of native authenticity and identification seem equally valid; however, why and how do all of these ethnic communities present the postcards as proof of belonging in relation to Turkish nationhood? How do they construct their histories to show their distinct cultural identity and national affinity through practices of horon? How do the Pontians, the Turks, the Hemşin, and the Laz imagine their communal histories, in which the horon plays a central role?

Folklorists of the early Turkish Republic often approached this question by providing "evidence" from the etymological and historical sources to "prove" the origin of horon, some of which are mentioned in the Introduction.[35] Such evidence was yet changing depending on the political trends of the era. For example, ethnomusicologist Mahmut Ragıp Gazimihal, the head of a research committee at the Istanbul State Conservatory, went to Anatolia several times to collect folk music. When he started the fourth visit on August 15th, 1929, Mahmut Ragıp was happy to finally record folk dances because a camera person also participated in their trip. In his ethnographic notes about this particular visit to the eastern Black Sea, he suggests that the origin of the horon could be a Genovese dance[36] (though, he also finds it similar to the French circle dance called "harol, or horol," which, he claims, is rooted in the word "chorea, choreola, corola" in Latin). He argues that the Greeks used the Latin word for their "horos" (1929, 86-87). A decade later, musicologist and composer Adnan Saygun (1937) also rejects the Greek origin of the word and highlights both the etymological and

[35] These researchers highlighted "scientificity" in research and analysis of folk dances and often made claims based on the scientific evidence, which were often in forms of etymological discussions, archeological facts, and mathematical ratios. For example, Metin And showed similarities to the costumes and instruments in the Neolithic city of Çatal Höyük, an archeological site in central Anatolia (1964, 7-8). Folklorists also provided mathematical evidence to compare and contrast dances. Sadi Yaver Ataman claimed that horon constitutes eight percent of all folk dances in Turkey, whereas bars are ten percent and halays are thirty percent. Ataman also argued that thirty percent of folk dances were women's dances in contrast to sixty percent of men's dances (1975, 4). However, according to Şerif Baykurt (1996), twenty percent of the dances were bar and ten percent were halay. He also claimed that men-only dances were thirty-seven (63-64). These discussions show that there was no unity in scientific method and analysis.

[36] Genovese forces created colonies on the coasts of the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, and North Africa between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries.

choreographic similarity with the French "carole" dance. Saygun also offers that the Turkish linguistic roots of the term could be "xor" or "kör," meaning chorus in long epic poetry, or "xoroy," standing in order, both in Yakut Turkish dialects (10-11). In the mid-twentieth century, the supposed European origins of horon were dismissed yet Turkish references remained. In the 1960s, Turkish scholar and folklorist Metin And proposes to investigate the meaning of the word "horon." He argues that because the word, originating from tribal Turkish dialects, refers to a collection of things, like a "bouquet of grass" used to feed animals, or a "bundle of corn stalks," its meaning fits well with the orderly organization of bodies in the dance (1964, 31). Therefore, during the first four decades of the Turkish Republic, the folklorists aimed to prove the etymological origin of the word horon by looking at the choreographic qualities of the dance, and, having at first associated the dance with a Western tradition, then depicted it as a form with a purely Turkish origin.

In addition to these expert efforts to find scientific evidence to prove the roots of the dance, myths circulating among the native communities provided another approach to the narratives of origin. Horon's etiological accounts help constitute subject positions in reference to a certain source and, as mythical accounts, they are considered "mnemonic" because they remind members of the community about their foundational story at the present moment (van Dyk, 2009). Origin myths may compete with one another and change over time as they are dependent on the contemporary context of understanding and remembering the past. The multiple origin narratives of the horon show its inherent plurality in opposition to the official narratives, which assumes homogeneity. While these formal histories are represented in the Turkish Folk Dance Federation and state conservatories as well as several folk dance clubs and associations, the multiplicity of accounts circulated among local community members demonstrates horon's diverse contexts and framings.

Turkish folk dance researchers usually claim that the horon is generated through the

dancers' imitation of the natural environment of the Black Sea region, or through an instinctual or primal behavior associated with "nature" rather than "culture" (Eroğlu 1999; Artun 2017). For instance, the pace of the dance gradually speeds up following the fora until it is suspended at the peak moment, after which it goes back to the fora in which dancers slow down and catch their breath by stepping to the right and the left until the tempo once again accelerates. This pattern of accelerating and slowing down movement creates an undulation both in the structure of the dance and in the energy of dancing bodies. Such undulation is likened to the waves of the Black Sea[37] as well as being attributed to human behaviors and personalities in the region (Trabzon Kültür Turizm 2018). As a result, conflicting qualities of human behavior are normalized as cultural characteristics of the Black Sea people as a singular entity. The inhabitants of the region are thus constructed as subjects who lack rationality because they are assumed to have impulsive or arbitrary motivations for their behavior, involving sudden ups and downs similar to those of sea waves.

Similarly, when dancers shake their shoulders and vibrate their whole body by pulling their knees back, they are considered to be mimicking the movements of an anchovy. Known as *hamsi* in Turkish, the anchovy has been the most popular fish in the Black Sea region for both local consumption and exportation since antiquity (Bauer and Doonan 2012). There is a related origin story which naturalizes dance movements as if they stem from the instinctual behavior of the fish. According to this narrative, the fish scales were shining gracefully in the sunlight, inspiring humans to move like them and emulate this effect (Ataman 1975, 71). Metin And indicates that hamsi was considered sacred in the Black Sea, and horon figures resembling the rapid movements of the fish caught in nets are residue of the prosperity rituals of antiquity (1964, 78). Also, fishing, the major source of income for many in the region,

[37] These accounts are based on my interviews conducted between May and August 2017 with horon practitioners in Turkey and Greece, particularly those from Trabzon and Thessaloniki, respectively.

requires collective labor. Turkish horon choreographer Cavit Şentürk claimed that the groups performing this type of labor also danced together in these contexts (Şentürk 2009, 19; Cavit Şentürk, Personal conversation with the author, Istanbul, May 21, 2017). These horon narratives serve to frame the national subject as a laboring, cooperative, and primal agent.

In contrast to the emphasis on nature in Turkish folk dance narratives, Greek versions of horon history underlines its relations with war and culture. According to one Greek account, the horon originates with Xenophon, a legendary Athenian commander, and his Spartan army as they danced to celebrate their victory against the Persian army in the fourth century BCE. In this period, Xenophon traversed Anatolia with his mercenary forces under the command of Cyrus, a Persian ruler who hired the Greek forces to seize the throne of Persia from his brother Artaxerxes II. However, because Cyrus was killed during the campaign, the Greek forces escaped from the Persians and fled inlands toward northern Anatolia until they finally arrived in Trabzon. When they reached the hillside of Maçka town (*Machuka* in Greek), they gave their famous cry of exultation: "Thálatta! Thálatta!" in attic Greek ("The sea! The sea!"). The Black Sea littoral towns were Greek colonies, and Xenophon's army was happy to have survived the onslaught.

Thus, they danced the horon to celebrate their survival. They came together and calmly established their horon circle. They stood up straight and began pulling up their knees. As they held hands, they raised their arms up to the shoulder height. Their stiff bodies vibrated as they moved at an accelerating pace. They performed intricate footwork by tapping their feet on the ground. Isolating the torso from the rest of the body, they executed back-and-forth shoulder swaying with ease. They pulled their knees back with subtle yet sharp gestures at an increasing tempo. If they danced before going into battle, the soldiers' stiff torso and straight arms were meant to frighten the enemy even before the fight took place. When they shook their upper bodies, the sun reflected on their metallic, lamellar armor, causing much

fear in their enemies. As they lifted their arms up high, they formed an upside-down "v" for victory, or "νίκη" (pronounced "nike") in Greek. Since then, Pontian dancers have placed their forefingers and middle fingers loosely in a resting gesture of "v" when they perform this dance that once heralded an ancestral victory (Alexandros Kevrekidis, Personal conversation with the author, Thessaloniki, August 9, 2017).

These contested Greek and Turkish accounts regarding the origin of the horon represent a dichotomy between culture and nature. In both the Greek and Turkish narratives, the horon appears to be foundational for the birth of different ethnic communities, and maintaining boundaries between them. The Greek narrative implies the significance of war and strategies of survival to establish the community whereas the Turkish account prioritizes discourses of biological essentialism in the origin myths of the dance by claiming that nature shapes human movements. By reproducing and circulating dichotomous narratives, Greek and Turkish subjectivities are constituted in opposition to each other.

The analogy with nature, which is definitive in Turkish folklore studies, is also popular in Hemşin and Laz accounts of the horon. For example, in our conversation about the Hopa-Hemşin style horon, folk culture researcher Harun Aksu argues that the dance depicts the movement of the sea over the four seasons. Each season is identified with a certain pace, energy, structure, and sequence regarding the motion of the sea. For example, tiksir represents the winter because when cold water hits one at sea they may forcefully sneeze. Harun Aksu argues that tiksir is the end of the dance pattern, and after tiksir a new year-long cycle starts because the season turns to spring. According to him, if a horon leader wants to switch the sequence to the winter season, they command *yüksek* in Turkish and *çık siya* in a Turkish-Hamshetsna mixed language particularly used in the Hopa area.[38] With this

[38] According to Harun Aksu, siya in the Hamshetsna language means the "neighborhood." In the dance, it means "altogether." The command "çık siya," implies that everybody dancing in the circle will accelerate their tempo and energy to execute the final sequence before the brief suspension at tiksir.

command, horon dancers start performing with higher energy. In the fall, nature provokes melancholy and thus the fora segment is performed with improvised poetry. The sea calms down in the summer and thus movements representing the motion of the sea become slow-paced. Yet, following the *alorta* command, dancers perform in an accelerated tempo, changing the calm climate of the summer (Hopa, 9.1.2018).

An assumed link between the features of nature and traditional dance is also popular in the Laz accounts of the horon, where the dance is considered to be a representation of pre-historic communal practices. According to İsmail Bucaklişi (2011), a Laz linguist and folklorist, the horon indicates the period before the Laz were converted to monotheistic religions under the rules of the Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman empires, respectively.[39] He argues that the horon demonstrates how the Laz developed a conscious relationship with their surroundings in this polytheistic era, because they knew how to engage with the forces of nature. After they were converted to monotheistic religions, they continued horon as a corporeal memory of worshipping. A well-known Laz singer, Volkan Konak, recites in his song *Efulim* (1993), "You will consider horon a prayer" which is often referenced by activists from the Black Sea. Therefore, horon should remind the Laz community members of a history of sovereignty, prior to the reign of empire and ensuing religious conversion. These characteristics of the Laz are in opposition to common ideas about this community in Turkey today. The Laz are often stereotyped as conservative, religious, and devoted Sunni Muslims, as well as active agents of the emerging neoliberal economy. However, Bucaklişi and several left-leaning Laz intellectuals claim that because the Laz used to perform the horon as a

[39] In the 1920s, the newly established Turkish nation-state regulated the field of religion by outlawing religious symbols and organizations while institutionalizing certain religious practices under state control. Although the constitution of the modern republic emphasized the secular character of the state, the norm has become and continues to be Sunni Islam, resulting in the marginalization of other religions and religious institutions. Before the first AKP government in 2002, election campaigns focused on and promoted "tolerance" regarding other religious practices. Following the re-election of the AKP government for the second term in 2007, the discourse has radically shifted from pluralism and tolerance to the "one religion" system privileging Sunni Islam.

nature-bound religious ritual in the polytheistic era, the re-enactment of the dance in public spaces represents their collective wisdom and capacity for self-governance, and thus symbolizes a Laz counter-movement against the hegemonic monotheism and neoliberal policies of the Turkish state. In our personal conversation, a Laz intellectual and cultural rights activist says,

> "Nature shapes the human; tough land, rough sea, harsh mountains… Well, you have to be practical, solution-oriented, and strong because you need to transform these conditions. Horon is shaped by these qualities of nature… It means "yakarış" ("orisons") [to the nature] even before the Laz, in a popular etymology. Horon is thus "ibadet" ("worship") and also "isyan" ("revolt") for us!" (Istanbul, 6.20.2017).

According to these left-leaning members of the Laz community, the dance's pre-Islamic religious role also defines its contemporary character as a resistive practice against the hegemonic religious and political system. In addition, in the twentieth century, regional imams had considered both the tulum and kemençe "sinful" instruments, and those who played these instruments or listened to such music were assumed sinners in some places. Mahmut Ragıp Gazimihal explains in his ethnographic notes that in Of, a small town in Trabzon province famous for its Islamic schools called *medrese*, the kemençe was forbidden whereas the kaval and tulum were allowed (1929, 84). Yet, in a recent anthology of tulum players from Rize, several musicians talk about how they were suppressed as musicians because the tulum was associated with improper practice violating the rules of Islam (Topaloğlu 2004, 32-37). Furthermore, in fairy tales of both Laz and Hemşin communities, people chasing the charming sound of the tulum are typically caught by non-human beings (in forms of fairies or genies) who dance the horon. If humans join the circle, they are killed during the dance. These tales advise people to avoid dancing the horon as well as chasing the sound of the tulum, or of the kemençe, although they may be very compelling. Although the horon was not officially banned, these rumors are examples of the cultural repression. Dancing the horon with accompanying instruments thus shows minority resilience against

hegemonic discourses and their ability to maintain a collective memory and practice.

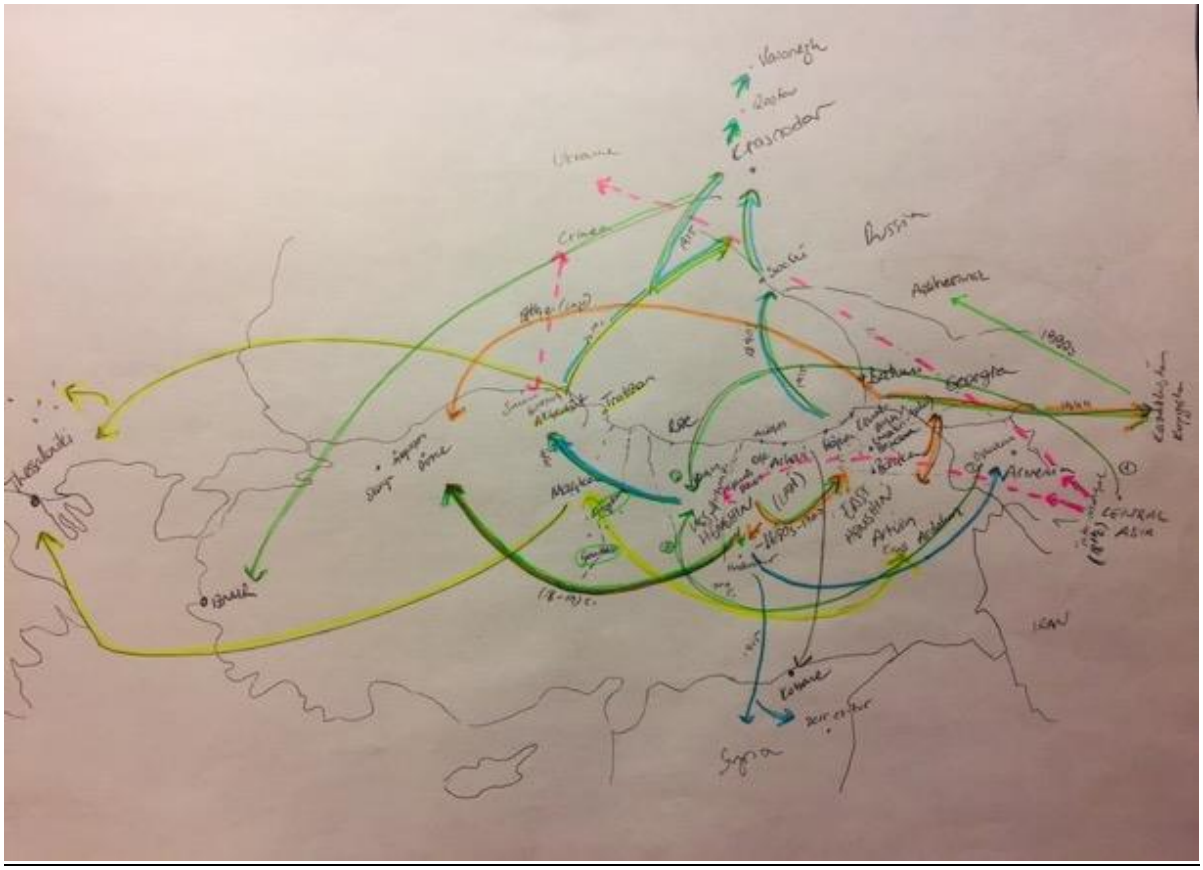

Figure 2.5: Author's map illustrating the migration of horon across borders in the Black Sea from seventeenth to twentieth centuries.

Color Codes of the Map:

- The Hemshin
- Armenians
- The Laz
- The Pontian
- Turks

The Making of Authenticity: "Techniques of Precision" in Folk Dance Training

How are these differences in terms of the choreography, musical instruments, ethnic divisions, and narratives of origin and authenticity reproduced today at folk dance institutions? How do cultural communities claim ownership of the dance by using different vocabulary for similar sets of movements? How does the construction of folk dance in relation to nature and natural phenomena operate in the shared cultural geography of the

Black Sea? In this section, I examine the ways in which state conservatories, folk dance clubs and federations, as well as alternative venues where non-conventional forms of folk dance are taught in Istanbul produce, highlight, and maintain "precision" as a technique to claim truthfulness in the representation of the respective culture.

Both in anthropology and dance studies, several scholars have elucidated how folk dances have been essential in the process of identity constitution in nation-states (Cowen 1990; Giersdorf 2013; Manos 2003; Zografou 2007). These scholars, among others, have shown how ethnic communities highlighted their cultural differences as identity markers in order to show belonging to the nation as an imagined community (Anderson 1983). This way of generating major identity distinctions out of minuscule differences in traditional dance has been discussed as a "narcissism of minor differences" in the literature about Eastern European and Greek dance traditions (Zografou and Pipyrou 2011). Although the notion of "narcissism" points toward an "overvalued self-love," the term is also used to highlight the isolation of the self (or a single community) from others around through establishing mechanisms to justify aggression towards other people (Kilstø 2007, 156).

The term has been conceptualized by Sigmund Freud in his *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1961). Building on his psychoanalytic theory, Freud used "narcissism" to analyze communities whose members are engaged in constant feuds or in ridiculing those in adjoining territories because of hypersensitivity to details of differentiation. He explains the aim of differentiating one's self from others as the humans' innate proclivity for aggression and desire for a distinct identity. Ethnic and religious communities as well as families whose members become connected through marriage think themselves superior or of better birth than others. Such groups that are in many ways alike develop hostility as they are uncomfortable with resembling each other, and thus try to differentiate themselves based on an assumed validity.

Greek dance researchers Magda Zografou and Stavroula Pipyrou (2011) discuss how the "narcissism of minor differences" can be understood in the case of Pontian dance in Greece. Pontian dances are performed in public spaces and highlight cultural differences, based on the variations that exist in the dance form as attached to a given group. The politics of minor differences prevents marginalized groups from allying by creating mechanisms of ethnic, cultural, and political divisions among them which also normalize and justify the conditions of their non-alliance. For example, I observed a wedding in Arhavi, a small coastal town of Artvin province, where the guests danced a horon style commonly performed by the Laz and the Hemşin. My collaborator, a female horon teacher and Laz activist, told me that the horon leaders were possibly coming from the neighboring town of Ardeşen because they were Laz in origin but were dancing like Hemşin whose styles are dominant in this town. She elaborated her observation by drawing my attention to how they had begun the sequence: The Hemşin swing their hands back and forth in the first two counts as they step with the right and then the left foot. However, the Laz execute only the steps and not the arm movements in the first two counts, and they begin the arm sequence at count three. Such reference to the starting point of the sequence that repeats during the dance reassures onlookers about the specificity and origins of belonging to their group. This specificity centralizes difference as a source of politics of separation, conflict, and even hostility in some cases, since each community defines itself in opposition to others (Cassia 2007; Zografou 2007).

Zografou and Pipyrou (2011) develop this idea further by arguing that the aim of differentiating the self from others may not be accomplished through conflict; rather, emphasizing difference can also facilitate tolerance and diversity in society. To prove their statement, the writers demonstrate how Pontian dance has been used to establish a unique cultural identity for ethnic groups and so has rendered plural subjectivities legible in the Greek nation-state. They claim that through greater public visibility of these dances, Pontian

community members encourage participation in the public space and use their "difference" to establish tolerance in Greek society. Unfortunately, Zografou and Pipyrou do not detail how such a system of tolerance and plurality can be constructed through dance in particular, but in what follows I elaborate on possibilities of difference through choreographic analysis. Similar to Greece, in Turkey, folk dance choreographies have been performed to both confirm historical and cultural differences among ethnic communities and also affirm a national singularity and unifying Turkish identity. Then, how do we analyze these constructions in the horon choreography?

I investigate this question by looking at the teaching practices of various folk dance instructors. Through participating in their weekly horon classes, joining their rehearsals as well as leisure dance events, watching their staged performances, and talking to both teachers and participants, I have noted a variety of pedagogic approaches and training processes. I have then examined how choreography is structured to teach the dance, as well as the use of the space, gendered bodily alignments, syntax, sequence, music and dance combination, and metaphors. My discussion demonstrates that the discourses of monolithic regionality, national unity, and cultural diversity are reproduced through repetitive acts of virtuosic and precise execution of the movements, which I call "techniques of precision." Minuscule details are highlighted in the dance technique as significant markers of cultural, political, and gender identities and thus divide marginalized communities into smaller groups based on their identitarian differences.

"Step Count Nine:" Defining the Difference

In Istanbul, I visited several folk dance institutions, clubs, cultural centers, and group dance classes as well as the Istanbul Technical University State Conservatory's Department of Turkish Folk Dances. In almost all of these places, teachers claim that the horon they teach is the most authentic one, identical to the one assumed to be performed in "the village" by

elders. The majority of these teachers invented their own norms of validity in choreographic structure and movement execution based on their nostalgic visions of the past and the rural. They differentiate "true" and "fake" ways of performing the dance, referencing these criteria of authenticity, which also demonstrate an assumed "truthfulness" or "fakeness" of the cultural community regarding their engagement with Turkish nationhood.

Ethnologist Regina Bendix argues that authenticity is a discursive formation. Her book, *In Search of Authenticity,* demonstrates that the longing for truthfulness is related to the feelings of loss inherent in modernization, and it is frequently used to foster national causes. She claims that while some cultural expressions are categorized as "authentic," and thus genuine, trustworthy, and legitimate, these categories also create the "other" of the authentic, namely, the fake, spurious, and even illegitimate (1997, 9). Similar categories also distinguish the "true" horon from the "fake" one, and the "true" ethnicity of a horon dancing community (Turkish) from the "fake" ones (others). Strict binaries of correct and incorrect dance forms govern transmission of tradition by local dance teachers. Thus right and wrong movements are mapped on to ethnic validity and thereby strengthen allegiance to a specific dance pedagogy.

In a dance class that I attended in Istanbul, for example, we learned a dance to a kemençe horon that was danced in ten counts. This class has conducted in different high school gymnasiums located in suburbs of Istanbul, which the teacher rented once a week for his horon class. In this horon, the right foot bounces as the knee pulls backward for two counts, and then the left foot bounces similarly for another two counts. The right foot taps the ground and the left foot lifts and moves forward at counts five and six until it steps forward at count seven; the right foot steps next to the left at count eight; the right foot goes forward at count nine, and the left foot goes next to it at ten. This movement cycle repeats, and the sequence is enriched with individual variations. The arms also move together by going up

and down in straight lines and by making forward and backward rowing during particular steps. In this class, the teacher approached me in the break and asked how I had learned the dance, and then he inquisitively added,

"Have you ever worked with this person as your horon teacher?"

Me: "Hmm…yeah…How did you know that?"

Teacher (proudly): "I knew it!"

Me (insisting): "Did I take a wrong step?"

Teacher (pausing, thinking): … "At count nine, you moved like the Laz!"

…

His comment drew my attention to how I executed the steps. In this class, I stepped back a half-step at count nine, which made the teacher suspicious about my identity. However, according to him I should have stepped forward at count nine in order to correctly dance like a Turk instead of a Laz. Within the given context of nationalism, "count nine" in the horon appears as a significant corporeal sign showing one's ethnic identity and specific political engagement with Turkish citizenship. Yet when I performed this forward step in another teacher's class, which is conducted in the busy Kadıköy neighborhood[40] in a private studio, he criticized me by saying that I was not dancing like a woman, who is expected to take smaller steps and go backward at count nine. I tried to adjust my steps and styling, yet in no way was I able to satisfy both my male teachers, since they differed in their interpretations of what constituted "proper" technique for a Turkish female body dancing horon.

The third horon class I participated in was at a cultural rights center also in Kadıköy. The community members gathered and socialized at the center, while also learning the horon in weekly classes. In one of the earlier sessions, I performed my forward step at count nine,

[40] Kadıköy is a neighborhood in Istanbul, near the Bosphorus, a significant natural waterway which forms part of the continental boundary between Europe and Asia. Kadıköy is considered a cultural center on the Asian side whereas Taksim is the hub of culture and entertainment on the European side of the city.

and the teacher became frustrated with me, arguing that I had not been able to learn the "real horon" even though I had visited several dance classes in town. His discomfort stemmed from the fact that I did not make a parallel step at count nine. He claimed that the horon should be danced using small, modest steps, which "naturally" motivate the dancer to take a parallel step at nine and move slightly back at ten. According to him, my arms were also completely wrong as they should have been parallel to the ground. This teacher specified that my arms should have leaned back at nine to prepare the body for the next move forward at ten—whereas the other two teachers executed a forward rowing gesture with their arms at count nine and then brought the arms back to the sides of the body at ten.

All of these instructors gave examples of the ways local elders danced to validate their claims. To show respect to the culture and represent it properly, I was told to execute my steps just like them. These teachers taught me the horon using specific gestures and attitudes in addition to precise steps and arm movements. Yet, which horon would I perform "authentically"? Which steps, styling, and arm movements make the dance a proper representation of Black Sea culture, particularly if there is no such homogeneous cultural identity? I continued to visit horon classes in Istanbul, and although I rehearsed each time before going to the class, I could not escape critique since there is great diversity within horon itself.

Gendered Bodily Alignments:

An important distinction among these three teachers is the way they consider gender alignments in the dance. In the second and third dance classes, the private studio and the cultural center, men and women dance in mixed-gender groups, and they learn identical movement sequences. However, in the first class, held in school gymnasiums, men and women perform different movement sequences in separate dance circles, and only neophyte dancers could learn the basic steps within a mixed-gender group of participants. When I first

attended this group, I danced twice a week at school gyms located on the outskirts of downtown Istanbul. After a while, the teacher allowed me to dance with the advanced group, in which I was between two male dancers to execute the common sequence before joining other female dancers to perform the women's sequence in the choreography. As I performed my assigned gender role in the dance, I was not able to learn or perform certain movements that were only taught to male dancers, such as swaying the upper body. Women's chests were not positioned in a straight position like the men's; they were slightly bent forward. This posture created an inward-looking attitude for women, whereas men were always facing forward and out. The movement sequences for men and women were routinized with extreme precision, including the specific attitudes accompanying an inward-looking posture, which was expected to be homogeneously executed to represent standard gender roles in the Black Sea region.

Figure 2.6: A horon circle in the eastern Black Sea. Oce/Yeniyol Village, Ardeşen, Rize. © Sevi Bayraktar, 8.4.2017. *Still from video*.

In her research in northern Greece, anthropologist Jane Cowan examines the social construction of gender through bodily negotiations in Greek "dance-events," which she defines as spaces of interaction where individuals publicly present themselves in and through celebratory practices, such as eating, drinking, singing, and dancing (1990, 4). These practices are evaluated by others in the community and through a series of assessment and self-assessment, practitioners construct themselves as gendered citizens. Cowan demonstrates how everyday relations and social meanings are reflected, shaped, and contested through the dance and in the settings of dance-events. For example, unlike men, who explicitly negotiate power and prestige during their performances, women's actions in a circle dance are always open to "misinterpretation" by others so that female dancers are forced to think, or "worry" about how to act (1990, 204). They are encouraged to show enthusiasm and thereby carry the risk of being criticized for showing flirtatious expressions or too much liveliness. Thus, their gendered bodies are constructed through such discursive ambivalence. Cowan's study demonstrates that in dance-events, gender and sexuality are reproduced particularly to reflect moral values such as "honor" and "shame" in Greek society. As such, women through their dance practice may reproduce or contest gendered codes of morality in their communities.[41]

In the horon courses mentioned above, women typically do not perform an ostentatious bodily presence and they do not take up space in comparison to their male counterparts: their footwork is expected to be less intricate than men's, even though they execute the same sequence; and also, their deployment of an inward-looking posture is contrasted with the upright bodily stance of male dancers. They are encouraged to use their

[41] In her comparative analysis of the indigenous moral systems, anthropologist Michael Herzfeld (1980) focuses on two rural areas in Greece and emphasizes on the nuances of the local terminology to analyze the moral values in these communities. Among these values, "honor and shame" has been exclusively attributed to the Mediterranean societies as one of their fundamental characteristics. Many Western scholars argue that these values can be homogeneously seen in every Mediterranean society. However, Herzfeld shows that what is considered as "honor" and "shame" can vary among Mediterranean societies, and in fact, these values are not exclusive to those societies and can also be seen in a wide range of other contexts outside of the Mediterranean.

hips straight, without showing much "femininity," and teachers may find hip swaying during the footwork unserious and insouciant. Moreover, assumed limitations of the female body in performing high jumps, torso swaying, and deep squats legitimize the gendered and sexualized performance of the horon as part of a "true" execution of the dance technique.

Repetition

In the aforementioned dance classes, bodily alignments also reflect certain social hierarchies. In the second and third institutions, dancers perform the same movement sequences in weekly gatherings designed for their level of skill; new dancers do not dance with advanced students unless they join the leisure-time activities of these groups. When I participated in the private studio, I immensely enjoyed learning and performing all gestures and movements "forbidden" to women in the first institution, like beginning the dance with a swaying movement. However, I was not allowed to perform with advanced dancers for a long time until I proved that I could dance well enough to express the authentic feeling of the dance. I learned how to sway the upper body simultaneously as I was stepping forward after countless repetitions until it looked "natural," meaning like a man. To achieve this arguably authentic look, I learned the technique standing and dancing in a straight line with other dancers and looking at myself in the mirror, the red tape on the floor indicating our spatial boundary. The organization of the space highlighted the discipline required to execute the dance authentically.

Such disciplined practices of precision show how authenticity is constituted at various levels in the choreography and legitimized by claims of honoring the culture that generated the "real" version of the tradition. In fact, one of my dance teachers, Burak, articulated this very point: "If you do not dance correctly, it means that you do not respect that the culture has shaped this dance and its meaning" (Istanbul, 3.15.2017). According to him, if you "damage" the dance, you "damage" the culture. To avoid this potential damage, one should

perform traditional dances flawlessly and according to standardized techniques, requiring excessive bodily discipline and hours of practice. For example, in a weekly social dance class, the students, most of whom were non-dancers, practiced how to bend their knees for hours during consecutive weeks until the gesture was executed perfectly in terms of the criteria of defined norm. In Burak's dance class, how dancers position their pinky fingers to link their hands, how much weight they would give to their knees for a perfect bouncing, how high they should elevate their feet and also find the "correct" angle are all discussed and reinforced through repetition. As such, cultural difference is constructed through repetitive acts of technical precision throughout the dance class.

Syntax and Unit(s) of Structure

The teachers in these institutions typically perform a count, where a number refers to a movement. The teacher of the first class counts to ten for a complete step sequence, yet there are no number equivalents for transitions between them, which results in an angular movement quality. Live musicians walk alongside the dancers, playing whatever the teacher wants from them at the moment and repeating the same melody countless times.

The teacher of the second class counts the dance steps only up to seven because he does not count double knee-bouncing as two separate movements. This teacher applies his own style of counting the steps based on what he considers a single movement. His use of recorded music helps dancers to adjust their steps with the beat. They altogether stand on the red tape across the mirror, lift their legs at count three, and step forward at five.

Unlike the first two teachers, the third one teaches the dance sequences holistically. He does not use musical accompaniments, but he imitates the rhythm and changes the tempo by stomping his feet. Rather than focusing on counts, he divides the dance into meaningful units based on his understanding of the structure and shows the bodily attitude and the steps together for each unit. However, these units are not immediately decipherable to a neophyte.

In one class, the teacher commanded, "right-left-together!" Everyone else immediately executed the movement, but I was confused. Shall I use the right arm or the right leg? Where do they come together? In the break, he explained to me: "It's so simple: I said, right hand and left hand come together to clap three times to the rhythm of the music" (Istanbul, 4.20.2017). The command was decipherable to me after this moment, yet the same movement phrase could have been uttered differently by other teachers who create their own standards and vocabulary based on their experience.

How to analyze folk dance structures has been a topic of debate among Turkish dance scholars. Professor Mehmet Öcal Özbilgin argues that we could use the models offered by earlier Turkish dance scholars, such as Metin And (1962, 1964), Sadi Yaver Ataman (1975), Cemil Demirsipahili (1975), and Şerif Baykurt (1976). These scholars often categorized the common dance genre of a region according to the step executions, bodily alignments, number of the dancers, whether dancers use a tool such as knives, spoons, and sticks, musical forms, and costumes. Arzu Öztürkmen (2007), however, argues that by the late 1960s movement alignments, musical forms, and costumes all started to look alike with the staging of Turkish folk dances. All folk dance choreographies used geometric shapes, stars, and circles; incorporated polyphonic rhythms implying modernity; and went to tailors in big cities who used similar textiles and colors for very different folk dance genres. Öztürkmen adopts Adrianne Kaeppler's terminology for dance analysis[42] to explore the Turkish folk dance experience because she argues that it is key to understand that in dance teaching, a morphokine, the smallest meaningful unit of dance, may have a different significance for

[42]Adrianne Kaeppler defines dividable and undividable units of dance to analyze movement systems. Among those, *kinemes* are the minimal units of movement having no meaning in themselves. A *morpohokine* is the smallest unit which has a meaning in the structure of movement systems. One cannot divide a morpohokine without changing or destroying its meaning. Organized morpohokines form *motifs***,** and a constellation of motifs can occur simultaneously or sequentially composing *chromes*. With addition of poetic and musical aspects, chromes become *phrases* and pre-set or improvised choreographies of phrases create the *dance* (2007, 49-50).

different dancers (2007, 354). She argues that urban folk dancers divide the movement into smaller parts (kinemes), which might be indivisible for a "native" village dancer to be able to convey the meaning of the movement. As a result, folk choreographies are reduced to sets of step combinations in the urban training system.

In my examples, all three teachers are male instructors from the eastern Black Sea region, now living in Istanbul. They have close ties with the area through family and friends and often participate in local celebrations and events. Although they can all be considered "native" to the Black Sea, their teaching practices are distinct from each other. They each create different units of structure: they may represent every motion with a count; they may omit some counts to create a meaningful unit of movement; or they may teach movement sequences holistically.

A fourth teacher, also native to the region who migrated back to the Black Sea after living and working in Istanbul for long years, uses another model in horon teaching which I call "building-up." I met this teacher in Arhavi; she does not have a studio or a space to conduct private or public courses, but she goes to teach when she is invited. She also teaches in activist gatherings and feminist events. She avoids claiming for a specific ethnic authenticity in her method but dances mostly Laz styles because of her familiarity with this form. This teacher foregrounds basic building blocks of a unit of movement, and starts with imitating the rhythm by tapping her foot on the floor. Then, she sings to the rhythm executed by this simple footwork to teach the fora segment. Once the group arrives at a harmonious swinging mode, she aligns the arms and commands dancers to raise them. She gradually increases the tempo until the group executes a collective suspension at the movement apex, with her command. Next, she continues with the savuş segment to let the momentum continue until she takes it once again back to the fora and performs the sequence. For her, this simple structuring of the horon, which anyone can execute on any occasion, including

protests, is a meaningful, basic unit to be taught all at once. She argues that all other nuances of the dance can be learned, differentially performed, and individually improvised in time through practice.

Metaphors Used in Folk Dance Imagery

Besides the four instructors' differential perspectives about what horon structure is and how to divide it into smaller units of movement for teaching purposes, some shared understanding of metaphor and imagery helps them convey the style and quality of movement to their students. In their pedagogy, the teachers often make analogies between an imaginary rurality, cultural essence, and dance movements such as shimmying like a hamsi caught in the fisherman's net; stomping as if dancing in a wooden house in the Black Sea highlands; gesturing as if laying the grass out to dry; or undulating the body like a sail on a rough sea.

In this regard, folklorists Ebru Olcay Karabulut and Pınar Karacan Doğan (2018) conducted research with 141 folk dance teachers in Turkey and found that the main metaphors folk dance trainers used were "love," "ambition," "life," and "harmony." Through these metaphors, the trainers emphasize the values and attitudes of happiness, excitement, and comity in relation to folk dance practice. The research results show a romantic engagement with dance since it is mostly associated with "love." A nostalgic imagery of the "true" Turkish culture rooted in nature, love, and the rural community has thus become a fundamental aspect of the precise construction of traditional dance. Moreover, to preserve a beloved culture, the dance trainers aim to maintain its integrity by inventing and deploying precise techniques to execute folk dances associated with it. Such technical precision is legitimized by the discourse of preventing the culture from being "ruined" by those who do

not "love" enough the culture. In an interview, Burak complained about how activists have changed the dance by using it as part of political protests:

> Since folk dances have become popular in protests, they have changed a lot. Activists do not know how to dance these traditional forms and make up their own styles. For example, they add "V" for victory sign during the dance, and in order to perform this gesture, they have changed the [dance] movement. In these ways, they not only ruin our dances but also actually damage our culture, even though they struggle for the recognition of cultural rights (Istanbul, 3.15.2017).

In many dance institutions as well as folk dance associations and community centers, traditional culture is perceived as a fragile, precious, and precarious entity which needs to be safeguarded through its authentic reproduction. Therefore, additions of new symbols, gestures, and movements are considered "ruining the traditional dance," or "damaging" the true essence of the culture. This is yet far from being a new phenomenon. Adnan Saygun's analyses of Rize and Artvin folk music and dances (1937) also reveal his concerns about the "loss" of folk traditions. Saygun urges folk dance teachers and trainers not to change the "authentic character" of these forms to keep them alive. In his ethnographic trip to the eastern Black Sea coastline, he puts much effort into looking for a native tulum player, but not until Borçka, a town near Artvin, was he able to find one musician who plays the tulum. He notes that young people were alas not interested in tulum, finding it "primitive." He writes,

> I sadly understood that the young people find this instrument indelicate and primitive. I encountered a similar state of mind in Bayburt as well. In fact, the youth there also found davul and zurna accompanying their bar [dance]s primitive. They either left the instrument or replaced it with violin and *ud* [a lute-like string instrument], yet this is a failure. "Halk oyunları" ("Folk dances") are only delineated with their own instruments… Black Sea horons are only and solely completed by a kemençe, [and] Artvin horon will gain its authentic character with the tulum zurna. Otherwise, a random instrument would be inappropriate and boring" (1937, 43).

Similar to Saygun, Metin And strongly disagrees with inappropriate stagings of folk dances (1964). And argues that both ballet and folk dances are organically connected to each other because folk dances utilized ballet's technique of poetic expression and ballet was enriched by folk dances. However, folk dance has turned to be a "character dance" within

ballet and "lost" its authentic quality as well as broken its ties with the national culture (1964, 105). He defines five alternative forms to adapt folk dances to the stage so as not to lose their originality: First, the "ABA type," a dance followed by another dance, which is different than the first one in terms of the alignments, use of space, tempo, and so on, before returning to the first dance. Second, the "thematic type," based on a narrative plot, related to either everyday events or heroism and myths. Third, the "repetitive type" based on the variations on one folk dance genre. Fourth, the "suite type" which is more about accompanying the music and defines a group of dances that may not necessarily be in opposition to each other. He suggests starting with a medium-paced song, continuing with a slower tempo, and ending with fast-paced music to make a suite of dances from a region or a city. The fifth one is the "broken type," although And is not clear whether this fits well into folk dance staging. He suggests using this type as a parody and experiment because the idea behind it should be the incompatibility and discrepancy of the parts of the dance (1964, 109-111). And offers these alternatives to suggest a system of adaptation which would help choreographers convert folk dances into stage products without harming their authentic qualities.

Turkish dance scholar Berna Kurt (2017) points out the relationship between the discourse of "essence" and the "anxiety" of losing it in Turkish folk dance narratives. Kurt argues that such anxiety about the "disappearance" or "degeneration" of traditional dances is often expressed as the need to preserve the national culture. Her research shows that authenticity arguments in Turkish traditional dance are often related to the power dynamics between folk dance trainers. My findings also support Kurt's observations because although units of structure are taught uniquely by different teachers, each trainer develops and disseminates their own technical criteria of performing authenticity in monochromatic and precise ways. By creating assumed criteria for dancing the "true" horon, techniques of

precision help produce and maintain hierarchies between diverse marginalized groups while preventing them from developing political alliances.

Conclusion

In the twentieth century, the horon was constructed as an "authentic" folk dance genre that was purely Turkish in origin and representative of the culture of the Black Sea that was imagined as a singular entity. Several ethnic communities that have lived in this region such as Turks, Pontians, the Hemsin, and the Laz each claimed their particular horon style as the genuine cultural product of the region, which would prove their belonging both to their own ethnicity and to the Turkish nation-state. An imagined form of cultural essentialism has been reproduced through the dance technique and choreography such that several different horon styles were considered "inauthentic," "incorrect," or "fake." By looking at how horon choreographies are taught at folk dance institutions, state conservatories, cultural centers, and folk dance associations, I investigated how "real" horon is constructed in these institutions. I borrowed Sigmund Freud's concept of the "narcissism of minor differences" to explain how discourses of difference crystallize ethnic and gender identities, divide cultures in oppositional categories, and create hierarchies among them. By showing plural histories and contested choreographies of the horon, my examples demonstrated that the "true" horon is primarily a discursive construct and thus a field of power relations. Several principles of the "Turkish folk dance" defined by the state elites of the early Republic, who had conducted ethnographic research and produced publications, are relevant sources as they are still popularly used in Turkey. Nevertheless, both young dance scholars and street activists have recently offered new questions about folk dance practice in Turkey.

I also argued that techniques of precision serve to draw boundaries between social groups and maintain historical ethnic affiliations to the "pure" version of the dance as

emblem of the community. Moreover, precision both as a choreographic technique and as the assumed evidence of purity and proper cultural reproduction is deployed depending on the criteria set by the specific dance teacher. I observed that the male horon teachers I encountered create "authentic" performances of the horon by employing their own choreographic criteria, including the use of tempo, rhythm, gendered qualities of the body, musical components, step counts, and metaphorical imagery of the body dancing the horon. Deviations from the homogenizing technique have been considered "disrespectful," "damaging," and absent of "love" or honor towards the "original" culture.

In the following three chapters, I will demonstrate how these boundaries, which are fostered through precision, are challenged, manipulated, and transformed by activist women for their political purposes, and how dissenters promote the ideas of pluralism in which differences can be performed, contested, and negotiated in a dynamic, in-flux fashion. In contrast to the homogenizing effects of the techniques of precision, the participants of political protests deploy varying styles and include distinct movement vocabularies and individualized ways of dance execution. They add new gestures or transform the old ones, complementing their political statements. Therefore, activists dismantle institutionalized techniques of precision by multiplying, manipulating, and altering the choreography by tactically using different techniques, which I will discuss in consecutive chapters as dispersal, imprecision, accentuation, and bricolage, respectively. In the immediacy of protest, activist women may take forward, backward, or parallel steps at the same count. These differences are often accepted, negotiated, or ignored but are not attempted to be homogenized as the symbolic markers of cultural difference. Along with the institutional forms of dance technique and pedagogy, I will show that activists develop their own technical and pedagogical perspectives based on "imprecisely" organized choreographic structures.

Chapter 2

Re-Choreographing the Urban Space of Protests: Dispersal and Assembly of Political Dissent in Istanbul

In the busy streets of Kadıköy in Istanbul, people are rushing from one place to another on a chilly yet sunny day in March 2017. As I am leaving behind the port where ferries dock for transportation between the Asian and European sides of the city, my feet take me towards the tiny, slightly hilly, and overwhelmingly crowded market lanes of the neighborhood. These backstreets of Kadıköy had felt unfamiliar until just a few months ago. I knew Taksim and the surrounding area on the European side very well and had had no reason to explore this neighborhood on the Asian side for many years. During the last decade, the neoliberal transformation of Taksim due to urban renewal projects resulted in increasing rents and changing demographics, which have rendered this area less affordable and compelling for grassroots communities and young inhabitants. Subsequently, cultural events, social gatherings, activist organizing, and even protests have been transferred from Taksim to Kadıköy, turning this middle-class district, which had been less familiar to many, into a new popular hub for social and political activities.

As I walk from the ferry towards the fish market, I am continuously stopped by people who are working on the presidential referendum campaigns of various political parties. In two weeks, on April 16th, 2017, people will vote on a major change in the constitution of the Turkish Republic and decide whether the political system will shift from a parliamentarian democracy to a presidential system, which could consolidate the authoritarian state regime in Turkey. Political parties have set up stands in several neighborhoods to promote their campaigns. They often have a tent, one or more tables to exhibit brochures and party emblems, and an amplifier to play songs expressing their political view. From the tents, the volunteers reach out to passersby and hand them flyers explaining

the pros and cons of the presidential system, trying to convince them to vote "yes" or "no" for constitutional change.

Leaving the port and the tents of the political parties behind, I proceed towards the first pedestrian intersection, where Betül Celep has been performing a vigil since January 23rd. At the time of my visit on March 29th, she has been there for over sixty days. Betül sits in a busy pedestrian intersection to protest her dismissal from her job along with thousands of other people as a result of the new executive order ruled by state-of-emergency decree known as *KHK*, the Turkish acronym for *Kanun Hükmünde Kararname*. By converting an everyday marketplace into a space of resistance, she aims to make her unjust discharge visible to and questionable by the public. Inspired by Nuriye Gülmen, a fired academic who staged a sit-in, despite continuous police coercion, in front of the Human Rights Monument on Yüksel Street in the capital, Ankara, Betül claimed Istanbul's Kalkhedon Square as her site of resistance. Her manifesto entitled *Kanun Hükmünde Kadınname* (*KHKadinname*, or executive woman's order) urged other people to join her action:

> "*My dear KHK friend, I know your story is not much different than mine. I also feel responsibility for your silence, loneliness, and despair. To be the voice of the people fired with the Emergency Decree, I will be at Kadıköy, in front of the church, as if I am going to work on Monday the 23rd of January. If you also come, if you lend a hand, if you tell your story! That is the way we could stop this! Or we'll lose our hope. We'll accept to be destroyed. They have stolen our jobs, let's show we won't let them kill our souls!"*[43]

…

I find Betül sitting in front of the church where four small streets intersect, creating a little square surrounded by shops and cafés. During our conversation, many people stop to

[43] For the full manifesto of Betül Celep, see https://khkadinname.wordpress.com.

read her signs, express their feelings of solidarity, or ask if she needs anything. Betül explains her manifesto to me further, arguing that the dismissal of a man is different than that of a woman because a woman experiences its consequences so much more harshly. After being fired, Betül had to move back into her parents' house. Similarly, many women who lost their jobs because of the emergency decrees had to move back their parents' houses or become dependent on their partners' salary because they lost their source of independent income. For this reason, she says,

> Women resist and also convert spaces of struggle into spaces of life. I created a life here in this square that became my home over the last months. I am coming here every day and staying until late at night. Sometimes, I come to visit, and when I see police or some other people, I get pissed off because I feel like they trespassed in my home. We are making a memory of resistance in this square, but it also feels so intimate (Betül Celep, Istanbul, 3.29.2017).

We look down the hill that I climbed up to reach her site of resistance. At the end of the street, I see the calm, blue waters of the Bosphorus. It breaks our silence when her friend comes with an *erbane*, a large frame drum often used in traditional Kurdish dances. Betül and the other women who are in the square to support her cheer up and start dancing by holding hands to constitute the dance circle. The musician friend improvises on the Kurdish song lyrics and inserts Betül's name as he praises her resistance. To execute this dance, Betül and four other women step forward four times and backward four times while bouncing their hands in double time. Passersby temporarily stop to look at them before continuing their busy lives. Since the conversation is over, I film them for a bit and then join the dance circle, holding the hand of the last woman. Together we proceed slowly around the square. As we dance to the drum's beats, our collective action features Betül's vigil and highlights this little square as a protest site.

Figure 3.1: Betül Celep (second from the right) dancing with her supporters. The banner on the floor reads, "Women are Resisting against KHKs." Betül's apron reads, "I want my job back." © Sevi Bayraktar, 3.29.2017. *Still from video*.

Betül's choice of site for her civil disobedience in 2017 needs to be understood within the recent history of public space politics in Istanbul, in which the Pride Parade of 2016 was a crucial turning point. At the time, activists were still claiming Taksim Square, an iconic center of grassroots activism in Turkey and the central space for political gatherings in Istanbul, despite their forced eviction from Taksim-Gezi Park following the 2013 Gezi resistance, one of the largest uprisings in Turkey's recent history. Pride had been celebrated in Istanbul since 2003, yet the 13th annual march in 2015 was declared illegal because it coincided with Ramadan, the holy month of fasting for Muslims, both falling in the month of June. Despite the governor's ban, participants gathered on the appointed date in Taksim, and were violently attacked and forcefully dispersed by the police. In the following year, the parade was also supposed to take place on İstiklal Avenue adjacent to Taksim Square. Citing concerns about security and public order, the then-governor of the city, Avni Mutlu, declared the 2016 Pride march illegal, which meant, once again, police violence and being taken into

custody for the activists. In response, the Istanbul LGBTI+ Pride Committee released a press statement inviting activists to "obey the call of the police" and "disperse to every single corner of İstiklal Avenue." The statement reads:

> *We are announcing, with sadness, that we will not be able to hold the 14th Pride March. But our confidence in ourselves, our horizon, and our dreams are much bigger than a march, İstiklal Avenue, this city, and this country. Our fight for existence goes beyond yesterday, today, and the future because we were here, we are here, and we will be here.*
>
> …
>
> *Police forces have told the people attempting to read a press statement during the Trans Pride March to voice their legal and political demands: "Please disperse and allow life to go back to its normal course." We are obeying this call: On Sunday, June 26th, we will disperse to every single corner of İstiklal Avenue and reunite with each other on every street and avenue in Beyoğlu. Instead of living a life that is imposed, a life that normalizes violence, oppression, and denial, we are living the life we chose, the life in which we exist with pride and honor and we are "Letting life go back to its 'normal' course" by:*
>
> *DISPERSING, DISPERSING, DISPERSING* (LGBTI News Turkey 2016).
>
> …

As Pride activists dispersed along İstiklal Avenue and its side streets, they moved from one place to another, searching out opportunities for interaction, momentary encounters, and rapid departures from police violence. As they had not been able to constitute a central assembly, these queer, trans, and feminist activists performed "dispersal" as a counter-maneuver against the forceful and violent maneuvers of the police. A month later, following

an attempted coup d'état on July 15, 2016, the right to public assembly was officially banned. The Turkish state declared a state of emergency on July 21st and extended it every three months until July 2018. In this period between 2016 and 2018, while the police continued regulating bodies in protests and inhibiting public assemblies, activists kept rehearsing dispersing themselves in public spaces to defy police violence and escape capture.

Dispersal is used both by the state forces and the dissenting activists: on one hand, the police violently block, prevent, scatter, disjoint, clear, and even "disappear" (detain, torture, and kill) activists; and on the other hand, dispersal, as a survival tactic, reveals the resilience of dissenters who continue moving, circulating, interacting, conjoining, and performing temporary, spontaneous, and momentary intersections to maintain a dynamic space for politics. I suggest that this flexibility, and also ambiguity, of the act of dispersal involves the potential for political agency.

In this chapter I examine some of the protests conducted in Istanbul between December 2016 and October 2017 during my fieldwork, such as feminist and LGBTQI+ demonstrations, anti-emergency decree vigils, and presidential referendum protests. My examples show that, as a critique of the state violence aiming to isolate people, dissenters rehearse ways to make political collectives through their corporeal and momentary actions. Being in constant motion, dispersed activists make decisions to execute improvised acts that may or may not be decipherable to the police. I argue that these kinesthetic negotiations between the state forces and dissenters in Turkey participate in Hannah Arendt's theoretical conceptualizations of "politics" and "isolation." Arendt's notion of "politics" refers to a relational space between and among humans in opposition to the demolition of such relationality by the hegemonic application of violence, insulating people. I suggest that the state's coercive use of dispersal aims to isolate people by destroying the plural and relational space of politics, and prevents them from establishing connections in the public sphere,

whereas dissenters' tactics of dispersal aim to expand the space of political action at the moment of their departure from the major assembly in order to make minor assemblies.

Dissenters' tactics of dispersal were designed to let them survive under conditions of extreme violence in the public sphere where they could exercise assembly only in small groups, "minor" or "peripheral" assemblies, instead of a large "body" of protest. I suggest that by creating and rehearsing alternative movement patterns through horon, and also halay, dance practices which I refer to in this chapter as "circle dances," dissenters have re-choreographed dispersal and assembly as subversive political acts against the coercive power of the Turkish state. In this regard, horon and halay choreographies have certain similar characteristics such as forming lines, circles, and semi-circles, having a leader, and involving songs to accompany the dance. In both types of dance, activists often carry traditional props or political signs; can individually interpret the dance movements in rhythmic harmony with others; and can enter or exit the dance anytime. I abstract these common elements of the horon and halay when I refer to circle dance. By using these dance forms, activists rehearse gathering and dispersing in the public space at the very vulnerability of protest. Each time they depart from and join in a horon group both in central and peripheral spaces, dissenters practice choreographic decisions to anticipate their next meeting at another corner and with another group of activists. To "join in" the dance, they proactively hold hands with other people, yet also consider other dancing bodies in the group who may want to dance next to their comrades or only among women. When a dancer leaves the circle during the dance, she steps back gently to make sure that the circle is not broken due to her absence. If the dance is terminated by a collective action, then activists clap and chant political slogans a few times, and disperse in different directions. Dissenters test their individual and collective movement decisions at these brief moments when they dance together until they disperse once again, either under duress, or by their own volition for tactical purposes.

How do activists negotiate dispersal, as a violent, oppressive, and totalitarian maneuver of the state? How do they expand the space of the political beyond iconic streets and squares of dissenting activism? And how do traditional dance circles enable protesters to rehearse alternative, enduring, and persistent choreographies of dispersal and assembly? To explore these topics and conceptualize my arguments, I will first map the city of Istanbul in terms of activist practices and discuss recent re-configurations of the public space under the authoritarian state regime. Next, I will discuss "tactics of dispersal" in relation to urban grassroots movements in general, and question how activists, once exiled from the symbolic center of the city, continue creating new spaces for political action in the peripheries of the central square, particularly in the relatively liberal neighborhoods that are administered by the CHP, such as Kadıköy and Beşiktaş. Building on the theories of Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben, and Achille Mbembe, as well as performance and dance studies scholars such as Judith Butler and André Lepecki, I will investigate the potentials of "dispersal" as a choreographic tactic. Lastly, I will go into dance practices in detail, and examine how activists decide to demonstrate a public presence and produce social and political meanings through horon choreographies; how they negotiate the police who also study the routes, maneuvers, and engagements of activists to anticipate their next movement; and how they find new ways of developing counter-maneuvers by persistently dispersing and assembling themselves in the public space.

Taksim Square as the Iconic Center of Political Activism in Turkey

In the nineteenth century, Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, was composed of two parts: *Pera* represented a modern public lifestyle and European culture with its wide boulevards, avenues, streetlights, and transportation facilities, whereas the historic center called Istanbul had haphazard street networks and dead-ends, aiming to protect the privacy of

the family and women in particular (Z. Çelik 1986). After the Turkish Republic was founded in 1923, Taksim, formerly named *Pera*, continued to serve as the center of secular and modern life. For example, in the 1930s, the *Taksim Club*, located in today's Gezi Park, became a popular venue for Republican mixed-gender dance parties (Bozdoğan 2001, 214). An Italian, Pietro Canonica, crafted the Republic Monument in 1928 which provided Taksim Square with its "national" aura. The 36-feet high monument depicts Mustafa Kemal, founder of the Turkish Republic, as a soldier and in modern clothes on two opposite sides, marking the square as the center of the modern and secular values of the new nation-state. In the 1930s, the state's attempts at the "Turkification" of the language resulted in changing non-Turkish names to their Turkish counterparts; thus the central avenue of the area, *Grande Rue de Péra*, became *İstiklal* (Independence) Avenue.

Figure 3.2: Postcard - Taksim Square after the inauguration of the Monument of the Republic. Istanbul Müzayede Online. https://www.istanbulmuzayede.com/en/product/341497/istanbul

This period also staged the detachment from the Ottoman past and the establishment of Turkish national culture and history. Invited to Istanbul in the 1930s, a French colonial architect, Henri Prost, rearranged Taksim as its new urban cultural center. Prost met the concerns of the Republican elites with his "open fields" plans, and he designed all open-air public spaces with three principles: environmental hygiene, ease of traffic, and modern European aesthetics (Bilsel and Pinon 2010, 116). Consequently, the nineteenth century Ottoman Artillery Barracks, known as *Topçu Kışlası*, was razed to the ground alongside the Armenian Surp Agop cemetery and Surp Kirkor Lusarovich church in 1931. In this "open field," the building of the first national public broadcasting corporation, Turkish Radio and Television, was constructed alongside luxurious hotels such as Hyatt Regency, Hilton, and Divan. A recreational park was planned in the same area. After President İsmet İnönü's visit, the park was called *İnönü Gezisi* (*İnönü Esplanade*) and later, simply *Gezi*. Adjacent to the park, Taksim Square was re-arranged as a large, open area to accommodate the Republic's public celebrations (Bilsel and Pinon 2010, 365-369). In the 1930s, paying tribute to the Monument with a wreath became a popular nation-state ceremony (Batuman 2015, 10).

Imitating the state-sponsored ceremonies, civil demonstrators with nationalist sentiments also chose Taksim to stage their protests against non-Muslim minorities living in this area—particularly Jewish, Orthodox Greek, and Catholic Armenian citizens of Turkey—in the 1940s and 50s. Such demonstrations usually began at the Republic Monument and moved down along İstiklal Street.[44] Students were the major leading group to promote Turkish nationalism through rallies in this period. University students with nationalist sentiments and those protesting the pro-American and capitalist political agenda of the ruling

[44] In the 1950s and 60s, Taksim/Beyoğlu became the city's modern public hub with its Western-style shops and theaters. The district became popular also for rural-urban migrants, who inhabited the city as the new entrepreneurs, after non-Muslim communities left Istanbul due to increased nationalism and discriminatory policies, such as: The population exchange between Greece and Turkey (1928); the "wealth tax," which were heavy economic sanctions affecting 75% of non-Muslim properties (1942-43); pogroms against non-Muslims (1955); and the policy regulations constraining the rights of Greek citizens in Turkey (1964).

Democrat Party (DP) government often met in Bayezit Square in front of Istanbul University in the historical peninsula and continued marching towards Taksim Square along the Golden Horn (Batuman 2015, 11). This trajectory had been the common route of student protests until the 1960s.

Two significant events in the history of urban social movements provided Taksim Square with an iconic status. On February 16th, 1969, leftist student groups marched once again from Bayezit to Taksim to protest the presence of U.S. Naval Forces (the Sixth Fleet) in Istanbul. A group of right-wing counter-protesters attacked the students in Taksim Square while the police just watched (Bianet 2009). Since then, Taksim Square has been claimed by the left-leaning groups as well as contemporary grassroots organizations as the major site of dissenting activism and political demonstrations. Another significant date where fatalities occurred was May Day of 1977. Large groups of protesters gathered in both Beşiktaş and in Saraçhane, on the historical peninsula, to unite in Taksim Square.

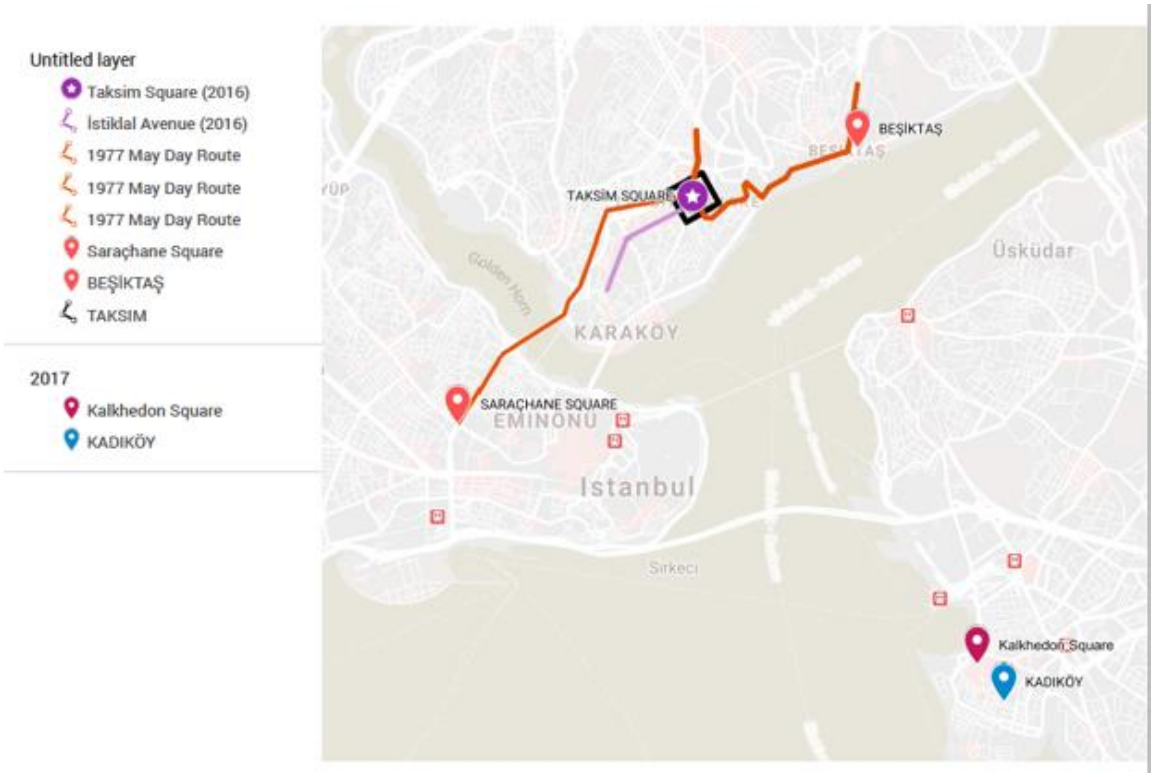

Figure 3.3: 1977 May Day procession routes and locations of recent protests in Istanbul.

As they arrived, an unknown source of gunfire suddenly dispersed the crowd; thirty-four people died, and hundreds were injured. The following year, Taksim Square was banned for May Day demonstrations, and it remained forbidden to the Left for the next three decades. The protesters kept trying to breech the ban during these decades and continuously attempted to reach the square, despite increasing police violence.

In the 1990s and 2000s, the image of Istanbul had been oscillating between its position as a global cultural capital and as prototype of an Islamic city with the rise of a new Islamic bourgeoisie. A series of massive urban renewal projects aimed to re-create Istanbul's past Islamic glory in the present (Öncü and Weyland 1997, 57). Taksim Square, a secular space "associated with the heritage of the early Turkish Republic and the high culture of European modernity" (Walton 2010), was hence imagined as the center of the neo-Ottoman Islamic city and represented the taste of the new conservative capitalist class with its emerging luxury residences and shopping malls through the transformation of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century European-style buildings. Secular public spaces and modern cultural venues symbolizing the Republican era were targeted, such as the Atatürk Cultural Center (AKM), the first modern opera building of Istanbul constructed in the 1960s. In a dilapidated state since it was closed for "restoration" in 2008, the AKM was finally completely demolished in 2018.

The Left remained largely excluded from the distribution of resources and the use of public spaces. Although May Day was officially celebrated in Taksim Square in 2010 for the first time since 1977, the May Day March in the square was banned once again in 2013. On that day, the city highways were blocked; the police formed barricades and located armed vehicles around the Republic Monument; the bridges on the Golden Horn were lifted to disconnect the historical and European districts; and public transportation, including buses, metro, and trams, stopped the night before May Day. The police brutally dispersed those who

gathered in the street through the use of high-pressured water, rubber bullets, and pepper spray. Hundreds were taken into custody as they tried to reach the square.

Three weeks later, on May 27th, a small group of activists occupied Gezi Park to stop bulldozers from razing it to the ground. The occupation turned out to be the most striking recent example of social uprisings in Turkey. It started against the government's commercial transformation plans targeting historical sites and public parks.[45] The demolition of the park was part of a government redevelopment plan that included the construction of a shopping mall and a luxury residence by re-building the Ottoman Artillery Barrack demolished in 1931. Protesters were decrying the lack of transparency about plans for the area's redevelopment and the government's authoritarian decision-making process.[46] Although the movement started against neoliberal urban policies degrading public spaces and green areas in the city, the authoritarian political practices of the government were the immediate object of the discontent (Yeğenoğlu 2013; Ertür 2014; Yörük and Yüksel 2014). As activists gathered in the park, the authorities sent riot police to disperse them. Extreme police violence paradoxically brought more people out to defend the park, and the Gezi Park movement became one of the most influential uprisings against neoliberal commercialism and authoritarian state policies in modern Turkey.[47]

[45] In the 2000s, the urban transformation projects, aimed at the physical and demographic "upgrading" of their respective areas, caused a process of property transfer, impoverishment, and displacement (Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010). Thus, neighborhood solidarity initiatives established in several areas, which organized themselves as mobile units mainly to fight for their legal rights (Kuyucu 2014). These initiatives also inspired the larger-scale urban grassroots movements and joined them when needed. One of these networks, the Taksim Solidarity Platform, opposed the Taksim redevelopment project in 2012.

[46] In May 2013, despite public opposition, a historic landmark of Beyoğlu, Emek Theatre, was demolished for the construction of a luxury shopping mall.

[47] Public surveys (KONDA 2014) showed that 51% of the Gezi protesters had participated in a social movement for the first time in their lives, and 49% decided to join the movement after seeing the police violence against protesters in the park. The protests resonated both in upper-class areas of Istanbul such as Nişantaşı and Bebek, and also in working-class neighborhoods such as Gazi, Okmeydanı, and Bir Mayıs. The majority of activists were against the top-down production and organization of the space and demanded the equal distribution of wealth and civil rights.

Exile from Taksim Square: The Re-making of Istanbul's Protest-scape

The Gezi Park resistance ended when the police violently evacuated the park on June 15th. The area has remained as a park, but with the addition of armored police vehicles located at the top of its stairs facing Taksim Square. The Republic Monument has been closed off for activist gatherings and isolated by police barricades. Any attempt towards a political appearance in the square and the adjacent İstiklal Street has been banned and met excessive force of the police. From summer 2015 throughout 2016, political instability and terror attacks in central places of the city, alongside increased authoritarianism and arbitrary violence, rendered public political actions and mass demonstrations nearly impossible in Istanbul. During the imposed state of emergency between 2016 and 2018, statutory decrees legalized arbitrary dismissals, arrests, and killings of dissenters. Since then, more than a hundred thousand civil servants have been dismissed, and all oppositional groups, including students, academics, journalists, members of parliament, notably, MPs of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), and members of civil society have been arrested.[48] By mobilizing nationalist and pro-state mass movements within a polarized society, creating the conditions for exile and deportation, and arbitrarily imprisoning members of civil society, the Turkish state created an atmosphere of permanent danger and instability underpinned by the authorities' declaration of the "state of exception."

Political philosopher Giorgio Agamben explains the "state of exception" as a "temporary suspension of the rule of law on the basis of a factual state of danger" (2005, 96);

[48] In July 2018, the emergency decree 701 removed 206 academics and 52 administrators from their positions at 63 public universities across the country. Since the 2016 coup attempt, more than 5,800 academics have been dismissed from public universities under emergency decrees. At least 378 of them had signed a January 2016 Academics for Peace petition condemning the government's draconian security operations in the Kurdish southeast (Human Rights Watch 2018). Moreover, lawsuits were filed against over a thousand academics who signed the peace petition entitled "We will not be party to this crime" on charges of "propagandizing for a terrorist organization." As of December 2018, 426 academics had stood trial and 41 of them been sentenced to 1 year and 3 months, two to 1 year and 6 months in prison, and one to 2 years and 3 months in prison. All of the sentences were suspended, except four. The trials of academics still continue (Pişkin 2018).

it is “a space without law,” “a zone of anomie” (50-51). Agamben argues that politics of death, what he calls “thanatopolitics,” is the basis of the logic of the sovereignty that is not based on managing or fostering life but bringing the sovereign power back to give death, establishing its authoritative social and political order (1998). This form of sovereign power also produces “bare life,” a human body that is killable since it is deprived of political rights and the protection of law (11). His concept of “bare life,” the life of *homo sacer*, a “life that cannot be sacrificed but may be killed” (52) refers to the outside of the rule of law. “Bare life” normally locates at the margins of the political order, yet when the state of exception expands its limits and becomes the rule itself, “bare life” coincides with the political realm and inside and outside of the rule of the sovereign power become indistinguishable. When borders of “bare life” are blurred, it becomes both subject and object of the political power. In this ambiguous space, everything that sovereign wants can happen because the state of exception becomes a judicially empty space where not only any form of violence becomes legitimate but also any action of the sovereign is considered “normal.”

In Turkey, the state of exception period was extended seven times from July 2016 to July 2018. However, the decrees and rules that were instituted under the state of emergency, such as the banning of public assembly, were legalized and constitutionalized, rendering any anti-government political gatherings or activist meetings more precarious than ever. The arbitrariness of detentions and accusations have been also normalized. For example, employees working at state institutions such as public hospitals, schools, universities, and army in addition to bureaucrats, governors, and mayors who were accused of supporting the attempted coup were discharged, and in some cases imprisoned, yet many government agents who were known to have connections with the group allegedly responsible for the attempted coup remained in their positions. The state not only targeted the assumed perpetrators of the

attempted coup, but also anti-government teachers, academics, and public service employees, who continue to suffer politico-legal persecution, criminal trial, job loss, and prison sentence.

In addition to state-of-emergency decrees which inhibited the right to public assembly, bomb attacks and explosions throughout 2015 and 2016 led to fear about public political gatherings.[49] On the day of a planned political meeting in Taksim Square, I went to meet Ayla, an environmental activist and a member of a left-wing urban grassroots organization. The tension was already high in İstiklal Avenue as many armed police vehicles were waiting in the area with their engines on, ready for action. Police barricades closed each street along the two-mile long avenue. However, during the 2013 Gezi resistance, the backstreets of İstiklal had become home to many activists, who had carefully studied its blind corners, narrow openings through nineteenth century European passages, and tricky culs-de-sac, and sussed out both friendly and hostile merchants. When I met Ayla, she was angry:

> It feels meaningless to demonstrate or march along İstiklal Avenue, because we are trapped here. They trapped us here, leaving no room to escape. You are all surrounded, and they are here to kill you. So why do you go out and walk on this street like a cage? I don't think there is a point unless you want to be killed. I don't feel excited anymore to march along İstiklal (Istanbul, 4.26.2017).

The militarization of everyday life has been fostered by the closure of the central streets and strong visibility of the police in Istanbul: armed police vehicles called "akrep" ("scorpion") strolling in the city; soldiers wearing balaclava snow masks and carrying rifles

[49] Between summer 2015 and winter 2016, *IŞİD* (ISIS/Daesh) was accused of organizing suicide bombings and mass killings particularly targeting anti-government rallies in Turkey. For example, the July 2015 attack in Suruç killed thirty-two members of the Socialist Youth Organizations Federation, who were heading to the neighboring city of Kobanî in Syria to assist in rebuilding the Kurdish town after IŞİD left it in ruins. Similarly, the October 2015 Ankara massacre, the deadliest terror attack in modern Turkey, targeted activists who joined the Peace, Freedom, and Democracy Rally organized by the HDP before the general elections in November 2015. The bomb attack killed more than a hundred people and left hundreds injured. These attacks targeted the Kurdish cultural rights movement, but they also caused a relative separation of the Turkish Left and Kurdish groups, which had constituted joint political platforms for the 2015 parliamentary elections. The terror attacks continued after the elections in November until the end of 2016 and targeted central places in Istanbul, such as the historical Sultan Ahmet hippodrome square, İstiklal Street, outside the İnönü Stadium near Taksim, and the Reina Night Club in Beşiktaş on New Year's Eve. These attacks made the public fearful about going to popular public places. The police used the pretext of security concerns to "clear" public spaces of anti-government protests, whereas pro-government groups became gradually more visible in Taksim Square through religious Ramadan activities, anti-coup celebrations, and pro-AKP meetings.

as they walk in central public streets and squares such as İstiklal Avenue; and check-points in frequently changing locations, where the police ask passersby for their identity documents for a background check, known as *GBT-kontrol* (control for "general knowledge gathering"). In addition, arbitrary bomb attacks temporarily emptied the streets and ongoing urban gentrification projects in Taksim dramatically increased property prices in downtown Istanbul. Government policies and municipal regulations against the proliferation of cultural centers, entertainment venues, restaurants, and bars changed the cultural and demographic structure of Taksim, a symbolic place highlighting the country's secularism and modern identity. As a result, many activist groups, particularly feminist and LGBTQI+ grassroots communities, experienced severe political, cultural, and economic marginalization and were exiled from the iconic Taksim Square.

Figure 3.4: Activists are exiled from Taksim Square as the Republic Monument is enclosed by police barricades. © Sevi Bayraktar, 5.2.2017.

In her study, *Performance, Space, Utopia: Cities of War, Cities of Exile* (2013), Silvija Jestrović demonstrates that spatial exclusion and marginalization as well as the activist modes of struggle were performed differently in different cities during and after the war in Balkan countries in the 1990s. She highlights how performance and theatricality became instrumentalized in various urban locations as strategies of physical and ethical survival during the war. Jestrović focuses on three cities—Sarajevo, Belgrade, and Toronto—which she defines as cities of conflict, resistance, and exile, respectively. In each case, Jestrović questions how one's relationship with the changing conditions of the urban space creates new national and political subjectivities. In Toronto, for example, exiles build new forms of interaction to relate each other and navigate within a larger urban community by using the principles of improvisation. They recreated the space through performative organization of objects and decorations to reflect upon their communal and individual memories. Jestrović thus argues that exilic collective can be possible only through fragments of personal accounts and partiality of individual relationships. Her analysis further shows that although Toronto is the main city of exile for those who emigrated during the Balkan war, the dwellers of Belgrade and Sarajevo had also experienced internal displacement because the consequence of living in these cities under war and violence was often described as marginalization within, and exodus from, the city.[50] She states that consequently, both Belgrade and Sarajevo "had established their own inner exilic spaces—their city within the city—to preserve and protect a form of urban life that had been threatened" (2013, 191). All three cases, therefore, reflect exile in one way or another and show marginalized and deported people's resilience under changing spatial conditions.

[50] In *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, David Graeber (2004) gives the example of how young people in Italy refused factory work and they established squats, occupying social centers in many cities. His approach to "exodus" is a possibility of creating alternative forms of assembly at the margins of the liberal capitalist system, which inspires my conceptualization in this chapter.

Regarding Istanbul, I build on Jestrović's conceptualization and argue that the city has not only become a "city of exile" for large groups of displaced individuals who escaped from wars, political upheavals, and authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and refuged Istanbul, but also marked with "inner exilic spaces" through which activists politicized the public space in the relatively peripheral neighborhoods, such as Kadıköy, Beşiktaş, and Bakırköy, whose municipalities are governed by the oppositional CHP. Moreover, when Gezi Park was forcefully closed in 2013, protesters used smaller neighborhood parks to conduct workshops for community building. They also held public forums in these parks to experience direct democracy and make decisions on local issues.

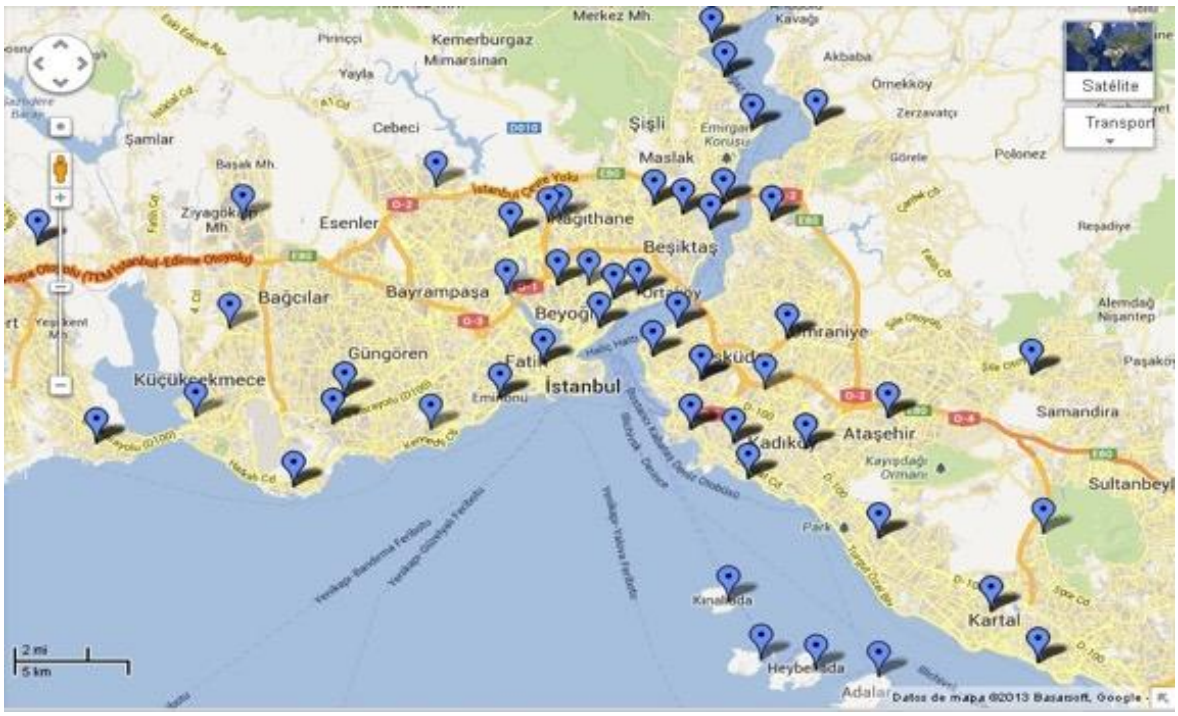

Figure 3.5: Map showing Public Park Forums in Istanbul as of June 25, 2013.
Also see "Historical Atlas of Gezi Park" resistance at
https://sinialo.espiv.net/gezi-commune/

After they were exiled again from Taksim Square, many activists went back to some of these neighborhood parks to continue their activities. Since parks could be isolated more easily compared to the streets, political action was extended to new sites, namely, transportation hubs such as piers and bus stations, pedestrian intersections, market streets, and small

squares, which could be closed off with greater difficulty. These sites became exilic spaces in which new forms of performing politics have appeared and are practiced. This was why Betül was sitting in a busy street in Kadıköy, like many other activists who found a corner of the city to call their own. By deploying circle dances, as well as trying to occupy the space these parks and streets through larger political performances, such as forums, sit-ins, vigils, and marches, dissenters expressed resilience against the centralized authority of the government. They also revealed layers of history in these new locations, by drawing attention to the attempted transformation of key city sites.

As protesters claim these new sites of resistance, they also disclose the palimpsest of Istanbul's urban history and draw attention to the erasure of its diverse landscapes. For example, because Kalkhedon Square was unknown to me before Betül began her resistance, I looked it up on Google as well as on the Istanbul Municipality website, but I could not find any square by this name on city maps. Instead, Kalkhedon was mentioned as an ancient name of Kadıköy, a Greek colony that was established in the seventh century B.C. across the Greek city called Byzantion, which is today's historical peninsula. Despite all the information, Kalkhedon Square as a present-day location did not seem to exist. Finally, I found a black-and-white photograph taken in front of the Greek Orthodox Church Aghia Ephemia of Kadıköy. This was the landmark where Betül, in her manifesto, invited people to meet. With Betül's strategic decision, the old church square, otherwise unnoticed, became part of the social memory of resistance as Kalkhedon Square. Her re-use of the space as a resistance site recognized other forms of vulnerability and greeted the non-Muslim community of the church by rendering their historical marginalization visible.

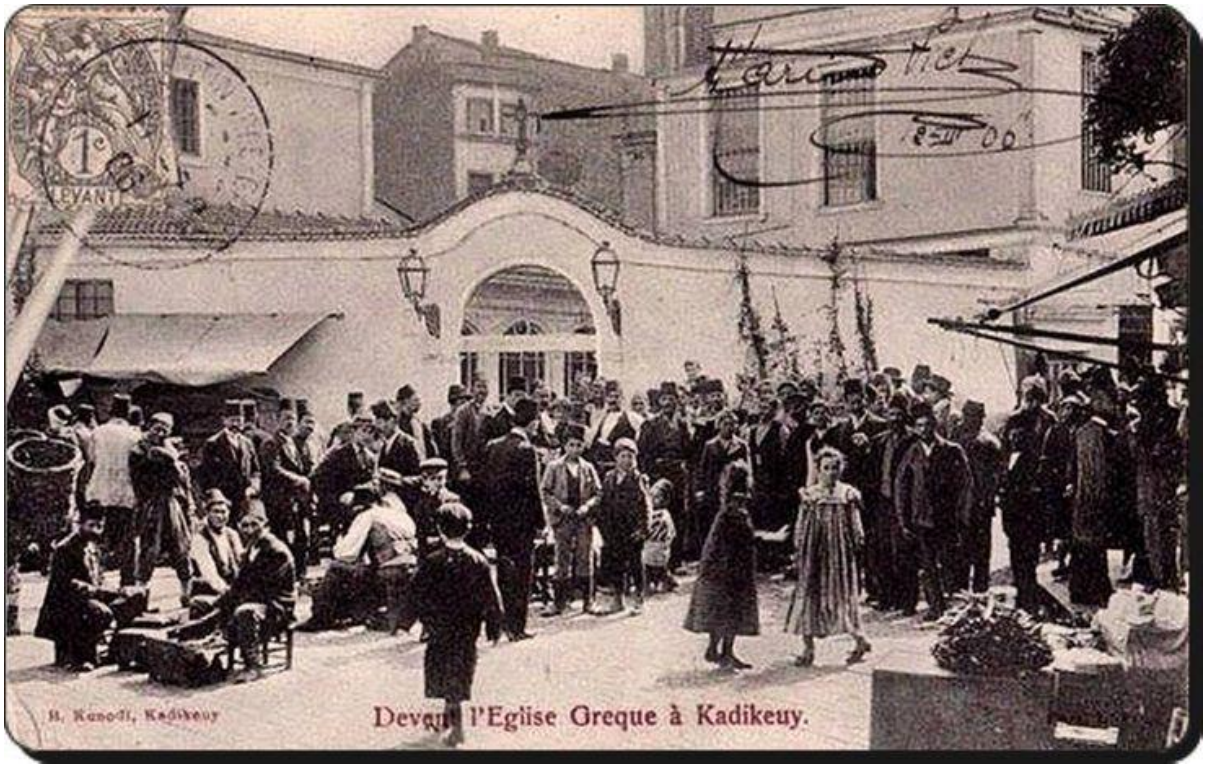

Figure 3.6: Greek Orthodox Aya Efemiya Church Square, Kadıköy, early 1900s.

In Istanbul, while activists familiarize themselves with new sites of protest outside of Taksim, they map out and rehearse new routes for performing political action. Protesters discuss how to use the backstreets to run, escape, and spread out in case the police would attack. Similarly, the police also study these new routes to be able to disperse the group even before they assemble. For example, during the demonstrations before the presidential referendum in April 2017, dissenting women from several political organizations organized a campaign entitled "Hayır Diyen Kadınlar," ("Women Who Say No"), and just used the Turkish acronym, HAYDIKA. In March 2017, the campaign had a demonstration for which I went to the meeting point as announced on social media. It was a busy street in Kadıköy with public transportation, shops, and cafés. Women met in front of Süreyya Opera House and marched along pedestrian streets towards Kadıköy pier. Instead of taking the direct route, they used backstreets and included a break in Kalkhedon Square, where the press statement was delivered, and people performed circle dances. I was experiencing this route for the first

time and wondered how activists had come up with this particular trajectory. Melek, a HAYDIKA organizer, explained to me how they had rehearsed the route while considering possible ways of evading a police attack:

> With the State of Emergency, our right to protest is suspended, and dissenting political activities are banned. Particularly whenever the women's movement goes for a protest, [the police] announce another prohibition. We have talked a lot about where to begin the march. We have discussed whether Süreyya Opera allows us to run into the backstreets to escape from the police if any violent intervention occurs. We went to the area and rehearsed it several times. We discussed it street by street: we went there and looked at which street ends up where; and then, we have decided our route for the demonstration. And, the protests continued… The police offer us other places and try to fool us. However, whenever they try to fool you, you find alternatives (Istanbul, 3.22.2018).

Volunteers from women's grassroots groups in Istanbul practiced and agreed on a route of demonstration, which also became a principal route for other activist gatherings in which I participated throughout the referendum campaign between February and June 2017. Their proposed choreography on an exilic square brought into life a new trajectory of protest as a model for future demonstrations. Moreover, by temporarily stopping at Kalkhedon Square, women recognize the place as a site of past and present vulnerabilities and resistances, and show solidarity with diverse contemporary political movements.

The police also study these new sites and routes of activism. In another protest organized to raise awareness to arbitrary dismissal imposed by the government and a consequent hunger strike performed by Nuriye Gülmen and Semih Özakça,[51] people gathered in front of the same Opera building to march to the Kadıköy pier. Their marching trajectory was almost identical to that I had experienced in the women's protest. When I went to take a photograph of the protesters from the front of the march, I took another backstreet to catch them as I knew the route they would take. Soon after I was surrounded by police, who had

[51] Nuriye Gülmen and Semih Özakça are two educators with left-leaning political views. Nuriye, an academic, and Semih, a school teacher, dismissed their jobs due to the state of emergency decrees. They initiated a hunger strike in the capital of Ankara in March 2017 and continued for 324 days. They ended the hunger strike in January 2018. Their protest mobilized a large public, but they were not reinstated.

used the same backstreet to block the protesters' pathway. As the officers were running to take the street before the protesters arrived, the demonstrators spread out and ran into other streets until they met once again in a small park located not far from where they had started their march. This park was claimed by dissenters and named after a victim of the Gezi resistance, Ethem Sarısülük.[52] The dispersed activists soon gathered there and resumed their march to the pier. The police and dissenters had been constantly negotiating the protest space through trying to decipher each other's acts and anticipate the next action.

As activists claim new sites for their urban protests, the state also develops new strategies to block their marching routes or to segregate dissenting groups and individuals in these areas. For example, the Istanbul Municipality designate certain locations for activists to perform their public assemblies and political demonstrations. This attempt is almost quarantining activists from the larger public, so that they would not "contaminate" the public sphere with their political ideas. These areas are often large, yet isolated places located on the outskirts of the city. For example, in response to the civil society demands for the 2015 May Day celebrations in Taksim Square, the Istanbul Governor's Office designated an outdoor parking lot in Beylikdüzü, two hours away from Taksim by public transportation (Diken 2015). In 2018, the Governor's Office issued a list of nine sites eligible for dissenting rallies, which did not include Taksim Square (Hürriyet Daily News 2018). These approved areas of protest were not only located far from the city center (such as those in Beylikdüzü, Maltepe, Kartal, and Pendik), but also mostly constructed through projects of land reclamation and urban gentrification, causing the dislocation and impoverishment of ethnically, racially, and economically marginalized communities in those areas. Designating these "remote" areas as sites of protest was paramount to inviting anti-government protesters to act as accomplices of

[52] Ethem Sarısülük, a 26-year-old activist and worker, was shot in the head and killed by the police officer Ahmet Şahbaz on June 1, 2013, in Ankara during the nationwide demonstrations ignited by the Gezi Movement of Istanbul. After spending fourteen days in intensive care, Sarısülük passed away on June 14th. The police officer Şahbaz was sentenced nearly eight years of prison in the court held in 2014, yet he was released in 2016.

the government's plans of dispossession. Many grassroots organizations thus refused to organize or participate in demonstrations in designated protest locations.

Moreover, even if a central area is permitted for a protest, it is often enclosed and isolated from the rest of the urban inhabitants by police barricades, which signify potential danger and emergency for protesters. In one interview, Zerrin, an independent activist, mentioned the presidential rally run by the HDP, in Beşiktaş's Barbaros Square, a large square next to a busy pier where boats run between the Asian and European sides of the city. This rally called "El Ele" ("Hand in Hand") was spatially isolated with the installation of police barricades. Zerrin went to the meeting, but instead of going inside the square, she watched it from outside the cordoned-off area. She says,

> I walked all around [the barricaded square]; there was one gate and ten police officers [at the gate]. I did not enter; it was like a cage. I was not afraid, but I felt truly sad. It was painful; I did not want to be there. Can we call this a referendum? Can we say there is no oppression? People were afraid of participating [in the rally]. There were only fifteen to twenty people inside the square, and half of them were dancing together. Tell me, if this is not a resistance, what is it? (Istanbul, 4.19.2017).

The police thus constantly created spatial divisions by isolating activists in urban space. Such spatial segregation prevented the majority of city dwellers from joining anti-government rallies. People were either afraid of being present in a political assembly due to the recent attacks, or despaired of seeing political oppression in the form of an enclosed and segregated space. As a result, many activists and grassroots communities refused to perform political protests in designated locations. As they refused to perform demonstrations in these places, dissenters dispersed towards the peripheries to continue their political activities in the inner exilic spaces of Istanbul.

"Tactics of Dispersal:" Theoretical Explorations

After violently exiled from the central Taksim Square towards its peripheries, dissenters have thoughtfully occupied new sites of protests to continue vocalizing their

political demands outside of the main square of Istanbul. Under precarious conditions of the urban space, a positive politics of dispersal provides anti-government activists a significant potential for collective agency and capacity of movement. My analysis of social choreography employs Hannah Arendt's concepts of "politics" to conceptualize and discuss the relationship between assembly and dispersal.

In *The Promise of Politics* (2005), Hannah Arendt defines her idea of "politics" as a set of conditions under which distinct individuals live together (*xxx*); a plural and relational space which can only be established "in-between humans" who "act differently" (2005, 93). Arendt criticizes Western political thought for privileging ideas over human action; in contrast, her notion of politics is based on *praxis*, the practice of acting together. In *The Human Condition* (1998), she also mentions that "politics" is based on "action" which enables humans to develop an interpersonal space through the interaction, coexistence, and association of multiplicity of diverse political practices in the public space. In Arendtian theory, such political interaction requires disclosure of preconceptions that play a significant role in everyday life and in politics. When judging and deciding, political subjects should be aware of their prejudices about the "other" because something of the past is always hidden in their prejudices (99-101). Our opinions about other subjects with whom we might interact in the public sphere, which is the space of politics for Arendt, are very much conditioned by these histories. She argues that abandoning one's biases is impossible, instead, she suggests bringing awareness and acknowledgment of their existence, which would help create plural spaces in which one can act together with another political subject. Only those individuals who are distinct yet able to move along would achieve "freedom" that is, for her, the meaning of politics (108).

Arendt also argues that modernity has lost its standards and values and became a monstrous machine against life because totalitarianism denied freedom and sacrificed it for

historical development (1998, 120), due to which the experience of politics is mediated through violence in current times. She claims that it is harder to destroy the world of relationships between the people, as they are composed of actions, than to destroy things in the world. However, once this world is destroyed, there will be no way to go back because the laws of political action are then destroyed, and, "the place of no law," or "a wasteland between men," would occur (190). The destruction of this plural space is a loss of politics, and of freedom, which Arendt calls "isolation." It is the abandonment of in-between space and refers to the "breakdown in relations" in politics, in which all violent actions proceed to annihilate also those who live outside of it (193). For her, the public sphere, where people articulate and clarify common concerns from different points of view, should be the space of equality and plurality, and this can only happen when people maintain their space in-between through moving and relating each other in alternative and creative ways against the isolating violence of totalitarianism. Arendt warns us about the immediacy of acting politically at the present moment against the devastating impacts of the rising impacts of totalitarianism.

In *Origins of Totalitarianism* (1966), Arendt continues examining totalitarian regimes and argues that the creation of fear through violence is a requirement for undemocratic systems. A totalitarian rule is supported by the mobilization of terror by governing forces, arbitrary arrests, a secret police presence, and controlling everyday life. The ruler uses police terror to destabilize all other institutions in society and spread the condition of mass atomization upon which the totalitarian movement thrives (323). A totalitarian regime completely isolates people from one another and from the outside world through such threats, prohibitions, or/and mass murder. In other words, by the use of violence and the creation of fear, these states individualize and separate their citizens, preventing them from coming together in public assemblies or creating the relationality necessary to build an oppositional politics. Arendt defines isolation as "a loss of stable social relationships, loss of common

sense. It is the desperately disorienting one of losing the company of even one's own solidarity thoughts" (474). Isolation is thus a result of terror conducted by the state and inhibits people from acting together in unison. Atomized individuals would be powerless because they cannot move together to create the space necessary for plural politics.

As opposed to these forces of "isolation," a conglomeration of individuals in a form of public assembly has been a concern of performance and dance studies scholars. Among those, Judith Butler explores agency in relation to the idea of assembly as concerted actions and unpredictable alliances of bodies in public spaces. In her conversations with Athena Athanasiou, Butler argues that moving together is possible in assembly, through which dissenters claim recognition by "being there," or appearing in public space. Their presence and amalgamation mean "we are *still* here," or, "we haven't yet been disposed of. We haven't slipped quietly into the shadows of public life" (2013, 196). In her recent work (2015), Butler argues that when people are assembled in the street, they claim their existence as a statement of plural, interdependent, and relational politics. She thus offers a performative theory of assembly through which we can examine the resilience of precarious bodies when they act together in interdependent ways.

Dance theorist André Lepecki (2013) also offers a look at the Arendtian notion of politics in relation to human movement as he explores the relationship between dance and resistance. Lepecki argues that dancing bodies move and interact with each other in a search for alternative configurations against the controlling mechanisms of power. His study shows how choreography creates particular trajectories for bodies towards freedom, which he calls "choreo-politics." These choreographies are resistive because they are inventing, activating, seeking, and experimenting with movement to exercise emancipating possibilities (2013, 20). However, its oppositional category, "choreo-policing," refers to the restrictive and oppressive force of the state and police control because the police often perform actions like imposing

blockades, channeling demonstrators, dispersing crowds, and lifting up and dragging bodies around, through which they exercise choreographic commands on the protesters' bodies in space (15-16). Lepecki conceptualizes choreo-politics and choreo-policing as a binary in which restrictive and controlling acts are in opposition to acts of freedom and emancipation.

Inspired by the Arendtian political theory, performance studies scholars have often focused on the possibilities of assembly as the manifestation of freedom, and they have not sufficiently discussed what happens when bodies are not able to gather in the public sphere due to the state's use of extreme violence. In Turkey, dissenting people have been afraid of being present in public space because of the recent detentions and fatalities. Many of them also hesitated joining in conventional forms of anti-government assemblies such as press statements, marches, and petitions due to arbitrary arrests. An enclosed or segregated space of protest has evoked recent memories of violence and death. How can we explore political agency in a scattered space where bodies are unable to assemble in traditional ways and cannot manifest their democratic rights in free means of action? How do we contextualize political action under restrictive conditions of a violent public space?

Michel Foucault's notion of biopolitics (2003, 2007, 2008) is helpful to conceptualize my discussion further. Foucault defines biopolitics as a governmental technique which refers to particular historical conditions of modernity and liberalism in which the management of populations became one of the fundamental concerns. According to Foucault, one premise of liberalism is to maintain the "naturalness" of the population as well as of the entire political economic system. According to this "empirical" norm, the population regulates itself naturally, and the liberal state, with all its institutions, needs to secure it. Hence, the population requires a security apparatus to ensure that it will work properly in the right place and at the right time (2007, 69). The calculation and management of a set of processes and procedures to govern the "naturalness" of the population are based on statistics and scientific

knowledge, which had emerged in the early eighteenth century. Natural and human sciences established "life" as the center of political strategies, which provided a ground for "biopower," power over life. The idea of naturalness and science in addition to the new truth regime of liberalism established biopolitics in the second half of the eighteenth century to treat the population as "a set of coexisting living beings with particular biological and pathological features" (2007, 367). This system did not aim to normalize one "type" separating it from the other. The social body as an independent biological corpus was naturally going to regulate itself despite risks and failures. Biopolitics then emerged as a distribution of "living" by calculating, measuring, and comparing populations, yet also allowing the removal of some elements from the population for its better functioning. According to Foucault, as opposed to the power regime of the pre-liberal times, in which the sovereign had an ultimate power performed through public punishments targeting the "deviant," and in addition to this type of force, biopolitics is the power to "make" people live and "let" them die (2003, 241).

In his study of "necropolitics" and "necropolitical power," Achille Mbembe (2003), however, argues that the sovereign power divides populations into those who must live and who can be killed according to the biological difference of race (and I would add, ethnicity). The sovereign makes such difference tangible through the use of spatial segregation as a method to create divisions among the population. In Mbembe's theorization, power "makes" populations die based on their racial differences. Mbembe's questions resonate with Judith Butler's theory of "grievability" (2009), through which she asks whose bodies are disposable and whose lives are counted as mournable and valuable in today's era of the global war on terror. While certain populations are considered worthy of life, others are at risk of disease, poverty, starvation, displacement, and of exposure to arbitrary state violence (26).

In Turkey, by dispersing the opposition, the state enacts a politics of terror and a vulgar exhibition of its power, because dispersal demonstrates how the state commands centralizing authority and can drive out opponents, showing how they're on the run, in fear, cowering, always aware of being potential detainees and murder targets. Dispersal aids in the creation of an atmosphere of repression through the regime's display of pure authority and occupation of public space by its agencies like the police and military. Simultaneously, dispersal now refers also the counter-maneuvers of dissenters, who align themselves in particular ways to proliferate politics in the public sphere. By continuously finding new ways of relating to each other under spatial constraints, dissenters in Turkey use choreographies of dispersal to create possibilities for oppositional, relational politics. Their scatterings in the city, followed by attempts to achieve solidarity through minor assemblies in remote spaces, subvert the state's moves to completely disaggregate them.

In these performances, the activists highlight mobility and ordinariness of their movements, rendering the configurations of dispersal and assembly "tactical." Michel de Certeau defines "tactics" as resistive, quotidian, temporary practices of the body, a system of "microbe-like operations proliferating within technocratic structures" (1984, 30). A tactical space cannot keep what it wins, in which sense it can never possess "property;" but it will always be "poaching" on the property of others. Fixing bodies in space allows them to be identified and targeted, while constantly circulating, unfixed bodies escape the state's radar and defy it. Dispersal, as a tactic, is a constant occupation of the space of the other. It renders bodies relational at the moment of their departure and makes ad hoc and hit-and-run types of re-assemblies possible under the dire conditions of the street.

As a tactical counter-act, dispersal resembles what sociologist Asef Bayat (2013) calls "nonmovements," which are noncentralized and distinct everyday activities performed as political struggle and agency by "fragmented and inaudible collectives" (16). In *Life as*

Politics, Bayat (2013) argues that dominant social movement theories draw on the Western experience and therefore lack in theorizing simultaneous, fragmented, and parallel practices of individual actors in non-Western contexts. By looking at the urban poor, the youth, Muslim women, and the politically marginalized in the context of the Middle East, Bayat investigates how ordinary people act politically and artfully in "times of constraints" (*xi*), and how these marginalized communities mutually recognize their commonalities in their public encounters. His examples from various Middle Eastern countries show that marginalized groups are inclined to conduct "nonmovements," because fluid, flexible, dispersed, and disparate struggles in the immediate domains of everyday life—such as in neighborhoods, workplaces, street corners, courthouses, communities, and at home—help people to struggle against the domination and control of the state. For example, in Iran, urban dwellers, atomized in their daily conduct, create what Bayat calls "passive networks" which refers to collective acts of people who did not know each other before the action. Such as, those who walk on the street together "without active or deliberately constructed networks" (2013, 63); yet, when they are confronted by a threat or police force, they convert this passive network into an active communication and cooperation. When quotidian acts are performed collectively, they serve political purposes.

Bayat argues that "nonmovements" are different than social movements. He explains that first, unlike social movements which are ideologically driven, "nonmovements" are action-oriented; they are the "collective actions of noncollective actors" (20) and mostly based on individual claims. Second, actors of nonmovements directly practice their claims despite government sanctions; therefore, unlike public demonstrations, nonmovements developed as direct action. Third, social movements go beyond the routine of everyday life, and bracket times and places for activism, with adherents attending meetings, petitioning, lobbying, marching, and so on; however, nonmovements are merged into the ordinary

practices of everyday life and they conceal a certain flow of life (20-21). Although dispersal has some similar characteristics with Bayat's conceptualization of "nonmovements," particularly with the ordinary quality of these performances, dispersed political subjects can use traditional as well as non-traditional forms of protest depending on the availability of the conditions of the street. When medium-scale or large-scale performances cannot be envisioned, horon dance collectives provide activists with an alternative to occupy the public space and mobilize the audience but these dance groups can be easily integrated into larger-scale protests, such as performing sit-ins and vigils, distributing hand-outs and flyers, making press statements, and marching, when they are possible.

Making Public Assembly via Circle Dance

Both horons and halays begin when a few people come together and hold each other's hands. They step forward and backward creating a common pattern. As others join the group, they altogether form a circle, semi-circle, or line. Individuals enter the dance by separating the hands of two people to locate themselves in the circle. As dancers typically move clock-wise, a horizontally organized, egalitarian circle structure provides equal ground regardless of gender, race, age, and ability.

The leader of the dancing group decides the next movement sequence and the level of collective energy. If the leader cannot create group coherency—by mixing up the dance steps, dancing off-beat, and so on—another person may claim the leadership by gently yet often suddenly taking the leader's hand. Individual positions may change because any person can claim the leadership at any time during the dance. To centralize focus, the leader may vary movement sequences and create surprising moments. Participants may initiate a rhythmic clapping to make the dance easily accessible to those who are not familiar with the genre. The leader may hold a

handkerchief in traditional iterations of the dance, which is often replaced by political party banners, rainbow flags, or feminine-power symbols in demonstrations.

In a protest, the dance may come to an end due to police intervention, termination of the music, or simply fatigue of the group members. If the dance is willingly ended by the participants, they finish it with an applause, a kind of a marker showing that the dance is over. This may be followed by a few political slogans, defining the statement and aims of the group. Finally, the dancers disperse and move on until they meet up again when another opportunity presents itself, perhaps with other dissenters on another street or square. The execution of such circle dances creates possibilities in which bodies can practice getting together and departing from the group as well as negotiate moving along.

(fieldnotes, Istanbul, 2.14.2017)

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In a protest in Kalkhedon Square, I encountered Aynur, a classmate from a horon class that I regularly visited. The demonstration we both participated in was a solidarity event with activist women who had been detained in the morning while they were protesting the government's silence on cases of hunger strikes, particularly the above-mentioned example of Nuriye Gülmen and Semih Özakça. Aynur and I greeted each other and stood side by side. Horon music played, but no one danced. The atmosphere of lament and uncertainty took precedence over joy and hope. Aynur and I looked at each other and invited one another to begin the dance, yet neither of us danced. Later, a Kurdish song was played, and a few women stood up to dance to the low-pitch music amplified through a megaphone. The dancers seemed mournful yet also serious and determined, with their upright chests, and faces looking at the audience who surrounded the square. A dog lay on the ground among the dancing women. They stretched their arms so as not to mistakenly step on the sleepy dog.

This unexpected guest momentarily changed the mournful atmosphere of the protest. The dancers' collaboration to find ways to solve this choreographic problem brought some humor and energy to the space. However, these activist women danced not for entertainment but for resistance, showing to the public that they were still alive, despite hunger strikes, detentions, and all the other unlawful and arbitrary actions tied to the state-of-emergency decree.

As both of the above-mentioned examples demonstrate, when there is opportunity, protesters rapidly establish a circle to start dancing although it is hard to create coherence in a few seconds with the new people who join the dance. By using folk dances, activists not only make public assemblies possible at moments of excessive violence, but they also gain skills which help them to navigate and survive in the space of protest. Dissenting women practice and assess several parameters that one needs to be aware of in protest, such as deciding the optimum duration of their participation in political action, testing their leading and following skills, and finding ways to build support at the very moment of danger. Here I ask: How do activists improvise political action as they rehearse folk dance? How do they unite, depart, and position themselves in relation to others in a dance circle? How do dissenters make assemblies and also disperse themselves against the police force?

Although traditional dance has been widely used by non-professional dancers in Turkey's political gatherings in the second half of the twentieth century, its meanings and implications have recently changed due to the violent atmosphere described earlier and the state of emergency rules forbidding activists to perform any kind of political gathering in the public space. Although public political protests were "normalized" between 2004 and 2006 when the participation in demonstrations was considered a legitimate democratic activity, and thus state forces avoided intervening in grassroots assemblies (Uysal 2017), by the second term of the Justice and Development Party government in 2007, the constitutional rights and freedoms have been significantly limited and the police force has been visibly increased in

the street. In this context, how activists created ephemeral, fluid, and temporal assemblies through their use of folk dance is a particularly significant phenomenon.

Activists mobilize folk dance for many reasons and in multiple ways. For example, Betül danced many times with those who came to Kalkhedon Square to support her. She explained to me that she danced for different purposes in each time, such as to create public visibility for her cause, express her anger, and warm up her frozen body during long hours of sit-in protest. "As you dance," she says, "You hold the hand of a person you do not know. You work with this person on something and feel enthusiastic about it, which is very powerful. You connect with a passerby for five minutes; and in those five minutes, you resist against the isolating efforts of the system" (Istanbul, 3.28.2017). When two people get together and holding hands to dance even briefly for a few minutes, they show the possibility of interacting and initiating a political assembly in the public sphere.

Yet, this is not an easy decision because of the unique character of each protest and emotions embedded in different political circumstances. In other words, to dance or not to dance in a political event is a significant choice and activist women spend time and energy to discuss and negotiate the conditions of performing dance in demonstrations. In this sense, a point of heated debate is whether to dance during times of ongoing mourning. Should activists dance horon during protests involving deep pain and lamentation? Could they perform folk dance in a demonstration against hunger strikes? Could survivors dance after losing their loved ones in tragic events targeting dissenting individuals in public squares? When and how should a protester dance, and who does make this decision?

Nora, an LGBTQI+ activist and a member of the music group *Direnişin Ritmleri* (*Rhythms of Resistance*), which only performs during protests, told me that they have been debating this in her group and sometimes taken major risks by taking part in certain events (Istanbul, 5.22.2017). For example, LGBTQI+ activist Mehmet Tarhan declared the

conscientious objection to the compulsory military service in Turkey and started a hunger strike in 2005. Nora's percussion group went to the demonstration to support Tarhan's hunger strike and decided to play their instruments during the demonstration, yet Nora still remembers how awkward she felt at the moment because the music is assumed to be a medium of entertainment. Her group members gradually solved this problem as they experienced how their music worked in different protests. In a women's march against a rape incident in one of the alleys of İstiklal Street in Taksim, Nora joined the protest and played her drum vigorously to express her anger and frustration. Later she explained to me, laughing, that many drums were broken in that evening as they played applying extraordinary force.

Similar to music, folk dance may also signify the anger and endurance of activists against necropolitical power exercised by the state. Debates about the role of dance were particularly augmented when a 2015 clip showing a group of dancing activists during Ankara massacre became viral in news and social media. As mentioned earlier, a terrorist attack during the Peace and Democracy Rally at Ankara's central square on October 10, 2016, resulted in over a hundred fatalities and hundreds of injuries. The footage demonstrated a group of dissenters dancing and singing "Placards in their Hands,"[53] an iconic song of the Left from the 1970s; while they vocalized the lyrics that went, "This is the bloody square," a dreadful explosion occurred in the background.

When this video became viral, the folk dance performed in the clip called significant public attention. A widely circulated flyer about the event read, "They were dancing," underlining the peaceful aspect of the protest in contrast to the fatal violence of the attack.

[53] The song was dedicated to those killed during the 1977 May Day demonstrations in the Taksim Square (Yasli 2015), although some sources indicate that these lyrics were written for the bloody Sunday of February 16, 1969, when students were gathered together and marched to Taksim to protest the American military presence in Turkey (Pinar 2015). To commemorate mass killings, it was written and sung by *Dostlar Korosu*, a choir composed of highly skilled left-leaning musicians under the leadership of Ruhi Su, a Turkish musician, who re-interpreted traditional monophonic songs by adding Western polyvocality.

The drawing symbolically representing the dancing group in the flyer depicted four dancers involving women and men of different ages. The man who seems like the lead dancer holds a white fabric symbolizing peace. The green and red t-shirts of the two young people at the center merge with the yellow background and hence the colors create a subliminal image of the Kurdish political movement with their reference to the colors of the Kurdish flag.

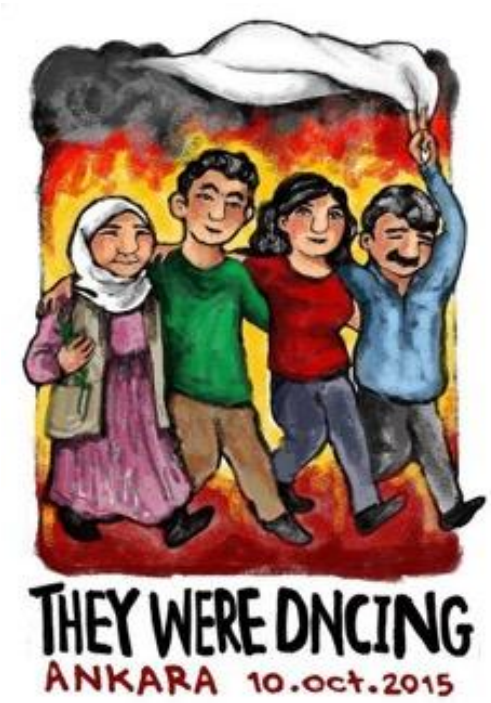

Figure 3.7: The flyer, "They were dancing," was circulated widely on social media after the Ankara Explosion on October 10, 2015. Public domain.

After this horrible incident, mourning and lamenting became dominant in public spaces of activism in urban centers. Moving the body is associated with weddings and joyful occasions, and often keeping the body rigidly immovable except for speech and lamenting is required when mourning in the Middle Eastern context. However, many activists discussed whether they should dance in order to show rage, anger, and oppression against the government, which indicated a significant change to approach mourning practice. Some dissenters supported dancing to invoke solidarity with those who were dancing and lost their lives to the terrorist act and others found dancing inappropriate in case of mourning. Along

these lines, Ayla says that they were traumatized and after the attack, in sorrow they decided not to dance in the coming demonstrations to commemorate the people who lost their lives in Ankara massacre:

> When the explosion occurred, we were caught in the middle: Should there be hope and shall we dance; or, as being sensitive to all this pain and sorrow, shall we not perform something associated with joy? We preferred the second one but we regret it because without those dances people cannot heal. Without getting together and holding hands, people cannot heal. We had experienced it, and then said, "We will not do this again…even if it explodes here today, we will come here and dance!" We came to realize that it is not about joy; it contains much anger (Ayla, Istanbul, 4.26.2017).

While Ayla supports dancing to overcome collective trauma and perform resilience, another activist, Eylem from a left revolutionary party rationalizes why she should dance in protests regardless of tragic events targeting dissenters. She has lost close, female comrades in armed attacks, and she commemorates their friendship with sorrow and pain; however, she prefers dancing in demonstrations because she thinks that her comrades would want to see her doing that—alive and resistive against duress. She says,

> Folk dance is our practice of happy days ("neşeli günler pratiğimiz"). We have a lot of reason to be depressed but we should not delve into depression. We should keep up our "happy-days-practice." Our friends who died in political actions lost their lives for us to have a smile, and I inherit what they intend to do. If all others who are in extreme danger can still smile, why do not I keep up my spirit high? (Istanbul, 4.6.2017)

Eylem suggests dancing to keep their comrades' memory alive who lost their lives during social and political movements. Yet, some activists identify dancing as an activity similar to putting one's life at risk for political reasons. An LGBTQI+ activist told me that she is persecuted and has an open court case for her folk dance practice. In a dance circle, she performed to Kurdish lyrics which she did not understand, since she only speaks Turkish. She was accused of making terrorist propaganda because the lyrics called for Kurdish independence against the Turkish state. Besides the song lyrics, people have been sentenced

to custody, imprisonment, and criminal fines because their dance could be considered "illegal" assembly (Yeni Yasam 2018; Dalgıç 2016).

Another activist from an environmental grassroots movement, also argues that folk dance is not an innocent activity, or a "comfort zone,"[54] because many people take a risk by getting together in the public space for protest purposes. I n a 2016 environmental demonstration in Istanbul to show solidarity with the local resistance against the highway construction called the "Green Road" in the Black Sea, she led a horon. They dispersed the group before police intervention and after performing the typical repertoire of a medium-scale assembly, including marching a short distance in İstiklal and making a press statement as well as dancing. Although they did not encounter the police in this demonstration, she knew that the police video-recorded her and also other activists; however, because she led the horon, she might be later prosecuted based on these video-recordings and charged with "organizing the public for making terrorist propaganda against the state," which in Turkey often ends with the arrest of the accused person. She thus associates horon in a protest context with a powerful and resistive political act, which is "similar to a sit-in protest or a hunger strike" (Istanbul, 7.21.2017).

Although dissenters usually discuss whether to dance in different political circumstances, some of those completely reject dancing during demonstrations which typically highlight mourning. For example, a feminist activist described her disappointment with those who danced during the annual march that was held to protest violence against women. Every year on November 25th, women from diverse grassroots organizations get together in Taksim Square to march along İstiklal Street. Some feminists are strongly against

[54] Laz intellectual and sociologist Nilüfer Taşkın (2016) argues that although horon dance and music have been identified with resistance by the Laz activists, both dance and music activities are not supported within the larger context of the cultural and political rights of the Laz. Taşkın argues that dance and music actually provide the activists with a "comfort zone" in which they do not claim their rights beyond the arts such as the right to education in the native Lazuri language.

the use of music and dance in the commemoration, because they argue that it is a day of lament and protesters should simply march in silence. This has been a continuous debate among women's organizations and independent feminists in Istanbul.

Therefore, dancing requires strategic decision-making and negotiations among the grassroots women in Istanbul. Some activists support the position that one should not dance at funerals or events memorializing victims of violence, whereas others suggest that dancing itself is necessary not only to heal the traumas of survivors after tragic events targeting dissenting populations, but also commemorate their comrades who lost their lives to make a world in which others could stay alive and keep dancing. While some activists are against dance at commemorations but not at hunger-strike protests, others find dancing itself similar to a symbolic hunger strike or tribute to those fallen. Dance becomes a way to demonstrate the endurance of dissenters and their capacity to assemble, despite legal prohibitions and the regulation of the police force. Regardless of their level of participation in dance, activist women discuss, strategize, and rehearse their folk dance practices aligned with specific forms of protests.

Duration

In my interviews, several women told me that while they are performing, they prefer to stay in the horon circle as long as they can. Suzi, an activist in the Kurdish cultural rights movement as well as in the labor movement, says that when she feels comfortable about the dance steps, she joins the circle and keeps going "until the end," without specifying when a dance ends in a protest. Like Suzi, Ayla also prefers to stay as long as she can, saying, "I do not leave the circle until the music is over and the group is dispersed… even if I feel short of breath, I do not leave the dance, because I do not want to give up the energy that I share with other dancing people." If people dance to music, they can either stop dancing when the music is over or they can continue dancing while singing. During May Day demonstrations in 2017

in a designated area in Bakırköy, when the music stopped, various political groups continued dancing as they sang songs compatible with the cultural history of their political organizations. For example, a leftist group was singing "Placards in their Hands," a Kurdish activist group was singing Kurdish lyrics in praise of Kurdish independence fighters, and a small group from a labor union was dancing horon as they were singing "Bella Ciao," an Italian folk song made popular during World War II internationally sung against fascism and for freedom and resistance. In none of these examples, music was a definitive variable to determine when the dance is over.

Similarly, Eylem is also unwilling to leave the circle before the dance is over. However, her motivation is somewhat different in that she does not want to disrupt the order of the circle by leaving it. If people are dancing with very high energy, she prefers not to join because she does not want to get too sweaty and then catch a cold. She prefers circle dances rather than line dances because she thinks that she can more freely enter and exit a circle dance where she is easily replaced by others. In contrast, she feels that she cannot depart from a line dance, not only because of their often complicated movement patterns, but also the alignment, which would expose her absence if she left the dance. She argues that her abrupt departure may cause confusion among her comrades and may even ruin the entire line. Eylem thinks carefully before entering and exiting the circle or line, because dancing requires considering how one's actions would influence the others in these protest formations.

Position

Activists also choose where, and among whom, they are located in a protest dance. Some activists find it safe to dance among familiar bodies, and some others prefer to dance with those they consider competent, as I will explain in more detail in the next chapter. Their engagement with other bodies is far from random as they are aware that individual decisions, such as taking leadership, may be contested or negotiated by others in a dance collective.

Similarly, people from the same political organization who dance next to each other can be separated by other dancers from a different organization joining the group. How dancers respond to each other's movements, find coherent ways of moving together, and calibrate their pace and energy mutually, as well as when, how, and how long they decide to be in and out of the dance, all provide information about the nuances of their choreographic decisions.

In these ways, activists develop a system of knowledge which is decipherable to the dancer-activists but maybe indecipherable to state agents. Equipped with such knowledge, dancers may choose whom to follow, challenge, or to hold hands with during a protest. These decisions may reflect on other individual and collective choices in political action. For each time they disperse the dance circle to meet up with others in another, dissenters reevaluate their capacities and ways of moving together with surrounding bodies. The forms of departure from the circle provide activists with information about how to disperse in the space, collaborate with other bodies, and evade capture by the police.

Members of Keskesor, a Kurdish LGBTQI+ group from Diyarbakır, favors practicing folk dance in public parks of Istanbul not only as an expression of their Kurdish ethnic identity against the homogenizing discourse of the Turkish nation state, but also as a display of their LGBTQI+ identity. Keskesor organized a Kurdish circle dance workshop in Maçka Park during the week of the Pride Parade in Istanbul in June 2017. Following the workshop, an instructor said to me, "These folk dances promote diversity and equality because one has to hold hands with the next person even if this person is a transwoman, Arab refugee, or a gay man" (Istanbul, 6.25.2017). Two group members also mentioned in our interview that by using dance lines and circles, they encourage participants to challenge themselves to move together, and hence live together, with queer and trans individuals as well as migrants, sex workers, and members of other marginalized groups in society. Keskesor activists underlined the heteronormative approach in established political groups and gave examples

from both Kurdish and Turkish leftists who are afraid of being considered gay when they hold hands with a queer/trans individual in a dance during protests. Arguing that their effort is still relevant and necessary for dissenters in Turkey, they teach folk dances particularly to activists.

To sum, in a choreography of forced dispersal, several state actors such as the police, the military, the gendarmerie, and troupes of security forces involving men with a variety of institutional titles such as private security, watchmen, plain-clothes police, and so on, block and enclose the public space and restrict inhabitants' movements in the city. The public space, including streets, squares, public roads, highways, transportation hubs, and vehicles, are being randomly evacuated and emptied. Further, activists trying to transgress those spaces are dragged, detained, maimed, tortured, and even killed. State of emergency and suspension of the law enable the police to apply arbitrary means of violence. In opposition to this type of dispersal imposed through coercion, the tactical dispersal of activists aims to develop counter-maneuvers against the hegemonic power of the state in order to reclaim and reconfigure the public space. Horon collectives help dissenters create minor or peripheral assemblies, when gathering in a massive public assembly is impossible. Following a few people initiating the dance, activists rapidly conjoin, creating ephemeral, fluid, and ever-changing horon groups in which they constantly negotiate leadership and followership as they also become familiar with each other. By learning, practicing, and rehearsing the dance over the duration of a short song, or until interrupted by a police announcement or pepper gas, activists gradually develop techniques of dispersing and assembling during each protest they participate in. Yet, the police also study these counter-maneuvers and keep finding new routes, intersections, and streets to block, enclose, and evacuate. Activist women respond to these efforts by claiming new spaces and applying novel compositional tactics to continue creating new forms of assemblies. They profoundly and critically discuss the appropriateness

of dance at funerals, hunger strikes, sit-ins, and other types of political actions, and deploy the horon in those political events to express anger, frustration, and mourning, in addition to joy as I will discuss in the next chapter.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the spatial history of dissenting activism and social movements in Istanbul before and after the Gezi Park movement, one of the most influential uprisings of recent years. Following this social movement, the Taksim area was closed to dissenting political protests, and through the declaration of the state of emergency in July 2016, those restrictions were legalized and legitimized, leaving no room for political assemblies in the public space. Dissenters were then forcefully and violently exiled from Taksim Square, the symbolic center of left-leaning and other dissenting movements in Turkey. I used Silvija Jestrovic's conceptualization of "exilic" and "inner exilic" urban spaces to argue that the activists created new sites of resistance in the peripheries of Taksim Square and dispersed urban grassroots activism to other parts of the city. By converting everyday locations into places of protest, dissenters reconstituted the space of the political resistance in neighborhood parks and pedestrian intersections, in front of cafés and teahouses, at piers, and in narrow market streets and small squares. In this context, gathering in folk dance collectives allowed them to develop alternative forms of assemblies in a dispersed and vulnerable public space.

I used Hannah Arendt's notions of "politics" and "isolation" to conceptualize premises of politics to make people act and interact in the public sphere against a centralized and populist state regime applying extensive amount of coercive power. In an Arendtian account, while politics refers to a space that occurs among distinct individuals who are able to act together, "isolation" is defined as the lack of this kind of relational space. Arendt

reminds us that to eliminate "isolation" prompted by the state agents, diverse political subjects should create a space for plural politics through the multiplicity of their actions.

I investigated how dissenting actors of the public space proliferate "politics" against fatal attempts to "isolate." To analyze how dissenters tactically used the isolating technique of the police and dispersed themselves in the public space, I suggested "tactics of dispersal" as a concept to underscore the dissenters' tactical use of the state's choreographic strategy to survive under the dire conditions of the street. Dissenters are capable of creating a relational space by continuously dispersing themselves and gathering again through folk dance circles at another corner and with another group of dissenters. My conceptualization of "tactics of dispersal" hence refers to the body's constant thinking in motion and finding new ways of making the separation of bodies a relational practice. The unique characteristic of dispersal is its simultaneous reference to the violent maneuvers of the state that separates, segregates, makes populations live or die differentially, and the counter-maneuvers of dissenters who maintain the plural space of politics against isolation. I argued that this bilateral, ambiguous, and flexible structure of dispersal creates potential for collective agency.

I also showed how folk dance performances are discussed and negotiated by dissenting grassroots women who make strategic decisions about the dance after considering the particularities of the protest such as whether it is a mourning, a tragic event, or a hunger-strike in which dancing may or may not be well received. I also analyzed the ways in which folk dances facilitate and develop corporeal responses to spontaneous movements at the moment of social action. Being part of a dance collective requires considerable decision-making, such as when to join in and depart from the circle or line, how long to keep dancing, among whom to dance, whether to lead or follow, whose hand to hold and for how long, how to vary styling, pace, and energy to be in unison with the group, and how much effort to exert in order to develop and maintain coherence and unity. These decisions are made both

individually and collectively during the dance through which activists rehearse making immediate, thoughtful, and meaningful decisions in protest. Temporality, spatial configurations, and the arrangement of bodies change each time protesters gather to form a dance circle. Finally, I demonstrated how activist-dancers explore the space and rehearse taking spontaneous choreographic acts to foster tactical interventions and internal support in moments of assembly and dispersal.

Chapter 3

"Techniques of Imprecision:" Choreographing Agonism through Circle Dance in Women's Grassroots Movements in Istanbul

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Figure 4.1: Women dancing horon during the "No-To-Presidency" Rally in Kadıköy Pier, Istanbul. © Sevi Bayraktar, 4.4.2017. *Still from video*.

In spring 2017, political parties and grassroots organizations are lobbying across Istanbul for the upcoming referendum which would change the Republic's Constitution from the parliamentarian to the presidential system. As a new center of political activism after the closure of Taksim Square, the busy Kadıköy pier is hosting three political parties: the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), the main oppositional Republican People's Party (CHP), and the Justice and Development Party (AKP) that is currently in-power. These three parties do not share the square equally: while the HDP and the CHP use the small area at the exit of the pier, the AKP occupies a larger space next to them. I see a group of women dancing horon in front of the HDP pavilion and approach them to film their dance. One of

them extends her hand as an invitation to dance. I take her hand and start imitating others in the circle. The audience members watching us dance are mostly men. Among them, undercover police officers film the scene to identify and register the participants into police records. The women dance until the music is turned off because then it is the CHP's turn to use the square. As the pier is tiny and crowded, it can accommodate only one political party's activity at a time. Unlike the HDP, the CHP uses the area not as a dance floor but as a miniature stadium where people, again mostly women, wave Turkish flags in sync with the tempo of Republican songs. Their movements highlight rhythmic, disciplinary, and dutiful bodies, and signify a collective of the homogeneous national body.

Behind the shared square, the AKP has its own private elevated stage where two men are holding hands and dancing. One of the men carries a Turkish flag with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's portrait on it in his free hand and the other a sign which reads "EVET" ("YES") in capital letters. The music played through the large amplifiers has horon tunes and the sound of the kemençe is easily recognizable, but its rhythmic pattern is also compatible with Kurdish circle dances. The two men's movement sequence resembles a traditional circle dance such as horon that I observed in the streets or at dance studios, but it also seems very different. One man bounces in place, steps to the right and to the left from time to time, or sometimes continues stepping to the right until the edge of the platform and then comes back to his starting point. The second man has difficulties following him, although they sometimes lean forward together, picking up cues from each other. Although they are only two, they take turns leading. As they switch roles, the new leader shows the former his own version of the steps, but because there is no pattern, the former leader gives up looking at the new leader's feet and dances the way he likes. As I watch them, I notice the two men are appropriating the folk dance as an activist political performance with their forward-leaning gestures, holding hands, and bounces. As they dance to the AKP's election song, they

replicate what they "imagine" as the traditional dance—emphasizing the footwork, leading the dance by changing the step patterns, bouncing from the knee, holding hands, and leaning towards each other.

They, perhaps, imitate those who dance in the next pavilion: The women are dancing horon to a Hemşin song in front of the HDP tent and execute a movement pattern altogether with great enthusiasm. When I look closely, I see activists employ traditional techniques unusually. They combine different horon and halay movements and gestures, performing an imprecise, and sometimes even eclectic way of executing folk dance. As I approach the HDP pavilion to see more, I write the following in my fieldwork diary:

> *A group of dissenting women, who represent a myriad of activist groups, are dancing on the pier: There are two HDP volunteers wearing aprons. Other activists include members of labor organizations, feminist grassroots groups, and individuals with no political affiliations. They hold hands, forming a semi-circle, which welcomes participation from the audience, most of whom are male. Some dancers hold the next person's hand very tightly, and others hook their pinky fingers, creating a vulnerable link that contradicts the strength conveyed by their vivid and forceful dancing bodies. The use of the pinky finger is unusual in the horon but common in Kurdish circle dances; activists are merging the movement vocabularies of two genres.*
>
> *The leader holds a purple banner which reads "Na." While purple signifies feminism, "Na" meaning "no" in Kurdish, here stands for "no" to the presidential system. As the dance continues, another woman claims leadership by taking the current leader's hand. She performs the standardized horon of the Trabzon area, and other dancers replicate her variation. However, the music that she dances to is a Hemşin song, which ordinarily requires a different dance style. Also, some Hemşin dancers traditionally carry props like scarves in their hands, but this is unusual in*

dances from the Trabzon area. Various horon styles are thus combined with the mixed use of props, music, and step sequences in this dance.

The dancing women wear high heels, mini-skirts, as well as jeans and t-shirts; almost all of them wear their hair loose, even if sometimes it impairs their vision. Their conventionally feminine clothing is in contrast with a hyperbolic emphasis on seemingly masculine movements, with energetically moving shoulders, strong kick-steps, high jumps, and forceful stomps. These imprecise, incoherent, accentuated, and embellished performances of the dance defy the ideal of the protester's body as disciplined, homogeneous, and "naturally" male.

(Istanbul, 4.4.2017)

Through their ways of bridging various styles and dance movements, activists create a generic horon dance by attenuating its precise implications and demonstrate heterogeneity and harmony as well as forcefulness, combativeness, and defiance. I argue that the dissenting women tactically choreograph political subjectivities through deploying folk dance movements "imprecisely" during protests—by changing the gendered qualities of movements; mixing dance styles, forms, and vocabularies; and commenting on ethnic and political identities through merging genres. In this way, they not only critique the institutionalized form of folk dance, which centers precision as the criterion for the "authentic" execution of movements demonstrating one's membership in the nation state, but also struggle against this political vision and offer alternatives for pluralist political participation and dissenting citizenship.

I approach activist women as "political citizens" whose connection to discourses of nationalism and citizenship had been primarily structured through their absence (Işın 2002). My analysis of discontinuous narratives of authenticity and citizenship, as expressed in horon dance, sheds light on the struggles of contemporary activists who are excluded from, or are

only partially and differentially included in, normative models of citizenship. I argue that by using traditional dance ("authentically" and "inauthentically") for their political purposes, the progressive women choreograph new modes of political subjectivities and stage "agonistic" practices to contribute to the democratization of Turkey's public spaces.

Chantal Mouffe offers "agonistic pluralism" as a way to discuss democracy and social order in modern societies. Mouffe defines two primary models currently dominating liberal democracies: her notion of "deliberative democracy" describes a harmonious political situation in which people speak and exchange ideas freely, and they all compete for a widespread acceptance among the population.[55] This model assumes consensus without any conflict and recognizes the legitimacy of a range of political positions, which are acknowledged as irreconcilable in some cases, such as the "common sense" value of inviolable rights of property (2000, 6). In case of a disagreement, the liberal in the deliberative model might just leave it as is, without engaging seriously the arguments of the others, justifying the diversity of opinion as cultural relativism. In contrast, "aggregative democratic model" is based on antagonism and conflictual interests, without leaving any room for discussion and negotiation (81). Mouffe demonstrates that both deliberative and aggregative/antagonistic models are based on the ideal of universal rationality as these systems assume that free and equal individuals make lucid decisions in the public sphere, assumptions which are also the basis of the Western liberal understanding of citizenship. However, Mouffe claims that democratic consensus is not possible without exclusion because each new system is built on the previous hegemonic order. Since hegemonies and hierarchies

[55] *On Liberty* (1859) John Stuart Mill refers "the marketplace of ideas" as a metaphor to talk about freedom of expression with an analogy of free market economy. In such a market many products are available and we as rational consumers choose freely what we want from among those available after careful assessment of their relative quality. We consider price. Quality of manufacturing, how the product fits our needs, tastes, and convenience, and so on. So that in a democratic model, all opinions are expressed; everyone comes to the market with their ideas, and through discussion everyone exchanges ideas with one another. The ideas or opinions compete with one another, and we have the opportunity to test all of them, weighing one against the other. As rational consumers of ideas, we choose the "best" among them. Similarly, "bad" products naturally get pushed out of the market because of the lack of demand for them (Gordon 1997, 235-236).

are inevitable in modern social structure, the question is how to create a more egalitarian system in which those ideas would compete and confront each other.

In order to contest and be considered a legitimate participant in the struggle for hegemony, each camp must support and subscribe to the "rules of the game" and recognize institutions. She says, "all participants recognize the positions of the others in the contest as legitimate ones;" unlike antagonists, for instance, who tend to erase diversity (74) and impose a single view as they do not want to struggle for power but simply wrest it. So that agonistics consider the other as an "adversary" rather than an "enemy" and thus recognize the possible validity of multiple positions, but in the struggle for power, they seek to persuade others of the truthfulness of their point of view over their competitors. Mouffe's agonistic theory imagines that there are spaces in which conflict can be productively performed for the ideal of pluralistic public space.

In dominant strands of Western liberal thought, the idea of democracy presumes a particular form of citizenship as a set of legal, political, economic, and cultural practices.[56] According to the canon of liberal theorists, citizens possess certain rights and are obliged to fulfill certain obligations within their nation-states. T. H. Marshall (1950), a British sociologist, introduced citizenship as a "status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed" (28-29). Citizenship was assumed to be a universal value practiced by free, equal, and reasonable individuals.

This idea of universal citizenship was criticized by the Western feminist scholars in the 1990s who demonstrated that this notion of citizrnship is a highly gendered category, and it represents the experience of middle-class white men while concealing gender inequalities

[56] See Barbalet 1988; Benedix 1964, Culpitt 1992; Keane 1988; Rawls 1993; B. Turner 1993; Twine 1994.

that are embedded in social, political, legal and economic relations.[57] These scholars also elucidated that in liberal theories, citizenship has been represented as the active participation to the public domain from which women were either excluded or included "differentially" as mothers and wives (Pateman 1998). The oppositional construction of public and private spheres serves to maintain patriarchal social and political structures in the society because the public sphere is imagined as a masculine space, in which male actors ideologically control and participate. The division between the public and the private in Western liberal theory determines the public sphere as the center of politics while considering the private a domain outside of the political. Consequently, whatever happens in the household—such as domestic violence, abuse, unpaid labor, and other unequal relations of power—remains invisible because these inequalities are considered outside of the immediate realm of politics and thus are not regulated by the rules of political life. In this binary system, the public sphere in which political activities are assumed to be practiced is dominated by men; whereas the household, a legitimate realm of the private sphere, is considered the women's space.

Feminist scholars writing about the Middle East have also critiqued the liberal and universal notions of citizenship by arguing that citizenship is also a process of subjectification and subject-making. So that there are no abstracted citizens detached from their communities and equipped with undifferentiated, uniform, and universal properties, rights, and duties.[58] These feminists also highlighted that the Western notions of citizenship were in fact very much provincialized definitions of the term because in many Middle Eastern contexts, the political actor is not conceptualized as a "free individual." Contrarily, the self is frequently bound to its environment and social group, which is often experienced

[57] See Lister 1997; McClintock 1995; Nelson 1984; Pateman 1989; Phillips 1991; Scott 1998; Walby 1996; Yuval-Davis 1997.

[58] See Arat 2000; Hafez 2012; Hanafi 2012; S. Joseph 2000; Joseph and Slyomovics 2001; Zubaida 1999.

as "relational" or "connected" self in these contexts (S. Joseph 2010). These scholars remind that in several Middle Eastern states, including Turkey, citizens are mostly recognized not as individuals but as members of families, and thus patriarchal relations that are constitutive of the household structure also define social and political relations outside of the home. Patriarchy links together civil society, state, and family with Western democratic ideals of citizenship, creating more complex social and political structures in those states (S. Joseph 1996, 7). Similarly, in Turkey, citizenship is very much connected with the patriarchal networks of the household, and men, as presumed heads of household, engage with citizenship as "free individuals" who have rights to perform in the public sphere of political activities; whereas, women negotiate citizenship only through the male members of their families (Sirman 1989; Kandiyoti 1991).

In Turkey, because citizenship is often considered as an extension of the household and a kinship structure, women can conventionally occupy the public sphere as mothers and housewives yet LGBTQI+ individuals are ignored, criminalized, and/or pathologized and consequently excluded from the political and legal practice (Eşsiz 2012; Ergün 2019).[59] The peripheralization of both women and queer women causes strategic alliances among women's organizations and LGBTQI+ groups even though they are not necessarily support each other's political trajectories. For example, by using distinct methods and agendas, either in cooperation with one another or as rivals, women and LGBTQI+ grassroots have been struggling to make what is commonly considered the "private sphere" a visible and legitimate site of legal and political regulation. Their demands include but are not limited to the

[59] In Turkey, LGBTQI+ communities are legally recognized, but the law does not include sexual orientation or gender identity in its civil rights laws and there is no legal recognition for same-sex couples. Sexual reassignment surgery is allowed, and legal sex change has been possible since 1988. A gay man can be exempt from the compulsory military service for men but with the condition of showing a photographic "proof" of a recent sexual intercourse (Zengin 2016). Some vague bans in the criminal code on "offenses against public morality" have been used against the LGBTQI+ community. For instance, the governor of the capital city of Ankara has recently banned all LGBTQI+ public events by extending the ban imposed in 2017 following the attempted coup (Human Rights Watch, 2.19.2019).

recognition for women's unpaid care-work in the home (Acar-Savran 2009, 15-94); reproductive rights (Toksöz and Barın 2012); the legalization of brothels and better conditions for sex workers (Berghan 2013; B. Çelik 2013); sanctions against child labor, child abuse, and child marriages; adherence to international agreements on women and gender equality (F. Acar 2010); legal and political mechanisms to prevent the murder of women and trans persons (Kadın Cinayetlerini Durduracağız Platformu 2019). One context which has supported these claims and challenged the public-private distinction in the recent decade was women's frequent appearance in the public space through their collective dancing during protests. Although these activists follow distinct paths to express and practice their ideological positionings, they all engage in folk dance as a symbolic space of negotiation with the hegemonic patriarchal power. In other words, while activists tactically deploy traditional dance to carve out a niche in the public space for their political objectives, they also contest the dominant hetero-patriarchal conventions of Turkish citizenship and demonstrate different articulations of politics in the coercive and precarious public sphere.

In our conversations, activist women specifically emphasized the fact that "sociable" interactions were a major motivation of their dancing politics. I use the term "sociable" drawing on Georg Simmel's (1949) definition of sociability as "the art or play form of association, related to the content and purposes of association in the same way as art is related to reality" (254). Sociability as a means of politics requires particular interactions among equal individuals within society. These interactions are principally built upon the maximization of sociable values such as "joy, relief, and vivacity" (257). Although activists make the politics of emotion through using dance to demonstrate different sentiments such as mourning, lamentation, anger, and rage, they also significantly deploy horon to express joy which is a resistive quality against the austere face of the hegemonic power in Turkey. Activist women's dancing-as-protest has thus reconstituted the political in "the space of the

sensorial" (Mahmood 2005), which is often considered intuitive and thus apolitical within both liberal and Marxist political theories. Their choreographic manifestations have been subversive to the patriarchal political traditions and heteronormative discourses by offering alternatives to the dominant politics of individual participation and discourses of leadership, plurality, solidarity, and alliance, as well as conventional gender representations in Turkey.

In this chapter, I examine urban protests between 2015 and 2017 in Istanbul through video footage, interviews, and choreographic notes based on my participant observation. These materials focus particularly on environmental protests, International Women's Day demonstrations, Pride parade, and the presidential referendum campaign. First, I discuss how activist women choreograph techniques of "imprecision" against institutionalized forms of folk dance, within which precision and virtuosity are highlighted as the signifiers of authenticity and belonging to the nation state. In this context, I unpack some elements of the horon choreography that I provided in the first chapter, such as composing a dance circle, leading the group, and performing gendered movement qualities. By looking at the components of the choreography, I discuss how women use and manipulate the horon to construct and contest social, cultural, and political processes. Second, I analyze another technique of political critique, what I call "techniques of accentuation," which protesters use to defy hetero-patriarchal conventions of left-leaning political organizations among the dissenting group. Through highlighting "feminine" qualities of the body, increasing bodily energy, accelerating the rhythm, and using certain gestures and expressions hyperbolically, women defy the revolutionary body promoted by the Left. I discuss how women and queer activists in recent protests use the critical aesthetic value of the dance to establish "artistic activism" (Mouffe 2007) in order to disclose and challenge hegemonic social and political processes while negotiating and defying political positions among dissenting circles.

Techniques of "Imprecision" and Choreographing Plurality

In the first chapter, I explained how authenticity claims of ethnic minorities from the Black Sea region manifest themselves through precision in their dance techniques as taught in dance institutions. The precise gestures, meticulously calculated steps, bodily alignments, movement sequences, musical components, spatial organization, and metaphorical imagery connecting the dance and nature in nostalgic rurality are taught at state conservatories, folk dance associations, and cultural centers in Istanbul. Through repetitive enactments of these choreographies and pedagogic processes, cultural identities and essentialized differences based on ethnicity and gender are constantly reproduced as the "authentic" components of traditional dance. I argue that women from various political, economic, and cultural backgrounds subvert these parameters of "authenticity" by using folk dance techniques "imprecisely" in their street protests and demonstrations. By challenging and manipulating conventional dance choreographies, such as by shuffling the movement vocabularies of folk dance genres, reversing the assumed gender qualities of the movements, wearing diverse clothing, and constantly negotiating individual positions and leadership within the dance circle as they claim political agency and visibility, activists perform pluralistic practices.

Media studies scholar Pollyanna Ruiz applies Chantal Mouffe's idea of "agonistic pluralism" to explore social movement choreographies in recent global grassroots movements of the late 1990s and early 2000s. She examines how the anti-globalization and Occupy movements deploy spatial metaphors to unsettle fixedness of space and reveal the power dynamics of capitalist economy. She argues that protests such as those against the World Trade Organization in 1999 focused on breaching the barricades that excluded citizens and activists from the sites of economic and political power as well as the democratic process, and demanded the right to access them. In these ways, Ruiz suggests, anti-globalization movements created new forms to challenge their exclusion such as using the space in

unconventional ways, and the 2011 Occupy movement built on them by peacefully occupying symbolic spaces in the city through which they intervened in the organization of politics and offered the mainstream inclusive forms of democracy. The Occupy activists' demonstration of everyday conduct such as cooking, sleeping, and cleaning in the encampment allowed them to interrupt the public space by revealing repressive power dynamics of the capitalist intervention in those spaces and started a debate about how financial power is constructed in contemporary societies.

These recent protest movements also use aesthetic qualities and artistic work as political practice. Mouffe (2007) argues that artistic practice can contribute to the struggle against capitalist domination, however, the field of aesthetic intervention should be widened towards social spaces to oppose social mobilization of capitalism (para. 3-4). Mouffe claims that modern capitalist system blurs the distinction between art and advertising; and moreover, aesthetic strategies of the 1960s such as self-management methods are now central to capitalist productivity. But art can be still "critical" by revealing symbolic order of social relations that are interwoven with modern capitalism and making the hegemonic structure visible (para. 12-13). Critical artistic practice also foments political dissent by promoting dissensus and giving voice to all those who are silenced under the existing system of hegemony. Agonistic approach is thus important to understand new forms of "artistic activism," as counter-hegemonic interventions whose aim is to occupy the public space to disrupt "corporate capitalism's smooth image" by showing its repressive character (para. 15).

Mouffe focuses on how this type of "artistic activism" resists against capitalist domination and reveals hegemonic order. In Turkey's political spectrum, activist women occupy public spaces through the performance of folk dance, as a form of critical aesthetic practice, not only to disclose and deny current hierarchies of the capitalist order but also to contest the existing heteropatriarchal hegemony. The dance participates in and contributes to

their comment on gender inequalities and combat with other dissenting groups to persuade the audience. Dance serves as a significant artistic and political tool to vocalize dissenting opinions which are otherwise unheard, particularly when conventional means of political action are unavailable to activists. Through their "imprecise" execution of the dance, women could create a common ground to combat for their political views and struggle together against the heteronormative establishments of the state and traditional Left. Moreover, as they perform contesting acts that are driven from their own movement repertoire, dissenters also aim to challenge each other's political stance and gain more supporters.

Similar to the deliberative democratic model, "precision" assumes an equal expression of identities and a diverse yet coherent public space where all identity groups can present themselves and compete their ideas within the rules of the "free market."[60] In opposition, dissenting women apply "imprecision" as a choreographic tactic where they perform and mobilize agonistic ideas, thus challenging the hegemonic structure of politics and offering alternative ways of thinking about the political. Through enacting, transmitting, and transforming the horon choreography, activist women reject heteronormative and homogeneous configurations of public space and provide contestatory practices of political agency. Moreover, they deploy the technique to challenge an imagery of nationhood whose unity and authenticity is represented through the "precision" of an affirmed and legitimized choreography that is taught in folk dance institutions. With "imprecision," they also show disagreement with patriarchal practices within left-leaning political organizations. In this vein, their intentional and unintentional deployments of "imprecision" offer non-hegemonic

[60] In the 1980s, Turkish nation was idealized in the official discourse as "mosaic," implying a coherent unity of political, social, cultural, and ethnic differences. One of the generals of the 1980 coup d'état, Alparslan Türkeş, who established the ultra-nationalist MHP, publicly denied this discourse stating in a debate program with a Kurdish politician Orhan Doğan in November 8, 1993 that Turkey was indeed a "marble," rather than a mosaic (Baysal 2014). This discussion of "mosaic" vs. "marble" is still a matter of debate in Turkish politics while other analogies of cultural diversity and nationhood, such as "ebru," or "marbled paper," (Altınay 2007) are also occasionally added to this discussion.

authenticities and egalitarian participation in politics by blurring the markers of identity difference among cultural and political communities. The subversive capacity of imprecision stems from its invitation to agonistic participation in politics by opening up the critical artistic space to non-expert and "inauthentic" performers. They engage in dance to persuade others in the public sphere of their viewpoint and vie for hegemony; therefore, dance becomes part of a political struggle. To examine this capacity and analyze how political subjectivities are constructed in women's grassroots activism, I focus on some choreographic elements, including the composition of a dance circle, the role of leadership and followership, and the execution of gendered movement qualities.

Circle Dance Composition

When activist women form a dance circle by holding hands in a protest, they both affirm and contest forms of individuality. Dance circles demonstrate not only a request for recognition at the individual level but also belonging to a community. In her study, Miranda Joseph (2002) questions the function of community as concept and strategy. She argues that a marginalized group can reiterate the society although it has long been criticized by feminist and post-structuralist theories. For example, in her ethnographic study of a gay and lesbian community theater, she demonstrates that even politically active groups that are radically opposed to the dominant culture and social structures tend to slide into a conservatism that supports hierarchical social relations. Miranda Joseph finds that the invocation of community among the theater members is used as a way to exclude and silence minoritized identities because what she calls "homosexism," the prioritization of gayness over other identity features, limits the theater's orientation to white gays and lesbians of stable and unified gender identity (2002, *xvii*).

In Turkey's radical dance communities performing traditional circle dances during protests, the invocation of community is performed through the negotiation of certain hierarchies based on knowledge and expertise in the dance technique. Although activists create an equal ground for every individual to join the dance circle, how to engage with other dancers depends on one's strategic positioning in the circle: where does she stand in a dance collective, does she assume leadership or not, is she willing to teach the dance to others, is she coming from the cultural community where the dance is rooted, and so on. Therefore, a dance circle which is supposedly composed of equal individuals who hold hands to demonstrate solidarity and support in a horizontal organization of bodies may also invoke social hierarchies based on one's ethnic identity or competency in dance, which are often associated with one's familiarity with and knowledge about the dance. This vying for authority also illustrates and corresponds to the politics of agonistic pluralism because dissenters negotiate their expertise and shape the ways of moving in the dance circle which is framed as an egalitarian space that is composed of individuals with equal rights. As all the participants of a dance collective accept the rules of the discourse and recognize the validity of multiple positions as their "adversaries" to be persuaded for the legitimacy of their truth claims, they create spaces to defy other movements, ideas, as well as ways of doing politics.

These political positions are discussed and defended by different members of the dissenting population. Melek, an activist affiliated with the labor movement, says, "Dance is an individual expression and you do not have to belong any political group to dance in a protest" (Istanbul, 3.22.2017). Others, who are already politically engaged with a grassroots organization, find the relational characteristics of the dance stronger. Esma, a Kurdish youth movement activist, states, "When I dance in protests, I feel I am not alone; the people on whom I lean my hand, my arm, my shoulder give me courage" (Istanbul, 4.13.2017). Almost all of my interviewees mention that dance facilitates connecting with another vulnerable

person in the public space, which supports a feeling of belonging and allows interactions among ethnically, racially, economically, and sexually marginalized individuals.

In traditional and institutional contexts, men and women often dance in separate dance circles and dancers are positioned according to the hierarchies depending on their age, gender, status, and competency. Activist women dancing in the street—seemingly an inclusive practice as people hold hands regardless of gender, sexuality, age, status, and ability—also register hierarchies; however, these are dynamic positionings which can be challenged and defied. The possibility of negotiating abilities in a dance group establishes common grounds among activists both inside and outside of the protest space. Inside the space, members of different grassroots communities can make alliances upon recognizing each other. For example, in a dance circle on International Women's Day on March 8, 2017, an activist from the Initiative of Muslim Women Against Violence Against Women held hands with another person waving a rainbow flag. Similarly, during the Gezi Park movement in June 2013, protesters holding Turkish flags danced together with Kurdish activists carrying banners covered with the colors of the Kurdish flag. Eylem says "You should learn the culture of your allies; to perform their dances is to accept their culture" (Istanbul, 4.6.2017). Kinesthetically experiencing the other's corporeal restrictions, abilities, and imaginaries, Eylem and other activists look for finding new ways of negotiation in their political approach.

Because participants familiarize themselves with and accept one another in a dance circle, they can also create solidarity outside of the protest space. For women in general and queer and transwomen in particular, familiarity is important in a potentially hostile public space. Meri, a transgender rights activist, mentions that she recognizes some of the people with whom she has danced in a protest when she sees them "outside." These people make support accessible when it is needed in a patriarchal and homophobic public space of everyday action. She says, "When I see a person with whom I danced in a protest randomly

in the street, I probably recognize this person. I often think, 'Oh, she is one of us,' and continue on my way… I feel good because I know that this person is somewhere close by" (Istanbul, 4.19.2017). Other activists may prefer having engaging dialogues with protesters with whom they dance together. According to Esma, during the dance, you may have a conversation with someone which also helps establishing a personal interaction. Such verbal and corporeal forms of communication convert a personal relationship into a political one, and vice versa. Esma says,

> In protests, I danced the halay with hundreds of people. When you go to another protest, you may bump into one of these people and you may remember [this person]. During the dance, perhaps you had a conversation. For example, "I cannot do [the dance]," "What is [the movement]," "Shall I move my arm like this?" or, "Shall I step into this direction?" It becomes a conversation. When I establish such a connection, I remember them when I see them in another place. I say [to myself] we have danced the halay together" (Istanbul, 4.13.2017).

In addition to fostering familiarity, which can be used strategically in everyday locations, the circle also allows participants to observe each other as they face the center. In our conversations, a couple of activists from different political organizations stated that by paying attention to what other people wear and how they behave, they can recognize the economic, social, and political background of the dancers. If they want to approach a person, for instance to promote their organization, they can take advantage of this information to start a conversation about their political objectives.

Lara, an environmental activist, says, when she dances across from a political leader important in her activist scene and sees that the leader is corrected, warned, and even left outside of the circle about the way he dances, she feels less stressed about talking to or arguing against this person within their political group. However, the same dance circle may also reproduce power relations which are based on evaluations of competency and depend on the pedagogic approach of the dancer. In my interviews, many women from grassroots movements stated that if they are asked, they teach the dance to others during protests. Lara

continues, “If a person comes out there and starts dancing with others although she doesn't have enough knowledge of the dance, I think that she is showing courage and willingness to act. Why not support her by showing her the steps? If she asked me, I would teach her immediately right there” (Istanbul, 3.4.2017).

Many activists express a similar attitude towards participants with no previous dance knowledge and teach them the dance to encourage and support other protesters. Fahriye, a grassroots activist engaging with labor, environmental, and Kurdish movements, says, “When you dance in protest under today’s brutally coercive conditions, you are already performing a courageous act and spreading courage in society. If a person who does not know how to dance joins the circle, it means that she is claiming presence in the public space and I welcome her with no reservations” (Istanbul, 4.13.2017). Similarly, Yıldız, who is from a Trotskyist political party states, “I say, ‘Come on comrade, you can learn this, no worries,’ and place those who do not know the dance in between experienced ones from whom they can learn the dance during the demonstration” (Istanbul, 4.5.2017). If requested, she teaches the dance styles at home before the protest that they plan to join. Esma also mentions,

> I never say, ‘Get out, do not ruin the dance!’ I never exclude [those who do not know it] because I remember learning these dances myself outside the prison where I went with my family to see our acquaintances. I had no idea what to do, but I eventually learned these dances because I feel I am not alone while I am dancing (Istanbul, 4.13.2017).

Esma now leads both women-only and mixed gender circle dances in political demonstrations and makes a point not to discourage activists who would like to learn the dances. If she sees a person behind her who wants to dance but feels shy about joining, she turns toward her and smiles to encourage her participation (Istanbul, 4.13.2017). Some activists, however, may not be willing to teach during the protest itself because, they explain, the task may reduce their enthusiasm. Two environmental activists follow different attitudes

about it: One says, "It is very boring to teach the dance to those who have no idea how to do it. But, they insist on dancing! I say, 'OK,look at my feet' and hold her hand." However, Lara prefers not to ask for individual attention from another protester during the dance. She does not usually claim leadership and often joins the circle among other dancers because she feels comfortable, even if she takes a wrong step. Melek, from the labor movement, adds, "I can teach the dance, but I do not want to dance next to a person who does not know it because she has nothing to contribute to [my dance technique]." Melek, who considers herself a competent dancer, prefers to lead because other people enjoy it when she does it, and they ask her to take on that role. In contrast to Melek, Leman, an independent feminist, prefers not to lead, but she often analyzes the circle and joins the line next to competent dancers, which makes dancing more enjoyable for her.[61]

The majority of these activist women enter the dance circle by strategically positioning themselves in relation to other bodies. Some prefer to dance among familiar people from their own political or social circles; others hold hands with other women instead of men in mixed-gender groups; and many choose to be next to a dancer competent in the genre executed at the moment. By looking at specific gestures and individual interpretations of the dance, the competency of a dancer can be qualified by the others. On the one hand, positioning oneself next to a competent dancer brings ease in execution due to the shared technique and bodies dancing next to each other supporting each other's jumps, kicks, and squats. In this sense, competency allows the expression of ambition as a collective political statement and practice. Many activists indicate that they not only enjoy it more but can also express their anger energetically and spiritedly if they can execute the movements of the genre without difficulty or confusion. Shared technical knowledge facilitates finding new

[61] In the traditional context, competency may show the dancer's abilities and skills in everyday action. For example, until the late 1970s, in some villages in the Black Sea region, women had hidden in the dark to be able to see the dancers without being noticed by others. By looking at the dancers' attitudes, such as concentration, improvisation, and leadership, the women evaluated potential candidates for marriage.

ways of moving against homogeneous and unifying bodily regimes of the hegemonic order, developing patterns of solidarity among diverse dancers, and offering ways of cultivating agonistic practices as each competent dancer challenges others with her particular knowledge of the technique.

On the other hand, competency creates new hierarchies in a dance circle which is supposedly based on the acts of equal individuals in a non-hierarchical and horizontally organized formation. In such a dance circle, competent dancers become more popular than others because everyone tries to "hold their hands," "eline girmek" in Turkish, a colloquial expression meaning to dance next to them. These dancers are often familiar with or raised within the traditional culture in which the dance was performed as an everyday activity. They may also have been trained in folk dance institutions and be professional or semi-professional artists. Alternatively, these competent dancers could be experienced ones who have learned the diverse dance genres throughout years of relentless political agitation. Thus, different reasons such as one's ethnic and cultural identities, artistic training, and a long-standing engagement with grassroots work may define one's position among other dancer-activists, changing power dynamics in the horon circle.

Nevertheless, unlike institutionalized forms of the dance, these positions, including leadership, are subject to contestation at the moment of performance in protest. Dancers may be interrupted or even forced to change or reconsider their places in the circle by other dancers. In this dynamic process of composing a dance assembly, people may enter or leave the circle during the performance. They may be happy to follow the others or claim the leadership. Women who prefer to dance at the end of the line may gradually find themselves in the middle of it if other women also join the dance from the end of the line. Therefore, the leader and other participants are not statically and hierarchically positioned; in fact, their positions are constantly mediated and, ideally, they should be open to new bodily interactions

and aesthetic interventions. Although one positions herself in a particular place in the circle, her individual decisions are dynamically and agonistically challenged within the group as a collective of bodies in motion.

Figure 4.2: Women dancing to protest the presidential referendum results in Istanbul. The first photograph shows a process of dance learning and the second one is after they are aligned. © Sevi Bayraktar, 4.24.2017.

Leadership, Followership, and Joy

In horon circles, the mood and energy of the dance event are very much related to the skills of the horon leader, or horoncu. In circle dances, the leader determines the next sequence of the movements, energy changes, and accompanying songs. The dance leader facilitates collective dancing, lift the mood of participants, and ideally encourage the audience to participate in the dance. If harmony is not achieved in the group, then the leader often uses creative ways to establish unifying movements to develop rapport and solidarity within the group. A common way to build common rhythm and energy is collective clapping, during which dancers walk three steps forward and three steps backward, allowing a short break between relatively complex step patterns. Either the leader or another participant who would like to change the routine may initiate the clapping movement. Leadership is not an exclusive position—it is temporarily claimed, and the leader is replaceable, even though some leaders do not want to pass on the banner or the handkerchief they hold as a sign of their role. A neophyte dancer does not need to be a part of the political organization to claim a position of command but should be familiar with the activist project and also deal with some potential risks of her claim. In one of the protests in March 2017 against the presidential elections to be held in April, for instance, the leader mixed up the steps, and then she panicked seeing that all her followers were also confused. Another woman noticed that the leader did not know the dance well and immediately intervened by taking her hand and becoming the new leader. The new leader both supported the fellow dancer and also showed her competency in the technique by leading it for a consecutive few songs.

In their recent study on public assemblies, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2017) conceptualize a new form of leadership as the ideal form for contemporary social movements which are otherwise considered horizontal and "leaderless." A choreographic manifestation

of the leadership position in the dance should be "tactical leadership" implying "occasional, partial, and variable" qualities (15). They offer this type of model because by being subordinated to and submerged in the multitude, this kind of leader can serve the strategic vision of converting these spontaneous movements into long-term collectivities and commitments.

I would like to add to this definition that creating the physical conditions of collective joy and facilitating the group's engagement with the politics of emotions should also be one of the assets of the "tactical leadership." In my research, "joy" has been expressed as important as the political intervention itself, which may also mean defeating a police attack. Activists from various organizations mention that they dance in protests because "it is fun." Many of them emphasize that horon provides its participants with enormous joy and pleasure. Only after thinking for a while do they list other "benefits" of dancing, such as gathering people together, encouraging participation, and leaving the police undecided regarding the use of violence against dancers. Several activists seem surprised to think about the ways horon facilitates political struggle. Melek mentions that what women want most is "dancing and having fun" during protests (Istanbul, 3.22.2017). A number of activists state that they do not explicitly think about dance as a significant political gesture but are well aware that displaying joy and laughter is a disruptive and defiant act against the austere face of power. Dissenters have very different reasons and motivations for dancing in protest. Some dance to demonstrate courage, to break up hierarchies in their political group, prevent the police from creating harm, or to politically re-organize the space. These protesters present joyful interactions not as a sign of "public happiness," which feminist scholar Sarah Ahmed describes as an ideal of liberal multicultural society (2008, 1-2). Rather, their demonstration

of joy is a form of political positioning to promote the "principle of hope" against the politics of fear that the hegemonic state power disseminates (Bloch 1986).[62]

Another quality of this type of tactical horon leadership is to make oneself heard and clearly understandable by others in the group. In my interviews, men often defend their occupation of leadership roles by resorting to gendered discourses about their biological assets, such as claiming an average man has a louder voice or a taller and more muscular body than an average woman, justifying that group members should be able to clearly see and hear dance instructions. However, many women lead, whether their voices are louder than men. Some female leaders make up their own sequences when they miss certain alignments in the conventional forms of the dance. In recent protests, women have applied alternative tactics to occupy this leadership position.[63] Esma says that men often expect women to watch them dancing or leading the dance circles, but that for female spectators this is like "gücü izlemek," which can be translated as "watching power," where "power" can be interpreted as a "masculine power." Esma argues that women are louder and more visible in traditional dance circles during protests because they do not simply watch power; instead, they claim it.

Kinesthetic forms, in which women generate affective and tactile ways of communication, are generally considered outside of politics in the liberal political thought (Taylor 1997; Shea Murphy 2007). In her study about the women's piety movement and

[62] In *The Principle of Hope* (1986), Ernst Bloch suggests to bring philosophy to "hope" which has been ignored in the history of social sciences. In the introduction of his first volume, he explains "hopelessness" as a "temporal and factual sense, the most insupportable thing, downright intolerable to human needs" whereas "hope" leads "most efficiently towards the radical termination of the contents of fear" (5). Bloch does not approach hope and utopia as naïvely optimistic phenomena; he indeed reminds that discontent is part of hope and they both together defy and create a condition of struggling against deprivation.

[63] For example, in an environmental demonstration against a mining project in Artvin in 2015, women did not let men lead the horon for an extended period by passing the leadership to one another. In traditional contexts, the leader should give permission or demonstrate signs of tiredness for another person to take the lead. In this event in Artvin city center, a woman horon leader would signal to other women when she became tired, and then another woman would take the leadership before she gave up. Several women thus took the lead one after the other, not giving the leading position to male participants. "We were having fun," says Berna, a participant of this event (Artvin, 7.29.2017). She expresses how she enjoyed making sequences, even if they might not have been very orderly in comparison to a standardized horon. Participants also enjoyed the very practice of passing the leadership to one another, which facilitated a dynamic and joyful horon, even not necessarily coherent.

political activism in Egypt, anthropologist Saba Mahmood (2012) argues that affective and sensible reorientations are often ignored and considered outside of the realm of the political by liberal social theorists who put the state at the center to understand and analyze the concept of social change. Similarly, in Turkey, liberal approaches locate agency in the public sphere, arguably conceptualized as the space of universal rationality, through which citizens are expected to make those decisions that best suit their interests. Such an ideal subject becomes a legible and legitimate citizen of the modern state, and all other inter-subjective relations in the public sphere, such as dancing, are considered intuitive and thus apolitical in these liberal frameworks. As opposed to this perspective, activist women's dancing as protest reconstitutes the political through the politics of emotions such as joy, anger, and mourning in the public sphere. Women's dancing becomes a tool for progressive struggle against three dominant political perspectives in the current spectrum of Turkey: the patriarchal, the liberal-conservative, and the ultra-nationalist. It also makes their political vulnerabilities more visible with a blatant display of different identities based on race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality. In dancing as political action, activists blur the constructed boundaries between public and private spheres and encourage others to challenge these divides and participate in changing the current hegemonic social and political order.

Gendered Movement Qualities and Improvisation

When women perform the horon in protests, they perform a dialogue with heteronormative corporeality and subvert the dominant gender discourse on masculinity and femininity through their choreographic decisions. Because a standardized horon reflects conventional ideas of the hetero-patriarchal gender regime, activist women negotiate those ideas by altering the explicitly gendered qualities of movements, such as the uses of the hips, legs, and arms, defined as masculine or feminine. When one of my horon teachers said I was

not dancing like a woman, he was referring to these conventional gender qualities that dancers are expected to enact in (his interpretation of) traditional iterations of the horon. As I mentioned in the first chapter, women are supposed to take smaller steps, perform fewer jumps, and use their arms at a lower level than men - essentially operating in a more limited sphere, while men are encouraged to expand their movement capacities and claim a wider berth of space. Nevertheless, these qualities set by dance institutions also vary in different traditional contexts.

Figure 4.3: Activists dancing in the solidarity demonstration in Kalkhedon Square.
© Sevi Bayraktar, May 20, 2017. *Still from video*.

In Hopa, a northeastern province of Turkey, during a local public gathering I participated in, dancing women often explicitly moved their hips to the right and left from the pelvic center, a movement considered inappropriate in some folk dance institutions in Istanbul. On a couple of occasions, I was admonished by horon instructors in Istanbul who found my hip movements "too much," not "authentic," or "degenerated." These teachers prioritized discipline and emphasized the production of unified bodies as an army of dancers.

My “authentic” and “natural” horon dancing body should move as a whole without allowing the isolation of different body parts, such as the hips or breasts. As such, women are expected to keep their hips straight, with no emphasis on pelvic movements. In this vertical organization of the body, any horizontal deviations implying “excessive femininity,” such as swaying the hips, could become the object of criticism because such movement of the hips is associated with sexualization of the body. The movement of hips and also breasts are also coded sexual because they resonate “belly dance” movements, a denigrated form of entertainment due to the presentation of female sexuality in the public space. In opposition to the wholesome ethnicity of the horon, belly dance is “historically a morally and economically suspect profession” (Potuoğlu-Cook 2006, 634) in Turkey because these dancers’ bodies could not be regulated by the masculine social order.

Although different representations of femininity are constructed and embodied in traditional framings of the horon, a dominant discourse of masculinity remains in both versions. In these dances, high-tempered, energetic, subversive male bodies often construct their male-only horon circles to “be able to move more freely and enthusiastically” (Kurt, Tonya, 3.9.2018). As such, masculinities are reproduced and fostered by the idea of “freedom” while representations of femininity oscillate between hypersexuality and immobility. These representations of gender and sexuality in dance reflect specific configurations of power which construct the body in its everyday conduct and define its movements and interactions within categories of identity.

In a phenomenological context, Iris Marion Young (1980) questions how a Western white female body kinesthetically experiences an objectified femininity in everyday life and through quotidian practices. As an example, Young examines the execution of “throwing” an object, which involves other quotidian movements such as stepping, jumping, leaning forward, reaching backward, and using the whole body in action. She claims that women and

girls are taught not to use the full capacity of their bodies when engaging in physical activities; instead, they move in a constricted space with a lack of trust in their bodies and a fear of getting hurt, regarding their corporeal experience of self as "fragile." While Young draws our attention to miniscule operations of power in shaping the experience of the female body, dance theorist Susan Foster suggests that although the body is historically gendered and sexualized, it can also move in this restricted space of femininity by creating a larger spectrum of meanings in a space of physical interaction.

In "Choreographies of Gender" (1998), Foster examines how gender is constructed intersecting with sexual and racial configurations of identity, and argues that multiple identifications of the body are possible because both the body and the identity are not static and fixed and but in flux categories. She exemplifies her argument with a female choreographer who makes a repertoire of bodily actions that may or may not confirm expectations for the normative gender behavior. Dancer cultivates a body through training and also separates this dynamic anatomical identity from its possible ways of moving, creating layers of meanings and intersecting identities contesting the existing ones. She argues that bodies do not only reiterate norms but also vary them, establishing "resonances among distinct categories of normative behavior" (1998, 5) and thus expanding the transgressive and resistive capacity of the gendered and sexualized body.

As activist women perform traditional horon choreographies, they also vary and attenuate the precise choreographic structure of the dance, and thus opening up possibilities of challenge gender, ethnic, and national identities. Dance scholar Ann Daly (1995) reminds us that dominant cultural values constitute the dancer's body, yet dancers also subvert those values by negotiating existing cultural meanings and creating new ones through their dance practice. In this context, through the technique of imprecision, activist women embody both the masculine and feminine qualities of the dance, thus opening a space of possibility to

intervene in gendered constructions of the body in public space. For instance, an interviewee active both in LGBTQI+ and environmental movements indicates that she pointedly uses a stance with her legs open wide in dance because she feels more grounded and enjoys leading in this posture more. Although women are not expected to keep their legs open from the pelvic area in traditional and institutional forms of the horon, when this activist led the dance in her preferred position, her comfort with it also filled the group with confidence and high energy. Finding counter-strategies against these hegemonic discourses on women's bodies have been an important political struggle for feminists in Turkey since the 1980s.

Turkish feminists in the 1980s advocated women's ownership of their bodies and fought against the policies of the time aiming to restrict the right to abortion and reproductive freedom (Torun [1983] 2015), which is still a matter of debate between progressive women and state actors. In 1989, the feminist movement was focusing on political campaigns to promote women's autonomy and invited women to raise their voices against gender violence. The campaign titled "Our bodies are ours! No to sexual harassment!" encouraged women who had experienced sexual persecution in both public and private spaces (such as at work, in public transportation, on the street, and at home) to speak up against it (Osmanağaoğlu [1989] 2015, 349-350).

In the 1990s, discussions of gender were primarily centered upon the bodily representations of Muslim vs. secular women (İlyasoğlu 2000; Öncü 1999). When Atatürk assumed leadership of the Republic, he had introduced a series of what he perceived as liberal-secular social reforms designed to limit the signs and expressions of religiosity in the public sphere, for example banning the hijab (the Islamic headscarf). Muslim women's later struggle against the ban on headscarves at public universities, the increasing visibility of veiled women in the public sphere, and the political reactions following the preclusion of Merve Kavakçı, the first veiled woman MP in the history of the Turkish Republic, from

taking her oath in the parliament in 1999, led to new discussions about gender and body politics in Turkey.

In the 2000s, grassroots LGBTQI+ organizations, such as KAOS GL, Pink Life Association, Blue-Pink Triangle, and LAMBDA, as well as several scholars cooperating with these organizations, highlighted other genders which were not visible enough within the ongoing discussion of secular vs. Muslim women's public representations. These activists and scholars adopted an intersectional approach by showing how dominant economic, political, and national discourses work together to differentially domesticate and control gendered and sexualized bodies in Turkey. They demonstrated that not only women but also LGBTQI+ and gender non-conforming individuals have been, and continue to be, suppressed by the heteronormative social and political order supported by the neoliberal and Islamist political trajectory of the current AKP government.

During the 2017 Presidential Referendum Campaign, women dancing on the Kadıköy pier, integrating high jumps, forceful kicks, and deep squats into their repertoire, were hence crucial to making a counter-statement to these hegemonic discourses of gender and the body in Turkey. These dance movements opened up sites of resistance to women because their performing bodies showed a high corporeal and political capacity beyond those values that the dominant gender regime attributes to non-masculine figures. As the activists performed these jumps and kicks, they manifested a statement of gender politics through their aggressive, laborious, and powerful kick-steps, which are typically considered masculine movement qualities.

Similarly, professional folk dancers interpret women's upright bodily posture with the arms stretched forward above shoulder level as confrontational, and they legitimize and normalize the enactment of this posture in male-only horon groups. Yet, in a few protests organized by grassroots feminist and LGBTQI+ groups in Istanbul during the 2017

referendum period, I observed that certain movements representing masculinity in a standardized horon changed meaning. Activists had deployed a new version of the elevated arms by resting them on each other's shoulders in the circle. Kicks and jumps became more challenging to execute in this position, yet the elevated arms strengthened the meaning of support and solidarity conveyed through the dance.

To alter the qualities attributed to the feminine body such as passivity, demureness, inward-orientedness, and tenderness, activist women often integrate so-called masculine movement patterns in their repertoire, such as an upright stance, wide-open legs, high energy, and exalted jumps, kicks, and arm movements. By using "imprecision" as a choreographic technique and a political tactic, they sometimes blend masculine and feminine gestures, introducing new forms of movement both intentionally and accidentally, and disrupting hegemonic social relations in the contemporary iterations of the dance during protests. Through constantly claiming and challenging the leadership position, teaching the dance on the spot and encouraging a wider audience to join the circle, and intermixing styles and musical genres to reflect "imprecise" executions of ethnic forms, dissenting women re-choreograph gender conventions in Turkey's public spaces and promote pluralistic participation in national politics.

Women's Critique of the Left: Techniques of "Accentuation"

Qualities conventionally attributed to the female body were also widely accepted in the radical left traditions of the 1970s in Turkey, which I call "the orthodox Left." These groups were able to perform mass actions until the 1980 coup d'état, when the Kenan Evren government, the head of the army and the coup, imprisoned several leaders of the left-leaning political parties and organizations. When women from the former Left organizations started consciousness-raising and working groups on women's issues in the 1980s, they became

vocal about how they were left out of the decision-making mechanisms in their communities (Berktay 1990, 290). By and through organizing meetings and campaigns, women gradually became more vociferous about the patriarchal oppression they experienced in the Left, and an urban feminist movement emerged during the 1980s (Bayraktar and Özdemir 2011, 281-282). Some women within Left politics also began establishing separate "women's groups" in their collectives. For example, the Feminist Women's Group in the Socialist Party argued that a feminist vision is necessary for leftist organizations (Özuğurlu, Kurşuncu, Şirin 1989). My analyses of LGBTQI+ and feminist deployments of folk dance, particularly horon, elucidate patriarchal and heteronormative discourses in orthodox Left organizations. I explore how women and LGBTQI+ subjects use what I call techniques of accentuation to manifest a critique against the homogenizing hetero-patriarchal practices of their potential allies among the dissenting groups.

Here I explore the choreographic techniques of folk dancing used by members of the orthodox Left, and how women manipulate these techniques. By looking at the ideal alignments, gendered movement qualities, and tempo and energy of the revolutionary dancing body, I examine how this body is constructed as a gendered figure. I find that this homogenized body generally dances in a slow-paced tempo, uses small steps and gestures, and presents serious facial expressions. In contrast, I argue, activist women use techniques of "accentuation" through which they tactically "embellish" and highlight hyperbolic gestures of conventional femininity to critique the dominant discourse of female modesty, which is conventionally associated with masculine, uniform, and serious representations of the body in left-leaning movements.

The Revolutionary Body and Folk Dance in Turkey

The leftist tradition in the recent history of the Turkish Republic is segmented into multiple groups of political parties, associations, and grassroots communities. Folk dance

practice has been compatible with their aim of reaching a wider audience since the 1960s and 70s, when folk forms were popularly taught at schools, proliferated through dance competitions, and celebrated in political actions such as labor strikes and anti-imperialist student rallies. These dances were taught at a level of professionalism in the most political organizations in order to promote and disseminate the political views and values of these groups and attract more people to their cause (Kızmaz 2015, 207).

Figure 4.4: 1978 May Day poster depicting men and women folk dancers. It is signed by the Turkey Food Industry Workers (GIDA-İŞ), a part of the Revolutionary Workers' Union (DİSK). It reads: "Hurray May Day, Unity Solidarity Struggle" and "All Food Workers to DISK/GIDA-İŞ." Unknown artist. Public domain. https://m.bianet.org/biamag/sanat/174350-1976-dan-2006-ya-1-mayis-afisleri.

Suzi, a revolutionary activist who participated in the social movements of the 1970s and is still involved in grassroots groups, explained to me that political organizations each had their own professional folk dance ensembles in the 1970s, and equipped with special costumes and well-rehearsed choreographies, they participated in protests together. Folk

dance was then considered instrumental in recruiting supporters, delivering revolutionary ideas, and expanding the impacts of left-leaning ideology. These dances also provided the Left with tools to develop communication with the rural-urban migrants, many of whom were blue-collar workers in the manufacturing sector. In the late 1960s, left-wing labor organizations collaborated with the emerging wave of manufacturing strikes in big cities, during which folk dances were used for the first time to establish a shared space between migrant workers and the political cadres of the left revolutionary groups.

Suzi mentioned how dancing was a "duty" in her former political organization, serving as a way to draw others to the dance and, indirectly, forward the cause of the political group. She performed circle dances to fulfill her revolutionary obligations and bring as many people as possible into her organization. She defined some of the qualities attributed to leftists in Turkey in the 1970s:

> Revolutionaries were considered role models in society, so we were always careful and modest. In my then political group, whoever performed improperly in the dance was expected to provide self-criticism in front of the group because their undisciplined attitudes were assumed to be against "revolutionary morals" (Istanbul, 4.4.2017). [64]

The notion of "modesty" encompasses the aesthetic values and qualities of the revolutionary morals ("devrimci ahlâk" in Turkish), which is choreographically manifested through the use of a slow-paced rhythm, small movements, the perfect execution of the footwork and arm gestures, the presentation of a disciplined body, and the use of a "neutral" facial expression that mitigates explicit or extreme emotional expressions. A revolutionary body is hence depicted as restrained, disciplined, and unembellished—a body in control of itself, and hence, "naturally" male. Similar to Melek who mentioned that she used to wear blue jeans and plain dark t-shirts so as not to attract attention during the dance, Eylem said, "If you are a revolutionary, you should be quiet, calm, colorless, earnest, and serious," and

[64] In this context, "self-criticism" refers to a practice of the leftist tradition in which group members evaluate their individual acts and everyday relationships regarding moral principles and rules defined by the group.

thus, part of an undifferentiated group of bodies. She continues, "as women rejected being earnest and quiet, they instead colored the [revolutionary] movement, and when it gained color, the movement became feminized" (Istanbul, 4.6.2017). Features such as a still body, unemotional facial expressions, an upright chest, small gestures, perfect execution of the movements with narrow steps and a slow-paced tempo, and wearing "modest" clothes in plain colors, constituted the body of the revolutionary subject. A failure to integrate with any one of these codes would signal "immodesty" and an "excessive" demonstration of difference, which was inconsistent with the image of an army of similar bodies defining the communist ideal. Such corporeal imagery has been the required condition of the revolutionary body so that individual deviations from this ideal would necessitate self-criticism before the members of the political group.

In contrast to this choreographic construction of the revolutionary dancing body, dissenting women from feminist and LGBTQI+ organizations often use a fast-paced tempo, high-energy actions, movement vocabularies drawn from dances of various ethnic communities, myriad improvisational strategies, conventionally feminine-looking outfits, and emotive facial expressions, which highlight diverse political subjectivities in the public sphere. I call these actions "techniques of accentuation" which women utilize particularly against homogenizing, heteronormative, and patriarchal bodily discourses within dissenting groups, and especially against the orthodox Left in Turkey.

In these activist women's choreographies, ethnic and sexual identities might be intersected to oppose the homogenizing, unifying, and heteronormative meanings otherwise created by the revolutionary dance. Women may also accentuate specific movements, for example, those of the shoulders and arms, as signifiers of their ethnic, gender, and sexual identities. For example, Meri mentioned that she was once involved in a radical left group where she experienced homophobic oppression; she not only had to make her transgender

identity invisible, but also had to omit obvious signs of her ethnic identity as Kurdish. She argues that a homogeneous national Turkish identity in this left-leaning context was represented through unified movements in the circle dances. However, she continues, her expertise in the execution of complex shoulder movements signifies her ethnic identity and thus vitiates the organization's disregard for her heritage. She says, "If their shoulders do not bounce up and down, I feel that I cannot express myself well enough while dancing with them," since Kurdish circle dances have remarkable shoulder bounces which often happen twice as fast as the tempo of the music. These shoulder movements require knowledge and experience of the style, which demonstrates one's familiarity with Kurdish cultural codes and embodiments. Moreover, Meri argues that the use of the shoulders is also a sign of competency in the technique, because although other steps can be learned relatively easily, the virtuosic skill of the dancer is disclosed via the shoulder technique instead of the step pattern. Yet, in Kurdish community events and social gatherings, Meri felt marginalized because of her trans identity and preferred not to dance. In LGBTQI+ demonstrations and women's grassroots protests, however, she bounces her shoulders up and down and leads dance circles both to highlight her Kurdish identity and also to emphasize her trans visibility. Shoulder bouncing thus intersects both ethnic and sexual identities in this context and Meri uses it against homogenizing and heteropatriarchal references both in the Left and in her ethnic community. By insisting on executing the dance in the way she wants to, Meri combats the hegemonic structures that dominate the public space, and claims recognition as a Kurdish trans activist.

Leman, an independent feminist and a volunteer of the Initiative of Women for Peace, also emphasizes the use of the shoulders in her movement vocabulary. She notes that, in the circle dance practiced by members of traditional left-leaning organizations, the shoulders remain fixed and static. She likes to move her shoulders up and down in opposition to this

fixing of the body and the ideological rhetoric that intersects her political engagement with the Kurdish cultural rights movement and her grassroots activism in feminist and LGBTQI+ struggles. By enthusiastically bouncing her shoulders, she makes her gender and political identities visible in the public space and indicates her support of the Kurdish movement by demonstrating knowledge of the dance. Leman underlines that the imposition of strict order and discipline in dance, which she experienced in leftist groups, prevents participants from improvising and thus restricts individual expressions while also reproducing hierarchies in the organizational structure of these political groups (Istanbul, 3.13.2017).

Similar to state and ethnic-community institutions, left-leaning organizations also claim these circle dances as "authentic" representations of the culture and consequently are not in favor of improvisation or "imprecise" (for them, "incorrect") executions of the movement patterns. Suzi mentions that when dancing in recent political demonstrations, she has been performing without concern for the assigned "authenticity" of the dance, however, she worked hard to adhere to the given rules of proper performance when she was in a revolutionary organization in the past. She says, "In the 1970s, we were working so hard on folk dances to perform them 'authentically.' Those who did not know the steps could not join the dance. We [leftists, revolutionaries] lost because of that! What is the problem if she joins the dance?! She could have learned it in the circle [during the dance]" (Istanbul, 4.4.2017).

Archival footage of the 1977 May Day held in Taksim Square shows folk dance ensembles from leftist groups joined in the demonstration. Similar to nationalist rallies of the twentieth century, leftist political organizations represented the collective revolutionary body, projecting the ideals of discipline, order, and homogeneity. In these gatherings, folk dancers often wore distinct "traditional" costumes such as baggy trousers, ornamented vests, and props, and often marched in front of their political groups. Yet, some organizations, who defined themselves as Marxist and also "contemporary," performed their dances in casual

clothes which matched each other in terms of style and color, perhaps to illustrate their proletarian status and solidarity with laborers, against the bourgeoisie, and also to identify with everyday people in the city as they wore bell-bottomed trousers and plain t-shirts compatible with the urban fashion of the 1970s.[65]

Today, the women's clothing choices can also complement their choreographic decisions in protests. Many activist women wear make-up, colorful clothes, and skirts, which highlight the conventional femininity of the body in this context where the socialist subject is universalized as male.[66] Meri claims that until 2005, women in leftist organizations did not wear make-up and even avoided blouses that may reveal their cleavage in the slightest as they subscribed to the patriarchal, conservative discourses of the orthodox Left and tried to adopt a restrained and unassuming appearance that downplayed spectacular markers of conventional feminine difference. Melek states that, unlike her earlier years of labor activism, she now makes a point of wearing red lipstick when she goes to protests. She says, "We were afraid of wearing high heels in demonstrations because we might have needed to run or fight back. However, now, I am adorning myself particularly when I'm about to participate in a protest. I wear red lipstick—which I don't normally wear" (Istanbul, 3.22.2017). She argues that her

[65] For example, on May Day 1977 in Taksim Square, folk dance groups marched in front of the political organizations they represented. Depending on their political views, dancers wore traditional or modern clothes, and performed complex choreographies in harmony, showing their labor and investment in dance also inspiring their political activities. On the same day, HASAD, a folk dance group of the left-leaning theater company *Dostlar* performed a choreography from Antep town, in southeastern Turkey. As the group claimed to be a "contemporary" folk dance company with a Marxist political stance (Kızmaz 2015), they wore non-traditional everyday clothes reflecting their urban life, such as trousers, t-shirts, and scarves in compatible colors. Their composition and arrangements demonstrated high-quality training and a significant amount of rehearsal time spent to execute the complicated footwork alongside sudden and frequent squats in unison.

[66] In her book *Mihrî Hatun*, a female poet of the Ottoman court in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Didem Havlioğlu (2017) examines how "strategic gender essentialism is, to some extent, necessary when women are systematically dismissed from the intellectual fields on the basis of gender alone" (6). Mihrî used her gender identity not because she had any fixed gender values, but because it enabled her to subvert the male-dominated poetic tradition because she spoke as a woman poet expressing her love to a man who was not her husband. Havlioğlu argues that Mihrî created a rupture in the poetic discourse in which men usually performed both the lover and the loved, and women were assumed to be silent and ignorant. Her poetic discourse, yet, reconstructed women as the agents of history, society, and politics. Mihrî used traditional tools in her poetry to "function as sites of resistance" (29) through which she subverted the dominant discourse. Although Havlioğlu's work refers to a different context, aesthetic genre, and historical period, it speaks to my research regarding activist women's use of gender codes strategically to subvert heteronormative discourses in a male-dominated public space.

earlier protest outfit, blue jeans and sneakers, reflected the practical assumption she may have had to run from the police. The choice of wearing "comfortable clothes" caused anxiety even before the protest. However, she now does not presume that she will need to run, and even if she does, she thinks she can also do it in high heels.

Turkish political scientist Fatmagül Berktay argues that in the Turkish Left, women were seen to be at greater risk of 'bourgeoisifying" because of their gender, and thus, control over their clothing and attitudes was legitimized and rationalized by patriarchal authorities. Women constantly had to "prove" themselves as activists; until then they were considered "bourgeois." Berktay shows that although the Left organizations had inordinate control over all their members, the supervision mechanisms over women were multilayered and could easily turn into conventional forms of gender oppression. For instance, the image of modesty, highly valued in these organizations against the perverse and ostentatious relations of capitalism, was typically attributed to women (Berktay 1989, 291-292). Melek yet rejects the idealized body of the leftist woman who is supposed to wear loose-fitting clothes with plain colors and no make-up to highlight her propriety. Unlike this "neutral" and "naturally" male revolutionary body, she embodies diverse qualities of gender representation, and wears whatever she feels like on the day of a protest.

By promoting "imprecise" deployments of the dance reflecting their tactical positionings; focusing on dissensus within dissenting politics; and struggling against the hegemonic power, dissenters alternate the "diversity" and "consensus" discourse of liberal democratic theories by ceaselessly contesting their rivals. In other words, the ideals of inclusivity and diversity in these liberal theories can easily silence debate; whereas activist women make decisions, speak up, and act tactically to contest and negotiate with other political agents, such as grassroots communities and state institutions. In Turkey, these grassroots groups have distinct approaches and political practices yet all use institutions such

as elections, courts, and constitutional laws. Those who accept the rules of discourse are also the participants of the horon dance circles in protests. Others with singular political views do not usually join these groups. For example, a member of the ultra-nationalist political party, the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) is unlikely to dance together with those who are struggling for anti-hegemonic political system. Supporters of the MHP and the AKP, the parties that have recently formed an electoral alliance called "Cumhur-İttifakı," or, the "People's Alliance," in February 2018, typically meet in pro-state gatherings and dance to kemençe tunes, performing a simplified iteration of the standardized horon. The organizers of these gatherings also invite professional horon groups to perform the same genre with complex steps and floor patterns. In contrast, self-acclaimed electoral representatives of the dissenting group, the HDP and the CHP, recently declared "Demokrasi İttifakı," or the "Democracy Alliance," inviting all dissenters to be part of their democracy ideal. During their joint electoral campaign for the Istanbul Municipality elections of June 2019, supporters of the both parties danced together in folk dance circles in the street, which was unimaginable in 2017—as I depicted their disparate corporeal regimes during the presidential election period in the beginning of this chapter.[67]

In this context, multiple horon dancers with contrasting political agendas and adversarial practice in their approach and appropriations of the dance seem not only to perform Mouffe's paradigm but also to expand her approach of "artistic activism" as they struggle against heteropatriarchal discourses also among the dissenting allies. Using aesthetic qualities and performing their "critical art" to contest and confront with their adversaries, horon dancing activists contest against heteronormative hegemonic structures both within and

[67] During my fieldwork in 2017, mostly the HDP followers danced horon in demonstrations, and the majority of CHP followers specifically differentiated themselves from the HDP voters by not joining the dances. However, with the current formation of electoral alliances, clips are currently circulated on social media showing the CHP and the HDP supporters dancing together as they run the joint municipal election campaign in Istanbul for the second time in the first six months of 2019.

outside of the dissenting assemblies. Activist women further challenge the traditional Left by bringing alternative aesthetic qualities into the dissenting circles. By significantly using hips, breasts, and shoulders in dance they powerfully contest the leftist ideal of the "revolutionary body," that is motionless and serious. They dance disclosing corporeal signs of ethnic and sexual identities and do not hide their emotions, a signifier of an assumed "weakness" as opposed to the "rational mind." Similarly, women deploy dance techniques not "mistakenly" as folk dance trainers would suppose, but "imprecisely," through which they compete social, cultural, and political meanings of these movements. These techniques can be used not only to struggle against the heteropatriarchal hegemonies but also to challenge like-minded activist organizations within the dissenting group. For example, although a Hemşin-style step pattern usually requires dancers to hold hands some dancers who are active in Kurdish cultural rights movement may find it important to display a suppressed Kurdish identity in the public space, and use a gesture from a common Kurdish folk dance by contesting others in the group. She may eventually convince those to link their pinky fingers, even though this aesthetic innovation makes a fast-paced horon more difficult to execute collectively since pinky fingers are easily disjointed at high tempo. This corporeal contestation among activists may or may not be resolved immediately during the action; yet it continues to be negotiated in different forms and in different contexts. Activists' horon dance as a critical artistic practice reveals and opposes hegemonic articulations of power and serves agonistic struggle among opposing political projects of the dissenting groups, which can never be reconcile rationally.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I argued that by using certain bodily techniques and forms of interaction, activists instrumentalize folk dance to counter both the authoritarian state regime and various patriarchal tendencies in left-leaning dissenting groups. I examined how

dissenting women adopt “techniques of imprecision” against institutionalized forms of folk dances, in which precision and virtuosity are highlighted to define boundaries between ethnic, racial, cultural, and sexual identities, and how they deploy “techniques of accentuation” against the homogenizing and gendered discourses of “modesty” and “morality” of the orthodox Turkish Left. These techniques can overlap or be used separately in different contexts for social and political critique. Through these choreographic negotiations, women not only resist institutional forms of identity construction and suggest that dissenters meet at the kinesthetic space of “imprecision” for pluralistic political participation, but also re-define these boundaries to negotiate their differential oppression among the dissenting groups. I extend Chantal Mouffe’s frame of “agonistic pluralism” to explain women’s struggle to achieve the ideal of a pluralistic democracy, which is based on political engagements that are not harmonious or dialogic but contentious and combative. By privileging a struggle against heteronormative and patriarchal gender representations and body politics in Turkey, feminist and LGBTQI+ activists reorganize the political space by their eclectic, gender-fluid, non-disciplinary, and highly diverse aesthetic qualities and movement formations which “imprecisely” come together.

In opposition to the dominant gender discourses, which create binaries between feminine and masculine embodiments, they deploy different qualities of movement to choreograph alternative manifestations of gender, through which they potentially and progressively transform the public space. Dissenters intervene in and challenge hegemonic politics also through their sociable, joyful interactions. Rather than a precise execution of dance movements or serious expressions of claiming participation into politics, they invest in imprecise bodily interactions, tactically but not mistakenly, and expose their excessive joy as a subversive politics of emotion. While their joy reconstitutes the political in the space of the so-called “irrational” and “sensorial,” a presumably intuitive and thus apolitical space in

opposed to the space of the "rational" action, their imprecise movement execution helps to highlight intersecting ethnic, political, and sexual identities. Similar to the dance I witnessed on the Kadıköy pier in which women were negotiating the two folk genres, the horon and the halay, by hooking their pinky fingers in the execution of a fast-paced horon dance, activists' "imprecise" artistic resistance eventually mitigates the crystallization of ethnic and cultural differences established through precise choreographies of the dance. Through their aesthetic interventions, dissenters disclose, challenge, and subvert dominant heteronormative constructions of the body in different political projects.

Chapter 4

Horon in Environmental Movements: Improvising Tradition Between the Urban and the Rural

In 2013, an environmental organization in Istanbul made a meeting announcement, with a poster showing three identical, male horon dancers in their traditional attires resembling costumes of Trabzon or Rize. The dancers are depicted as black silhouettes, holding hands at the chest level and lifting their right feet identically up to the level of their left knees. They dance at the edge of a cracking cliff and barely touch the ground with the tip of their right big toes, as if the rock will break off if they apply more weight. The background is bright yellow, yet the cliff, the falling rock, and three dancing men are all portrayed in black, conjuring the necropolitical effects of environmental devastation in the Black Sea. The image illustrates that small pieces of rock are falling, yet the big piece on which dancers hold onto each other can still be saved before it totally breaks. Three men jump at the same height while keeping their flawless upright posture, which demonstrates a high level of mastery in the dance technique. On the poster, there is no indication of the name of the political organization, meeting time or place—only that on the upper left corner, it reads, "Against Ecological Devastation, DANCE UPRIGHT!" The performers enact the utterance through their upright dancing bodies and jump high just before the rock breaks off.

Environmental grassroots groups often make the analogy between "dik" (upright) horon style and resistance, and they use this dance imagery in public announcements of meetings, concerts, and rallies.[68] In this horon, the entire body of the dancer shimmies and shakes as they continuously pull their knees backward with small, sharp movements as if sliding backwards. In the context of protest, the symbolic imagery of the upright body is

[68] "Dik" means upright in Turkish; its Greek pronunciation, tik, also means something straight. Although Turkish version of Tik implies one style, Pontian Greek Tik has many variations, such as Tonya Tik, Machuka Tik, and Tik Omal, as I explained in detail in the Introduction of the dissertation. In both Turkish and Greek versions, the style requires upright posture and is also called "men's horon" (Kaya 2008).

compatible with the idea of having a solid political stance. Esra, an environmental activist and a tulum player, says that standing straight on both feet refers to a defiant body, who does not kneel to the power. Another activist from the organization called the Black Sea is in Riot Platform, elucidates the significance of the standing posture saying, "You should have a strong vertebra to dance horon. We have a horon called upright horon, and we should dance it right! Whatever happens, when you dance horon, you know that you shouldn't bend down" (Istanbul, 4.9.2017). A dancing body can perform sit-ins and vigils; she can be dragged by the police or lay down on the ground; yet, her upright vertebra indicates resilience and struggle for these activists.

Figure 5.1: Call for Action Poster:
"Against Ecological Devastation DANCE UPRIGHT!"

The depiction of three dancing male bodies on a cracked cliff emphasizes the urgency of addressing environmental degradation in the Black Sea area, yet this representation ignores women's active and laborious environmental struggle in the region. How shall we examine the aforementioned poster about Black Sea environmentalism in relation to gender and performance? How do such representations of horon link urban and rural activists and how

can we analyze these transregional connections? How do dissenters aesthetically combine different materials and sources such as images, pieces of clothing, dance, and poetry to create political meanings and travel between locations? In this chapter, I focus on environmental grassroots struggle in rural and urban settings. I argue that activists develop "techniques of bricolage" by locating diverse art forms next to each other; inserting a foreign object or style into a traditional genre; using familiar signs in unfamiliar ways; and juxtaposing distinct elements in a horon performance. As they create new intertextual relations between objects, art forms, and artistic styles, they disclose, dismantle, and subvert relationships between dance, tradition, and politics.

Bricolage is defined in the arts as the construction or creation from a diverse range of available things, both from traditional and non-traditional materials including everyday objects; and this definition also guides my interpretative framework in this chapter (Baldick 2008; ArtFire 2012). As an artistic process, it requires knowledge and experience to skillfully manipulate and repurpose the art form by bringing elements together which are recited and referred in the mainstream discourse. Through bricolage, disparate parts and things may form, following their reorganization, a new object. Similarly, already existing frameworks can also be disassembled and re-assembled by means of bricolage. In horon performances, activists de-compose existing choreographies as signifiers of certain traditional, cultural, and political values and re-compose their components, sometimes with the addition of new material from other repertoires. For example, they use traditional images together with political signs; perform horon during vigils and sit-ins as new forms of protest at rural sites; and recite slogans within established forms of poetry.

Dissenters apply bricolage in their political protests and horon performances by masterfully using the existing material from various sources that are available to them at the

moment and creating new alignments and relationships, which requires artistic competency.[69] Environmental activists from the Black Sea are usually competent dancers who take conscious decisions to enact or defy the expectations in the typical horon choreography. Therefore, "imprecision," for instance, refers to an amalgamation of different dance styles and movement vocabularies through which activists blur its precise stylings; however, using what I call "techniques of bricolage," they meticulously recite and refer to images, objects, lyrics, and movements to create new social and political meanings by innovatively re-assembling those elements in a single frame. So that activists may bring together traditional props with protest lyrics; they may innovate new movements and insert them into the conventional choreography; or dancers in urban outfits may be represented as the "natives" of the Black Sea in posters and flyers. Activists also execute movements in complex ways as they bend the choreography to order their bodies against impediments installed at the place of protest; position themselves and move along other activists; and assess physical capacities and willingness of individual participants to join and support political action.

In this chapter, I use performativity as another conceptual framework to analyze how activists mobilize the public through horon performances. I use the term in two ways: to refer to the performativity of language (Austin 1962; Bauman 1977) which involves the utterances that do not merely describe an action but accomplish it, what J.L. Austin calls "performative utterance" (1962, 5-6). He famously gives an example of a marriage ceremony, in which the bride and groom change their social and legal status and become a married couple as they say, "I do." These types of utterances are also contextualized as "speech-acts," sentences that create events or relations in the world; these are the words that initiate the performance of the

[69] Claude Levi-Strauss defines "bricolage" (1966, 16) as the skill of using whatever at hand and combining them to create something new, such as the traditional medicine that is made by those who have inexhaustible knowledge of plants. He identifies this "maker" as the "bricoleur," who, like a craftsperson, works in devious ways by putting pre-existing objects together in particular ways and creating new relationships among these objects, which result in the emergence of new meanings.

act. While Austin argues a performative utterance has no force in an aesthetic milieu, I suggest the use of horon, poetry, and chanting in public protest blurs the distinction Austin makes between "art" and "everyday life," and shows the efficacy of the performative in this scenario.[70] In horon, activists convert traditionally improvised poetry into political chants, slogans, and contemporary statements by using performative language as they denounce corporations, curse their owners, and promise a better future. Although "speech acts" are often authored and authorized by the hegemonic system, my examples show their dissenting recitations. Second, I cite performativity as an act of identity-construction which requires reflexive engagement with the codes of ethnicity, gender, and activism. Scholars such as Judith Butler (1993, 1990) and Susan Foster (1998) have shown how performativity works as a discursive force in which the subject "cites" and "re-cites," or resists and negotiates, to variously construct, challenge, or re-choreograph her social identity.

To discuss these arguments, first, I provide an overview of the history and politics of environmental struggles in the eastern Black Sea and also explain the actors taking part of environmental and political activism. Next, I look at call-for-action posters and protest imagery to examine how activists envision and bring together the Black Sea region's pristine nature and pieces of traditional clothing in rural and urban demonstrations. Later, I address performativity in relation to improvised poetry and song lyrics used in horon performances. My investigation centers on how activists use the structure of traditional poetry to transform the lyrics into political cries, which participates in the conversion of horon into a resistance genre. Lastly, I analyze how these experienced dancers transform spaces of protest by bringing different movement vocabularies and styles together as well as alternating established roles and hierarchies in horon. For example, they may juxtapose an accordion-

[70] Further, Judith Butler and other scholars have shown how performativity operates in the aesthetic domain as well as other spheres (Butler 1993; Sedgwick 1990).

horon style with tulum tunes if that is the only instrument available in protest; or, they may insert quotidian gestures into the traditional choreography to decrease the tension during activist event. Dissenters divide, extend, or limit the space of political action through collectively de/re-composing the available material both in horon circles and in protests.

I select my examples from the Black Sea environmental movement and investigate how activists, who are mostly competent horon dancers, bring together dance, music, and poetry in rural and urban environmental actions. I particularly focus on three case studies: a highway project known as the "Green Road," which aimed to connect the highland plateaus of Rize province; a resistance against the "Cerattepe mining" in Artvin province; and the Hydroelectric Power Plant ("Hidroelektrik Enerji Santrali" in Turkish, with the acronym of HES) in Arhavi, a town between Rize and Artvin. While the first two initiatives have solidarity networks in Istanbul, the third one remained relatively local, and I will return to these episodes when I analyze bricolage and performativity in different protest contexts. My examples will show as dissenters move between Istanbul and the Black Sea rurality, they neatly combine a transregional repertoire through which horon tradition is re-formed, re-assembled, and re-interpreted as a resistance genre.

Environmental Grassroots Activism and Horon

My use of the term "activists," refers to three main constituencies: urban activists, rural activists, and internal, or regional, diasporic activists who were born and raised in a western Turkish city although they have extended family members in the Black Sea. This last group consists of an internal regional diaspora, and they mobilize the rural community by traveling between the city and the countryside. While the state was the agent of environmentalism in the early twentieth century, the first group of urban activists led the

environmental campaigns in the 1950s.[71] This group focused on the beautification of cities as the major part of the environmental program. In the 1970s, the form of environmental activism has changed significantly since nationwide institutions were established to "protect" the environment. Thus the primary demonstrations with environmental concerns focused on environmental protection, rather than, for instance, ecological justice. Members of these institutions were mostly volunteers, however, in the 1980s, they were replaced with professionals. Turkey's Green Party (YP) was established in 1988 and prioritized the conservation of the country's natural and historical heritage, until the Party's demise in 1994. Benefiting from the experience of the YP, a new generation of environmental organizations emerged in the 1990s with the involvement of the second group, namely rural activists, who created locally established, network type organizations.

Between 2005 and 2016, small-scale activist groups unified under various umbrella organizations and mobilized the masses. For example, the environmental resistance succeeded against the pivotal HES projects of the AKP government paved the way for the establishment of the "Derelerin Kardeşliği Platformu" (the Fraternity of Rivers Platform, with Turkish acronym DEKAP) in 2007, a grassroots group aiming to unite local anti-HES movements from Trabzon to Hopa in the eastern Black Sea. Further, the "Network of River Movements," the "Black Sea in Riot Platform," and the "Black Sea Culture and Environment Association" were established with such notable voices as Citizen Mustafa (2007) and Citizen Kazım (2009), two senior gentlemen and well-known activists of the environmental movement in the eastern Black Sea. Under the umbrella organizations, local activists experienced a wide range of forms of protest such as vigils (Artvin Cerattepe resistance in

[71] The country's first environmental policy was introduced in 1924 with the establishment of the Turkish Foresters' Association, yet environmental organizations flourished in the 1950s during the multiparty period. [71] Since the 1980s, liberalization and opening up Turkish markets to foreign investment and global capital prioritized economic growth over environmental protection.

2016), egg-throwing to business representatives visiting villages to convince inhabitants to energy plans (Ikizdere River in Çayeli, Rize in 2008), and synchronized demonstrations at rural sites and in front of the headquarters of energy companies in big cities. In an anthology of environmental movements in Turkey, Cemil Aksu and Ramazan Korkut define this decade-long period as Turkey's realization of ecology as a political problem, which was a result of protests and organizational capacities of those who call themselves "defenders of life" (2017, 9). During this time, a demonstration for the right to water in Hopa in 2011 ended with the murder of Metin Lokumcu, a school teacher, which created even more outrage against power plants. These emerging grassroots movements demanded not only ecological protection and justice, but also legal justice and democratization in a larger political context (Adaman and Arsel 2005, 3). As they succeeded in linking environmental policy with general debates on democratization, transparency in decision-making, and citizens' right to access information, politically conscious individuals and labor unions with no previous experience in environmental struggle were also attracted to green movements (Adem 2005). These developments changed the "nature conservation" approach of the 1970s and politicized the movement both urban and rural contexts.

Since the late 1990s, the third group of protesters which I call "internal diasporic activists" have been engaged in environmentalist struggle and conducted campaigns. These are often the second and third generations of those who migrated from the Black Sea to other cities. For example, the Fırtına Initiative was established in the 2000s against the highway construction in Fırtına Valley located in Çamlıhemşin area of Rize province. The group called itself, "the Children of the Valley," referring to their belonging to the native culture although many were living in big cities. Their call attracted large groups of rural and urban protesters who were against the demolition of the natural resources in the valley. While Black Sea activists pursued their struggles *in situ*, their solidarity networks in Istanbul organized

public protests and demonstrations to support these local movements. All three groups of activists, urban, rural, and internal diasporic, collaborated in many cases to appeal court cases against construction firms and use the legal system extensively as the site of struggle. In addition to legal battles, they introduced new techniques of resistance. For example, in 1993, the anti-nuclear platform was established after Chernobyl reactor explosion in 1986, which had devastating radioactivity on the Black Sea and caused widespread cancer affecting populations particularly those living on the coastal area (Gökmen et. al. 1996; Wise 1996; H. Acar et. al. 2011). The anti-nuclear movement utilized a number of new strategies to further its cause, such as signature campaigns, demonstrations, rallies, festivals, and symbolic referenda, some of which other environmentalists later used in urban and rural protests.[72]

Horon became part of these new environmental campaigns included concerts, themed picnics, hunger strikes, and human chains in the late 1990s. For the first time horon was deployed against the construction of the HES in Fırtına Valley in 1997.[73] Following the protests in the region and in the big cities, Trabzon Administrative Court canceled the Environment Assessment Report (ÇED) approved for the construction company by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, and the State Council, the highest court about any public initiatives in Turkey, abolished ÇED in 2004. In the 2000s, popular artists also joined the canon of environmentalism. Turkey's iconic pop star Tarkan made a pro-environmentalist public statement against HES projects and was criticized harshly by Veysel Eroğlu, the Minister of Environment in 2011. A singer and tulum player, Gökhan Birben,

[72] The Anti-Nuclear Platform had several positive impacts in the environmental resistance culture in Turkey, yet the Platform has been criticized by not showing a similar interest to the environmental issues in Kurdish cities. For example, activists and scholars demonstrated their disappointment with the platform because it did not show a similar reaction against Ilisu dam in Mardin province in the southeastern Turkey (Adem 2005, 77).

[73] The newspapers mention the environmentalists protesting the Dilek-Güroluk Hydroelectric Power Plant construction in Fırtına Valley. *Milliyet*, a popular newspaper, mentions that a group of environmental protesters gathered at Istanbul's Kadıköy's Pier and danced horon as an innovative demonstration against the planned power plant in Fırtına Valley (Milliyet 1998). Individual testimonies that I registered in Çamlıhemşin during my follow-up fieldwork (March 2019) also confirmed this information as I will explain further in this chapter.

featured a record, *Tears of Clouds* (2011), which was dedicated to anti-HES resistance. In his press statement on February 22, 2013, Birben invited artists to show their solidarity with activists against the environmental degradation of the Black Sea and criticized other artists who collaborated with the government, stating, "some of our artist friends who danced the horon together with us yesterday, have now left the horon, and become the voice of their owner." In his concert, he invited everyone to unite in a horon circle, where they chanted, "No to HES, Rivers should run free!" (Haberler 2013).

My personal conversation with an associate of singer Kazım Koyuncu, an iconic artist and activist of the Black Sea who passed away due to fatal effects of Chernobyl nuclear disaster, indicated that to establish a link between diverse communities of the region was one of Koyuncu's biggest dreams, and he advised his associate to pay attention to horon as a significant tool to create such link. Environmental movements in the Black Sea, of which Koyuncu was also a part in the 1990s particularly those against the debated coastal highway known as "sahil yolu,"[74] exclusively used horon after Koyuncu, and so that these activists claim that this trend of deploying horon in political events was their contribution. Although a variety of urban social justice movements perform horon in their demonstrations today, environmental activism primarily uses this genre, referring to the unique connection between horon and the history of environmental resistance in the Black Sea, one of the most resilient regions opposing recent neoliberal and developmentalist initiatives.

Politics, Gender, and Horon in the Black Sea

[74] In 1997, then-Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz from the center-right Motherland Party proposed a highway to connect towns on the Black Sea coast up to the Georgian border. Many were against this project, claiming that the road would block access to the sea, particularly for women who used pathways through the forest to reach it—their route would be disrupted by a busy highway full of cars and trucks. Besides, they argued, the coastal highway created mobility only for the upper classes, whose members could afford to travel between big cities and along littoral towns for business or leisure. However, a decade later, in 2007, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the then-prime minister of another center-right party, AKP, opened the coastal highway (*C*NNTurk 2007).

The political spectrum in the Black Sea region is highly polarized. A national economic crisis following the Second World War in the 1940s and 1950s promoted large-scale migration from rural Black Sea towns to Turkey's big cities, particularly Istanbul. Mostly men migrated, looking for job opportunities in other cities and abroad, whereas women remained in their place of origin, taking care of their extended families and participating in local agriculture and land cultivation. In some cases, men sent money to their families in the village and in other cases they brought their families to the cities where they found job opportunities.[75] The entrepreneurship skills of the Black Sea peoples and forced dislocation of the (Armenian and Greek) non-Muslim bourgeoisie in the first half of the twentieth century provided these rural-urban migrants with privileged positions in the re-allocation of resources in Istanbul and other big cities in Turkey. The majority of the population hence stayed close to the political center (Taşkın 2016), which may explain an increased popularity of the right-wing political parties since the coup d'état of 1980. Recently, the AKP government has found its greatest source of support in the Black Sea cities, particularly in the parliamentary elections of 2015 (Yıldırım and Haspolat 2016, 21).

Although center-right governments have been very popular in in the Black Sea region for almost four decades, left-wing politics had been dominant from the early twentieth century until the early 1980s. The first regional branches of the Turkish Communist Party opened in Rize, Trabzon, and Zonguldak in the mid-1920s, and many Laz and Hemşin community members joined the party due to their familiarity with Bolsheviks at the Russian

[75] In Black Sea villages, when people go to big cities for work opportunities—this could be a city in western Turkey like Istanbul or a city abroad like Krasnador in Russia or Berlin in Germany—these places are considered "gurbet," meaning "abroad." Those who are resided in "gurbet" come back to their villages in religious festivals and holidays and are welcomed with great attention. When they are in "abroad," they are also expected to send money from these locations to their villages. This global financial issue which involves the money that international migrants send back home to the global South is conceptualized as "remittance flows" in development studies (Bakker 2015, 4).

border after the 1917 Revolution in Russia (Aksu 2012, 237). Starting from the mid-1960s and throughout the 1970s, the leftist political view has particularly become prominent in the Black Sea because the mass-production principle of modern capitalism changed the economic relationship in the region, as villagers became workers in tea factories and mining areas.[76] The organizational capacities of the *Turkish Worker's Party* (TİP) in the 1960s and leftist revolutionary groups, such as *Devrimci Gençlik* (the Revolutionary Youth Federation, or DEV-GENÇ), *Devrimci Yol* (the Revolutionary Path), *Halkın Yolu* (People's Path), and *Halkın Kurtuluşu* (People's Salvation) in the 1970s complemented the worker's self-governance experiences (Narin 2016). The ethnic differences yet reflected in the Left tradition in the region; the Laz mostly participated in the People's Path while the Hemşin largely joined the Revolutionary Path (Aksu 2012, 275).[77]

These leftist movements bequeathed an important legacy in the eastern Black Sea area. Some towns in particular, such as Fatsa, Fıdıklı, Hopa, and Şavşat, are still known for their democratic, left-leaning, and anti-AKP inhabitants.[78] Fatsa, located to the west of Trabzon, has a special place in Turkish modern history because it was ruled by direct democracy and self-governance for a short period before the coup (E. Şahin 2016; Korkmaz

[76] A new economic model has been introduced to the Black Sea in the 1950s: the tea production. While the main economic resource was vegetables and corn, the state promoted hazelnut between Adapazarı and Trabzon in the 1960s and tea in Rize in the late 1940s. From 1947 to the 1970s, tea production was supported by the state. As they began working in tea production, women planted and cutting tea in the plantations and men worked in tea factories as workers (Aksu 2012, 246). When the private sector started to occupy a large role in the tea industry after the mid-1980s and the opening of Georgian and Russian markets in the 1990s, the values of the liberal economy have also changed social, cultural, and gender relations in the area (Bellér-Hann and Hann, 2012).

[77] In this period, the People's Salvation was the first political organization in the Black Sea to demonstrate solidarity with the Kurdish cause. Yusuf Ziya Örün's oral history account demonstrates that an anti-colonialist perspective of the Salvation in Rize led them to support "free Kurdistan" against the Turkish nation-state (Sarıoğlu 2004, 512). Örün's biographical narrative highlights that although not all the members of the organization agreed or understood the meaning of it, they chanted this slogan in Kurdish in their protests.

[78] In the local elections recently held in March 2019, all these towns with the Left legacy voted for the CHP or independent candidates and hence dethroned the existing AKP mayors. Among these newly elected CHP mayors, the mayor of Fındıklı, Ercüment Şahin Cervatoğlu, encouraged a direct democracy model and constituted assemblies under the municipality. The first assembly was the women's assembly conducted with the participation of 400 women, who elected their assembly administration and discussed women's major problems in Fındıklı (Gazete Duvar 2019).

2018). Similarly, leftist Revolutionary movements were popularized in Hopa between 1974 and 1980 with the opening of the branches of the *Turkish Teacher's Union* (TOB-DER) and the *People's houses* (*Halkevleri* in Turkish) until the 1980 coup (Aksu 2012, 258-259). Left-leaning parties and organizations reclaimed political agency once again in the 1990s, and the left-libertarian and socialist *Freedom and Democracy Party* (ÖDP) gained victories in the 1999 and 2004 local elections. Yet, environmental movements opposing hydroelectric projects have been pivotal in reorganizing the dissenting politics, and they have emphasized their independent character by refusing association with any political organizations, thus attracting popular support (Yavuz and Şendeniz 2013, 55).

In the protest repertoire of the 1970s, I have not noticed the deployment of the horon. According to one of my interviewees whose family members were leftist revolutionaries in the Black Sea region at the time, the dominant Marxist political philosophy, which distinguishes the base from the superstructure, determined the value attributed to the horon as a product of the latter. The dance, seen as a leisure activity, was not considered a part of political and economic relations constituting the base.[79] For the local inhabitants, however, the horon is strongly engaged with the practice of everyday life. Emine, an activist and horon leader explained to me that in her village, the horon has been a normal course of life for centuries. "Therefore," she says, "we dance the horon whether there is a wedding, a celebration, or a festival. So when the police come in Robocop uniforms, we also dance the horon" (Çamlıhemşin, 8.31.2017). The quotidian aspect of the dance was utilized to support the mainstream discourse of environmentalism as an "apolitical" activity, which women strategically employed to claim ownership in the Black Sea environmental movement.[80]

[79] In orthodox Marxist interpretations, forms of art and entertainment are associated with bourgeois ideology and the superstructure (Williams 1977).

[80] Turkish scholar Özlem Şendeniz (2016) underlines how the region has been developed as an energy center for over a decade, with major projects such as hydroelectric and thermal power plants, highways, and mining

The environmental movement in Turkey has been interpreted by some scholars as "above politics" activism, which "strengthens civil society, fosters alternative expressions of identity, and creates new forms of agency outside of the state" (Knudsen 2015, 302). Others suggest that a range of political problems in Turkey such as the Kurdish question, developmentalism, cultural identity, and gender can be interpreted and analyzed through the lens of political ecology and environmental movements (Aksu, Erensü, Evren 2016, 11). In this context, horon is imagined as a kinesthetic space, where people from diverse ethnic backgrounds and oppositional political perspectives can gather together to stand against neoliberal state policies which cause serious ecological problems. Horon, danced equally by people from both the Left and the Right, is assumed to have the capacity for inviting people from diverse political perspectives to the environmental movement.

Women in particular were very active by leading, initiating, and disseminating environmental action as well as leading horon circles in public sphere. They used the "above politics" discourse which associates horon with everyday life, connoting outside of politics, which is home, and took the leadership in the grassroots organization. In the Black Sea region, women perform the labor of heavy domestic work in their households. They cook, clean the house, take care of children and elderly of the family, feed the animals, plant crops, cultivate family-owned tea fields, carry wood for heat, and prepare food stuffs for storage and consumption in winter, such as cheese and butter. Because they carry heavy loads in large baskets on their backs, many women have back pain and related health issues as they age. The popular image of the tough, hard-working and self-sacrificing Black Sea woman is

extractions. She particularly focuses on the town of Fındıklı, located between Çamlıhemşin and Artvin, to examine the local resistance against HES constructions. Şendeniz argues that the environmental struggle was built on earlier experiences of poorly designed mega-projects in the area and was organized against the forced commercialization of the land because such plans had no transparency or public discussion about their effects on the nature and living spaces. Drawing on these earlier experiences, inhabitants turned to be feverish activists to hinder these upcoming initiatives. Şendeniz's interviewees also refer to the negative impacts of the previous mega-projects in the region. One of them says, "They took our seas, we will not let them take our rivers!" (421).

represented as “a pastoral and an authentic figure” (Genç 2010; Taşkın 2018, 22). Such imagery renders invisible forms of patriarchal oppression both at home and in public. An important book exploring gender and Black Sea identity is edited by Ayşenur Kolivar and Leyla Çelik, *Fadime Kimdir* (*Who is Fadime*, 2007), in which the romanticized image of Black Sea femininity is questioned by women writers from the region who reject the gender typology and instead emphasize their diverse identities, abilities, and capacities. For example, Emine Kolivar's essay about a woman called “Gelin Anne” (Bride Mother) indicates her surprise at learning that the woman’s name was actually not Gelin but Emine, same as the author’s name. Her role in her husband’s household as “the bride” also defined her position in the social setting outside the home. There is no homogeneity among Black Sea women who are differentially oppressed by the patriarchal relations. In the regional environmental struggle, women recited their performative identities as “brides,” “daughters,” and “wives” of their families to initiate new networks for further mobilizing the local public.

Referring to such differences among Black Sea women, Emek Yıldırım defines Hemşin women as the “weakest link” (2017, 28) because while the Turkish state pretends the Laz are “white Turks” by providing this community with economic and political privileges, the Hemşin are considered “the other” of the Laz and thus despised and marginalized deeply. In their ethnographic study on the Laz women participants of the anti-HES resistance in Fıdıklı town of Rize, sociologists Şahide Yavuz and Özlem Şendeniz demonstrate that the Laz women are more attentive to the discourse and news about HES constructions, and they are also more active than male members of the Laz community regarding environmental struggle, yet men are more visible in the media (2013, 47-49). Both the Laz and the Hemşin are contemporary societies in which patriarchal relations are dominant although women are currently more active than men in dissenting movements. Although their engagements have been different, many women in both communities have performed pivotal roles in vigils;

carried banners and sign-posts against companies; asked for an accounting from the governor; spoke forcefully to media; and struggled physically against the police, soldiers, and security forces in the sites of resistance.[81]

Three Case Studies Among the Recent Environmental Movements in the Black Sea

Developmentalist discourse has become the legitimizing force of the mega-projects in the Black Sea area. After becoming Prime Minister in 2002, Erdoğan declared that he was going to continue with investing in energy plans in the region, including the construction of a mountain highway, a new airport in Rize, and opening of several mines. Moreover, stating that he is "*the* environmentalist," Erdoğan blamed activists for protesting unnecessarily just because they had too much time on their hands (Hürriyet 2008). Following this statement, Veysel Eroğlu, the Minister of Forest and Water Affairs of the time, declared a "war against environmental activists" and claimed that environmentalists are used by energy companies to harm the government (Cumhuriyet 2012). These declarations criminalized environmentalists and further politicized the environmental struggle.

In this political climate, rural and urban activists found ways to support each other more profoundly. Rural community members shared their experiences by visiting urban environmental organizations, and internal diasporic activists from urban initiatives also went to rural sites to support the resistance in situ. Such transregional form of political activism reflected into protest styles as well: Rural resistance movements were supported by synchronized protest events in western cities of Turkey to raise public awareness of

[81] Grassroots environmental movements started locally and implemented their goals and objectives to defend a broader sense of global sustainability and ecological justice in the 1980s. Women have pervasive roles in these environmental and ecological grassroots movements. Sarah Sturges Gardner's study (1995) about the rise of environmental movements in the "third-world" countries during the 1970s underlines women's expanded role in these movements. Gardner argues that women's significant roles stem from the fact that economic and ecological stress prevents women from fulfilling their household and motherhood responsibilities. Therefore, women's participation in these movements should not necessarily imply women's liberalization. Contrarily, such participation may both affirm and revoke traditional gender roles (1995 211-212).

ecological issues. Those who joined in solidarity protests in metropolis might also go to support activists in the region. To this extent, horon, representing solidarity and resistance, has been assumed as a shared kinesthetic space which might unite not only the Left and the Right political views but also the urban and rural activists. Below I briefly contextualize three important episodes of the recent history of environmentalism in the Black Sea to discuss the assumption further.

Figure 5.2: A bulldozer opening the "Green Road" in the mountain behind villagers' houses. Kavrun Plateau, Çamlıhemşin, Rize. © Sevi Bayraktar, 8.1.2017.

Cerattepe Mine Protests (1995-2016)

Cerattepe, at an altitude of 1700 meters, is a hill in Artvin province in northeastern Turkey. The hill, and the surrounding area, is known for its unique biodiversity as well as being the water source for the town. The area where Cerattepe and the neighboring Hatila Valley National Park are located is a forest with trees from the Neolithic Age. There are 1400

kinds of plants among which 165 are endemic, and it is one of the two migration routes of wild birds in Turkey. The area was investigated by the General Directorate of Mineral Research and Exploration (MTA) in 1985, which reported that mine construction has heightened the risk of landslides because the area consists of volcanic sedimentary rocks. However, the first drilling took place in the early 1990s by the Canadian mining company Cominco. The activity polluted the water resources and caused animal deaths; then people started to pay more attention to the mining project. Despite the inhabitants' persistent struggle, the activity continued on and off for more than two decades. The movement led by the Green Artvin Association, established in 1995 to increase environmental awareness. The association is still the most influential organization in Artvin, working with numerous grassroots groups at local and national levels. As a result of the mobilization,[82] Cominco switched the license for mining operations to another Canadian company, Inmet, in 2002. Yet, the environmental struggle was more organized against the second company. The faculty of Karadeniz Technical University's School of Forestry reported and voted on a statement about the impacts of the construction in 2006. In 2007, members of the State Council visited the region (Hopam 2007), and in 2008, the Rize courthouse canceled Inmet Mining Company's license, with the State Council approving the local court's objections in 2009. The State Council's decision not only terminated the operations of Inmet company but also were considered valid for all future plans regarding mining in the region. The court decision specified the harmful effects of mining on the unique landscape, mentions its diverse vegetation and animal species, and indicates the already existing risk of landslide.

[82] The Association invited scientists for a panel in 1996, which also convinced the Artvin governor of the negative impacts of the mining project and the governor published a report in the state registry (no. 22553) in 1996. The volunteers of the association collected about ten thousand signatures in opposition to development projects in the province in 1997, and presented those to the national parliament in Ankara in 1998.

Despite this court decision, the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources announced the auctioning of 1343 new mining areas in 2011 and gave license for Cerattepe in 2012 to Özaltın, "Pure-gold" in English, a Turkish company called Cengiz Holding, which also constructed the debated coastal highway. Since 2002, Cengiz Holding increased its capacity by running several other mega-projects, such as the new Istanbul Airport, a fast train between Ankara and Sivas, and the ongoing Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant. The company also bought at auctions the "Green Road" highway construction project in Çamlıhemşin and has been authorized to build Rize Airport (Birgün 2017, Kuzeyormanlari 2016).

Environmentalists conducted a meeting at the central square of Artvin city on April 6, 2013, protesting the ÇED report that supported the investments of the company. This demonstration in Artvin showcased some recent tactical shifts in the movement's protest repertoire. Activists typically wrote petitions, collected signatures, opened court cases, and issued press statements as conventional forms of protest. However, in 2013, the horon drew public attention and facilitated a common enthusiasm for resistance. Environmentalists also used other creative forms of performances in the following years, such as women playing big drums. Neşe Karahan from the Green Artvin Association explains this tactical change in the movement as a requirement of the circumstances:

> When we began our struggle in the 1990s, our protests were very different from those of the Bergama people who were good at performing attractive protests to highlight their anti-mining struggle.[83] Also, they were close to the big cities in the west and performed influential protests, but we took a different path. We did not want to be as visible because our court cases went well. But, seeing that judges were kept being replaced until they made biased decisions, we had no other choice but to change our tactics (Artvin, 2.8.2017).

[83] The inhabitants of Bergama, a small town in Turkey's Aegean Region in the west, began their environmental struggle in 1990 against the first gold mining project by Eurogold Gold Mining Company, which is currently operating in the area and was founded in 1989 by French and Canadian multinational mining companies. Following the Mining Law of 1985 in Turkey, the company obtained a permit to establish the first modern gold mine in the country (Environmental Justice Atlas 2019). To hinder company's operations, particularly against its open-pit methods, inhabitants of Bergama used several direct action and civil disobedience tactics (along with opening up court cases) such as road blockades, mine field occupations, sit-ins, and naked protests.

These new tactics increased the visibility of the Cerattepe struggle in the country. The State Council once again cancelled the ÇED license in 2014. This decision resulted in massive celebrations during which activists danced to celebrate their victory. However, in 2015, Cengiz Holding applied for another ÇED license and this time the outcome was in favor of the company. Consequently, on June 21, 2015, protesters occupied Cerattepe to prevent the work machines from entering the mining zone. This "guard duty" was a 24/7 collective act by the people and it created public momentum, with the vigil lasting for 245 days and drawing participants from diverse economic, political, and cultural backgrounds—such as scientists, business people, students, villagers, and politicians—until the police and gendarmerie used pepper gas, rubber bullets, and pressured water to scatter activists in February 2016. On one hand, articles in national newspapers discussed the potential harmful effects of the project with the example of the copper mine in the neighboring town of Murgul, which "left no life in the surrounding area" (Ocak 2016). On the other hand, as a response to the growing public attention, President Erdoğan became involved in the debate and called Cerattepe protesters "yavru Gezici," which means "juvenile" Gezi supporters, referring to Istanbul's 2013 Taksim Gezi Park movement, whose "perpetrators" are currently in trail. Erdoğan not only infantilized the Cerattepe protesters but also criminalized them in the court of public opinion (CNNTurk 2016). Following this statement, some media called the Cerattepe protesters "terrorists," and accused them of being "German spies."[84] A national newspaper announced on the front page that activists were "Not Environmentalists [but] German Converts" (Star, 2.26.2016), who aimed to divide the country. The notion of

[84] The racist accusation is rooted in Bergama protests of the 1990s. Zafer Şahin, a column writer in Yeni Asır newspaper, claims that the state could not drill the gold mine in Bergama because German foundations in Turkey cooperated with FETÖ, abbreviation of the Fethullah Gülen Terror Organization that is accused to lead the attempted coup d'état in 2016. He associates Bergama anti-mining struggle with these groups and claims that environmentalists were financially supported by German foundations in Turkey (Z. Şahin 2016). Şahin's claims are based on a book, *Alman Vakıfları Bergama Dosyası* (*German Foundations Bergama File*), by Necip Hablemitoğlu, a Turkish historian known with his Republicanist views. It was published in 2008 and reprinted in 2016, fourteen years after Hablemitoğlu was murdered in 2002 in front of his house by unknown perpetrators.

"German convert" served to marginalize environmental protesters by invoking inflammatory notions of ethnicity and nationality by implying that activists were non-Turks who would destroy national unity.

Green Road Protests (2015-2016)

In addition to the Black Sea coastal highway, government authorities decided to make another road in order to expand the tourist economy and unite the plateaus of eight cities, from Samsun to Sarp at Turkey's border with Georgia. The road is a 2600 km (1600 mile) stretch, crossing over the high mountains of the eastern Black Sea region. Ironically the highway is called the "Green Road," implying its assumed environment-friendly construction. The company argued that the road would increase the tourism potential of the area by making highland plateaus accessible for daily visits and tourist accommodation. Yet, inhabitants were not convinced by this argument, because a number of environmental organizations claimed that the road was going to be used to transport the energy minerals extracted from the rural Black Sea to big cities. The Black Sea in Riot Platform argued, the green plateaus would be covered with concrete; the lack of infrastructure would increase pollution; ecological diversity would be significantly harmed; and animal husbandry as an important economic resource for several local families would be diminished (Onedio, 2015). The activist and Hemşin intellectual Uğur Biryol defines the Green Road as "not a road project but a more comprehensive and broader project of demolition" (2016, 555).

In 2015, when construction vehicles came to the area connecting Kavrun and Samistal plateaus, they were met with an effective resistance by environmental activists. Once the bulldozers reached Kavrun Plateau in June 2015, the locals managed to stop construction. Yet, in July, it started up again on Samistal plateau. Activists arrived there too, despite the company's obstructive maneuver of leaving a bulldozer in the way to prevent them from

reaching the site; they constructed an alternative road to swing around the bulldozer, carried rocks to make a curve, which they called "the resistance curve," "direniş virajı" in Turkish. They began to hold a vigil on July 11th and continued for the next fifty days. On July 12th, thousands gathered in Istanbul's İstiklal Street to demonstrate solidarity with the Green Road protesters. People danced horon during this event and the next day's newspapers announced "the 'Green Road' Protest with the Horon in Beyoğlu" (Haberler 2015). On July 13th, the local court decided to stop construction. The media announced this achievement as "the First 'Victory Horon,'" and showed a group of activists dancing in downtown Çamlıhemşin (Hürriyet 2015). Nevertheless, the construction started once again despite the court's decision and the company's activity continued illegally with police support. Simultaneous protests took place once again on Samistal plateau and in districts of Istanbul, such as Beyoğlu, Kadıköy, and Beşiktaş. In August 2015, hundreds protested in front of the governor's office in Rize, during which they danced to tulum tunes and improvised song lyrics to express their frustration and demand the company act in compliance with the law.

Arhavi Anti-Hydroelectric Power Plant Movement (2016-present)

In addition to building roads and highways, HES projects are widespread energy plans in the region. The State Water Affairs has been dysfunctional since the rise of neoliberal policies of the AKP government beginning in the early 2000s, and private companies dominated the "market" for water, while environmental activists perceive free access to water as a human right.[85] Alongside big dams, smaller "stream-type" hydroelectric power plants have become very popular, and they have been the main problem for the inhabitants because they can operate in any fast-running stream. The state leases portions of the streams to private

[85] In 2015, there were 537 HES in Turkey. In addition to these, 133 HES were under construction and 721 HES were projected. The total number of HES was planned as 1400 by 2023 (Erensü, Aksu, Evren 2016).

companies for an extended period, so that multiple companies can rent different parts of a stream to produce energy, converting river beds into busy zones of construction. Currently 271 HES have been planned in the eastern Black Sea despite court cases and protests.

In 2007 and 2008, several significant protests against hydroelectric and thermal power plants received a widespread public participation for the first time in the recent history of the Black Sea (Hamsici 2012, 291). The Arhavi Anti-HES Struggle stands out among these movements. The agitation started when the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning approved a plan to carry spring water from Kamilet Valley to the regulator to be constructed in downtown Arhavi in 2012, inducing the formation of the Arhavi Nature Protection Platform with the Turkish acronym ADAKOP. Sociologist Sinan Erensü defines ADACOP as a "typical anti-HES organization," because it unites rural and urban activists, particularly those coming from families migrated from the Black Sea region, with the purpose of working together against the HES project (Erensü 2016, 484). Arhavi anti-HES protesters also held vigils, demonstrations and press declarations, in both Arhavi and Istanbul, and cooperated with DEKAP and the Black Sea is in Riot Platform, two organizations that engage with the smaller-scale environmental movements in the region.

Women of all ages have been pivotal in Arhavi anti-HES struggle. Their grassroots group emerged from ADAKOP; they called themselves "Hawk Women," "Atmaca Kadınlar" in Turkish. Their name refers to the tradition of hunting with hawks in the area. One member told me that female hawks are popularly used in hunting because they are more combative, and thus they picked this name for their group. Using this traditional imagery, they call themselves "Hawk Women" to show that they will not step back from their struggle. Some of these women were injured trying to prevent construction vehicles from operating in the area, others were threatened and assaulted by the company representatives, and several of them were persecuted and put on trial by the company. The Hawk Women performed sit-ins, wrote

petitions, organized mass demonstrations, filed court cases against the company, among many other actions. According to the blog writer NuGünlük (2008), women are passionate about defending the environment in Arhavi because they depend on natural resources for everyday household work and thus know the hardship of living without them. Moreover, in the Laz community, the majority ethnic population in Arhavi, women have had a significant role due to its assumed past as a matriarchal society.

Horon as a Resistance Genre

In the given historical and political context, women in environmental movements improvise and re-assemble various components of horon, such as its visual imagery, traditional clothing, poetry style and song lyrics, and choreographic components to reconstitute the dance as a practice that is anti-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian, and anti-neoliberal, in which lines activists also constitute their own political subjectivities. One of the excellent examples to analyze social and political identities presented in reference to horon is call-for-action flyers.

For example, a poster reproduces the idyllic imagery of the Black Sea by showing a group of people dancing the horon in a valley surrounded by high mountains. The background has no buildings but rather trees, implying that this place is protected from state and private development by the people in the frame, mostly young individuals shown wearing a mix of urban and rural outfits. The rural attire is recognizable by the baggy trousers and the women's particular way of folding the headscarf; and the urban outfit involves sneakers, shorts, and colorful pants. In the poster, above the mountains, up in the sky, it reads "Horon is Resistance!" The next line goes, "Continue the Struggle for Cerattepe."

Figure 5.3: Call for Action Poster: "Horon is Resistance! Continue to Struggle for Cerattepe." It is signed by Artvin Solidarity.

The poster demonstrates the people against the Cerattepe mining in Artvin highland; they dance together to stop the plan because "horon is resistance." The poster is signed by the Artvin Solidarity, an umbrella organization that is composed of smaller grassroots groups. It calls urban activists to the political demonstration in Istanbul in order to show their solidarity with those resisting in Artvin. It invites Istanbulites to join the "horon" as a common kinetic space shared by both activists from the rural and the urban. Those who are invited to Kadiköy Pier of Istanbul know that they are particularly called to perform something similar to those who are currently agitating in Cerattepe, which is dancing. Yet, highlighting the horon as resistance itself renders relatively "dangerous" forms of resistance less noticeable, such as the 7/24 vigils in the mining area and insurgencies against the police. When these forms of resistance become illegitimate, horon appears as a peaceful and legitimate form of resistance against anti-environmental and neoliberal construction businesses. Horon as a shared

knowledge which unites local and urban activists in their struggle is reconstituted as the dance of resistance through this poster.

Another poster-announcement explicitly identified horon with resistance is from Istanbul's 2013 Taksim-Gezi Park movement. The poster shows the green mountains of the Black Sea region with a river running through a valley. The image connects Gezi Park with the green areas of the Black Sea region, which is, similar to Gezi Park, under threat of demolition by the construction companies. It thus links the resistance movements in the urban and the rural by showing their shared goal which is to prevent the demolition of nature. The caption invites people to the "Resistance Horon" at Gezi Park, and hence two environmental movements, one from Istanbul and the other from the Black Sea rural, meet once again in a horon circle as the common space of resistance against developmentalist policies.[86]

Two other posters use the graphic form that does not allow romantic imagery as clearly as the photographic ones; however, both of them support the idea of the horon as a resistance dance. The first poster shows only trees and mountains both of which are split by a text, creating a fissure in the middle of the scenery. The text reads, "Cerattepe icin Horona Dur" (Stand in/Compose the Horon for Cerattepe), and invites people to meet in Artvin for the first anniversary of the Cerattepe resistance in February 2017. The second poster, however, has no image of nature. It reads, "Ver tulumun hakkını!" ("Give the tulum what it deserves!") and underneath this imperative, it reads in italics, "dayanışma horonu" ("solidarity horon"). I asked an activist about the meaning of the phrase, "Give the tulum

[86]In these posters the loss of the rural as a pastoral image is another common theme besides horon, which is related to the representation of the Black Sea in the popular culture. A romantic portrayal of the landscape of the Black Sea has been prolific in films since the early 2000s (Yüksel 2012), including *Waiting for the Clouds* by Yeşim Ustaoğlu (2003), *Autumn* by Özcan Alper (2008), and *Honey* by Semih Kaplanoglu (2009). As their titles disclosed, these films have strong connections thematically with nature and non-human agencies. Nature serves to provide a romantic ambience for the stories in these films. Images of monumental mountains, magnificent plateaus, and cascading rivers are intertwined with the hardships of living in the Black Sea because heavy rains and dense layers of fog render life very difficult in the rural area. People from the eastern Black Sea region are thus often depicted as resilient, strong, and skillful because of the exigent conditions of the nature.

what it deserves." She explained to me that in the local context, the tulum player is tipped by the participants of the social event. In poster, however, tulum refers to nature, implying that one ought to give nature what it deserves. Similar to the tulum player, nature also provides the inhabitants with joy and fulfillment and it has to be paid back. Activists can do this by protecting nature from being destroyed by private companies. This poster calls for a "solidarity horon" in Abbasağa Park of Istanbul to support the "Green Road" protesters performing a vigil in the highlands of Camlıhemşin to avert the work machines. When the protest was performed in the park, a tulum player performs his instrument in the middle of the horon circle and audience members watch from their seats, surrounding the stage as a semi-circle. A banner behind the dancers reads, "Son Sözü Doğa Söyler!" ("Nature Gives the Last Word!") and "#yesilyoladurde," "stop the green road."

Figure 5.4: Solidarity horon against the "Green Road," Abbasağa Park, Beşiktaş, Istanbul. The green poster reads, "Nature says the last word!" Photo courtesy of the Fırtına Initiative.

In addition to the reference to the nature as a distinguishing part of Black Sea cultures, activists also use traditional clothing to demonstrate a form of communal identity

and political stance. In both Istanbul and Rize, activist women wear their traditional headscarf called *puşi*, which has a particular wrapping style. This tying style is common, but not totally identical, amongst Hemşin and Laz women from Çamlıhemşin area. Puşi became popular among young activist Hemşin women in the city, who wear it not only to criticize environmental policies but also to make their marginalized cultural background visible in public. In recent protests, a group of young Hemşin women who called themselves "puşililer," or "the women in puşi," signified their ethnic, gender, and political identities as dissenting Hemşin women. With the use of this headscarf, an object identified with a rural lifestyle, they attained a new symbol to the environmental resistance. The use of the headscarf by both religious and secular Hemşin women from a variety of ages has symbolized solidarity between the rural and urban members of the Hemsin community regarding their struggle against cultural assimilation as well as neoliberal land reclamation.

Some women wear traditional clothing and some others combine different pieces of such as typical skirts, handmade socks, and headscarves. During the Green Road protests in 2015, the activist women's use of provincial clothing has been the matter of a heated debate. For example, a woman wore a Hemşin skirt and socks, but her skirt was found too short by several men in the community who later criticized her after a newspaper published a photo featuring her among other environmental activists. Some blamed her for exposing her legs "inappropriately" and others argued that because she does not know how to wear traditional outfits properly, she cannot be a member of the Hemşin community but a "provocateur," who pretends to be a Hemşin to politically separate people and create hostilities. This criticism over the clothing not only targets the women and restricts their active political presence in the public space but also demonstrates discomfort with the use of props representing a cultural group in a political action. Those among the Hemşin who do not want to be seen in

opposition to the government are against the politicization of the symbols of their ethnic identity, and thus aim to control the woman's body which is seen subversive in this context.

Improvised Poetry and Performativity in Horon

Historical narratives and everyday events are traditionally conveyed through improvised poetry among Black Sea communities, and each horon performance enables its participants to convey traditional poems and interact through the recitation of lyrics. There are different types of poetry such as *ağlama* (songs for crying), also called *ağıt* or *ezgileme* (lamentation or intonation), *ninni* (lullaby); *kına havaları* (henna songs), *destan* (epic poetry) and *türkü* (ballad). Among these, the first three forms are exclusive to women's improvisation and singing. *Ağlama* is performed in funerals and in cases of losing beloved ones due to migration, death, or marriage. Women sing kına havaları for the bride before her marriage ceremony to mourn and also celebrate the bride's departure from her parents' house. In this section, I explore the examples of destan and türkü because these forms are typically seen in the recent environmental movements. Both forms can be performed by men and women both traditionally and in the context of activism.

Destan is a long epic recitation used to explain major historical events, heroic exploits, and stages of human life.[87] It is also used for lamentation following the loss of a beloved person in a family. It typically narrates tragic stories, but humorous versions have been recently popularized in the region (Küçük 2014). In the form of a long rhyming poem, a destan can be considered oral history. It conveys stories which may be as long as hundreds of lines. They are often recited as quatrains typically added to one another. Each line is

[87] The term "destan" indicates a Turkish origin of these epic narrations. Another term which can be used for this type of poetry is "*âşık"* literature." Artists called *âşık* were folk poets who performed folk-poetry with the accompaniment of their string instrument called *saz* or *baglama* in Turkish. The last famous representative of the *âşık* tradition was Aşık Veysel who died in 1973 (Soileau 2007). However, my example shows that the tradition continues in alternative forms, such as women's lamentations and recitations of everyday grief in the eastern Black Sea. Because activists use the word "destan" to define these epic recitations I use the same term.

composed of seven syllables. This form of poetry is performed at a slow tempo and often refers to accounts of heroism (O. Yılmaz 2017).

Ethnomusicologist Özlem Doğus Varlı's doctoral dissertation (2007) on women's lamentations demonstrates that they can also be written after personal tragedies. Varlı mentions the story of Havliye Hanim from Trabzon whose husband married a second wife. This woman was very upset about the situation and improvised a destan to demonstrate her feelings (2007, 123). A few years later, her husband got married once again, bringing a third wife into the house. Havliye Hanim pretended that everything was alright and took care of her husband's mother and her own kids. Although she does not complain about her degraded position in her family, her destan conveys her disappointment and sadness with regard to her husband's behavior, demonstrating her anger and grief.

Improvising and singing these epic recitations create a space to communicate a woman's frustration which is inappropriate to show more publicly in this context. In her study on native women's poetry in the community of Awlad 'Ali Bedouins in Egypt, Lila Abu-Lughod (1986, 1990a) demonstrates that the feelings that are difficult to express in local contexts can be conveyed through poetry. Focusing on the Bedouin community, where established codes of honor and modesty, against which one's moral worth and "real manhood" are tested, prevent people from talking about their intimate feelings, Abu-Lughod discusses how women improvise and recite poetry to talk about their emotions without being condemned by the community. Within an intricate web of rules and nuances of behavior, she finds that *ghinnawas*, "little songs," or lyric poems, which are sung during public occasions, are key to understanding the culture and its organization.

According to Richard Bauman (1977), not only the words of these little poems but also how they are uttered define their meanings. Bauman conceptualizes "verbal art" as folkloric performance, or "a way of speaking" (11), which involves myth narrations and

"speeches expected from certain members of society whenever they open their months" in culture-specific contexts (5). He argues that in different societies, interpretation of verbal acts may vary because the meaning of the words is entangled with how they are said that changes the meaning significantly. Verbal art, unifying aesthetic genre and verbal behavior, displays one's communicative competence based on knowledge and ability to speak in particular societies and under defined conditions. In this regard, for instance, using a language that is not appropriate in "everyday speech" may be appreciated in another context, such as in "ceremonial speech." Bauman highlights speaking as a cultural system which varies among and within communities, and so that the realm of performance and verbal art also varies.

In horon context, one can express emotions and desires which may be considered "inappropriate" in everyday form of speech. When it is danced within a close community, those who are knowledgeable in poetry can recite about their desire to someone, make sexual connotations, and disclose their anger and disappointment. As a result, expressing one's frustration against a road construction company, cursing to the business owners, using slang language, and urging or defying others can be assumed "alright" within the limits of this genre. Yet activists also combine these improvised lyrics with political slogans which make their chants catchy, poetic, and bold. For instance, a destan was improvised and performed during the Green Road resistance through which the activists announced their struggle and decisiveness against the road plan. Although their destan is relatively shorter than the common type and its musical style is not entirely compatible with the typical Hemşin destan genre, activists named their poem as the "Resistance Destan."

Yesil Yol Direniş Destanı	**The Green Road Resistance Destan**
Uzaklardan geldiler	They came from far away
Almaya yaylalari	To take our *yayla*s away
Zannetmeyom veruruz	I don't think that we will give
Bu güzelum daglari	These darling mountains away

Yesil yol dedugunuz	What you call Green Road
Pempe bir yalan gibi	As if it is a white lie
Dedelerden kaldigi	They remain from our ancestors
Biz daglarin sahibi	We are the owners of these mountains
Bu gençler direnecek	These youth will resist
Daglar bizim evumuz	Mountains are our home
Çekun ellerunuzi	Keep your hands off
Bunlardur son sözümüz	These are our last words

Performativity helps activists to achieve their political goal because poetry converts the chants into social and political force. The above destan informs community members about the "lies" of those "who came from far away," who are the strangers of the region; and as outsiders, they are the potential enemy of the native community who will be dispossessed if their yaylas are taken away from them. By disclosing "the truth" behind the promised ideals of developmentalist plans, activists legitimize their solid stance against the highway and mobilize the public to stand together and protest. Destan as an epic recitation with artistic value constitutes collective political potency, which blurs J. L. Austin's distinction between the contextual structure of performatives and the structure of the reception of art. Poems not only mobilize the public for a defiant act but also threat the construction business as it utters the "last words" of the youth who urges strangers to keep their hands off the land.

In addition to destans, rhyming poems can be in quatrain form, called türkü, and also in the form of a couplet, *atma türkü*. While destans are not sung in horons, both türkü and atma türkü are popularly used in the fora segment of the horon performed to a tulum. A türkü may be popularly known or improvised during the dance. If the quatrain of a rhyming poem is improvised on spot, it is called *düzme* in the villages of Fırtına Valley. Some türküs are familiar to the villages where they were recited for the first time, and some others are known in a wider area, or even nationally through the songs of popular artists from the Black Sea region, like Kazım Koyuncu. The copyrights of these songs are often violated by record

companies because these poems are rarely written down, but generally recited orally and circulated among the people who know the authors.

In a horon circle, the leader or another person recites a line and other participants echo the verses. The compositional style often refers to the location of the event or the beauty of the nature in the first two lines which are followed by the main argument of the poem. The example below is an anonymous Hemşin-style türkü (Saatçi 2008, 106). This style is sung in a horon circle known as Kemer Horonu in Çamlıhemşin. To adapt the lyrics of the poem into the musical form of the horon style, performers added the "x" line before typically echoing the verses. It follows the structure of A-B-A-B:

1.	A	Sabahtan kalktım baktım	I woke up in the early morning
2.	B	Gunesin ardı bulut	Behind the sun is all clouds
3.	A	Seni sana bıraktım	I leave you to yourself
4.	B	İster sev ister unut	Love or forget, as you wish

When it is recited in the fora, the poem gets longer as each verse is repeated by others. These participants not only repeat line A, but they also create an additional musical component by singing the x line and thus fit the lyrics into the particular tulum melody of this horon style. They may sing the same türkü to diverse tulum melodies, or one melody can be used to accompany several different türküs. This musical style is called "giydirme" in Turkish literature (Uslu 2012) which is also used in religious music of the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim populations who lived in Anatolia (152). In his study on Alevi music in Turkey, Ulaş Özdemir indicates how music-makers use "giydirme" in the religious ceremonies, noting that these practitioners do not usually use the term "giydirme" but define their artistic-religious-cultural practice as "throwing ritual songs [*aşk atmak*] with improvised rhythms" (2016, 181). The above poem is performed as the following when it is recited in a horon performance. The red ink shows the recitation of the line and the black ink is the chorus part.

1. A Sabahtan kalktım baktım
   X Ah o yo yoy oy oy oy (cananum)
   A Sabahtan kalktım baktım

2. B Guneşin ardı bulut
   X Ah o yo yoy oy oy oy (cananum)
   B Gunesin ardi bulut

3. A Seni sana bıraktım
   X Ah oy oy oy oy oy oy (cananum)
   A Seni sana bıraktım

4. B İster sev ister unut
   X Ah oy oy oy oy oy oy (cananum)
   B İster sev ister unut

While türküs are sung in quatrains, atma türküs are sung as couplets added to each other to compose a quatrain form in a horon performance, and the most common style is developed in the form of call-and-response structure, performed among two people or two groups. Atma türkü often tries to provoke another person by expressing one's feelings of love, disappointment, longing, resentment, or anger. An accurate translation of the atma türkü can be a "thrown song" and the action, "türkü atmak," is translated as "throwing a song." Hasan, a senior dancer (rest-in -peace), who were also known for his excellent leadership in Hevek-style horon from Artvin highlands, explained to me that a performer can spontaneously improvise and recite a couplet, and "throw" it to another person to make them angry (Çamlıhemşin, 7.24.2017). Although the name of the person is not explicitly uttered, this person knows that the couplet has been sung for them and can respond by reciting another couplet or keep silent so as not to draw attention in the group.

This type of atma türkü is frequently used in protests because it enables activists to express their anger to ill-conceived policies, fake promises of the state representatives, and court judges for their biased actions. When improvised as couplets and recited immediately one after the other during the dance, atma türkü makes a quatrain called düzme. For example, to protest the court decision about the Green Road, these lyrics were sung during the fora of the horon performed in front of the governor's office in Rize on August 24, 2015:

A Hemşin'in dereleri X Hemşin'in dereleri	Rivers of Hemşin
B Aksun aksun Cağlasun X Aksun Aksun Cağlasun	Should run and gurgle
C Yeşil yoli yapanlar X Yeşil yoli yapanlar	Those who make the Green Road
B Cehennemi boylasun X Cehennemi boylasun	Should go to hell

At the moment of singing altogether in the fora segment, the group manifesto is produced collectively and progressively after each repetition. Such a process resembles a technique of public discussion used in Istanbul's Gezi Park resistance in 2013, called "the human microphone," based on a delivery of an individual speech in front of a large audience, the members of which repeat each sentence after the speaker. By using this nonviolent activist method, individual statements are collectivized and also the person who states the manifesto develops more political awareness as she hears the echo of her words. This method was previously used in NYC Zuccotti Park during Occupy movement in 2011, but its earlier embodiments go back to the anti-nuclear rallies of the 1980s.

The above quatrain was improvised during the recent Green Road protests; however, it was first sung in 1997 during the struggle against the first HES construction attempt in Fırtına Valley. Activists issued press statements and held solidarity meetings in Istanbul, and university students, environmentalists, and academics visited Fırtına Valley to demonstrate their solidarity and support. However, the construction was ongoing. A group of activists danced horon next to the site as they were monitoring the machines in the river bed. One person in the group who had participated in this horon in 1997 told me in our conversation that a female dancer in the group improvised a türkü. This person recited the lyrics of that türkü for me (Çamlıhemşin, 3.27.2019):

Bu Furtuna deresi	This Furtuna River
Aksun aksun cağlasun	Should run and gurgle

Bu dereyi kurutanlar	Those who dry up the river
Ömür boyu ağlasun	Should cry forever

By "throwing" this türkü in the fora, she had cursed those who "dried up" the river without explicitly naming the company; yet, in the following decades, activists inserted the name of the company or the business partner in their cursing lines to convert lyrics into political chants. These innovative lyrics in 1997 had provoked a group of people who were HES supporters. After a heated argument over the lyrics between anti- and pro- HES people, the dancers stopped the horon. However, this türkü improvised to a Hemşin-syle melody continue inspiring environmental activists across the region.

The türkü form is popular not only among Hemşin community but also in the Laz-dominated areas. For example, "Hawk Women" converted a popular Hemşin song to an anti-HES statement by re-improvising the lyrics of a popular türkü, "Hala'nun Dereleri" that was first sung by Uğur Yazıcı in his 2007 record *Dinle Tulumu* (Listen to Tulum). While Yazici's record featured traditional instruments and melody, the band *Karmate* introduced non-traditional instruments such as accordion, guitar, and percussion in 2010. Later, a renowned artist, Gökhan Birben, re-arranged it as a rock song and recorded it as an anonymous Hemşin song on his 2017 album *Yağmurların Ardındaki Ezgiler* (Melodies Behind the Rains). The original lyrics have sexist connotations in the second quatrain:

Bu sene yaylalara	Those who go to yaylas this year
Giden geri gelmesun	I wish would not come back
Pokut'un pugarindan	Those who drink from Pokut's spring
İçenlere kalmasun	I wish would not find it
Hala'nun dereleri	Rivers of Hala
Karadeniz'e aksun	Shall run to the Black Sea
Karadeniz'e aksun	Shall run to the Black Sea
Aksun Karadeniz'e	To the Black Sea they shall run
Ayşeler, Fadumeler	Ayşe and Fadime[88]
Hatice, Emineler	Hatice and Emine

[88] In Turkish, the suffix "-ler" makes the noun plural. Thus "Ayseler" means Ayse and likewise women in general, and is valid for the other women's names, such as Fadime, Hatice, and Emine, in the poem.

Eger bizum olmazsa	If we do not own them
Yerun dibune batsun	They shall go to hell
…	…

When converted to a protest song, it often starts from the second quatrain because that fits perfectly into the context of environmental protest. Also because it is the chorus part, it can be repeated several times and learned by the majority. There are more quatrains in the original version, but activists usually sing only a total of three, often changing the word "Hala" (a village in Çamlıhemşin) to the names of their towns, and they send the river in each town to the Black Sea, instead of being imprisoned by dams of the hydroelectric power plants. For the rest of the song, they change the sexist lyrics and convert them into progressive political cries and promises. For example, the Hawk Women re-wrote the lyrics in a way that the first quatrain emphasizes the local context; the second one provides "truths" about the possible consequences of the planned energy project; and the third one serves as "performative" as it declares that the singers will not let the "machines" into the village.

Arhavi dereleri	Arhavi rivers
Karadeniz'e aksun	Should run to the Black Sea
Karadeniz'e aksun	Should run to the Black Sea
Aksun Karadeniz'e	To the Black Sea they should run
İndum dere duzina	I went down to the river bed
Baluklar ölmiş idi	Fishes had died
Findugi zaten sorma	Don't even ask about the chestnut
Onlar yok olmiş idi	They have disappeared
Deremizi vermeyiz	We don't give our river
Suyumuzu satmayız	We don't sell our water
Makinalarunuzi	Your machines
Köyümüze sokmayız	We don't let into our village

This song is handwritten in a notebook where the Hawk Women collected lyrics to use in the protests, and they sang it when a group of experts came to Arhavi to assess the potential impacts of a HES project in the area. Their improvised türkü found a voice in national newspapers as the song of "Özgür Aksın Dereler," or the "River Shall Run Free" (Hurriyet 2015). The media headlines registered the traditional türkü as a protest song

highlighting “freedom.” Instead of singing a Laz song, perhaps in Lazuri, dissenters chose a popular Hemşin song in Turkish, making it accessible for a larger audience without intersecting their Laz ethnic identity with the content and form of their political performance unlike the Hemşin women did in the “Green Road” protest.

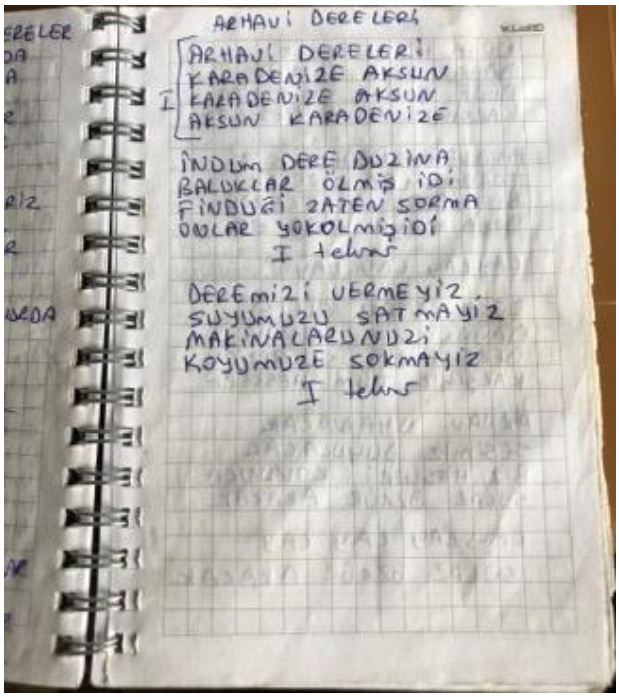

Figure 5.5: An activist’s notebook showing the improvised lyrics of the protest song “Arhavi Rivers.” © Sevi Bayraktar, Arhavi, 8.31.2018.

The Artvin Youth Association also used the same song on the anniversary of Cerattepe resistance in February 2017. Gathering in Abbasağa Park despite the rain and intensive police presence, activists adapted the same song to the case of Artvin:

Artvin’in dereleri	Artvin’s rivers
Karadeniz’e aksın	Should run to the Black Sea
Karadeniz’e aksın	Should run to the Black Sea
Aksın Karadeniz’e	To the Black Sea it should run
Artvin’un yeşilliği	The green of Artvin
Dünyalara bedeldir	Worth the world
Ha bu işi yapan da	One who does this work
Gavur oğlu Cengiz’dir	Is Cengiz, the son of the infidel

İlişme Artvin'uma	Do not touch my Artvin
Cerattepe bizimdur	Cerattepe is ours
Başlatma madenuna	Do not even speak of the/your mine
Siçtirtma madenuna	Do not make me mess up the/your mine

Each line in the third quatrain also refers to one slogan of the Cerattepe anti-mining movement. An Artvin Youth Association activist argues that throwing songs during the horon provides agitators with the freedom to express their reaction to the exploitation of the land and natural resources: "when we throw a song cursing a company or disclosing their dirty business, we actually shout political cries without being seen as so political. At the end of the day, we say whatever we want to say, but police have no reason to arrest us!" Through chanting their political slogans within the horon and as part of the traditional choreography, activists are able to create political impacts "without being seen as so political!" (Istanbul, 3.30.2017).

In these ways, traditional türkü lyrics are re-improvised by activists and circulated among various environmental protests in both the eastern Black Sea region and Istanbul. Although these songs demonstrate patterns of folk literature and music in specific communities they are used by various ethnic and political groups in protest. As shown in the example above, activists keep the structure of the traditional poem and transform it for political agitation: They indicate the location of the event in the first quatrain; relay the facts or expected consequences of the energy plans in the second quatrain; and curse, accuse, promise, and name their actions in the last quatrain. By using poems as performative utterances activists act politically "without being seen as so political," as mentioned.

This spirit expressed in the repurposing of the song and music is also relevant to the use of the dance technique. Similar to the words that performatively turn into political doings, dominant social and political identities are also constituted and subverted through the performativity of ethnicized and gendered bodies in horon. When Hemşin and Laz activists

perform the dance as a "traditional everyday activity" they also confirm and constitute their heteronormative identities as "rural," "folk," "youth," "women," and "children" of the valley who dance horon as part of their regular activity. However, while they re-construct these identities women also pervert these subject positions because they also enjoy having mobility between the urban and the rural, claiming streets at night by joining the 7/24 vigils in construction areas; moving between the home and the street; by lobbying and speaking in front of the cameras; mobilizing senior men and women; and reorganizing the rural public spaces as political arenas. In the following, I will build on and add onto the content of the flyers and lyrics by analyzing the movement and how they all come together by disorienting the police and giving the viewers and listeners a refreshed sense of political issues and stakes.

"Techniques of Bricolage" in Horon Composition

Activists compose horon movements meticulously by assessing the restrictions of the space, relations between the musicians, the song lyrics, and the negotiations among the dancers based on gender, ethnicity, and political view. For example, during the Green Road protests in Çamlıhemşin, when bulldozers began working on Kavrun Plateau in June 2015, the locals stopped the construction work by dancing horon in front of a bulldozer to prevent it from reaching the highland. In the photograph men and women of various ages dance a horon blocking the mountain road. Their rain coats imply the weather conditions of the summer at this high altitude as mountains are seen in the background. People dance on a cobble stone road, where grass is growing up between the stones, showing the force of the nature. In the road, there is a yellow caterpillar, next to which the dancers and the tulum player are performing in a tightly closed circle. Some dancers wear traditional headscarves and others wear urban clothing. They bend their knees as they lean forward and stand next to each other

as close as possible. In this position, they do not give any room for breaking up the circle; their bodies create a solid yet moving barrier on the road.

Figure 5.6: The "Green Road" protest horon in Çamlıhemsin, Rize.
Photo courtesy of the Fırtına Initiative.

Conversely, during the Cerattepe protests of February 2016, a critical moment occurred when police broke through the activists' horon circle and dispersed the protesters.[89] A group danced a horon to prevent the police from going to the upper part of the hill for the purpose of closing the activists' access points. Some dancers were carrying Turkish flags and others were wearing simple gas masks. The police went go upper side of the hill, but their truck-mounted water cannon was still at the lower part of the road, separated by the dancing activists. While they were performing a dance to accordion tunes, a police officer came to ask for a permission to pull the police vehicle back, but a young woman immediately responded,

[89] The active resistance began on February 16th and continued until February 21st, when the police used excessive amounts of pepper spray and pressured water to disperse the activists. Dozens of injured individuals were taken to the local hospital where the clashes occurred. A woman fell down the wall adjacent to the hospital while she was trying to escape from rubber bullets; her both legs were broken. Many patients in the hospital including those in the emergency room were also badly affected by the pepper spray.

“No! [you] cannot pull back the vehicle back; we are dancing horon here!” After this deceleration she continued dancing among other women (Çekim Yapan Kadınlar 2016, 24:55- 26:33)—although men and women together composed the circle, women were usually close to each other and holding hands.

Other people called the accordion player to play different tunes to energize the crowd because the police seemed pretty strong with their shields and gas masks. Some activists asked the musician to play Hemşin-style horon and others were shouting for the popular *Vazriya*-style of Artvin. Another accordion player stepped in and changed the tune to Vazriya horon. As the police simultaneously maneuvered the vehicle to bypass the protest, some dancers went to negotiate with the police while others took a number of consecutive backward steps, which caused them to move away from the right side of the road where the police vehicle was parked. The horon circle broke apart and the empty space enlarged as they danced. The vehicle used this opportunity to move to the upper hill. Although many activists were disappointed with the loss of the site, they continued dancing; this time, to boost the collective morale.

These spatial negotiations operate together with choreographic decisions in terms of the style, sequence, energy, and execution of the movements. For example, during the first anniversary of the Cerattepe Resistance in 2017, protesters in Artvin performed their press statement in a location close to the disputed mining area. Because the area had been behind police barricades, activists were only allowed to reach a certain point on Cerattepe Hill. Despite the police presence, which included the riot squad of the General Directorate of Security, about five hundred people came together and gave a press statement declaring an ongoing struggle against the mining project (HaberTurk 2017). After this they danced horon, but in the narrow and unpaved road, there was no room to make a circle, so they made a rectangular shape instead to be able to continue dancing and showed their endurance.

Similarly, in the solidarity demonstration of this event in Istanbul, a small group of urban activists gathered together in Abbasağa Park on March 26, 2017. But they were concerned by the police, who greatly outnumbered them, and decided not to read their press statement because they thought they might be arrested. Instead, they danced two different styles of horon, compatible with both tulum and kemençe tunes. One activist explained the addition of kemençe as a way to show the inclusiveness of their political movement to different ideological perspectives and also to show solidarity with the Cerattepe cause across the Black Sea region regardless of ethnicity or political view (Istanbul, 3.30.2017). In the park, the dancers made a straight line because they were too few to make a circle. Also, the horon looked bigger when the bodies were extended in the form of a line; this way their group did not seem so small. They danced in the center of the amphitheater while they were looking towards the empty seats of the audience. Yet, behind the empty seats, others watched the dancers from the buildings surrounding the park, and that is, for example, how I got to meet the activists. They, therefore, extended the audience presence from the theatre seats in the park to the apartments of the neighborhood. The restricted conditions, such as heavy rain, few participants, police presence, and spatial limitation all determined the composition of this horon. As Selda and Ebru, activist women in Hopa, noted that by taking the risk of being in a street and dancing under an authoritarian governmental regime, one can encourage those who witness the dance to become part of the political action (Hopa, 8.30.2018). Similarly, in Istanbul's Abbasağa Park, horon dancing environmentalists showed one possibility of taking a risk and solicited the audience who were hiding at home to go outside and move.

Figure 5.7: Protest against the Cerattepe mining project, Artvin. February 21, 2016. Author's archive. *Still from video*.

Experienced dancers also improvise dance styles depending on the availability of the instruments in a protest. For instance, when urban environmentalists demonstrated in Istanbul in solidarity with the Cerattepe struggle on February 20, 2016, they met in Tünel Square, a small opening that could accommodate protesters at the end of İstiklal Street. A tulum player stood before a poster in support of the Black Sea is in Riot Platform, and following the press statement, he started to play. Shortly after, a few women appeared from among the crowd; they start moving in a straight line and performed a walking movement as if they were limping on one foot. The crowd opened up and the women proceeded towards the tulum player. Their alignment created a distinct linear shape among the cumulation of bodies in the narrow street. They danced a Vazriya-style horon as they approached; although this genre is typically accompanied by accordion, the women adopted the style to a tulum melody. An average urban audience would not be able to distinguish, but those from the Black Sea would immediately recognize how this group of women professionally executed the dance to tulum tunes which are normally not associated with this style. Relying on their expertise in the

dance and music, activist women referred to traditional horon components by combining them in untraditional musical elements in the protest.

Bricolage can be used not only to bring these distinct elements together in the horon performance but also to increase the flexibility of the dancers with the introduction of everyday movements into the dance sequence. For example, the demonstration conducted in front of the governor's office in Rize on August 24, 2015, provides an excellent example involving both urban and local participants of a protest event. In a footage (Sırtlı 2015) showing young and elderly people that dance together in a wide circle in the courtyard of the office. Dancers synchronize their arm movements, and their steps keep up with the rhythm of the sequence. A continuum is notable even in uncomfortable positions—for instance, a dancer's single foot is placed on the sidewalk whereas her other foot is located on the floor. Although the space may easily turn violent, dancers seem relaxed and comfortable. I note that participants mostly use walking steps instead of enthusiastic jumps; they look around and not seem extremely focused on dance; they catch each other's eyes and smile, and even chat with the person next to them while they dance, which is considered absolutely an improper behavior in a typical horon. Although common footwork patterns and arm movements seem in unison, the forward, backward, and parallel steps co-exist simultaneously; so that bodies seem calm and easy. As long as the dancers are in unity, differences in technique and style seem negotiable. During the dance, two horon leaders, a young man from internal diaspora activists and a senior woman from the rural area, alternately sing and lead the horon. This combination of leaders both reproduces and breaks the rule of the tradition. It reproduces the transmission of corporeal knowledge from the elder to the younger community members, and it also changes the tradition because the leadership of the young diaspora activist is not necessarily abided by the rules of the rural community. In turn, urban participants introduce new tools and relationships to the rural activists, as they prepare banners, political symbols,

ways of composing türkü lyrics. The two separate groups of people become connected through mutual recognition and collaboration in horon. Their responsiveness to each other's repertoire and openness to use material from different sources, as well as their integration of everyday gestures and relaxed attitudes bridge urban and rural environmental activists and help them develop a provincial understanding of resistance.

Performing Poetry and Dance Together: The "Victory Horon"

Protests against Arhavi's Kavak-HES project on Orçi river were not as popular as Cerattepe or the Green Road, judging from the frequency and coordinated demonstrations taking place in big cities. As I explained earlier, the ADAKOP had opened a court case against the HES company, the MNG, which re-started the construction in Kamilet Valley. The activists then filed another court case, claiming that the company did not wait for the trial to conclude and illegally continued its operations. Similar to other nearby locations of activism, such as Samistal plateau in Çamlıhemşin and Cerattepe in Artvin, people in Arhavi also began a 24/7 vigil at the construction site against attempts of illegal demolition.

The MNG has been criticized not only because it was destroying the land it rented from the state, but also because the company owner himself was from Arhavi, and not an "outsider," so that inhabitants claimed that he was betraying his community by spearheading HES projects. [90] Activists embraced this claim and recited their poetry accordingly. When they had won the court case against the company that stopped the construction work, activists marched across downtown Arhavi to celebrate the judgement. At the end of the march, they held a very large horon circle composed of hundreds of people, which is called the "victory

[90] The first and only pro-HES demonstration in the Black Sea has been performed for the MNG. In the summer of 2014, businessmen and the governor's office organized the pro-HES meeting in Arhavi downtown. They declared their support to the "local business" and criticized anti-HES activists by being against the development of their town. During this meeting, HES supporters also danced horon to show their support to the local businessmen (Erensü 2014).

horon." The dance involves elements of a typical horon structure; it has fora, savuş, al oyna, içeri bas. However, the türkü lyrics both urge the MNG's owner not to harm the river and also indicate the activists' dedication to prevent the company from doing so:

Dere özgür akacak	The river will run free
O MNG batacak	That MNG will lose
Arhavi'nin usağu	The son of Arhavi
Dereyi satmayacak	Shall not sell the river
Kamiletten aşağa	Below Kamilet
Yolu birleştirimis	[He/they/it] say they'd unite the road
Dereyi satturmayan	That does not let the river be sold
HESleri yapturmayan	That does not let the HES build
Yaşasın bu direniş	Hurray, this resistance!

In the protest, two male horon leaders sing the lyrics, which the dancers echo. One of the leaders wears a white t-shirt having a hand printed in black gesturing "stop." Above and below the hand, it reads, "Do not touch my water." Some other people in the "victory horon" wear the same t-shirt. Others are in their everyday clothes: most of the women wear jeans or comfortable trousers whereas several men are seen in shorts. People hold placards and banners altogether on one side of the town square, where the horon is danced. Behind the leader, there is a giant placard that reads "HES'E HAYIR" ("NO to HES"). Although activists execute a typical tulum-horon structure, the leader attentively arrange the sequence of the patterns to enable shouting slogans. For example, the leader commands the dancers to execute a pattern called "içeri basma/vurma" (stepping into), a fast section of Hemşin-style horons, during which dancers make a running gesture in three counts with an accent on four as they stomp the right or left foot with force towards the center of the circle. Since this movement energizes the dancers the leader utters short phrases which are off the musical melody but still pronounced within the rhythm. Next, he changes the sequence and commands for "bas yana" ("step aside") to help the dancers rest a bit before starting the same sequence of "stepping into" with a different lyrical phrase. These phrases are in the form of

couplet, but they do not compose a türkü. These have artistic rhyme yet action oriented as they curse the company or wish a revolution to happen. For example, the leader says,

Omuz, omuz	Shoulder, shoulder
MNG domuz	MNG is a pig

In the first line, the word "shoulder" provides a rhyming quality and also indicates solidarity among the dancers while the next line curses the construction company. In between each line, dancers shout as "aha" showing an affirmation. The "shoulder" line of this phrase is also used in other environmental protests in the eastern Black Sea, but the second line is changed for each context. In Artvin, for example, it becomes "Cengiz is a pig" referring to the name of the mining company, Cengiz Holding. In these examples performativity of the poetry is intertwined with the choice of the horon movements because the order of the lyrics and the sequence are negotiated towards an accelerated rhythm of the "step into" pattern, during which activists cultivate high energy to shout political slogans.

To sum up briefly, in rural and urban environmental protests, horon performances are built upon performativity and techniques of bricolage. Performativity conceptually helps open up the language of the poetry into social realms through mobilizing political force. Performativity also enables activists to subvert hegemonic constructions of identity through recitation. For example, by highlighting horon as a quotidian activity of rural inhabitants and using Hemşin and Laz traditional costumes in the performances that they held during the vigils, occupations, marches, and demonstrations, activists both reproduce and subvert conventional identity categories such as "traditional," "rural/urban," "Hemşin," "Laz," "Turk," "woman," and "protester." They also symbolically re-assemble movements, flyers, posters, songs, props, and images to create new political meanings. While adding lyrics about environmental concerns into a traditional poetry in horon, they also insert and juxtapose different material to actively transform these meanings. With the new ways of relating genres and intersecting aesthetic and political repertoire from urban and rural movements, activists

constantly de-assembly and re-assembly horon as a cultural heritage and a resistance genre. By using these materials which are available to themselves, environmental activists re-choreograph their social and political identities as dissenting citizens.

Conclusion

In this chapter I examined techniques of bricolage, a set of choreographic tactics through which diverse materials are combined and used in horon performances during environmental movements in the Black Sea region and their solidarity demonstrations in Istanbul. By looking at three episodes that are significant in the recent history of Turkey's environmental resistance—the Cerattape Mine Protests, "Green Road" demonstrations, and Arhavi Anti-HES actions—I analyzed how activists combine traditional material in new ways with regard to the delivery, movement, and lyric composition of the horon to overcome spatial uncertainties and create novel political meanings. I argued that specific ways of re-assembling the existing material is fundamental to dismantle existing hierarchies and open new political possibilities for transregional environmental activism in Turkey.

I also demonstrated how protesters revitalized the legacy of the 1970s' leftist political activism in the Black Sea from the late 1990s onwards. They create links between urban and rural environmental movements by mobilizing the romantic iconography of the Black Sea nature, using traditional props, and playing musical instruments like tulum and kemençe, and with these strategies, they reproduce a horon culture as both a theory and practice of the resistance. Particularly activist women from the eastern Black Sea highlight symbols of their cultural identities by the use of traditional skirts, socks, and headscarves and thus politicize the ethnic identity beyond the milieus of environmental activism. Through re-placing, juxtaposing, inserting, and bringing together the existing material with other available

sources, activist women subvert heteronormative identities by constituting themselves as resistant and resilient agents of the neoliberal and nationalist contemporary politics.

My exploration of horon lyrics particularly showed how activists insert political slogans or chants of the environmental movement into the traditional context and make these lyrics political statement of a transregional ecology movement. Both in the Black Sea area and in Istanbul, environmentalists bridge the rural and the urban through such conscious use of choreographic tactics to create alternative political and social histories and accommodate a range of possibilities that can shift the power dynamics at the moment of protest through disorienting the police. These examples show that by artistically putting together flyers, poetry, music, singing, and movement from different contexts and sources, activists re-contextualize the horon as a resistance genre.

Dissertation Conclusion

During my fieldwork in March 2017, I met an activist in a sit-in protest against the recent dismissals in public institutions with a state-of-emergency decree in Istanbul. She asks me whether I know Hopa-Hemşin style horon, as she is currently learning it to perform in public demonstrations. Her interest in the dance is unexpected to me because she is engaged with the grassroots labor movement in which three-step circle dances are often performed rather than specific ethnic dances such as Hopa-Hemşin style of horon, which is more commonly used in environmental movements from Artvin province. Tülay clarifies, "It's very popular these days after the Rojava clip!" Surprised at my confusion, she asks, "Don't you know about it?! Some revolutionaries from the Black Sea went to Rojava to support the Kurdish battle and they danced there; everyone is learning this dance now!"

Kurdish male and female groups fought against ISIS along Turkey's border with Syria, and they established a small autonomous polity in Syria called Rojava (or Northeastern Kurdistan) in 2013.[91] The Kurdish feminist movement, *Tevgera Jinên Azad* (TJA), or the *Free Women Movement,* in Turkey and northern Syria and *Yekîneyên Parastine Jin* (YPJ), the Women's Protection Units, were in armed resistance against ISIS. I knew that both TJA and YPJ members used the Kurdish traditional dance in symbolic opposition to the Turkish government and also for multiple practical purposes such as bodily training, promoting collective harmony, and providing mutual emotional support. But for the first time I heard of horon traveling across the borders to be danced in the Kurdish armed struggle.

Tülay shows me the clip after indicating her disappointment with my dated knowledge of the protest repertoire. The clip of the "Rojava Enternasyonalist Özgürlük

[91] The war between the *Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê*, or Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), and the Turkish army in the 1990s resulted in the migration of thousands of Kurds from eastern to western Turkey. As the Kurdish identity implied "separatist" and "terrorist" group of people in the nationalist discourse, Kurdish bodies and thus dances were politicized in public spaces of Turkey's western cities, where their dances became a political symbol of the demand for Kurdish political rights and autonomy in the 1990s.

Taburu" (the Rojava Internationalist Freedom Troop) shows four people in military uniforms dancing horon on the roof of a building in Kobanî, a city demolished during the ISIS siege between September 2014 and March 2015. Their faces are covered with pieces of cloth predominantly in red and black colors, a sign that they are Turkish leftist revolutionaries who fought against ISIS together with Kurdish fighters who have established a self-governing political territory, administered by practices of direct democracy. On the roof, a large satellite dish with the Communist sign of a hammer-and-sickle drawn in red creates a background for the dancers. All other buildings around this terrace are demolished, and few children hold hands on the ground and jump playfully, imitating the dancing fighters on the roof. Horon, a genre associated with Turkish nationalism and authentic Turkishness, is transnationally circulated affirming the Kurdish struggle despite the long history of enmity between the Kurdish independence movement and Turkish nationalist forces. However, understanding this particular style of horon is critical because it refers to the leftist cultural history of the town of Hopa in the eastern corner of the Black Sea, which is still the only town in the region having a pro-Kurdish HDP office, whereas all other towns have been violently dismissed any similar attempts which would enable the political party run campaigns. Yet, there is no indication about whether these dancers on the roof in Kobanî are all from Hopa or are people from different towns dancing this style for a particular purpose.

These queries called my attention to the dance in other protest contexts. Indeed, I observed that it has been a popular style among activists in Istanbul, who have studied and learned the dance via social media clips and rehearsed during demonstrations. I also studied the Hemsin-style horons and watched the clip of the fighters several times; and one time I used the opportunity to join the horon circle in a demonstration to perform Hopa-Hemşin with four other dancers in Istanbul. Yet, in this performance we danced for six counts instead of the original ten counts that usually mark the style. Since the dancers in the protest,

including myself, had mostly learned the dance by memorizing it through the clip, we simply missed four counts of jump steps at the moment of demonstration. The missing steps brought more questions to my mind: Do those in the clip also make up the step counts, or are they connoisseurs of the horon technique? Who are the people dancing on the roof? Did they know the dance before performing it during the war? Are there any female fighters among the dancing group, or are they all men? Although my dissertation has been limited with the activists who reconfigure Turkey's national space, I decided to investigate these questions to note down how traditional dance travels and is received transnationally. I approached folk dance teachers and the community members among the Hemşin in Istanbul and the Black Sea rural, asking them to interpret the dancers' movements for me. Some of them did not want to answer my questions, and some abruptly covered my phone screen with their hands in order to prevent passersby from seeing the clip, because the dancers in this context imply an anti-state political stance which may be even considered "terrorist" according to right-wing populist discourse. Other people agreed to interpret the dance for me, yet with varied and often contradictory readings of the bodies and their movements: Some expressed the opinion that the first and the third dancers seemed to be from the Black Sea because of the swaying motion of their arms at a particular place. However, an interlocutor from the Black Sea was pretty sure that the first one was "not one of our boys" ["Bizim uşaklardan değil"] because for this viewer, horon cannot be danced with the wrists moving outwardly letting the whole hand freely dangle, unlike the lead dancer performing in the clip. Some viewers even anticipated the dancers' hometowns in the Black Sea, referring to historical ties with leftist tradition in certain places. Regarding gender, some viewers considered the third and the last performers to be female dancers, whereas other viewers agreed that the last dancer was not female, but a person who did not know the dance very well so they did not jump as high as expected.

Although these viewers offered different readings of the dance, all these interpretations demonstrate a meticulous observation and assessment of complex movements and gestural signs deployed during the dance. Participants know what they are looking at; they interpret the steps, height of jumps, movements of arms and hands, and other gestures as intersecting with ethnic, gender, and political identities of the dancers. They constitute themselves as the viewers who are able to evaluate the quality of the dance in relation to its history, culture, and politics. In this dissertation, I have investigated how these understandings play a role in the reconstruction of the dance in the protest context. I questioned how dancers decipher the dance movements, develop techniques, and manipulate the existing structure of traditional dance for their political aims, and how others read their movements and interactions. Audiences of these dances also observe dancing bodies, assess dancers' techniques, and interpret the statements—in choreographic, written, or verbal form—that dancers make.

The recent use and interpretation of horon in the Kurdish liberation movement also reveal possibilities for solidarity among diverse dissenting groups which are intrinsically connected to each other. The activist groups that I exemplified in this dissertation are not coherent or homogenous at all; in fact, they have all different political projects, goals, and approaches; and even some significant historical hostilities toward one another. There have sincere differences and discrepancies; for example, some groups prioritize ethnic struggle over workers' labor struggle, whereas others argue that workers are the most oppressed social and economic group and their emancipation would help achieve, for example, the Kurdish ethnic struggle against Turkish cultural, economic, and legal domination. Some environmentalists from the Black Sea strongly disagree with the Kurdish ethnic struggle, finding them "separatist" against the Turkish nation. In this vein, within women's groups, one of the greatest discrepancies is among those who self-identify as feminists and those who

do not. Among those who self-identify as feminists, some work for equality for women and are organized in women-only associations, whereas others, finding this group of feminists "conservative," mostly develop political activities together with LGBTQI+ groups and individuals. Among the LGBTQI+, some groups blame others for being liberal and not critical enough; and some left-leaning organizations implicitly or explicitly exclude all LGBTQI+-identified individuals from their political struggle. Additionally, these groups also have common actors working in more than one grassroots organization voluntarily or professionally. For example, one activist can participate in the labor movement as well as work with environmentalists; an ecology activist can be an animal rights defender and also a Kurdish rights activist; a feminist lawyer can voluntarily defend another person from a Marxist-Revolutionary group who disbelieves feminism. Moreover, the individuals in these groups could study each other's techniques of political activism. For example, the Kurdish cultural and political rights struggle and its strategies can be studied by protesters from environmental and social justice movements. Similarly, Kurdish activists can engage with the strategies of the grassroots movements from the Black Sea to open up new avenues in their political agitations. Despite varying interests and contested ideological perspectives among these grassroots groups and politics, my work shows that they all perform horon one way or another as a legit form of protest.

These travels of horon in urban, rural, regional, national, and transnational contexts are also related to the marginalization of Kurdish folk dance in Turkey. Many young Kurdish activists recently avoided performing Kurdish govend forms in the public sphere during protests as they did not want to be easy targets for arbitrary arrest and detention. Instead, they have come to learn horon. For instance, Esma from the Kurdish youth movement says that whenever they have a protest at their university, the police come to campus, and non-Kurdish university students are apparently afraid of joining in their protests or their folk dances. As a

solution, she explains to me how she and some of her friends learned and practiced horon to involve others in their action while avoiding police violence:

> I know, it is very painful; you cannot dance your own dances because no one joins, and the police come immediately to arrest you. Yet, this is what we can do now; we have learned the horon and performed it in *Newroz*;[92] people indeed participated in our celebration and the police did not come for a relatively long period of time.

Although Esma cannot always perform Kurdish dances due to cultural oppression based on Turkish nationalism and the marginalization of Kurdish bodies in urban public space, horon provides her with a tactic for creating a possibility of maneuvering in response to power. Similarly, I met other activists who danced Kurdish folk dance styles to horon melodies just because they were rhythmically similar. A group of activists who were performing a Kurdish dance called "beynu" from Hakkari province in southeastern Turkey told me that they danced it because it "fitted well with the music." As such, dissenters find ways to express their political statements by hybridizing marginalized Kurdish dances with horon styles. Similarly, those from the Black Sea area are also aware of the risk of horon's marginalization in tandem with the political context, and they frequently emphasize that their dance is absolutely not political. While many activists from the Black Sea refrain from using Kurdish dance because they do not want to be "seen as so political," as said, activists from the Kurdish movement adopt new folk dances including horon. This approach also aligns with what Meri said to conclude our interview, "Whenever people from the Black Sea get to learn and perform Kurdish dances, then we can start talking about social process of 'peace' in Turkey" (Istanbul, 4.3.2017). Despite their diverse and discrepant political perspectives and practices, grassroots movements are interconnected through dance—conceptually and also locally, trans-regionally, and transnationally. Such interconnectedness

[92] "Newroz" is the celebration of New Year and the beginning of spring in Kurdish culture, which coincides with spring equinox. Newroz as a Kurdish festival is suppressed in Turkey, and its Turkish equivalent as "Nevruz" has been prompted across the nation. In opposition to Newroz, the Turkish Nevruz does not involve songs in Kurdish language neither does it include dances performed with those songs.

reveals the critical significance of horon to create agonistic spaces for activist encounters and instigate non-hegemonic struggles in Turkey.

I have showed that several grassroots movements from Turkey's recent political history apply horon in such diverse contexts. horon may be performed to stop the police at the protest site, to warm-up activists during the cold weather as they perform sit-ins or vigils; to spend time while observing and watching out for the environment, or waiting in front of a courthouse; and to prevent bulldozers and work machines from reaching their targets. The horon may be also used to publicize the activist group because the media find images of dancing people more "interesting" than those who perform conventional forms of public demonstrations such as petitions, marches, and press statements. Additionally, horon styles are performed to boost morale; demonstrate emotions such as anger, mourning, and joy; and show unison and solidarity among dissenters. By focusing on the contemporary activists who self-identify as women from diverse backgrounds, such as those involved in environmental, feminist, LGBTQI+, labor-oriented, left-leaning and revolutionary, cultural rights, social justice, and urban commons movements, my research highlighted dance not only as an aesthetic activity but also as a significant social and political practice. Drawing upon ethnographic methods such as interviews, participant observation, and fieldwork study as well as choreographic, media, and discourse analyses, I discussed how grassroots activists respond to the changing historical and political circumstances of an increasingly authoritarian and repressive regime in Turkey. Also, how do they transform traditional dance as a genre of resistance that is central in Turkey's recent repertoire of social movements? How do marginalized, grassroots non-Western women translate hegemonic, institutionalized inscriptions of the "national dance," in this case, horon, into a language of dissent, transforming it to a pluralist performance of citizenship? By exploring Turkey's protest-scape and centering activist women's bodies—their intelligent acts, ephemeral interactions,

meaning-making processes— this dissertation reveals marginalized citizens' capacities and bodily strategies for remaking history, culture, and politics to foster democratic participation in current times of authoritarian state regime in Turkey.

Authoritarianism has increased in Turkey since 2007, and particularly and dramatically following the attempted coup d'état in 2016 after which state-of-emergency decrees ruled the country until recently. In this current period, arbitrary detentions, dismissals, and proscriptions have become pervasive, rendering dissenting populations more vulnerable than ever, particularly activist women. In this context, I understood more profoundly how dance encouraged progressive women to resist injustice, helped to cultivate political communities, and provided those collectives with alternative modes of expression when other ways of conveying their ideas and messages, such as political public assemblies, were regulated or banned. In this context, my dissertation provides a unique and timely contribution to dance studies, particularly showing the ways in which dissenting women collectively deploy, mobilize, and transform folk dance as an activist practice in Turkey under conditions of extreme vulnerability in the public space.

By specifically focusing on the horon genre and its alternative choreographies in urban and rural settings, I explored the dance's re-constitutions from below to examine how the dance directly serves to grassroots politics. Horon provided me with a fertile ground to investigate intersecting areas of dance, history, anthropology, sociology, politics, and gender in Turkey. My research questions reflected such interdisciplinarity as I asked: How do activists strategize choreographic decisions in protests? How do they describe the dance and how do they articulate themselves within dance groups? What is the affect and effect of the dance in the public space? How does horon facilitate a discussion on gender and nationalism? How does dance provide us a way of thinking about alternative forms of public assembly

when conventional types of expressing political discontent are not feasible due to extreme violence in times of political precarity?

My analyses reflect this struggle over horon choreographies in Turkey. By closely analyzing activists' ways of employing folk dances in a range of protests, I found that dissenters, individually and collectively, employ a number of techniques as sets of choreographic tactics. They improvise by using these techniques among others to overcome uncertainties depending on the changing circumstances of the protest. The improvisation in protest and in horon hence create multilayered and complex sets of interactions in political demonstrations both in rural and urban contexts. For example, activists disperse in the city at moments of extreme violence, decentering their political activity and gathering again in the form of a folk dance collective in order to make public assembly possible. Dissenting women's bodies consider how to modulate their dance movements, how to organize and be organized in space strategically against power, and how to relate to each other in a continuous effort of dance-making. They deliberately use imprecision as a tactic of unsettling the "proper" mode of dancing, and also accentuate their gendered characteristics in horon choreographies to contest patriarchal mandates. I argued that by using one technique at a time or multiple ones simultaneously, activist women move critically and creatively in the public space despite state coercion and police violence.

Horon has been institutionalized as the representative of a supposedly homogenous Black Sea tradition, notwithstanding the profound discrepancies and debates regarding the "authenticity" of horon. Several ethnic and cultural communities of the eastern Black Sea region, such as the Laz, the Hemşin, the Greek Pontians, the Georgians, and the Turks, claim that horon is their unique cultural production. The dance is taught at state conservatories, folk dance clubs, and cultural associations where technical precision and virtuosity are highlighted to define boundaries between ethnic, racial, cultural, and sexual identities. Such clear

distinctions prevent potential political allies from uniting due to their identitarian differences. I argued that "precision," both as a choreographic technique and as the assumed evidence of authenticity and authentic cultural reproduction, is deployed depending on the criteria set by the dance teacher. As such, deviations from the homogenizing technique have been considered "disrespectful" and "damaging" to the authentic culture. Such attempts of standardizing horon have been and continue to be challenged by dissenting activists in anti-governmental and environmental justice movements.

Horon has also been integral to a spatial politics of grassroots activism in Istanbul, where the symbolic center of dissent, namely Taksim Square, has been transformed in the twentieth century. In the period after the 2013 Gezi resistance when activists were exiled from this main area towards the relative peripheries of the city, a positive politics of dispersal emerged as a choreography of survival through which activists scattered in urban peripheries, in response to the state's use of violence in centralized public spaces. Activists re-assemble in a dispersed public space of political action through their folk dance gatherings which are performed in ephemeral and ever-changing groups of individuals. By drawing on performance studies and political philosophy scholars such as Michael Foucault, Michel de Certeau, Giorgio Agamben, Hannah Arendt, and Judith Butler, I have conceptualized "tactics of dispersal" to refer to dissenters' capacity of creating a space for plural political action as they continuously disperse themselves and gather together through folk dance circles. I have also elucidated how folk dance practices are discussed and negotiated by activist women who make strategic decisions about the dance after considering the particularities of the protest event and how the act of dancing would be received.

One of my case studies was the recent Presidential Referendum in Istanbul and I examined related protests between February and June 2017. After closely looking at how activists manipulate standardized horon choreography and what kinds of meanings they

produce and circulate in the public sphere, I have suggested the notion of "techniques of imprecision," a term that I use to underscore the improvised collective movement practices of dissenters, aiming to blur institutionalized differences and to make protest a more inclusive democratic practice. I have also analyzed how they highlight conventional codes of femininity to critique heteropatriarchy both in the state institutions and among the dissenting group. In this context, grassroots women and LGBTQI+ activists accentuate their dance movements against the idealized revolutionary body of some leftist organizations, which is depicted as "naturally" a male body. Showing how folk dance patterns are manipulated in demonstrations, I have argued that women and LGBTQI+ activists claim a left-leaning dissenting legacy in Turkey.

Finally, I have examined how activists in the rural areas of the Black Sea region compose horon performance by re-assembling multiple materials from different sources such as movement, poetry, lyrics, musical instruments, posters, photographs, attires, props, and political banners and signs. They bring together related or unrelated elements; insert unfamiliar objects to the traditional composition; or juxtapose different components of horon and everyday life creating new relationships among objects. Such "techniques of bricolage" help activists to bewilder the police and create new political meanings. While activists were converting the traditional song lyrics into political chants, performativity conceptually enabled them to have a political impact among the audience in the Black Sea rural and also in Istanbul. Urban and rural activists not only claimed, repurposed, and transformed the dance, but also reconstituted horon within a bilateral movement between the city and the country to register it as a distinct form of political agitation.

My work invites other studies to investigate Turkish folk dance as a political tool through which bodies are scrutinized, assessed, and even marked; and they also interact, resist, and transform the signs of marginalization into signifiers of political identification in

the public sphere. A collective of bodies is not an abstract phenomenon; protesters are not able to move equally free in the public space (Lepecki 2013), neither do they compose a unified multitude, who magically act in concert to make protest movements (Hardt & Negri 2017). My analysis takes dancing bodies seriously, showing how they individually and collectively strategize their acts in protest; how they contest each other; and how they fail and gain victories under the conditions of precarity. By analyzing dissenting women's horon practice as political action, this study contributes to both scholarly and activist efforts in connecting dance and politics with loosely stitched yet enduring choreographies of resistance and solidarity.

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