İSTANBUL UNIVERSITY PRESS

Siyasal: Journal of Political Sciences, JPS 2025

https://doi.org/10.26650/siyasal.2025.34.1646920

Submitted: 20.01.2025
Accepted: 24.04.2025
Published Online 28.08.2025

Siyasal: Journal of Political Sciences

Research Article

Open Access

The Marketplace of Anti-Communism: Shopkeeper Ideology and the Cultural Political Economy of Representation (1960-1980)

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Abstract This study examines how Turkish shopkeepers constructed their class identity through anti-communist discourse between 1960 and 1980, during Turkey's Import Substitution Industrialization period. Drawing on Bob Jessop's Cultural Political Economy framework, integrated with Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, it demonstrates how shopkeepers actively transformed their structural contradictions into political agency, rather than merely reflecting their economic interests. A systematic analysis of four organizational periodicals published by shopkeeper unions, alongside national newspapers, reveals a three-phase discursive evolution: from an administrative vocabulary focused on economic concerns (early 1970s), through narratives of political alienation and representational crisis (mid-1970s), to a militant anti-communist rhetoric (late 1970s). The analysis shows how material anxieties were linguistically rearticulated into cultural narratives of national integrity through processes of 'semiotic transformation.' Shopkeepers' anti-communism emerged not from ideological manipulation or mechanical class positions, but through sophisticated meaning-making practices that fused economic grievances with nationalist-conservative imaginaries. By reframing their structural vulnerabilities as moral authority and patriotic duty, shopkeepers were able to transcend their contradictory class position—being dependent on state protection yet constrained by its regulations, opposing big capital while fearing working-class mobilization. This study contributes to our understanding of class formation among the petty bourgeoisie in late-developing capitalist countries, revealing how anti-communist discourse functioned not as a top-down imposition, but as a symbolic resource for forging political unity across divergent material interests.

Keywords Anti-communism · shopkeepers · critical discourse analysis · cultural political economy · class formation · Turkey

Citation: Altınoklu, M. N. (2025). The marketplace of anti-communism: Shopkeeper ideology and the cultural political economy of representation (1960-1980). *Siyasal: Journal of Political Sciences*, Advance Online Publication. https://doi.org/10.26650/siyasal.2025.34.1646920

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The Marketplace of Anti-Communism: Shopkeeper Ideology and the Cultural Political Economy of Representation (1960-1980)

The anti-communist story in Turkey is a complex interplay of global alignments and local dynamics. Following World War II, Turkey positioned itself within the Western bloc, aligning with the United States and adopting the Cold War's ideological contours. However, anti-communism did not operate solely as a top-down state project; it became a social force embedded in everyday life—circulating through neighborhoods, workplaces, and cultural imaginaries. At the heart of this discursive and political mobilization were Turkish shopkeepers whose voices and practices have often been overlooked in Turkish historiography.

Understanding the widespread adoption and active reproduction of anti-communist discourse by shopkeepers during the 1960–1980 period necessitates moving beyond simplistic interpretations of cultural conservatism or manipulation of political actors and parties. This study investigates how Turkish shopkeepers' contradictory class position was shaped and negotiated within the structural constraints of Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) and how their economic interests—articulated through nationalist-conservative and anti-communist ideological frameworks—functioned dialectically to constitute and transform their class identity and political subjectivity. Positioned between labor and capital and increasingly pressured by economic centralization and market control, shopkeepers as a fraction of petty bourgeoisie translated their contradictory class position and material grievances into political meaning through symbolic narratives that depicted communism as an existential danger to moral authority and national unity.

While existing literature has explored Turkish anti-communism through the lenses of intellectual production (Örnek, 2015), party politics and right-wing media (Yaşlı, 2024), ; Çelik, 2024), and discursive representation (Yıldırmaz, 2012; Öztan, 2012), shopkeepers' ideological role remains relatively understudied. However, when considering Bob Jessop's (2002) reading of Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, which conceptualizes *politics as a theatrical space where actors assume historically contingent roles and masks*[1], shopkeepers as a fraction of petty bourgeoisie were also political actors on this stage through their interests reflected as discourse and practices, just as they have been active participants in the political theater of every historical period. This framework elucidates why shopkeepers' political participation frequently appears fragmented or contradictory when analyzed through conventional class-based approaches, yet becomes coherent when understood as strategic role-adoption within the constraints and opportunities presented by specific political conjunctures. Their material interests are not pre-constituted but are actively constructed through engagement with available political discourses and practices. By providing symbolic resources that could simultaneously address shopkeepers' economic vulnerabilities, legitimate their social position, and align them with dominant conservative-nationalist narratives, anti-communist discourse enabled them to transform their structural contradictions into political agency. This study examines how organizational leaders constructed anti-communist narratives claiming to represent the broader shopkeepers' community to understand this transformation process, rather than analyzing rank-and-file experiences, demonstrating how ideological work mediated between structural position and collective action. This methodological choice is

[1] In the *Eighteenth Brumaire* (1852), Marx presents a sophisticated analysis of political representation that challenges the conventional interpretations of class-political dynamics (Jessop, 2002). While various scholars have debated the text's implications, as Jessop has well-outlined, this article argues that Marx's framework demonstrates a direct correlation between class interests and political identities. This interpretation is supported by Marx's treatment of politics as *"formative and performative rather than merely superstructural or reflective"* (Petrey 1988; Stallybrass 1990), suggesting that political representation actively shapes and crystallizes rather than passively reflecting class interests.

deliberate: organizational publications reveal how elite actors constructed anti-communist narratives that claim to represent the broader community of shopkeepers, demonstrating how ideological work mediated between structural position and collective action. These sources capture the discursive strategies through which shopkeeper organizations attempted to forge collective identity and political coherence among a structurally fragmented social group. This analysis reveals how anti-communist discourse functioned as a "bridging ideology"[2] flexible semantic resource that enabled diverse social groups to coordinate politically despite conflicting material interests.

Methodologically, this approach aligns with Jessop's Cultural Political Economy (CPE) framework (2004), which emphasizes the co-evolution of material structures and discursive practices. Jessop's CPE provides analytical tools to examine how economic contradictions are transformed into political discourse through variation, selection, and retention processes. Van Dijk's CDA (2015) complements this by providing methodological tools to analyze textual, discursive practice, and socio-political dimensions. This integration enables multi-layered analysis by combining macro-level structural analysis of CPE with micro-level textual analysis of CDA. While CPE represents a theoretical approach that bridges materialist political economy with cultural and discursive analysis, CDA, which examines how economic processes are culturally and discursively mediated, constitutes a critical approach to discourse analysis that seeks to uncover power relations and ideological dimensions embedded in texts and communicative practices. This methodological synthesis follows a two-stage process: first, structural contradictions and their discursive transformations are identified through the CPE lens; second, specific textual manifestations and their socio-political implications are analyzed using the three-dimensional model of CDA.

The primary empirical foundation consists of four shopkeeper publications issued by shopkeeper organizations in İzmir and Ankara[3]— *Birlik*, *Milli Gayret*, *Türkiye Esnaf*, and *Türkiye Esnaf ve Sanatkârlar*— supplemented by national newspapers *Cumhuriyet* and *Milliyet*.[4] The focus on İzmir and Ankara publications is methodologically justified given these cities' centrality to shopkeeper organizations and their leaders' dual positioning as both organizational heads and parliamentary deputies, providing insights into how sectoral concerns are translated into broader political narratives. The organizational publications from İzmir and Ankara demonstrate how shopkeeper discourse operated at the national scale. Although individual positioning may have been constrained by local neighborhood expectations, the publications themselves show collective articulation that increasingly addressed macro-political themes beyond immediate sectoral grievances.

[2]Although developed independently through this study's empirical analysis, the concept of bridging ideology may find theoretical resonance with Mübeccel Kıray's (1999) pioneering concept of the tampon mechanism (buffer mechanism). Though Kıray's framework was not specifically applied to shopkeepers or ideological processes, her insight into how certain social actors mediate between different social formations during periods of structural transformation provides valuable theoretical precedent for understanding mediating functions in Turkish society. The key distinction lies in the analytical focus: while Kıray's 'tampon mechanism" describes structural-functional roles in social transition, "bridging ideology" examines discursive processes that enable political coordination across diverse groups.

[3]Among these publications, *Türkiye Esnaf Gazetesi* is the official publication of the Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen Confederation. T*ürkiye Esnaf ve Sanatkâr* magazine is published by the Ankara Credit Cooperative, while *İzmir'in Sesi* is associated with the İzmir Credit Cooperative. Birlik magazine was published in İzmir, but its publisher is uncertain; it was likely issued either by the local credit cooperative or the chamber.

[4]The analysis employed a mixed approach that combined quantitative tracking of semantic changes with qualitative interpretation of rhetorical strategies. Publications were systematically coded for the following: vocabulary categories (administrative, political, and crisis), ideological markers (references to communism, nationalism, and economic threats), and rhetorical devices (metaphors, temporal references, and victimization narratives). Content was analyzed both synchronically (within each phase) and diachronically (across the 1960-1980 period) to identify patterns consistent with CPE's variation-selection-retention framework while applying Van Dijk's multi-level discourse analysis.

Several limitations must be acknowledged[5]. Nevertheless, analyzing organizational discourse reveals the strategic discursive work required to constitute shopkeepers as a coherent political class despite internal contradictions, making these sources valuable for understanding collective identity formation during Turkey's developmental period. Organizational discourse provides unique insights into collective identity formation processes that individual testimonies cannot capture, as it reveals how elite actors construct shared narratives that claim to represent broader communities. Moreover, these publications functioned as vehicles through which organizational leadership attempted to disseminate political frameworks to rank-and-file members, making them crucial sites for analyzing the ideological work of class formation.

Reconsidering Shopkeeper Ideology: Class Position and Political Discourse

Academic studies in Turkey often draw a persistent analytical divide in analyzing shopkeepers, which ends up obscuring their class dynamics. This division is largely characterized by two dominant paradigms. On one hand, the culturalist paradigm, represented by Ülgener (1991) and Mardin (1973; 2014), freezes shopkeepers within pre-capitalist formations, treating their ideological expressions as transparent reflections of "medieval mentalities" rather than strategic responses to specific class contradictions. On the other hand, socialist discourse reduced shopkeepers to their objective class position as petit-bourgeois obstacles to socialist transformation, interpreting their political stances as mechanical reflections of material interests. As Balıkçı (2015) demonstrates, this approach was evident in socialist publications such as *Yön* and *Ant* in the 1960s. Both approaches miss the crucial insight that shopkeepers' ideology emerges through the active articulation of economic and cultural elements within specific historical conjunctures.

This study deliberately avoids "false consciousness" frameworks that assume shopkeepers' anti-communism contradicts their "objective" interests. Instead, following Jessop's CPE approach, we analyze how shopkeepers actively constructed their interests through discursive practices rather than being misled about pre-given interests. This methodological positioning is crucial because it moves beyond deterministic assumptions about what shopkeepers' interests "should" be given their structural position, and instead emphasizes how they actively articulated and transformed their material conditions into political agency.

To understand shopkeepers' class dynamics, Wright's (1985) concept of "contradictory class location" proves essential. Shopkeepers simultaneously function as employers and self-employed workers, owning production means while directly engaging in labor. Crucially, they operate within the circulation sphere, realizing surplus value through exchange rather than generating it through production, which positions them ambiguously within class relations (Altınoklu, 2022). Although the 1964 Turkish Craftsmen and Artisans Law (Law No. 507) defines shopkeepers through traditional occupational categories, they should be understood through their position within the capital circuit—as critical mediators facilitating commodity flow from production to consumption. This understanding emphasizes that classes are not pre-given entities but are continuously made and remade through historical and political economic processes.

To analyze how this structural position translates into political agency, we should note that class formation operates through dual dimensions: the *material* dimension involves agents' positioning within specific

[5]Several limitations must be acknowledged. (1) This study's focus on organizational discourse raises questions about whether leadership rhetoric reflects genuine membership interests or elite positioning strategies, particularly given the early stage of shopkeeper institutionalization during this period (Öniş and Türem, 2001; Buğra, 1995; Buğra & Savaşkan, 2015). However, analyzing elite discourse reveals the strategic discursive work required to constitute shopkeepers as a coherent political class. (2) Geographic concentration on İzmir and Ankara potentially overlooks regional variations while privileging elite over rank-and-file perspectives. (3) Empirical verification of specific state-association relationships during this period remains limited (see Altınoklu, 2022 for current analysis). (4) The cognitive interface between individual meaning-making and structural forces remains underexplored (van Dijk, 2015) while integrating CPE addresses Van Dijk's noted gap between linguistic and social approaches.

economic practices of a mode of production, while the *political* dimension encompasses the ideological processes through which class members develop shared identity and coordinated action. Class capacity derives not only from collective identity but also from structural economic position and accessible organizational resources (Therborn, 1983).

While shopkeepers' class formation in Turkey traces back to late Ottoman capitalist integration and early Republican transformations (Altınoklu, 2022), Turkish shopkeepers during the ISI period offer a particularly vivid illustration of this dual process. *Materially,* they occupied a contradictory position—benefiting from expanding domestic markets while constrained by state regulations and large capital's preferential access to credit. Their class position was actively constituted through struggles over credit access, price controls, and distribution rights within a domestic framework increasingly shaped by rapid urbanization, changing consumption patterns, and the expansion of both the working class and middle strata, especially in contestations with large capital over preferential credit allocations and state subsidies during the 1960s and 1970s. *Politically,* this period marked rapid institutional expansion of shopkeeper organizations alongside accelerated legal and regulatory reforms affecting small commerce, unifying previously scattered organizational forms that had persisted since the dissolution of the Ottoman guild system, providing the organizational infrastructure necessary for sustained political mobilization. Their class capacity was forged through organizational discourse that transformed these structural contradictions into anti-communist narratives. Understanding how they articulated anti-communist discourse during this period requires examining how they transformed structural vulnerabilities into political narratives that fused economic grievances with nationalist ideology. Anti-communism should be understood as a historically embedded necessity of responding to specific conjunctures and power dynamics within Turkey's political landscape rather than viewing it as an inherent characteristic of shopkeepers.[6]

A Necessity of Anti-Communism: Class Formation and Political Discourse

The significance of shopkeepers in Turkey's anti-communist formation must be understood within the broader historical trajectory of small property ownership and commercial organization. In contrast to Western European contexts, where industrialization rapidly displaced traditional retail structures, Turkey maintained a predominantly small-proprietor economy well into the ISI period. This persistence reflected both the commercial legacies of the Ottoman Empire and the Republican transformations that repositioned small Muslim-Turkish property owners as carriers of nationalist and religious ideology (Altınoklu 2022; Çetinkaya, 2025). In the early republican period, the state's populist ideology further elevated the symbolic importance of shopkeepers, positioning them as representatives of "the people" against both foreign capital and large-scale monopolies, creating fertile ground for anti-communist mobilization in the following periods.

The emergence of anti-communism as a dominant ideological force in Turkey dates back to the post-World War II period. The shift to multi-party politics (1946) coincided with Turkey's Western alignment, institutionalizing anti-communism as a core state policy through the Truman Doctrine (1947) and the Marshall Plan (1948). The 1950s witnessed the systematic embedding of anti-communist sentiments in

[6] Drawing inspiration from Judah Hill's (1977) article about class split within the Union of Marxist Social Scientists (UMSS) between the League for Proletarian Socialism and what they characterize as petty bourgeois socialist groups, the article uses the term "*necessity*" to explain how petty bourgeois socialists must defeat Marxism-Leninism and proletarian socialism to succeed in using the proletariat for their ends. However, this use and meaning of the term "necessity" is reversed considering the specific historical conditions of Turkey and shopkeepers' class formation. In our historical case, in a context where petty bourgeois socialism historically did not exist as a category, anti-communism appeared as a *necessity* of shopkeeper ideology in terms of its propagation, embedded within historical concrete conditions.

Turkey's legal framework and political discourse. This period, shaped by the anti-communist rhetoric of the Democratic Party, witnessed increasing religious influence in education (Öztan & Kaynak, 2020). McCarthy-style practices and right-wing groups reinforced anti-communism, labeling leftist thought as "traitors to the homeland" (Örnek, 2021). This political dialogue manifested fundamental transformations within Turkish society, as "geopolitical tensions and ideological schisms" became increasingly interwoven into everyday social interactions (Üngör&Örnek, 2013:8). The 1960s represented a watershed moment in Turkish societal discourse, as ideological debates breached the confines of intellectual enclaves to suffuse broader social spheres. Within this framework, it would be inconceivable that this process would not penetrate state-capital relations and the organizational structures mediating between them.

The 1960 coup marked the emergence of a new order in which ISI policies fostered an industrial bourgeoisie while anti-communism remained dominant. His period marks a time when *capital sought a new order*, turning to alternative forms of organization (Demir; Kömürcü, 2014) and launching publishing activities to wage a war against communist ideology (Çelik, 2024) where the state could not balance the contradictory and conflicting interests with the capitalist class. In this respect, the anti-communist network that developed requires examination not only through cultural and political organizations (Yaşlı, 2024) but also through the social structure created by the state-capital alliance, as evidenced in publications like "Can We Believe What the Communists Say?" (1962) and "Freedom Against Communism" (1965) by the Union of Chambers of Commerce (Çelik, 2024). Shopkeepers, strategically positioned at the intersection of daily social and economic exchanges, were also inevitably enmeshed in this ideological milieu, their particular location in the socioeconomic framework rendering them exceptionally responsive to both market imperatives and social meaning construction processes.

The following analysis focuses on the crucial period between 1960 and 1980, which represents a distinct phase in the consolidation of the anti-communist consensus. This process was simultaneously one of class formation: shopkeepers constituted themselves as a political class through articulating anti-communist discourse, but did so within ideological coordinates partly established by state populism and through a distinctive discursive evolution that distinguished their trajectory from other social groups. Through systematic discourse analysis of shopkeeper publications, this study traces how their organizational discourse evolved from administrative vocabulary to militant anti-communist positioning, revealing the mechanisms through which structural contradictions were transformed into political narratives.

Discursive Evolution of Anti-Communist Positioning: A Three-Level Analysis

Political discourse serves as the primary medium through which ideological propositions are formulated and communicated, requiring analysis of how actors construct meaning within particular contexts rather than deriving it from structural positions (van Dijk, 1995). As van Dijk (2015: 468) argues, while language use occurs at the micro-level of daily interactions, power relations operate at the macro-level of institutions and social groups, yet they work together as "one unified whole." Drawing on Jessop's CPE framework, this process involves the co-evolution of economic and semiotic elements through variation, selection, and retention processes, making "shopkeeper ideology" a contingent outcome rather than a given structure.

While major capitalist organizations had been engaging in systematic anti-communist publication efforts since the early 1960s (Çelik, 2024), the relationship between shopkeepers and anti-communist ideology emerged through a more complex process that exemplifies CPE concepts in action. This transformation can be traced through distinct phases of semantic evolution that reveal how shopkeepers actively constructed

their class identity through anti-communist articulation rather than passively reflecting their structural position.

Phase 1. Variations in Administrative Discourse

CPE analysis identifies the initial phase as the "variation" moment, during which diverse discursive possibilities emerged within constrained structural conditions. Following the coup of 1960, ISI policies necessitated the legal and organizational structuring of shopkeepers. Organizations expanded rapidly[7], creating the institutional infrastructure through which anti-communist discourse would later circulate, leading to unprecedented intensification of their political self-representation. Unlike major capitalist organizations that had already integrated into this consensus, shopkeepers confronted concrete contradictions inherent to their position between state, capital, and labor through a gradual ideological transformation process. The institutionalization of anti-communist consensus during the ISI period created a structural context within which shopkeepers would later develop specific discursive strategies.

The 1961 Constitution elevated the institutional and legal visibility of shopkeepers, leading to the 1964 Turkish Craftsmen and Artisans Law and the establishment of Confederation of Tradesmen and Craftsmen of Turkey (TESK) (Bianchi, 1984:137). This period marked a fundamental transformation in the institutionalization and representation of shopkeepers' collective interests in the political sphere[8]. While the bicameral structure of the 1961 Constitution enhanced shopkeepers' political visibility, this institutional arrangement presented an intriguing paradox when juxtaposed with the political positioning of shopkeeper representatives. This tension is particularly evident in Hasan Tez's discourse, a member of the first coalition following the 1960 military intervention. Tez asserted that "shopkeeper organizations serve the revolutionary government, above politics with equal rights, as guardians of the revolution in our economic life" (Türkiye Esnaf ve Sanatkar, July 1, 1961). This positioning raises a crucial analytical question: How and when did this socioeconomic group become integrated into and subsequently reproduce anti-communist narratives? How did they begin to engage in active political engagement with anti-communism despite their initial claims of political neutrality? During this period, shopkeeper publications experimented with diverse discursive strategies—administrative appeals, technical economic vocabulary, and cautious political positioning—reflecting the range of available discursive possibilities within the structural constraints of ISI.

While ISI policies initially fostered opportunities for shopkeepers through expanding service sectors, distributorship networks, and repair services linked to growing industrial production and changing consumption patterns, the relative optimism of early ISI policies initially channeled shopkeeper discourse toward administrative solutions, with their promise of protected domestic markets and state support. This optimism reflected concrete material benefits: increased domestic demand, relatively rising wages, and

[7]The period from 1951 to 1969 witnessed significant institutional proliferation within Turkey's shopkeeper sector. Following the establishment of TESKOMB in 1951 to address credit constraints, the membership of the cooperative expanded from 56 units in 1955 to 367 units by 1967. By 1969, the organizational infrastructure encompassed 3,400 associations, 52 unions, and 6 federations, indicating the systematic institutionalization of shopkeeper collective representation during the early developmental period of Turkey. (Türkiye Esnaf ve Küçük Sanatkarlar Semineri, 1969, 80) Furthermore, the numerical significance of shopkeepers was substantial: approximately 4 million individuals were classified as shopkeepers in 1979 (Türkiye Esnaf, May 31, 1979), significantly exceeding today's 2 million. This disparity resulted from including employees, who were also categorized as "esnaf" under the pre-2005 legal framework, illustrating the expansive social scope of shopkeeper identity beyond formal ownership.

[8]While the 1960s marked a similar transformation for chambers of commerce and industry, this period was particularly significant for shopkeepers who had previously been required to organize under merchant and industrialist organizations during the early Republican era (Makal, 2016). During this period, they gained a more independent and distinct organizational identity. The Union of Chambers gained new functions and importance, especially in response to the need to discipline import procedures that had become chaotic due to the partisan practices of the Democratic Party. Following the 1960 military intervention, the Union of Chambers began organizing a significant portion of Turkey's industrial sector needs as Turkey transitioned to a planned economy. See Tekerek (2023).

the expansion of commerce and service sectors meant that shopkeepers, positioned at the final stage of surplus value realization in trade and services, inevitably shared in the benefits of ISI's economic expansion (Altınoklu, 2022). During this period, shopkeepers held a unique position in the capital circuit as critical mediators, facilitating the flow of goods from production to consumption. Their role went beyond traditional retail. They were a crucial node in the transformation of commodities and intermediate goods that supported the emerging industrial infrastructure in the 1960s.

Shopkeepers' publications predominantly employed administrative language that focused on technical vocabulary: 'devaluation, capital scarcity, new taxes' (Birlik, September 1, 1970). This semantic repertoire positioned shopkeepers as rational economic actors seeking bureaucratic solutions within the existing institutional frameworks. The centrality of economic concerns was consistently emphasized, as demonstrated in TESK President Hüsamettin Tiyanşan's identification of "financing as shopkeepers most pressing problem" (Milli Gayret, June 20, 1973). However, by late 1973, even technical discussions began to incorporate political elements. TESK President Tiyanşan's framing of financing as "shopkeepers most pressing problem" (Milli Gayret, June 20, 1973) was increasingly accompanied by references to "representational inadequacies" in the same texts, suggesting that administrative solutions alone were insufficient.

During this period, publications discussed 'peace, security and stability' as abstract core values (Milli Gayret, February 20, 1973), but anti-communism remained implicit rather than explicit. A particularly illustrative example can be found in a Milliyet newspaper (August 28, 1968): while student movements were "advocating passive resistance in anticipation of the U.S. 6th Fleet's imminent arrival in İzmir", local shopkeeper associations took an explicitly opposing stance, formally declaring intention to "resist any actions directed against US." Despite the pro-American, *if not anticommunist*, discourses, shopkeepers' organizations and publications in the early 1970s primarily focused on economic issues and used peaceful, organized actions to address their concerns. For instance, in October 1970, the Turkish Federation of Drivers and Motorists organized a boycott against black market auto parts sales, explicitly emphasizing the peaceful nature of their protest (Birlik, October 15, 1970). This example demonstrates that the initial responses of shopkeepers to structural pressures were focused on specific economic grievances and employed direct but non-confrontational tactics.

Shopkeepers primarily pursued concrete economic solutions through direct negotiations with state institutions during this period. When facing disputes over tobacco monopoly product sales, "grocers and dealers abandoned their boycott after reaching an agreement through negotiations on the principle of raising profit margins' (Türkiye Esnaf, April 20, 1976). Similarly, the head of the federation of drivers articulated this pragmatic approach: "Our goal is not to become workers, but to be owners of our vehicle" (Türkiye Esnaf, May 2, 1976). These examples demonstrate how shopkeepers prioritized immediate material gains over ideological positioning, reflecting the dominance of administrative discourse during the variation phase of CPE analysis.

This gradual semantic shift involved a transitional period in which administrative language was supplemented with political terminology that engaged with broader national questions, preparing the ground for Phase 2's more explicit political discourse.

Phase 2. Selection of the Political Vocabulary

The second phase witnessed the emergence of what Jessop's framework conceptualizes as "selection"—the process through which certain discursive repertoires gain prominence over others due to their resonance

with structural contradictions and strategic utility. As structural contradictions deepened, publications gradually supplemented administrative vocabulary with political language, eventually leading to the predominance of political discourse over technical-administrative appeals, indicating how specific discursive repertoires gained prominence due to their resonance with shopkeepers' changing structural position.

However, this positioning of shopkeepers gained particular significance after 1965, when the Justice Party's deepening alliance with large capital generated mounting anxiety among shopkeepers, who increasingly viewed industrial capital as an existential threat to their economic sustainability. Shopkeepers operated within a tightly controlled economic ecosystem where DPT's comprehensive planning and price controls fundamentally structured their market interactions (Keyder, 1989; Altınoklu, 2022). ISI policies created a structural contradiction: while promising domestic industrialization, they progressed with heavy dependence on imports rather than genuine domestic development. This persistent external dependency constrained the integration of shopkeepers into the domestic market, creating tension between stated economic nationalism and actual development patterns. Despite the proclamations of shopkeepers "as the very heartbeat of free enterprise" (Türkiye Esnaf, August 22, 1976), comprehensive state planning directly regulated their profit margins, credit access, and distribution channels. ISI created a dual constraint for shopkeepers: they benefited from industrial growth as consumers expanded, but state planning increasingly favored large industrial capital through credit allocation and import licenses, leaving small businesses excluded from key opportunities. DPT's price controls prevented shopkeepers from capitalizing on increased demand, while import licensing concentrated distribution rights among large firms. This historically specific "squeeze"—being empowered by ISI's expansion while constrained by its regulatory apparatus—explains why shopkeepers' publications shifted from optimism (early 1970s) to grievance (mid-1970s).

While ISI policies increasingly favored large industrial capital while constraining small businesses through price controls and regulatory mechanisms, shopkeeper discourse shifted from administrative optimism to political alienation. Political vocabulary began displacing administrative language, with terms like "representation" and "distrust" (Türkiye Esnaf, August 5, 1976) revealing growing alienation from existing political channels. Publications from this period exposed profound skepticism about the effectiveness of existing representatives from both the Justice Party and the Republican People's Party, with the failure to pass crucial legislative regulations generating significant distrust (Türkiye Esnaf, August 5, 1976). This skepticism was well-founded: despite shopkeepers' demands since the 1950s, crucial legislation remained stalled throughout the 1960s. The law on "apprentices, headworkers, and masters," first demanded in the 1950s, was not implemented until 1977. Similarly, amendments to the essay law were delayed until 1983, with many 1960s demands only addressed in the mid-1970s. When legislation finally passed, the Justice Party strategically claimed credit for demonstrating political success against the CHP, as evidenced in their 1977 report highlighting parliamentary achievements on shopkeeper issues (AP, 1977: 13-16). This pattern of legislative delays followed by partisan credit claims reinforced shopkeepers' political alienation and distrust of conventional party politics.

The dysfunctional structure of shopkeeper associations further deepened this political alienation. Despite rapid institutional expansion, structural problems persisted: TESK had not organized a meeting for seven years by the mid-1970s, while confederation members were criticized for "abusing their duties within the confederation and confusing them with their political functions" (Cumhuriyet, July 1, 1975). The arbitrary attitudes of both government officials and leaders of shopkeeper associations created what contemporaries called "organizational inflation," causing instability within these organizations (Türkiye Esnaf

ve Küçük Sanatkârlar Semineri: 33). Politicians were accused of undermining the interests of shopkeepers by failing to offer credible solutions (Milliyet, 17.04.1967). These organizational dysfunctions deepened the disillusionment of shopkeepers with both party politics and their own representative structures.

This demonstrates that numerical representation did not necessarily translate into effective political advocacy for shopkeeper interests. This political incorporation process reveals how bourgeois political mechanisms strategically absorbed shopkeepers into the parliamentary system, rather than representing what Bianchi (1984) might characterize as representational weakness. A more nuanced understanding emerges by examining how this process gradually incorporated and intensely politicized shopkeepers within the broader systemic framework as their priorities increasingly aligned with bourgeois interests. Their demands for increasing the number of shopkeeper deputies in parliament (Türkiye Esnaf, May 20, 1976) indicated a calculated engagement with rather than opposition to existing institutional frameworks. The Ankara Union of Shopkeeper Associations' declaration that "there is no place for Maoists or Leninists in this country!" (Türkiye Esnaf, May 20, 1976) marked the beginning of an explicit anti-communist position but remained relatively straightforward compared to subsequent developments.

This timing is particularly significant as it coincided with the industrial bourgeoisie's consolidation of its position as a "class for itself" in the 1970s, most notably marked by the establishment of TÜSİAD (Turkish Industry and Business Association) (Yalman, 2009). This parallel development reveals how different segments of Turkish society were simultaneously developing their organizational capacities and class consciousness, albeit through different means and with different objectives.

Phase 3. Retention of the Crisis Vocabulary

The final phase emerged against the backdrop of Turkey's severe economic crisis, which was characterized by inflation, foreign exchange shortages, and the breakdown of the developmentalist promises of ISI. The crisis deepened with escalating political violence, marked by intensifying left-right confrontations, widespread student unrest, and sectarian massacres in Sivas, Çorum, and Maraş, leading to widespread martial law. These events revealed complex intersections of political polarization, sectarian tensions, and economic competition, particularly where anti-communist discourse could mask sectarian commercial rivalries.

This phase exemplifies what CPE analysis terms "retention"—the institutionalization and reproduction of discursive repertoires that have proven strategically effective in mediating structural contradictions. Economic instability directly fueled militant language that transformed shopkeepers' discourse. The vocabulary of crisis became dominant, with "anarchy," "terror," and "communist imperialism" transforming shopkeepers from economic supplicants into defenders of civilization. By the late 1970s, discourse had shifted dramatically, with shopkeeper organizations framing challenges through "anarchy" (Türkiye Esnaf Gazetesi, February 1, 1979). Kasım Önadım's assertion that shopkeepers were the "main target of anarchy considering our members who were killed inside their shops while at their workstations" (Türkiye Esnaf, January 1, 1979) exemplifies the victimization rhetoric that positioned economic vulnerabilities as evidence of systematic persecution.

The semantic evolution reached its apex in the December 1978 declaration of TESK: "The Republic of Turkey finds itself in the most critical bottleneck not only in republican history but also in Turkish history." The anarchy and terror that have engulfed Turkey present a unique character without precedent in any country, directly threatening the life of the last Turkish state. Therefore, anarchy and terror have external

sources, and the primary focal point of this external source is communist imperialism." (Türkiye Esnaf, December 1, 1978) Tiyanşan declared that shopkeepers "wander impoverished yet never renounce their connection to the homeland, the crescent moon and star, and being Turkish." This exemplifies how shopkeepers evolved from passive recipients of state anti-communist ideology to active producers of discourse that merged economic grievances, national sovereignty, and anti-communist sentiment.

Retention of this crisis vocabulary proved remarkably durable beyond the immediate conjuncture. Following the 1980 military coup, shopkeeper organizations' anti-communist discourse during the 1970s became systematically embedded in Turkey's new institutional framework. The anti-communist rhetoric of the military heavily drew upon the same semantic repertoire—"anarchy," "terror," and "external threats"—that shopkeeper organizations had been developing throughout the decade. More significantly, the post-1980 economic liberalization policies, while fundamentally restructuring shopkeepers' material conditions, retained this discursive framework by aligning anti-communism with free market values and justifying their position through opposition to state market intervention. (Altınoklu, 2022) TESK and provincial shopkeeper chambers adapted their anti-communist positioning to legitimize market-oriented reforms while maintaining their organizational autonomy. This demonstrates how successful discursive innovations achieve retention not through mechanical reproduction but through adaptive redeployment across changing structural conditions—revealing anti-communist discourse's function as a flexible ideological resource rather than a fixed class expression.

This linguistic transformation demonstrates how material anxieties were systematically translated into cultural narratives about national integrity through what CPE analysis reveals as "semiotic transformation"—the active construction of meaning rather than passive reflection of structural position. The late 1970s witnessed the institutionalization of anti-communist consensus at the discursive level, uniting right-wing associations, business groups, and shopkeepers, even as their material interests increasingly diverged. The formation of the Free Enterprise Council exemplified how capital groups initially united to protect collective interests, although shopkeepers withdrew from this formation by the late 1970s (Ozan, 2022), suggesting that anti-communist consensus was not powerful enough to reconcile the concrete material interests of different capital groups, especially during periods of hegemonic crisis.

The resonance between shopkeeper anti-communist discourse and diverse political movements reveals the "bridging ideology" function in practice specifically for shopkeepers. Shopkeepers' organizational publications simultaneously aligned with MHP's secular nationalism and MSP's Islamic moral economy, demonstrating the flexibility of anti-communist discourse. Regarding MHP convergence, the shopkeeper rhetoric of "defending small businesses against socialist threats" paralleled MHP's appeal to the anxieties of the petit bourgeois about both large capital and working-class mobilization. The moral economy framework found in shopkeeper publications—which emphasized "honest trade" against "exploitative systems"—resonated with MSP's Islamic economic discourse. This alignment occurred not merely because marginalized groups, such as shopkeepers in front of the big capital, were attracted to or manipulated by religion (Ahmad, 1991: 3-21), but because of overlapping agendas, such as promoting heavy industry or fair market order while maintaining an anti-communist stance. This ideological flexibility was not an inconsistency but a strategic deployment of the adaptable semantic resources of anti-communist discourse. The same foundational opposition to "communist materialism" could accommodate both secular nationalist and religious traditionalist interpretations, enabling shopkeepers to maintain organizational autonomy while participating in broader right-wing coalitions. However, this bridging capacity had limits: while anti-communist discourse

enabled shopkeepers to align with different political movements (MHP, MSP), it was not powerful enough to reconcile the concrete material interests of different capital groups, as evidenced by shopkeepers' withdrawal from the Free Enterprise Council.

Following the 1978 Maraş massacre, Tiyanşan drew attention to the "unaddressed killings of shopkeepers resulting from robberies and plunderage in martial law regions" (Türkiye Esnaf, February 1, 1979). Concurrently, Uğur Mumcu (Cumhuriyet, March 26, 1979) highlighted how shopkeepers' calls for public self-defense and resistance during the massacre demonstrated that shopkeepers strategically positioned themselves beyond mere economic actors. The massacres in Maraş (1978), Çorum (1980), and earlier in Sivas revealed complex intersections of economic competition, sectarian tensions, and political polarization. The targeting of Alevi shopkeepers and businesses in Maraş reveals how anti-communist discourse was used to mask or legitimize economic rivalries along sectarian lines (Dinler, 2020).

The increasingly militant nature of this discourse raises important questions about the relationship between anti-communism and fascist mobilization in Turkey[9]. Unlike the paramilitary nationalist organizations that emerged during the 1970s, shopkeeper organizations initially framed their anti-communism through appeals to "order," "stability," and "free enterprise" rather than aggressive nationalism. However, as political violence escalated, this distinction became increasingly blurred. During this period, the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) actively courted shopkeeper support by positioning itself as a defender of small business interests against both large capital and socialist threats. The convergence between shopkeeper organizations' increasingly militant anti-communist rhetoric and MHP's appeal to petit bourgeois anxieties suggests that the boundary between "moderate" anti-communism and fascist mobilization was more porous than initially apparent (Bora, 2000). While the discursive convergence between shopkeeper anti-communism and MHP's petit bourgeois appeals is evident in published materials, determining whether this reflected deeper organizational coordination or merely parallel ideological development would require analysis of archival sources beyond this study's scope.

Their engagement with anti-communist discourse should not be reduced to a reactive reflection of class position or ideological manipulation. Instead, it was a selective and strategic articulation through which certain meanings, representations, and practices were elevated and stabilized. From the perspective of class formation, this ideological alignment functioned as a mediating moment in the constitution of shopkeepers as a politically coherent group. Drawing on the CPE framework, their anti-communist stance was not a spontaneous expression of pre-given interests, but a historically contingent outcome of variation, selection, and retention of discourses that could effectively legitimate their social position. Thus, shopkeepers' anti-communism must be understood as a formative terrain upon which their class identity was produced—not merely a discourse they adopted but a field through which they reconstituted their relation to the state, capital, and the working class.

Conclusion

This study has revealed the critical role of anti-communist rhetoric in class identity construction by analyzing the discourses of Turkish shopkeeper organizations during the 1960-1980 period. The primary

[9]The relationship between fascism and the petty bourgeoisie has historically emerged during periods of crisis. In Germany (1920-33), Italy (1919-22), and Spain (1936-39), the petty bourgeoisie supported fascist movements under conditions of economic squeeze and political polarization (Lipset, 1960; Paxton, 2004). Theoretically, this has been explained as the petty bourgeoisie's structural contradictions leading to radical solutions during crisis conjunctures (Trotsky, 1933; Poulantzas, 1974). Turkey in the 1970s presents similar conditions: the ISI crisis, escalating violence, and weakening democratic institutions created the historical conjuncture that enabled shopkeepers' anti-communist mobilization.

empirical finding is that shopkeeper discourse underwent a three-phase transformation: evolving from an initial bureaucratic-administrative language, through a political alienation discourse that crystallized in the 1970s, to militant anti-communist rhetoric by the late 1970s. This transformation demonstrates how shopkeepers translated their economic grievances into threats to national security and social order. The study's main theoretical contribution, the concept of "bridging ideology," explains how anti-communism functioned as a flexible semantic resource that brought together groups from different class positions on a common political platform. The methodological framework combining Bob Jessop's Cultural Political Economy approach with Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis has enabled analysis of the mutual determination between economic structures and discursive practices, transcending both structural determinism and cultural essentialism.

The findings demonstrate that anti-communist hegemony in Turkey was not merely imposed "from above" by the state-capital alliance, but was also actively constructed "from below" through the participation of intermediate strata like shopkeepers. The parallel discursive transformation of shopkeeper organizations with the anti-communist publications of the capital class reveals how this hegemony was internalized and reproduced by different social segments. This finding makes an important contribution to the class formation literature by showing how the petit bourgeoisie in late-developing capitalist societies managed their contradictory position between labor and capital through anti-communist discourse. Moreover, the shopkeepers' transformation of economic grievances into cultural and political narratives in the 1970s offers insights into similar processes in contemporary populist movements, particularly how economically anxious middle classes mobilize against perceived threats by constructing narratives that merge material concerns with identity politics and claims about social order.

While this study has revealed important findings by focusing on organizational elite discourse, it has certain limitations. The focus on official publications of shopkeeper organizations leaves unanswered questions about how rank-and-file shopkeepers received, interpreted, or resisted these discourses. Similarly, how anti-communist discourse varied in cities with different economic structures has not been systematically examined. Future research could examine the relationship between organizational discourse and everyday practices through ethnographic methods, comparatively analyze regional and sectoral differences, and investigate how anti-communist discourse articulated with post-1980 neoliberal transformation. The theoretical framework and empirical findings presented by this study offer a productive starting point for understanding not only class formation processes in Turkey, but also the construction mechanisms of ideological hegemony in peripheral capitalist societies.

Peer Review Externally peer-reviewed.
Conflict of Interest The author has no conflict of interest to declare.
Grant Support The author declared that this study has received no financial support.
Acknowledgments I would like to express my profound gratitude to Prof. Dr. Cangül Örnek and Prof. Dr. Evren Hoşgör for their invaluable insights.

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