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Interaction of Nation, Religion and Class

Building Kurdish Consensus in Turkey

Cuma ÇİÇEK

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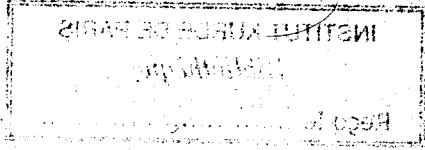
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To my daughter Delal

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Abbreviation

AK Party	Justice and Development Party
Azadi	The Kurdistan Islamic Initiative for Rights, Justice and Freedom
BDP	Peace and Democracy Party
BİGİAD	Bingöl Entrepreneur Businessmen's Association
CHP	Republican People's Party
DDKD	Revolutionary Democratic Culture Association
DEDEF	Federation of Dersim Associations
DFDG	Dicle-Fırat Dialog Group
DHF	Democratic Rights Federation
DİAYDER	Association of Religious Scholars Solidarity Association
DİGİAD	Diyarbakır Entrepreneur Businessmen's Association
DİSİAD	Diyarbakır Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association
DOGÜNSİFED	Federation of Southeast Industrialists' and Businessmen's Associations
DSP	Democratic Let Party
DTK	Democratic Society Congress
ECLSG	European Charter of Local Self-Government
ECRML	European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
ESOB	Unity of Tunceli Chambers of Tradesman and Artisans
EU	European Union
GAP	Southeastern Anatolia Project
GC	Gülen Community
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GÜNSİAD	Southest Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association
HAK-PAR	Right and Liberties Party

HDK	Democratic Congress of Peoples
HDP	Democratic Party Peoples
HÜDA-PAR	Free Cause Party
IKR	Iraqi Kurdistan Region
KADEP	Participatory Democracy Party
KCK	Kurdistan Communities Union
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
KH	Kurdish Hezbollah
KRG	Kurdistan Regional Government
Mazlum-Der	The Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People
MGH	National View Movement
MHP	Nationalist Action Party
MÜSİAD	Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association
MZC	Med-Zehra Community
MNP	National Order Party
NC	Nur Community
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ÖSP	Freedom and Socialism Party
Özgür-Der	Association for Free Though and Educational Rights
PAJK	Kurdistan Women Freedom Party
PDK	Kurdistan Democratic Party (in Iraq)
PDKT	Kurdistan Democratic Party of Turkish
PKK	Kurdistan Worker's Party
PSK	Kurdistan Socialist Party
PYD	Democratic Union Party

SP	Facility Party
Sarmaşık	Sarmaşık Association for Sutainable Development and Struggle to Poverty
ŞÜGİAD	Şanlıurfa Entrepreneur Businessmen's Association
TDŞK	Movement of Revolutionary Democrat Kurds
TEV-KURD	Kurdish National Unity Movement
TİP	Worker's Party of Turkey
TKP	Communist Party of Turkey
TSO	Chamber of Commerce and Industry
TUNSİAD	Tunceli Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association
TUSKON	Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists
TÜSİAD	Turkish Industry and Business Association
UN	United Nation
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Introduction

A - Problematic: A Kurdish Political Region?

In this PhD I defend the thesis that the Kurdish issues are historical and social constructs of the central state and of different Kurdish actors, which all have different ideological and political orientations, ideas, and interests, and which all have established formal and informal institutions. In this research, I analyze the question of the three main types of Kurdish groups -national, religious and economic- cooperate to establish a consensus on a common purpose: a political Kurdish region in Turkey. I problematize the capacity of these three groups to establish a common cognitive frame, shared interests and accepted rules to form a political Kurdish region. In other words, I ask whether three Kurdish groups can found a political region in the historically existing Kurdish cultural region in Turkey. Thus conflicts, negotiations, cooperation and consensus of these three Kurdish groups on the Kurdish issue are the main subjects of this research.

But how can we define the problems that the Kurds have in Turkey? Is there a Kurdish issue or are there many Kurdish issues? Does the notion of the "Kurdish issue" that most of the actors commonly use refer to a single question, or to diverse questions of different actors who have contentious ideological and political orientations, and normative and material interests?

Is the Kurdish issue a problem of identity as most of the actors argue? Indeed, the problem of identity is the most highlighted and indisputable characteristic of the Kurdish issue. According to most Kurdish groups, the root of the matter lies in the policies of denial and assimilation that the Turkish nation-state has imposed on the Kurds since the 1920s. However, we cannot talk about an uncontroversial Kurdish identity. The Kurdish identity has different meanings and the actors have varied perceptions on the identity issue. The Kurdish identity refers to both national identity and a religious identity, which have been both conflicted and complementary within the Kurdish context at different time periods.

This aspect poses yet another question: how do we take diversities within these national and religious identities into consideration? The Alevi and Sunni-Muslim Kurds, for example, have some shared points on the identity issue, but also often stand in remarkable conflict. On the other hand, the identity issue presents different problem for *Zazakî-* (also called Dimilî, Kirdkî and Kirmanckî) and *Kurmancî*-speaking Kurds.

Furthermore, the distinction between religious and national identity seems questionable in the Kurdish scene. To some extent, we can argue that *Kurmancî*-speaking Kurds are more pro-secular than the *Zazakî*-speaking Kurds. We observe that *Zaza* cultural-national identity is a resource of mobilization for Sunni-Muslim and Alevi religious groups vis-à-vis the secular Kurdish politics, as seen in cities such as Bingöl and Dersim, where religious identities are more powerful than national identity.

Is the Kurdish issue a problem of regional poverty and socioeconomic underdevelopment? According to nearly all the commonly cited social and economic indicators, the Kurdish region has long lagged behind the other areas of Turkey in terms of development[1]. This issue has been discussed at multiple levels by both the Turkish state and Kurdish political actors, which often point to drastically different causes and solutions. The Turkish state has claimed that the Kurdish issue is essentially and solely a problem of socioeconomic underdevelopment and feudalism since the 1920s[2]. At the opposite end of the spectrum, various Kurdish groups argue that poverty in the Kurdish region is not the cause for the issue, but rather an outcome of the decades-long, deliberated, permanent and systemic policies of the Turkish state.

There also remains a complicated and relatively uneasy relationship between the question of identity and those of socioeconomic underdevelopment. Indeed, socioeconomic underdevelopment of the Kurdish region has a diverse importance for different Kurdish groups, which have different political and ideological orientations, as well as varying normative and material interests. The discussion of this underdevelopment also remains one of the main instruments used by the Turkish state to frame[3] and confine the problems of the

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[1] Bülent Dinçer, Metin Özaslan, and Taner Kavasoğlu, *İllerin Ve Bölgelerin Sosyoekonomik Sınıflandırması Araştırması – 2003*, vol. 2671 (Ankara: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 2004); Mustafa Sönmez, "Regional Inequality: Aspects of Inequality in the East and the Southeast.," in *Socioeconomic Problems of the East and South-East Anatolia Regions of Turkey and Suggestions of Solution* (Diyarbakır: Union of the Municipals of the South-East Anatolia Region, 2008), 15–52; Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu TUİK, *Bölgesel Göstergeler: TRC2 Şanlıurfa Diyarbakır* (Ankara: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu (TUİK), 2010); Naime Zerrin Üstünışık, "Türkiye'deki İller Ve Bölgeler Bazında Sosyoekonomik Gelişmişlik Sıralaması Araştırması: Gri İlişkisel Analiz Yöntemi Uygulaması" (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi, 2007).

[2] For a brief summary of the main reports of the Turkish state on the Kurdish issue, see, Belma Akçura, *Devletin Kürt Filmi. 1925-2009 Kürt Raporları* (İstanbul: New Age Yayınları, 2009); İsmail Beşikçi, *Doğu Anadolunun Düzeni: Sosyo-ekonomik Ve Etnik Temeller* (Ankara: Yurt Kitap-Yayın, 1992); Saygı Öztürk, *İsmet Paşa'nın Kürt Raporu*, 5th ed. (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2008); Hüseyin Yayman, *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2011).

[3] Using the concept of "frame", I refer to the work of Erving Goffman on the frame analysis. Framing generally refers to the construction of a social phenomenon by different actors and institutions such as

Kurds within poverty and feudalism, and to challenge the other frames constructed by Kurdish groups.

Is the Kurdish issue a problem of territorial sovereignty beyond the identity and inter-regional socioeconomic inequalities as most of the Kurdish secular movements claim? The lands of the Kurds were for centuries on the periphery of the Ottoman and Safavid states, often serving as a buffer zone between these powerful empires[1]. Under Ottoman domination, the Kurds maintained semi-independent emirates until the middle of the 19th century[2], despite Ottoman's efforts to build a direct rule in the Kurdish region[3]. The elimination of Kurdish regional emirates and the establishment of the direct rule in the Kurdish region caused the first rupture in the relationship between the Kurds and the Ottoman-Turkish states. The regional Kurdish governments that had enjoyed relative autonomy in economic, political, administrative and military decisions since the 16th century were eliminated as a result of the territorial centralization policies taking place as part of the Ottoman modernization process[4].

These territorial centralization policies only became more severe after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 as a unitary nation-state. Analyzing this process, noted scholar İsmail Beşikçi – who wrote more than 30 books on Kurds and Kurdistan and has served 17 years in prison because of his writing – asserts that the Kurdish issue is a problem

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state, political or social movements, political leaders, mass media, and etc. that provide individuals various filters to understand and response the events. Goffman used the idea of frames to label "schemata of interpretation" that allow individuals or groups "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" events and occurrences, thus rendering meaning, organizing experiences, and guiding actions (Erving Goffman, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1974). For a more noteworthy work using the frame analysis to compare attitudes to European integration in three European states, see also, Juan Diez Medrano, *Framing Europe. Attitudes to European Integration in Germany, Spain and The United Kingdom. Princeton* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[1] Özoglu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, p. 67; van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, p. 135; O'Shea, *Trapped Between the Map and Reality: Geography and Perceptions of Kurdistan*, p. 9, 15.

[2] Hamit Bozarslan, *Conflit kurde: Le brasier oublié du Moyen-Orient* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2009), 25–35.

[3] Amir Hassanpour, *Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan, 1918-1985* (New York: Mellen Research University Press, 1992).

[4] Naci Kutlay, *Kürt Kimliğinin Oluşum Süreci* (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1997); Naci Kutlay, *21. Yüzyıla Girerken Kürtler* (İstanbul: Pêri Yayınları, 2002); van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 175–188; Abbas Vali, "Genealogies of the Kurds: Constructions of Nation and National Identity in Kurdish Historical Writing," in *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism*, ed. Abbas Vali (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2003), 58–105.

of inter-states colony[1]. On the contrary, Mesut Yeğen claims that the Kurdish issue is not a problem of colonialism, but is rather a construct of the post-imperial nation-state-building process[2].

In addition to the historical background of the issue, current political projects of the pro-Kurdish parties show that the political demands of the Kurds date back to the path of the Ottoman-Turkish centralization policies and demolition of the territorial sovereignty. The BDP, the leading Kurdish political party in Turkey advocates a regional autonomy that centers on collective cultural rights, political and administrative decentralization, and the sharing of state sovereignty through "democratic autonomy"[3], while the three other Kurdish political parties, HAK-PAR[4], KADEP[5] and ÖSP[6] demand a federal Kurdish region. Therefore, to some extend, the problem for some Kurdish groups is not "the Kurdish issue" but "the Kurdistan issue".

Finally, we can ask whether the Kurdish issue is a question of democracy and equal citizenship, as some of the Kurdish actors claim, or rather a problem of threats to the security of the unity and indivisible integrity of the Turkish state, and nation as Turkish state authorities and nationalists have asserted for nearly a century. We have witnessed a persistent state of emergency in the Kurdish region since the beginning of the 19th century. The Turkish state has largely ignored the cultural, political, socioeconomic and administrative aspects of the Kurdish issue and framed it as a problem of "national security"[7]. As a result, the Turkish

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[1] İsmail Beşikçi, *Devletlerarası Sömürge Kürdistan* (İstanbul: Yurt Kitap-Yayın, 1992).

[2] Mesut Yeğen, *Müstakbel Türk'ten Sözde Vatandaşa Cumhuriyet Ve Kürtler* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006), 18–9.

[3] Democratic Society Party, *Democratic Solution to the Kurdish Question* (Ankara: Democratic Society Party, 2008). The democratic autonomy project of the BDP is also accessible at following address: http://international.bdp.org.tr/documents/democratic-authonomy.html, retrieved September 5, 2012.

[4] The program of the HAK-PAR is accessible at following address: http://www.hakpar.org.tr/index.php?lang=TR&page=articles&is=showSubCat&id=8, date of access: September 5, 2012.

[5] The program of the KADEP is accessible at following address: http://www.kadep.org.tr/sayfa.asp?sayfaid=1549, date of access: October 15, 2012.

[6] The program of the ÖSP is accessible at following address: http://osp.org.tr/tr/program-ve-tuezuek/program.html?showall=1&limitstart=, date of access: May 18, 2013.

[7] Rıdvan Akar and Can Dündar, *Ecevit Ve Gizli Arşivi*, 2nd ed. (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2008); Mehmet Bayrak, *Kürtlere Vurulan Kelepçe Şark Islahat Planı* (Ankara: Öz-Ge Yayınları, 2009); Yayman, *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası*; Akçura, *Devletin Kürt Filmi. 1925-2009 Kürt Raporları*; Yeğen, *Müstakbel Türk'ten Sözde Vatandaşa Cumhuriyet Ve Kürtler*; Beşikçi, *Doğu Anadolunun Düzeni: Sosyo-ekonomik Ve Etnik Temeller*; Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish*

state has persistently dealt with the Kurdish issue using security-based measures by establishing state's institutions that are specific to the Kurdish region for the last century. Consequently, it is evident that the concepts such as grievance, honor, self-respect, dignity and justice constitute a fundamental feature of the different Kurdish groups' discourse regarding the issue. We can assert that the Kurdish issue is not just a problem of cultural-national identity, regional poverty and territorial sovereignty, but also a question of whether and how democracy secures honor, self-respect and justice for the all citizens.

In the following sections, the theoretical frame, the methodology and the plan of the thesis will be presented.

B - Theoretical Frame

Given the fact that actors and the issues are historical social constructs, both micro and macro sociological approaches must be articulated to analyze the construction process of a social fact[1]. Microsociology interrogates the interaction of the actors and their ideas, interests and institutions, while the macrosociology centers on the system of action of actors; in other words, the structured context that privileges some actors and interests while demobilizing others.

Focusing principally on the micro levels, I articulate both micro and macro levels as they relate to diverse Kurdish issues and current conflicts, including the cooperation and negotiations of different Kurdish groups that themselves have both complementary and adverse ideas, interests and institutions. Following the theory of constructivism, I rely on the works of the sociology of collective action in general and the model of the "Three I" (ideas, interests and institutions) in particular to analyze the interaction of three Kurdish groups at the micro level. The model of the "Three I" proposes to take ideas, interests and institutions as three elements in analyzing public policy changes[2]. Although most works based on the "Three I" center on the public policy change, it is also applicable to the study of the changes of policy and politics at the local, regional, national, supranational and international levels.

Question (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998); M. Bülent Varlık, *Umumi Müfettiiler Toplantı Tutanakları, 1936* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2010); Cemil Koçak, *Umûmî Müfettişlikler (1927-1952)*, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010).

[1] Michel Crozier and Erhard Friedberg, *L'ateur Et Le Système* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1977), p. 293–7.

[2] Yves Surel, "Trois I," in *Dictionaire des politiques publiques*, ed. Laurie Boussaguet, Sophie Jacquot, and Pauline Ravinet (Paris: Presse de Sciences Po, 2010), 650.

As to the system of action or the structured context of three Kurdish groups, there essentially exist five dynamics that must be included in the theoretical frame. These are the history, the central state, the geopolitics of the Kurdish issue, the Europeanization process, and globalization. These dynamics function both as constraints and resources for the three Kurdish groups in different time periods. First of all, following the theories of historical and constructivist institutionalisms, and work on the "politics of memory", we can argue that history matters for collective action for two reasons. On the one hand, social facts and actors are historically constructed. That means that the present is framed and limited by the formal and informal institutions[1] constructed in the past. On the other hand, history itself is a social construct. As contentious constructions of the past, history itself is a resource of mobilization for asymmetrically structured actors, which have competing interests and struggle against each other in the present.

Second, the central state interferes with the interaction of Kurdish groups thanks to its infrastructural and despotic powers[2]. The state's historically constructed military, socioeconomic, and ideological power has been substantially restructured since the AK Party came into power. This transformation process has significantly affected the interactions of the three Kurdish groups. However, while AK Party shares the exclusive and monolithic Turkish nationalism of Kemalism, its pro-Islamist political and ideological identity and neo-liberal nature have been utilized both as a constructive and destructive resource by Kurdish national, religious and economic groups in different ways and at different periods in time.

Given that the Kurdish issue is a trans-national/trans-boundary[3] and international[4] problem, I thirdly must underline the geopolitics of the Kurdish issue as one of the main constraints/resources on collective action of the Kurds in Turkey. In this matter, the foundation of the IKR as a quasi-state, and increasing multi-level cooperation in economic, social, cultural and political fields among different public/political, associative and private Kurdish and Turkish actors has been a determining dynamic that frames and constructs different actors and their different Kurdish issues since 2003.

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[1] Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C. R. Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," *Political Studies* 44, no. 5 (1996): 936–957.

[2] Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," in *State/Space: A Reader*, ed. Neil Brenner et al. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), 53–64.

[3] Bozarslan, *Conflit kurde: Le brasier oublié du Moyen-Orient*.

[4] Beşikçi, *Devletlerarası Sömürge Kürdistan*.

Turkey's accession process to the EU must be added to the theoretical frame as the fourth aspect affecting the three Kurdish groups. Following interactive approaches defining Europeanization as "all institutional, strategic and normative adjustment processes induced by European integration"[1], I bring the Europeanization process into the context of the theoretical frame in order to analyze the construction and deconstruction of the ideas, interests and institutions within the Kurdish sphere between 1999 and 2013. Along this line, I must highlight different forms of "usage of Europeanization"[2] that center on how domestic actors use the European integration process as a constructive or destructive constraint/resource to re-shape the domestic area[3].

Finally, I will note the spread of globalization process, which has had multiple effects on most of the actors and processes including the central state, the geopolitics of the Kurdish issue, and the Europeanization process. As globalization is a subject of broad debate, in this research I will confine the issue to the question of scale of the collective action of Kurdish groups. Discussing theories on the re-scaling of state power[4], multi-level governance[5] and public policy transfer[6], I emphasize that the ideas, interests and institutions of the three Kurdish groups are shaped and reshaped in a new multi-scale and multi-dimensional system of action within the process of globalization.

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[1] Bruno Palier and Yves Surel, "Analyser L'européanisation Des Politiques Publiques," in *L'Europe En Action. L'européanisation Dans Une Perspective Comparée*, ed. Bruno Palier and Yves Surel, Logiques Politiques (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2007), 39.

[2] Sophie Jacquot and Cornelia Woll, *Les Usages de l'Europe. Acteurs et Transformations Européennes*, Logiques Politiques (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004).

[3] Kenneth Dyson and Klaus H. Goetz, "Living with Europe: Power, Constraint and Contestation," in *Living with Europe: Germany, Europe, and the Politics of Constraint*, ed. Kenneth Dyson and Klaus H. Goetz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 5.

[4] Neil Brenner et al., eds., *State/Space: A Reader* (Malden: Blackwell, 2003); Bob Jessop, "The Future of the State in an Era of Globalization," *International Politics and Society* 2003, no. 3 (2003): 30–46; Bob Jessop, *The Future of the Capitalist State* (Cambridge: Polity Press. 2002); Neil Brenner, "Beyond State-centrism? Space, Territoriality, and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies," *Theory and Society* 28, no. 1 (1999): 39–78; Neil Brenner, "Glocalization' as a State Spatial Strategy," in *Remaking the Global Economy. Economic-Geographical Perspectives*, ed. Jamie Pect and Henry Wai-Chung Yeung (London: SAGE Publications, 2003), 197–215.

[5] Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, "Unraveling the Central State, But How? Types of the Multi Level Governance," *Institute for Advanced Studies Political Science Series* 87 (2003): 1–27.

[6] Sabine Saurugger, *Théorie et Concepts de L'intégration Européenne* (Paris: Presse de Sciences Po, 2009); David P. Dolowitz and David Marsh, "Learning from Abroad: The Role of Policy Transfer in Contemporary Policy-Making," *Governance* 13, no. 1 (2000): 5–23; Palier and Surel, "Analyser L'européanisation Des Politiques Publiques"; François Bafoil, "Transfert Institutionnel et Européanisation. Une Comparaison Des Cas Est-allemand et Est-européens," *Revue Internationale de Politique Comparée* 13, no. 2 (2006): 213–238.

I must also note that the research covers the period between 1999 and 2013. The year of 1999 was a turning point for the Kurds in Turkey for three reasons. In the first place, the capture of A. Öcalan, the founding leader and supremo of the PKK, on February 15, 1999, brought immense changes to the ideological, political, organizational, institutional and strategic transformation of the leading Kurdish movement. In the second place, this transformation led to the enlargement of the Kurdish political sphere, which was advanced by the success of the leading pro-Kurdish party in the local election held on April 18, 1999. Finally, Turkey was recognized as a candidate state for EU accession at the Helsinki Summit of the European Council held on December 10-11, 1999.

C - Methodology

The principal method used in my research is the qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews. I conducted 132 interviews with Kurdish political, economic, religious and cultural-intellectual elites in the seven cities of the Kurdish Region and two cities in the western part of Turkey between November 2011 and October 2012. It is important to note that there exist different forms of knowledge at diverse levels, and the knowledge that elites produce and circulate is not the only resource available in analyzing the conflicts, cooperation, negotiations and consensus in the Kurdish region. Knowledge and cultural critique can, for instance, also be produced by relying on the words and experiences of ordinary people.

However, I confined myself with a research focusing on the elites for three basic reasons. First, it is vital to note that the elite has different meanings in accordance with the time and space. The elites that I mention are representatives of different groups that all have different ideas, interests and institutions. It is also important to note that the "ordinary people" and the "elite people" are analytical categories; and it is not possible to make a clear distinction between two groups on the ground. The elites also do not constitute an isolated group from the society, but rather they have interactive relations with different social groups at multiple levels. Therefore, they can be considered a representative sample of the many factions that exist within the Kurdish region. Second, these elites are the key actors in generating public political discourse. They have personal and institutional resources and networks to discuss and address subjects regarding different aspects of the Kurdish issue(s) in the public sphere. Lastly, from an operational standpoint it was more efficient to interview the

elites rather than ordinary people on the street in order to analyze the conflicts, negotiations and cooperation between different Kurdish groups.

The interviews took an average of 1.5 hours, with the shortest taking 30 minutes and the longest taking three hours and 10 minutes. Although my research took place in nine cities, most of the interviews were conducted in the three cities of the Kurdish Region; namely, Diyarbakır, Bingöl and Dersim[1]. As well as these, I conducted several complementary interviews in Batman, Mardin, Şanlıurfa, and Bitlis provinces of the Kurdish region. Moreover, I met with several important political elites in Ankara, the capital, and cultural, intellectual and religious elites in İstanbul, the cultural and economic center of Turkey (See Map 1).

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[1] The official name of Dersim is Tunceli. The old name of the province was changed to Tunceli on January 4, 1936 with the "Law on Administration of the Tunceli Province" (*Tunceli Vilayetinin İdaresi Hakkında Kanun*), no. 2884 of 25 December 1935. However, in this research I use Dersim for two reasons. First, using Dersim, I refer to a larger area than Tunceli, which includes some border districts of Sivas, Erzincan, Erzurum, Bingöl and Muş provinces that were the historical and cultural geography of most of the Alevi Kurds. Second, most of the Kurds called the city as Dersim and this name has more been known across the country given recent debates on the "Dersim massacre" of 1937-8 that resulted in the deaths of more than 10,000 people and the forced internal displacement of one-third of the total population of the region.

Map 1: Kurdish political region and places of interviews

LEGEND

The Boundary of Kurdish Political Region

Diyarbakır, Tunceli, Bingöl
Main research area

Supplementary research area where the pro-Kurdish party is the first party according to the last local election held on March 29, 2009.

Supplementary research area where the pro-Kurdish party is the second party according to the last local election held on March 29, 2009.

Ankara: The Capital
Istanbul: The Economic and Cultural Capital

Diyarbakir was chosen as the main research area for the basic reason that it is a vital center for most of the Kurdish groups. First of all, it is the *de facto* capital of the Kurdish region. This identity of the city has been informally constructed as a political and cultural space rather than a socioeconomic and administrative one since the 1980s. However, particularly since the 1990s, the city has become a true cultural, economic and politico-administrative regional center for Turkey's Kurds. The city is also the most important political center for the national movements including the leading Kurdish movement, as well as for Kurdish Sunni Muslims; and constitutes an important regional economic center for the Kurdish economic elites.

Noting the internal diversity and somewhat controversial issues, I can clearly and definitively state that Diyarbakir is the political center of the Kurdish national groups, while the Sunni-Muslim identity is the principal dynamic that defines the political sphere in Bingöl, and the Alevi identity dominates the cultural and political sphere of Dersim. For instance, if we look results of the general election for a long period, we will see that the national, the Sunni-Muslim and the Alevi identities are the principal elements in Diyarbakir, Bingöl, and Dersim, respectively. Along these lines, according to the results of the last general election held on June 12, 2011, the pro-Kurdish party BDP won in Diyarbakir, the AK Party won in Bingöl and the CHP won in Dersim.

As well as these three cities, I conducted several interviews in four other Kurdish cities in order to enrich field research data. Of the 10 other cities[1] where pro-Kurdish party BDP has majority support, I chose Batman and Mardin for my research, while I chose Şanlıurfa and Bitlis from the four cities[2] where the AK Party won the 2011 general election. Although the Kurdish region historically and culturally denotes a larger area, I use the "Kurdish Region" in this thesis to refer to fifteen cities where the pro-Kurdish cultural and political demands are one of the principal dynamics determining the socio-political sphere and as well as economic life (See Map 2 and Map 3).

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[1] These are Agri, Batman, Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Mardin, Siirt, Sirnak, Van and Igdir.

[2] These are Bingol, Kars, Sanliurfa and Bitlis. In Dersim, it is not the AK Party but the CHP that won the majority of support and the BDP is the second party.

Map 2: Kurdish cultural and political regions

Administrative Units of Contemporary Kurdistan

Tamim   Province
• Kirkuk   Provincial capital
         International borders
         Areas where majority of the population
         is Kurdish

Remarks: When the name of a province and its capital are the same, only one is noted.

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Border of Kurdish Political Region

Map 3: Kurdish political region in Turkey

LEGEND

Provinces where the pro-Kurdish party is the first party according to the last local election held on March 29, 2009

Provinces where the pro-Kurdish party is the second party according to the last local election held on March 29, 2009.

The Kurdish Political Region
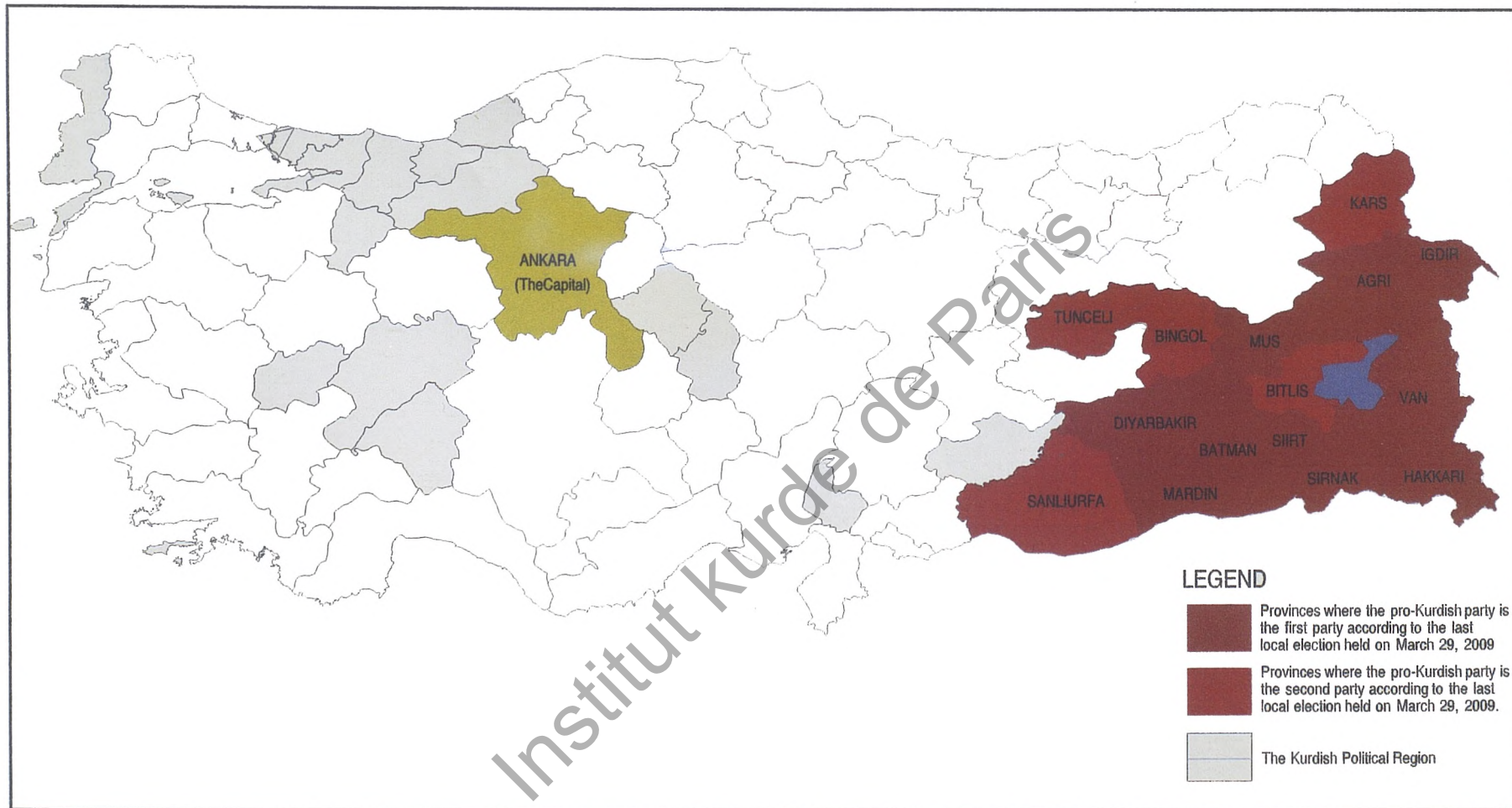
In addition to the Kurdish cities, I had to conduct five interviews in Ankara with some critical political actors: three deputies of the BDP, including S. Demirtaş, co-president of the party and two vice presidents of the AK Party. I also conducted five critical interviews with cultural and religious elites who live in Istanbul, but have constant interactions with and influence on the Kurdish region (See Table 1).

Table 1: Place and categories of interviews

Cities	Political Elites	Religious Elites	Economic Elites	Cultural and Intellectual Elites	Total
Diyarbakır	17	14	19	23	73
Bingöl	4	9	4	2	19
Dersim	5	0	4	3	12
Batman	3	1	1	0	5
Mardin	2	0	1	2	5
Şanlıurfa	2	1	2	0	5
Bitlis	2	0	0	1	3
Ankara	5	0	0	0	5
İstanbul	0	1	0	4	5
Total	40	26	31	35	132

It is important to note that alongside the ten elites who live in Ankara and Istanbul, in total, 52 elites (2 in Bingöl, 5 in Ankara, 5 in İstanbul and 40 in Diyarbakır) that I conduct interviews with have a regional relation and influence beyond the city in which they live (See Table 2).

Table 2: Interviewers who have a regional influence

Category	Interview
Political Elites	17
Religious Elites	9
Economic Elites	6
Cultural and Intellectual Elites	20
Total	52

As to the identities of the elites, the interviews include 35 cultural and intellectual elites, 31 economic elites, 40 political elites and 26 religious elites. The cultural and intellectual elites are generally academics, intellectuals, journalists, or presidents or directors of associations or institutions working on different aspects of Kurdish cultural life. The political elites are generally mayors, presidents or managers of political parties, including the BDP, the AK Party and the CHP, as well as Kurdish political platforms, initiatives and movements. The religious elite, on the other hand, includes presidents or managers of

religious associations, of informal communities (*cemaat*), religious opinion leaders, and editors-in-chief of religious journals or newspapers. Finally, the economic elite covers the businessmen, presidents or directors of the provincial chambers of trade and commerce, provincial chambers of tradesmen and artisans, and of associations or foundations working on economic issues.

Table 3: Categories of interviews according to the sex

Cities	Political Elites	Religious Elites	Economic Elites	Cultural and Intellectual Elites	Total
Woman	4	0	0	2	6
Man	36	26	31	33	126
Total	40	26	31	35	132

The gender issue must be highlighted regarding the identity of the economics, religious, political and cultural-intellectual elites that I interviewed. Among the 132 elite, I conducted just six interviews with women, constituting 4.5% of the total. Four of them are political elites, and two of them are cultural-intellectual elites, while the entire religious and economic elites are men (see Table 3). It is important to underline that all the women are members of or activists for the leading Kurdish movement. It therefore appears that men dominate the elite groups in the Kurdish scene, with women's representation being very limited. The political and cultural-intellectual spaces that the leading Kurdish movement has been creating for decades constitute the principal arenas in which female elite emerge and represent themselves (for a more detailed discussion on this issue, see Chapters 2 and 3).

In order to understand the interests, expectations, cooperation and conflicts among and between the Kurdish community and groups, I have first questioned the position of each participant vis-à-vis the Kurdish issue during the interviews. In this respect, I asked them to define the issue and to elaborate upon its historical roots. Additionally, I asked them to assess the reform process since 2002, which was essentially initiated by the AK Party, to evaluate the "democratic autonomy" being proposed by the leading Kurdish groups BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK, and to elaborate on their own proposals for the settlement of the issue.

Second, I have focused on the cooperation of actors at local, regional, national and international levels. This required me to ask several questions about the effects of Turkey's accession process to the EU and the geopolitics of the Kurdish Issue (IKR and Syria). I also posed questions with regard to the interests, ideas, and institutions of different Kurdish groups and the Turkish government.

Third, I asked questions relating to the obstacles standing in the way of the relationship between the national, religious (both Sunni-Muslim and Alevi) and economic groups. The questions in this part mainly dealt with the intervention of the central state in these relations.

The fourth part pertained to the negotiation, achieved consensus, disagreements and frictions, and permanent or temporary mechanisms of dialogue and negotiation among the Kurdish groups. Finally, I asked the participants to evaluate what they have done, their own efforts, the efforts of other groups and what they will do to move cooperation forward.

In addition to the in-depth interviews, I participated in several workshops and symposiums, a city festival and a congress as an observer. These were the "Workshop on the Democratic Autonomy" and the "Symposium on the Economy in the Democratic Autonomy" both organized by the DTK on May 2012, and the "Second Symposium on Local Government", organized by the BDP on June 2012. Moreover, I observed the 12th Dersim Cultural Festival, organized by the Dersim Municipality and the Federation of Dersim Associations and held on July 26-29, 2012. During the festival, I observed three political panels and recorded several political speeches presenting the main political and cultural groups' approaches on the Alevi community and the Kurdish issue. Finally, I participated as an observer in the Second Ordinary Congress of the BDP, held on October 15, 2012 in Ankara.

I must also add that I have followed the Kurdish issue and the leading Kurdish parties since 1997 at different levels. In 1997-2004, I was a political activist while at university studying undergraduate degree. Between 2004 and 2006, I worked as a director in the Istanbul Kurdish Institute that works principally on the Kurdish language. During that period, I was also a member of the High Assembly of a pro-Kurdish party. Finally, I worked in the Diyarbakir Metropolitan Municipality between 2006 and 2009. During my last year in that position, I worked in the Foreign Relations Office as an advisor to the mayor of the city, who is one of the political leaders of the leading pro-Kurdish movement and has a cross-border influence on the Kurds and Kurdish political movements and institutions. These 12 years of experience have provided me with an immense experiential and theoretical knowledge on the Kurdish issue, particularly of different Kurdish groups and their conflicts, cooperation, and negotiations.

D - *Outline of Thesis*

This thesis is composed of three parts. The first part includes the theoretical framework, the basic hypotheses and a description of the three Kurdish blocs. In the first chapter, the main theoretical framework and the basic hypotheses are presented. In line with the theory of constructivism and the sociology of collective action, in this chapter I discuss the constructivist institutionalism and the "Three I" model to construct a theoretical frame to analyze the ideas, interests and institutions of different actors in an interactive manner. Given the research question, theories and approaches on the influence of the historical background and the four constraints/resources outlined briefly above (the central state, the geopolitics of the Kurdish issue, Europeanization, and globalization) are also articulated in this theoretical frame. After the discussion on the main theoretical frame, the chapter is completed with basic hypotheses on the Kurdish region, the Kurdish issue(s), conflicts, negotiations, and consensus.

In the second chapter, I present three Kurdish blocs, which are the main actors of the Kurdish scene in Turkey in a historical perspective. These are national groups, religious (both Sunni-Muslim and Alevi) groups and economic elites. After presenting a theoretical framework on collective identities, I discuss the construction process of the distinctive qualities of the three Kurdish blocs and their interactions. By doing this, I expose the historical background of the ongoing conflicts, cooperation, negotiations and consensus among three Kurdish blocs on the Kurdish issue. In other words, I elaborate on the distinctive qualities of each Kurdish bloc and the historically constructed context in which they are being constructed and acting.

The second part of thesis focuses on the conflicts and the negotiations between and among the three Kurdish groups. I discuss in greater depth the main conflicts in the next three chapters, and then complet this part with a chapter on the negotiations.

In the third chapter, I argue that there exists an ideological and existential conflict both between the national and religious groups, and between the Sunni-Muslim and Alevi groups. Religion and the nation are the constructive and dominant identities for the religious and national groups, respectively, and cause each group to define the Kurdish issue in a different way. However, there is no clear distinction between national and religious identities. While religious groups prioritize Islam and Alevism as the main frames and filters of interpretation, they also mobilize the *Zaza* ethnic identity as a source to distinguish themselves from the national Kurdish groups, in particular the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK, which mostly mobilize the

Kurmancî speaking Kurds, while not excluding *Zaza* speaking Kurds. In this respect, it is also important to underline the Turkish state's intervention into the construction of the Alevi and Zaza identities as distinctive alternative identities to the Kurdish national identity. These ideational differences between the religious and national groups cause several conflicts around issues such as secularism, gender, and religious freedoms. I complete this chapter with a discussion on the borders of both religious and national identities. I argue that collective identities are not one-dimensional but multi-dimensional, and include national and religious dynamics, but at the same time do not ignore the existence of a variable hierarchy between these identities. Moreover, the Kurdish, the Sunni-Muslim and Alevi identities must be analyzed not as "identities for granted" or "substantial things-in-the-world", but rather as relational political constructs of organizational entrepreneurs.

In the fourth chapter, I focus on the class conflict between the national groups and economic elites. Is the leading Kurdish movement a national movement or a class movement based on the lower and middle classes, or both? What are the effects of the socialist legacy of the Kurdish movement on the present conflict and cooperation with the Kurdish economic elite? Does the movement become a more nationalist one? What does the Democratic Autonomy Project that the Kurdish movement advocates propose to the economic elite? In this chapter, while I discuss these questions, I also interrogate the limits of the economic elite to participate in the multi-level mobilization for a political Kurdish region. At this point, the center-periphery relationship between the Kurdish region and the western part of the country, the underdevelopment of the Kurdish region and Kurdish economic elites' dependence on Ankara constitute the main issue of discussion.

After the discussion on the identity and class conflicts between the Kurdish groups, I use the fifth chapter to pose questions on local and regional decentralization, autonomy and federation, and the conflict or the disagreement of the Kurdish actors on a political Kurdish region. The identity policies, political and administrative decentralization and different proposals of three Kurdish groups emphasizing the economic, cultural, political and administrative aspects, constitute the general frame of this chapter. It seems that the main conflict doesn't lie in the type of regionalization, but with issues of who will govern the Kurdish region, and what the nature of the Kurdish region will be: secularist, religious, socialist or capitalist? The main question is whether different Kurdish actors can find a midcourse?

The sixth chapter focuses on the negotiation among the Kurdish groups. Whilst the national groups have a constant relation with the economic elites that allows for direct negotiation, they have limited relations with some pro-Islamist groups and indirect relations with others (in particular with the KH). It is evident that the intervention of the neo-liberal and pro-Islamist AK Party government has been playing a vital role in the negotiation of three Kurdish blocs by strengthening or weakening the loyalties of the religious (both Sunni-Muslim and Alevi) groups and economic elites since 2002, and particularly since 2009. Besides providing a new cognitive and normative frame and presenting a politico-administrative model for building the national unity between different groups with diverse ideas, interests and institutions, the IKR has motivated three Kurdish groups to negotiate with each other in order to produce common interests and rules. Despite this remarkable progress, I should note that the negotiation mechanisms between Kurdish groups are very limited. Ideational differences, controversial interests and different and asymmetrical institutional networks (in particular the constant armed conflict) among the three groups prevent them from building a general umbrella organization, despite some remarkable efforts. At this point, it is crucial to note the position of the leading Kurdish movement, BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK, which is not sufficiently inclusive of the other groups. The movement has so far yielded a very limited sphere for others to reproduce their ideas and values, and to represent their distinctive interests.

The last part of this thesis, comprising a comprehensive chapter, is on the system of action, which comprises five macro dynamics structuring the ideas, interests and the institutions of three Kurdish groups.

First, the Kurdish collective action occurs in a historically constructed context. This context largely confines and frames the ongoing conflicts, negotiation, and cooperation among the Kurdish groups. Besides, the Kurdish groups use history to justify their ideas and interests in the present – that is to say they produce various history as different versions of the past to reinforce their current political position.

Second, the remarkable changes since 2002 under the neo-liberal and pro-Islamist AK Party government has been the first vital dynamic, which brings together the ideas and the interests of the three Kurdish groups since 2009, though it had a negative effect in the first years.

Third, the geopolitical changes of the Kurdish issue (i.e. the establishment of the IKR), become the most constructive dynamics by providing a realized politico-administrative model and a model for a consensus-building process between different Kurdish groups with diverse political and ideological orientations. This first wave of the geopolitical changes of the Kurdish issue continues with the Syrian regime crisis and the establishment of a new *de facto* Kurdish autonomous region in the northern part of the country in the summer of 2011.

Fourth, it is essential to note the different usages of the process of Europeanization by the different Kurdish actors between 1999 and 2004. Despite the limits and the failure of the Europeanization process in the Kurdish scene since 2005, it contributed to the consensus-building process by enlarging the political sphere and building some mechanism of negotiations for the Kurdish groups.

Finally, the globalization process provides Kurdish actors with multi-scaled interactions and a multi-level and multi-dimensional learning process that restructures their interests by changing ideas and institutions. However, it is crucial to note that the multiplication of the scales does not mean a transfer of ideas, norms, values, standards and the like. Rather, the historically and socially constructed actors filter and reproduce them in accordance with their specific space and time.

Following the previous discussion on the actors, their conflicts and negotiation, the system of action, in the conclusion, I present the main theoretical and empirical inferences. The theoretical inferences cover the issues of the collective identities and groups, the state, the "Three I" model, path dependency, the geopolitics of the Kurdish issue, and Europeanization. The empirical inferences comprise the conflicts and negociations, the system of action composed by the five structuring dynamics and the consensus at the levels of ideas, interests and institutions.

First Part: Theoretical Framework, Basic Hypotheses and Actors

I - Chapter 1 Theoretical Framework and Basic Hypotheses

Introduction

In this research, I analyze how Kurdish national, religious and economic groups, the main three groups, cooperate to establish a consensus on a common purpose: a Kurdish political region. I problematize the capacity of the three groups to produce a common cognitive frame, shared interests and accepted rules to establish a political region in Turkey. In other words, I ask whether three Kurdish groups can found a political region in the historically existing Kurdish cultural region in Turkey. Therefore, conflicts, negotiations, cooperation and consensuses of these three Kurdish groups are the main subjects of this research.

As the actors and issues are historical and social constructs, the micro- and macro-sociological approaches must be articulated to analyze the construction process of a social fact. The microsociology interrogates the interaction of the actors, their ideas, interests and institutions, while the macrosociology centers on the system of action of actors; in other words, the structured context that privileges some actors and interests while demobilizing others[1]. Therefore, in order to understand diverse Kurdish issues and the current conflicts, as well as the cooperation and negotiation of different Kurdish groups, we need to look at two interrelated levels: the first is the interaction of the diverse Kurdish actors who have complementary or controversial ideas, interests and institutions; the second is the system of action of the Kurdish actors, who are embedded in a historically constructed context. This context is being continuously restructured and reshaped by the macrodynamic functioning as both constraints and resources for the Kurdish groups.

Given the fact that the present situation – which includes actors, conflicts and alternative resolutions – is framed and limited by formal and informal institutions[2], I add the historically constructed context of different Kurdish issues to the theoretical framework in which three Kurdish blocs exist and interact. The Kurdish issues are historical and social constructs of interactions between the central state and a number of Kurdish actors, which all

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[1] Michel Crozier and Erhard Friedberg, *L'ateur Et Le Système* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1977), p. 293–7.

[2] Hall and Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms."

have different ideological and political orientations, ideas, interests, and formal and informal institutions. It is important to underline that all the actors, including Kurdish ones and the central state, are also historical and social constructs.

However, there is no *total* and *unique* image of this historical construct; asymmetrically structured groups produce and mobilize history to construct different versions of the past for the *present* power struggle. I therefore look into the history of the Kurdish region according to five main issues that different Kurdish actors presently utilize as fundamental historical references of the current problems of the Kurds. These issues are as follows: (1) the perceived division of Kurdistan between four states (Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey); (2) the dissolution of local Kurdish sovereignties under Ottoman-Turkish centralization policies; (3) Turkification policies and the forced assimilation of Kurds to ideals of "Turkishness"; (4) regional disparities and socioeconomic underdevelopment of the Kurdish region, and (5) the persistent state of emergency in the Kurdish region.

In addition to the history, there are basically four main constraints/resources, which influence different Kurdish actors in different ways at ideas, interests and institutions levels: The central state is unquestionably the first of these, as it interferes with the interaction of the Kurdish groups thanks to its infrastructural and despotic powers[1]. Given the fact that the Kurdish issue is a transnational and international problem, the geopolitical dynamic must be taken into consideration as a second significant constraint/resource. In particular, the foundation of the IKR as a quasi-state, and the relationship between the IKR and Turkey at local-regional and central levels in economic, social, cultural and political fields by the public/political, associative and private actors, has been a determining dynamic that has framed and constructed Kurdish issues in Turkey since 2003. Additionally, the establishment of a *de facto* autonomous Kurdish region in the north of Syria since the summer of 2011 can be seen a second wave of the geopolitical effects on the Kurdish issue in Turkey. The third aspect is the Europeanization process of Turkey. Turkey's accession process to the EU is obviously a noteworthy dynamic that must be considered in order to analyze the transformation of Turkey in general, as well as the ideas, interests and institutions of the different Kurdish groups in particular. Last, I must note the globalization process, which has

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[1] Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," 2003. Accroding to Mann, the state's despotic power signifies "the range of actions which the elite is empowered to undertake without routine, institutionalized negotiation with civil society groups", while its infrastructural power indicates "the capacity of the state to actually penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm.", Ibid, p. 54.

had multiple effects on most of the actors and processes involved, including central state, the geopolitics of the Kurdish issue, and Europeanization. As the globalization is a subject of broad debate, in this research, I confine the issue with the question of scale of the collective action of different Kurdish groups. In this matter, I must particularly note the global diffusion of the ideas thanks to the developing information technologies and global/transnational mobilizations of the Kurdish groups by the transportation facilities.

Finally, as to the temporality, the research covers the period between 1999 and 2013. The year of 1999 is a turning point for the Kurdish issue in Turkey for three reasons. First, the capture of A. Öcalan has caused a remarkable transformation of the leading Kurdish movement. Second, after two-decade long armed conflict, for the first time, the pro-Kurdish party gained a significant power in the politico-administrative field after the success in the local election held on April 18, 1999. This new experience in the local governments has initiated to build new pro-Kurdish civil society networks in economic, social, cultural and political fields at local, regional, national and also international levels since 1999. Finally, Turkey was recognized as a candidate state destined to join the EU at the Helsinki Summit when the European Council met on December 10-11, 1999.

The general theoretical framework of the research is presented in the following Schema 01. The central state, the geopolitics of the Kurdish issue, the Europeanization process, and globalization function both as constraints and resources in a different manner for asymmetrically structured Kurdish groups situated in the landscape of power. They mobilize these dynamics to construct and reconstruct their ideas, interests and institutions. It is also theoretically important to note that each constraint/resource has had an effect on each Kurdish group over different time periods. In other words, each constraint/resource have a different temporality for each Kurdish group. The actors, the historically constructed context, four constraints, temporality of the research, the Three I model (ideas, interests, and institutions) and the main theses are discussed in a more detailed way in the next sections.
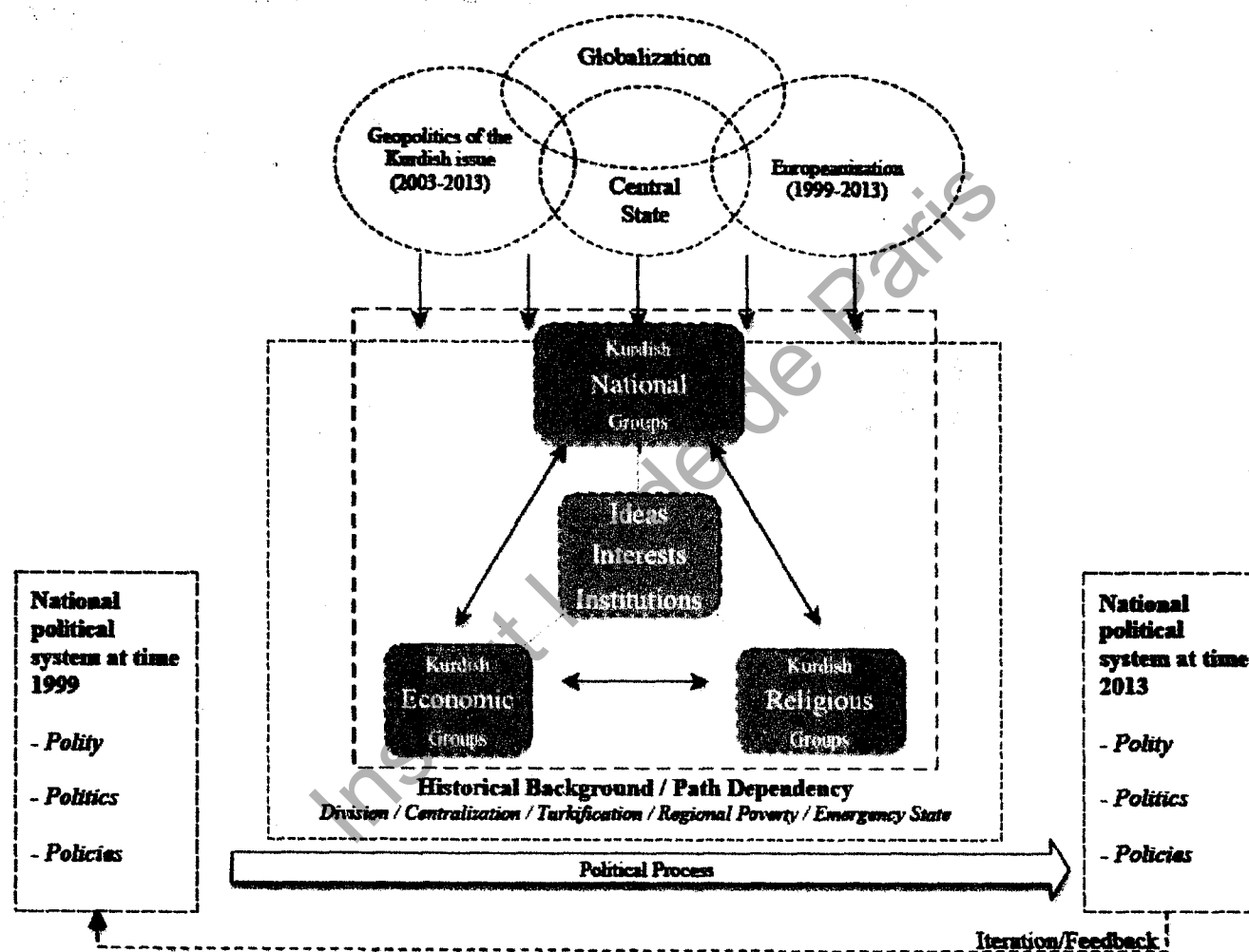
Schema 01: Theoretical Model for Interaction of Nation Religion and Class in the Kurdish Region of Turkey

A - Three Kurdish blocs

I classify the main Kurdish groups in the Kurdish region within basic blocs: the national bloc, the religious bloc and the economic bloc. It is crucial to emphasize that I use the national, economic the religious concepts, as ideal types in the Weberian sense[1] to analyze the ongoing collective action in the Kurdish region. In reality, one cannot make a clear distinction among the collective identities, i.e., among the economic, religious and national ones.

1) The Kurdish national bloc

For the purposes of this research, the Kurdish national bloc comprises the secular groups that have identified the Kurdish national identity as a principal element in constructing and resolving the Kurdish issue. The bloc is composed of secular Kurdish political groups, of which the BDP-DTK[2]/PKK-KCK is considered the leader, representing a wide socio-political mobilization in economic, social, political and cultural domains. The Kurdish national bloc contains two other pro-Kurdish parties, KADEP and HAK-PAR, and other secular political groups such as the newly founded pro-Kurdish party ÖSP, and TEVKURD.

These groups advocate *collective cultural rights* for the Kurds, such as the ability to receive education in their Kurdish mother tongue and the availability of public services their native language (or in both Kurdish and Turkish), as well as *a politico-administrative status* for the Kurds. It is crucial to underline that each Kurdish national group defines this politico-administrative status differently. It is used for diverse politico-administrative models such as local self-governance, regional administration, federalism and the like. They also share *a secular political view*, which does not see the religion as an essential element for constructing and framing the Kurdish issue, although the concept of secularism is perceived and used differently by each group. Additionally, most of the other Kurdish national groups including the leading BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK group have an orthodox socialist/Marxist legacy, which

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[1] "An ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidely emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct (*Gedankenbild*). In its conceptual purity, this mental construct (*Gedankenbild*) cannot be found empirically anywhere in reality." See: Max Weber, *The Methodology of The Social Sciences*, ed. Talcott Parsons (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1949), 90.

[2] The umbrella organization of different institutions and movements of the leading pro-Kurdish movement including the BDP, the local governments, Kurdish feminist movement, youth movement, NGOs networks, different Kurdish media institutions and the like.

confines and obstructs their capacity to cooperate with Kurdish religious groups and the economic elite.

2) The Kurdish religious bloc

The Kurdish religious groups constitute the second bloc within the Kurdish scene. The adjective "religious" is used for those who view and frame the Kurdish issue through the lens of religion. In this research, the term "religion" implies Sunni-Islam and Alevism and the phrase "Kurdish religious groups" refers to Alevi and Sunni-Muslim Kurdish groups. For these groups, religious identity is more important than a Kurdish national identity. Therefore, the priority of the religious identity has important effects on their ideas, interests and institutions. As I will show in the next chapters, this priority defines how these groups construct the Kurdish issue and take a position vis-à-vis other relevant actors, i.e. the central state, the Kurdish national groups, and the economic elite. Although they agree on the priority of the religious identity, there significant differences exist among the Kurdish religious groups about different aspects of the Kurdish issue, such as socioeconomic underdevelopment, individual/cultural collective rights and territorial sovereignty. In other word, they have different Kurdish issues.

It is important to underline that there exists a historical separation between Alevi and Sunni-Muslim people among Kurdish society in particular and throughout Turkey in general. The Alevi religious community including people from Turkish, Kurdish and Arab national groups and constitutes the principal religious minority in Turkey. Alevis have been subject to policies of neglect, denial and assimilation for centuries. In spite of significant discussions on Alevism in the public sphere and the mobilization of Alevi groups at multiple levels for the last two decades, the Turkish state and Sunni-Muslim people have not yet officially recognized them as a religious minority. Although the Sunni-Muslim and Alevi Kurds share the priority of religious identity, there is a significant distinction between the two groups in general and on the Kurdish issue in particular, leading to differences in their ideas, interests and institutions relating to the Kurdish issue.

In the political arena, BDP and CHP are the main parties in which Alevi Kurds are represented. On the other hand, most Sunni Muslims participate in the ruling AK Party, while BDP has the support of the significant part of them. Yet the nationalist limits of the AK Party's Islamist discourse and the dominant exclusive secularism of Kurdish national groups,

in particular, of the leading BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK have created a political space for Kurdish groups claiming to mobilize pro-Islamic and Kurdish nationalist identities simultaneously.

3) The Kurdish economic bloc/elite

The Kurdish economic bloc covers economic elite who are principally located in the Kurdish region, though some of them also engage in economic activity beyond the region within Turkey, as well as outside of the country altogether. The Kurdish economic elite has a relatively lower capacity than the other groups due to the long-standing socioeconomic underdevelopment of the Kurdish region, which has led to widespread inequalities in per capita income between the Kurdish region and the rest of Turkey.

In spite of decades of discussions on regional disparity, the latest researches show that the Kurdish area is still the most disadvantaged part of the country. The regional disparity in Turkey is the highest among all OECD and EU member states. The Gini coefficient[1] for Turkey is 0.41 while the OECD average is 0.31. Among the 34 countries, Turkey is the 32nd country just after Chile (0.49) and Mexico (0.48)[2]. The average income per capita of cities in the Kurdish region varies between 7% and 16% of the EU average, while it is 32% in the region of Lubuskie in Poland, the lowest among the EU-25 states[3]. Because of under-development of the region, the existence of a Kurdish bourgeoisie has always been a debated issue among the political actors.

The Kurdish region is essentially a periphery economy in Turkey. The center-periphery relationship between the region and western part of country – and especially the westernmost Marmara and Ege regions – frames and confines the economic life in the Kurdish region. This economic center-periphery relationship has also been confined by politico-administrative domination of the center over the Kurdish periphery and permanent political unrest in the region, which has continued since 1984 in a manner that has caused immense social, economic and spatial devastations and the loss of thousands of lives.

The members of the economic elite have several different organizations to represent and advocate their interests in the Kurdish region. Chambers of commerce, chambers of

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[1] The Gini coefficient is a number ranging from 0 to 1, where 0 means perfect equality and the 1 means total inequality.

[2] The data are accessible on the OECD website, http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx, retrieved November 06, 2012.

[3] Sönmez, "Regional Inequality: Aspects of Inequality in the East and the Southeast."

craftsmen and artisans, industrialist and businessman associations are the main institutions where the local and regional economic elite are represented. At the political level, although the economic elite are more heterogeneous than the national and religious groups regarding the Kurdish issue, their economic dependence to the center gives an unquestionable power to the center economic and political authorities to dominate and confine them. However, after 1999 the local government experience of the leading Kurdish party changed the politico-administrative context in the main provinces of the Kurdish region. In addition, since 2003, the Kurdish economic elite' efforts to profit from the emerging market in IKR have not been supported by Ankara, which has significant economic and political power in the region. The AK Party has been trying to build an economic bridge between IKR and the western part of the country (cities such as Istanbul, Gaziantep, Mersin, Adana and Kayseri) rather than with its own Kurdish region. The center-periphery relationship between the Kurdish economic elite and Ankara has become more complicated after Turkey's exclusive position against the Kurdish economic elite in IKR and the rise of the leading Kurdish movement in the eastern part of the country as the local-regional power. In short, while increasing their national sensitivities, the Kurdish economic elite struggles to maintain a political balance between central and local regional powers.

B - Five Constraints or/and resources of collective action

Three Kurdish blocs and their different visions on the Kurdish issue(s) embedded in a historically constructed context have been confined within four main dynamics: the central state, the geopolitics of the Kurdish issue, Europeanization, and globalization. All these historically constructed constraints are not isolated, static, solid, bounded and completed, but interrelated, dynamic, fluid, permeable and processive. They have a direct effect on the Kurdish issue and relevant actors by framing and structuring their ideas, interests and institutions on the one hand and providing new resources to mobilize for the current power struggle on the other.

1) Historically constructed context

The interaction of the three Kurdish blocs occurs in a historically constructed context, which can be defined as a network of formal and informal institutions that have laid out rules and structured ideas, interests and institutions of relevant actors. In order to understand the influence of the historically constructed context on collective behaviors of actors, we can invoke theories of neo-institutionalism, and in particular historical institutionalism, which

centers on how institutions affect the behavior of individuals[1]. According to theories of neo-institutionalism, "the institutional organization of the polity or political economy"[2] is the principal factor that structures collective behavior and generates distinctive outcomes[3]. Neo-institutionalists underline the strategic interaction of the actors and argue that institutions provide actors to manage the uncertainty during the collective action by providing information about the past, present and future behavior of others, as well as enforcement mechanisms for agreements and penalties for defection. Institutions also provide diverse frames, filters and methods of interpretation, cognitive scripts, categories and models. In other words, they determine what we must do and what we can imagine. In short, the institutions not only provide strategically useful information, but also structure the identities, self-images and preferences of the actors.

Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C.R. Taylor, in their frequently cited work on three new institutionalisms in political science[4], highlight two characteristics of the historical institutionalism, which are of particular importance for this thesis. First, historical institutionalists focus on ways in which institutions structure asymmetrical relations of power by distributing sources unevenly across social groups so as to privilege some interests while demobilizing others. Contrasting the assumption of freely-contracting individuals, they tend to stress how some groups lose while others win due to a world in which the institutions give some groups or interests unequal access to power[5].

Second, the historical institutionalism invites us to focus on path dependency[6]. Rejecting the tradition postulate that the same operative forces will generate the same results everywhere, historical institutionalists recognize the importance of the contextual features of a given situation inherited from the past and stress the production of "paths" and "lock-in" effects by eliminating other alternatives[7]. We can argue that in a given time and space, the

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[1] Hall and Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms."

[2] Ibid., 937.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Hall and Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms."

[5] Ibid., 940-1.

[6] Scott E. Page, "Path Dependence", *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, no. 1 (2006): 87–115.

[7] François Bafoil, *Central and Eastern Europe: Europeanization and Social Change* (New York: Palgrava Macmillan, 2009); François Bafoil and Timm Beichelt, "Introduction: Elements of Comparing Europeanisation Processes in Central and Western Europe," in *L'européanisation d'Ouest En Est*, ed. François Bafoil and Timm Beichelt, Logiques Politiques (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008), 15–28; François Bafoil, "Variété Des Processus d'Européanisation En Europe Centrale et Orientale," in

formal and informal institutions, as the most significant of these features, are both the historical constructs and producers of these distinctive trajectories or paths. Path dependency has also been defined as "the influence of past over the present"[1] or "sensitive dependence on initial conditions"[2], underlining the continuity and entirety of the past and present on the one hand and the importance of the existing institutions –which confine and form the adaption and production of new institutions by structuring actors' preferences, identities and self-images– on the other.

Although historical institutionalists highlight the influence of the past over the present, they do not pay enough attention to the fact that the relation of the past and the present is not linear and one-directional, but rather cyclic, dynamic and two-directional. Paul Connerton's argument is well to the point:

"(W)e may note that our experience of the present very largely depends upon our knowledge of the past. We experience our present world in a context which is causally connected with past events and objects, and hence with reference to events and objects which are not experiencing when we are experiencing the present. And we will experience our present differently in accordance with the different pasts to which we are able to connect that present. Hence the difficulty of extracting our past from our present: not simply because present factors tend to influence – some might want to say distort- our recollections of the past, but also because past factors tend to influence, or distort, our experience of the present. This process, it should be stressed, reaches into the most minute and everyday details of our lives[3]."

In this matter, the distinction between "history" and "memory" can be useful to understand the dynamic relationship between the past and the present. Pierre Nora, in this frequently cited article makes a clear distinction between the memory and the history:

L'européanisation d'Ouest En Est, ed. François Bafoil and Timm Beichelt, Logiques Politiques (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008), 55–88.

[1] Paul A. David, "Clio and the Economics of QWERTY," *The American Economic Review* 75, no. 2 (1985): 332–337; Scott E. Page, "An Essay on The Existence and Causes of Path Dependence" (2005): 4–5.

[2] Stan J. Liebowitz and Stephen E. Margolis, "Path Dependence, Lock-In, and History," *Journal of Law, Economics and Organization* (April 9, 1995): 205–226.

[3] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remerber*, 6th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 2.

"Memory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition. Memory is life, borne by living societies founded in its name. It remains in permanent evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, unconscious of its successive deformations, vulnerable to manipulation and appropriation, susceptible to being long dormant and periodically revived. History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer. Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past. ... Memory is blind to all but the group it binds - which is to say...that there are as many memories as there are groups, that memory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective, plural, and yet individual. History, on the other hand, belongs to everyone and to no one, whence its claim to universal authority. Memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects; history binds itself strictly to temporal continuities, to progressions and to relations between things. Memory is absolute, while history can only conceive the relative."[1]

Likewise, Enzo Traverso, in his book entitled *Le passé, mode d'emploi: histoire, mémoire, politique*, states that the memory, both individual and collective, is an appearance of the past filtered through the present[2]. Hence we can argue that there does not exist a single past shared by actors, but contending versions of the past constructed by asymmetrically structured groups embedded in the present[3]. That is why we witness diverse histories as different constructions of the past that are viewed through the lens of gender, race, ethnicity, religion and class according to the actors' interests, preferences, identities, and positions. In short, history is a resource of mobilization for the asymmetrically structured actors who have challenging interests and struggle against each other in the present[4].

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[1] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire," *Representations* no. 26 (1989): 8–9.

[2] Enzo Traverso, *Le Passé, Mode D'emploi: Histoire, Mémoire, Politique* (Paris: La Fabrique - Editions, 2005), 20.

[3] For instance, Romain Pasquier, in this work on the regional power in France, reveals that the production and reproduction of different narratives and alternative territorial representations to those of the nation-state is one main mechanism that contributes to the institutionalization of the regional space. See: Romain Pasquier, "Le Pouvoir Régional: Mobilizations, Décentralization et Gouvernance En France" (thèse d'habilitation, Institut d'Etudes Politique de Paris (Sciences Po.), 2010), 32–87.

[4] For the mobilization of the history as a resource of the present sociopolitical struggle in the Kurdish scene: Hamit Bozarslan, "Some Remarks on Kurdish Historiographical Discourse in Turkey (1919-1980)," in *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism*, ed. Abbas Vali (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2003), 14–39; Martin van Bruinessen, "Ehmedê Xanî's 'Mem û Zîn' and Its Role in the Emergence of Kurdish National Awareness," in *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism*, ed.

Starting from this theoretical frame, in this part, some essential elements of history and geography of the Kurdish region are discussed in order to provide a general frame of reference for the Kurdish scene, in which different Kurdish actors stand in varying states of conflict, cooperation and negotiation on different issues. It is important to note that the aim of this part is not to analyze or summarize the history and geography of the Kurdish region in a general manner[1], but to examine some basic features in a specific manner that will allow for a historically informed understanding of the current conflict, cooperation, negotiation and consensus building process among Kurdish actors that have different cognitive, ideological, political and economic orientations. It will additionally allow us to see how the different actors view some (though not all) components of the past. Given the results of my field research, I look into the history and geography of the Kurdish region according to six main issues that constitute different lenses through which Kurdish actors view the current problems of the Kurds. These issues are as follows:

1. Division of Kurdistan into four parts

2. Turkification: Assimilation of the Kurds to the Turkishness

3. Ottoman-Turkish centralization policies and dissolution of local Kurdish sovereignties

4. Regional disparities and socioeconomic underdevelopment of the Kurdish region

5. The persistence of the state of emergency in the Kurdish region

6. De-Islamization of the Kurds (and Turks)

Abbas Vali (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2003), 40–57; Vali, "Genealogies of the Kurds: Constructions of Nation and National Identity in Kurdish Historical Writing."

[1] For this aim see, Bedlîsî, Şerefxan, (2007) *Şerefname: Dîroka Kurdistanê*, İstanbul: Avesta, (for English version see Bitlisi, Sharaf Khan, (2005) *The Sharafnama: or the History of the Kurdish Nation, 1597*, California: Mazda Publishers); Zeki, M. Emin, (2012) *Kürtler ve Kürdistan Tarihi*, Istanbul: Nubihar; McDowall, David, (2005) *A Modern History of the Kurds*, New York: I.B. Tauris; Jwaideh, Wadie, (2006) *The Kurdish National Movement. Its origins and development*, New York: Syracuse University Press; Izady, Mehrdad R. (1992) The Kurds: A Concise Handbook, Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis; O'Shea, Maria Theresa, (2004) *Trapped between the map and reality: geography and perceptions of Kurdistan*, Florida: Routledge; van Bruniessen, Martin, (1992) *Agha, Shaikh, And State: The Social And Political Structures Of Kurdistan*, Londan and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd; Ozoglu, Hakan, (2004) Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries, New York: State University of New York Press; Mehmet Bayrak, *Kürtler Ve Ulusal-Demokratik Mücadeleleri* (Ankara: Öz-Ge Yayınları, 1993); Celîlê Celîl, *Kürt Aydınlanması: Ondokuzuncu Yüzyıl Sonu - Yirminci Yüzyıl Başı* (İstanbul: Avesta, 2011).

First, most Kurdish actors in Turkey agree that Kurdistan been separated into four parts, within four states: Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. During the field research, I observed that this separation of the Kurdistan is one of the most important aspects of the Kurdish issue, dominating the Kurdish actors' debates and their perceptions.

Second, I can argue that the problem of identity is the most highlighted and indisputable characteristic of the Kurdish issue. According to most Kurdish groups, the essence of the issue lies in the policies of denial and assimilation imposed on the Kurds who have demanded the Turkish state to recognize their national existence. The current debates on the definition of the citizenship, de-ethnicization of the state, education in the Kurdish language and a multi-lingual public administration system have become evident issues of national identity.

The policies of centralization that initiated at the beginning of the 19th century[1], the last period of the Ottoman Empire, and continued with the establishment of the Turkish state are the third crucial aspect of the Kurdish issue[2] that Kurdish actors persistently argue. The regional Kurdish governments, which achieved to maintain their relatively political, administrative and military autonomy since the 16th century, despite the constant efforts of the Ottoman period to establish a direct rule in the Kurdish region[3], were eliminated during the

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[1] As Amir Hassanpour notes, both Ottoman and Safavid Impires made remarkable efforts to estalish a direct rule in the Kurdish emirates' territory between 16th and 19th centuries. See, Hassanpour, *Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan, 1918-1985*. Ehmedê Xanî, in his book titled "Mem û Zîn" (Mem and Zin), the famous Kurdish classic love story that he wrote in 17th century, critized Ottoman and Safavid dominations over the Kurds and their destuctive impacts on the Kurdish society. See, Ehmedê Xanî, *Mem û Zîn*, ed. Jan Dost (İstanbul: Avesta, 2010). Likewise, the famous Kurdish epic of "Keleha Dimdimê" (Dimdim Castle) recount the battle between the Kurds and Safavid Empire in the 17th century. See, Ereb Şemo, *Dimdim Kalesi* (İstanbul: Evrensel Basım Yayın, 2005).

[2] Hamit Bozarslan, "Kürd Milliyetçiliği Ve Kürt Hareketi (1898-2000)," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce - Cilt 4: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil, 3rd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), 841–870.

[3] Although most Kurdish groups refer the Ottoman period as an era that the Kurds had autonomy, the Ottoman and Safavid Empires constantly tried to establish its direct rule in the Kurdish region. For instance, the famous Kurdish epos "Kela Dimdimê" (Dimdim Castle in English) and "Mem û Zîn" of Ehmedê Xanî, which were the literary works of the 17th century, show the constant conflicts between the Kurdish emirates and the centers. Xanî, *Mem û Zîn*; Jan Dost, *Kela Dimdimê* (İstanbul: Avesta, 2011). For a more detailed discussion on this issue, see also: Ebru Sönmez, *İdris-i Bidlisi: Ottoman Kurdistan and Islamic Legitimacy* (İstanbul: Libra, 2012); Cenk Reyhan and Nizam Önen, *Mülkten Ülkeye: Türkiye'de Taşra İdaresinin Dönüşümü 1839-1929* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011); N. Ertürk Keskin, *Türkiye'de Devletin Toprak Üzerinde Örgütlenmesi* (Ankara: Tan Kitabevi Yayınları, 2009).

19th century as a result of the centralization policies of the Ottoman modernization[1]. As a crucial part of the Ottoman modernization, these centralization polices were finalized by the 1847, the date that the last Kurdish local government ruling by the Bedir Khan Beg, the last emir of the Cizre Bohtan Emirate was demolished[2]. The centralization policies continued more strictly after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 as a unitary nation-state[3]. Besides, present political projects of the pro-Kurdish parties show that political demands of the Kurds refer the path of the centralization policies and demolition of the regional Kurdish governments. The leading Kurdish political party BDP advocates a regional autonomy that centers on collective cultural rights, political and administrative decentralization, and the sharing of state sovereignty through "democratic autonomy", while three other Kurdish political parties, HAK-PAR, KADEP and ÖSP demand a federal Kurdish region.

Fourth, according to almost all the social and economic indicators, the Kurdish region is the least developed region of the country. In fact, the claim that the Kurdish issue is a problem of socioeconomic underdevelopment has been one of the essential theses of the Turkish state since the 1960s. On the other hand, different Kurdish groups argue that the poverty of the Kurdish region is an outcome of the decades-long, deliberate, permanent and systemic policies of the Turkish state. During my field research, I observed that this is one of the main arguments of the Kurdish actors regarding the Kurdish issue.

Fifth, we have witnessed a persistent state of emergency in the Kurdish region since the beginning of the 19th century. Many believe this constitutes a central part of the Kurdish issue. The Turkish state has ignored the cultural, political, socioeconomic and administrative aspects of the Kurdish issue and framed it as a problem of "national security". As a result, the Turkish state has been persistently dealing with the Kurdish issue with security-based measures by establishing state's institutions that are specific to the Kurdish region. Given the Kurdish

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[1] Kutlay, *Kürt Kimliğinin Oluşum Süreci*; Kutlay, *21. Yüzyıla Girerken Kürtler*; van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 175–188; Vali, "Genealogies of the Kurds: Constructions of Nation and National Identity in Kurdish Historical Writing."

[2] Kutlay, *Kürt Kimliğinin Oluşum Süreci*, 26; Kutlay, *21. Yüzyıla Girerken Kürtler*, 44; Ozoglu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, 60; van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 177–180.

[3] Hamit Bozarslan, "'Why the Armed Struggle?' Understanding the Violence in Kurdistan of Turkey," in *The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey: Obstacles and Chances for Peace and Democracy*, ed. Ferhad Ibrahim and Gülistan Gürbey (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 22–3.

revolts between 1806 and the 1930s and the bloody and harsh response of the Ottoman and Turkish states to the revolts, the General Inspectorates ("Umumi Müfettişlikler" in Turkey) between 1927 and 1952[1], three coups d'états in 1960, 1970 and 1980, and State of Emergence ("Olağanüstü Hâl Bölge Valiliği) in 1987-2002[2], we can argue that the Kurdish region has been relentlessly governed by a regionally specific military state establishment. Consequently, it is observed that the concepts such as grievance, self-respect and justice constitute a fundamental feature of different Kurdish groups' discourse regarding the Kurdish issue.

Finally, de-Islamization of Kurdish and Turkish societies after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 as a secular Turkish nation-state has had a significant influence on the formation of the Kurdish issue and the Kurdish contestations since the beginning of the 20the century. As H. Bozarslan underlines, the establishment of the Republic of Turkey as a secular Turkish nation-state resulted in the end of "Ottoman implied contract"[3] between the center and Kurdish traditional ruling tribunal and religious elites[4]. Bozarslan highlights three dynamics of the emergence and the radicalization of the Kurdish contestations after the end of "implied contract": the taking place of the Islamic brotherhood by the Turkish nationalism in the formation of the state doctrine, the abolishment of the caliphate, and the role of the Armenian genocide in which the Kurdish tribunal and religious elites took place[5]. It is evident that the de-Islamization of the Turkish political system and its influence on the society has a very particular place in the formation of the Kurdish "nationalism" and contestations[6].

Indeed, for most Kurdish pro-Islamist groups, the Kurdish issue is essentially a result of the de-Islamization of Turkish and Kurdish societies during the Ottoman-Turkish westernization and modernization process. According to the pro-Islamists, the Ottoman Empire was based on the Sunni-Muslim identity and did not privilege any national/ethnic identity, however, the Republic of the Turkey was established on "a constructed Turkish secular national identity" by excluding and suppressing the Islamic quality of (both Kurdish

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[1] Koçak, *Umûmî Müfettişlikler (1927-1952)*.

[2] For a detailed discussion on the violation of human rights in the Kurdish region during the Regional Governership for State of Emergency, see, Sezgin Tanrıkulu and Serdar Yavuz, "İnsan Hakları Açısından Olağanüstü Hal'in Bilançosu," *Sosyal Bilimler Araştırma Dergisi* no. 6 (2005): 493–521.

[3] Şerif Mardin, *Türk Modernleşmesi. Makaleler 4* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1991), 108.

[4] Hamit Bozarslan, "Türkiye'de Kürt Milliyetçiliği: Zımni Sözleşmeden Ayaklanmaya (1919-1925)," in *Türkiye'de Etnik Çatışma*, ed. Erik Jan Zürcher, Süer ef (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), 89–121.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

and Turkish) society and other national identities. Even some Kurdish pro-Islamists describe the Ottoman-Turkish modernization and westernization process as a "the national disaster for the Kurds"[1], and they see the Kurdish nationalism ("ulusalcılık" in Turkish) not a way for the liberation of the Kurds, but as a westernist project aiming "de-Islamization" of the Kurds[2].

2) Central State

Alongside the historically constructed context, the second constraint is undoubtedly the central state, which interferes with conflicts, negotiations, cooperation and consensus building among the Kurds through its infrastructural and despotic powers[3]. In addition to the state's historically constructed military, socioeconomic, ideological power, the substantial transformation of the state establishment during the last decade, characterized by the commencement of AK Party's rule of the country and the reconstruction of state infrastructural power and the ideological apparatus across the country in general – and in the Kurdish Region in particular – makes the central state intervention a fundamental constraint on the regional collective action of different Kurdish groups. While AK Party shares the exclusive and monolithic Turkish nationalist ideology of Kemalism, and as some Kurdish actors claim it can be in partially seen as a neo-Kemalist movement (I will discuss this argument in detail in next chapters), its pro-Islamist political, ideological identity, and neo-liberal characteristic have the potential to restructure parameters of collective action and the positions of local and regional actors in the Kurdish scene.

The pro-Islamist identity of AK Party has made it possible to reconcile the controversial relationship between the Turkish state and most Kurdish pro-Islamist groups, providing them considerable economic and political sources to reorganize themselves in economic, social, cultural and political arena against or alongside the Kurdish national and secular groups in general, and the leading Kurdish movement in particular. However, it has been seen that the Turkish nationalist character of the AK Party has limited relations between the party and the Kurds since 2007.

The pro-Islamist character of the government has also opened a new political space for the leading secular Kurdish movement (and also for CHP) in the Alevi Kurdish groups. These

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[1] Abdülkadir Turan, *Kürtlerde İslami Kimliğin Gelişmesi* (İstanbul: Dua Yayıncılık, 2011), 186–284.

[2] Ibid., 285–389.

[3] Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," 2003.

groups – and the Alevi in particular – have been subjected of policies of denial, neglect, assimilation and violence by the state, which privileged Sunni-Muslim vision of Islam.

Like the effect of pro-Islamist identity of AK Party on the pro-Islamist Kurdish groups, its neo-liberal characteristic facilitated to consolidate state's relation with the Kurdish economic elite, guaranteeing their loyalty to the state. The Kurdish economic elite is dependent on the center because of the socioeconomic underdevelopment of the Kurdish region and the state's infrastructural and despotic power in the region. This dependence is centered on the center-periphery relationship between the state and the Kurdish region, which obliges the Kurdish economic elite to have good relationship with the central government to develop their economic activities both within and across the region.

The neo-liberal characteristic of the AK Party[1], which initiated the second wave of integration of the national economy to the global market after Turgut Özal in 1980s[2] and facilitated enormous economic growth[3], has expanded the economic and political sphere of the upper class. There has been a high growth of foreign trade since the AK Party's mandate[4]. As K. Kirişçi has emphasized, with the rule of AK Party, the Turkish state has become a "trading state"[5] and "set free the productive and trading energies of people and merchants who would find markets for their goods overseas"[6]. For instance, according to data of the Ministry of Economy, the foreign trade has increased from $87.6 billion to $375.7 billion in

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[1] For the neoliberal characteristic of AK Party, see two sophisticated books: Faruk Ataay, *Neoliberalizm Ve Muhafazakar Demokrasi: 2000'li Yıllarda Türkiye'de Siyasal Değişimin Dinamikleri* (Ankara: De Ki Yayınları, 2008); Ilhan Üzgel and Bülent Duru, eds., *AKP Kitabı: Bir Dönüşümün Bilançosu* (Ankara: Phoenix Yayınevi, 2010).

[2] The first neoliberal wave was initiated by Turgut Ozal' government, which was formed just after the military takeover in 1980. For a more detailed discussion on the first neo-liberal transformation process in Turkey during 1980s, see: Nuran Yentürk and Yakup Kepenek, *Türkiye Ekonomisi*, 8th ed. (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1996), 193–210; Fikret Başkaya, *Paradigmanın İflasi-Resmi İdeolojinin Eleştirisine Giriş* (Ankara: Özgür Üniversite Kitaplığı, 2004), 187–204; Korkut Boratav, *Türkiye İktisat Tarihi (1908-1985)*, 6th ed. (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınları, 1998), 119–138; Ayse Bugra, *State and Business in Modern Turkey: A Comparative Study* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 142–156.

[3] Morton Abramowitz and Henri J. Barkey, "Turkey's Transformers: The AKP Sees Big," *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 6 (2009): 118–128.

[4] Henri J. Barkey, *Turkish Foreign Policy and The Middle East*, CERI Strategy Papers (Paris: Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales - CERI, June 6, 2011).

[5] Kemal Kirişçi, "The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of the Trading State," *New Perspectives on Turkey* no. 40 (2009): 29–57.

[6] Richard Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), p. 27.

the 2002-11 periods[1]. Similarly, GDP in constant prices (classified by type of economic activity for basic prices in 1998) has increased from TL75.52 billion to TL114.89 in the same period[2]. In adopting these neo-liberal policies, the AK Party accelerated the privatization of public services, reproduced more effectively the traditional state's rhetoric about the development and politics of service (*hizmet siyaseti*)[3] in the Kurdish region and across the country. Hence, the AK Party obtained the support of most Kurdish economic elite.

The Marxist-socialist legacy of the leading pro-Kurdish movement and its anti-capitalist discourse has facilitated the consolidation of this relationship between Kurdish economic elite and the government. For instance, compared with pro-Kurdish parties, most of the AK Party deputies in Kurdish region are either former businessmen, or presidents of chambers of trade and commerce or businessmen association, or members of the bourgeois families.

However, the relationship between the AK Party and Kurdish economic elite cannot be reduced to a simple economic interaction. It has been seen that the Turkish nationalist character of the AK Party has constructed barriers for the Kurdish economic elite, as well as the pro-Islamist Kurdish groups. The Kurdish economic elite have realized, therefore, that the Turkish "trading state" functions differently according to cultural geographies and national identities of economic actors. In particular, the experience of the Kurdish economic elite in IKR since 2003 has shown that while Ankara has tried to develop an economic bridge between the western parts of the country and Erbil, the capital of the IKR, it has limited – and even blocked – the economic integration of Erbil with Diyarbakir. While a common Kurdish identity might be expected to facilitate and accelerate economic activity between Erbil and Diyarbakir, the Kurdish economic elite instead has found their interactions limited within the scope of Ankara-Erbil interactions.

3) Geopolitics of the Kurdish Issue

Given the fact that the Kurdish issue is a transnational and international problem, the geopolitics must be taken into consideration as a third significant dynamic that has

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[1] The data are accessible on the official website of the Ministry of Economy, see: http://www.ekonomi.gov.tr, reiterated November 17, 2012.

[2] The GDP data are accessible on the official website of the Turkish Statistical Institute, see: http://www.turkstat.gov.tr, reiterated November 17, 2012.

[3] This politics of « development » or « service » is also seen in the name of party, the Justice and Development Party.

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remarkable effects on the ideas, interests and institutions of the Kurdish groups. As has been previously discussed, Kurds live under the political domination of four states, namely Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. They constitute a considerable population inhabiting a large geographical area and had significant influence on domestic and foreign policies in each of these four countries. Indeed, the Kurdish issue is one a primary dynamic in determining the relationships of these countries[1].

Besides, the current political situation of the Kurds in Turkey, Iraq and Syria depends on the Treaty of Lausanne signed by Turkey and the European powers in 1923[2]. As a matter of fact, they are global and imperial powers that built and tracked political boundaries in the region throughout the 20th century. Therefore, it is not surprising that they still operate in the region to rebuild the balance of power there. That is why the Kurdish issue has been an international as well as regional/transnational issue since at least as early as 1920s.

The Kurds are the majority in a very large geographical region in southeastern Turkey that constitutes around 20% of the country's territory. This region has borders with other Kurdish regions of Iran, Iraq and Syria[3]. Since 2003, the Turkish government has been challenged by the model developed in the IKR, which has over five million inhabitants and functions as a quasi-state[4]. While Turkey has a hyper-centralized political system and the Kurds have no regional or provincial autonomy in Turkey, the Iraqi Kurds have a federal region with a broad political, administrative, socioeconomic and military power. While the Kurdish language was prohibited from being taught in the Turkish public school system until recently, an optional Kurdish course was just provided in September, 2012; however, the AK Party government refuses definitively the demand of education in mother language. In the IKR, however, Kurdish is the first official language; it is also a second official language of entire country of Iraq. In addition, the IKR has enjoyed massive socioeconomic development thanks to its political and administrative power to control its economic resources and external

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[1] Bozarslan, *Conflit kurde: Le brasier oublié du Moyen-Orient*; Henri J. Barkey, "Turkey and Iraq: The Making of a Partnership," *Turkish Studies* 12, no. 4 (2011): 663–674.

[2] The Treaty is accessible at the following address: http://wwi.lib.byu.edu/index.php/Treaty_of_Lausanne, reiterated November 18, 2012.

[3] Mehrdad R. Izady, *The Kurds: A Concise History And Fact Book* (Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis, Inc., 1992), p. 1–12; David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), p. 5–8. For a more sophisticated discussion on the geography and maps of Kurdistan see, O'Shea, *Trapped Between the Map and Reality: Geography and Perceptions of Kurdistan*.

[4] Merve Ozdemirkiran, "Construire Un Etat, Briser Des Tabous: Les Hommes D'affaires de Turquie Entre La Construction Étatique Du Gouvernement Régional Du Kurdistan (GRK) et La Politique Étrangère de La Turquie" (Institut d'Etudes Politique de Paris (Sciences Po.), 2013).

globalized capital investments, while the Kurdish area of Turkey is still the poorest region of the country[1]. Since the withdrawal of the Americans from Iraq, the formation of a separate Kurdish state in Iraq has become a more likely possibility.

There has been a noteworthy cooperation both at economic and political levels between the KRG and the ruling AK Party government since 2007, even in spite of Turkey's aggressive and hostile politics towards the IKR during the first years of official establishment in 2003[2]. For instance, Turkey's registered export to Iraq (most of them were in the stable IKR) was $8.3 billion in 2011. It is important to note that it is just the registered numbers and constitutes only half of the total exports. As to political cooperation, M. Barzani, president of the IKR, as well as president of Iraq's Kurdistan Democratic Party, was among the world leaders invited to speak at the AK Party 4th Congress, held on September 30, 2012 in Ankara. Given the historical policies of denial and assimilation towards the Kurds and Turkish political and military authorities' statement that the establishment of a free Kurdish state in Iraq would be a *casus belli*, the invitation of M. Barzani constitutes an important change in the portrayal of the Turkish government's conception and perception about the Iraqi Kurds.

The establishment of the IKR and the improvement of its relations with Turkey at multiple levels by multiple actors have transformed the frame of reference for both the Turkish state and Kurdish political actors concerning Kurdish issue. The foundation of the IKR as a quasi-state in Iraq has made it much more difficult for Turkish state authorities to perpetuate the traditional security policies that have denied the recognition of a separate Kurdish national identity and framed the issue as a one-dimensional problem of security and terrorism. The rise of Kurdish nationalism has basically undermined the moral basis of Turkey's polity based on monolithic Turkish identity[3]. The Kurds, whose distinct identity has been denied throughout the Turkish Republic's history and who have been defined by the

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[1] According to the New Incentive System declared by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan on April 5, 2011, which classified cities' socioeconomic development on a 1-6 scale, with 1 being highest and 6 being lowest. 15 cities in the Kurdish Region are classified at level 6, while other cities were at level 5. For more information on the New Incentive System see: Ekonomi Bakanlığı, (2012) "Yeni Teşvik Sistemi: Yatırımlarda Devlet Yardımları", see: http://www.ekonomi.gov.tr/upload/42760EC5-C17C-8402-E41BE0CFF2DF5959/basbakan_sunum.pdf, reitretaed November 18, 2012.

[2] Barkey, "Turkey and Iraq: The Making of a Partnership"; Barkey, *Turkish Foreign Policy and The Middle East*; Abramowitz and Barkey, "Turkey's Transformers: The AKP Sees Big."

[3] Neşe Düzel, "Selahattin Demirtaş: Türkiye'nin Sınırı Kürdistan Olacak," *Taraf*, October 4, 2012. For a brief summary of the state's reports on the Kurdish issue which represent the state's permanent policy during the 20th century see also Yayman, *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası*; Akçura, *Devletin Kürt Filmi. 1925-2009 Kürt Raporları*.

Turkish government as "mountain Turks", have had a federal state just on the other side of the border, named "Kurdistan Region". Furthermore, international actors, including the US and EU member-states, have recognized the KRG; and the post-2003 era in Iraq has led the Kurds to become more visible in the international political arena. Consequently, the denial of Kurdish identity and the refusal of the Kurdish claims have become much more difficult for Turkish authorities to uphold in the international political arena since 2003.

As to the Kurdish scene, the IKR has undoubtedly become an important political center for Kurds throughout the world, and in Turkey in particular[1]. There has been an accelerating cooperation among the public/political, associative and private Kurdish actors of Turkey and Iraq in economic, social, cultural and political areas since 2003. The rise of Kurdish nationalism in Iraq, with its *politico-administrative model*, provides Kurdish groups with have a new cognitive and normative framework concerning the Kurdish issue and increases their demands, expectations and motivations in Turkey. Given the Kurdistan model developing in Iraq, it is clear that Kurds in Turkey will not be satisfied with a local government system under administrative and financial tutelage[2]. Discussion of the optional Kurdish language instruction in public schools and the New Action Plan of the GAP[3] which started in 1980 and re-planned as a regional development plan in 1989, but have not yet achieved any considerable development against the region's chronic socioeconomic problems, namely severe poverty and hunger[4].

In addition to IKR's challenge, Ankara has been faced with the possibility of the establishment of a new Kurdish autonomous region in Syria, given the regime crisis and the uprising of the Syrian people against the Assad regime[5]. Since the summer of 2012, the Syrian Kurdish parties have united and taken control of several cities of Kurdish region in northern Syria, namely Afrin, Ayn Al-Arab, Amudeh, Derbasiyah and Derik. The Kurds

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[1] Bozarslan, *Conflit kurde: Le brasier oublié du Moyen-Orient*, 10, 19.

[2] For a comparative study on the local government systems of Turkey, France, Spain, Italy, Poland and Republic of Czech, see: Fikret Toksöz et al., *Yerel Yonetim Sistemleri: Türkiye Ve Fransa İspanya İtalya Polonya Ve Çek Cumhuriyeti* (İstanbul: TESEV, 2009).

[3] For more information on the GAP see the official website, http://www.gap.gov.tr

[4] Dinçer, Özaslan, and Kavasoğlu, *İllerin Ve Bölgelerin Sosyoekonomik Sınıflandırması Araştırması – 2003*; Üstümışık, "Türkiye'deki İller Ve Bölgeler Bazında Sosyoekonomik Gelişmişlik Sıralaması Araştırması: Gri İlişkisel Analiz Yöntemi Uygulaması"; TUİK, *Bölgesel Göstergeler: TRC2 Şanlıurfa Diyarbakır*.

[5] Cengiz Çandar, "Suriye Rejimi Düşerse, Irak Parçalanırsa...," *İstanbul*, February 29, 2012.

celebrated the "liberation of Western Kurdistan"[1], or the Kurdish region in Syria, following an agreement for the establishment of the Kurdish Supreme Council, signed between the leading pro-Kurdish Party PYD, the only armed party affiliated with the PKK, and the Kurdish National Council, which includes a dozen Kurdish parties, under the sponsorship of M. Barzani, president of the IKR, on July 9, 2012. S. Demirtaş, co-president of the BDP, more recently summarized this situation by saying "from Igdir to Hatay, all southern borders of Turkey will officially be Kurdistan"[2].

4) Europeanization: A temporary and limited resource

The Europeanization process of Turkey is the fourth constraint/resources. It now seems to be common sense to say that Turkey has experienced a qualitatively new beginning and a process of strategic transformation since the Helsinki Summit of the European Council in December 1999 – the date when Turkey was officially recognized as a candidate for full membership. We have witnessed a remarkable transformation at the polity, politics and policy levels for the last decades in Turkey. It is obvious that the Europeanization process has also affected Turkey's Kurdish issues at multiple levels and that the Kurdish scene has undergone considerable transformations throughout this process. However, how can we qualify the role of the Europeanization process in the transformation of Kurdish scene? To what extent and how does this process play a role in this transformation?

Different Kurdish groups mobilized the Europeanization process as a new resource in a different manner to restructure the polity, politics and public policy changes. However, it is important to note that Europeanization is neither sole dynamic nor a binding top-down process. The effects of the Europeanization process must be considered alongside other dynamics at multiple levels[3] such as the capacity of different Kurdish groups, the central state,

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[1] Guillaume Perrier, "Les Kurdes Du PKK à L'offensive Contre Le Régime de Damas ," *Le Monde*, July 23, 2012.

[2] Düzel, "Selahattin Demirtaş: Türkiye'nin Sınırı Kürdistan Olacak."

[3] R. Pasquier highlights that the influence of the Europeanization process on the regional level process differs in accordance with various combinations of the cultural, economic and political dynamics both at regional space and the nation-state. In France, he notes, "The change is not going to realize automatically that cause often the theorists of the *multi-level governance* think of. Certain regions appear having more dispositions than others." See: Pasquier, "Le Pouvoir Régional: Mobilizations, Décentralization et Gouvernance En France," 155. See also: Romain Pasquier, "The French Region and the European Union: Between Change and Resilience," in *Regional Development and the European Union. A Coperative Analysis of Karabuk, Valenciennes and Katowice*, ed. François Bafoil and Ayhan Kaya (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2009), 37–60; Romain Pasquier, "Ce

the geopolitics of the Kurdish issue and the globalization process, which have a direct influence on the levels of ideas, interests and institutions. Besides, the temporality issue also matters. While the Europeanization process was the most important dynamic framing the Kurdish issue in Turkey after 1999, it became irrelevant after 2005, when the IKR was established and stabilized, providing a new cognitive and normative frame for different Kurdish groups.

Despite its noteworthy limits, the Europeanization process has been an unquestionable dynamic utilized by the different Kurdish groups to reconstruct ideas, the interests and the institutions in order to reshape domestic polity, politics and policy changes. It seems the interactive approaches on Europeanization focusing on domestic changes, and the concepts of the different kinds of "usage of Europeanization" are appropriate to analyze the effects of Turkey's EU accession process on the collective action of the Kurds. As this research centers on the interaction of the Kurdish national, religious and economic groups, I confine the debates of Europeanization within the context of the influence of European integration at the domestic level[1], although they also cover the emergence of distinctive governance structures at European level[2], and the interaction of European and domestic levels[3].

Initial works on Europeanization focus on the influence of the EU on the political, economic and social change among member states. In this matter, Claudio Radaelli proposing the most elaborated definition, argues that Europeanization comprises the "processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first

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Qu'apporte L'éclairage Des Études Est-européennes," in *L'européanisation d'Ouest En Est*, ed. François Bafoil and Timm Beichelt, Logiques Politiques (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008), 285–298.

[1] Pasquier, "Le Pouvoir Régional: Mobilizations, Décentralization et Gouvernance En France," 154–196; Thomas Christiansen, Knud Erik Jorgensen, and Antje Wiener, "Introduction," in *The Social Construction of Europe*, ed. Thomas Christiansen, Knud Erik Jorgensen, and Antje Wiener (London: SAGE Publications, 2001); Robert Landrech, "Europeanization of Domestics Politics and Institutions: The Case of France," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 32, no. 1 (1994): 69; Claudio Radaelli, "The Domestic Impact of European Union Public Policy: Notes on Concepts, Methods, and the Challenge of Empirical Research," *Politique Européenne* 5 (2001): 107–142; Palier and Surel, "Analyser L'européanisation Des Politiques Publiques." For that approach, see:

[2] James Caporaso, Maria Green Cowles, and Thomas Risse, *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change* (Ithaca (N.Y.): Cornelle University Press, 2001).

[3] Palier and Surel, "Analyser L'européanisation Des Politiques Publiques"; Dyson and Goetz, "Living with Europe: Power, Constraint and Contestation."

defined and consolidated in the making of EU public policy and politics and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies[1]."

Unlike this unidirectional definition, Palier and Surel propose an interactive approach and define Europeanization as "all institutional, strategic and normative adjustment processes induced by European integration"[2]. This definition, on the one hand, emphasizes the interaction between different levels of government, and on the other hand, refers to the Three I model (institution, interest, idea) by focusing on institutional, strategic and normative adjustments. Focusing on the domestic influence of the Europeanization, Kenneth Dyson and Klaus H. Goetz go further to develop a more appropriate interactive approach and give a comprehensive definition of Europeanization:

> "Europeanization denotes a complex interactive 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' process in which domestic polities, politics and public policies are shaped by European integration and in which domestic actors use European integration to shape the domestic arena. It may produce either continuity or change and potentially variable and contingent outcomes"[3].

Analyzing the collective action in the Kurdish scene, I can assert that the Europeanization process provides relevant regional actors with the opportunity to develop a new normative and cognitive frame with regard to the Kurdish issues, initiating changes in polity, politics and policies[4] by challenging three pillars of a century-long Kemalist regime:

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[1] Radaelli, "The Domestic Impact of European Union Public Policy: Notes on Concepts, Methods, and the Challenge of Empirical Research," 108.

[2] Palier and Surel, "Analyser L'européanisation Des Politiques Publiques," 39.

[3] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Europeanization and the Mechanics of Economic Policy Adjustment," *European Integration Online Papers (EIoP)* 5, no. 8 (2001).

[4] Referring to the work of Tanja A. Börzel and Thomas Risse ("When Europe Hits Home: Europeanization and Domestic Change," *European Integration Online Papers (EIoP)* 4, no. 3 (2000).), several authors identify the policy, the polity (the political and constitutional structures) and the politics (the politics and electoral) as the main domains of Europeanization (François Bafoil and Yves Surel, "Européanisation Plurielle," in *L'européanisation d'Ouest en Est*, ed. François Bafoil and Timm Beichelt, Logiques Politiques (Paris: L'Harmattan coll, 2008), 299–328; Timm Beichelt, "Dimensions of Europeanization," in *L'européanisation d'Ouest En Est.*). However, there are several approaches on domains of Europeanization; in other words, on those that can be Europeanized. Christoph Knill and Dirk Lehmkuhl indicate beliefs and ideas, rules of the game and institutions as three main domains of Europeanization (Christoph Knill and Dirk Lehmkuhl, "How Europe Matters. Different Mechanisms of Europeanization," *European Integration Online Papers (EIoP)* 3, no. 7 (1999).), while Vivien Schmidt focuses on policies, practices and politics (Schmidt, "Europeanization and the Mechanics of Economic Policy Adjustment."). Besides, Palier and Surel insist on institutional frameworks in which public policies and attitudes of stakeholders, namely the social, economic, political actors, as well as governmental and non-governmental actors are shaped (Palier and Surel,

(1) the tutelage of civil and military bureaucracy over the politics which frames the Kurdish issue as a problem of security and terrorism, (2) the Turkish nation-state that is built on the monolithic Turkish identity and the denial and assimilation of other national groups including the Kurds and (3) the hyper-centralized unitarian state.

At the polity level, by providing the actors with a comparison of the European and national norms, institutions, and regimes, the process facilitated for the actors to criticize the civil and military tutelage regime over the politics and to normalize the political system in accordance with the parliamentary democratic system. Hence, the Europeanization process expanded political space in general and the scope of discussion for Kurdish issues in particular. As to the level of politics, until the 1990s, the Kurdish issue was seen as a problem of security and terrorism threatening the unity of the nation and the state; therefore, it was one of the topics on the agenda of the security forces, in particular, of the Turkish army. The EU, however, redefines the Kurdish issue as a problem of democracy and minority rights. The Kurdish issue thereby became a subject of the politics and a new determinative issue of election in Turkey with the Europeanization process. Finally, the policy level, it has created the need for a reform process concerning some cultural-linguistic rights, administrative reorganization at multiple levels and continued socioeconomic development. Therefore, taking into account the above-mentioned definitions, we can argue that, in the Kurdish scene, Europeanization denotes complex interactive processes of institutional, strategic and normative adjustments induced by the European integration, in which domestic actors use the integration process to reshape polities, politics and public policies.

Although the Europeanization process has its limits, it has provided considerable administrative and political resources for both central and local-regional actors to restructure

"Analyser L'européanisation Des Politiques Publiques."). In a similar approach, Risse, Cowles and Caporaso denote the policy structures and the system-wide domestic structures, i.e. the historical and cultural practices Antoine Mégie and Pauline Ravinet, "Coopération Intergouvernementales Et Processus D'européanisation: La (Construction Des Espaces Européens De La Justice Et De L'enseignement Supérieur," in *L'Europe En Action. L'européanisation Dans Une Perspective Comparée*, ed. Bruno Palier and Yves Surel, Logiques Politiques (Paris: L'Harmattan coll, 2007), 87–143.). In this regard, Radaelli conducted the most detailed and comprehensive work by indicating three areas of Europeanization: the national structure, public policy and normative and cognitive structures. The national structure includes the political structure (institutions, administration, intergovernmental relations, legal structure) and structures of representation and cleavages (political parties, interest groups and societal structures of cleavage). Second, the public policies refer actors, political issues, political styles, instruments and resources. Finally, cognitive and normative structures focus on discourse, norms and values, political legitimacy, identities, state traditions, policy paradigms, policy frameworks and national myths (Radaelli, "The Domestic Impact of European Union Public Policy: Notes on Concepts, Methods, and the Challenge of Empirical Research").

the balance of power and the political, institutional and legal systems at both central and local-regional levels. The central authorities and different Kurdish groups have taken varying stances on the Europeanization process according to their ideas, interests and institutions. Hence, I argue that the process carries different meanings for each group and, there were plural Europeanization processes in the same Kurdish scene. However, I can assert that the usage of Europeanization was the main tendency among all actors, despite their different ideological and political positions about the EU.

At this point, it will be useful to invoke the concept of "usage of Europeanization" developed by Sophie Jacquet and Cornelia Woll. Most of the works on the resources of Europeanization insist on the domestic impact of the European institutions and are most often attached to the postulate of the Community's constraint. In this matter, the concepts leaning on the misfit model developed by Börzel and Risse[1], neglect the significant role of the state and the non-state actors in the use of the European constraint. Conversely, the concept of the instrumentalization or usage of the Europeanization allows us to further deepen the analysis by concentrating on the resources and the mediation means of the national and European actors[2]. Sophie Jacquet and Cornelia Woll distinguish three types of the usage of the Europeanization: cognitive usage, strategic usage and usage for legitimization. The cognitive usage refers problematization and definition of solutions, and it means interpretation of context and distribution of ideas as vectors of persuasion. On the other hand, the strategic usage notices decision-making processes and it refers to the transformation of political practices and mobilization of resources for action. In this respect, the most studied examples are interest groups and social movements, which use European political and financial opportunities to bypass obstacles at the national level to act simultaneously at the national and European levels. Lastly, the usage for legitimization means use of European integration a way to legitimize public decisions[3].

In the Kurdish scene, most of the national groups, economic elite and Alevi groups have used Europeanization as a source of legitimacy, as a cognitive and normative reference, and a strategic leverage to bypass obstacles at the national level. The pro-Islamist groups are mostly Euro-skeptics (and also skeptics of the West) and do not support Turkey's accession

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[1] Börzel and Risse, "When Europe Hits Home: Europeanization and Domestic Change."

[2] Saurugger, *Théorie et Concepts de L'intégration Européenne.*

[3] Sophie Jacquot and Cornelia Woll, *Les Usages de l'Europe. Acteurs et Transformations Européennes*, Logiques Politiques (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004).

process to the EU. Yet, most of the pro-Islamist groups used the Europeanization process an organizational resource, and re-organized themselves in the public sphere by establishing new NGOs, newspapers, journals, and the like. Turkey's adhesion process to the EU contributed to the ongoing democratization process and relatively enlarged the freedom of association, the freedom of speech and etc. Despite these different pragmatic and self-seeking positions, Europeanization played a role of multi-level learning process for most of the actors.

Although the Europeanization process has provided significant resources for different Kurdish actors, it is important to note that it is neither the sole macro dynamic nor a linear, progressive process. First, I must highlight the fact that the different time periods of the process have had specific, individual effects on each actor. For instance, recognition of Turkey as a candidate for full membership coincided with the time when the leading Kurdish movement was passing a substantial ideological, political, institutional and strategic transformation in favor of the enlargement of the political sphere and the reconstruction of the Kurdish issue within democratic methods and measures after a long-standing armed conflict. Similarly, during the same period, the KH, the main Kurdish pro-Islamist movement in the Kurdish region – an illegal, armed group and in conflict with the PKK– was eliminated by the Turkish state. Despite its Euro-skepticism, this movement used the Europeanization process expanding freedoms of association and speech, supporting ongoing democratization in order to reorganize itself in the public sphere as a legal network of pro-Islamist NGOs, newspapers, journals and social movements.

The influence of the Europeanization process must also be analyzed with other macro constraints and resources. Within the Kurdish scene, it seems that there is a correlation between the decline of Europeanization process and the foundation of the IKR that has functioned as a quasi-state and restructured all the parameters about the Kurdish issue in Turkey since 2005. After the establishment of the IKR in 2003 and its stabilization in 2005, the Europeanization process became an irrelevant and ineffective dynamic for the actors. The IKR changes the main parameters of the Kurdish issue in Turkey by providing a new cognitive and normative frame, and immense economic and political resources to different Kurdish groups.

For instance, while the leading pro-Kurdish movement framed the Kurdish issue as a problem of democratization, minority and cultural-linguistic rights between 1999-2005 by referring to the Europeanization process, it re-framed the issue as a problem of territorial sovereignty after the establishment of the IKR, which presents a new politico-administrative

model sharing the sovereignty between different national groups regionally separated in Iraq. In addition to the influences of the IKR, it is important to note the EU's top-down approach during the process. EU gave the central authorities the role of the main negotiators and did not sufficiently include the local-regional Kurdish actors. Additionally, it framed the Kurdish issue as a matter of minority and individual cultural rights within the liberal perspective, excluding collective cultural rights and the politico-administrative issues. This approach caused the Kurdish groups to see the Europeanization process as an irrelevant dynamic and turn instead to the IKR model.

It is obvious that the concept of Europeanization cannot allow for the analysis of the influence of the other factors, such as globalization, geopolitics, purely domestic dynamics, and organizations or supranational institutions[1]. At this point, the debates on globalization can be illuminating in the development of a more sophisticated analytical frame.

5) Globalization: Multi-level and multi-dimensional system of action

The globalization process has multiple effects on most of the actors and processes, including Europeanization, the geopolitics of the Kurdish issue, the central state and the three Kurdish groups. Given the fact that globalization is a subject of broad debate, in this research I confined the issue with some basic aspects of globalization and their effects on the rescaling of the collective action of different Kurdish groups. In this matter, I must particularly note the global diffusion of ideas and global/transnational mobilization of the Kurdish groups thanks to the development of information technologies and the improved transportation infrastructure. This new multi-level mobilization of actors and diffusion of ideas construct actors and their ideas, interests and institutions.

In this regard, one must note the role of the Kurdish diaspora situated mostly in the European countries in the formation of different transnational Kurdish movements - the leading Kurdish movement and the Alevi communities in particular. The Kurdish diaspora constitutes a remarkable "de-territorialized" and "de-nationalized" transnational community[2] "within which networks of solidarity (national, regional, religious, or professional) compete,

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[1] Palier and Surel, "Analyser L'européanisation Des Politiques Publiques"; Bafoil and Surel, "Européanisation Plurielle"; Beichelt, "Dimensions of Europeanization."

[2] For a comprehensive discussion on this issue, see: Riva Kastoryano, "Vers Un Nationalism Transnational: Redéfinir La Nation, Le Nationalism et Le Territoire," *Revue Française de Science Politique* 56, no. 4 (2006): 533–553.

interact, and cover the European space"[1]. Therefore, the Kurdish diaspora does not constitute only a political and economic resource for the Kurdish movemnts, but also a resource of transnational multi-level networks influencing the Kurdish actors' ideas, interest and institution.

The emerging revolutionary developments in information and transportation technologies after the 1970s and the liberalization of many economies in the 1980s and 1990s are the two main aspects that shape the globalization process. This combination has given rise to international financial markets that are conducive to the growth of multinational companies[2], leading to radical worldwide transformations in economic, cultural, social and political systems. As Neil Brenner[3], one of the leading scholars in the study of state/space theories, points out, studies on globalization center around three issues: Some researchers stress the economic effects of globalization, such as the growing role of transnational corporations in the worldwide economy, the deregulation of finance capital, the expansion of foreign direct investment in all countries, the intensified deployment of information technologies, and the dissolution of the Bretton Woods monetary regime since the early 1970s[4]; others privilege the sociocultural and sociopolitical aspects of globalization and focus on various newly emergent forms of the collective identity based on the nation, religion, gender, class, and environment, as well as the political consciousness and the socio-cultural interaction beyond the national territorial boundaries thanks to the new information

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[1] Riva Kastoryano, "Citizenship, Nationhood, and Non-Territoriality: Transnational Participation in Europe," *Political Sciences and Politics* 38, no. 4 (2005): 694.

[2] Oswaldo De Rivero, *The Myth of Development: Non-Viable Economies and The Crisis of Civilization,* 2nd ed. (London: Zed Books, 2010), p. 28–50; Miguel Jimenez, "Global Change, Economic Restructuring and Labour Market Issues in Mexico City," *International Journal of Manpower* 21, no. 6 (2000): 464–480; *World Investment Report 2007: Transnational Corporations, Extractive Industries and Development* (United Nations, 2007), p. 3–32.

[3] Neil Brenner, "Beyond State-centrism? Space, Territoriality, and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies," *Theory and Society* 28, no. 1 (1999): p. 42.

[4] For this aspect of globalization, see: Robert Boyer and Daniel Drache, eds., *States Against Markets: The Limits of Globalization* (London: Routledge, 1996); Peter Dicken, *Global Shift: Mapping the Changing Contours of the World Economy,* 6th ed. (London: Guilford Press, 1991); Wim Ruigrok and Rob van Tulder, *The Logic of International Restructuring* (New York: Routledge, 1995); David Gordon, "The Global Economy: New Edifice or Crumbling Foundations?," *New Left Review* no. 168 (1988): 24–65; Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, *Globalization in Question: The International Economy and the Possibilities of Governance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996); Robert Wade, "Globalization and Its Limits: Reports of the Death of the National Economy Are Greatly Exaggerated," in *National Diversity and Global Capitalism,* ed. Susanne Berger and Robert Dore (Ithaca (N.Y.): Cornell University Press, 1996), 60–88.

technologies[1]; lastly, some authors concentrate on the spatial aspects of globalization, emphasizing the extended, deepened, and intensified interdependencies among geographically distant localities, places, and territories[2], as well as among actions, organizations, and institutions within and/or across different functional sub-systems, such as economy, law, politics, education, sciences, and sport in various spheres of the life[3].

Analyzing this process of transformation with regard to the regional collective action of the Kurdish groups, the most important matter is undoubtedly changing and multiplying scales of the construction of ideas, interests and institutions of public, private and associative actors in almost all domains. It is seen that the issue of "scale" is a key notion in the remarkably broad range of studies on globalization. Brenner, defining the globalization "as multi-scalar process of reterritorialization in which states play crucial roles"[4], highlights that researchers studying globalization "deploy a barrage of distinctively geographical prefixes - e.g. "sub-," "supra-," "trans-," "meso-," and "inter-," - to describe various emergent social processes that appear to operate below, above, beyond, or between entrenched geopolitical boundaries"[5].

Although there exists a broad debate on globalization and its effects on the issue of scale, it will be adequate to highlight three remarkable approaches. The first is the approach of public policy transfer which shows the limits of the theories or the concepts of Europeanization that generally limit national transformation with the influence of European

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[1] For this aspect of globalization, see Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Mike Featherstone, ed., *Global Culture* (London: SAGE Publications, 1990); Stuart Hall, "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity," in *Culture, Globalization and the World System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, ed. Anthony D. King, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 19–40; Warren Magnusson, *The Search for Political Space: Globalization, Social Movements, and The Urban Political Experience* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); Peter Marden, "Geographies of Dissent: Globalization, Identity and the Nation," *Political Geography* 16, no. 1 (1997): 37–64; Jan A. Scholte, "The Geography of Collective Identities in a Globalizing World," *Review of International Political Economy* 3, no. 4 (1996): 565–607.

[2] This definition is developed by Anthony Giddens in *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1990). See also Held, Democracy and the Global Order; and Anthony McGrew, "A global society?" in *Modernity and its Futures*, ed. Stuart Hall et al. (Cambridge:Open University Press, 1992), 61-116.

[3] Bob Jessop, "The Future of the State in an Era of Globalization," *International Politics and Society* 2003, no. 3 (2003): p. 114.

[4] Brenner, "Beyond State-centrism? Space, Territoriality, and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies," 41–2.

[5] Ibid., 39–40.

integration[1]. David P. Dolowitz and David Marsh define the public policy transfer as "the process by which the knowledge concerning the policy, the administrative arrangements, the institutions and the ideas in a (past or present) political system are used for the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions or ideas in a political system"[2]. This approach allows for the understanding of three characteristics of the transformations of domestic structures. First, it does not limit itself with public policies, but also includes institutional, cognitive and normative structures in a historical perspective. Second, it does not confine the sources of the domestic transformations with Europeanization, but widens the sphere of consideration to the global level. Finally, it insists on the interaction and the possibility of transfer between varying political systems.

The second is the approach of "multi-level governance", developed by political scientists Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks[3]. The concept of "multi-level governance" that resulted from the studies on newly emergent structures during the European integration process gives expression to the idea that the traditional public administration system – in which public authorities are the sole actors and the national level is determinative one – has changed; a new system has been constructed in which there are many interacting authority structures in the emergent global political economy, at both the vertical and horizontal levels[4]. At the vertical dimension, the national level has lost its decisive place and the authority is shifting not only from the national central state up to supra-national politico-economic authorities, but also down to sub-national establishments. Hence, a new united complex structure of the local, regional, national, transnational and supranational players has emerged, in which positions and functions of the sub-national and supranational authorities have been strengthened and increased. At the horizontal dimension, the public authorities have shared their power and responsibility with the private, associative and non-profit actors. This multi-

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[1] Saurugger, *Théorie et Concepts de L'intégration Européenne*; Dolowitz and Marsh, "Learning from Abroad: The Role of Policy Transfer in Contemporary Policy-Making"; Palier and Surel, "Analyser L'européanisation Des Politiques Publiques"; Bafoil, "Transfert Institutionnel et Européanisation. Une Comparaison Des Cas Est-allemand et Est-européens."

[2] David P. Dolowitz and David Marsh, "Learning from Abroad: The Role of Policy Transfer in Contemporary Policy-Making," *Governance* 13, no. 1 (2000): p. 5.

[3] Hooghe and Marks, "Unraveling the Central State, But How? Types of the Multi Level Governance."

[4] Bas Arts, Arnoud Lagendijk, and Henk van Houtum, eds., *The Disoriented State: Shifts in Govermentality, Territoriality and Governance* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009); Ian Bache and Matthew Flinders, eds., *Multi-level Governance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Vasudha Chhotray and Gerry Stoker, *Governance Theory and Practice: A Cross-Disciplinary Approach* (New York: Palgrava Macmillan, 2009).

level and multi-partner governance process, which acts both horizontally and vertically, has been advocated and promoted with the justification of democracy and efficiency in the deliverance of the public services[1].

Third, we can invoke the approach developed by the Bob Jessop, a British sociologist working on the state theory and political economy. He argues, "globalization is not a single causal mechanism with a universal, unitary logic but is multicentric, multiscalar, multitemporal, multiform, and multicausal"[2]. Although in this case, a space- and actor-based super-complex series of multiple processes produces different results in different places, he contends that a "Schumpeterian post-national workfare regime" (SPNWR) substitutes "the Keynesian national welfare state" (KNWS) in the most advanced capitalist economies[3].

Jessop highlights *six trends* of this process of transformation[4]. The first trend is *the denationalization of statehood*, which denotes rescaling the state power previously located at the national territorial level among local-regional, national, supra-national or international bodies.

The second is *de- and re-statization*, which contends that the boundaries between state and non-state apparatus and activities are being redrawn. In this process, destatization means that some of the particular activities previously performed by states have been transferred entirely to, or shared with, non-governmental, not-for-profit or private, commercial actors, institutions or regimes. This is generally named a transformation from government to governance and highlights the public-private-associative partnership. On the other hand, this partnership does not mean a one-way transfer of the power; it also includes a re-statization process, which denotes that some particular activities performed by non-state actors or institutions have been undertaken by the state power at different scales.

The third trend involves *the retreat of state* and the rise of a non-territorial form of political power that bypasses or circumvents state power. "The increasing importance of

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[1] François Bafoil, "Regionalization and Decentralization in Poland: A Europeanization Process in a Comparative Perspective," in *Regional Development and the European Union. A Coperative Analysis of Karabuk, Valenciennes and Katowice*, ed. François Bafoil and Ayhan Kaya (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2009), 61; Andrea Mairate, "The Added Value of the European Union Cohesion Policy," *Regional Studies* 40, no. 2 (2007): 167–177; *European Governance A White Paper* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, July 25, 2001).

[2] Jessop, "The Future of the State in an Era of Globalization," p. 32–3.

[3] Jessop, *The Future of the Capitalist State*.

[4] Jessop, "The Future of the State in an Era of Globalization," p. 36–9.

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international regimes for the relative stabilization of a globalizing economy and the rise of networks in an extra-territorial cyberspace that is allegedly beyond state control are two contrasting examples of this third trend"[1].

The fourth is the *re-articulation of the economic and extra-economic*, which emphasizes that the division of labor between the political and economic systems is being redefined. Unlike the Keynesian period, in the SPNWR, the economy is interpreted in a broad term and it stresses that social practices, institutions, functional systems, and domains of civil society affect economic competitiveness in the global market. This enlargement of the borders of the economic one expands the potential scope of state intervention and necessitates the redesign of the institutional forms and functions of the state to increase economic competitiveness.

The fifth trend is *re-ordering the political hierarchies and the internationalization of policy regimes*, which means the increasing importance of the international context, extra-territorial, trans-national or cross-border dynamics and processes for domestic state action, and policy ideas, policy designs and their implementation at the local, regional or national scales.

Lastly, the political communities on which political systems are based are being re-imagined and *new political communities* are being constructed in various ways. These take the form of new imagined nations seeking autonomy or control of a defined territory below, above, or transversal to existing national states; a global civil society based on cosmopolitan patriotism; new communities of interests defined by shared identities, interests, and values regardless of specific territorial location (e.g., globally organized communities based on gender, class, environment issue)[2].

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[1] Ibid., p. 38.

[2] For effects of globalization on state functions, institutional forms, and social life see also, Jessop, *The Future of the Capitalist State*; Jessop, "The Future of the State in an Era of Globalization"; Bob Jessop, "Capitalism and Its Future: Remarks on Regulation, Government and Governance," *Review of International Political Economy* 4, no. 3 (1997): 561–581; Brenner, "Beyond State-centrism? Space, Territoriality, and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies"; Neil Brenner, "Metropolitan Institutional Reform and the Rescaling of State Space in Contemporary Western Europe," *European Urban and Regional Studies* 10, no. 4 (2003): 297–324; Brenner et al., *State/Space: A Reader*; Michael Mann, "Has Globalization Ended the Rise and Rise of the Nation-state?," *Review of International Political Economy* 4, no. 3 (1997): 472–496; Michael Keating, "Rescaling Europe," *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 10, no. 1 (2009): 34–50; Michael Keating, "Thirty Years of Territorial Politics," *West European Politics* 31, no. 1–2 (2008): 60–81.

Discussing theories on the re-scaling of state power[1], multi-level governance[2], and public policy transfer[3], I emphasize that the ideas, interests and institutions of three Kurdish groups are shaped and reshaped in a new multi-scale and multi-dimensional system of action in the globalization process.

6) Mobilization of resources by the actors

After the discussion on the five dynamics as the macro constraints, in this section, I concentrate on the same five dynamics, yet this time as resources mobilized by the Kurdish actor at micro level. I must underline that the different Kurdish groups have mobilized each of these dynamics in a different manner and in different time periods. While the Kurdish economic elite and pro-Islamist groups have used the neo-liberal and religious qualities of the AK Party, respectively, to expand their roles in the current political sphere, the Alevi and national groups have seen the AK Party as a new obstacle confining their socio-political mobilization. However, after an eight-year experience, since 2010, the AK Party's Turkish nationalist characteristic has broken the cooperation with the Kurdish pro-Islamist and economic groups. This disappointment caused the pro-Islamist, and economic groups to become closer to the national groups.

Although the three Kurdish groups have welcomed the foundation of the IKR, it has a different importance for each group. While the IKR has provided a new normative and cognitive frame, a new political and national-cultural resource for the Kurdish national groups, it is essentially a new economic market for the Kurdish economic elite. As to the religious groups, the IKR provided the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups with a new political and pro-Islamic resource, while it does considerably matter neither politically nor economically for the Alevi Kurds in Turkey.

The Europeanization process has been used by all the Kurdish groups in different manners. Except for most of the pro-Islamist groups, other Kurdish groups supported Turkey's adhesion process to the EU. Although most of the pro-Islamist groups are Euro-

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[1] Brenner et al., *State/Space: A Reader*; Jessop, "The Future of the State in an Era of Globalization"; Jessop, *The Future of the Capitalist State*; Brenner, "Beyond State-centrism? Space, Territoriality, and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies"; Brenner, "Glocalization' as a State Spatial Strategy."

[2] Hooghe and Marks, "Unraveling the Central State, But How? Types of the Multi Level Governance."

[3] Saurugger, *Théorie et Concepts de L'intégration Européenne*; Dolowitz and Marsh, "Learning from Abroad: The Role of Policy Transfer in Contemporary Policy-Making"; Palier and Surel, "Analyser L'européanisation Des Politiques Publiques."

skeptics, they used the process a new organizational resource to re-organize themselves in the public sphere. On the other hand, the Alevi groups mobilized the process to expand freedom of association and freedom of religion to bypass the obstacles of the dominant Sunni-Islam politics of the Turkish state. The national groups used the process as a new cognitive and normative frame and a new political resource to gain strategic leverage in bypassing the obstacles of the Kemalist regime, which frames the Kurdish issue as a problem of security and terrorism threatening the unity of nation and state. Finally, the Kurdish economic actors used the Europeanization process as a new resource for political and economical stability, economic and politico-administrative liberalization, and a new way of integration into the international economic market.

As to the globalization process, it is firstly important to note the global diffusion of ideas thanks to the developing information technologies and global/transnational mobilization of the Kurdish groups by the transportation facilities. This new multi-level mobilization of actors and the diffusion of ideas inform all the Kurdish actors and their ideas, interests and institutions. Secondly, I must emphasize that all the Kurdish groups are transnational actors. In this matter, the Kurdish diaspora situated essentially in the European countries has an important influence on the national movements and Alevi Kurds. For instance, while the first state-owned Kurdish channel started to broadcast in 2009, the first Kurdish TV channel started to broadcast in Europe in 1995 thanks to transnational networks of the Kurdish diaspora and the satellite technology. Likewise, the pro-Islamist groups are also transnational actors. They do not have only transnational networks within the Kurdish diaspora, but also transnational relations with the pro-Islamist movements in other countries. As to the economic elite, they are the most trans-nationalized actor and have to realize their economic interests in a globalized market.

C - Time period: 1999-2013

After the description of the three Kurdish groups, the historical context and the four constraints/resources, I can now address the time period of the research. The time period of collective action by different Kurdish actors studied in this research covers the years 1999-2013. The year 1999 has been chosen as starting date because this year constitutes a turning point for the Kurdish issue in Turkey. After 1999, the context of the Kurdish issue was sharply and dramatically changed due to three interrelated significant events. The first is the capture of A. Öcalan on February 15, 1999 in an operation by Turkish and American forces.

This event caused significant ideological, political, strategic and institutional changes within Kurdish politics in Turkey. The PKK declared that it was ready to finish armed struggle and withdrew its armed groups out of Turkey's border. Criticizing its own ancient nationalist and state-centric ideological and political characteristics, it also announced that it would use democratic measures and methods to ensure the cultural rights of the Kurdish society in a "democratic republic". During the next five years, mainstream Kurdish politics, including both legal and illegal forces within the social, economic and political domains, had been reorganized at ideological, political and institutional levels according to new strategic goals which centered on democratization, multiculturalism and Kurdish cultural identity.

Additionally, the reorganization of the pro-Kurdish politics promoting democratic measures and methods were facilitated and accelerated given the significant success of the pro-Kurdish politics in the local election held in April 18, 1999. This new local government level of pro-Kurdish politics has enlarged the political sphere for pro-Kurdish politics at multiple levels since 1999. The pro-Kurdish civil society organizations' networks and public sphere have also extended thanks to the new existence of pro-Kurdish politics in both municipalities and special provincial administrations. Lastly, Turkey was recognized as a candidate state for accession at the Helsinki European Council in December 1999. Turkey's accession process to the EU was unquestionably a transformative power for polity, politics and policy changes in general – and for the Kurdish issue in particular – until recent years.

D - Three I Model: Ideas, Interests, Institutions

In this part, I concentrate on the main theoretical framework and analytical elements I will use to examine the interaction of three Kurdish groups who exist and behave in a historically constructed context, and mobilize different economic, political, religious and national resources at the national, European, global and geopolitical levels. Following the theory of constructivism arguing that "the reality is socially constructed"[1] and "all human 'knowledge' is developed, transmitted and maintained in social situation"[2], I rely on works of the sociology of collective action in general and the "Three I" (ideas, interest and institutions) model in particular. In the following sub-sections, I discuss the sociology of collective action,

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[1] Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (New York: Anchor Books, 1966), p. 13.

[2] Ibid., 15.

the "Three I" model and the constructivist institutionalism providing a comprehensive frame to analyze the interaction of the ideas, interests and institutions.

1) Sociology of collective action

The sociology of collective action predominantly centers on determinants and dynamics of collective action, which refers to "emergent and minimally coordinated action by two or more people that is motivated by a desire to change some aspect of social life or to resist changes proposed by others"[1]. The works on collective action try to answer three basic questions: the first concerns the origin of the emergent collective action and conditions under which the collective action develops; the second questions why one person come to take part in an episode of collective action while another does not; and the third centers on the impact of collective action and the factors of variation in its effects[2].

In the literature one can discern three main standpoints on the origin of emergent collective action: strain theories, resource mobilization and political process theory[3]. According to followers of the strains theories, collective action is usually a response to some form of severe strain on society. While the classical strain theories center on the psychological factors to analyze collective action[4], the contemporary strain theories such as Marxist analysis of collection action[5] or competition theories[6] underline the structural economic, ethnic and racial dislocations as principal factors. According to the resource mobilization theory formulated by John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald[7], on the other hand, the strains to not produce collective action itself, but rather the organizational capacity and resources required to do so. Lastly, stressing the political character and origin of emergent collective action, followers of the political process theory[8] concentrate on the power disparity

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[1] Doug McAdam, "Collective Action," in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, ed. George Ritzer (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 15.

[2] Ibid., p. 575.

[3] Ibid., 575–6.

[4] William Kornhauser, *The Politics of Mass Society* (New Jersey: Free Press, 1959).

[5] Jeffrey M. Paige, *Agrarian Revlolution* (New York: Free Press, 1978).

[6] Susan Olzak, *The Global Dynamics of Racial and Ethnic Mobilization* (Standford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

[7] John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, *The Trend of Social Movements in America: Professionalization and Resource Mobilization* (New Jersey: General Learning Corporation, 1973).

[8] Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (New York: Random Hause, 1978); Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge:

between "members" (those who enjoy routine access to power) and "challengers" (those who do not). They argue that emergent collective action is expected to develop among the latter group during the unstable periods when the established regimes are weakened, thereby creating new "opportunities" and "threats"[1].

As to the question on the factors made individuals to participate collective action, we can basically underline two main explanations: the first stresses individual factors, while the other emphasizes structural ones[2]. According to the individual explanation, individuals participate in collective actions due to their psychological characteristics, rational cost-benefit calculation, or a certain attitudinal affinity with the aims or values of the collective action. On the other hand, the structural explanation centers on an individual's structural/network location, such as prior ties to participants and memberships in organizations that put them "at risk" for participation. Besides, this approach underlines that "the overwhelming majority of emergent movements develop within *established organizations, institutions, or networks*"[3].

Lastly, previous works on the impacts of the collective action mostly center on social movements, underlining three mechanisms of collective action that have variable effects to change some aspects of social and political life under certain circumstances: disruptive protest, signaling and shifts in public opinion. Some argue that the impact of collective action depends on "negative inducements" that challenging groups can create by disrupting public order and threatening the realization of elite interests[4]. Others suggest that collective actions provide decision-makers with timely and meaningful information to better understand the policy preferences of people. Accordingly, the success of collective action depends on the ability to organize large, ideologically moderate public demonstrations[5]. However, some political scientists hypothesize that collective action does not work directly as a signal to

Cambridge University Press, 2011); Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University Of Chicago Press, 1999).

[1] Ibid.; Jack A. Goldstone and Charles Tilly, "Threat (and Opportunity): Popular Action and State Response in the Dynamics of Contentious Action," in *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics*, ed. Ronald R. Aminzade et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 124–154.

[2] McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 576–8.

[3] McAdam, "Collective Action," 578.

[4] Frances F. Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*.

[5] Susanne Lohmann, "A Signaling Model of Informative and Manipulative Political Action. American Political Science Review," *American Political Science Review* no. 87 (1993): 319–333.

change policy preferences of policy-makers. Rather, collective action first shifts public opinion and policy-makers accordingly modify their policy preferences to retain electoral support[1].

Previous works on the sociology of collective action show that there exist basically three main interrelated dynamics that affect the collective action. These are ideas, interests and institutions. Concepts such as "structural dislocation", "power disparity", and "structural/network location" show that most of approaches center on the institutional context to explain the dynamics of the collective action. On the other hand, given the fact that collective action refers to a conflict among groups having unequal power as the followers of political process theory and Marxist and competition theories contend, it seems that contentious interests constitute the core issue of collective action. Lastly, sharing aims, goals and values show the importance of cognitive and normative frames in analyzing collective action. Although the role of ideas, interests and institutions in policy, politics and polity changes have separately been discussed for a long time, the model of "Three I" has for the first time proposed to take these three dynamics as interrelated variables of analysis. In the next part, I discuss this model in a more detailed manner.

2) The "Three I" Model

The "Three I" model proposes that ideas, interests and institutions are the three main elements to be used in the analysis of public policy changes[2]. Although most works based on the "Three I" model center on public policy change, in particular on the welfare state, it is not limited to this field and is also applicable to domestic polity and politics changes as well as international relations. Scholars working on the "Three I" model generally refer to works of Peter A. Hall[3], Hugh Heclo[4] and Yves Surel[5]. However ideas, interests and institutions are

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[1] McAdam, "Collective Action," 579–80.

[2] Yves Surel, "Trois I," in *Dictionaire des politiques publiques*, ed. Laurie Boussaguet, Sophie Jacquot, and Pauline Ravinet (Paris: Presse de Sciences Po, 2010), 650.

[3] Peter A. Hall, "The Role of Interests, Institutions, and Ideas in the Comparative Political Economy of the Industrialized Nations," in *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, ed. Mark Lichbach and Alan Zuckerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 174–207. See also, Hall and Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms."

[4] Hugh Heclo, "Ideas, Interest, and Institutions," in *The Dynamics of American Politics: Approaches and Interpretations*, ed. Lawrence Dodd and Calvin Jillson (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 366–451.

[5] Yves Surel, "Idées, Intérêts, Institutions Dans L'analyse Des Politiques Publiques," *Pouvoir* no. 87 (1998): 161–178.

some of the main methodical elements of analysis since the early writings on sociology and they have long been used as analytical dimensions in social sciences.

Ideas, interests and institutions have been used as elements of analysis in different versions of the new-institutionalist works initiated by James March and Johen Olsen[1]. For instance, Peter A. Hall and Rosemary C.R. Taylor, in their article titled "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms", published in 1997, classify new-institutionalist works as Rational Choice New-Institutionalism, Historical New-Institutionalism and Sociological New-Institutionalism; each of these deals differently with role of ideas, interests and institutions.

According to Rational Choice Institutionalism, which centers on the game/conflict of interests, actors behave rationally and strategically to maximize their benefits. Institutions, meanwhile, provide actors with adequate information about other actors, mechanisms for implementing the agreements and penalties for non-compliance.[2] On the other hand, followers of the Historical New Institutionalism emphasize the influence of historically constructed institutions and argue that the rationality of the actors are limited by a world vision shaped by the institutional organization of an economic and political system that allows collective actions to privilege some interest while putting others at a disadvantage[3]. Finally, Sociological New-Intuitionalism centers on the cognitive and normative frames and stresses the importance of the ideas, values, norms, culture, legitimacy, system of symbols, and moral modes that provide actors different frames of interpretation guiding human actions. Underlying social legitimacy, this approach argues that the "rational" action is itself socially and culturally constructed and individuals do behave in accordance with the logic of social appropriateness rather than the logic of instrumentality[4].

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[1] James March and Johan Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organisational Basis of Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1989). See also, James March and Johan Olsen, "Elaborating the 'New Institutionalism'," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, ed. R.A.W Rhodes, Sarah Binder, and Bert A. Rockman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 3–20.

[2] Hall and Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," p. 942–6. See also, Kenneth Shepsle, "Rational Choice Institutionalism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, ed. R.A.W Rhodes, Sarah Binder, and Bert A. Rockman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 23–38.

[3] Hall and Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," p. 937–42. See also, Elizabeth Sanders, "Historical Institutionalism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, ed. R.A.W Rhodes, Sarah Binder, and Bert A. Rockman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 39–55.

[4] Hall and Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," 946–50.

In addition to these three new institutionalisms, the "constructivist institutionalism"[1] and the "discursive institutionalism"[2] that a number of scholars have recently used highlight the role of ideas and discourse in complex institutional changes.

By simultaneously taking these ideas, interests and institutions into consideration, the "Three I" model can provide a more systematic, integrated frame with analytical elements to understand changes in polity, politics and policy levels. There are not, however, many studies based on the "Three I" model and the existing works do not establish a sophisticated theory or explanation to analyze the interaction of ideas, interests and institutions. With regard to this matter, we can discern some effort of the neo-institutionalist scholars. Comparing three different versions of neo-institutionalism, Hall and Taylor argue that by relying on "calculus" and "cultural" approaches, each neo-institutionalism reveals a partial dimension of the human behavior and of institutional impact that can have on behavior. Although they do not present a clear analysis on the interaction and integration of the calculus and cultural approaches on which the three types of institutionalism are based, they suggest that two approaches are not incompatible, and can be somehow complementary to explain the human behavior and what the institutions do[3].

3) Constructivist institutionalism and "Three I" model

Constructivist institutionalism, as elaborated by Colin Hay, can be a useful theoretical approach and offer a systematic and integrated analytical frame to disclose the interaction of ideas, interests and institutions. Departing from historical institutionalism and refusing Hall and Taylor's explanation that it is a flexible combination of calculus and cultural approaches, Hay argues:

> "(A)ctors are strategic, seeking to realize certain complex, contingent, and constantly changing goals. They do so in a context which favors certain strategies over others and must rely upon perceptions of that context which are at best incomplete and which may very often prove to have been inaccurate after the event. Moreover, ideas in the form of

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[1] Colin Hay, "Constructivist Institutionalism," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, ed. R.A.W Rhodes, Sarah Binder, and Bert A. Rockman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 56–74.

[2] Vivien A. Schmidt, "Taking Ideas and Discourse Seriously: Explaining Change through Discursive Institutionalism as the Fourth 'new Institutionalism'," *European Political Science Review* 2, no. 1 (2010): 1–25; Vivien A. Schmidt, "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Discourse," *Annual Review of Political Sciences* no. 11 (2008): 303–326.

[3] Hall and Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," p. 950–7.

perceptions 'matter' in a second sense— for actors are oriented normatively towards their environment. Their desires, preferences, and motivations are not a contextually given fact —a refection of material or even social circumstance—but are irredeemably ideational, reflecting a normative (indeed moral, ethical, and political) orientation towards the context in which they will have to be realized"[1].

While historical neo-institutionalism emphasizes the historical continuity of the institutional complex, constructivist institutionalism centers on the institutional change[2]. Hay sees changes as products of strategic interaction of actors and the institutional context in which they are constructed, in other words, as products of the interaction between "institutional architects", "institutionalized subjects", and "institutional environments"[3]. Unlike historical institutionalism, constructivist institutionalism stresses not only "institutional path dependence", but also "ideational path dependence", whereby actors' perceptions about what is feasible, legitimate, possible and desirable are shaped not only by the institutional environment but also by existing policy paradigms and world-views[4].

Emphasizing the issues of "sequence" and "temporality", Yves Surel makes a noteworthy contribution to the discussion on the role of ideas, interests and institutions in policy changes. He argues that taking together the ideas, the interests and the institutions as three interrelated elements of the analysis does not mean that there is not a hierarchy between them. Each of the ideas, the interests and the institutions has a different weight in different sequences of the policy change process[5]. These sequences of the policy change process are the construction of the diagnostic of the problem, the elaboration of solutions, the adoption of measures, the implementation and the evaluation[6]. Additionally, Yves Surel (with Bruno Palier) claims that the ideas, the interests and the institutions have a different temporality. Paraphrasing the categories used by Fernand Braudel, they claim that the ideas change in a long time while the institutions do in intermediate time and the interests do in a short time[7].

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[1] Hay, "Constructivist Institutionalism," p. 63.

[2] Ibid., p. 60.

[3] Ibid., p. 64.

[4] Ibid., p. 65.

[5] Surel, "Trois I," p. 654.

[6] Bruno Palier and Yves Surel, "Les « Trois I » et L'Analyse de L'Etat En Action," *Revue Française de Science Politique* 55, no. 1 (2005): 25–7; Charles O. Jones, *An Introduction to the Study of Public Policy* (Belmont: Duxbury Press, 1970).

[7] Palier and Surel, "Les « Trois I » Et L'Analyse De L'Etat En Action," p. 29.

The "Three I" model provides noteworthy advantages for analyzing changes at the polity, politics, and policy levels, in spite of limited theoretical and empirical explanations on the interaction of ideas, interests and institutions. First, taking together ideas, interests and institutions as three interrelated elements keeps the analysis aware of the plurality of possible dimensions of changes, as well as of diverse causes of these changes[1]. Second, the model invites researchers to enlarge the frame of the analysis and to multiply hypothesis on different aspects of the studied process[2]. Third, it also allows us to take into account the issue of temporality and to prioritize the role of ideas, interests and institutions in each sequence of the process[3]. Last but not least, the mobilization of the three analytical elements makes it possible to combine different theoretical approaches centering on and prioritizing different aspects of the process[4] and to develop a more sophisticated and completed theoretical explanation.

E - Basic Hypotheses

Given the complexity of the Kurdish issue and the theoretical frame as it is presented as a graphical manner in the Schema 01 (see p. 44), I have several hypotheses for different levels and parts of the research. These are classified under the titles of the Kurdish region, the Kurdish issues, the conflicts, the negotiations, the consensuses, and the constraints and resources.

1) Main hypothesis

I postulate the hypothesis that the Kurdish groups have not achieved to build a common cognitive frame, shared interest and accepted rules for the establishment of a Kurdish political region in Turkey, despite their noteworthy efforts. It is evident that the divisions based on the national, religious and class-based dynamics among the Kurdish groups have constituted a grave obstacle on the way of consensus building process so far.

2) Kurdish Region: A Historical Construct

I hypothesize that the Kurdish region is a historical construct of the interaction of the Turkish nation-state and the centuries-long Kurdish sociopolitical mobilization. Although it was not recognized politically and administratively, there are relatively well-defined

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[1] Ibid., p. 8.

[2] Surel, "Trois I," 653.

[3] Ibid., p. 655.

[4] Ibid., p. 655.

cognitive, cultural, socioeconomic, as well as politico-administrative borders of the Kurdish region. Most of the Kurdish groups share a common memory about the destructive power of the Turkish state within the region. Additionally, the establishment of the Turkish-nation state after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the policy of neglect, denial and assimilation imposed on the Kurds have created a visible cultural region. Moreover, a century-long standing regional disparity and the chronic underdevelopment of the Kurdish region has added a socioeconomic border between the Kurdish region and other parts of Turkey. Finally, the two-century-long consistent emergency state and its region-specific political, administrative and military establishments created a *de facto* politico-administrative specific region. The Kurdish sociopolitical mobilization emerged essentially as reactions to these border-constructing politics of the Turkish nation-state. Although culturally and historically the Kurdish region refers to a larger geographic area, the politically constructed Kurdish issue essentially includes 15 provinces where there is a considerable sociopolitical and sociocultural mobilization of the Kurds.

3) Diverse Kurdish Issues

My third hypothesis concerns the existence of various Kurdish issues. There is not one single Kurdish issue, but rather that there are diverse Kurdish issues experienced by different Kurdish actors. There are various interactions between the central state and different Kurdish groups that have taken place through different historical and social constructs. These have diverse ideological and political orientations, ideas, interests and formal and informal institutions that have led to the construction of different Kurdish issues. Most Kurdish national groups define the Kurdish issue as a problem of territorial sovereignty, including national dimension. On the other hand, for most of the Kurdish religious groups it is essentially an issue of identity rather than the sovereignty problem. The economic elite are generally much more fragmented on the issue, though they underline the socioeconomic aspects of the issue more than national and religious groups. Despite internal divisions, all the Kurdish groups refuse the central state vision that continues to frame the Kurdish issue within socioeconomic and security dimensions, despite the last reform process initiated by the AK Party.

4) Conflicts

I have three hypotheses on the conflicts within the three Kurdish groups. First, ideational conflict dominates the interaction of the national and religious groups and limits

cooperation between them. Religion and nation play significant roles in the construction of politics in the Kurdish region, serving as the source of pro-Islamist, pro-Alevi and Kurdish nationalist politics, respectively. While the religious groups prioritize their Sunni-Muslim and Alevi identities, the leading Kurdish national groups – in particular the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK –mobilize the national identity dynamic with a conventional secularist perspective, which has so far left very limited political space to religious Kurds. Although the leading Kurdish movement represented today by the BDP-DTK has been trying to revise its orthodox secularist position on religion and build a new approach to the question of religion since the early 1990s, a highly modernist secularism still marks the ideological orientation of the movement. This has led to an uneasy relationship between the Kurdish national struggle and religious Kurds, preventing the movement from going beyond conjuncture-dependent revisions toward developing a more systematic, integrated, deeper and self-critical engagement with the question of religion in general, and with Islam in particular. On the other hand, relations between national and religious groups are limited by the negative collective memory among the Kurds about the armed conflict between the PKK and the KH, which most national Kurds view as an pro-Islamist group supported by the state to suppress the Kurdish national struggle through extra-judicial killings during the 1990s, as well as by the ultra conservative and anti-left characters of the most of the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups.

In this regard, it is important to note that relations between the Alevi Kurds and the Sunni-Muslim Kurds have been uneasy for centuries. Most of the Sunni Muslims see the Alevism as either a non-Islamic religion or as an "aberrant" or "deviant" sect of Islam, while the dominant perception among the Alevi Kurds regarding Sunni Muslims has been shaped by a history of victimization, assimilation, denial and violence that Sunni Muslims imposed on the Alevis. Despite its conjuncture-dependent and instrumentalist approach toward the question of religion, the leading Kurdish movement plays a bridge role between two religious communities that have had centuries-long contentious relations.

Second, the conflict of interest between national groups and economic actors limits their cooperation. The socialist legacy of the leading Kurdish movement and its anti-capitalist discourse keep the Kurdish economic elite from mobilizing to form a political Kurdish region. In addition to the ideological limits, it is important to note the class conflict between the leading BDP/DTK, which is a movement of the lower and middle classes, and the Kurdish upper class. The Kurdish lower and middle classes have suffered from a state socioeconomic policy that has caused regional disparities and have had uneasy relations with the Turkish

state for decades, whereas the Kurdish upper class has retained good relations with the state to guarantee its economic interests.

Third, the three Kurdish groups diverge on the politico-administrative form of the Kurdish political region, although there is a general consensus on the self-government issue. While the groups who define the Kurdish issue as a problem of cultural-national identity propose a local decentralization process, the groups who define the issue as a problem of territorial sovereignty beyond the identity dimension demand regional autonomy or a federal Kurdish region that is based on cultural geography. Therefore, I argue that there is a conflict on the subject of the institutional form of a possible Kurdish political region among the Kurdish blocs.

5) Negotiation and Consensus

I postulate another hypothesis concerning the negotiation amaong and between the Kurdish groups. The lack of umbrella organizations and mixed organizations builds limits the negotiation efforts among the different Kurdish groups. Despite the existence of some organizations, such as city council, development agencies under which the national and economic elite can negotiate, or TEV-KURD, under which the national groups out of the leading Kurdish movement come together, there has not been any umbrella organization that has included the majority of groups and allowed them to negotiate the controversial issues to produce common rules and build a political Kurdish region.

As to the established consensuses, I postulate three hypotheses concerning common normative and cognitive frame, shared interests, and accepted rules. At the normative and cognitive level, three Kurdish groups agree on three main issues. First, the Kurdish issue is not a problem of terrorism and security as the Turkish state has argued for decades, but rather a political problem. Second, the Kurds constitute a distinctive nation like Turks, and other nations. Third, the equality between the Kurds and Turks must be established.

At the level of interests, the Kurdish groups agree on several issues: a peaceful solution to the Kurdish issue; the constitutional recognition of the Kurdish nation; the collective cultural rights including the education in their Kurdish mother tongue; the rights to the self-government; a regional socioeconomic development; the development of the economic and political relations between the IKR (and also de facto autonomous Kurdish region in Syria) and Turkey; and Turkey's adhesion to the EU.

At the institutional level, the Kurdish groups have not achieved to establish accepted rules regarding the establishment of a Kurdish political region so far. However, there is some noteworthy progress to build accepted rules among the Kurdish national, religious and economic elites. These are the relative elimination of the political violence among the Kurdish groups; the consensus building processes within both the pro-Islamist groups and the groups who give a significant importance to the Kurdish national liberation issue; and the establishment of the umbrella organizations such as the KIAP and the Northern Kurdistan Unity and Solution Conference. Yet, the accepted rules within each platform is not stable, but a very recently established and provisory.

6) Constraints and Resources

In addition to the hypotheses on the interaction level of the three Kurdish groups, I put forward several hypotheses on the five constraints and/or resources.

a) History as a constraint and a resource

First, the actors and issues are not only the constructs of history, but also constructors of history. In other words, the relation between the past and the present is neither linear, nor unidirectional, nor actor-free; in contrast, it is interactive, bidirectional and actor-based. Three Kurdish groups and the institutional context in which their conflicts, negotiation and consensus occur are historical constructs. Additionally, each Kurdish group has different ideas, values, and symbols, which are also historical constructs. These produce and bring to the table different versions of the past in accordance with their present positions. For instance, the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups who define the issue as a problem of identity and assimilation policy use the history of the Turkification policy imposed on the Kurds, while the national groups who describe the issue as a problem of territorial sovereignty emphasize the centralization policy of the Ottoman modernization process and the destruction of the Kurdish local-regional governments.

b) Central State: A constructive and destructive power

Second, the central state intervention and its asymmetrical relations with local-regional actors play a crucial, constructive and also destructive role in the conflict, negotiations and the consensus of the in the Kurdish region. The AK Party government became a destructive force in the interactions of the Kurdish national and religious groups by reinforcing the loyalty of the religious groups with Muslim-brotherhood discourse to resolve the Kurdish issue until

2009. Yet the nationalist and statist qualities of the AK Party have been unmasked over the last three years and these characteristics of the pro-Islamist central state have forced the local-regional Kurdish pro-Islamist groups to question the Muslim-brotherhood policy and find a pro-Islamic way to resolve the Kurdish issue. This has brought them together with the national groups at least at the idea levels. The same analysis can be made for the intervention of the Turkish state in the relationship between the national groups and the economic elite.

c) Iraqi Kurdistan Region: A new frame for the Kurdish issue in Turkey

Third, by providing different Kurdish groups with a new cognitive and normative frame; new cultural, socioeconomic, politico-administrative and psychological resources; and constructing a new geopolitical constraint for the Turkish state, the IKR has dominated the Kurdish issue in Turkey since 2003. There has been rising cooperation between the Kurds of two states at multiple levels and in economic, cultural, political areas since the foundation of the IKR. The IKR provides all Kurds and the Turkish state and society a new cognitive and normative frame through its federal or quasi-state model developed in Iraq. It is also a new emerging market for the Kurdish and Turkish economic elite, which restructures their interests. Besides, it is a new source for the reproduction of the Kurdish language and cultural identity by a politico-administrative system assuring collective cultural rights. Moreover, it is a source of legitimacy and motivation for the Kurds who live in Turkey, Iran, Syria and all around the world. It is important to note the role of the flow of the information over the Internet, TV channels broadcasting by satellite across the borders, as well as newspapers, journals, and social media thanks to new information technologies.

The IKR has changed the normative and cognitive frame of the Kurdish issue in Turkey since 2003. For instance, the leading pro-Kurdish movement was discussing the Kurdish issue in the frame of the Europeanization process and "Democratic Republic" project, highlighting the democratization and cultural rights until 2005. However, since the establishment of the IKR, they advocate "Democratic Autonomy" which centers on collective cultural rights, including bilingual public administration services and education in Kurdish, political and administrative decentralization, and the sharing of state sovereignty.

d) Usage of Europeanization: A new multi-level resource

Fourth, the Europeanization process of Turkey was a new resource at multiple levels for the Kurdish actors between 1999 and 2005. Each Kurdish group differently utilized the

Europeanization process. The leading Kurdish movement used the Europeanization process normatively, cognitively, politically, and strategically. On the other hand, while most of the pro-Islamist groups are the Eurosceptic, they used the Europeanization process as a new organizational resource. Enlarging the political sphere and freedom of association, the Europeanization process provides pro-Islamist groups the opportunity to re-organize in the public sphere by founding NGOs, newspapers, journals, websites, and the like. Finally, for the economic elite, the Europeanization process means political stability and a new source of the multi-level governance. This process allows the economic elite to access a new decision-making process by participating in the NUTs, development agencies, city councils, and multi-stakeholder projects founded by the EU. Lastly, the Europeanization process provides a new multi-level learning process for the national groups and economic elite. Despite these different usages by the actors, in the Kurdish scene the Europeanization process is a temporary and limited resource. Although, the Kurdish groups found the Europeanization process a useful resource for bypassing obstacles at the national levels between 1999 and 2005, it became an irrelevant and ineffective dynamic after the stabilization of the IKR in 2005, which provided different Kurdish groups a new and more useful normative and cognitive frame and political and strategic resources to reconstruct their Kurdish issues.

e) Globalization: Multi-level and multi-dimensional system of action

As to the globalization process, it provides different Kurdish groups with a new multi-level and multi-dimensional learning process that affects their ideas, interests and institutions. First of all, the globalization process provides actors with new multi-level and multi-dimensional learning opportunities thanks to the new information technologies (Internet, TV channels broadcasting by satellites, social media and etc.). This process has also been changing the scales of interactions by cross-border economic, political, cultural and religious cooperation. Moreover, the leading Kurdish movement is a trans-national movement having different political, economic, social and cultural cross-border and supra-national networks. In this regard, I must particularly emphasize the Kurdish diaspora in the European countries and the USA. Like the national groups, the religious groups have cross-border and trans-national networks across European countries. Likewise, the economic elite does not seek their interest in a regional/national market, but in a globalized one.

The abovementioned hypotheses are verified in a detailed manner in the following chapters. In the next chapter, I present three Kurdish blocs, which are the main actors of the

Kurdish scene in Turkey in a historical perspective. This chapter concentrates on the historical construction process of three Kurdish blocs and will allow us to understand the distinctive qualities of each bloc and the historically constructed context in which they are acting and being constructed.

II - Chapter 2 Actors: Kurdish National, Religious and Economic Blocs

Introduction

In this chapter, I present three Kurdish blocs – the main actors within the Kurdish region in Turkey – in a historical perspective. These are Kurdish national, religious (both Sunni-Muslim and Alevi) and economic blocs. This presentation of the historical construct processes of the three groups, their distinctive qualities, and their interactions will enable a better understanding of different ideas, interests and institutions on the one hand and the historical background of current conflicts, cooperation, negotiations and consensuses in the Kurdish region on the other. Therefore, the diverse ideas, interests, institutions of the three blocs, as well as their interrelated construction processes, and the historical conflicts between them, are the principal subjects of this chapter.

Following a discussion of the constructivist approach, I present a theoretical frame for the construction of collective identities. Referring to the theoretical frames on "the ethnic groups", "boundaries", and "groupness" developed by F. Barth[1] and R. Brubaker[2], I argue that the collective identities are historical political constructs. Unlike Barth and Brubaker, I underline the decisive role of the state in the process of constructing collective identities. The states are not only ethno-political, but also religious and economic entrepreneurs. Therefore, I argue that three Kurdish blocs are interrelated political constructs.

After the discussion on the theoretical frame, I analyze the Kurdish national bloc, the main groups who constitute this bloc, including their distinctive characteristics and their interactions with other groups, within a historical perspective. In this regard, I give particular attention to the leading Kurdish movement, the most important and powerful group, which has represented a massive socio-political and socio-cultural mobilization in the Kurdish scene since 1980s. The transformation of the political discourse of the movement, with its left-wing heritage being shared with the Turkish left-wing political movements, its highly modernist secularist quality, its women's liberation discourse and mobilization, its lower and middle-

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[1] Fredrik Barth, "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. Introduction," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Cultural Difference*, ed. Fredrik Barth (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969), 09–38.

[2] Roger Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* XLIII, no. 2 (2002): 163–189.

classes-based social support, and the transnational and multi-dimensional mobilization are highlighted as distinctive qualities of the movement. This part is completed with a short presentation of other national groups, namely, the HAK-PAR, KADEP, ÖSP and TDŞK.

Second, I examine the religious bloc. I explain how the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups emerged within the Turkish counterparts as a periphery of Turkish nationalist, pro-Islamist groups after the 1950s. The Kurdish tariqats, the MGH and the NC constituted the three principal pro-Islamist groups in the Kurdish region until the 1990s. It is crucial to note that the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups fell under the influence of the Turkish pro-Islamist groups' cognitive frame based on three pillars: the anti-westernism, anti-communism and statism. Yet since the 1990s we have witnessed to the autonomization and radicalization of some Kurdish pro-Islamist groups, although the majority of these are still on the periphery of Turkish pro-Islamism. This part also includes the Kurdish Alevi groups that have been essentially constructed as a historical other of Sunni-Islamist rules and a powerful opposition to Turkish right-wing politics based on nationalism, conservatism, and Islamism. Therefore, the Turkish left-wing socio-political mobilization since 1960s, the Kurdish socio-political mobilization and identity politics since 1980s and the cultural and political mobilization of the Zaza identity since 2000s are underlined as three constructive elements of the Alevi groups.

Lastly, I discuss the historical process of constructing the Kurdish economic elite. Three dynamics are highlighted as the principal reasons of the weakness and center-dependence of Kurdish economic elites. These are the destructive economic effects of Armenian genocide on the Kurdish region, the construction of the Kurdish region as a peripheral economy, and the incorporation of the Kurdish ruling class into the ruling elite.

I conclude this chapter with three important results. First, it seems that Turkey's sociopolitical and socioeconomic context after 1950s, the period between the 1950s and the 1980s, in particular, has a remarkable influence on the current conflict, cooperation, negotiations and consensuses between and among the three Kurdish blocs. The distinctive qualities of the three Kurdish blocs, and their constant conflicts were mostly inherited from this period. Second, the Kurdish region is on the periphery of Turkey, both in economic and political terms. Although the Kurdish national bloc separated from the Turkish left-wing politics after the middle-1970s, the majority of religious (both Alevi and Sunni-Muslim) groups and the economic elite still constitute the peripheral actors in Turkey. This brings us to the third result: the Kurdish national bloc – and the leading Kurdish movement in particular –

has been constructed as an opposing bloc to both the Kurdish pro-Islamist (and also Alevi) bloc and the economic elite.

A - *Theoretical frame for the construction of collective identity*

Following the constructivist approach, in this chapter, I argue that the three Kurdish blocs are interrelated historical constructs. In order to analyze this process of constructing the identities of the different Kurdish actors, I articulate the frame that Frederic Barth presents in his work entitled "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries"[1], and Roger Brubaker's analysis on the construction of the "groupness" in his article entitled "Ethnicity Without Groups"[2]. Barth's approach allows us to concentrate on the socioeconomic and sociopolitical context in which actors behave, and the multi-level interaction of different ethnic groups. Besides, Brubaker invites us deal with the ethnicity and other collective identities as a construction process of group identity by problematizing the concept of a "group". While using their approaches, I also add the decisive role of state power into this process of constructing collective identities. I argue that the states are not only the ethno-political entrepreneur, but also religious and economic ones.

The frame that Barth presents in the above-mentioned article reminds that the ethnicity is a construct and must be understood within the social relations including different contradictions and conflicts. While noting geographical and social isolation as critical factors in maintaining ethnic diversities, Barth argues that "ethnic distinction does not depend on the absence of social interaction and acceptance", but is founded on interethnic contact and dependence[3]. The social system entails "social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories"[4].

According to Barth, in anthropological literature, the ethnic group is generally understood,

"to designate a population which (1) is largely biologically self-perpetuating, (2) shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms, (3) makes up a field of communication and interaction, (4) has a membership which identifies itself,

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[1] Barth, "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. Introduction,".

[2] Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups."

[3] Barth, "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. Introduction," 9.

[4] Ibid., 10.

and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order[1]."

Considering ethnic groups foremost as social organizations, Barth focuses on a fourth feature that underlines the interaction of different ethnic groups living in the same socioeconomic and sociopolitical system. According to the author, decisive dynamics that shape and sustain the existence of ethnic groups are not inter-group construction processes or historically existing cultural values, but rather constructed boundaries among the ethnic groups:

"The cultural features that signal the boundary may change, and the cultural characteristics of the members may likewise be transformed, indeed, even the organizational form of the group may change, yet the fact of continuing dichotomization between members and outsiders allows us to specify the nature of continuity, and investigate the changing cultural form and content[2]."

Brubaker's analysis of the ethnicity by problematizing the concept of "group" allows us to go beyond the frame that Barth presents. He underlines that "the group" is one of the few core concepts in sociology, political science, anthropology, demography and social psychology. It is also "fundamental to the study of political mobilization, cultural identity, economic interests, social class, status groups, collective action, kinship, gender, religion, ethnicity, race, multiculturalism, and minorities of every kind[3]."

Despite remarkable developments in the social theory, Brubaker argues that there exists a persisting strength of "groupism" that takes groups a "given", "substantial thing-in-the-world" in the studies of ethnicity, race and nationhood. He defines groupism as "the tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis"[4]. Accordingly, the tendency treats "ethnic groups, nations and races as substantial entities to which interests and agency can be attributed"[5]. Yet, Brubaker argues that what we mean by using the concept of the "group", in reality is a

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[1] Ibid., 10–1.

[2] Ibid., 14.

[3] Brubaker, "Ethnicity Without Groups," 163.

[4] Ibid., 164.

[5] Ibid.

constructed "groupness". Therefore, the ethnic group refers in reality to "ethnic groupness" constructed during political, social, cultural and psychological construction processes:

"Ethnicity, race and nation should be conceptualized not as substances or things or entities or organisms or collective individuals –as the imagery of discrete, concrete, tangible, bounded and enduring 'groups' encourages us to do- but rather in relational, processual, dynamic, eventful and disaggregated terms. This means thinking of ethnicity, race and nation not in terms of substantial groups or entities but in terms of *practical categories, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, discursive frames, organizational routines, institutional forms, political projects and contingent events*. It means thinking of *ethnicization, racialization* and *nationalization* as political, social, cultural and psychological *processes*. And it means taking as a basic analytical category not the 'group' as an entity but *groupness* as a contextually fluctuating conceptual variable[1]."

Elaborating on the above-quoted theoretical analysis, Brubaker reasons that ethnic groups are generally constructed by ethno-political entrepreneurs, including states or more broadly autonomous polities, political groups, political parties, social movement organizations, media institutions and religious organizations in order to mask the pursuit of clans, clique, or class interests[2]. By underlining the relational, processual, dynamic, and eventful qualities of the group(ness) in general and the ethnic group(ness) in particular, Brubaker proposes an illuminating analytical frame. Most importantly, he invites researchers to focus on the process and interaction of actors to analyze the construction of different collective identities like ethnicity.

To summarize, the conceptualizations of Barth and Brubaker underline the following points that provide us with a very useful analytical frame to examine the construction process of the three Kurdish blocs:

- The collective identities or the groups are not "given" or "for granted", but political constructs having dynamic borders. Therefore, they are not discrete, concrete, tangible, bounded, but rather relational, processual, dynamic, eventful and disaggregated.

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[1] Ibid., 167–8.

[2] Ibid., 174.

- The construction processes of the groups and collective identities do not depend on the absence of social interaction and acceptance, but are rather founded on inter-group contact and dependence.

- The interaction of groups occurs in a socioeconomic, sociopolitical and cultural context that is constituted by the social processes of exclusion and incorporation. These social processes structure asymmetrical relations of power by distributing sources unevenly across social groups so as to privilege some interests while demobilizing others.

- The interaction with the "other" or "others" has a remarkable role in the construction of the collective identities and the groups.

- The collective identities and the groups generally are constructed by the socio-political entrepreneurs including states or more broadly autonomous polities, political groups, political parties, social movement organizations, media institutions, religious organizations and the like.

Alongside the above-mentioned point, I must add the decisive role of state power in the construction of collective identities, and the groups. The state plays a critical role in the construction of social relations based on the ethnic, racial and national diversities[1]. The state is the most powerful ethno-political entrepreneur and constructs ethnic groups within society, including different cultural and linguistic groups. In this respect, the process of constructing the nation-state can be seen as a process of constructing unequal ethnic groups. Thanks to its despotic and infrastructural power[2], the state constructs one (or more than one) ethnic group that forms its main supporter base, and excludes and suppresses others. This "otherization" process by the state power mostly provokes the parallel constructions of other ethnic groups by ethno-political entrepreneurs[3]. I can add that the state is not only an ethno-political entrepreneur, but also a religious, class and gender entrepreneur. The political entrepreneur

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[1] John Solomos and Les Back, "Marxism, Racism, and Ethnicity," *American Behavioral Scientist* 38, no. 407–420 (1995): 407–420.

[2] Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," *European Journal of Sociology* 25 (1984): 185–213.

[3] Abbas Vali's book discussing the mutual construction process of the Kurdish and Persian ethnic identities presents a noteworthy example of the ethno-political entrepreneur quality of the state. Abbas Vali, *Kurds and State in Iran: The Making of Kurdish Identity* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011). See also, Vali, "Genealogies of the Kurds: Constructions of Nation and National Identity in Kurdish Historical Writing"; Denise Natali, *The Kurds And the State: Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey, And Iran* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2005).

quality of the state has a critical role in the construction of gender, ethnic, religious, and class relations.

Following the above-mentioned theoretical frame, I discuss the historical construction processes of the Kurdish national, religious (including both Sunni-Muslim and Alevi), and economic blocs, as well as their distinctive qualities and interactions, respectively.

B - The Kurdish national bloc

The Kurdish national bloc refers to the secular Kurdish political groups in which BDP-DTK, and PKK-KCK constitute the leading groups, representing a wide political mobilization in economic, social and cultural domains. The bloc contains three other pro-Kurdish parties (KADEP, HAK-PAR, and ÖSP), and several secular political groups, such as the TDŞK.

Before going further, I must clarify why I use the adjective "national" for this bloc, rather than other terms – "nationalist" in particular. Many scholars classify these groups and their multiple mobilizations as "nationalist"[1]. However, the term "nationalist" is an ambiguous adjective, and to some extent a risky qualification that masks different kinds of social and political mobilization processes in different historical and socioeconomic contexts[2]. Moreover, the leading Kurdish movement has constantly criticized the nationalisms

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[1] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 397–495; Bozarslan, *Conflit kurde: Le brasier oublié du Moyen-Orient*; A. Kemal Özcan, *Turkey's Kurds: A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Öcalan* (London: Routledge, 2006), 198–201; Robert Olson, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movements in Turkey, 1980 to 2011* (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2011); David Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Opportunity, Mobilization, and Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Paul J. White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers?: The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey* (New York: Zed Books, 2000); Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 24.

[2] For instance, discussing the leading scholars' interpretations of the nationalism, Antoine Regor mentions eight principal kinds of nationalism according to a classification based on two axes and four parameters. These are "the principal of domination" and "the principle of cohesion" on the first axis; and "the evolutions of structures" and "the strategies of the actors" on the second axis. The principal approaches on the nationalism are "A logic of cultural homogenization" (Ernest Gellner), "A logic of social communication" (Karl W. Deutch), "A logic of social emancipation" (Miroslav Hroch), "A logic of recycling identity" (Eric Hobsbawm), "A logic of cultural re-foundation" (Anthony D. Smith), "A logic of cultural interaction" (Louis Dumont), 'A logic of political demand" (John Breuilly and Paul Brass), and "A logic of political legitimation" (Guy Hermet and Liah Greenfeld). See, Antoine Roger, *Les Grandes Théories Du Nationalisme* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2001). For different kinds of the nationalism, see also, Lloyd Cox, "Nation-state and Nationalism," in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, ed. George Ritzer (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 3143–3152; Alain Dieckhoff and Christophe Jaffrelot, eds., *Repenser Le Nationalisme: Théories et Pratiques* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2006); Athena S. Leoussi, "Nationalism," in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, ed. George Ritzer (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 3152–3158; Susan Olzak, "Ethnic, Racial and National Movements," in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, ed. George Ritzer (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 1465–1475.

constructed on ethnicity or cultural identity since the 1970s. Unlike the petite bourgeois nationalisms, the leading Kurdish movement, as a national liberation movement, has constructed the issue not on the basis of cultural/ethnic identity, but rather on class and ideology[1]. Lastly, frequently highlighting that they are not nationalist, the leading Kurdish movement has justified its ideological and political transformation with a radical critique of state-centrism, the nation-state, and nationalism since 1999[2].

I prefer to classify secular Kurdish movements as "national" for three reasons. First, most secular Kurdish movements took root before the 1980s, when the majority of the movements were arguing that Kurdistan was a colony[3]. They were advocating the right of nations to self-determination and framing the problems of Kurds as a national liberation issue within a Marxist-Leninist discourse[4]. Second, I prefer to respect the self-identification of the actors. Although, the colonialism and the rights to self-determination are not the dominant discourse on the Kurdish issue today, most of the secular Kurdish movements still describe the problems of the Kurds as a national issue, i.e., the liberation of the Kurdish nation. The political projects, such as the regional autonomy or the federation for the settlement of the issues that these groups propose, essentially underline the "national" right of the Kurds with different liberal, classical nationalist and socialist references. Last but not least, the BDP-DTP/PKK-KCK, the most important and powerful actors in the Kurdish region, does not describe the Kurdish issue only as "a national issue", but also as "a social liberation issue". That is to say, the national issue does not refer only to the language, culture, and the self-governance rights of the Kurds, but also covers the decades-long political domination, socioeconomic exploitation, women's liberation, and socio-psychological elements such as humiliation, dishonor, and second-class citizenship.

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[1] For instance, one cannot find a single reference about culture or ethnicity in the initial manifesto of the PKK. See, Abdullah Öcalan, *Kürdistan Devriminin Yolu (Manifesto)*, 6th ed. (Köln: Weşanên Serxwebûn, 1993).

[2] For a noteworthy analysis on the ideological transformation of the PKK after 2000s, see, Ahmet H. Akkaya and Joost Jongerden, "Reassembling the Political: The PKK and the Project of Radical Democracy," *European Journal of Turkish Studies (Online)* no. 14 (2012), http://ejts.revues.org/4615.

[3] İsmet G. İmset, *PKK: Ayrılıkçı Şiddetin 20 Yılı (1973-1992)*, 7th ed. (Ankara: Turkish Daily News Yayınları, 1993), 26–7.

[4] For a brief history of Kurdish socialist movements between 1971-1980, see, "1971-1980 Arasında Kürt Sorunu," *Sosyalizm Ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi 7. Cilt* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1988); İmset, *PKK: Ayrılıkçı Şiddetin 20 Yılı (1973-1992)*, 405–443.

At this point, it is crucial to clarify the concept of "national". By using this concept, I refer neither to "ethnicity"[1] in terms of a minority or sub-nation category[2], nor "nationalism" in a narrow sense[3] (the petit bourgeois/primitive nationalism in the PKK jargon). Although I do not use "national" as equivalent of "nationalist", the national bloc includes some classical nationalist groups like the KADEP. Therefore, it is important to note that I use the concept of "national" as an analytical tool in a broad and flexible sense. However, in this research, the national bloc at the last analysis denotes the Kurdish groups that imagine the Kurds as a distinctive nation beyond "the ethno-linguistic (Zazakî, Kurmancî and Soranî), and ethno-religious (Sunni, Alevi and Shiite) communities[4]"; and claim national rights for the Kurds. They do not describe these rights within a religious frame, but within modernist, secular, left-wing, or social democratic frames.

After these critical remarks, I can now move on to the main groups who constitute the Kurdish pro-ethnic bloc. These are BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK, HAK-PAR, KADEP, and several political groups.

1) The leading Kurdish Movement (BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK)

BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK is the leading Kurdish movement in Turkey. This group represents plural and massive socio-political and socio-cultural mobilizations at local, regional, national, transnational and international levels. The BDP, DTK and PKK-KCK do not formally constitute a single and united organization, however; they are different institutional forms of the same political movement, representing similar ideas and interests. Although there is not a direct and organic relationship between the BDP-DTK and the PKK-KCK, they can, in a broad sense, be classified as the legal and illegal branches of a single Kurdish movement respectively.

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[1] Thamos Hylland Eriksen, *Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Antropology*, 2nd ed. (London: Pluto Press, 2001), 261–274; Barth, "Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. Introduction,".

[2] For a discussion on the relationship between the ethnicity and minority issue, see, Eriksen, *Small Places, Large Issues: An Introduction to Social and Cultural Antropology*, 275–293.

[3] For a more detailed discussion on the ethnicity, nation and nationalism, see, Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998).

[4] Bozarslan, "Some Remarks on Kurdish Historiographical Discourse in Turkey (1919-1980)," 39.

a) From an independent and united Kurdistan to democratic autonomy

The PKK, also known today as KCK, founded in 1978 as a Marxist-Leninist national liberation organization, and has been fighting an armed struggle against the Turkish state since 1984. The initial political goal of the PKK was to establish an "independent, united and democratic Kurdistan" including entire Kurdish lands in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria through "a national democratic revolution" by a "revolutionary force". A socialist Kurdistan will have followed this national democratic revolution[1]. However, the PKK has re-organized itself at the levels of ideas, interests and institutions several times as a result of the interaction of external and internal dynamics since 1984[2]. Embarking as a separatist armed organization, the PKK backed down this original goal and announced that it sought "a solution within Turkey" to the Kurdish issue after the 1990s[3]. While the movement and the Turkish state discussed a federative solution during the 1990s, the PKK proposed to re-establish the Turkish state as a new "democratic republic" basing on the a European-style democratic system ensuring cultural and linguistic rights of the Kurds after the capture of its leader[4].

Whilst Öcalan labeled all the forms of territorial sovereignty – such as federation, regional autonomy, and an independent Kurdish state – as backward solutions for the justification of "democratic republic" project[5], he has advocated a democratic autonomy since 2007. Democratic autonomy, which can be seen as a form of regional autonomy, essentially centers on collective cultural rights including bilingual public administration services and education in Kurdish, political and administrative decentralization, and the sharing of state sovereignty[6]. However, there are several noteworthy critiques: the democratic autonomy project is unclear about the scale (81 provinces, or several region -7, 15, 20, 25- in

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[1] Öcalan, *Kürdistan Devriminin Yolu (Manifesto)*, 115–134.

[2] Marlies Casier and Joost Jongerden, "Understanding Today's Kurdish Movement: Leftist Heritage, Martyrdom, Democracy and Gender," *European Journal of Turkish Studies (Online)* no. 14 (2012), http://ejts.revues.org/4656; Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 24–5.

[3] Cengiz Çandar, *"Leaving the Mountain": How May the PKK Lay down Arms? Freeing the Kurdish Question from Violence* (İstanbul: TESEV, 2012), 31; Altan Tan, *Kürt Sorunu* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2011), 365–379.

[4] Abdullah Öcalan, *Declaration on the Democratic Solution of the Kurdish Question* (London: Mesopotamian Publisher, 1999); Abdullah Öcalan, *Sümer Rahip Devletinden Demokratik Uygarlığa : AİHM Savunmaları Cilt II* (Köln: Mezopotamya Yayınları, 2001).

[5] Öcalan, *Declaration on the Democratic Solution of the Kurdish Question*; Öcalan, *Sümer Rahip Devletinden Demokratik Uygarlığa: AİHM Savunmaları Cilt II*.

[6] Democratic Society Party, *Democratic Solution to the Kurdish Question*.

Turkey or a single Kurdish region); doesn't have a defined base (cultural-ethnic, socioeconomic or geographic boundaries) of decentralization; there remain questions as to the responsibility and power of new autonomous politico-administrative entities[1]. Despite these uncertainties, the constitutional recognition of Kurds; education in the Kurdish language for the reproduction of Kurdish cultural identity; self-government; and a radical participatory democracy based on the self-organization of people at the neighborhood, county, district, city and regional levels are four vital aspects of this political proposal[2].

b) Left-wing heritage

At the level of idea, the second important issue is the fact the PKK has a radical Marxist-Leninist left-wing heritage[3]. Most of Kurdish national liberationist movements inspired the rising of both Kurdish nationalist party PDK in Iraq[4] and diverse Turkish left-wing movements in the 1960s[5]. Like other Kurdish national liberationist movements, the PKK emerged from the Turkish revolutionary left-wing movements in 1970s[6]. However, the Kurdish left-wing movements including the PKK took their own separate ways because of the different theoretical orientations and contentious political analyses on the issues of imperialism, colonialism, inner-colonialism, and Kurdistan; and irreconcilable strategic

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[1] Mesut Yeğen, *Son Kürt İsyanı* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), 93–100.

[2] Ibid., 99; Joost Jongerden and Ahmet H. Akkaya, *PKK Üzerine Yazılar* (İstanbul: Vate, 2012), 145–203.

[3] Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 21–2.

[4] Kurds of Turkey were effected by Kurdish revolt started in Iraq in 1961. The establishment of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (PDK) in Turkey clearly shows this influence. See: Hamit Bozarslan, *Conflit kurde: Le brasier oublié du Moyen-Orient* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2009), 48–54.

[5] White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers?: The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey,* 129–161; Hamit Bozarslan, "Between Integration, Autonomization and Radicalization. Hamit Bozarslan on the Kurdish Movement and the Turkish Left," *European Journal of Turkish Studies (Online)* no. 14 (2012), http://ejts.revues.org/4663; Bozarslan, *Conflit kurde. Le brasier oublié du Moyen-Orient*; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 405; Tarık Z. Ekinci, *Kürt Siyasal Hareketinin Sınıfsal Analizi* (İstanbul: Sosyal Tarih Yayınları, 2011), 60–8; van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 32; Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 14–5.

[6] Akkaya and Jongerden, "Reassembling the Political: The PKK and the Project of Radical Democracy"; Joost Jongerden and Ahmet H. Akkaya, "The Kurdistan Workers Party and a New Left in Turkey: Analysis of the Revolutionary Movement in Turkey through the PKK's Memorial Text on Haki Karer," *European Journal of Turkish Studies (Online)* no. 14 (2012), http://ejts.revues.org/4656; Casier and Jongerden, "Understanding Today's Kurdish Movement: Leftist Heritage, Martyrdom, Democracy and Gender"; Özcan, *Turkey's Kurds: A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Öcalan*, 73–119; Michael Gunter, *The Historical Dictionary of the Kurds* (Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2004), 119–121; İmset, *PKK: Ayrılıkçı Şiddetin 20 Yılı (1973-1992)*, 11–46.

goals[1]. Yet, this left-wing ideological and political orientation has remained as one of the distinctive qualities of the PKK so far.

The first manifesto of the movement clearly presents this left-wing heritage, in which the PKK examines the political economy of the Kurdistan by a Marxist analysis of the colonialism. For instance, in the manifesto, the PKK argues that against the repressions and exploitations of the Turkish colonialism and its feudal compradors, saying the national democratic revolution will be possible "only under the condition that a political organization is founded under the guidance of scientific socialism; that a national liberalization front functions under the leadership of this political organization; and that a fighting people's army operates in association with this front"[2].

The socialist legacy of the movement continued until the beginning of the 1990s, when it became a massive sociopolitical and sociocultural people's movement. While the populist character of the movement became more visible during the 1990s, the PKK began to establish its own ideological identity and socialist understanding, which is sometimes called "Apoism" by its members[3], and some pro-Islamist groups[4] after the collapse of the socialist bloc in 1991. This ideological re-foundation accelerated after the capture of Öcalan in 1999[5] and continued until 2005. As the aim of this chapter is not to analyze this transformation[6], I simply underline the main elements of this ideological reconstruction of the movement. These

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[1] Aliza Marcus, *Blood and Belief: The PKK and The Kurdish Fight for Independence* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 15–32; Yeğen, *Müstakbel Türk'ten Sözde Vatandaşa Cumhuriyet Ve Kürtler*, 174–181; Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 24–5; İmset, *PKK: Ayrılıkçı Şiddetin 20 Yılı (1973-1992)*, 26–7.

[2] Öcalan, *Kürdistan Devriminin Yolu (Manifesto)*, 122.

[3] Jongerden and Akkaya, *PKK Üzerine Yazılar*, 80.

[4] Hüseyin Yılmaz, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 25, 2012; Sıtkı Zilan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 14, 2011.

[5] H. Bozarslan anaylzes this ideological transformation as a result of "the crise of the Kurdish nationalism" that it faced after the fall of the Belin Wall. Bozarslan argues that the Kurdish nationalism legitimates its particularity with a universal discours and imaginary. Bozarslan, *Conflit kurde: Le brasier oublié du Moyen-Orient*, 23–4.

[6] There are two interpretations of this transformation. According to the first interpretation, the PKK abandoned its original goal. The second interpretation, on the contrary, describes this transformation as a project of radical democracy, based on the conception of "politics beyond the state, political organization beyond the party, and political subjectivity beyond class". For an extreme example of these interpretations, see following references, respectively: Mahsum H. Pir, *Bir Yanılsamanın Sonu / Uluslararası Karşı-Devrim Hareketi, Teslimiyet Ve Tasfiyecilik İle* (İstanbul: Komal Yayınları, 2001); Akkaya and Jongerden, "Reassembling the Political: The PKK and the Project of Radical Democracy."

are socialism, women's emancipation, and social ecology[1]. The movement refers to this new perspective as "the democratic, ecologic, gender-libertarian society paradigm" and "scientific democratic socialism" in the KCK Contract[2].

c) Highly modernist secularist quality

It is crucial to note that the left-wing political and ideological orientation of the PKK-KCK embraces a highly modernist secularism that limits the capacity of the movement to cooperate with Kurdish religious groups. Until the 1990s, the PKK had an orthodox secularist stance on religion, defining religion roughly as an anachronistic and backward issue that is mobilized as counter-revolutionary dynamic by the state, and will gradually disappear from social life during the modernization process. However, the PKK has been trying to build a new approach to the question of religion since the early 1990s[3]. The aggressive emergence of the KH, which most Kurdish national groups and their supporters view as an Islamist group supported by the state to suppress the movement through extra-judicial killings, and the transformation of the Kurdish movement from a small left-wing armed group into a massive populist movement by the participation of millions of Kurds, compelled the movement to revise its orthodox secularist stance on religion during the 1990s. During this period, the movement's leadership declared Islam to be a religion of justice against all kinds of oppression and tried to accommodate pro-Islamist Kurds[4] as well as other religious groups such as the Yezidis and Alevis into its frontal activities[5].

This politics was interrupted when the leader of the PKK was captured in 1999. Between 1999 and 2004, the leading Kurdish movement was trying to negotiate a "peace

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[1] Social ecology, founded by American libertarian socialist Murray Bookchin, proposes a reconstructive, ecological, communitarian and ethical approach to society. It promotes a directly democratic, confederal politics to alter hierarchical modes of social organization causing current ecological and social problems. Social ecologists propose to establish more mutualistic social structure to ensure diversity, creativity and freedom in the society. See, Murray Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emeergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005).

[2] The KCK Contract is the principal official document of the movement. Some describe the KCK Contract as a Constitution of the parallel state in the Kurdish Region because of its content. The Contract is accessible at the following address: http://www.ankarastrateji.org/_files/1110201152912-YLB6Z.pdf, retrieved January 28, 2012.

[3] Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*.

[4] İmset, *PKK: Ayrılıkçı Şiddetin 20 Yılı (1973-1992)*, 179–184.

[5] For a detailed discussion, see Hisyar Ozsoy, "Between Gift and Taboo: Death and the Negotiation of National Identity and Sovereignty in the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey" (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Texas, 2010).

project" with the secularist Kemalist establishment to "democratize the Republic". Yet in this process, the distance between the Kurdish movement and pro-Islamist Kurds widened. Pro-Islamist Kurds committed to the Kurdish movement met Öcalan's claim that the Kurds would guarantee the secularism within a "Democratic Republic" with anxiety, anger and disillusionment. The informal "peace negotiations" with the Kemalist establishment came to a halt in 2004, when the PKK ended the ceasefire it had initiated in 1999. And in the last few years, we have witnessed a kind of return to the movement's approach to religion and Islam in the 1990s, but in a different historical and political context. The Kurds are no longer struggling against the traditional state apparatus dominated by Kemalist cadres. Now the rival is the AK Party, which has integrated Turkey and Turkish Islamism into neoliberal globalization and, in the process, marginalized the Kemalists politically. However, in spite of such these often instrumental and sporadic efforts, a highly modernist secularism still marks the ideological orientation of the movement (I discuss this issue in a detailed manner in the next chapter)[1].

d) Kurdish women's movement

Given that the gender issue is one of the major topics determining the interaction of the religious and secular movements, gender politics can be underlined as another "distinctive characteristic" of the leading Kurdish movement. The movement has been successful in "mobilizing women in masses" in a society where patriarchal attachment keeps women at home[2]. The modernist, secular and left-wing qualities of the PKK emphasize gender inequality and interrelate societal-national liberalization and gender emancipation. These facilitate women's participation in the Kurdish movement at multiple levels[3].

Several works on the gender issue and nationalism show that gender relations constitute one of the principal dynamics constructing ethnic or national identities and related political projects[4]. Like other anti-colonial nationalist liberalization struggles, the PKK initially

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[1] I discussed in a more detailed manner the highly modernist secularist quality of the leading Kurdish movement and pro-Islamist challenges in the following article: Cuma Çiçek, "The pro-Islamist Challenge for the Kurdish Movement," *Dialectical Antropology* 37, no. 1 (2013): 159–163.

[2] Handan Çağlayan, "From Kawa the Blacksmith to Ishtar the Goddess: Gender Constructions in Ideological-Political Discourses of the Kurdish Movement in Post-1980 Turkey," *European Journal of Turkish Studies (Online)* no. 14 (2012), http://ejts.revues.org/4657.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Handan Çağlayan, *Analar, Yoldaşlar, Tanrıçalar: Kürt Hareketinde Kadınlar Ve Kadın Kimliğinin Oluşumu*, 3rd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), 23; Tan, *Kürt Sorunu*, 375–6.

instrumentalized the gender inequality issue and mobilized women to construct a "modern" and secular Kurdish nation-state. Kurdish women have been, on the one hand, the principal actor reproducing Kurdish cultural identity and transferring it to the new generations. On the other hand, they have been the symbol of the new modern Kurdish society being constructed on "wreckages"[1] of the traditional society, excluding women from the public sphere. However, alongside many other dynamics, the mass mobilization of Kurdish women at multiple levels, including armed struggle, legal political party, social movements, NGOs, media, local and national parliaments, allowed them to bypass this instrumentalist approach and become one of constructive and determinative groups of the leading Kurdish movement after 1990s[2]. As a matter of fact, the PKK-KCK has provided Kurdish women with a "transformative path" to not only participate in the "national" liberalization process, but also to bypass social, cultural, religious and economic obstacles of the traditional society.

The Kurdish women's movement today constitutes a principal group in the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK at the ideological, institutional and mobilization levels[3]. At the ideological level, the gender discourse developing around the concept of the "women's liberation ideology"[4] is an essential part of the "democratic, ecologic, gender-libertarian society paradigm" of the movement. For instance, the fourth clause of the KCK Contract, which defines the principles of the movement, states that the movement is "predicated on women's emancipation and equality against male domination and its gender-based system at all levels, and is committed to the struggle for gender emancipation in every domain of life[5]."

At the institutional level, the PKK-KCK gives a remarkable importance to women's organizations. The Kurdish Women's Movement has a complex of transnational networks, including an illegal women's political party (PAJK), social movements, NGOs, journals, and newspapers "constituted and directed by women" and "for women". In addition to gender-

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[1] Michael Löwy, *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's "On the Concept of History"* (London: Verso, 2005), 61–2.

[2] Çağlayan, *Analar, Yoldaşlar, Tanrıçalar: Kürt Hareketinde Kadınlar Ve Kadın Kimliğinin Oluşumu*, 87–123; Marcus, *Blood and Belief: The PKK and The Kurdish Fight for Independence*, 172–4.

[3] For a more detailed and sophisticated analysis of the women participation in BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK and identity construction process of the Kurdish women after 1980, see, Çağlayan, *Analar, Yoldaşlar, Tanrıçalar: Kürt Hareketinde Kadınlar Ve Kadın Kimliğinin Oluşumu.*

[4] For the women's liberation ideology and its principals see, Yaşamda Özgür Kadın Dergisi, 1998, issue, 6, İstanbul.

[5] The Contract is accessible at the following address: http://www.ankarastrateji.org/_files/11102011152912-YLB6Z.pdf, retrieved January 28, 2012.

specific organizations, women establish their parallel autonomous structures or bodies in all mixed social, cultural, political, and military organizations.

At the mobilization level, finally, women constitute an indispensable group in armed conflict, street demonstrations, NGOs, political party, media, and local and national parliaments. One-quarter of the PKK's fighters are woman[1]. In the KCK Contract, it is stated that the movement implements 40 per cent quota for women's participation in elected bodies at the all levels. BDP also has a 40 per cent gender quota in all domains of social life, including party bodies and institutions[2]. Indeed, BDP is the party in which women's representation is highest in Turkey. While the rates of female deputies in the AK Party, CHP and MHP are 14.11 %, 14.17 % and 5.76 %, respectively; the rate is 30.05 % in BDP[3]. One of two co-presidents each of the BDP (G. Kışanak) and DTK (A. Tuğluk) are female and the ratio of women in the central executive board of the party is 42.8 %. In Turkey, there are just 26 women among 2948 mayors; there are 14 female mayors in the BDP[4].

e) PKK-KCK: A lower and middle class movement

Apart from the PDKT that was comprised some local dominant groups, i.e., conservative elites, *aghas*, religious orders (*tariqat's*) sheikhs, and urban artisans and merchants[5], in the late 1960s and early 1970s, most of the Kurdish left-wing movements were based on the urban and rural lower classes and petty bourgeoisie[6]. By engaging a small university student group in Ankara, the PKK has achieved the mobilization of youth from the

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[1] Süleyman Özeren, M. Alper Sözer, and Oğuzhan Başıbüyük, "Bireylerin Terör Örgütüne Katılmasına Etki Eden Faktörler Üzerine Bir Alan Çalışması: PKK/KCK Örneği," *Uluslararası Güvenlik ve Terörizm Dergisi*, 3, no. 2 (2012): 66–8.

[2] The BDP decided to increase female participation by adopting the principle of equal representation of women during the 2. General Women's Assembly held on April 28, 2013 in Ankara. For more details see, http://www.firatnews.com/news/guncel/bdp-kadin-kurultayi-sonuc-bildirgesi-aciklandi.htm, date of access: May 24, 2013.

[3] For more detail see, http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/milletvekillerimiz_sd.dagilim, reiterated January 28, 2013.

[4] BDP Women Assembly, *Peace and Democracy Party Woman Assembly* (Ankara: BDP, 2012).

[5] Çağlayan, *Analar, Yoldaşlar, Tanrıçalar: Kürt Hareketinde Kadınlar Ve Kadın Kimliğinin Oluşumu*, 93; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 397–419; White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers?: The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 131; Bozarslan, "Political Aspects of the Kurdish Problem in Contemporary Turkey," 76-7.

[6] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 404–12; Bozarslan, "Between Integration, Autonomization and Radicalization. Hamit Bozarslan on the Kurdish Movement and the Turkish Left"; Çağlayan, *Analar, Yoldaşlar, Tanrıçalar: Kürt Hareketinde Kadınlar Ve Kadın Kimliğinin Oluşumu*, 88–95; Ekinci, *Kürt Siyasal Hareketinin Sınıfsal Analizi*, 70–4.

lower urban and rural classes[1] who were filled with anger at the socioeconomic exploitation and national suppression carried out by *agha*s, merchants, and the ruling state establishment, by a Marxist-Leninist discourse of national liberalization in 1980s.

In its original manifesto, as mentioned above, the PKK has announced that it aims "a national democratic revolution". While the national character of the revolution targets the foreign colonial powers, its democratic characteristic marked the exploitative Kurdish landlord class as the enemy of the Kurdish people[2]. Indeed, in practice, the PKK initially focused on the "feudal comprador exploitative class" and targeted the widely disliked local *agha*s and tribal leaders in the Urfa and Batman provinces until the military coup d'état on September 12, 1980[3].

The severe and bloody armed conflict between PKK fighters and Turkish military forces enlarged the number of PKK sympathizers within the urban and rural lower class. The conflict has claimed at least 40,000 lives, been cause for the evacuation of nearly 4,000 villages, forced the displacement of over three million people[4], and led to enormous social, economic and spatial disruptions throughout the Kurdish region since 1984[5]. Victims of the forced displacements were relocated to the outskirts of cities in the Kurdish region, as well as to main metropolises in the western part of the country such as Istanbul, Izmir, Adana, and

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[1] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 420–1; White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers?: The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 153–4; Bozarslan, "Between Integration, Autonomization and Radicalization. Hamit Bozarslan on the Kurdish Movement and the Turkish Left"; Martin van Bruinessen, "Between Guerrilla War and Political Murder: The Workers' Party of Kurdistan," *Middle East Report* no. 153 (1988): 40–1; Marcus, *Blood and Belief: The PKK and The Kurdish Fight for Independence*, 15–7; İmset, *PKK: Ayrılıkçı Şiddetın 20 Yılı (1973-1992)*, 76.

[2] Öcalan, *Kürdistan Devriminin Yolu (Manifesto)*, 120–2.

[3] David McDowall, "The Kurdish Question: a Historical Review," in *The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview*, ed. Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Stefan Sperl, 4th ed. (London: Routledge, 2000), 16; Martin van Bruinessen, "Kurdish Society, Ethnicity, Nationalism and Refugee Problems," in *The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview*, ed. Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Stefan Sperl, 4th ed. (London: Routledge, 2000), 42; Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 22; İmset, *PKK: Ayrılıkçı Şiddetın 20 Yılı (1973-1992)*, 59–64.

[4] McDowall, "The Kurdish Question: a Historical Review"; van Bruinessen, "Kurdish Society, Ethnicity, Nationalism and Refugee Problems"; TMMOB, *TMMOB 2002-2004 Dönem Çalisma Raporu* (Ankara: Türkiye Mimar ve Mühendisler Odaları Birliği, 2004), 566–574; NRC, *Profile of Internal Displacement: Turkey* (Geneva: Norwegian Refugee Council, 2004), 50–51; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*.

[5] The Turkish state argues that the conflict is less destructive than is stated in the works of academicians and the reports prepared by the non-state organizations. According to a report prepared by Hacettepe University for the State Planning Organization (DPT) in 2006, 1,077,440 people were displaced due to security problems over the last 20 years.

Mersin[1]. The generations growing up without basic social and economic resources and opportunities – with the reproduced collective memory about the state violence, and under the ethnic discrimination in new settlements – have constructed the principal societal base of the PKK[2]. In particular, the generation that was raised in the conflict areas in the Kurdish region is sometimes called the "generation of war" or "the children of storm" by Kurdish politicians[3], political analyzers and academicians[4], and comprises the most radical groups in the leading Kurdish movement[5].

f) Transnational and multi-dimensional socio-political mobilizations

As mentioned above, the PKK-KCK is more than an armed political organization – it is a complex transnational and multi-dimensional social movement. Although the PKK-KCK is based in Turkey, it has different networks of social, cultural, economic and political organizations in each Kurdish region in Iran, Iraq and Syria, most European countries, Russia, and the Caucasus. The PKK-KCK has an autonomous political party and an offshoot of women's umbrella political party (PAJK) in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. According to a recent research, the PKK recruits its militants from Turkey (57.13 %), Iraq (12.7 %), Syria (12.28 %), Iran (7.75 %), Europe (8.9 %), and some other countries (1.24 %)[6]. This shows that the PKK has transnational and international networks that are capable of recruiting, politically socializing and sending new fighters to the armed struggle. It is obvious that these political socialization processes of the militants include multi-dimensional social, economic, cultural and political mobilizations by the formal and informal networks.

Important to note is that functions of these transnational and international networks go beyond the recruitment of new fighters, toward the building of Kurdish political regions (principally in Turkey, but also in Iran and Syria) and the initiation of multi-dimensional

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[1] Ibid., 440–1.

[2] Tan, *Kürt Sorunu*, 374–5.

[3] Ezgi Başaran, "Çözüm İçin Kürtleri Tatmin, Türkleri de İkna Etmek Lazım," *Radikal*, June 2, 2012.

[4] Cengiz Çandar, "'Fırtına Çocukları', 'Bildiğin Gibi Değil'…," *Radikal*, October 12, 2012.

[5] For the political socialization of this generation during 1990s, see, Rojin C. Akın and Funda Danışman, *Bildiğin Gibi Değil: 90'larda Güneydoğu'da Çocuk Olmak* (İstanbul: Metis, 2011).

[6] These ratios base the analysis of profiles of the 1362 PKK's militants who died between 2001 and 2011. For more details, see, TBMM İnsan Hakları İnceleme Komisyonu, *Terör Ve Şiddet Olayları Kapsamında Yaşam Hakkı İhlallerinin İncelenmesine Yönelik Kurulan Alt Komisyon Raporu (Taslak)* (Ankara: TBMM İnsan Hakları İnceleme Komisyonu, January 2013), 38–53.

social changes in cultural and ethnic identity, class structure, and gender issues. To do this, the leading Kurdish movement has realized remarkable achievements to build political, economic, social and cultural networks in Turkey since 1999. It is relatively well organized in trade unions, professional organizations, NGOs, women's and youth organizations, political parties, the parliament, local governments, and pro-Kurdish media, including news agencies, newspapers, journals, four TV channels broadcasting via satellite technology from the Middle East to Europe, and several local TV and radio stations. Thanks to these multiple networks, the PKK-KCK can direct different Kurdish resistance in diverse areas[1].

g) BDP-DTK: A peripheral actor?

The institutionalization of the leading Kurdish movement in the abovementioned areas since the early 1990s has allowed the Kurds to accumulate a very rich experience in legal platforms. The sociopolitical mobilization that the PKK-KCK directs has principally been represented by the legal pro-Kurdish parties since 1990 when HEP, the first pro-Kurdish legal party was established. After the closure of the HEP and its five successors[2] on charges of being a focus for the activities against the indivisible integrity of the Turkish state and nation and their ties with the PKK, the Kurdish opposition has principally been represented by the BDP since 2010. Since 1999, the pro-Kurdish legal parties achieved remarkable success in local and national politics. In 1999 the leading pro-Kurdish legal party won 37 municipalities in the local election and increased the number of municipalities to 56 (including the centers of five provinces in the Kurdish region) in 2004 and to 99 (including the centers of seven provinces and one metropolitan city) in 2009. In the meantime, they returned to the Turkish parliament with 21 seats in 2007 and increased their seat to 36 in 2011 – major advancements since1994, when several Kurdish MPs were expelled and jailed for ten years.

The legal platforms of the leading Kurdish movement are not limited with legal party politics in the Turkish parliament and local governments. In 2007 the Democratic Society

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[1] This enlargement of the movement made the Turkish state believe that a parallel state was being established in the Kurdish region. It responded to this perceived enlargement of the movement by a mass arrest of Kurdish political activists. Since May 2009, over eight thousand people including members of the BDP, deputies, mayors, heads of local councils, cadres of municipalities, representatives of NGS, academics, lawyers and journalist have been arrested for accuse of being members of the PKK-KCK or participated in its activities.

[2] The closed leading Kurdish parties are HEP (People's Labor Party, 1990-1993), ÖZDEP, (Freedom and Democracy Party, 1992-1993), DEP (Democracy Party, 1993-1994), HADEP (People's Democracy Party, 1994-2003), DEHAP (Democratic People's Party, 1997-2005), and DTP (Democratic Society Party, 2005-2009). Turkish state and public view all these banned parties and current BDP as "legal extensions" of the PKK-KCK.

Congress (DTK) was established with the participation of representatives of diverse organizations that inspired the leading Kurdish movement in economic, social, cultural and political areas. The principal organizations and actors that constitute DTK are the BDP, municipalities, local people's councils, the headmen of neighbors, women's and youth organizations, religious groups, NGOs, media institutions, well-known academicians and writers, and local opinion leaders[1]. Although it intended to establish a *de facto* regional parliament or a constituent assembly in the Kurdish region, it became the principal organization of the leading Kurdish movement, which directs and coordinates multiple Kurdish sociopolitical and sociocultural mobilizations in Turkey. Despite its institutional diversity, it is crucial to note that the BDP is the principal actor of the DTK. For instance, two co-presidents of the DTK, A. Tuğluk and A. Turk were co-presidents of the banned DTP and are current deputies of BDP.

Before ending this part, I must note several remarks on the relationship between the PKK-KCK and the BDP-DTK. First of all, the BDP-DTK "cannot be entirely distinguished from the PKK, but cannot be reduced to it either."[2] Although there is not an organic hierarchical relationship between them, it can be argued that they function as legal and illegal fronts of the same social movement. As the Kurdish politicians often state, the PKK-KCK and the BDP-DTK share the same societal base. Most of the professional activists and supporters of the BDP-DTK are also PKK backers.

Second, although they address and speak to the same societal groups, it does not mean that they have an easy relationship and equal power within the movement. As Hamit Bozarslan points out, this relationship can be classified with the notion of a "reference actor" and a "representative actor". He argues that from the 1990s onwards, the PKK-KCK has become a primary reference point of the Kurdish contestation, and what it says are its determinants. On the other side, the BDP-DTK "can be defined as the representative actor of the Kurdish political space"[3]. Inspiring Immanuel Wallerstein's classification of system-world analysis[4], we can also describe this relationship as center-periphery relation. The PKK-KCK

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[1] For the declaration of the first congress of the DTK see, http://bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/102616-dtp-kongresi-sonuc-bildirgesinin-tam-metni, date of access, 15.02.2013.

[2] Bozarslan, "Between Integration, Autonomization and Radicalization. Hamit Bozarslan on the Kurdish Movement and the Turkish Left."

[3] Ibid.

[4] Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction*, 4th ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

and its supremo A. Öcalan determine the main ideological and political identity, main strategy and goals of the movement, while the BDP-DTP principally socializes and mobilizes people, and represents the Kurdish national struggle in the political space accordingly.

Finally, the BDP-DTK is more pluralistic than the PKK-KCK[1]. As M. A. Uzunyaya, one of the influential businessmen whom I interviewed in Bingöl, pointed out, the BDP-DTK has been a coalition of socialist, nationalist and some liberal and pro-Islamist groups for two decades[2]. However, this internal divergence is not sufficiently reflected in political representation. Representatives of socialist and nationalist groups dominate administrative positions of Kurdish organizations and institutions. I witnessed this divergence during interviews with different actors of the BDP-DTK. For instance, M. H. Koç, vice president of the DİAYDER, Kurdish imams' association committed to the movement, described BDP as a party struggling for the rights of the Kurds within a pro-Islamist discourse[3], while O. Baydemir, mayor of the Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality designated it as a representative of the Kurdish national liberation cause underlining two-century-long historical background and continuity: "BDP is one of the legal political establishments of the Kurdish liberation cause, of the Kurdistan liberation cause that started with Bedirxanîs, Cemilpaşas, Sheikh Said, Seyit Rıza, and no doubt, Mazlum Doğan, and continued until now"[4]. Highlighting the political tradition of the radical democratic left-wing politics of Turkey's Labor Party in the 1960s to 1990s, from which the pro-Kurdish parties originated, G. Kışanak, co-president of the BDP, defined the party as a left-wing mass party being organized throughout the country, while focusing on the Kurdish issue[5]. Despite this divergence, as A. Tan, pro-Islamist intellectual and deputy of BDP, underlines, the Kurdish people see it as the Kurdish national party ("Kürt Milli Partisi" in Turkish)[6].

2) Rights and Freedoms Party (HAK-PAR)

HAK-PAR is the second important political group in the Kurdish national bloc. The party was founded in 2002 by former politicians and partisans of some pro-Kurdish radical

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[1] Bozarslan, "Between Integration, Autonomization and Radicalization. Hamit Bozarslan on the Kurdish Movement and the Turkish Left."

[2] Mehmet A. Uzunyaya, "Personel Interview", Bingöl, May 2012.

[3] M. Hadi Koç, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 18, 2011.

[4] Osman Baydemir, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, March 6, 2012.

[5] Gülten Kışanak, "Personel Interview", Diyarbakır, November 17, 2011.

[6] Altan Tan, Personal Interview, Ankara, October 10, 2012.

left-wing political parties and groups that were in conflict with the PKK and mostly eliminated from the political space in Turkey and installed in the European countries after the coup d'état in September 1980. Despite this political divergence, the supporters of PSK constitute the most powerful group in HAK-PAR. Hence, K. Burkay, president of PSK between 1974 and 2003, became the president of the HAK-PAR in the fifth congress of the party held in November 2012, just after the his return to Turkey in 2012, after 32 years of exile.

B. Bozyel, the former president of the HAK-PAR, defines the party as a libertarian, pluralist, democratic, and secular mass party. He highlights that the HAK-PAR is not an ideological party, but a mass democratic party. Although, the party describes itself as a mass party at the idea level, it is far from this goal and in actuality represents a very small part of Kurdish society in Turkey. However, the HAK-PAR has a distinctive quality: contrary to the "democratic autonomy" proposal of the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK, it advocates a federal Kurdish region in Turkey. Despite this remarkable difference, three main strategic goals that Bozyel highlights are shared by the leading Kurdish movement: (1) Kurdish national unity and cooperation in Turkey, (2) cooperation between Kurdish movements and other democratic political powers in Turkey, and (3) national unity among Kurdish movements in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria[1].

3) Participatory Democracy Party (KADEP)

In the national bloc, KADEP constitutes the third important actor. Ş. Elçi[2], the founder and president of the party, states that KADEP is the successor of the Kurdish Democratic Platform and the Democratic Mass Party, which were established in 1994 and 1997, respectively, to advocate Kurdish national rights in Turkey by establishing a federative system recognizing Kurds as a distinctive nation[3]. After the Constitutional Court closed the DKP in 1999, KADEP was founded in 2006. Like HAK-PAR, the KADEP also principally focuses on the Kurdish issue in Turkey and publicly advocates a federal region for the "Kurdish nation".

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[1] Bayram Bozyel, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 21, 2011.

[2] Mr. Elçi was the only president of the party until his last day. He lost his live two months after the interview, on December 26, 2012.

[3] Şerafettin Elçi, Personal Interview, Ankara, November 10, 2012.

In reality, HAK-PAR and KADEP share many common ideas on critical issues, such as the resolution of the Kurdish issue, the position of the leading Kurdish movement, and cooperation with other Kurds in Iran, Iraq and Syria. Indeed, there were failed negotiations between the two parties and some political Kurdish groups to establish a single united party alongside the BDP-DTK in 2007-2008. However, unlike the leading group BDP-DTK and HAK-PAR, as Ş. Elçi highlights[1], KADEP does not follow Marxist left-wing politics, and publicly defines itself as a liberal social democratic party. This quality of the party is underlined in the party's program: the KADEP "is a pluralist, participatory, secular, *liberal, social democratic mass party (the emphasize added)*[2]."

4) Other political groups

There are several small political groups in the Kurdish region alongside the abovementioned three groups. Among them, I will briefly mention the recently founded ÖSP and TDŞK, which are, respectively, active and have a representation power in the Kurdish region. The ÖSP was founded in December 2011 by former socialist and communist members of the different Kurdish movements, mostly of the illegal Kurdistan Communist Party that is a marginal political party in the Kurdish region of Turkey. S. Çiftyürek, the founder president of the party, describes the ÖSP as a socialist party that is open all people who define themselves as Marxist, communist or socialist within Kurdistan. According to Çiftyürek, in Kurdistan, there must be five main parties: a Marxist party of Kurdistan's communists and *socialists, a revolutionary democratic party like BDP*, a nationalist conservative party like PDK in Iraq, a pro-Islamist democratic party, and even a liberal democratic party that is unlikely to form under the present circumstances.

He argues that the ÖSP claims to represent socialist left-wing politics in Kurdistan, where all Kurdish political parties began as Marxist movements in the 1970s and 1980s; however, leftist class-based politics diverged into nationalist, liberal, and anti-communist groups at the same time. The president argues that although the national liberation struggle is a common point between the Kurdish parties, Kurdish society needs a new party that will principally make a social critique in Kurdistan, and be the voice and conscience of the Kurdish lower class suffering socioeconomic exploitation. Finally, he states that there is a

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[1] Ibid.

[2] The english version of the party's program is accessible at following address: http://www.kadep.org.tr/sayfa.asp?sayfaid=1549, date of access: February 18, 2013.

Kurdistan issue – a state issue rather than a Kurdish issue – and that the ÖSP advocates self-determination rights for Kurds. According to the party, under the current circumstances, the best form of the self-determination for the Kurds is a federative system in Turkey[1].

As to the TDŞK, Helip İpek, the spokesman of the movement, states that they are followers of political tradition that started by Dr. Şiwan[2] who was a radical left-wing politician and founded PDKT (also known as Tde-KDP) in 1969. He continued with DDKD until the coup d'état on September 12, 1980. After a 20-year, relatively non-active period, the former members and directors of the DDKD started to reorganize in 2002 and have gathered under the name of TDŞK since 2008. According to İpek, TDŞK is not an ideological organization, but rather a liberal mass movement addressing Kurdish nationalist vein. The movement aims to mobilize different people who have different political ideologies, such as left-wing or conservative. As to the solution of the Kurdish issue, they suggest a referendum under the surveillance of international organizations such as the UN, proposing three options for the Kurds: autonomy, federation or an independent state[3].

In conclusion, I can underline three distinctive qualities of the Kurdish national bloc. First, the groups that constitute this bloc have different left-wing traditions, although they have moved toward mass political organizations rather than ideological ones (with the exception of the ÖSP) since the 2000s. Second, they share *a secular political view*, which does not see religion as an essential element in constructing and framing the Kurdish issue, despite the fact that the concept of secularism is perceived and used differently by each group. Finally, they see the Kurdish (or Kurdistan) issue as a problem of territorial sovereignty, and thus claim *a politico-administrative status* and *collective cultural rights*, such as education in the mother tongue and public services in native languages such as Kurdish (or in both Kurdish and Turkish) for the Kurds. It is crucial to underline that each group describes the term of "the status" differently. It is used for diverse politico-administrative models such as local self-governance, regional administration, federalism and the like.

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[1] Sinan Çiftyürek, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 26, 2012.

[2] Sait Kırmızıtoprak, known as Dr. Şiwan, an Alevi-Kurd from Dersim, argued that Kurdistan was a colony. Unlike precedent Kurdish uprisings early 20th century, he advocated "a prolonged, national and social anticolonial war like in Algeria and other countries" for the liberation of Kurdistan. Bozarslan, "Between Integration, Autonomization and Radicalization. Hamit Bozarslan on the Kurdish Movement and the Turkish Left."

[3] Halim İpek, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 25, 2012.

C - *The Kurdish religious bloc*

The Kurdish religious groups constitute the second bloc in the Kurdish scene. The principal characteristic of these groups is that religious identity is more important than national identity for them. Therefore, the priority of religious identity has important effects on the ideas, interests and institutions of these groups. Although they agree on the priority of religious identity, there are significant differences among Kurdish religious groups about different aspects of the Kurdish issue, such as socioeconomic underdevelopment, individual/cultural collective rights and territorial sovereignty. In other words, there are different Kurdish issues. Moreover, there exists a historical polarization between Sunni-Muslims and Alevis who constitute the principal religious minority in Turkey and have been subject to policies of neglect, denial and assimilation for centuries.

Unlike the national groups, it is not easy to classify religious groups who are generally organized in informal ways and are more heterogeneous and divided than national groups. However, I can classify the pro-Islamist bloc in terms of six principal groups: (1) traditional Kurdish pro-Islamists or the Kurdish tariqats like Nakşibendi tariqat, (2) followers of the political tradition of MGH under the leadership of N. Erbakan, who mostly became AK Party's supporter after 2002, (3) the GC, who can be classified as Globalist Turkish pro-Islamists, 4) Kurdish pro-Islamists advocating the Kurdish national rights within an Islamist discourse underlying cultural plurality and equality between ethnic or national identities, (5) Mustazaflar Hareketi (Movement of oppressed people), the successor of the KH, which represents a fundamentalist version of Kurdish pro-Islamism, (6) several small *Selefi* groups who are offshoots of international radical fundamentalist pro-Islamist groups based in Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

1) Kurdish pro-Islamism: Periphery of Turkish nationalist pro-Islamism after 1950s

a) Traditional Kurdish pro-Islamists or the Kurdish tariqats

The majority of Kurds in Turkey are Muslim. Religious identity has been one of the determinative dynamics of political space among the Kurds for decades. Kurdish revolts during the late 19th and early 20th centuries were initiated and led by the religious Kurdish leaders[1] who had become the main local ruling class after the elimination of the Kurdish

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[1] White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers?: The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 54–92; Wadie Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origins and Development* (New York:

emirates during the 19th century[1]. After the brutal elimination of the Kurdish ruling class, and the establishment and consolidation of direct rule in the Kurdish region until the 1950s[2], the Kurdish political space moved toward the political periphery of the Turkish center.

Most of the Kurdish landlord sheikhs that led Kurdish society (alongside the landlord aghas), including successors of the leaders of the suppressed Kurdish revolts in 1920s and 1930s, engaged in DP and its successor AP[3], while some Kurdish nationalist leaders participated in the PDKT after the 1960s[4]. In this matter, several authors underline the role of Nakşibendi tariqat and its affiliated sheikhs in this engagement[5]. The engagement of a remarkable part of the Muslim Kurds living in rural areas (some of them settled in the cities after 1990s) to Turkish nationalist and conservative right-wing parties via landlord sheikhs and aghas was maintained until the 2000s, and continues with the AK Party today[6]. It is important to note that the cooperation between the Kurdish aghas and sheikhs and right-wing parties is not only based on Islamist sentiments, but also on patronage relations between the local ruling class and the center[7].

Syracuse University Press, 2006), 75–101, 203–218; Beşikçi, *Doğu Anadolunun Düzeni: Sosyo-ekonomik Ve Etnik Temeller*, 408–437.

[1] Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origins and Development*, 75–8; van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 68–9, 228–234; Serdar Şengül, "Bilgi, Topluş, İktidar: Osmanlı Ve Cumhuriyet Modernleşmesi İle Karşılaşma Sürecinde Doğu Medreseleri" (PhD Thesis, Hacettepe Üniversitesi, 2008), 92–3.

[2] Vali, "Genealogies of the Kurds: Constructions of Nation and National Identity in Kurdish Historical Writing"; Amir Hassanpour, "The Making of Kurdish Identity: Pre-20th Century Historical and Literary Discourses," in *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism*, ed. Abbas Vali (Costa Mesa: Mazda Publishers, 2003), 106–162.

[3] McDowall, "The Kurdish Question: a Historical Review," 397–403; Beşikçi, *Doğu Anadolunun Düzeni: Sosyo-ekonomik Ve Etnik Temeller*, 32–9; Şengül, "Bilgi, Topluş, İktidar: Osmanlı Ve Cumhuriyet Modernleşmesi İle Karşılaşma Sürecinde Doğu Medreseleri," 116–7.

[4] McDowall, "The Kurdish Question: a Historical Review," 408.

[5] Şengül, "Bilgi, Topluş, İktidar: Osmanlı Ve Cumhuriyet Modernleşmesi İle Karşılaşma Sürecinde Doğu Medreseleri," 92–5; van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 222–251; Tan, *Kürt Sorunu*, 371, 461–2.

[6] Ibid., 461–3.

[7] For a sophisticated and more detailed analysis of these patronage relations see, Beşikçi, *Doğu Anadolunun Düzeni: Sosyo-ekonomik ve Etnik Temeller*. For an analysis concentrating on Sheikhs, see, Şengül, "Bilgi, Topluş, İktidar: Osmanlı Ve Cumhuriyet Modernleşmesi İle Karşılaşma Sürecinde Doğu Medreseleri."

b) National View Movement (MGH) and pro-Islamist Kurds

Kurdish pro-Islamism was born within the Turkish pro-Islamism, just as Kurdish left-wing politics matured within the context of Turkish left-wing politics. Turkish political space was relatively enlarged with the multi-party system in 1950s, after the nearly 30 years of a single-party regime. The Islamist opposition was based in the rural areas in the Kurdish region under the leadership of sheiks who were severely suppressed during the Kemalist authoritarian modernization process. These returned to political space with the DP in 1950[1]. The Islamist opposition was mostly involved in nationalist and conservative right-wing politics (in DP in 1950s, and its successor the AP in 1960s) until the first pro-Islamist party, the MNP, was founded in 1970 by Necmettin Erbakan, the leader of the MGH, who founded several successor parties after the closure of the MNP.

While the Kurdish pro-Islamists in rural areas mostly continued to support central right-wing political parties, in the urban areas, most of Kurdish pro-Islamists were involved in the pro-Islamist MGH and the NC[2], which were also fitting into the Turkish nationalist, conservative right-wing political tradition after the 1970s[3]. The MGH was a powerful pro-Islamist movement in the Kurdish region until the early 1990s[4]. Indeed, the MGH was one of the main political blocs in the Kurdish region alongside the central right-wing political parties and the pro-Kurdish parties. After the establishment of the AK Party by some reformist groups in the MGH, the clear majority of the movement (and of central right-wing parties) gathered under the umbrella of newly founded party. As a result, the MGH marginalized across the Turkey and in the Kurdish region after the next general election held in 2002, and the AK Party became the new representative of right-wing politics by uniting its three interrelated political currents: the pro-Islamism, the nationalism and the conservatism[5].

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[1] Ibid., 115.

[2] NC refers to pro-Islamist groups following Said-i Nursi. Said-i Nursi, commonly known as *Bediüzzaman*, "the wonder of the age", is a Kurdish Sunni Muslim teologian who wrote the *Risaleyi Nur Collection*, a body of Qur'anic commentary exceeding 6,000 pages. After his death in 1960, several pro-Islamist groups organized by his students emerged in Turkey.

[3] Tan, *Kürt Sorunu*, 463–86; Ali Bulaç, in *Kürt Soruşturması* (Ankara: Sor Yayıncılık, 1992), 93–4.

[4] Tan, *Kürt Sorunu*, 463.

[5] Tanıl Bora, "Türk Sağı: Siyasal Düşünce Açısından Bir Çerçeve Denemesi," in *Türk Sağı: Mitler, Fetişler, Düşman İmgeleri*, ed. İnci Özkan Kerestecioğlu and Güven Gürkan Öztan (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 25–7.

c) Nur Community and Kurdish pro-Islamists

While the supporters of the MGH commonly became followers of the AK Party, most followers of the NC gathered in the GC, the most powerful *Nurcu* group, which also supported the AK Party in the last local and general elections. It is now commonly said that the GC is the most powerful Turkish pro-Islamist group in Turkey. It is organized in economic, cultural, social and political areas in public, private and associative institutions at local, national and also international levels. Only in Turkey, they have several TV channels, including Dünya TV, the first private Kurdish channel, a Turkish-language newspaper, one of two English-language newspapers in Turkey, several journals, numerous private schools, several networks of exam preparation centers, a private university, and a federation of 176 associations of businessmen and industrialists in 80 cities[1]. There exists a widespread conviction that the GC is the real power directing the Turkish state in general and the bureaucracy in particular[2].

The GC is well organized in the Kurdish region. Multi-dimensional and multi-level networks, including state institutions, have local and regional offshoots in Kurdish cities. It is important to note that the Community members are generally from middle, upper-middle or upper classes and the economic organizations have an important role in multiple networks. For instance, while doing field research in Diyarbakır and Bingöl, I observed that the opinion leaders of the Community have key positions in the associations of businessmen and industrialists.

Alongside the follower of MGH and the GC, two main pro-Islamist groups, there exist several small pro-Islamist groups like the *Süleymancılar, Yeni Asyacılar, Müsluman Kardeşler (Muslim Brothers)*, and the *Meşveret* community within Kurdish society. It is vital to note that all these groups comprise mostly Kurdish members, and are organized as the local and regional offshoots of the Turkish pro-Islamist groups. For that reason, these peripheral Kurdish actors mostly assimilated to the principal qualities of the Turkish pro-Islamism that constitutes the center. Before discussing the autonomization and radicalization of the some Kurdish pro-Islamists in the early 1990s, it will be expedient to highlight the principal

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[1] TUSKON has become one of the powerful businessmen associations in the country, alongside the TUSİAD and MÜSİAD for last years. For more information see, www.tuskon.org

[2] Ahmet Şık, *OOOKitap: Dokunan Yanar* (İstanbul: Postacı Yayınevi, 2011); Hanefi Avcı, *Haliçte Yaşayan Simonlar: Dün Devlet Bugün Cemaat* (Ankara: Angora Yayıncılık, 2010).

qualities of Turkish pro-Islamism and its peripheral Kurdish offshoots. These are anti-Westernism, anti-communist political tradition, Turkish nationalism, and statism.

d) Anti-Western quality of Turkish pro-Islamism

Anti-Westernism is one of several constructive elements of the Turkish politics. Although there exist some anti-Western roots within the Kemalist political tradition, which is generally described as pro-Western and modernist, the nationalist conservatives and Islamists no doubt make up the real anti-Westernist group and see the Western world as their sworn enemy and the source of backwardness regarding civil/humanitarian values in Turkey[1]. This imagination of an absolute enemy that was described, as a "one-toothed monster called 'civilization'" in the national liberation anthem written by pro-Islamist M. A. Ersoy in the 1920s, has remained a primary quality of the Turkish Islamism for decades[2]. According to most of the Turkish and Kurdish Islamists, the establishment of the Republic of Turkey means an authoritarian westernization process that will lead to the destruction of the pro-Islamist state establishment, as well as Muslim identity and culture. They see westernization as the imitation of Christian Western values in a Muslim society. Therefore, for most of the pro-Islamists, westernization is tantamount to "alienation", "rootlessness", and most importantly "de-Islamization"[3].

e) Anti-communist and nationalist roots of Turkish pro-Islamism

The majority of Turkish and Kurdish pro-Islamists see left-wing political groups and movements as the radical face of westernization process[4]. Opposition to the CHP, the founder party of the Republic, and the transporter of the authoritarian westernization process is a pivotal element of the Islamist politics[5]. Pro-Islamist oppositions were involved in nationalist conservative right-wing politics during the 1950s and 1960s, after decades-long suppression politics of the CHP-led single-party regime[6]. The anti-left or anti-communist quality of

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[1] Tanıl Bora, "Milliyetçi-Muhafazakar Ve İslamcı Düşünüşte Negatif Batı İmgesi," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce - Cilt 3: Modernleşme Ve Batıcılık*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil, 4th ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), 251–255.

[2] Christopher Houston, *Islam, Kurds and the Turkish Nation State* (New York: Berg, 2001), 192.

[3] Bora, "Milliyetçi-Muhafazakar Ve İslamcı Düşünüşte Negatif Batı İmgesi."

[4] Ibid.

[5] Houston, *Islam, Kurds and the Turkish Nation State*, 192.

[6] Bora, "Türk Sağı: Siyasal Düşünce Açısından Bir Çerçeve Denemesi."

Turkish pro-Islamists[1] was solidified as Turkish reformists and left-wing revolutionaries supported and praised Kemalism in the 1960s and 1970s. Furthermore, most of the left-wing movements had an anti-religious, orthodox secularist stance in this period[2]. The armed conflicts between the radical left-wing and pro-Islamist groups constituting one of the principal pillars of the right-wing groups that claimed over 1,000 lives in the 1970s, deepened the distinction between the left-wing and Islamist movements. During these years, most of the MGH and NC supporters organized within the "Association for Anti-Communist Struggle", the "National Turkish Students Union", and the "Association of Incursionists" (*Akıncılar Derneği*), which were essentially Turkish nationalist and anti-communist. Turkey's Prime Minister R. T. Erdoğan, President A. Gül, F. Gülen (the founder and leader of the GC), H. Velioğlu and other founders and leaders of the KH are some of the current leading actors who were politically educated in these organizations. Finally, the international confrontation between the USSR and the US reflected a left-right (including pro-Islamist) polarization in Turkey and deepened the current conflicts between the pro-Islamists and the left-wing politics, which were seeing each other as national offshoots of the adverse imperial powers.

Although the pro-Islamist oppositions led to the establishment of the pro-Islamist political parties after the 1970s, the political engagement of pro-Islamists with Turkish nationalists and conservatives continued until today. As a result, a long historical association has been constructed between the Islamist movements and conservative, nationalist rights politics since the 1950s[3], although the religion of Islam concludes remarkable common values

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[1] For a more detailed analysis of the anti-communist quality of Turkish right-wing politics, including pro-Islamism see, Ibid.; Sinan Yıldırmaz, "Nefretin Ve Korkunun Rengi: 'Kızıl'," in *Türk Sağı: Mitler, Fetişler, Düşman İmgeleri*, ed. İnci Özkan Kerestecioğlu and Güven Gürkan Öztan (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 47–74; Güven Gürkan Öztan, "'Ezeli Düşman' İle Hesaplaşmak: Türk Sağında 'Moskof' İmgesi," in *Türk Sağı: Mitler, Fetişler, Düşman İmgeleri*, ed. İnci Özkan Kerestecioğlu and Güven Gürkan Öztan (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 75–104; Aylin Özman and Aslı Yazıcı Yakın, "Anti-Komünist Fantaziler: Doğa, Toplum, Cinsellik," in *Türk Sağı: Mitler, Fetişler, Düşman İmgeleri*, ed. İnci Özkan Kerestecioğlu and Güven Gürkan Öztan (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 105–136; Tebessüm Öztan, "Öfkeyi Çizmek: Milliyetçi Tahayyülde Düşman Portreleri," in *Türk Sağı: Mitler, Fetişler, Düşman İmgeleri*, ed. İnci Özkan Kerestecioğlu and Güven Gürkan Öztan (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 137–168.

[2] Tan, *Kürt Sorunu*, 459.

[3] In fact, it is not easy to separate the ethnic and religious aspects from Turkish nationalism that is also one of the principal qualities of Kemalist forces. The Turkish identity that the modernist Kemalists aimed to construct has ethnic and religious roots. It was constructed on the ruins of the other ethnic non-Muslim identities. The assimilation of the other Muslim ethnic groups including the Kurds and the elimination of the non-Muslim communities including the Armenians and the Greeks are the constructive elements of the Turkish identity. Therefore, the Turkishness refers the ethnic and religious constructions at the expense of the destructions of others. See, Yeğen, *Müstakbel Türk'ten Sözde Vatandaşa Cumhuriyet Ve Kürtler*; Cuma Çiçek, "Etnik Ve Sınıfsal İnşa Süreçleri Bağlamında

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with left-wing politics like labor, solidarity, sharing, justice, and modesty[1]. As Tanıl Bora asserts, pro-Islamism, conservatism and nationalism have constituted three interrelated aspects of Turkish right-wing politics so far[2].

f) Statist quality of Turkish pro-Islamism

The statism must be underlined as the fourth quality of pro-Islamism (and of nationalist and conservative right-wing politics) in Turkey[3]. As I mentioned above, the traditional Kurdish pro-Islamism represented by sheikhs and tariqats was adopted by the Turkish central elites with the economic patronage relations in the 1950s. These patronage relations have been constantly strengthened for decades, and are continuing with the ruling AK Party today. The majority of the Turkish pro-Islamist groups, including the MGH and the NC, are also statist[4].

Several dynamics are behind the construction of this statist quality of pro-Islamism in Turkey. First of all, the liberation and protection of the state was maintained as a constructive element in Turkish politics. Three political currents in both the political and intellectual space during the late Ottoman period, i.e., Ottomanism, pan-Islamism and Turkism, were concentrating on the same problem: the liberation and protection of the Ottoman state[5]. Second, the Turkish pro-Islamist opposition emerged in the political space within the conservative and nationalist right-wing politics after the 1950s, attributing holiness to the state and highlighting their duty of liberation and protection of the state as well[6]. Indeed, the protection of "national and religious values" of the state and the nation was the principal

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Kürt Meselesi: Bölgesel Eşitsizlik Ve Bölgesel Özerklik," *Praksis* no. 28 (2012): 11–42; Hamit Bozarslan, *Histoire de La Turquie Contemporaine* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2004).

[1] For left readings of Islam in Turkey, see, İhsan Eliaçık, *Sosyal İslam: Dinin Direği Paylaşımdır* (İstanbul: İnşa Yayınları, 2011); İhsan Eliaçık, *Mülk Yazıları* (İstanbul: İnşa Yayınları, 2011); İhsan Eliaçık et al., *İslam Ve Kapitalizm* (İstanbul: Doğu Kitapevi, 2011); Eren Erdem, *Abdestli Kapitalizm*, 6th ed. (İstanbul: Destek Yayınları, 2012); Eren Erdem, *Devrim Ayetleri: Egemenlerin İslam'ı Değil, Ezilenlerin İslam'ı*, 6th ed. (İstanbul: Kırmızı Kedi, 2013).

[2] Tanıl Bora, *Türk Sağının Üç Hali: Milliyetçilik Muhafazakarlık İslamcılık* (İstanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 2007).

[3] Houston, *Islam, Kurds and the Turkish Nation State*, 147–156.

[4] Houston, *Islam, Kurds and the Turkish Nation State*; Cihan Tuğal, *Passive Revolution: Absorbing the Islamic Challenge to Capitalism* (California: Stanford University Press, 2009), 99–101.

[5] Güven Gürkan Öztan, "Türk Sağında Devlet Fetişizmine Dair," in *Türk Sağı: Mitler, Fetişler, Düşman İmgeleri*, ed. İnci Özkan Kerestecioğlu and Güven Gürkan Öztan (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 430–2.

[6] Ibid., 428.

argument of "the anti-communist struggle" of Turkish rights during the period of conflict before the 1980s[1]. Praising the Ottoman state as a "Turkish" and "Islamic" world empire that had brought civilization to three continents, Turkish pro-Islamism always criticized the governments, and civil and military bureaucracy, while always keeping "the category of state" untouchable[2]. Finally, as Mühittin Kaya, an influential opinion leader of the Kurdish pro-Islamist MZC underlines[3], this statist quality of Turkish pro-Islamism has been legitimized by a dominant interpretation of Islam[4] by referring to some verses of the Qur'an, like verse 4:59, which interdicts the uprising and orders obedience of the Islamic authority: "O you who believe! Obey God and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you".

In reality most of the Turkish pro-Islamists, including the MGH and the GC, evaluated the leading Kurdish movement as a group of schismatic bandits – a pawn of the external enemies and imperial powers aiming to divide the Turkish state and nation and dismember "the Ümmet of Islam", or the unity of Muslims constituted by all ethnic-national communities of the world[5]. Accordingly, the Kurdish issue is just an instrument of the imperial powers to prevent Turkish state to emerge as a powerful, leader Muslim actor in the region. Despite some current reforms regarding the Kurdish issue, this argument is being reproduced as a constructive element of the recent neo-Ottoman discourse of the AK Party[6]. By doing so, the leading Turkish pro-Islamist groups backed up and legitimized the Turkish state's main argument among the majority of the Turkish society, which claims that the Kurdish issue is a problem of security and terrorism, while excluding ethnic, cultural, sociopolitical and politico-administrative aspects. This nationalist and statist political stance of the Turkish pro-Islamists will have paved the way for the autonomization and radicalization the some Kurdish pro-Islamist groups in 1990s.

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[1] Ibid., 436–8; Bora, "Türk Sağı: Siyasal Düşünce Açısından Bir Çerçeve Denemesi."

[2] Öztan, "Türk Sağında Devlet Fetişizmine Dair," 441–4; Muhittin Kaya, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 17, 2012.

[3] Kaya, Personal Interview.

[4] Houston, *Islam, Kurds and the Turkish Nation State*, 147–155.

[5] The Kurdish Forum organized by the Mazlum-Der, a pro-Islamist NGO advocating Human Rights, in 1992 presents a remarkable resource to see the statist and Turkish nationalist characteristics of the main pro-Islamist groups on the issue and several critiques and self-critiques. See, Mazlum-Der, *Mazlum-Der Kürt Sorunu Forumu* (Ankara: Sor Yayıncılık, 1993).

[6] Öztan, "Türk Sağında Devlet Fetişizmine Dair," 455–6.

2) Autonomization and Radicalization of Kurdish pro-Islamism?

Unlike Kurdish left-wing movements, the majority of the Kurdish pro-Islamist movements have not separated from the Turkish pro-Islamism yet. However, we can note the autonomization of some Kurdish pro-Islamists since the 1990s. Three principal dynamics can be highlighted, which facilitated this autonomization process. First, there exists a network of centuries-long tradition of Kurdish madrasas (theological schools), in which many Kurdish *meles* (imams) and religious scholars have been educated in Islam and as well as in Kurdish language, culture and history[1]. For instance, M. H. Hadi Koç, vice president of DİAYDER, a group of Muslim scholars committed to the leading Kurdish movements, says the organization has more than 2000 Kurdish *meles* who were educated in madrasas. Emphasizing the equality of ethnic and national identities and the cultural plurality of the "Ümmet of Islam", most of these Muslim scholars advocate cultural, economic, social and political rights for the Kurds within a pro-Islamist discourse[2].

Second, the armed conflicts between the PKK and Turkish security forces intensified and spread throughout the Kurdish region, while the PKK transformed from a small armed group to a mass populist movement in the 1990s. This process made the Kurdish issue and the conflict principal dynamics framing the political space, and determining the political agenda in the Kurdish region. Most of the pro-Islamist groups had to deal with the issue and take a stance. Finally, the clear majority of Turkish pro-Islamist groups either ignored the Kurdish issue by labeling the Kurdish particularity as illegitimate and anti-Ümmet demands according to Islam, or followed Turkish nationalist and statist politics that framing the issue as a problem of the security and terrorism threatening the indivisible integrity of the Turkish state and nation.

a) Med-Zehra Community and the autonomization of Kurdish pro-Islamism

The first remarkable reaction to the Turkish pro-Islamism came from some Kurdish members of the NC. As the NC follows Turkish nationalist and statist politics, some Kurdish members separated from the Community and founded the MZC. According to M. Kaya, one of the opinion leaders of the MZC Community, the NC was transformed from a movement

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[1] For a doctoral thesis on the Kurdish madrasas during the Ottoman and Republican modernization period, see, Şengül, "Bilgi, Topluş, İktidar: Osmanlı ve Cumhuriyet Modernleşmesi Ile Karşılaşma Sürecinde Doğu Medreseleri."

[2] Kaya, Personal Interview; Yusuf Baluken, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 16, 2012.

opposing to the regime to a statist, Turkish nationalist, and regime-supporter movement. That is why some of Kurdish members separated from the NC and founded MZC[1].

The MZC issued Nubihar[2], a cultural pro-Islamist journal – and the first completely Kurdish pro-Islamist journal in existence in 1992. I must highlight that there were severe restrictions on the use of the Kurdish language at that period. The law (No. 2932) forbidding the use of the Kurdish language both in the expression of thought and the publication had been abolished in 1991, and the first Kurdish newspaper was issued in 1992. Therefore, although Nubihar was not a political, but rather a cultural pro-Islamist journal, it presented a great importance in the political sense. The MZC has remained as a small, mostly Kurdish pro-Islamist community at the organization level so far. However, at the idea level, the community can be identified as an initial Kurdish pro-Islamist group that deals with the Kurdish issue with the Islamic references underlining the equality of the Turkish and Kurdish national identities, criticizing state's decades-long suppression of the Kurds, and demanding national and politico-administrative rights for the Kurds[3].

It is crucial to note that the community is not involved in any political party, and frequently underlines that they are not a political group, but rather a pro-Islamist cultural and intellectual community[4]. Given the current political stances of different Kurdish pro-Islamist groups, nevertheless, I can argue that the MZC paved the way for the autonomization of the Kurdish pro-Islamism by providing a new Islamist discourse and a new frame of religious legitimacy regarding cultural plurality and ethnic-national issues in general, and the Kurdish issue in particular.

b) Kurdish Hezbollah and radicalization of Kurdish pro-Islamism

During the same years, alongside the MZC, Kurdish society witnessed another Kurdish pro-Islamist group, the KH. Like the MZC, the KH was clearly a Kurdish pro-Islamist group, in which most of the members were Kurds and it was a Kurdish-region-based organization. However, it has a clear distinction from the MZC: it was an armed fundamentalist Islamist group aiming to establish an Islamist regime.

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[1] Kaya, Personal Interview.

[2] Nubihar became the most consistent Kurdish journal in Turkey. The 121th issue of journal was published at the end of 2012.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

The aggressive emergence of the KH in the early 1990s can be seen as the main indicator of the radicalization of Kurdish pro-Islamism, along with the autonomization. The KH appeared in the political space during armed conflict with the PKK. Between 1991-95, over 700 people lost their lives as a result of the PKK-KH conflict[1]. Most Kurds beyond the PKK sympathizers view the KH as an Islamist group supported by the Turkish state to suppress the Kurdish movement through extra-judicial killings[2], while the KH refutes this argument and accuses the PKK of starting the conflicts[3]. Putting the debates on the link between the KH and the Turkish State aside, and taking the movement as a sociopolitical phenomenon, the KH can be defined as a fundamentalist, pro-Islamist reaction of the Kurdish lower and middle classes to the dominance of both the Turkish-state military regime and the PKK, the Marxist-Leninist national liberation movement in the Kurdish region. The KH is inspired by the Iranian Islamist Revolution in 1979, the global community of Muslim Brothers, the revolt of Sheikh Said, the most important Kurdish revolt in 1920s with Islamic references, and Said-i Nursi, the famous theologian and founder of the NC[4]. Although nearly all members of KH are Kurds and it is a Kurdish-region-based organization, it is important to note that the Kurdish issue was not the source of motivation for the movement, and it did not advocate any political relation to the Kurdish issue during the 1990s.

The sociopolitical and armed mobilization of the KH was mostly eliminated after the countrywide police operations in the 2000s that resulted in the death of H. Velioğlu, the founder leader and arrest of over 6,000 militants[5]. However, it seems that the KH returned to the political space in Turkey after a decade-long silence. Since 2006, former members of the KH have reorganized under the name of *Mustazaflar*. Unlike the illegal armed struggle in the 1990s, they have founded nearly a hundred associations across the Kurdish region and in main metropolises in Turkey over about six years. The *Mustazaflar* also founded several journals in Kurdish and Turkish, a newspaper, a news agency, a radio station, and a TV station broadcasting via satellite during this period. They have also organized several mass

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[1] Emrullah Uslu, "From Local Hizbollah to Global Terror: Militant Islam in Turkey," *Middle East Policy* XIV, no. 1 (2007): 127.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Hüseyin Yılmaz, Cemal Tutar, and Mehmet Varol, *Hizbullah Ana Davası: Savunmalar* (İstanbul: Dua Yayıncılık, 2011), 213–245; İ. Bagasi, *Kendi Dilinden Hizbullah* (Unknown Publisher, 2004), 75–162, http://www.huseynisevda.net.

[4] Yılmaz, Tutar, and Varol, *Hizbullah Ana Davası: Savunmalar*, 159–163.

[5] Uslu, "From Local Hizbollah to Global Terror: Militant Islam in Turkey," 128; Yılmaz, Tutar, and Varol, *Hizbullah Ana Davası: Savunmalar*, 292.

demonstrations to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed by gathering over 100,000 people since 2010. They officially became a political movement in 2012 and founded the HÜDA-PAR in December 2012.

Although the movement does not confirm publicly that they are successors of the KH, it seems that with the involvement in the legal political space by the HÜDA-PAR, the KH will enforce the autonomization of Kurdish pro-Islamists from the Turkish pro-Islamists. Unlike the 1990s, they advocate the Kurdish national rights with Islamist references underlying the equality among national groups like the Kurds, Turks, Arabs and Persians. As H. Yılmaz, founder president of the HÜDA-PAR, noted, they propose an Islamist solution to the Kurdish issue[1], while labeling the Ottoman-Turkish westernization or modernization process as "the national disaster for the Kurds"[2], and the Kurdish nationalism ("ulusalcılık" in Turkish) as a westernist "de-Islamization project."[3]

Indeed, in the manifesto of the KH[4], it is stated that "activities of the community cover all of Turkey; however, they are concentrated in Northern Kurdistan." In the same document, the community declares, "the ultimate aim of the pro-Islamist struggle is to construct a Muslim person, a Muslim family, a Muslim society and ultimately societal domination of the Islam and pro-Islamist government". Underlying the priority of "Ümmet of Islam", the KH declares, "The Kurdish people is a part of Ümmet of Islam. They refuse the denial, assimilation and suppression of the Kurds, and see as a duty to fight against these politics." According to the community, in the manifesto, the Kurdish language must be the second official language and for the resolution of "the Kurdish and Kurdistan issue", with regard to all discussions, "from the constitutional citizenship, autonomy, federation to independence, all alternatives ensuring the human and Islamic (*Islami*) rights of the Kurdish people must be discussed".

c) The Kurdistan Islamic Initiative for Rights, Justice and Freedom (Azadî)

The recent foundation of Azadî (meaning "freedom" in Kurdish) can be evaluated as a third step toward the autonomization of Kurdish pro-Islamism. Nevertheless, it seems that the

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[1] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012.

[2] Turan, *Kürtlerde İslami Kimliğin Gelişmesi*, 186–284.

[3] Ibid., 285–389.

[4] The manifesto is accessible at following website : www.huseynisevda.biz, date of access : Fabruary 23, 2013.

Azadi has several distinctive qualities. First, the Azadi focuses on the Kurdistan issue more than the MZC and the KH. While the initiative is unquestionably an Islamist organization, the Kurdistan issue (not Kurdish issue) constitutes its principal agenda[1]. This becomes evident in its founding declaration[2], where it is stated, "the initiative advocates the self-government rights of the Kurdistan people in Kurdistan." In fact, in this matter the name that the initiative chose has a symbolic meaning. S. Zilan, a founder of the initiative, stated that they chose the name Azadî to refer to Sheikh Said's revolt in 1925, the most important Kurdish revolt under the religious leadership in the 20th century.

Unlike the KH, the Azadî does not aim to establish Islamist rule in Kurdistan. In this matter, when I asked how the Azadî interprets Islam and whether it defends an Islamist rule in the Kurdish region like the KH, Zilan said the Islamic quality of the Azadi does not involve an orientation toward the establishment of the Islamic rule in Kurdistan. According to Zilan, "a state cannot be Islamic, individuals can be Islamic. The state must be a servant: fair, neutral, but not ideological. That is what we need." Refuting the distinction of both Kurdishness and Muslimness – and the prioritization of religious identity over ethnic/national identity, as the KH does[3] – he argued, "Kurdishness is the body, Islam is the soul. That is to say they together have a meaning." He continued as follows:

"We have a responsibility to our people, and history, for the cause of Kurdistan. When you are dominated, firstly you must be emancipated from this situation. That means we need freedom. The second issue is what we demand must be fair. That is to say, it does not matter if you are Turkish, Arab or Persian. We demand justice; we do not demand more than others, yet we will not accept less. We know the world, we know Europe, America, Asia. We deal with the issue within a wide frame, not with a narrow view[4]."

Second, the Azadî has a pluralist characteristic, both at the organizational and ideological levels. Unlike the MZC and the KH, the Azadî is not the successor of any pro-Islamist groups. Rather, it was founded by different Muslim people, including several intellectuals engaged in a variety of pro-Islamist groups before. Zilan highlights that this

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[1] Sıtkı Zilan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 30, 2012.

[2] The founding declaration of the Azadi Initiative is accessible at the following address: http://www.inisiyatifazadi.com/deklerasyon-ku; date of access, Mars 1, 2013.

[3] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012.

[4] Zilan, Personal Interview, May 30, 2012.

plurality is a clear distinctive quality of the Azadî[1]. At the idea level, Azadî adherents publicly declared that they recognize both individual and collective political, cultural, social and economic rights of the different ethnic (Arab, Armenian, Syrian) and religious (Christian, Yezidi and Yarsan) groups who constitute the main minority groups in Kurdistan.

Third, the initiative has a liberal perspective of Islam. It frequently highlights the universal law alongside the Islamist one as sources of legitimacy. In the founding declaration, they highlight that "the Initiative adopt a government approach in which that divine and universal laws guarantee the co-existence of all religions, sects, ethnicities ("kavim" in Turkish) and ways of life". Likewise, unlike the KH, the Azadî support the Turkey adhesion process to the EU.

Finally, the Azadî is more open than the KH to cooperate with other political groups, in particular within secular and left-wing politics[2]. The Azadî emphasizes that it is neither a successor nor enemy nor supporter of any political group in Kurdistan. In reality, unlike the KH, the Azadi cooperated with the BDP-DTK on several issues, such as the solidarity campaign with Kurds in Syria. It also participated in the First Kurdistan Islam Conference organized by the DTK on September 2012. It is not clear when the initiative will become a political party, or whether it will be able to mobilize mass part of the Kurdish people. However, the foundation of Azadî obviously indicates that the political space in the Kurdish region, and both in secular and religious politics, is undergoing reconstruction.

The next sub-part will be on the Kurdish Alevi groups, concluding the discussion of the Kurdish religious bloc.

3) Alevi Kurds

The Alevi religious community including Turkish, Kurdish and Arab ethnic groups, constitutes the principal religious minority in Turkey. In the Kurdish region, they are also the biggest religious minority group. Most of them live in the west and north of the Kurdish region and in the main metropolitan cities of Turkey. Dersim can be seen as the cultural and political center of the Alevi Kurds[3]. Like the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups, the Kurdish Alevi groups have remarkable internal diversity.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Martin van Bruinessen, *Kürtlük, Türklük, Alevîlik: Etnik Ve Dinsel Kimlik Mücadeleleri*, 9th ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), 88, 118–9.

Within the political space, however, we can roughly classify Alevi Kurds in three main groups: CHP supporters, BDP supporters and followers of radical left-wing groups. Three identities are used as the main aspects to characterize this diversity: Kurdish, Kızılbaş (which means "redhead" in English) and Communist[1]. While most of the Kurds who see the Alevism as their predominant identity and do not give any remarkable meaning to Kurdishness support the CHP, the Kurds who see their Kurdish and Alevi identities as compatible support the BDP. The Kurds who support the revolutionary left-wing political groups privilege the class struggle over any national or religious identity politics, and do not make any remarkable effort to mobilize their national or religious identities. Nevertheless, these three identities must not be understood as unrelated, solid, symmetric and fixed identities, but rather, interrelated, fluid, asymmetrical and dynamic constructs.

We must examine the historical construction of the Alevi identity in order to understand this dynamic internal diversity. In brief, we can underline four constructive elements of the Alevi identity: (1) the centuries-long historical domination of the Sunni-Muslim, pro-Islamist rule over the Alevi community, (2) the Turkish left-wing sociopolitical mobilization, (3) the Kurdish national sociopolitical mobilization, and (4) the Zaza-identity-based cultural and political mobilization.

a) Alevi identity: Historical other of Sunni Islam

The principal dynamic that constructs the Alevi identity is the centuries-long suppression of the Sunni-Islamist rule over the Alevi community[2]. At the idea level, the Alevism has not been recognized as a distinct religion, and has been characterized as a "syncretic" or "perverted" sect within Islam[3]. As believers of a disempowered religion (or sect), Alevis have been subject to policies of neglect, denial and assimilation for centuries[4].

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[1] Gürdal Aksoy, *Dersim: Alevilik Ermenilik Kürtlük* (İstanbul: Dipnot Yayınları, 2012), 13.

[2] Hüseyin Ağuiçenoğlu, "Alevilik Örneğinde Inanç-etnik Kimlik Ilişkisi Üzerine Yapılan Tartışmalara Kısa Bir Bakış," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 119; Gülsün Fırat, "Dersim'de Etnik Kimlik," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 148–9.

[3] Dilşa Deniz, *Yol/Rê: Derim İnanç Sembolizmi - Antropolojik Bir Yaklaşım* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 17–8; Elise Massicard, "Alevist Movements at Home and Abroad: Mobilization Spaces and Disjunction," *New Perspectives on Turkey* no. 28–29 (2003): 163–187.

[4] Munzur Çem, *Dêrsim Merkezli Kürt Aleviliği: Etnisite, Dini İnanç, Kültür Ve Direniş*, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: Vate Yayınevi, 2011), 17.

Moreover, the Alevi community has been exposed to several massacres, both in the Ottoman[1] and Republican periods. In particular, the Dersim operation of the Turkish state that aimed to establish the state power in region and achieve the ethno-nationalist incorporation project of the time and space[2] resulted in the death of nearly one-third of the population and forced the displacement of another third[3]. This bloody operation became the symbol of the severe state violence in the collective memory of the Alevi Kurds[4]. This collective memory has been kept alive among the Alevi community with pro-Islamist, radical right-wing groups' attacks under state authorities' protection in Çorum, Maraş, Sivas and the Gazi district in Istanbul since the 1970s[5].

The historical discrimination and othernization of the Alevi community by the Sunni-Islamist rulers made the opposing to the Sunni-Muslim Islamism the predominant element of the Alevi collective identity. Hence, the issue of laicism became one of the most important dynamics determining the political position of the Alevi community. Today the clear majority of the Alevis see laicism as a guarantee of protection from the Sunni-Muslim domination[6]. As most of the political and economic elites whom I interviewed in Dersim – including Ş. Halis, the former deputy of the pro-Kurdish party, and the current president of Dersim branch of the

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[1] van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 142; Hüseyin Aygün, *Dersim 1938 Ve Zorunlu İskan: Telgraflar, Dilekçeler, Mektuplar, Fotoğraflar*, 6th ed. (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2011), 57–68.

[2] Kerem Öktem, "Incorporating the Time and Space of the Ethnic 'Other': Nationalism and Space in Southest Turkey in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Nations and Nationalism* 10, no. 4 (2004): 559–578; Azat Zana Gündoğan, "1960'larda Tunceli/Dersim Kent Mekanında Siyasal Eylemlilik: Doğu Mitingleri," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 481–506.

[3] Çem, *Dêrsim Merkezli Kürt Aleviliği: Etnisite, Dini İnanç, Kültür Ve Direniş*, 417–94; Aygün, *Dersim 1938 Ve Zorunlu İskan: Telgraflar, Dilekçeler, Mektuplar, Fotoğraflar*; Mesut Keskin, "Zazaca Üzerine Notlar," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 357.

[4] Munzur Çem, *Tanıkların Diliyle Dersim '38* (İstanbul: Pêrî Yayınları, 1999); Hüseyin Aygün, *Dersim 1938 Ve Hacı Hıdır Ataç'ın Defteri* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2012); Hüseyin Aygün, *0.0.1938: Resmiyet Ve Hakikat*, 3rd ed. (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2011). For the role of music in the contrustion process of the collective identity in Dersim, see also, Bahar Şimşek, "Dersim Ve Egemene Direniş Mekanı Olarak Müzik," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 175–196; Mikail Aslan, "Müzik Ve Kültürel Kökler Bağlamında Dersim Müziği," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 197–242.

[5] van Bruinessen, *Kürtlük, Türklük, Alevîlik: Etnik Ve Dinsel Kimlik Mücadeleleri*, 125–9; Fırat, "Dersim'de Etnik Kimlik," 150.

[6] Mehmet Ertan, "Türk Sağının Kızılbaş Algısı," in *Türk Sağı: Mitler, Fetişler, Düşman İmgeleri*, ed. İnci Özkan Kerestecioğlu and Güven Gürkan Öztan (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2012), 206–7; van Bruinessen, *Kürtlük, Türklük, Alevîlik: Etnik Ve Dinsel Kimlik Mücadeleleri*, 119.

BDP[1] – highlighted, being Alevi is the most dominant identity determining the political choice among the Alevi Kurds.

b) Turkish left-wing socio-political mobilization among Alevis before 1980

Turkish left-wing sociopolitical mobilization during the 1960s and 1970s must be noted as the second-most important element of the construction process of the Alevi collective identity in Turkey. Turkish political space was highly polarized between the right wing and left-wing politics during the 1960s and 1970s. While pro-Islamist movements placed within the nationalist and conservative right-wing politics, the Alevi community (Dersim in particular) became the most powerful societal base of the left-wing movements[2]. In fact, comparing other cities, the political mobilization of Alevis from Dersim in political parties, NGOS, trade unions and social movements have clearly been high since 1960s[3]. In this period, the Turkish right-wing political tradition perceived the Alevism as the equivalent of communism in the political sense, and as anti-Islamic in the religious and moral sense[4]. Although most of the revolutionary left-wing groups were eliminated after the countrywide coup d'état in the 1980s, Dersim is still one of the most important regions in which radical socialist left-wing parties have popular support.

c) Kurdish socio-political mobilization and identity politics after 1980s

While left-right political polarization dominated the political space in Turkey before the 1980s, identity politics became the predominant form of sociopolitical mobilization after the mid-1980s[5], when a civic government was established after the coup d'état in September 1980. The severe elimination of left-wing revolutionary movements and the reproduction of

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[1] Şerafettin Halis, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 30, 2012.

[2] Şükrü Aslan, "Sunuş," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 10; İmran Ayata, "Kalbim Zeranik'te Kaldı," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 77; Ali Ekber Düzgün, "Dersimliyim: Biraz İçinden Biraz Dışından," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 89–90; Harun Ercan, "1970'li Yıllarda Tunceli/Dersim'de Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ve Dinamikleri," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 507–531.

[3] Deniz, *Yol/Rê: Derim İnanç Sembolizmi - Antropolojik Bir Yaklaşım*, 328–331; Yücel Demirer, "Dersim/Tunceli Ve Celali Kardeş Şehirler." in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 44–5.

[4] Ertan, "Türk Sağının Kızılbaş Algısı," 205.

[5] Ibid., 225.

Turkish pro-Islamist politics by state powers must be noted as the most important dynamics of the reconstruction of political space during the military regime in the early 1980s.

A significant portion of the Alevi Kurds mobilized within the leading Kurdish movement after the 1990s[1]. The secular and left-wing quality of the movement facilitated the participation of the Alevi Kurds in the sociopolitical mobilizations within the context of the Kurdish national liberation struggle. At this point, it is important to note that Dersim is one of the main regions in which conflicts between the PKK and Turkish army intensified due to a mountainous geography, suitable for rural guerilla warfare. The sociopolitical and armed mobilization of the leading Kurdish movement constructed Kurdish identity among most Alevi Kurds, in particular among the young generations. Additionally, Kurdish identity became the predominant dynamic determining the political choice of nearly half of Alevi Kurds after the second half of the 1990s.

Alongside the sociopolitical mobilization of the leading Kurdish movement, Alevi identity-based sociopolitical and cultural mobilizations emerged in the public sphere in the 1990s. While the Alevis have participated in the political space for decades under different forms of opposition like left-wing and Kurdish politics, for the first time the Alevis were involved in politics with their Alevi identity[2]. Alongside the leading Kurdish movement, the Turkish state's policies, which were based on the Turkish-Islam synthesis after 1980s[3], as well as the rise of the pro-Islamist movement under the leadership of the MGH – both in Turkey and among Turkish and Kurdish communities in Europe – in the 1990s, stimulated the Alevi awakening[4]. Furthermore, the Turkish state supported the Alevi awakening as a response with the aim of undermining the rise of the leading Kurdish movement among the Alevi community, while highlighting their Turkish and Islamist qualities[5].

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[1] van Bruinessen, *Kürtlük, Türklük, Alevîlik: Etnik Ve Dinsel Kimlik Mücadeleleri*, 128.

[2] Ertan, "Türk Sağının Kızılbaş Algısı," 226.

[3] van Bruinessen, *Kürtlük, Türklük, Alevîlik: Etnik Ve Dinsel Kimlik Mücadeleleri*, 120–4; Muzaffer Akın, "Kentin Bugünü: Ekonomik, Siyasal Ve Demografik Görünüm," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 55.

[4] van Bruinessen, *Kürtlük, Türklük, Alevîlik: Etnik Ve Dinsel Kimlik Mücadeleleri*, 110–3; Ağuiçenoğlu, "Alevilik Örneğinde Inanç-etnik Kimlik Ilişkisi Üzerine Yapılan Tartışmalara Kısa Bir Bakış," 120–8; Hıdır Eren Çelik, "Almanya'da Bir Göçmen Toplum: Dersimliler," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 591–611; Massicard, "Alevist Movements at Home and Abroad: Mobilization Spaces and Disjunction."

[5] van Bruinessen, *Kürtlük, Türklük, Alevîlik: Etnik Ve Dinsel Kimlik Mücadeleleri*, 123–4; Çem, *Dêrsim Merkezli Kürt Aleviliği: Etnisite, Dini İnanç, Kültür Ve Direniş*, 333–43.

In response to the state deployment of the Alevism, the leading Kurdish movement tried to build a new policy with respect to Alevism (to religion in general)[1] at the level of discourse, practice and presentation, as well as to accommodate the Alevi Kurds and other religious groups, such as the Yezidis and Sunni-Muslim Kurds, into its frontal activities[2]. Yet, the movement's dealings with Alevism in particular and religion in general was limited to instrumental and sporadic efforts due to its highly modernist, secularist quality that still marks the ideological orientation of the movement[3]. As a result, the Alevi awakening can be understood as a result of the Alevis' multifaceted interaction at different levels – with the Turkish Sunni-Muslim pro-Islamism, the Turkish state[4], the Kurdish movement[5], and Turkish radical revolutionary left-wing groups.

d) Cultural and political mobilization of the Zaza identity

Before ending the discussion of the Alevi Kurds, I must note Zaza-identity-based cultural and political mobilizations of a small part of Zazakî-speaking Kurds who claim that the Zazas are not a part of Kurdish nation, but a distinctive national group[6]. The historical records from the both Ottoman[7] and Republican[8] periods confirm that Zazakî-speaking Kurds saw themselves as Kurds. These records also clearly show that the state describes the Zazakî-

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[1] van Bruinessen, *Kürtlük, Türklük, Alevîlik: Etnik Ve Dinsel Kimlik Mücadeleleri*, 113; Ağuiçenoğlu, "Alevilik Örneğinde Inanç-etnik Kimlik Ilişkisi Üzerine Yapılan Tartışmalara Kısa Bir Bakış," 131–5; Sabır Güler, "Dersim Alevi Geleneğinde Bir Tarihsel Ocak: Ağuçanlar," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 155–6.

[2] Çiçek, "The pro-Islamist Challenge for the Kurdish Movement."

[3] Ibid.

[4] Massicard, "Alevist Movements at Home and Abroad: Mobilization Spaces and Disjunction."

[5] van Bruinessen, *Kürtlük, Türklük, Alevîlik: Etnik Ve Dinsel Kimlik Mücadeleleri*, 115–129.

[6] Mehmet Tüzün, Personal Interview, İstanbul, August 25, 2012; Keskin, "Zazaca Üzerine Notlar."

[7] Hüseyin Irmak, "Osmanlı Belgelerinde Dersim'e Dair Bazı Örnekler," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 245–267; Aygün, *Dersim 1938 Ve Zorunlu İskan: Telgraflar, Dilekçeler, Mektuplar, Fotoğraflar*, 50–68; Çem, *Dêrsim Merkezli Kürt Aleviliği: Etnisite, Dini İnanç, Kültür Ve Direniş*, 385–413.

[8] Aygün, *Dersim 1938 Ve Zorunlu İskan: Telgraflar, Dilekçeler, Mektuplar, Fotoğraflar*, 72–118; Dilek Soileau, "Koçgiri Ve Dersim Kürt Hareketliliği: Koçgirili Alişer Efendi Ve Nuri Dersimi'nin Rolüne Dair," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 335–356; Sibel Yardımcı and Şükrü Aslan, "Memleket Ve Garp Hikayeleri: 1938 Dersim Sürgünleri Ile Bir Sözlü Tarih Çalışması," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 413–440; Namik K. Dinç, "Kadim Anavatandan Bir Inkar Cografyasina: Kurdistan," in *Osmanlı Kurdistanı & Kurdistana Osmanî*, ed. Serhat Bozkurt and Alişan Akpınar (İstanbul: bgst Yayınları, 2011), 20–4; Mesut Serfiraz and Serhat Bozkurt, "Cografya-yi Osmani'de Kurtler Ve Kurdistan," in *Osmanlı Kurdistanı & Kurdistana Osmanî* (İstanbul: bgst Yayınları, 2011), 170–232.

speaking Kurds as a part of Kurds both at the Ottoman and Republican periods. There was not any public discussion on the ethnic/national origin of the Zazakî-speaking Kurds until last decades[1]. However, it seems that some part of Sunni-Muslim and Alevi Zazakî-speaking Kurds are under the influence of the identity politics that have dominated the political space in Turkey since the 1980s.

Alongside the effects of the identity politics, including Kurdish, pro-Alevi and pro-Islamist variations, the pro-Zaza cultural and political mobilization can be analyzed as a reaction to the leading Kurdish movement's monolithic language policy and highly modernist secular position on the religious issue. Although the leading Kurdish movement defines both Kurmancî speakers and Zazakî speakers as parts of the Kurdish movement, at the practical level, it is predicated on the Kurmancî dialect spoken by the majority of the Kurds in Turkey. As Z. Farqînî[2], president of the Istanbul Kurdish Institute, underlines, the movement has mobilized remarkable resources at multiple levels to revitalize the Kurmancî language, whereas it has not done for the same with regard to the Zazakî language[3], listed as a vulnerable language in UNESCO's *The Atlas of World of Languages in Danger* in 2010[4]. In this respect, I must also note the Turkish state's remarkable efforts in supporting the idea that the Zazas are not Kurdish. Apart from the Alevi-based political mobilizations, the Turkish state also has also deployed Zaza identity-based mobilizations as a new instrument to undermine the leading Kurdish movement[5].

D - The Kurdish economic bloc/elites

The Kurdish economic bloc covers economic elites who are principally located in the Kurdish region, but some of them engage in economic activities beyond the region and country. Economic elites have several different organizations to represent and advocate their interests in the Kurdish region. Chambers of commerce, chambers of craftsmen and artisans, industrialists and businessmen's associations are the main organizations in which local-

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[1] Çem, *Dêrsim Merkezli Kürt Aleviliği: Etnisite, Dini İnanç, Kültür Ve Direniş*, 507.

[2] Zana Farqînî, Personal Interview, İstanbul, October 7, 2012.

[3] van Bruinessen, *Kürtlük, Türklük, Alevîlik: Etnik Ve Dinsel Kimlik Mücadeleleri*, 110–2; Çem, *Dêrsim Merkezli Kürt Aleviliği: Etnisite, Dini İnanç, Kültür Ve Direniş*, 547.

[4] Christopher Moseley, ed., *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*, 3rd ed. (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2010), http://www.unesco.org/culture/en/endangeredlanguages/atlas., date of accesss : March 6, 2013.

[5] Çem, *Dêrsim Merkezli Kürt Aleviliği: Etnisite, Dini İnanç, Kültür Ve Direniş*, 526–9.

regional economic elites are represented. Alongside these economic organizations, political parties, mostly ruling right-wing parties, have also been noted as direct representatives of the Kurdish economic elite since the 1950s.

The Kurdish region has been the poorest region of the country since the beginning of the 20th century. Three interrelated dynamics can be underlined as the main reasons for historical socioeconomic underdevelopment in the Kurdish region: (1) the severe elimination of the Christian Armenian community, (2) the construction of the Kurdish region as a peripheral economy, and (3) the incorporation of the Kurdish ruling class in the center after the 1950s[1]. Despite the historical construction of the socioeconomic underdevelopment of the Kurdish region and the center-dependent weak Kurdish economic elite, they have tried to more actively involve themselves in the political struggle in the last decades.

1) Destructive economic effects of Armenian genocide on the Kurdish region

As many works assert, the capitalist economy has given rise to multi-level unequal development among and within countries, regions, cities, and districts[2]. These uneven developments of capitalist economic relations are generally constructed and function due to the exploitation of the gender-based, ethnic/national and religious diversities[3]. Inspiring the notion of "wreckage" or "ruin" developed by Walter Benjamin[4], we can argue that capitalist economies develop on the *ruins* of peripheries at multiple levels (city, region, country) not only in an economic terms, but also in national and religious ones.

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[1] For a more detailed historical analysis of the socioeconomic underdevelopment of the Kurdish region, see, Çiçek, "Etnik Ve Sınıfsal İnşa Süreçleri Bağlamında Kürt Meselesi: Bölgesel Eşitsizlik Ve Bölgesel Özerklik"; Mustafa Sönmez, *Doğu Anadolu'nun Hikayesi Kürtler: Ekonomik Ve Sosyal Tarih* (İstanbul: Arkadaş Yayınları, 1992). In this respect, for a book representing the long-standing arguments of the Turkish state's authorities, see: Sait Aşgın, *Türkiye'de Bölgelerarası Gelişmişlik Farkları Ve Doğu Anadolu* (Ankara: İmaj Yayınevi, 2009).

[2] Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction*; David Harvey, *Spaces of Neoliberalization: Towards a Theory of Uneven Geographical Development* (München: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2005); Neil Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space*, 3rd ed. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1990).

[3] I discuss this issue in a more detailed way at following article: Çiçek, "Etnik Ve Sınıfsal İnşa Süreçleri Bağlamında Kürt Meselesi: Bölgesel Eşitsizlik Ve Bölgesel Özerklik." See also, Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 92, 242, 258; Ania Loomba, *Colonialism & Postcolonialism* (London: Routledge, 1998), 9–12; Frantz Fanon, *The Wreched of the Earht* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 40.

[4] Löwy, *Fire Alarm: Reading Walter Benjamin's "On the Concept of History,"* 61–2.

In Turkey the Turkish and Muslim bourgeoisie emerged at the expense of the elimination of non-Muslim communities through the means of massacres and forced displacements. The Greek and Armenian communities, which owned 50 % and 20 % of total small factories, respectively, according to the state's industry reports in 1915[1], were mostly driven out or exterminated during the first decades of the 20th century. In this respect, the Armenian genocide in particular had immense destructive effects on the economy of the Kurdish region[2], where Armenians were the main ethnic and non-Muslim minority. Christian Armenian people who were forced to leave their settlements and were mostly killed during the forced displacement, were mainly manufacturers, artisans, and merchants in the urban areas, dominating the most important sectors in the Kurdish region[3]. Consequently, the principal productive urban groups that had the ability and capacity to transform the rural-area-based regional economy into an urbanized capitalist economy were mostly eliminated during this period, which claimed hundreds of thousands of lives.

2) Construction of the Kurdish region as a peripheral economy

The uneven economic development based on the center-periphery structure must be noted as the second-most important dynamic of the regional disparities and socioeconomic backwardness of the Kurdish region. The Kurdish region has essentially been constructed as a peripheral economy in Turkey. The center-periphery relationship between the region and the western part of the country has framed and confined the economic life in the Kurdish region since at least the 1950s[4].

While Turkey developed as a peripheral economy of the European economy[5], a center-periphery relation was constructed between the Marmara and Ege regions (the center) and the

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[1] Tevfik Çavdar, "Türkiye Ekonomisinin Elli Yılı Semineri," in *Cumhuriyet Devri Başlarken Türkiye Ekonomisi* (Bursa: Bursa İktisadi Ticari İlimler Akademisi, 1973), 163; Başkaya, *Paradigmanın İflasi-Resmi İdeolojinin Eleştirisine Giriş*, 140.

[2] Charles Issawi, *The Economic History of Turkey 1800-1914* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 305; Mehmet Polatel, "Diyarbakır'ın Sosyo-Ekonomik Dönüşümünde Ermeni Mallarının Rolü," in *Diyarbakır'ın Sosyo-Ekonomik Dönüşümünde Ermeni Mallarının Rolü* (presented at the Diyarbakır'ın ve Çevresinin Toplumsal ve Ekonmik Tarihi Toplantısı, Diyarbakır: Hrant Dink Vakfı, 2011).

[3] Sönmez, *Doğu Anadolu'nun Hikayesi Kürtler: Ekonomik Ve Sosyal Tarih*, 85–6.

[4] In this respect, Mustafa Sönmez's book is an excellent resource analyzing the construction process of the center-periphery relation with a historical perspective until 1990s. See, Sönmez, *Doğu Anadolu'nun Hikayesi Kürtler: Ekonomik Ve Sosyal Tarih*.

[5] The data of the Ministry of Economy show that over the half of Turkey's export and import is being made with the European country. The Data are accessible at following address: www.ekonomi.gov.tr.

rest of the country[1]. In this structure, the Kurdish region constitutes the periphery of the periphery or a case of the "under-underdevelopment"[2]. For instance, in the 1960s, only 7.6 % of manufacturers were in the Kurdish region while this ratio was 17.8 % in 1927. The ratio of the Marmara region increased from 29.6 % to 47.2 % in the same period[3]. Indeed, after the political silence during the two-decade-long period of severe single-party rule, the initial Kurdish political contestation that emerged in the 1960s mainly concentrated on the socioeconomic underdevelopment of the Kurdish region and the discriminative regional economic policies of the Turkish state[4]. The studies made by the Turkish state institutions in 1982[5], 1996[6], 2004[7] and 2012[8] show that uneven development, regional inequalities, and the peripheral quality of the Kurdish region have remained during the decades and continued until the present (For the current situation see Map 4).

For sophisticated discussions on the peripheral quality of Turkey's economy see, Başkaya, *Paradigmanın İflasi-Resmi İdeolojinin Eleştirisine Giriş*; Beşikçi, *Doğu Anadolunun Düzeni: Sosyo-ekonomik Ve Etnik Temeller*.

[1] Sönmez, *Doğu Anadolu'nun Hikayesi Kürtler: Ekonomik Ve Sosyal Tarih*, 15–70; Mustafa Sönmez, *Bölgesel Eşitsizlik: Türkiye'de Doğu-Batı Uçurumu* (İstanbul: alan yayıncılık, 1998), 13–9, 189–255.

[2] Majeed R. Jafar, *Under-Underdevelopment: A Regional Case Study of the Kurdish Area in Turkey* (Helsinki: Painoprint, 1976).

[3] Necdet Serin, *Türkiye'nin Sanayileşmesi* (Ankara: Sevinç Matbaası, 1963).

[4] Beşikçi, *Doğu Anadolunun Düzeni: Sosyo-ekonomik Ve Etnik Temeller*, 601–16; Gündoğan, "1960'larda Tunceli/Dersim Kent Mekanında Siyasal Eylemlilik: Doğu Mitingleri"; Azat Zana Gündoğan, "Space, State-making and Contentious Kurdish Politics in the East of Turkey: The Case of Eastern Meetings, 1967," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 13, no. 4 (2011): 389–416; Bozarslan, "Between Integration, Autonomization and Radicalization. Hamit Bozarslan on the Kurdish Movement and the Turkish Left"; M. Emin Bozarslan, *Doğu'nun Sorunları* (İstanbul: Avesta, 2002).

[5] Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, *Türkiye'de Yerleşme Merkezlerinin Kademelenmesi* (Ankara: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1982).

[6] Bülent Dinçer, Metin Özaslan, and Erdoğan Satılmış, *İllerin Ve Bölgelerin Sosyoekonomik Sınıflandırması Araştırması – 1996*, vol. 2466 (Ankara: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1996).

[7] Dinçer, Özaslan, and Kavasoğlu, *İllerin Ve Bölgelerin Sosyoekonomik Sınıflandırması Araştırması – 2003*.

[8] Ekonomi Bakanlığı, *Yeni Teşvik Sistemi : Yatırımlarda Devlet Yardımları* (Ankara: Ekonomi Bakanlığı, April 6, 2012), http://www.ekonomi.gov.tr/upload/42760EC5-C17C-8402-E41BE0CFF2DF5959/basbakan_sunum.pdf., date of access : March 6, 2013.

Map 4: Socioeconomic development rank in Turkey
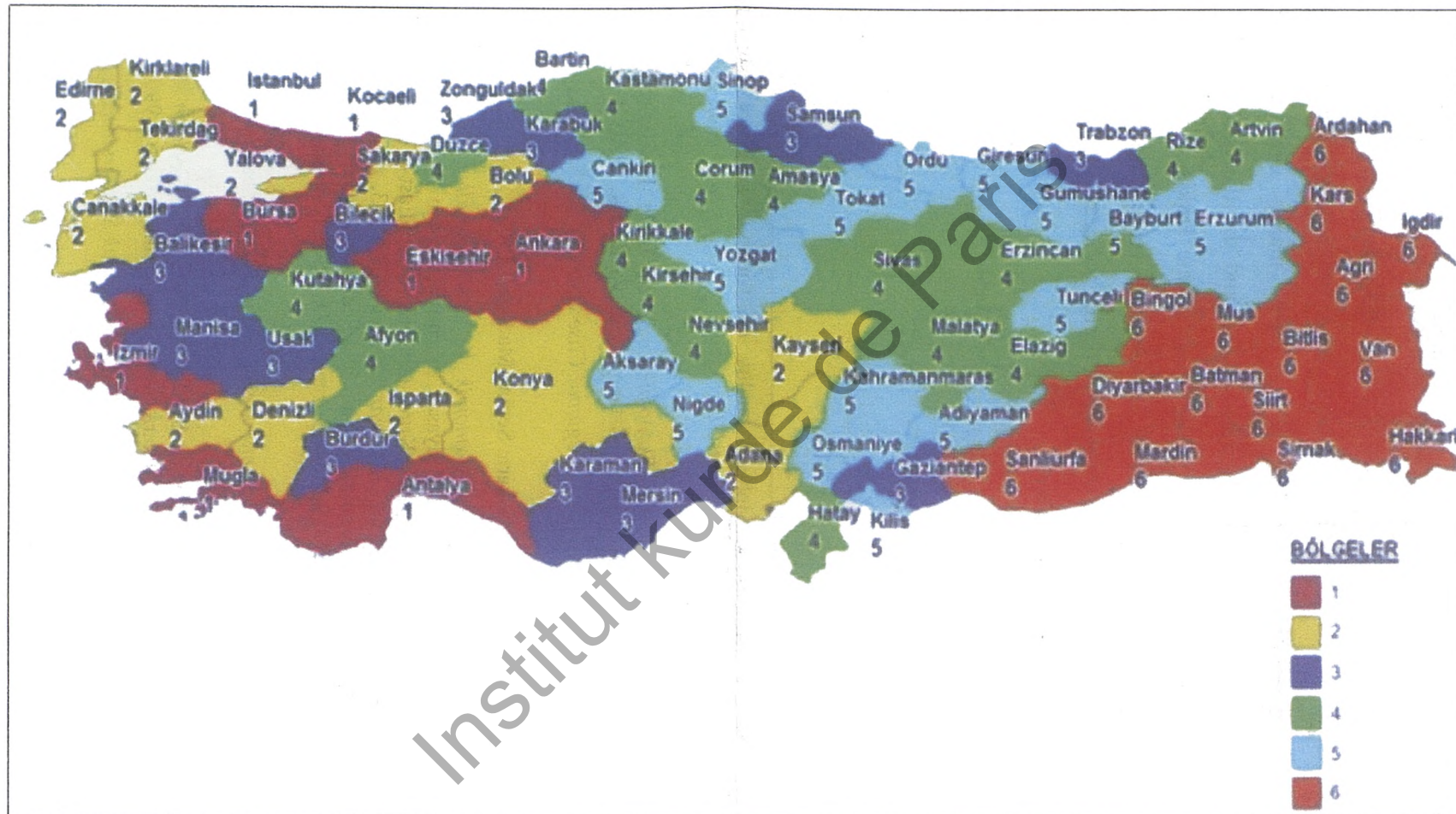
Note : "Bölgeler" means regions. All provinces were ranked rom "1" to "6". The "6" refers the least developed region.

3) Incorporation of the Kurdish ruling class into the ruling elite

The incorporation of the Kurdish ruling class into the Turkish ruling class in the 1950s has played a crucial role in the construction process of the Kurdish region as a peripheral economy. As I mentioned in the previous sections, after the severe elimination of the Kurdish ruling class during the first half of the 20th century, its successors were integrated into the Turkish national economic and political system thanks to patronage relations and Islamic religious ties that increased and consolidated state power over the Kurdish region after the DP mandate in the 1950s[1]. It is important to note that during this incorporation process, as David McDowall highlighted,

"the aghas ceased to be Kurdish in two vital senses: they quietly disowned their Kurdish origin, and they exploited their relationship with the peasantry, not as a means to semi-independence from the centre as in the old days, but in order to become more closely integrated members of the ruling Turkish establishment[2]."

In fact, the reproduction of the feudality in the Kurdish region provided the uneven capitalist development of the country on the one hand, and prevented – or at least delayed – the emergence of an urbanized and educated Kurdish social class on the other[3]. Indeed, the eastern part of the country, in which the Kurds constitute the clear majority of the population, remained a region in which feudal economic relations and production were dominant until the early 1990s, while remarkable capitalist development occurred in the western part of the country[4]. Moreover, the economy of the region has worsened because of the armed conflicts between the PKK and the Turkish army, which caused the collapse of rural area-based economic activities and immense socioeconomic and spatial devastation in urban areas since 1984. As a result, one can easily discern that the least developed region in Turkey's socioeconomic development map, prepared by the Ministry of Economy in 2012, constitutes

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[1] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 397–403; Beşikçi, *Doğu Anadolunun Düzeni: Sosyo-ekonomik Ve Etnik Temeller*, 448–53; McDowall, "The Kurdish Question: a Historical Review," 15; Bozarslan, *Doğu'nun Sorunları*, 141–4.

[2] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 402.

[3] Çiçek, "Etnik Ve Sınıfsal İnşa Süreçleri Bağlamında Kürt Meselesi: Bölgesel Eşitsizlik Ve Bölgesel Özerklik," 26–8.

[4] Sönmez, *Bölgesel Eşitsizlik: Türkiye'de Doğu-Batı Uçurumu*; Sönmez, *Doğu Anadolu'nun Hikayesi Kürtler: Ekonomik Ve Sosyal Tarih*.

exactly the Kurdish cultural region where there has been notable ethno-political unrest for decades (compare Map 2, Map 3 and Map 4)[1].

4) Weak and center-dependent Kurdish economic elites

The decades-long socioeconomic peripheral underdevelopment of the Kurdish region caused the Kurdish economic elites to remain relatively weak compared with the national and religious elites in the political space. The existence of a Kurdish bourgeoisie has always been a debated issue among political actors, because of economic elites' weak capacity, dependence to the center, and disowning their ethnic identity. During the field research, most of the interviewers – including the economic elite – underlined that the Kurdish economic elite does not constitute a powerful bloc and has no remarkable influence on the constant construction and reconstruction of the political space in the Kurdish region. Emphasizing the unproductiveness of the regional economy, many underlined that the region's economy is mainly dependent on the state institution's tenders, local/regional distributions of national companies and financial credit of national and international banks that agglomerated in the main metropolitan cities in the western part of the country. The term "the tender economy" characterized the weak and center-dependent qualities of the Kurdish economic elite. Indeed, the members of the economic elite with whom I interviewed have an engage in economic activity of between 25 million Turkish lira and 400 million Turkish lira per year, and the oldest company was established just after 1995.

Despite historically constructed limits, the economic elites have been more visible in the political space and have tried to become involved in the political struggle for the last decade. The general economic growth and the rising economic integration in the global economy during the AK Party mandate, as well as the newly emerging economic market in IKR and the leading pro-Kurdish party's experience in local government can be underlined as the most important dynamics empowering the economic elite in the Kurdish region. The economic elite has become remarkably advanced thanks to the neo-liberal economic policies of the AK Party government over the last decades. For instance, according to R. Türk, the president of DİSİAD, the association of industrialists and businessmen in Diyarbakır, their members developed commercial relations with more than 40 countries over the last years[2].

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[1] Ekonomi Bakanlığı, *Yeni Teşvik Sistemi : Yatırımlarda Devlet Yardımları.*, Date of access: March 6, 2013.

[2] Raif Türk, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 26, 2011.

Additionally, the local government experience of the leading pro-Kurdish party has changed the politico-administrative context in the main provinces of the Kurdish region since 1999. Moreover, the center-periphery relationship between the Kurdish economic elites and Ankara became more complicated after Turkey's exclusive stance against Kurdish economic elites in the newly emerging markets in the IKR. In short, while their national sensitivities have increased, the Kurdish economic elite follows politics of balance between central and local-regional political power. These issues are discussed in a more detailed way in the next chapters, which cover the conflict and consensus among the different Kurdish groups.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the historical construction process of the three Kurdish blocs and their distinctive qualities and interactions by invoking the theoretical frames of Barth and Brubaker on the ethnicity, ethnic boundaries and "groupness". This discussion allows us to underline several theoretical conclusions and the basic aspects of the three Kurdish blocs.

In the theoretical frame, I concluded five important points from the discussion on the analyses of Barth and Brubaker. The first is that the collective identities or the groups are not "substantial things-in-the-world", but political constructs having dynamic borders. The second point focuses on the importance of the inter-group contact and dependence in the group construction processes. The third point highlights the determinative role of "the other(s)" in these processes. The fourth emphasizes that the collective identities and the groups are constructs of the actors or the political entrepreneurs. The fifth and last point underlines that inter-group relations occur in the dynamic context constituted by the social processes of exclusion and incorporation. I added the determinative role of the state in the construction processes of the collective identities and groups to the theoretical frame.

I showed that the three Kurdish blocs and the groups that constitute these blocs are relational political constructs. It is important to highlight that the three Kurdish blocs are not discrete, concrete, tangible or bounded, but are rather relational, processual, dynamic, eventful and disaggregated. They are the dynamic products of a decades long process, in which their ideas, interests and institutional forms have been constantly constructed in accordance with their interaction with others.

The first point, in fact, comprises the following three points. That is to say, the construction processes of the three Kurdish blocs do not depend on the absence of social interaction and acceptance. On the contrary, the Kurdish actors are products of inter-group

contact and dependence. Moreover, it seems that each Kurdish bloc or group has "a constructive other". For instance, the secular left-wing Kurdish national groups constitute the other of Sunni-Muslim groups, while the Sunni-Muslim groups constitute the other of Alevi groups in the Kurdish region. Therefore, the collective identities like the Kurdish, Sunni-Muslim, Alevi, Zaza in the Kurdish region are not the identity for granted or substantial things-in-the-world, but rather the constructs of the socio-political entrepreneurs.

As to the fifth point, the socioeconomic and sociopolitical context at the national level in Turkey has had a remarkable influence on the interaction and construction process of the three Kurdish blocs since 1950s. The radical polarization of the left-wing/right-wing politics between the 1960s and the 1980s, and the dominance of identity politics since the 1980s, constructed the principal frame of the three Kurdish blocs' interaction at multiple levels. Both the Kurdish religious and national groups emerged and matured within their Turkish counterparts in the 1960s and 1970s. The Kurdish national groups parted ways from the Turkish left-wing politics in the second half of the 1970s. Yet, both the Kurdish Sunni-Muslim and Alevi groups still mostly constitute the periphery of the Turkish religious groups, while some of them started to move toward autonomy. This peripheral quality also has framed the Kurdish economic elites and their weak and center-dependent construction processes since the 1950s.

Lastly, the examination of the Kurdish actors has allowed us to understand the critical role of the Turkish state in the historical process of constructing collective identities and groups in the Kurdish scene. The emergence of a Kurdish national bloc can be seen as a reaction to the decades-long severe military rule by the Turkish state in the Kurdish region. Likewise, the Turkish state has a determinative role in the construction of the identity of the Kurdish economic elite. The same thing can be stated for the construction of Alevi and Zaza identities as alternative distinctive identities vis-à-vis the Kurdish national identities. As to the pro-Islamist Kurds, the Turkish state has played a critical role in both the construction of the majority of pro-Islamists as peripheral groups on the one hand, and the autonomization and the radicalization of some Kurdish pro-Islamist groups (the MZC, the KH and the Azadî in particular) on the other. Therefore, the process of constructing the identities of the Kurdish groups and their interactions cannot be analyzed unless taking state intervention into account.

Regarding the conclusions about the three Kurdish groups, the national bloc has three distinctive qualities: it has a left-wing heritage; it sees the Kurdish (and Kurdistan) issue as "a national issue" (in other words, as a problem of the territorial sovereignty of the Kurdish

nation); and it advocates a politico-administrative status (regional autonomy or federation) and collective cultural rights for the Kurds. It is crucial to underline that they frame the issue not with the religious references, but with different references such as secular, left-wing, liberal, and classical nationalist ones. In this respect, the highly modernist, secularist, left-wing qualities, as well as the discourse on women's liberation and mobilization, must be underlined in discussion of the leading Kurdish movement. These distinctive qualities of the leading Kurdish movement have left so far a very limited political space for the pro-Islamist groups and economic elite, and have constructed uneasy relations between the national struggle and most of the pro-Islamist groups and economic elite, while facilitating the participation of Alevis in the movement.

Second, unlike the national groups, religious groups commonly privilege their Alevi and Sunni-Muslim identities over the Kurdish national identity. Yet there exist remarkable differences among the religious groups about diverse aspects of the Kurdish issue, although they agree on the priority of the religious identity. Most of the Kurdish Sunni-Muslim groups are regional offshoots of the Turkish pro-Islamist movements and political parties, such as the GC, the MGH and the AK Party. The anti-western, anti-communist, Turkish nationalist and statist qualities of the Turkish pro-Islamists have significant influences on their regional offshoots in the Kurdish scene. Yet since the 1990s we have been witnessing the autonomization of some Kurdish pro-Islamists, such as the MZC, the KH, and the Azadî. Criticizing the Turkish nationalist and statist qualities of the Turkish pro-Islamists, these Kurdish pro-Islamist groups advocate Kurdish national rights, equality between the nations and the cultural plurality of the Muslim world within an Islamic discourse.

As to the Kurdish Alevi groups, there exist four basic dynamics that construct the Alevi identity in the political space. It is evident that the decades-long dominance of Sunni-Muslim rules over the Alevi communities and the constant massacres that the Alevi communities were exposed to during both the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey, constituted the most important dynamic in the construction of the Alevi identity. The Alevi identity has primarily evolved as a historical other of the Sunni-Muslim identity so far. This othernization of Alevi communities and their identities caused massive participation of the Alevis in the left-wing politics vis-à-vis pro-Islamist, nationalist and conservative right-wing politics after the 1960s. Although the left-wing political movements were mostly eliminated after the coup d'état on September 12, 1980, the Alevi communities still constitute the principal societal base of the marginal left-wing groups and the CHP. The Kurdish national movement, and the BDP-

DTK/PKK-KCK in particular, has achieved mobilization among the Alevi Kurds to some extent since the early 1990s. Today, a significant portion of Alevi Kurds sees religious and national identities as compatible. The pro-Zaza identity-based sociocultural and sociopolitical mobilization must be noted as the last dynamic. A small part of the Alevi Kurds has been under the influence of this additional aspect of mobilization over the last decades. The pro-Zaza groups argue that the Zaza people are not Kurds or Turks, but a distinctive nation.

It is important to underline that both the Kurdish pro-Islamist and Alevi groups have remarkable differences concerning the Kurdish issue and religion (Islam and Alevism), which depend on their diverse interactions with the Kurdish national groups (the leading Kurdish movement in particular), their Turkish counterparts (the pro-Islamist, Alevi and left-wing groups) and the Turkish state.

Finally, the Kurdish economic elite constitutes the weakest bloc in the Kurdish region. The decades-long socioeconomic underdevelopment of the Kurdish region is the main reason of this weakness. I underlined three dynamics to explain the historically constructed socioeconomic underdevelopment of the Kurdish region. These are: the destructive economic effects of Armenian genocide on the Kurdish region; the construction of the Kurdish region as a peripheral economy; and the incorporation of the Kurdish ruling class into the ruling elite after the 1950s. As a result, the Kurdish economic elite has remained weak and center-dependent when compared with the national and religious groups in the Kurdish political space. In spite of its internal diversity, the economic elite has been mostly involved in politics through the mediation of right-wing parties so far. However, it is crucial to note that the politico-administrative context has changed, and as a result, the political space of the Kurdish elite has been reconstructed since 1999.

Given the historical construction processes of the three Kurdish blocs that I just examined and my initial question, I pose the next questions in the following three chapters: What are the key sources of conflict for the three Kurdish blocs at the idea, interest and institutional levels? The conflicts at the idea level among the three Kurdish blocs are discussed in the next chapter.

Second Part: Conflicts and Negotiations

III - Chapter 3 Religion, Nation and Identity Conflicts: Muslim, Alevi or Kurd?

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the interaction of the national and religious identities in the Kurdish scene. The uneasy relations between the Kurdish national and religious groups, as well as between the Sunni-Muslim and Alevi groups in the frame of the Kurdish issue, constitute the main subject of the chapter. Religion and the nation are constructive and predominant dynamics for the Kurdish religious and national blocs, respectively. These dynamics affect each bloc and define the Kurdish issue in different ways. These ideational differences between the two blocs have caused several conflicts on a number of issues, including those of secularism, gender, and religious freedoms. I aim to illustrate the principal obstacles to building consensus among different Kurdish groups by discussing the conflicts between the national and religious groups. I argue that there is an ideological and existential conflict between both national and religious groups and Sunni-Muslim and Alevi groups at the idea level, which limits cooperation that could produce a common cognitive frame, shared interest, and accepted rules in the Kurdish scene (For a brief view of different ideational differences in the Kurdish region, see Table 4).

In this chapter, I also discuss the mutual construction of the national and religious identities and boundaries between these identities. I argue that the boundaries between the national and religious identities are not rigid or fixed, but are rather fluid, dynamic and relational. For instance, the *Zaza* identity increasingly becomes a common point of the Sunni-Muslim and Alevi Kurds, despite the historically uneasy relation between them. While the religious groups prioritize Islam and Alevism as the main frames and filters of interpretation, they also mobilize the *Zaza* identity to distinguish themselves from Kurdish national groups, in particular the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK, who mostly mobilize *Kurmancî*-speaking Kurds, though they do not exclude *Zaza*-speaking Kurds. Consequently, I conclude two important inferences from this discussion. First, in the Kurdish scene, the *Zaza* identity is a constructive element of both Alevi and Sunni-Muslim religious identities vis-à-vis the secular Kurdish national identity. Second, neither the religious nor the national identity can be reduced to elements such as religious values, culture, or language; both must rather be understood as a construct of political mobilization occurring in a historically constructed context.

Table 4: The principal social imaginaries and their qualities in the Kurdish region

	Actor	Pillars of Identities	Principal Political Other	Kurdish Issue	Religion	Gender	Socioeconomic Issue
National Groups	BDP-DTK/ PKK-KCK	- Kurdish national identity - Socialism - Gender equality	- Turkish nation-state - Turkish nationalism - AK Party - CHP (in Tunceli)	- National and social liberation - Local or Regional decentralization - Democratic autonomy	- Highly modernist secularism	- Constructive element - Gender equality and liberation	- Collectivist economic system - Labor rights - Gender equality
	HAK-PAR	- Kurdish national identity	- Turkish nation-state - Turkish nationalism	- National liberation - Federation	- Secularism	- Not a constructive element - Modernist	- Social democracy
	KADEP	- Kurdish national identity	- Turkish nation-state - Turkish nationalism	- National liberation - Federation	- Secularism	- Not a constructive element - Modernist	- Liberalism
	ÖSP	- Socialism - Kurdish national identity	- Turkish nation-state - Turkish nationalism - Kurdish ruling classes	- National liberation - Federation	- Secularism	- Not a constructive element - Modernist	- Socialism
	TDŞK	- Kurdish national identity	- Turkish nation-state - Turkish nationalism	- National liberation - Federation	- Secularism	- Not a constructive element - Modernist	- Social democracy
Pro-Islamist Groups	AK Party	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - Kurdish cultural identity	- BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK - Secular Kemalist establishment	- Cultural identity rights - Local decentralization	- Cultural pro-Islamist	- Not a constructive element - Conservative modernist	- Neo-liberalism
	GC	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - Kurdish cultural identity	- BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK - Secular Kemalist establishment	- Cultural identity rights - Local decentralization	- Cultural pro-Islamist	- Not a constructive element - Conservative modernist	- Neo-liberalism
	MGH	- Political Sunni-Islam - Kurdish cultural identity	- BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK - Secular Kemalist establishment	- Cultural identity rights - Local decentralization	- Cultural pro-Islamism	- Not a constructive element - Conservative modernist	- Liberalism
	MZC	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - Kurdish national identity	- Statist and Turkish nationalist Nur Community	- National issue - Politico-administrative decentralization	- Kurdish cultural pro-Islamism	- Not a constructive element - Conservative pro-Islamist	- Pro-Islamist social justice - Social democracy
	KH	- Political Sunni-Islam - Kurdish national identity	- BDP-DTP/PKK-KCK - Secular Kemalist establishment - GC	- National issue - From autonomy to Independent - Socioeconomic under-development	- Kurdish political pro-Islamism	- Not a constructive element - Radical conservative pro-Islamist	- Pro-Islamist social justice - Regional socioeconomic equality
	Azadî	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - Kurdish national identity	- Turkish nation-state	- National liberation - Self-government rights	- Kurdish cultural pro-Islamism	- Not a constructive element - Conservative pro-Islamist	- Pro-Islamist social justice - Regional socioeconomic equality
Alevi Groups	BDP-Supporting Alevi Group	- Socio-cultural Alevi identity - Kurdish national identity	- Turkish nation-state - Turkish nationalism - Sunni-Islam - AK Party and CHP	- National and social liberation - Local or Regional decentralization - Democratic autonomy	- Secularism	- Constructive element - Gender equality and liberation	- Collectivist economic system - Labor rights - Gender equality
	CHP-supporting Alevi Group	- Socio-cultural Alevi identity - Kurdish cultural identity	- Sunni-Islam - AK Party	- Cultural identity rights - Local decentralization	- Secularism	- Not a constructive element - Modernist	- Liberalism
	Left-wing Alevi Group	- Socio-cultural Alevi identity - Kurdish national identity	- Ruling classes - AK Party	- National issue - Respect to the Kurds' decisions including an independent Kurdish state	- Highly modernist secularism	- Not a constructive element - Highly modernist	- Socialism

To analyze the interaction of the religious and the national identities in the Kurdish scene, I follow the theoretical frame on the collective identities discussed in the second chapter. Accordingly, collective identities such as ethnic, national, and religious ones are dependent on the historically constructed socioeconomic and sociopolitical context. Second, they are not "identities taken-for-granted" or "substantial things-in-the-world", but rather the constructs of organizational entrepreneurs (such as political, economic, ethnic, or religious organizations). Third, the collective identities must not be understood as solid, fixed, and isolated phenomena, but rather as fluid, dynamic and relational. Finally, the state plays a critical role in the process of constructing collective identities.

In the following parts of the chapter, I first focus on the identity conflicts, the interaction and state intervention. Secular national groups' revision about the issue of Islam, pro-Islamist groups' revision about the national issue, state intervention in ideational conflicts, and finally the influence of the conflict between the PKK and the KH during the 1990s on the identity politics of the Kurdish scene are the main subjects of this part. In the second part, I discuss the social imaginary of the Kurdish national groups – and the leading Kurdish movement in particular – by examining the KCK contract, the political identity of the BDP, and the democratic autonomy project. The third part is reserved for the pro-Islamist social imaginary of the Kurdish region. The perception of the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups, which frames the nation and ethnicity as inappropriate bases for social order, and the perception of the leading Kurdish movement as anti-Islamist among most of the pro-Islamist groups, constitute the principal discussions of this part. The issue of gender is also examined as a core conflict between the social imaginaries of the Kurdish pro-Islamist and national blocs. The participation of Kurdish women in the public sphere and political arena as a consequence of woman's liberation discourse and mobilization of the leading Kurdish movement is the most critical issue challenging the pro-Islamist social imaginary. In the fourth part, I discuss the Alevi-identity-based social imaginary. The priority of Alevi identity over national identity, the Alevi Kurds' perception of laicism as a political guarantee, and the left-wing and opposing qualities of Alevi identity, are examined as three pillars of the third social imaginary in the Kurdish region. In the fifth part, I question the boundaries of both ethno-national and religious identities. I illustrate that these identities are relational political constructs by discussing the political construction of the Alevi identity, the mobilization of the Zaza identity as a political resource, and the intervention of the Turkish state in the

construction process of both Alevi and Zaza identities as alternative distinct identities vis-à-vis the Kurdish national identity.

In conclusion, I summarize the principal inferences of the chapter and underline the pillars of three contentious social imaginaries and their interaction in the Kurdish region. The collective identities cannot be reduced to a granted essence, but must be understood as relational political constructs. Besides, the collective identities are not one-dimensional, but are rather multi-dimensional phenomena that include ethnic, national and religious dynamics. It is important to note that each dynamic has different importance in the construction of collective identities.

Table 5: Result of Local Election of Provincial in 2004 and 2009 in the Kurdish region

Provinces	Total Population (2013)	Pro-Kurdish Party (%)		AK Party (%)		CHP (%)		Other Political Groups (%)	
		(SHP) 2004	(DTP) 2009	2004	2009	2004	2009	2004	2009
Diyarbakır	1,592,167	43.38	59.61	32.18	30.79	4.46	1.01	19.98	8.59
Batman	534,235	50.11	53.55	18.80	35.82	3.29	1.69	27.80	8.94
Mardin	773,026	26.93	47.08	23.13	29.27	11.34	3.81	38.60	19.84
Şırnak	466,982	37.95	59.98	24.89	26.74	5.22	1.11	31.94	12.17
Siirt	310,879	37.92	38.30	26.89	36.24	4.06	3.05	31.13	22.31
Hakkari	279,982	45.28	71.51	32.75	21.15	3.40	0.00	18.57	7.34
Van	1,051,975	40.26	48.18	26.26	34.24	7.28	2.52	26.2	15.06
Muş	413,260	31.33	44.99	29.52	31.64	4.39	3.30	34.76	20.07
Iğdır	190,409	24.07	43.65	23.40	23.03	4.65	4.42	47.88	28.9
Ağrı	292,525	19.26	38.38	34.57	28.60	4.35	2.31	41.82	30.71
Kars	304,821	17.00	18.95	38.52	36.26	11.68	14.11	32.80	30.68
Şanlıurfa	1,762,075	16.84	19.58	40.72	38.43	9.10	2.31	33.34	39.68
Bitlis	182,939	15.24	27.87	29.18	31.66	6.20	3.01	49.38	37.46
Bingöl	150,166	13.05	20.59	40.89	38.85	4.07	3.36	41.49	37.20
Tunceli	86,276	17.60	20.00	16.92	19.90	20.80	19.05	44.68	41.05
Total	8,391,717	30.47	41.89	31.23	32.57	6.76	2.95	31.52	22.59

Note 1: The Pro-Kurdish Party DEHAP made a coalition with the SHP and contested the election under the name of the SHP.

Note 2: Unlike Tunceli, in the other provinces, other political parties and groups are mainly right-wing parties. Most of them reunited under structure of the AK Party in 2009.

Note 3: Mardin and Siirt are two main cities where Kurds and Arabs live together. Most Arabs vote for the AK Party.

Note 4: Iğdır and Kars are cosmopolitan cities where different ethnic and national groups live together. Therefore, the relatively high percentage of votes gained by the CHP does not depend on the Alevi community. Besides, the MHP gained the 17-22 % of the votes in 2004 and 2009, respectively, in two cities.

Note 5: SP representing MGH, a pro-Islamist movement, has remarkable power in Ağrı, Bingöl, Bitlis, and Şanlıurfa.

Note 6: In Tunceli, alongside with three parties, the DSP, the EMEP and the TKP gained significant votes. The division of left-wing groups led the AK Party become one of the major three party in Tunceli. It is important to note that there is a significant Sunni population in Çemişgezek and Pertek, and there are high numbers of police forces from other cities that work in Tunceli because of ongoing conflicts. Most of them vote for the AK Party.

Source: The table was prepared by using the accessible data of Turkey Statistic Institute (www.tuik.gov.tr) and a specific website on the local election (www.yerelsecim.com). Date of access: May 29, 2013.

Before I discuss the social imaginary of each Kurdish bloc and their interactions, it will be useful to give some quantitative information about the place and power of this bloc. In the Table 5, the results of last local election in each city of the Kurdish region, held on March 19, 2009, are presented. Although the social supports of the leading pro-Kurdish party BDP (it was DTP in 2009), the AK Party (and FP) and the CHP cannot be reduced to Kurdish, pro-Islamist and Alevi identities, the following data can be interpreted to analyze the power of the main political entrepreneur of the three identities.

A - Identity conflicts, interaction and state intervention

Religion and nation play significant roles in the construction of politics in the Kurdish region, serving as resources of religious and Kurdish national politics, respectively. While the religious groups prioritize their Sunni-Muslim and Alevi identities, the Kurdish national groups (the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK in particular) mobilize national identity with a secularist perspective, which has so far left very limited political space to religious Kurds.

1) Secular national groups and pro-Islamist revision

In the Kurdish scene, the ideational conflict dominates the interaction of the national and religious groups, and limits cooperation between them[1]. As I mentioned earlier, like most of the national groups, the leading Kurdish movement has several distinctive qualities that limit its capacity to cooperate with Kurdish pro-Islamist groups. These are its left-wing heritage, highly modernist secular quality, and women's liberation discourse and mobilization. This political heritage commonly sees religion as an archaic, reactionary phenomenon that limits social emancipation, and will be eliminated during the socioeconomic development and modernization process. Moreover, religion, according to this political perspective, is one of the principal instruments used by the Turkish state to undermine the Kurdish national liberalization struggle.

Although the leading Kurdish movement has been trying to revise its orthodox secularist position on religion and build a new approach[2] to the question of religion since the early 1990s, a highly modernist secularism still marks the ideological orientation of the

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[1] Ömer Evsen, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 18, 2011.

[2] For a brief analysis of this approach, see: Abdullah Öcalan, *Din Sorununa Devrimci Yaklaşım*, 3rd ed. (Köln: Weşanên Serxwebûn, 2008). Öcalan continued to discuss the religion issue after his capture in 1999. For instance he defined the PKK as a modern Abrahamic movement in the text that he presented to the court as a political defense during the PKK Urfa case. The text is accessible at following address: http://www.abdullah-ocalan.com/index1.htm, date of access: May 28, 2013.

movement[1]. This has led to an uneasy relationship between the Kurdish national struggle and pro-Islamic Kurds, preventing the movement from going beyond sporadic revisions toward developing a more systematic, integrated, deeper and self-critical engagement with the question of religion in general, and with Islam in particular[2].

2) Pro-Islamist groups and revision on the national issue

On the other hand, most of the pro-Islamist groups privilege Muslim identity, and believe ethnic or national identity cannot be the base of the socio-political order. Indeed, for the pro-Islamist groups, the issue of ethnicity or nation is a result of Turkey's modernization process – in other words, the de-Islamization of the country. The Turkish nationalist, conservative, and statist qualities of the mainstream pro-Islamist groups in Turkey – and their offshoots in the Kurdish region – caused the Turkish and Kurdish pro-Islamists to ignore the Turkish national hegemony over the Kurds (and other national groups such as Arabs, Laz, Armenians), and supported the state's arguments framing the Kurdish issue as a problem of the security and terrorism threatening the unity of the Turkish state and nation. In spite of the autonomization of some Kurdish pro-Islamist groups in the early 1990s, most of the pro-Islamist groups do not see the national groups (the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK in particular) as political movements that principally work for the Kurdish national rights, but view them first and foremost as "nationalist", "left-wing" movements that are in the last instance anti-Islamist atheist, and have been trying to de-Islamize Kurdish society for decades. In this respect, I must underline that the gender issue constitutes the central area where the pro-Islamist and secular national groups confront with each other.

However, like the leading pro-Kurdish movement, the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups have undergone a noteworthy transformation in the last two decades. While they still privilege Muslim identity as the predominant dynamic of their social imaginary, they started to deal with the Kurdish issue through pro-Islamic references in the last years. The protection of the Kurdish cultural identity and language, and its transfer to the new generation, became a common demand of the Kurdish pro-Islamists as well during this period. However, there is not any consensus on the institutional forms and instruments that will guarantee these demands. Besides, the issue of politico-administrative status that constitutes the principal demand of the Kurdish national groups is not so crucial for most of the Kurdish pro-Islamist

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[1] Çiçek, "The pro-Islamist Challenge for the Kurdish Movement."

[2] Ibid.

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groups. This ongoing transformation is occurring as a result of Kurdish pro-Islamist groups' interaction with the Turkish state, and the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK (and other national groups). We can argue that the pro-Islamist groups' efforts to build a new policy regarding the Kurdish issue are a political response to the Turkish state, Turkish pro-Islamists and the leading Kurdish movement.

3) State intervention in the ideational conflicts

In this respect, I must highlight the role of two dynamics in terms of the state intervention in ideational conflicts: the Islamic brotherhood policy of the AK Party, a Turkish neo-liberal pro-Islamist party, and the armed conflicts between PKK–KH during the 1990s. The AK Party government played a destructive force for the interaction of the Kurdish national and religious groups by reinforcing the loyalty of the latter to the central authority with the Islamic brotherhood discourse to resolve the Kurdish issue between 2002 and 2009[1]. Yet the nationalist and statist qualities of the AK Party were unmasked after 2009. These characteristics of the pro-Islamist central state compelled the local-regional Kurdish pro-Islamist groups to question the Muslim-brotherhood policy and find a pro-Islamic way to resolve the Kurdish issue. This process has brought the pro-Islamist and national groups closer to each other, at least at the level of ideas[2].

On the other hand, as in the 1990s, the leading pro-Kurdish movement efforts to revise its orthodox secularist ideological orientation over the course of the last decades must be seen as a political response to the AK Party pro-Islamist politics towards the Muslim Kurds. Indeed, as I argued in an earlier work:

"In the last few years, we have been witnessing a kind of return to the movement's approach to religion and Islam in the 1990s, but in a different historical and political context. The Kurds are no longer struggling against the traditional state apparatus dominated by Kemalist cadres. Now, the rival is the AK Party, who has integrated Turkey and Turkish Islamism into neoliberal globalization and, in the process, marginalized the Kemalists politically. The Kurdish movement's recent efforts to build a new policy vis-à-vis Islam, including civilian Friday prayers[3], opening some political

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[1] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012.

[2] Çiçek, "The pro-Islamist Challenge for the Kurdish Movement."

[3] Thousands of Kurds, who refused to pray behind the imams appointed by the Turkish state and listen to Turkish sermons prepared by the state's Presidency of Religious Affairs (PRA), gathered to pray and listen to Kurdish sermons not in a mosque, but in the very square where Sheikh Said and his 46

space for the representation of pro-Islamic Kurdish actors, organizing commemorations for Sheikh Said (the quintessential symbol for pious Kurds), increasing use of Islamic language by some influential Kurdish politicians, etc., have helped undermining the influence of AK Party's Islamist discourse among conservative Kurds to a significant degree[1]."

As a result of the interaction of the Kurdish pro-Islamists with the secular Kurdish movements and the Turkish state (and Turkish pro-Islamists), we have been witnessing the appearance of a third way between the AK Party and the BDP-DTP/PKK-KCK. For most of the pro-Islamist Kurds, the boundaries between national and religious identities have become increasingly blurred since 2002. Despite its obvious limits, the AK Party's recent reform based on "individual cultural rights" seems to develop sensitivity toward Kurdish national identity among pro-Islamic groups. On the other hand, the Kurdish movement's efforts regarding Islam are facilitating a more dialogical relationship with pro-Islamist groups[2]. "Yet, the Turkish nationalist limits of AK Party's Islamism and the exclusive secularism of the Kurdish movement leave a large political space to other Kurdish groups claiming to mobilize pro-Islamist and Kurdish nationalist identities simultaneously. In fact, some pro-Islamist Kurds started seeking a third way out of confrontations between the Kurdish movement and the AK Party[3]." The re-emergence of the KH in the political space with the HUDA-PAR and the formation of Azadî can be seen as two remarkable steps towards the construction of this third way.

4) The PKK - KH conflict and a mutual learning process

The armed conflicts between the PKK and the KH, which claimed nearly 1,000 lives during the 1990s, can be seen as the second important intervention of the Turkish state in the ideational conflict in the Kurdish scene. Most of the Kurds beyond the supporters of the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK see the KH as a fundamentalist, pro-Islamist counter-organization of the Turkish state to undermine the Kurdish national liberation struggle. The name "Hizbul-contra" ("counter-party" or "counter organization" in English), which secular left-wing

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friends had been hanged by the Turkish state in June 1925. This form of civil disobedience led by Kurdish *meles* (imams), later called "civilian Friday prayers", has rapidly burgeoned in other Kurdish towns and cities and been underway since March 2011.

[1] Ibid., 162.

[2] Çiçek, "The pro-Islamist Challenge for the Kurdish Movement."

[3] Ibid., 162–3.

politics has used for the KH, shows that this is a common perception. Even some senior members of the AK Party[1] and some the NC[2] underline that the KH has a negative image in the collective memory of the Kurdish people, and they cannot advance with this name in the Kurdish region.

On the contrary, refusing this argument, the KH accused the PKK of starting the conflict[3]. H. Yılmaz, the former president of the *Mustazaflar* association and the founding president of the HUDA-PAR, argues that the KH retaliated against the PKK's attacks, which were provoked by the deep state[4]. Although the two sides accuse each other of starting the armed conflicts and collaborating with the Turkish state, they agree that both sides suffered from the armed confrontation. Today, nobody is in doubt about state interventions in these conflicts, and it is commonly said that the Turkish state is the only actor that benefited from the conflict between the secular left-wing PKK and the pro-Islamist KH.

However, it seems that the armed conflict between the PKK and the KH has functioned as a mutual learning process both for the national groups – the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK in particular – and pro-Islamist groups, including the KH. The PKK and the KH avoid new confrontations, although they are far from being in direct cooperation. More importantly, the armed conflict and its political influences on Kurdish society have compelled the two sides to revise their policies regarding each other, particularly with regard to the issues of religion and nation. Consequently, despite mutual suspicions and distrust, the leading Kurdish movement had to revise its orthodox secularist policy toward the issue of religion, while the KH had to put the Kurdish issue on its political agenda.

Looking more closely into different social imaginaries of the national and religious groups (both pro-Islamist and Alevi) will allow us to understand the ongoing ideational conflicts and their influence on the consensus-building process in the Kurdish region.

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[1] Dengir M. Fırat, Personal Interview, Ankara, November 10, 2012.

[2] Feyzi Güzelsoy, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 28, 2011.

[3] Yılmaz, Tutar, and Varol, *Hizbullah Ana Davası: Savunmalar*, 213–245; Bagasi, *Kendi Dilinden Hizbullah*, 75–162.

[4] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012.

B - Socialist, secular, dis-gendered social imaginary of the Kurdish region

It is obvious that the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK cannot be reduced to a "national movement". As I discussed in the previous chapter, it represents a massive sociocultural and sociopolitical mobilization beyond "the national issue" at the levels of ideas, interests and institutional practices. In this respect, I noted its left-wing heritage, highly secularist orientation, women's liberation discourse and mobilization, and lower and relatively middle class social base as distinctive qualities. Therefore, for the leading Kurdish movement the Kurdish issue is not just a national liberation struggle against ethno-national and political domination, but beyond that, a socialist, secular, and dis-gendered[1] nation-building process. The KCK Contract, the political identity of the BDP, and the democratic autonomy project that the leading Kurdish movement advocates are three basic examples showing this socialist, secular and dis-gendered social imaginary of the Kurdish region.

1) The KCK Contract

The KCK Contract, the fundamental document (sometimes called the Constitution) of the movement, clearly shows that its political agenda reaches beyond the national issue. In the Contract, the movement advocates a new regime based on "radical democracy", highlighting communal economy, gender emancipation and equality, ecology, and a multi-level con-federal organization of different social, cultural, economic, political and religious groups at the district, city, region and national levels[2].

In the second article of the contract, which that defines the characteristics of the KCK, it is stated that the KCK is "a democratic, socialist-collectivist ("toplumcu" in Turkish), con-federal system. The KCK is based on democracy, gender emancipation, and ecology... Social groups reveal their decisions and represent themselves by means of communes, associations-local headquarters, assemblies and congresses." In the fourth article, which summarizes the principles of the organization, it is noted that the KCK aims "to construct an area of freedom for differences based on age, gender, class, nation, ethnicity, and belief within society, and to eliminate the inequalities based on these differences." In the same article a paragraph is also reserved for the gender issue: "(The KCK) is predicated on women's emancipation and

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[1] I use the notion of "dis-gendered" to denote a circumstance purified from gendered social relations.

[2] The KCK Contract is accessible at following address: http://www.ankarastrateji.org/_files/11102011152912-YLB6Z.pdf, date of access, March 18, 2013.

equality against male domination and its gender-based system at the all levels, and committed to the struggle for gender emancipation in each domain of life." Finally, as to the issues of class and the economic model, the movement advocates a communal economy. In Article Four, Paragraph (i), it is expressed that the KCK aims "to transform the economy through commodification and profit to a communal economy based on use value and sharing."

2) Political identity of the BDP

Likewise, the ways in which its senior actors define the BDP evidently show the socialist, secular, and dis-gendered social imaginary. For instance, highlighting their left-wing heritage since the foundation of the TİP in 1960s, G. Kışanak, the co-president of the BDP, describes the BDP as a left-wing mass party concentrating on the Kurdish issue. She underlines the gender and class issues as the two main axes of the party:

"The BDP is a left-wing mass party, and overcoming basic inequalities constitutes the main axes of the party. That is to say the woman-man, gender inequality, the inequality between labor and capital. These are the basic fields of struggle in the history of humanity. And, here, we are standing on the labor axis[1]."

Besides, criticizing the state's policy on religious issue based on the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, the co-president summarizes the secular perspective of the BDP as follows:

"At this moment, among the political parties, the BDP is the only party that could gather different religious groups within the same party. Within the BDP, everyone's identity is explicit. Within the BDP, everyone knows who is Alevi, who is Sunni, who is non-Muslim, who is Yezidi. Everyone accepts each other with their religious identities. *(The BDP) legitimizes different beliefs, and protects dignity rights of different beliefs.* This is a very important stance. ... In this country, for instance, the Alevi people could not explicitly express themselves with their religious identities in schools and workplaces for years. Likewise, non-Muslim peoples never could express themselves with their identities. Especially, the Yezidis have always been seen as heretics. *Yet, within this (political) tradition, everyone knows and recognizes their religious identity and respects each other.* If we can sufficiently explain our theoretical approach, our

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[1] Kışanak, Personal Interview.

freedom-oriented approach to the public, in fact, *the BDP is the only party that can resolve the issue of belief and depoliticize it*[1]."

Likewise, D. Çelik, co-vice-president of the BDP and the member of the coordination committee of the DTK, describes the BDP as a society-oriented, left-wing mass party:

"(The BDP) took the road for contributing to the construction of a democratic nation within the common homeland of Turkey. In this respect, (the BDP) is a left-wing mass party seeking the solutions to the economic, democratic, political and cultural problems of all the oppressed, impoverished, dispossessed, and proletarian peoples in Turkey; and carrying out the struggle to protect and empower the society against the state[2]."

It is important to note that "the democratic nation" is one of the main concepts articulated by the leader of PKK, to change the existing Turkish nation-state. He conceptualizes "the democratic nation" as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nationhood. In the other words, he tries to de-ethnicize the nation (Turkish, Kurdish ones in particulars) and religion (Islam in particular)[3].

Although the BDP is a left-wing party, it is necessary to note the plurality within the party. The nationalist, liberal and pro-Islamist Kurds constitute important groups within the movement. However, I must note that the socialists constitute the most powerful groups at the administrative positions within the party. S. Demirtaş, the other co-president of the BDP, stresses the democratic and left-wing qualities of the party while underlining its plurality. According to Demirtaş, "(The BDP) takes a democratic left-wing ideology as a reference. However, the BDP is a big mass party that also includes different groups, from the pro-Islamists to Kurdish nationalists, from the socialists to liberals[4]."

The co-president also privileges Kurdish identity with a secular perspective as a "supra-identity" over the religious identities such as Muslim, Alevi and the like. When I discussed with him the issue of religion and asked how he evaluated two Kurdish pro-Islamist initiatives to establish new political parties, he highlighted that the BDP was neither a pro-Islamist nor a

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Demir Çelik, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, October 5, 2012.

[3] Abdullah Öcalan, *Beşinci Kitap: Kürt Sorunu Ve Demokratik Ulus Çözümü* (İstanbul: Mezopotamya Yayınları, 2012).

[4] Selahattin Demirtaş, Personal Interview, Ankara, October 11, 2012.

pro-Alevi party, and could not be a belief-based organization. According to the co-president, the BDP is first and foremost a party to resolve the national issue. He continued as follows:

"It is an achievement that people organize themselves and found political parties. ... Yet, here is the danger: the organizations provoking internal separations and the disintegration of power can be harmful for a people whose national identity has not been legally and constitutionally recognized yet, and who have not completed its nation-building process yet. One must be careful at this point. The second issue that one must be careful about is the perception that the organizations founded as counter-organizations against the Kurdish freedom movement, the most powerful actor will be also harmful. This is also wrong. Except that, the different sensibilities and ideological differences of Kurdish people and the re-organization of these differences *towards the liberation and emancipation of Kurdish people will only strengthen Kurdistan and Kurdish people.* Democracy also entails that[1]."

3) Democratic autonomy project

The democratic autonomy project, the recent political proposal of the movement, is another example in which this imaginary of radical democracy can be seen. S. Fırat, a senior member of the PKK since 1979, and a member of the first peace group[2], defines democratic autonomy as an "anti-nationalist" project to alter destructive nationalism and nation-state structures that resulted in enormous social, cultural, and linguistic harms, as well as the loss of lives in the Middle East. The democratic autonomy project, for Fırat, aims to build a new pluralist structure based on self-government, and to alter nation-state based on monolithic and highly centralized structures, organizational styles, and administrative entities that oppress others, and leave no space in any way for the others[3].

In this respect, Co-President Demirtaş makes more comprehensive definition of the democratic autonomy. He argues that the democratic autonomy project has two distinctive qualities. First, the autonomous quality underlines sharing sovereignty within central and local-regional authorities. In this respect, the protection and re-production of Kurdish cultural

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[1] Ibid.

[2] In 1999, upon the call of Öcalan eight militants from the mountainous area laid down their arms and capitulated to the Turkish authorities to show good faith of the movement for the peace process. Seydi Fırat, a group member was arrested and jailed for five years. He has been working as a peace activist since 2004.

[3] Seydi Fırat, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, October 5, 2012.

identity and Kurdish self-government rights constitute the core issues of the "autonomous" quality of the project. Second, the "democratic" quality highlights inter-organizational forms and internal mechanisms of autonomous local-regional authorities. In other words, it emphasizes the basic values and principles on which to construct local-regional governments. During our discussion on the economic aspects of the democratic autonomy project, he underlined three pillars of the regional economic model that they wanted to implement in the Kurdish region: sustainable development, labor rights and gender equality. Underlining that Kurdish economic elites are deeply dependent to the Turkish state, and the leading Kurdish movement is essentially a lower class movement, Demirtaş continued as follows:

> "If the people choose the BDP as the ruling party in regional governments, the economic model that we will implement will definitely be sensitive to the environment, respectful to labor rights, and to gender liberty and equality. These are the main points that we are sensitive about. Besides, our model is not close to private enterprise and capital. We do not accept enrichment at the expense of the exploitation of labor, of the devastation of labor. The other issue is gender emancipation. We criticize the investments, the approaches that subordinate women and ignore them in economic investment and the workplace[1]."

In fact, the cooperative or the collectivist approach is the core concept of not only the economic model but also the leading movement social imaginary. In the democratic autonomy project, the different social groups, i.e. women, youth, classes, religious groups, and the like, will represent themselves and advocate their interests in the general assemblies organized at multiple levels, i.e. from the neighbor to the regional and national levels[2]. Indeed, the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK imagines and builds a parallel state challenging the Turkish state establishment in the Kurdish region, although they refer to it as "non-state" or "extra-state" ("devlet olmayan" or "devlet dışı" in Turkish) organization of the people[3]. As D. Gündüz, a Zazakî-writing novelist and the director of the Vate Publication House, which

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[1] Demirtaş, Personal Interview.

[2] Çelik, Personal Interview; Demirtaş, Personal Interview; Tan, Personal Interview.

[3] The brochure including different aspects (social, economic, cultural, ecologic, political and the like) of the democratic autonomy project, written by the DTK and presented in "the 2. Workshop on the Democratic Autonomy" organized by the DTK in Diyarbakir, on May 12-13, 2012, is an excellent resource regarding "the a-state or non-state organization of the people".

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mostly published mostly books written in Zazakî, underlines, the PKK is, in reality, an "illegal state" in the Kurdish region[1].

The socialist, secular and dis-gendered imaginary is not the only social project in the Kurdish region, and there exists a remarkable, relatively powerful adversary: Pro-Islamist social imaginary of the Kurdish region. It is the subject of next part.

C - Pro-Islamist social imaginary of the Kurdish region

Most of the Kurdish pro-Islamists see the world in accordance with religion. For them, the base of social imaginary is neither class, nor gender and nation, but religion. Although different Kurdish pro-Islamists give different importance to the issues of class, nation, and gender, they commonly privilege religious identity over the others. However, it is noteworthy that they interpret Islam in different ways. While certain groups like the KH intend an Islamic regime, some, including the followers of the AK Party and the GC, see Islam as a cultural base of the political system and advocate a liberal democratic regime privileging Islamic values. Despite the diversity within the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups, they mostly see the highly modernist, secular, and left-wing groups as an ideological and existential challenge to pro-Islamist values, culture and social order in the Kurdish region. It seems that the antagonistic construction processes of the Kurdish left-wing and pro-Islamist groups since 1950s confine the recent conflicts between them. Besides, it is crucial to note the state intervention in the counter-construction of the pro-Islamist social imaginary against the socialist, secular and dis-gendered social imaginary.

1) Ethnicity and Nation: Inappropriate bases for the social order

Most of the pro-Islamist elites whom I interviewed characterize the BDP-DTK/PKK-PKK and other secular national groups as "ulusçu" (nationalist)[2], "kavmiyetçi" (particularist)[3], or "Kürtçü"[1] (Kurdist) in a pejorative sense and certainly declare that as

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[1] Deniz Gündüz, Personal Interview, İstanbul, March 24, 2013.

[2] Serdar B. Yılmaz, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 22, 2011.

[3] "Kavmiyetçilik" that means to advocate or privilege the benefit of "kavim", is a key religious concept that allows the pro-Islamists to criticize the particularistic trends and to emphasize the universalist quality of Islam. In the Qur'an, the notion of "kavim" is used to describe different local communities with diverse languages and "colors". Yet, "kavmiyetçilik" commonly emerged as a concept that denotes different kinds of nationalism that threaten Islamic unity during the modernization process. In Turkey, however, most of the Turkish pro-Islamists used this concept to mask the Turkish national domination over the other national groups and to de-legitimize the Kurdish national struggle in the 1990s. The Kurdish forum organized by the Mazlum-Der, where the major

Muslim people they cannot support such an idea. In this respect, to invoke the argument of A. Tan, a pro-Islamist intellectual elected as a deputy in the last general election on the list the BDP ballot, can be a good point of departure. Although Altan is a Muslim Kurd and open to cooperate with the secular left-wing BDP, even he contests the secular social imaginary based on ethno-national identity. He argues that most of the secular and left-wing Kurdish groups imagine a Kurdish nation-state, although they propose different political solutions to the Kurdish issue:

> "The Kurdish political parties, not only the PKK, but also others, all emerged in the political scene with the thesis of a 'United and Independent Kurdistan'. That is to say a nation-state, and while constructing this nation-state, constructing a new Kurdish identity: laic, secular and leftist. … All the nation-building processes in the world are by and large much alike with their laic and secular identities. As you know, then, they differentiated. Certain Kurdish political movements abandoned the nation-state idea and started to advocate federation, some said autonomy, some said that a new order based on equal citizenship would be enough. (Despite all these ideational transformations) all intellectuals who received a laic, secular, and nationalist education have the idea of the nation-state in their mind. That is the most crucial thing. Since they cannot express their ideas because of the current legislative limits, or unfavorable conjuncture, they dilute, mask the nation-state, or keep it in their mind, and say other things[2]."

He clearly stated that as a Muslim, he couldn't advocate a Kurdish nation-state based on ethnicity:

> "As a Muslim, I cannot defend the nation-state. The nation-state is a newly emerged state, a mode of modern times, and more interestingly, it has already become outdated. It is a monolithic model based on the togetherness of the people that speak the same language or come from the same ancestor. People do not have to live with those who

pro-Islamist groups discussed the Kurdish issue in 1991, presents a remarkable source about the Turkish critiques on the Kurdish "kavmiyetçilik". See, Mazlum-Der, *Mazlum-Der Kürt Sorunu Forumu*. However, today some Kurdish pro-Islamists use the same concept to criticize both the Kurdish and Turkish nationalisms that privilege the particular national identity over the universal Muslim identity. For a recent example delegitimizing the Kurdish national mobilization by framing it with "a particularism against the universal Islamic unity" in Turkey, see the influential pro-Islamist intellectual Hayrettin Karaman's writings between May 17-27, 2012 in daily Yeni Şafak. They are accessible at following address: http://yenisafak.com.tr/yazarlar/HayrettinKaraman/Eski-Yazilar, date of Access: May 28, 2013.

[1] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012.

[2] Tan, Personal Interview.

have the same ancestry or speak the same language. There have been many factors that kept people together throughout history. Religion is one of them. ... I mean to believe in the same thing, ... to see live through the same window. ... The second is the sect as a version of that (religion). They belong to the same religion, the same belief, but they interpret it in different ways. ... The third element of the living together is interest. People can live together owing to their common interests. ... Thus, the nation-state, the construction of a common life on ethnicity is a modern idea, and during a short period of time, in 100-200 years, it became outdated[1]."

Although the majority of pro-Islamist Kurds do not value nation or ethnicity as the principal base of social order, I must note that some Kurdish pro-Islamists do not exclude a political order based on ethnicity or nation, while they also privilege Muslim identity over Kurdish identity[2]. In this matter, I must particularly mention the MZC and the Azadî. The MZC community advocates political and administrative decentralization guaranteeing cultural collective rights for the Kurds and other ethnic/national groups[3], while the Azadî explicitly defends "self-government rights of the Kurds in Kurdistan"[4] by referring to some verses of the Qur'an.

Most of the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups make frequent references to the 22nd verse of Ar-Room (The Romans, The Byzantines, No: 30) and the 13th verse of Al-Hujraat (The Private Apartments, No: 49). The Ar-Room (30/22) underlines the plurality of Muslim society and defines the plurality of languages and colors as a sigh of Allah: "And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colors: verily in that are Signs for those who know". Kurdish pro-Islamists interpret the assimilation of Kurds to Turkishness as denying a verse of Allah. They highlight that denying "one" verse is equal to denying "entire" Qur'an, according to Islam. Likewise, the Al-Hujraat (49/13) says,

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Kaya, Personal Interview; Zilan, Personal Interview, May 30, 2012; Süleyman Kurşun, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, August 5, 2012; İsa Aydın, Personal Interview, Batman, September 6, 2012; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012.

[3] Kaya, Personal Interview.

[4] Zilan, Personal Interview, May 30, 2012.

other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)".

Criticizing the ethno-national political domination of the Turkish nation over the Kurds and other national groups in Turkey, Kurdish pro-Islamists mostly interpret this verse to underline the equality among the national groups in general, between the Turkish and Kurdish nations in particular.

2) Pro-Islamists' perception about the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK: An anti-Islamist movement

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the left-wing heritage is one of the distinct qualities of most of the national groups, including the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK. Moreover, this quality has been constructed in conflict with pro-Islamist, conservative, right-wing groups. Although the left-wing separation has no more dominated the political space since 1980s, the antagonistic relation between the left-wing and the pro-Islamist groups continue to remain both in the Kurdish scene and the entire country. For most of the Kurdish pro-Islamists, the national groups, the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK in particular, cannot be reduced to a pro-Kurdish party, but rather to a secular, left-wing group that has de-Islamized Muslim Kurdish society for decades[1].

Arguing that the PKK is an anti-Islamist movement, İ. Aslan, the former president of the Mazlum-Der[2] during two terms, the former Diyarbakır deputy of the AK Party between 2002-2011, and the current vice-president of the AK Party in charge of political and lawful affairs, clearly states that Muslim Kurds will never take joint actions with the BDP or the PKK:

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[1] İhsan Aslan, Personal Interview, Ankara, November 10, 2012; Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012; Cemal Çınar, Personal Interview, İstanbul, August 21, 2012; Ferzende Lale, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 15, 2011; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011; Hamdullah Tasalı, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 22, 2012; Aydın, Personal Interview.

[2] Mazlum-Der is one of the most valued and active human rights associations in Turkey, alongside the Human Rights Association. The Mazlum-Der was mostly founded and have been operated by the Muslim people since 1991. The association is mostly known for its work on discrimination based on religious grounds, while its activities cover other kinds of discrimination. It is important to note that the association took a relatively active position against discrimination based on the Kurdish issue, while most of the religious parties, social movement or NGOs ignored the issue or supported the Turkish state's arguments in 1990s, when human rights violations were frequently and widely recorded in the Kurdish region.

"Muslim Kurds do not get involved in the same (political) ways. ... The BDP has not convinced people (in the religion issue). Nobody looks at the BDP as only a civilian party. It constitutes the same movement with Qandil[1], İmralı[2] and theie offshoots in Europe. The ideological line of the PKK is very apparent and anti-Islamist. They used some imams within certain activities for political aims, it is just hypocrisy. We see like that, we do not believe, they are not sincere in this issue. Thus, Muslim people and groups have red lines. *They want to exist in this struggle but with a different position from the PKK's line[3] .*"

Indeed, the pro-Islamist groups have a common cognitive frame about the anti-Islamist quality of the leading Kurdish movement, although they are divided and have different political and ideological stances. Most of them characterize the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK as a Kurdish version of Kemalism. According to them, the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK deals with Islam in the Kurdish society just as CHP has dealt with it in Turkey for decades. Most pro-Islamist elites highlight that the Kemalists and the leading Kurdish movement have a common cognitive frame regarding Islam and modernization[4]. In this respect, the analogy of "cooker and cover" that A. Tan made summarizes this common perception among pro-Islamist Kurds. Tan argues that there exists a disharmony, even a contradiction between the social base (the cooker) and the political cadre (cover) of the BDP (or the PKK). The BDP is based on the support of conservative Muslim Kurds, while people who are highly secular, modernist, left-wing and even anti-Islamist constitute its political cadre. Tan describes the political structure of the leading Kurdish movement as follows: "Today we can consider the political structure in the region like a pressure cooker. The cover of the cooker has a Marxist and Alevi line. ... Yet the cooker itself is Sunni, Shafi, and Nakşibendi. Hence, today there exists a problem of harmony between the cooker and its cover[5]."

Most of the pro-Islamist groups have accused the leading Kurdish movement of being an outsider to the Kurdish society because of its social imaginary. In this respect, the remark

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[1] He refers to the PKK, located in the Qandil Mountains.

[2] He refers to Abdullah Öcalan, founding leader of the PKK imprisoned in the İmralı island.

[3] Aslan, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012.

[4] Aydın, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012; Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011; Enver Butasun, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 17, 2012; Güzelsoy, Personal Interview; Çınar, Personal Interview.

[5] Devrim Sevimay, "Kürtler AKP'ye Sadece Kredi Açtı," *Milliyet,* July 30, 2007, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2007/07/30/siyaset/asiy.html., Date of access: April 05, 2013.

of S. B. Yılmaz, the president of the Diyarbakır section of Özgür-Der, an Istanbul-based, countrywide pro-Islamist association organized in over 25 settlements, represents the dominant pro-Islamists perception of the leading Kurdish movement:

> "The ideological background of the PKK is alien to this land, extremely alien to the nature of this land. The BDP has emerged as a Marxist-Leninist organization in front of us; today it still advocates that as a socialist organization. Yet, socialism is alien to this land. The BDP-PKK line is a nationalist organization, yet nationalism is alien to this land. ... It is an anti-Islamic movement[1]."

At this point, alongside the left-wing discourse and mobilization that the movement promotes, I must highlight that the constant alliance that the BDP and previous pro-Kurdish parties have built with the Turkish left-wing parties for decades has a crucial role in the construction of the perception of anti-Islamist identity of the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK among the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups[2]. Most of the pro-Islamists do not have any common cognitive frame or any shared interest to cooperate with these groups. They use and perceive "the left" as tantamount to "atheist" and "anti-Islamist".

3) The gender issue: The heart of the ideational confrontation

The leading Kurdish movement's efforts regarding the gender issue constitute the most important and visible aspect of its "anti-Islamist" quality, according to most of the pro-Islamist Kurds. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the gender issue is one of the constructive dynamics of the leading Kurdish movement at the idea, interest and institutional levels. The struggle for gender equality, the participation of women in political, economic, social and cultural life, and their empowerment in the public sphere represent a fundamental aspect of the social imaginary of the movement.

On the contrary, pro-Islamist Kurds understand the gender-based discourse and mobilization that the Kurdish movement encourages as a modernist project that de-Islamizes Muslim Kurdish society. While conducting field research I observed that most of Kurdish pro-Islamist groups are hypercritical vis-à-vis the dis-gendered social imaginary and political mobilization of the leading Kurdish movement. They see the gender issue as a very real

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[1] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011.

[2] Kurşun, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012.

challenge to the pro-Islamist social imaginary. Pro-Islamist discourses regarding "honor"[1], "adultery"[2], "prostitution"[3], "family"[4], "people's values"[5], "Islamic morality" or "Islamic values"[6], "Islamic way of life"[7], and "homosexual relations[8] and marriage"[9] are some of the basic concepts of the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups to contest the dis-gendered secular social imaginary.

For instance, H. Yılmaz, the founder and president of the HUDA-PAR accused the leading Kurdish movement of protecting adulterous women whom the society – and even their families – refuses to support. According to him, the campaigns such as "We are women, not anyone's honor" that the women NGOs close to the PKK conduct are being supported by the West (and EU funding in particular); these campaigns, he claims, aim to take Kurdish society away from the Islamic values and Islamic morality. Yet it seems that the participation of women in the public sphere and political arena is the most important issue challenging the pro-Islamist social imaginary. He argues that even supporters of the BDP do not accept this imaginary. "I know the men voting for the BDP. They even complain about this issue," he said. "They say 'I cannot say anything to my wife. She comes back home at midnight. I ask her where she comes from, she says she comes from the party.'"[10]

Likewise, S. B. Yılmaz, the president of Özgür-Der in Diyarbakır, highlights that the socialist, nationalist and secular qualities of the BDP-PKK transform the Kurds from a Muslim society to a secular one. In this respect, he emphasizes the ratio of women with headscarves as one of the principal explicit indicators of this transformation:

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[1] Çınar, Personal Interview.

[2] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011.

[5] Aziz Aslan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 22, 2011.

[6] Lale, Personal Interview.

[7] Ibid.

[8] The BDP was advocating the equal rights for the people having different sexual orientations during the discussion on the new constitution in parliament. Several pro-Islamists that I interviewed, including those who support the BDP, severely criticized the BDP because of its political stance on the homosexual and bisexual relations.

[9] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012; Zeki Hülagü, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 17, 2012; Butasun, Personal Interview.

[10] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012.

"Nearly 80 % of the women supporting the PKK wear a headscarf; nearly 80 % of its supporters perform the *namaz*. I think these ratios will change after one generation. If we talk about the BDP or the PKK in the 2020s or 2030s, it will be an organization that has a very secular social base. I have no doubt about that. Since it has already started with the new generation. It is not possible to see a headscarf-wearing woman among the new generation of the PKK. There are already very few women; their number is gradually decreasing. ... This, in fact, shows how the ceiling (the organization) affects the base (the society)[1]."

4) Islam as the principal basis of social order

In contrast to the socialist, secular and dis-gendered social imaginary of the pro-ethnic groups that have tried to de-Islamize the Kurdish society, the pro-Islamist groups have a social imaginary based on Islam. Although the Kurdish pro-Islamists imagine Islam as the principal basis of social life, they propose different forms of the political organization for the social order. For instance, like A. Tan, most of the Kurdish pro-Islamists, including members of the MZC and the Azadi, and most of the supporters of the GC and AK Party, propose a democratic and pluralist social order guaranteeing religious freedoms. On the other hand, some pro-Islamist groups, including the KH, advocate Islamic rule in the Kurdish region.

Despite internal differences within the Kurdish pro-Islamic groups, it is obvious that Islam constitutes the predominant frame of reference for their social imaginary. For most of the Kurds supporting the AK Party, its pro-Islamic quality is the most important reason that they support or participate in the party[2]. For instance, F. Güzelsoy, an influential opinion leader of the *Meşveret* (Negotiation) Community, interprets the AK Party's societal support in the Kurdish region as a sign that religious identity is dominant over national identity for Kurdish society[3]. Likewise, H. Advan, one of the founders and co-presidents of the Diyarbakır branch of the Mazlum-Der and the former president of AK Party's Diyarbakir branch, highlights Islam as one of the main reasons that he preferred to support the AK Party rather than other political parties:

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[1] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011.

[2] Feyzi Aytar, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 19, 2012; Ali Burakgazi, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 18, 2012; Hülagü, Personal Interview; Cevdet Çalbay, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 22, 2012.

[3] Güzelsoy, Personal Interview.

"I met for the first time with the AK Party's cadres in the 1990s when there were many problems in the political life. The RP achieved considerable success in the local election of 1994 and the general election of 1995. ... Then, we were confronted with the coup d'état of February 28, 1997. ... The oppression over the RP's cadres and imprisonment of people due to reading poetry when they were mayor[1] had pretty influence on me, and I joined the AK Party. Besides, the conservative democratic philosophy of the AK Party also affected me. ... When we look at from the local level, conservatism refers to *the worldview protecting the religious and traditional values*. .... From the perspective of the local, *it is a reflex to protect both religion and tradition*[2]."

D. M. M. Fırat, a member of a famous Kurdish family in the region, and the former vice-president and spokesman of the AK Party, highlights the conservative democratic worldview of the AK party as one of the principal qualities of the party. It is evident that Islam is the base of this conservative worldview and the conservative democracy can be read as pro-Islamist democracy. According to Fırat,

"AK Party, before all else, means the masses' alliance and struggle for power, which were at the periphery of the society by then. Within them, there are the pro-Islamist masses that were oppressed during the history of the Republic. There are also the Kurds and other minorities. Besides, a massive group of people who was economically suppressed was also supporting the AK Party. In fact, the AK Party, in my opinion, constituted a mixed organization of the oppressed masses whose freedoms were restricted. When it came to power, it used for the first time a conservative democratic approach that had not been used as a concept in political literature until that time. ... The conservative democratic approach was one of the main elements that united these masses during that period[3]."

As in the case of the AK Party, most supporters of the GC also privilege religious identity and have a social imaginary based on Islamic values. A. Korkutata, one of the influential actors of the GC in the region, and the president of the DİGİAD highlights the role of Islam in the Kurdish community as follows:

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[1] He refers the imprisonment of the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in 1999.

[2] İhsan Aslan, Personal Interview, Ankara, November 10, 2012.

[3] Fırat, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012.

"Everyone must know that Kurds were honored with Islam. ... When you think of the Kurdish nation without Islam, you cannot succeed even you struggle not for just 50, but 500 years. That has become a part of the people's characteristic. ... People prefer that the administrators who will govern them are honest Muslims performing *namaz* and other religious rituals. If you travel across the region, you will see that. ... That is to say you will see the people who want to be a Kurd like Selahattin-i Eyyubi[1], like Ehmedê Xanî[2]. ... It is the religion of Islam that ideally recognizes the rights and freedoms of people[3]."

The Kurdish pro-Islamist groups like the MZC, the Azadi and the KH share a cognitive frame that values Islam as the principal base of the social imaginary. As I mentioned in the previous chapter the MZC emerged from the NC in the early 1990s as an objection to the Turkish nationalist and statist tendencies within of the pro-Islamist community. Although the MZC can be seen as the first step towards the autonomization of the Kurdish pro-Islamists from the Turkish pro-Islamists in 1990s, it is evident that the community's social imaginary is not based on Kurdish national identity per se, but on Islam. M. Kaya, an influential opinion leader of the community, describes the community as follows:

"This community after all carries out Islamic activities. Here, it does it with non-Kurdish people. There are also Turks (within the community) ... These activities are not carried out only in Hakkari, but also in Yozgat, Muğla, and Niğde. ... The movement has not been organized on a Kurdish base. In fact, ethnicity does not play an important role in the foundation of the religious community. That would be to say, 'I follow that religious discipline or school, and for that, I need only the Kurds'. Since religion or truth or philosophical theses address humans, one cannot make any (ethnic) distinction. Yet, at least the following can be said for the Zehra community: when they see injustice

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[1] Better known in the Western world as Saladin, he was a Muslim of Kurdish origin. He is the first Sultan of Egypt and Syria and the founder of the Ayyubid dynasty. A Kurdish Muslim led Islamic opposition against the European Crusaders in the Levant. At the height of his power, his sultanate included Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, Hejaz, Yemen and parts of North Africa.

[2] Ehmedê Xanî or Ahmad-i Khani was a writer, poet, Sunni Muslim cleric, and philosopher who lived in the second half of the 17th century. His most important work is the Kurdish classic love story "Mem û Zîn (Mem and Zîn) in 1962. Ehmedê Xanê is considered to be one of the major poets of classical Kurdish literature. Most of the Kurdish pro-Islamists see Xanî as a Muslim philosopher, while the Kurdish nationalists value him as the father of the Kurdish nationalism.

[3] Alaattin Korkutata, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, January 5, 2012.

or identify any condition against the Kurds or other disadvantaged groups, they object to it without any hesitation[1]."

The Azadî has a similar social imaginary. They do not pursue an Islamic regime in the Kurdish region and advocate a liberal, pluralist democratic regime guaranteeing both "national rights" and the freedom of religion. However, it is evident that Islam constitutes the base of social life for the Azadî. In the first sentence of the founding declaration, it is stated that the Muslim people have founded the Azadî: "The Initiative is an organization founded by the gathering of individuals who have Islamic responsibility in Northern Kurdistan." This Islamic quality of the initiative is emphasized in the name and the abbreviated name of the Azadî: "Kurdistan Islamic Initiative for Rights, Justice, and Freedom". S. Zilan, a member of its coordination committee, stated that they chose the short name of Azadî to "make our people remember the revolt of Sheikh Said"[2] in 1925, which was the most important Kurdish revolt under religious leadership in the 20th century. It is important to note that Sheikh Said is the quintessential symbol for pious Kurds. Although Zilan conceptualizes Islam as a social and cultural path, rather than political one, he defines Islam as the principal feature of Kurdistan for centuries:

"Kurdishness is the body, Islam is the soul. That is to say they have a meaning together. ... (Yet), for us, the state cannot be Islamic ("Îslamî" in Kurdish), individuals can be Islamic. The state can be a servant – fair, neutral, but not ideological. That is what we need. When we define ourselves as Islamic, we denote the very old current ("Xeta qedîm" in Kurdish). Our fathers and grandfathers are Islamic; our land and the geography of Kurdistan is Islamic. If in the future an independent Kurdistan is founded, it will be a part of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation[3]."

In this respect, the KH represent the most radical version of political Islam in the Kurdish region. They explicitly defend Islamic rule. In the manifesto of the KH they declare, "the ultimate aim of the pro-Islamist struggle is to construct a Muslim person, a Muslim family, a Muslim society and eventually social domination of Islam and the pro-Islamist government." Answering my question about the political solution to the Kurdish issue, C.

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[1] Kaya, Personal Interview.

[2] Zilan, Personal Interview, May 30, 2012.

[3] Ibid.

Çınar, an influential opinion leader of the Mustazaflar in Istanbul, underlines that Muslim people must first establish an Islamic rule in their region to solve ethnic/national problems:

> "Since the rights that the religion of Islam recognizes for humanity are universal, a Kurd, a Turk, an Arab, and a Persian have equal rights. Because of that, in the region, Muslims must first found a system of rule based on their own Islamic law. There must be an Islamic administrative system. In this administrative system, the same rights that Almighty Allah gives all peoples (nations) must also be given to them (Kurds)[1]."

In this respect, E. Butasun, a senior member of the *Marifet* (Ingenuity) Foundation, which was recently founded by some members separated from the MZC, summarizes the social imaginary of most of the Kurdish pro-Islamists, in which Islam constitutes the primary base of the social order: "I wish with all my heart and soul the establishment of a Kurdistan. But, *I do never accept a Kurdistan governed by an ideology created by human beings[2].*"

It is obvious that the Kurdish pro-Islamist and national groups have two different social imaginaries about the Kurds. The first bloc mostly imagines a secular, "modern", dis-gendered and socialist or collectivist Kurdish nation, although it includes pro-Islamist and liberal members that do not share these imaginaries. On the contrary, evaluating the nation or ethnicity as an inappropriate base for the social order, the second bloc imagines Kurds first and foremost as a Muslim people living with other Muslim peoples. These ideational differences dominate the relations between the two blocs and to some extent limit their cooperation. As I mentioned before, gender issue constitutes the heart of these two social imaginaries. Yet, there exists a third social imaginary that complicates the ideational conflicts in the Kurdish scene: Alevism. This is the subject of the next part.

D - Alevi identity-based social imaginary?

In the second chapter, I underlined four constructive elements of the Alevi identity. These are (1) the centuries-long domination of the Sunni-Muslim pro-Islamist rule over the Alevi community, (2) the Turkish left-wing sociopolitical mobilization since the 1960s, (3) the Kurdish national sociopolitical mobilization since the 1980s, and (4) the Zaza-identity-based cultural and political mobilization since the 2000s. As a result of different combinations of these dynamics, the Alevi Kurds are mostly divided into three political blocs. In brief, most

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[1] Çınar, Personal Interview.

[2] Butasun, Personal Interview.

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of the Kurds who see Alevi-ness as their predominant identity and do not give any remarkable meaning to Kurdishness support the CHP. The Kurds who see their Kurdishness and Aleviness as compatible identities support the BDP. The Kurds who support the revolutionary left-wing political groups privilege class struggle over any national or religious identity politics, and do not make any remarkable effort to mobilize their national or religious identities.

These four dynamics still shape the social imaginary of the Alevi Kurds. However, their being the historical Others of Sunni-Islam is the most important dynamic shaping the Alevi Kurds' social imaginary. I argue that Alevi identity is principally a religious identity that has been constructed in a controversial relationship with the Sunni-Islam for centuries. This contentious relationship has two important results among the Alevi Kurds: On the one hand, the Alevi identity is more important than Kurdish national identity in the social imaginary of most of the Alevi Kurds. The majority of the Alevi Kurds see Alevi Turks and Arabs closer to themselves than Sunni-Muslim Kurds. Therefore, the principal resource of the social order is not Kurdish national identity, but the Alevi religious identity for most of the Alevi Kurds. On the other hand, Alevi Kurds perceive a Sunni-Islam-based social order as an existential danger for themselves. As a centuries-long oppressed religious minority, they consider laicism as a political guarantee to protect them against the Sunni-Islamist hegemony. As a result, laicism is the principal element of the social imaginary of the Alevi Kurds (as well as of the Arabs and the Turks).

Besides, given the historical dominance of Sunni-Muslim and right-wing politics in Turkey, I can argue that the Alevi identity has been constructed as an oppositional identity. This quality of the Alevi identity has allowed many revolutionary and reformist left-wing political movements to organize well among Kurdish, Turkish and Arab Alevi communities since the 1960s. The leading Kurdish movement has become a main political space for the Alevi Kurds alongside the CHP since the 1980s. Today, Zaza identity-based political and cultural mobilization can be understood as an opposition to the Kurmancî-dominated leading Kurdish movements. In brief, the oppositional quality based on left-wing references constitutes the second-most important resource of the social imaginary of the Alevi Kurds.

1) The priority of Alevi identity over the national identity

Most Alevi economic and political elites have a common cognitive frame regarding the priority of the Alevi identity in the social imaginary of the Alevi Kurds[1]. D. Gündüz, a famous Zazakî-writing novelist, linguist and an Alevi Kurd from Varto, underlines that "the issue of Aleviness is a problem older than the Kurdish issue for the state. It is a problem that Turkish state inherited from the Ottomans; the Ottomans had inherited it from the Seljukids before; the Seljukids inherited it from others"[2]. Because of the centuries-long Alevi issue that Gündüz describes as "a problem of Muslimization of a non-Muslim society"[3], the Alevi Kurds privilege their Alevi religious identity over the national one in the political space. Gündüz argues that like Sunni Kurds, Alevi Kurds make their political choices in accordance with their religious identity at the national level, while they can support the Kurdish national movement at the local level:

"We are a typical Alevi family. My father votes for the CHP, but at the same time he votes for the BDP in the local elections. This is answering many questions. This is a general attitude. We see the same attitude among the Sunnis. … Until the Kurds reached a remarkable power, many Kurds has supported the AK Party at the general election, while they have voted for the BDP in the local election. This is also because the Kurdish political movement is a peripheral power. We can see that among not only the Alevi, but also the Sunnis[4]."

The different political preferences of Alevi Kurds that Gündüz highlights clarify the place of Alevi and Kurdish identities in the social imaginary of the majority of Kurdish Alevi communities. In this respect, B. Gündoğan, the president of TUNSİAD describes the priority of religious identity over the national identity in Dersim in a more explicit way:

"Speaking of identity, if we recognize Alevi, Kurd, Zaza, Turk and Sunni as distinct concepts, the first thing that I think is that Dersim is Alevi. Its primary identity is Aleviness. After that, in this region there exist Kurds, Turks, Zazas. This somehow

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[1] Ali Mukan, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 31, 2012; Halis, Personal Interview; Halis Yurtsever, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 21, 2012; Ali A. Güler, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 30, 2012; Murat Polat, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 28, 2012; Hüseyin Tunç, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 29, 2012; Munzur Çem, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 30, 2012; Gündüz, Personal Interview; Baran Gündoğan, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 31, 2012.

[2] Gündüz, Personal Interview.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

depends on the interpretation. ... Some say that Dersim is Kurdish. Others interpret that Dersim is Turkmen; they became Kurds, since they have lived for a long time with the Kurds. Some see (Dersim) as Zaza and interpret the Zaza as a distinct identity. It is certain that it is first of all Alevi. There is no debate over this issue. Yet, there exists a debate about the second identity[1]."

In this respect, even Ş. Halis, the former deputy and president of the BDP's Dersim section, explicitly points out that the Alevi identity is the primary constructive element in the Dersim Alevi-Kızılbaş communities' collective identity:

"Dersim has a distinctive identity. Although they and Kurds come from the same places and speak the same language, the Kızılbaş people from Dersim separated from the Kurds and created an abstract world outside the Kurds during the last 1,000 years, the last 500 years in particular. As a result, the Kızılbaş people from Dersim, or the Alevi-Kızılbaş people living with the other Kızılbaş people of the same regions close to Dersim, created a new sociological formation. What is this sociological formation? It is not necessary to talk about the previous periods; starting with İdris-i Bitlisi[2], they created an isolated world to protect themselves. ... In this region, whatever the historical origin is, we must recognize the social formation based on a cultural religious structure. What is that? It is the name with which social memory prefers to define itself. This is very important[3]."

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[1] Gündoğan, Personal Interview.

[2] İdris-i Bitlisi was a Kurdish religious scholar and Ottoman administrator. He played a critical role in uniting different Sunni-Muslim Kurdish emirates and persuading them to cooperate with the Ottomans during the Battle of Çaldıran against the Safavids. The Battle of Çaldıran is a historical break in the history of both the relationship between Kızılbaş-Alevi Turkish and Kurdish communities and Ottoman Empire-Turkish state and Kurdish Sunni-Muslim and Kızılbaş-Alevi groups. During this battle, the Ottomans killed thousands of Kurdish and Turkish Alevis. The Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, Selim I, nicknamed "Yavuz" ("the grim" in English) made muftis of this period declare a *fetva* that said the Kızılbaş-Alevis people were profane and anti-Islamist followers of the Shah Ismail, the Sultan of the Safavid Empire (Gülağ Öz, *İslamiyet Turkler Ve Alevilik* (Ankara: Umum Yayincilik, 1999), p. 188). As a result nearly 40,000 civilian Alevis, including children, women and elders, were killed during the war (Serefxan Bedlîsî, *Şerefname: Dîroka Kurdistanê* (Istanbul: Avesta, 2007), p. 516-535). While this battle is a historical moment for the alliance between the Ottomans and Sunni-Muslim Kurdish principalities, it is a historical rupture for the relationship of the Kızılbaş-Alevi Kurds and the Ottomans. After the Battle of Çaldıran and the Peace of Amasya in 1555, the Kurdish and Turkish Kızılbaş people found themselves on the « wrong » side of the Ottoman-Safavid border (van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 142-5.).

[3] Halis, Personal Interview.

Halis gives a remarkable example to distinguish the Alevi Kurdish community from the Sunni Kurdish community. Discussing the ongoing regime crisis in Syria and the establishment of a *de facto* autonomous Kurdish region in the northern Syria, he underlines that the Alevi-Kızılbaş Kurds in Dersim are more interested in the situation of Alevi (Arab) communities than the Kurdish (Sunni) communities in Syria: "(Unlike the rest of the Kurdish region), today, you see that the influence of the (Kurdish) uprising in this region is very limited. In fact, when people watch the news about the events in Syria, they primarily worry about what is happening to Alevis living there[1]."

2) Laicism as a political assurance

It is crucial to note that the Alevi identity is a historically constructed Other of the Sunni-Muslim political rule. Most of the Alevi elites underline the fact that Alevi communities have been subjected to constant massacres carried out by the pro-Islamist political formations since the Ottoman period. It seems that the Alevis perceive political Islam as an existential danger. Gündüz's argument is well to the point:

"One must distinguish among the Alevis, Armenians, Yezidis. They are, first of all, historically aggrieved societies having such fears. They do not claim political rule. They struggle only for survival. (Yet), Islam comes from an ideological background that claims to govern (the society). It has already become the religion of several states so far. There exists such a problem regarding Islam, since it can turn into a political current claiming rule. This is a big danger for Alevis, Yezidis. They certainly will not support such a thing[2]."

The centuries long pro-Islamic rule and its constant massacres of the Alevi communities caused the Alevis to perceive laicism as a political assurance to protect their religious identity[3]. After more than 600 years of Islam-based Ottoman rule, the Alevis welcomed the establishment of the Republic of Turkey as a new secular regime in 1923. As H. Yurtsever, an Alevi Kurd directing the BDP Bingöl branch highlights, the Alevi communities perceived the new secular Republic as a "light", and supported Kemalism[4]. H.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Gündüz, Personal Interview.

[3] Halis, Personal Interview; Yurtsever, Personal Interview; Polat, Personal Interview; Tunç, Personal Interview; Hıdır Bellice, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 30, 2012; Mukan, Personal Interview.

[4] Yurtsever, Personal Interview.

Tunç, a regional director of EMEP (the Labor Party), a left-wing party with remarkable social support in Dersim, analyzes the Alevis' support to the new regime as follows:

"The transformation of the state's quality from a Sunni-Islamist and violence-based expansionist one to a laic one, needless to say, created sympathy among the Alevis. Since, for the Alevis, there exists a tradition of massacre at the hands of the Sunnis for centuries. ... Since the people from Dersim are also Alevi, the laic quality of the young Republic created a new inspiration, a new emotion among the Alevis[1]."

Indeed, the CHP has been the most powerful political party among the Alevi communities since the foundation of the Republic. Although there are remarkable critiques about laicism in Turkey when compared with the French and Anglo-Saxon types of laicism[2], since the establishment of the Republic, CHP's political discourse about laicism has had a remarkable role in this political achievement among the Alevi communities. The issue of laicism is not only operative at the national level, but also at the local level. CHP's local politicians emphasize "social democracy"[3] and "laicism"[4] as basic qualities of the party.

Even the BDP politicians point out that the Alevi Kurds' perception of the laic quality of the CHP is the main reason behind their support to the party. M. Polat, the former president of the Dersim branch of the HADEP and DTP, the predecessors of the BDP, highlights that the laic quality of the newly founded Republic and the CHP made the Alevi perceive them as a political guarantee for freedom of religion against the Sunni Caliphate. Even if it was a false laicism, Polat argues, the controversial relations between the Alevi and Sunni communities frames the Alevi community's political choice:

"After the Republic, laicism or the freedom of religion as they called it, in fact, it is a scam, a false laicism. It did not bring the freedom of religion, yet this laicism of the CHP separated Dersim's Alevis from right-wing politics and the Sunnis. ... Since the Ottomans, who organized expeditions to Dersim, were Sunni, the Caliphate was Sunni, and they saw the people of Dersim as outsiders, first and foremost, there is an Alevi-

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[1] Tunç, Personal Interview.

[2] In this regard, Hasan Bülent Kahraman's analyses are noteworthy. See, H. Bülent Kahraman, *AKP Ve Türk Sağı*, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: Agora Kitaplığı, 2009), 32–59.

[3] Nurettin Bozkurt, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 19, 2011; Mustafa Kurban, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 21, 2012.

[4] Ibid.

Sunni hostility. Since the CHP advocates laicism, the Alevis have seen the CHP as a guarantee to freely express their religion[1]."

In this respect, the Alevis' perception of M. Kemal, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, is a remarkable example for understanding the dominant social imaginary among the Alevi communities. As Y. Cengiz, the president of Tunceli TSO, points out, for the Alevis, M. Kemal is a very important actor alongside with Hz. Ali, the most respectful religious figure; and there exists a religion-based love for M. Kemal among the Alevi communities[2]. H. Tunç asserts that some people of Dersim even believe that M. Kemal was an Alevi[3]. This love for M. Kemal has remained as a live and common emotion among the Alevi Kurds so far, despite the Koçgiri (1921) and Dersim (1937-8) massacres that claimed thousands of lives. Although historical documents explicitly show that the Dersim massacre was planned since 1925[4] and carried out under the leadership of M. Kemal during the single-party regime[5], the majority of Alevis in Dersim still believe that it was not M. Kemal, but Celal Bayar, the prime minister, who carried out the massacre. Further, M. Kemal still is viewed as the political (and even religious) leader who saved their lives during the massacre of 1937-8 in the collective memory of Alevi communities in Dersim[6].

3) Left-wing and oppositional identity in the social imaginary of Alevis

Alevi-identity based social imaginary includes a left-wing oppositional identity. Alongside the historical otherness of the Alevi identity, the active left-wing political mobilization among the Alevi communities since 1960s has made a significant influence on the dominant social imaginary among the Alevi communities. For that reason, today, the left-wing oppositional references constitute an important aspect of this social imaginary. As a matter of fact, the Alevi Kurds have a multi-level oppositional identity. U. Yeşiltepe, the representative of the DHF in Dersim, which is the second important radical revolutionary left-

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[1] Polat, Personal Interview.

[2] Yusuf Cengiz, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 27, 2012.

[3] Tunç, Personal Interview.

[4] Bayrak, *Kürtlere Vurulan Kelepçe Şark Islahat Planı*.

[5] Aygün, *Dersim 1938 Ve Zorunlu İskan: Telgraflar, Dilekçeler, Mektuplar, Fotoğraflar*, 69–118; Çem, *Dêrsim Merkezli Kürt Aleviliği: Etnisite, Dini İnanç, Kültür Ve Direniş*, 417–494.

[6] Cengiz, Personal Interview; Tunç, Personal Interview; Bozkurt, Personal Interview, November 19, 2011; Polat, Personal Interview; Veli Aytaç, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 27, 2012.

wing political group alongside the EMEP, describes Dersim as an "eccentric geography" at multi levels:

"Dersim is a distinctive geography. It has an eccentric quality in terms of both countrywide level and Kurdish geography level. In brief, it is a Kurdish-Kızılbaş geography. Yet, it has several eccentric features: Within the entire Kurdish geography, it is a different geography with its distinctive religion, way of life, and culture-identity. At the same time, within the general Aleviness, it has eccentric features; that is to say, it is different from the general Aleviness that we see it in the entire geography of Turkey. It is a different geography that has distinctive qualities. In fact, it has eccentricity at two or three levels[1]."

Indeed, as Yeşiltepe underlines, the Alevi-Kızılbaş Kurds' identity has been constructed as an opposing identity due to its multi-level eccentricity. As I discussed in the second chapter, while the conservative, pro-Islamist and nationalist groups have constituted the right-wing politics since the 1950s, the Alevi communities, as the other, have taken their place within left-wing politics. This historical background has made the left-wing references an essential part of different social imaginaries in Dersim. During the interviews, I observed that left-wing references constitute an unquestionable place within political discourses of both the CHP and the BDP, alongside the left-wing revolutionary groups of the EMEP and DHF. These four political groups represent the clear majority (79.1 %) of Dersim, according to the general elections in 2011.

CHP's local politicians define the CHP as a social democratic party. K. Bozkurt, the president of CHP's Dersim division, underlines that the people of Dersim have been supporting social democrats since the period of Ataturk[2]. In this respect, M. Kurban, the president of the CHP Bingöl division has a more left-wing and nationalist perspective[3]: "It is a political movement, the principal axis of which is based on laicism, the law and democracy. In the last internal regulation of the party, it is emphasized that the CHP is a social democratic

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[1] Uğur Yeşiltepe, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 31, 2012.

[2] Bozkurt, Personal Interview, November 19, 2011.

[3] Kurban, Personal Interview.

party, a member of the socialist international, yet, on the other hand, having historical roots and being devoted to the Kuva-yi Milliye[1]."

Likewise, the left-wing heritage of the leading Kurdish movement is more alive and effective in Dersim than in other parts of the Kurdish region. For instance, M. Polat, who has been a political activist since 1990s, and was the former president of HADEP and DTP in 2000s, states that he was in the socialist movements since high school.[2] Similarly, Ş. Halis, the former deputy and the president of the BDP Dersim section, defines himself as a socialist, Alevi-Kizilbas person of Dersim, while describing the BDP as a "social democratic mass party"[3].

Alongside the political elite, the economic elite of Dersim[4] also highlight left-wing references to describe Dersim and their personal political identity. For instance, A. A. Güler, the former president of Tunceli TSO, and the former politician from the CHP criticizes the present CHP for leaving its tradition. According to Güler, "the CHP was a patriotic, democratic, revolutionary, republican, laic party before"[5]. Likewise, H. Bellice, the president the Tunceli ESOB, emphasizes that people from Dersim have generally had a social democratic perspective and opposed to the state[6].

Although the religious contradiction dominates relations between the Alevi and Sunni-Muslim Kurds, there is not a clear distinction between national and religious identities. In the Kurdish scene, it seems that the borders between national and religious identities are not rigid, fixed, and clear-cut, but rather fluid, dynamic and relational. The following discussion of the boundaries of identities will allow us to illustrate how collective identities are relational political constructs.

E - Sunni-Muslim, Alevi, Zaza: Relational political constructs?

The Kurdish pro-Islamist and Alevi groups prioritize Sunni-Muslim and Alevi identities, respectively, as the main filters of interpretation. However, the boundaries of

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[1] With Kuva-yi Milliye that means meaning either National Forces or Nationalist Forces in Ottoman Turkish, the Kemalists refer to the irregular Turkish forces in the early period of the Turkish War of Independence.

[2] Polat, Personal Interview.

[3] Halis, Personal Interview.

[4] Bellice, Personal Interview; Güler, Personal Interview; Gündoğan, Personal Interview.

[5] Güler, Personal Interview.

[6] Bellice, Personal Interview.

national and religious identities, and the relationships between them, are not rigid, but fluid. It seems that the political interactions among the religious and national identities have a determinative role in the construction of these identities. I argue that these religious and ethnic identities cannot be reduced to a granted essence such as religious values, culture or language. Rather, these identities must be understood as relational political constructs of multi-level interactions occurring in a historically constructed context. Three issues that I observed during the interviews show this relational political construction process. These are 1) the ongoing debates on the relation between Alevism and Islam among the different political groups, 2) the mobilization of the Zaza identity by the Sunni-Muslim and Alevi Kurds to construct a distinct religion-based political stance, and 3) the state intervention in the construction of both the Alevi and Zaza identities as counter-identities against the Kurdish identity, as constructed by the Kurdish national groups.

1) Political construction of Alevi Identity

The Alevi communities have a common cognitive frame about the contentious relations between the Alevis people and the pro-Islamist rules. However, the debates on whether Alevism is a part or sect of Islam or a distinct religion are incomplete. It is crucial to note that the ongoing debates are not just academic or religious, but rather political. In bold outline, the Alevi elites who support the CHP define Alevism as a part of Islam. In contrast, the Alevi elites who support the BDP and the revolutionary left-wing groups see Alevism as a distinct religion, while they do not exclude the influence of Islam on Alevism at different levels.

Alevism constitutes a resource of political mobilization for different political groups. I carried out the interviews in Dersim during the 12th traditional Munzur Nature and Culture Festival, which has become a national and international meeting for the people of Dersim who live in different cities within Turkey and European countries. Without the intervention of the CHP[1], the municipality (that is ruled by the leading Kurdish movement) and different associations and political groups have organized this festival for years. One of the several panels organized during the festival was on the Alevi identity in Dersim. The debate that Alevi belief is a distinct, non-Islamic religion was one of the key points underlined during the panel, alongside the discrimination and assimilation policies that have affected the Alevi communities for centuries, and the recent policies that aim to make Alevi communities Sunni-Muslim. In this regard, M. Polat, who moderated this panel, argues, "Dersim Alevi Kızılbaş-

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[1] Bozkurt, Personal Interview, November 19, 2011.

ness ("Kızılbaşlık" in Turkish) is not one of the heavenly religions, but a religion of nature. It bears the important features of Zoroastrianism. Fire, sun and water are sacred. The holy places are still sacred for the Alevis[1]." Likewise, criticizing the state's policies over the Kurdish Alevi people, V. Aytaç, a former mayor of Dersim, an opinion leader in the city, states, "Alevism is not the Muhammedanism, but a different belief. It is a belief that has roots dating back 2000 years. Having had different names, it took the name of Alevism toward the end of the 19th century[2]."

In contrast, the CHP's local politician underlines that Alevism is a part of Islam. For instance, K. Bozkurt, the president of the CHP Dersim division, argues that Alevis cannot distinguish themselves from Islam: "In my opinion, Alevism is a part of Islam, it is not non-Islamic. It is not a different religion. We can never distinguish ourselves from Islam. This is because we believe the same prophet; Hz. Ali is our common caliph. If we support these, then, Alevisim is a part of Islam"[3]. Likewise, A. A. Güler, an influential CHP politician in Dersim, advocates the same argument. Invoking K. Kılıçdaroğlu's statement, he also describes Alevism as a part of Islam: "I agree with the idea that our president stated. Alevism is not a distinct religion. I have not learned such a thing about Alevism from my grandfather or my father. I believe that Alevism is a belief that is a part of Islam[4]."

2) Zaza Identity: A resource of political mobilization

Zaza identity-based sociocultural and sociopolitical mobilizations can be seen as the second example showing that the national and religious identities are relational political constructs in the Kurdish scene. It is surprising to observe that some Sunni-Muslim and Alevi groups mobilize the *Zaza* identity as a resource to construct their religious identities in the political space, despite the centuries-long contentious relations between them. The mobilization of the Zaza identity by different Sunni Muslims and Alevi Kurds is a response to the Kurdish national groups, in particular the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK, which mostly mobilizes the *Kurmancî*-speaking Kurds, though does not exclude *Zaza*-speaking Kurds. Moreover, both pro-Islamists and Alevis see the Zaza identity as an operative resource for distinguishing themselves from the leading Kurdish movement in the political scene.

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[1] Polat, Personal Interview. For a more detailed analysis on the Alevism in Dersim, see, Deniz, *Yol/Rê: Derim İnanç Sembolizmi - Antropolojik Bir Yaklaşım*.

[2] Aytaç, Personal Interview.

[3] Bozkurt, Personal Interview, November 19, 2011.

[4] Güler, Personal Interview.

Some part of Zazakî speaking Sunni Muslim and Alevi Kurds are under the influence of identity politics that have dominated the political space in Turkey since the 1980s. However, the pro-Zaza cultural and political mobilizations have essentially emerged as a reaction to the leading Kurdish movement's monolithic language policy. The leading Kurdish movement sees both Kurmancî speakers and Zazakî speakers as parts of the Kurdish society, and is well organized within both of these communities. In practice, nevertheless, the movement has not made a noteworthy effort for the Zazakî dialect, while it mobilized remarkable resources at multiple levels to revitalize the Kurmancî dialect[1]. D. Gündüz, an influential member of Vate Working Group, which has a remarkable place in the revitalization of Zazakî, analyzes the pro-Zaza cultural and political mobilization as follows:

"For Alevis, for Zazas, (the leading Kurdish movement) it seems Diyarbakir-centered, Sunni-centered and Kurmancî-centered. ... There exists such a perception from outside. This perception must be changed. This is because this organization is not, in reality, such an organization. For instance, it is not an organization constituted just by Kurmanc people. It is an organization that the Zaza people significantly participate in. For instance, if we give an example from the BDP, 11 or 17 people (of 36 deputies) are Zaza. ... Therefore, this perception causes a reaction. For instance, the lack of a Zazakî TV channel even today is a lack of foresight. This political organization has several media institutions, TV channels. These channels broadcast in Kurmancî. Yet the people that they want to address are not totally Kurmanc. We live in such a world that the Zazas do not have to watch Kurmancî. They will watch Turkish channels. There, the connection (between the Zaza and Kurmanc people) will be lost. Or if the state organizes broadcasting in Zazakî, they will watch it. For instance, Russian state broadcasts in Zazakî. A state like Russia has a concern whether it can communicate with the Zaza people. While the Russian state has such a concern, the ignorance of a political organization about the language of a population that supports it certainly causes a reaction. I am one of the people who is part of this reaction[2]."

It is evident that the leading Kurdish movement prioritizes Kurmancî and does not make the necessary effort to revitalize Zazakî. Yet, the issue of Zaza identity cannot be reduced to a language- and culture-based issue. Some Zazakî-speaking Alevi and Sunni-

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[1] Tan, Personal Interview; Farqînî, Personal Interview; Gündüz, Personal Interview; Kaya, Personal Interview; Polat, Personal Interview; Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011.

[2] Gündüz, Personal Interview.

Muslim groups mobilize the Zaza identity to distinguish themselves from the leading Kurdish movement and to build their religion-based political identity. In other words, the mobilization of the Zaza identity is a way or an instrument to construct their political position vis-à-vis the BDP-KCK/PKK-KCK, which dominates Kurdishness in the Kurdish scene. In Bingöl, where the pro-Islamist identity is more powerful than national identity, for instance, the representatives of the GC[1] and the KH[2], two main religious rivals of the leading Kurdish movement in the Kurdish region, emphasized that the Zazas are not Kurds, but a distinct nation.

Likewise, in Dersim, where the Alevi identity is more powerful than national identity, I observed a clear distinction between the elites supporting the BDP and the revolutionary left-wing groups and the elites privileging the Alevi identity and mostly supporting the CHP with regard to the Zaza issue. The former group sees the Zaza people as a part of the Kurdish nation[3], while the later group underlines its Zaza identity as either a very important difference from the rest of the Kurdish nation[4] or a distinct identity separate from the Kurdish identity[5]. In brief, I can argue that the Zaza identity is a constructive element of the Alevi and Sunni-Muslim religious identities in the political space in the Kurdish scene.

In this regard, to some extent, I also argue that the Kurmancî-speaking Kurds give less importance to their religious identity than the Zazakî-speaking Kurds in the political space. The Kurmancî-based sociopolitical and sociocultural mobilization of the leading Kurdish movement has a significant role in the secularization of this part of the Kurds. Most of the Zazakî speaking Kurds who privilege their Alevi identity support the CHP, while those who privilege their Sunni-Muslim identity support the AK Party. The dissatisfactory language policies of the leading Kurdish movement regarding the Zaza identity and its relative weakness among the Zaza-speaking Kurds even lead to the argument that the BDP-KCK/PKK-KCK has gradually become a Kurmancî movement, rather than a Kurdish movement[6].

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[1] Mustafa Tatlı, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 20, 2012.

[2] Tasalı, Personal Interview.

[3] Çem, Personal Interview; Halis, Personal Interview; Polat, Personal Interview; Yeşiltepe, Personal Interview; Tunç, Personal Interview; Aytaç, Personal Interview; Mukan, Personal Interview.

[4] Bellice, Personal Interview; Güler, Personal Interview.

[5] Kemal Bozkurt, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 30, 2012; Gündoğan, Personal Interview.

[6] Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011.

3) Turkish state intervention into the construction of the Zaza and Alevi identities

Turkish state intervention into the construction of the Zaza and Alevi identities as alternative identities vis-à-vis Kurdish national identity must be underlined in order to understand that both the religious and national identities are relational political constructs with fluid boundaries. The Turkish state, which had ignored and assimilated the Alevi and Kurdish (both Kurmancî and Zazakî) identities until the last decades, has started making remarkable investments in the construction of the Alevi identities and Zazakî identity as distinct identities vis-à-vis the Kurdish national identity. In this regard, as D. Gündüz asserts, the relative achievement of the leading Kurdish movement to mobilize Alevi and Sunni-Muslim religious groups and Kurmancî- and Zazakî-speaking communities under the same political organization must be underlined as the key dynamic[1]. Therefore, the state intervention into the construction of the Alevi and Zaza identities can be understood as a political response to undermine the leading Kurdish movements.

The struggle between the Turkish state and the leading Kurdish movement has opened a remarkable political place to the groups opposing to the Sunni-Muslim and Kurmancî-centered political mobilizations. For that reason, one can argue that the state presents a remarkable resource to these opposing groups. In this respect, the first thing that must be underlined is the fact that the construction of the Alevi and Zaza identities as distinct identities is a new process. M. Çem, the well-known researcher working on the Alevi, the Zaza and Dersim issues, underlines that one cannot find any debate on this issue in archives before the 1980s[2]. In the archive, according to Çem, there is not any discussion arguing that the Zaza people are not Kurds, but a distinctive nation. Both the Turkish and Ottoman states and Zaza people themselves see Zazas as a part of the Kurds. Likewise, the Alevi identity was discussed not as an alternative identity to the Kurdish identity, but as a religion identity until the 1980s[3].

Second, most of the Alevi and Zaza elite advocating for the national rights of the Kurds have a common cognitive frame, believing that the sociopolitical mobilization for the construction of the Alevi and Zaza identities are the political projects sponsored by the

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[1] Gündüz, Personal Interview.

[2] Çem, Personal Interview.

[3] Ibid.

Turkish state. It is important to note that the Kurdish secular national[1] and pro-Islamist elites[2] have the same cognitive frame on this issue. H. Yurtsever's argument summarizes this common cognitive frame very well:

> "The system first made an effort to separate the Alevi Kurds and argued that the Alevis are not Kurds, but Turks. Then they tried to separate the Zaza-speaking Kurds from the Kurmancî-speaking Kurds by saying the Zaza people are not Kurds, but a distinct nation. They even sometimes argued that Zazas were Turkish. When the argument that they are Turkish did not have an influence on the Zaza people, then they started to say Zaza language is a distinct language, the Zazas are a distinct nation[3]."

Indeed, the Turkish state, which had ignored and denied the right to publish and broadcast in both Zaza and Kurmancî since the establishment of the Republic, has surprisingly given noteworthy acknowledgment to the Zazakî language in recent years. For instance, as M. Kaya points out, the Turkish state did not choose the Dicle University in Diyarbakır, the most important university in the Kurdish region, but rather selected the newly founded Artuklu University in Mardin to establish an institution working on Kurdish language and literature during the reform process[4]. The Turkish state has tried to control Kurdish cultural studies by constructing Mardin as a new place or center vis-à-vis Diyarbakır, the sociocultural and political center of the region where the leading Kurdish movement is very strong. Additionally, the newly founded Bingöl and Tunceli Universities are used as new centers to give academic legitimacy to the construction of the Zaza language and people as a distinct language and nation, respectively. For instance, at Bingöl University the Kurdish (not Kurmancî) Language and Literature Department and the Zaza Language and Literature Department have been established as two different sections of the Living Languages Institute[5]. Likewise, Zulfü Selcan, an adamant advocate of the argument that the Zaza people

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[1] Yurtsever, Personal Interview; Halis, Personal Interview; Aytaç, Personal Interview; Polat, Personal Interview; Çem, Personal Interview; Gündüz, Personal Interview.

[2] Butasun, Personal Interview; Tasalı, Personal Interview; Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011; Kaya, Personal Interview.

[3] Yurtsever, Personal Interview.

[4] Kaya, Personal Interview.

[5] For information about the Institution, see, www.bilgol.edu.tr

are a distinct nation and that they live in "Zazaistan" (the Zaza homeland)[1], was appointed as the president of the Zaza Language and Literature Program at Tunceli University[2].

In brief, the national and religious identities cannot be reduced to granted qualities such as religious values, culture or language, but rather they must be analyzed as relational political constructs in the Kurdish scene. This allows us to conclude two important points: First, the construction of the Sunni-Muslim, Alevi, Kurdish, and Zaza identities cannot be understood without taking into account their interaction with political entrepreneurs. The leading Kurdish movement and the Turkish state must be underlined as two powerful political entrepreneurs in the Kurdish region. Second, it is not possible to make a clear distinction between the national and religious identities. The Zaza identity is a remarkable resource for the Alevi and Sunni-Muslim religious groups to construct their social imaginaries vis-à-vis the leading Kurdish movement's social imaginary. However, it is evident that each group bestows a different level of importance on the national and religious aspects to define their collective identities. There exists a variable hierarchy between these aspects for different Kurdish groups. The national groups privilege their Kurdish identity, whereas religious groups see Aleviness and Islam as the pre-dominant parts of their identities in the political space.

Conclusion: Politically constructed plural identities

In this chapter, I discussed three different social imaginaries of three Kurdish groups and their interactions in the Kurdish region. The national groups that constitute the most powerful bloc have a social imaginary based on socialist, secular and dis-gendered references. The most important point that must be underlined is the fact that the secular quality of the national groups – the PKK-KCK/BDP-DTIK in particular – have left very limited space to religious identities thus far, although they have made remarkable efforts to revise this orthodox secularist position since the early 1990s. Besides, as opposed to other national groups, the PKK-KCK/BDP-DTK gives more importance to the left-wing and dis-gendered qualities.

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[1] For Selcan's publications on the Zaza identity see, http://www.tunceli.edu.tr/akademik/fakulteler/edebiyat/bolum/doded/zaded/zs_yayinlistesi.htm, Date of access: May 08, 2013.

[2] For more information on the Department, see, http://www.tunceli.edu.tr/akademik/fakulteler/edebiyat/bolum/doded/zaded/anasayfa.htm, Date of access: May 08, 2013.

The pro-Islamist social imaginary constitutes the principal rival to the social imaginary of the national groups in the Kurdish region. Most of the pro-Islamist groups consider ethnicity or nation as an inappropriate base for social order, while they underline the equality between national or ethnic groups with Islamic references. Moreover, most of the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups perceive the leading Kurdish movement as a left-wing movement aiming to de-Islamize Muslim Kurdish society. The historically constructed antagonism between left-wing politics and pro-Islamist politics in Turkey frames the interaction of the Kurdish left-wing secular and pro-Islamist groups. In this regard, I must underline that the gender issue constitutes the heart of ideational confrontation of the Kurdish pro-Islamist and national groups.

Alongside these two social imaginaries, the Alevi Kurds, the main religious minority in the Kurdish region, have a distinctive religion-based social imaginary. Like the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups, most of the Alevi Kurds privilege their religious identity over national identity. Since the Alevi identity has been constructed as the other of the Sunni-Islam, laicism as a political assurance constitutes a very important place in the social and political imaginary of the Alevi people. The historically constructed religion-based antagonistic relation between the Alevi and Sunni-Muslim communities and the centuries long grievance have made Aleviness a remarkable resource for a left-wing oppositional identity. The historical integration of pro-Islamism, Turkish nationalism and conservatism as the three pillars of the right-wing politics since 1960 has a significant role in the construction of the Alevi identity as a left-wing oppositional identity. It is important to note that the left-wing and secular qualities the Alevi Kurds' social imaginary constitute two significant pillars of the leading Kurdish movement's social imaginary. These two qualities have allowed the Kurdish movement to organize among the Alevi Kurds to some extent.

The Kurdish, Sunni-Muslim, and Alevi identities constitute the pro-dominant elements of the social imaginaries of the Kurdish national, pro-Islamist and Alevi Kurds, respectively. However, the Kurdish, Sunni-Muslim and Alevi identities must be analyzed not as "self-evident identities" or "substantial things-in-the-world", but rather as relational and processual political constructs of organizational entrepreneurs for at least four reasons. First, these collective identities are dependent on a historically constructed context. The historically constructed antagonistic relations between Aleviness and Islam, and between left-wing politics and pro-Islamist politics, frame the ongoing interactions among the leading Kurdish movement, Kurdish pro-Islamists and Alevi groups. For that reason, second, these collective

identities are not rigid, fixed, and isolated, but rather, fluid, contingent, and relational. Third, it is not possible to discuss a nation-free religious identity. Some Sunni-Muslims and most of the Alevi groups mobilize Zaza identity to construct their religion-based political identities and social imaginaries vis-à-vis the leading Kurdish movement, which aims to construct "Kurdish national identity" over different "sub-identities" such as Kurmanc, Zaza, Sunni or Alevi. Therefore, I argue that identity is not a one-dimensional, but rather a multi-dimensional phenomenon involving national and religious dynamics. Yet, this conclusion does not ignore the existence of a variable hierarchy between these dynamics constituting collective identities. Finally, the Turkish state plays a critical role in the construction process of collective identities in the Kurdish scene. The construction processes of the Alevi and Zaza identities as distinct and alternative identities vis-à-vis the Kurdish national identity cannot be understood without taking the Turkish state intervention into consideration.

The ideational conflicts based on the three different social imaginaries are not the only issue that constitutes a remarkable obstacle to build a Kurdish consensus in Turkey. There exists a conflict of interest between the Kurdish national bloc and the economic elite that limits their cooperation in the Kurdish scene. This conflict of interest is the topic of the next chapter.

IV - Chapter 4 Nation or Class: Conflict of Interest

Introduction

In this chapter, I focus on the conflict of interest between the Kurdish national groups and the economic elite. The "national" and "class" qualities of the national bloc, the influence of its left-wing heritage on its ongoing relations with the economic elite, and what the democratic autonomy project of the leading Kurdish movement proposes for the economic elite are the main subjects of this chapter. In addition, I discuss the influence of weakness and center-dependence of the Kurdish economic elite on the current interaction of the two blocs. The historically constructed center-periphery relationship between the Kurdish region and the western part of the country not only economically, but also politically, determines the limits of the Kurdish economic elite to participate in the multi-level mobilization for a Kurdish political region.

I argue that the conflict of interest between the national and economic blocs limits their cooperation on the "national" issue in the Kurdish scene. The Kurdish lower and middle classes have suffered from the state socioeconomic policy causing regional disparities; and have had an uneasy relation to the state establishment for decades, whereas the Kurdish upper class has retained good relations with the state to guarantee its economic interests. The lower and middle classes have been major actors in the Kurdish national struggle since the 1960s, while most members of the Kurdish economic elite have been incorporated into the central ruling classes. This historically constructed antagonistic relationship between the national bloc and economic elite still determines and frames their ongoing interaction.

In the following parts of the chapter, I first present a brief framework on the conflict theory. Second, I discuss the national and class qualities of the national bloc. The national bloc's discourse and perception of the economic elite and Turkish state's violence towards the Kurdish economic elite constitute the main subjects of this part. This section also includes the economic aspects of the democratic autonomy project of the leading Kurdish movement and its decades-long alliance with Turkish left-wing groups, which constitute two remarkable examples of the class quality of the Kurdish national struggle in Turkey. Third, I examine the members of the economic elite who try to build their way between the Turkish state and the Kurdish national movement. The Turkish state's discriminatory socioeconomic politics toward the Kurdish region, the Kurdish economic elite's negative perception of the economic aspects of democratic autonomy project, and the weakness of the leading Kurdish movement

in the social and economic areas, are three pillars of this part. Lastly, I summarize the main conclusions of the chapter.

A - A theoretical frame on conflict of interest

In the first chapter I underlined that collective action "refers to emergent and minimally coordinated action by two or more people that is motivated by a desire to change some aspect of social life or to resist changes proposed by others[1]." As it is obviously seen in this definition, conflicts of interest between different social groups constitute the principal dynamic of collective action. Conflict theory has been an influential permanent theory in analyzing social change for centuries. Although a number of social theorists, including Karl Marx and Max Weber, advocated this theory, the term "conflict theory" became a frequently used approach in social and political sciences as an alternative to and rival of functionalism in the 1960s[2]. Although the Marxian and Weberien conflict theories have substantial differences[3], they share following four presuppositions:

"(1) conflict or struggle between individuals and groups who have opposing interests or who are competing for scarce resources is the essence of social life; (2) competition and conflict occur over many types of resources in many settings, but power and economic resources are the principal sources of conflict and competition; (3) conflict and struggle typically result in some individuals and groups dominating and controlling others, and patterns of domination and subordination tend to be self perpetuating; (4) dominant social groups have a disproportionate influence on the allocation of resources and on the structure of society[4]."

The Marxian conflict theory gives the greatest importance to the class struggle[5]. Criticizing this position as "class reductionist," contemporary Weberian conflict theorists consider political, ethnic, and religious struggles equally important. They point out that these

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[1] McAdam, "Collective Action," 575.

[2] Stephen K. Sanderson, "Conflict Theory," in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, ed. George Ritzer (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 662.

[3] Sanderson argues that there exist crucial differences between Marxian and Weberian conflict theories at least on four issues. These are 1) class and other struggle, 2) inevitability of conflict, domination, and inequality, 3) nature and role of the state, and 4) bureaucratic and organizational power struggle. For a more discussion, see, Sanderson, "Conflict Theory."

[4] Ibid., 662.

[5] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: Penguin Group, 2011), 35.

struggles "cannot be explained simply by relating them to class struggle"[1]. Despite ongoing debates on diverse dynamics and their different importance in processes of social change, conflict theorists underline social conflict between any group facing different inequalities, including inequalities in ethnicity, nationality, gender, religion, or political and economic standing. Conflicting values, ideas, and agendas of unequal groups condition the struggle against one another that forms the basis of constant social change.

It is crucial to note that conflicts of interest among and between actors and groups occur in a specific time and space. In other words, these occur in a socially and historically constructed context in which both conflicts and actors are constructed. As I discussed earlier in the part on the constructivist institutionalism, social changes are products of interactions among "institutional architects," "institutionalized subjects," and "institutional environments"[2]. At this point, it is worth reiterating the argument of Hay, who elaborated on constructivist institutionalism:

"Actors are strategic, seeking to realize certain complex, contingent, and constantly changing goals. They do so in a context that favors certain strategies over others and must rely upon perceptions of that context which are at best incomplete and which may very often prove to have been inaccurate after the event. Moreover, ideas in the form of perceptions 'matter' in a second sense – for actors are oriented normatively towards their environment. Their desires, preferences, and motivations are not a contextually given fact – a reflection of material or even social circumstance – but are irredeemably ideational, reflecting a normative (indeed moral, ethical, and political) orientation towards the context in which they will have to be realized[3]."

Hay highlights that the "rationality" and "interests" of actors are normative social constructs. That is to say, their perceptions about what is feasible, possible, desirable and socially legitimate are shaped not only by the institutional environment, but also by existing policy paradigms and world-views[4]. This argument allows us to underline that unlike

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[1] Sanderson, "Conflict Theory," 663.

[2] Hay, "Constructivist Institutionalism," 64.

[3] Ibid., 63.

[4] Ibid., 65.

historical institutionalism, constructivist institutionalism stresses not only "institutional path dependence," but also "ideational path dependence"[1].

The above-mentioned discussion allows us to underline several points providing analytical elements to analyze ongoing interaction of Kurdish national groups and economic elite. These analytical elements are 1) conflicts of interest, 2) the normative quality of rationality and interests of actors (in other words, different references of social legitimacy), 3) institutional path dependence, and 4) ideational path dependence. The first point invites us to concentrate on the different interest and conflict of the Kurdish groups. The second point emphasizes that each Kurdish group has diverse values, ideas, and world-views providing different references for social legitimacy. The third point highlights the influence of historically constructed institutional context that produces some paths shaping and confining ongoing interaction. Last, ideational path dependence allows us to focus on the continuity of Kurdish groups' normative and cognitive frames and their effects on the formation of the current diversity in ideas and interests.

B - Kurdish movement: Between nation and class

In the first chapter, I underlined the left-wing heritage and urban and rural lower-class-based social support as two distinctive qualities of the Kurdish national movements after the 1960s[2]. While the Kurdish revolts in the late 19th century and the early 20th were led by the Kurdish local and regional religious and tribal ruling classes, the Kurdish national movements[3] in the 1960s and early 1970s typically emerged as Marxist-Leninist national liberationist organizations[4], and their base comprised the lower classes and petty bourgeoisie[5]. Most of these Kurdish national movements, which were discussing the national liberation not

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[1] Ibid.

[2] PDKT constitutes an exception. Unlike other Kurdish national movements, the PDKT was established by local dominant groups including conservative elites, *aghas*, religious order's (*tariqat's*) sheikhs and their disciples, and urban artisans and merchants in 1960s.

[3] For a brief history of Kurdish national movements in the 20th centuries, see: Bozarslan, "Kürd Milliyetçiliği Ve Kürt Hareketi (1898-2000)."

[4] For a brief history of Kurdish socialist movements between 1971-1980, see: "1971-1980 Arasında Kürt Sorunu."

[5] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 404–12; Bozarslan, "Between Integration, Autonomization and Radicalization. Hamit Bozarslan on the Kurdish Movement and the Turkish Left"; Çağlayan, *Analar, Yoldaşlar, Tanrıçalar: Kürt Hareketinde Kadınlar Ve Kadın Kimliğinin Oluşumu*, 88–95; Ekinci, *Kürt Siyasal Hareketinin Sınıfsal Analizi*, 70–4.

in terms of ethnicity or identity, but rather in term of class and ideology,[1] described the Kurdish local ruling class as the enemy of the Kurdish nation. Indeed, in practice, members of "feudal comprador exploitative class" were the initial targets of the PKK until the military coup d'état September 12, 1980[2]. It is crucial to note that Turkish left-wing movements had a remarkable influence on the formation of left-wing quality of most of the Kurdish movements[3] including the PKK[4], before the 1980s.

The majority of the Kurdish national (and Turkish left-wing) movements were severely eliminated after coup d'état of September 12, 1980. Yet the PKK, which initiated an armed struggle against the Turkish security forces in 1984, has been able to maintain guerrilla warfare based in the rural areas across the Kurdish region. In the 1990s, the PKK transformed from a small left-wing armed group to a massive popular movement. Several Kurdish cultural, social, and political institutions were established during this period. Yet, the urbanization and institutionalization of the Kurdish movement became possible with the relative enlargement of legal political space after 1999, particularly in the fields of municipal politics and NGOs. The enlargement of the political space across the country in general, and in the Kurdish region in particular, led other Kurdish groups establish their own institutions, organizations or political parties after the early 2000s. HAK-PAR, KADEP, ÖSP and TDŞK are the major national parties and organizations established in the 2000s.

As I detailed in the previous chapter, the left-wing heritage still marks the Kurdish national groups after a two-decades-long period of conflict. Except the liberal KADEP[5], the

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[1] Öcalan, *Kürdistan Devriminin Yolu (Manifesto)*, 120–2.

[2] McDowall, "The Kurdish Question: a Historical Review," 16; van Bruinessen, "Kurdish Society, Ethnicity, Nationalism and Refugee Problems," 42; Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 22; İmset, *PKK: Ayrılıkçı Şiddetin 20 Yılı (1973-1992)*, 59–64.

[3] White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers?: The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 129–161; Bozarslan, "Between Integration, Autonomization and Radicalization. Hamit Bozarslan on the Kurdish Movement and the Turkish Left"; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 405; Ekinci, *Kürt Siyasal Hareketinin Sınıfsal Analizi*, 60–8; van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*, 32; Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 14–5.

[4] Akkaya and Jongerden, "Reassembling the Political: The PKK and the Project of Radical Democracy"; Jongerden and Akkaya, "The Kurdistan Workers Party and a New Left in Turkey: Analysis of the Revolutionary Movement in Turkey through the PKK's Memorial Text on Haki Karer"; Casier and Jongerden, "Understanding Today's Kurdish Movement: Leftist Heritage, Martyrdom, Democracy and Gender"; Özcan, *Turkey's Kurds: A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Öcalan*, 73–119; Gunter, *The Historical Dictionary of the Kurds*, 119–121; İmset, *PKK: Ayrılıkçı Şiddetin 20 Yılı (1973-1992)*, 11–46.

[5] Elçi, Personal Interview.

national groups define themselves as left-wing mass parties. The BDP-DTK[1], the HAK-PAR[2], and the ÖSP[3] underline their left-wing qualities, while the TDŞK[4] describes itself as non-ideological, although it accepts its left-wing heritage. The rural and urban lower class still constitutes the most important societal base supporting the Kurdish national movements in Turkey, and the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK in particular. The severe and bloody armed conflict between the PKK and Turkish military forces that has claimed over 40,000 lives, led to the evacuation of nearly 4,000 villages, forced the displacement of over three million people, and caused enormous social, economic and spatial destruction throughout the Kurdish region since 1984[5], has increased the number of the PKK's sympathizers from the urban and rural lower class[6]. The generations that have grown up without basic social and economic resources and opportunities, with the reproduced collective memory about state violence, and who have suffered ethnic discrimination in new settlements, have constituted the principal societal base of the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK[7].

Since 1999, however, the weight of the middle class has significantly increased in the leading Kurdish movement. This class mostly comprises lawyers, doctors, engineers, and pharmacists with professional training; managers and workers in the public sectors, such as education and health; and tradesmen and artisans who own or work in small and medium-sized commercial businesses and manufacturers. The Kurdish middle class has experienced remarkable growth in the last decade thanks to general national economic growth in Turkey and the economic cooperation with emerging market in the IKR. As a result, the importance of the middle class in politics has notably increased both in the Kurdish movement and the AK Party, the two main political groups in the Kurdish region.

Moreover, the forced displacement of more than three million Kurds from the rural areas to urban settlements dramatically transformed the leading Kurdish movement from a

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[1] Demirtaş, Personal Interview; Kışanak, Personal Interview; Çelik, Personal Interview.

[2] Bozyel, Personal Interview.

[3] Çiftyürek, Personal Interview.

[4] İpek, Personal Interview.

[5] McDowall, "The Kurdish Question: a Historical Review"; van Bruinessen, "Kurdish Society, Ethnicity, Nationalism and Refugee Problems"; TMMOB, *TMMOB 2002-2004 Dönem Çalisma Raporu*, 566–574; NRC, *Profile of Internal Displacement: Turkey*, 50–51; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*.

[6] Ibid., 440–1; Tan, *Kürt Sorunu*, 374–5.

[7] Ibid., 374–5.

rural-based movement an urban-based one during the 1990s. Furthermore, the leading Kurdish movement has formally institutionalized thanks to the local government experience in several provinces, growing Kurdish NGO networks, the Europeanization process, and the ideological and political transformation of the movement prioritizing democratic measures and legal political struggle since 1999. This urbanization and institutionalization process of the Kurdish movement allows the middle class to dominate the political party both at local and national levels, the local governments, pro-Kurdish media, and the pro-Kurdish NGOs working in diverse domains such as linguistic and cultural rights, human rights, gender issues, and socioeconomic development. As a result of this process, the leading Kurdish movement became a coalition of the lower and middle classes, although the sources and kinds of sociopolitical mobilizations of two classes differ from each other[1].

1) Economic elite: "Unreliable", "weak", "state-dependent" actors

The lower- and middle-class-based social support and left-wing heritage of the Kurdish national movements – the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK in particular – and the weakness and center-dependence of the Kurdish economic elite structure and limit ongoing relationships between two blocs. Most of the national groups underline weak and center-dependent qualities of the Kurdish economic elite, referring to them as "weak"[2], "jumpy and fearful"[3], "disorganized"[4], "state-dependent"[5], "incorporated into the state ('devletleştirilmiş' in Turkish)"[6], "incorporated into the center ('merkezleştirilmiş' in Turkish)"[7], "self-seeking"[8], "stability-seeking"[1], and "devoid of any national identity"[2].

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[1] Role of and position of Kurdish middle class is relatively a new debate. For initial discussions see, Çiçek, "Etnik Ve Sınıfsal İnşa Süreçleri Bağlamında Kürt Meselesi: Bölgesel Eşitsizlik Ve Bölgesel Özerklik"; İrfan Aktan, "Makul Ve Makbul Kürtler," *Birikim* no. 260 (2010): 45–53.

[2] Baydemir, Personal Interview; Mehmet Aslan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır March 5, 2012.

[3] Fırat, Personal Interview, October 5, 2012; Çelik, Personal Interview; Baydemir, Personal Interview; Serhat Temel, Personal Interview, Batman, August 6, 2012.

[4] Çelik, Personal Interview; Demirtaş, Personal Interview.

[5] Çiftyürek, Personal Interview; Abdullah Demirbaş, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 23, 2011; Bozyel, Personal Interview; Kışanak, Personal Interview; Fuat Önen, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 5, 2012; Fırat, Personal Interview, October 5, 2012; Çelik, Personal Interview; Yurtsever, Personal Interview; Baydemir, Personal Interview; Gündoğan, Personal Interview; Demirtaş, Personal Interview; Elçi, Personal Interview.

[6] Fırat, Personal Interview, October 5, 2012.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Hüsamettin Zeydanlıoğlu, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 14, 2012; Demirbaş, Personal Interview; Bozyel, Personal Interview; Kışanak, Personal Interview; Çiftyürek, Personal Interview;

The state-dependent quality of the Kurdish economic elites is the most highlighted point by the national groups. B. Bozyel, president of the HAK-PAR argues, "the Kurdish bourgeoisie has never existed as a class. They have sought a future with Turkish ruling powers and incorporation into Turkish bourgeois class[3]." Likewise, S. Çiftyürek, the president of ÖSP, asserts that there is not a Kurdish national bourgeoisie:

"Even a small company in Hakkari has an economic, commercial relation with A or B Bank. ... In Kurdistan, is there a single capital(ist) group that is not economically integrated with Ankara, deeply does not have a commercial, industrial, credit relations with a bank? There is not. Here is the disaster, the biggest impasse of the North (Kurdistan) ... Hence, I do not think that there is a national bourgeoisie[4]."

Even Ş. Elçi, the president of the liberal pro-Kurdish party, KADEP, underlines that the Kurdish bourgeoisie has not advocated the Kurdish cause. Elçi points out that the economy is under the state control in Turkey:

"It is a big misfortune of Kurds that their capitalists – we can to some extent say their bourgeoisie – have not advocated the Kurdish cause. Why? There are reasons. Turkey's economy is under state control, since the state was established that way. Kurdish capitalists have relations with the state; their economic interests are related to the state. If they were on the way of their nation, away from the state's side, the state would not allow them to advance[5]."

The leading Kurdish movement has a similar idea about the Kurdish economic elite's dependence on the state[6]. According to A. Demirtaş, mayor of the Diyarbakır Sur Municipality of Diyarbakır Sur District that has been ruled by the BDP since 1999, 10 % of the Kurdish capitalists are close to Kurdish national movements, 70 % of them are close to

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Önen, Personal Interview; Baydemir, Personal Interview; Temel, Personal Interview; Elçi, Personal Interview.

[1] Zeydanlıoğlu, Personal Interview; Baydemir, Personal Interview; Temel, Personal Interview.

[2] Zeydanlıoğlu, Personal Interview; Kışanak, Personal Interview; Önen, Personal Interview.

[3] Bozyel, Personal Interview.

[4] Çiftyürek, Personal Interview.

[5] Elçi, Personal Interview.

[6] Kışanak, Personal Interview; Demirtaş, Personal Interview; Baydemir, Personal Interview; Temel, Personal Interview; Demirbaş, Personal Interview; Çelik, Personal Interview; Fırat, Personal Interview, October 5, 2012; Yurtsever, Personal Interview.

central, and 20 % of them have pragmatic relations with both sides[1]. O. Baydemir, one of the leading actors in the Kurdish scene, underlines the power dependence of the economic elite. He states that "there has not been a national capital yet, and I am doubtful that will be able to emerge in a short term"[2]. Noting that "the capitalists are self-seeking", he argues that "commercial future and commercial sustainability are essential" for them. For that reason, "there exists a base where they are constrained to incorporate into the power, the authority"[3]. Likewise, G. Kışanak, the co-president of BDP, highlights the state power in the market. She asserts that the economic elite have to work with the government, and they do not want to have conflicting relations with the government, which can put their economic interests at risk. Therefore, according to Kışanak, "the economic elite with a Kurdish identity do not want to be a part of the conflict. It is not a problem of today; there has been such a situation since the beginning (of the Kurdish issue)"[4].

In this respect, S. Demirtaş, the other co-president of the BDP, has a clearer and more critical perspective. He argues:

"There is not a Kurdish bourgeoisie. In fact, there is not an organized capitalist group that we can describe as a Kurdish capital(ist). There exists a capital; there exists also an organized group, yet they even hesitate to describe themselves as a Kurdish capital. In reality, they are inherently Kurdish capital. However, when you look at the intended use of capital, there is not any use or accumulation of the capital serving the Kurdish movement or Kurdish nation building process. In this regard, we cannot see them as a Kurdish capital. Since, we see that all the private enterprises either are attached to the state with an umbilical cord, or attached to those in power with an umbilical cord, or work for serving the policies of those in power. ... Even when they create a brand mark, they see the creation of a Kurdish brand mark as a disadvantage, as a danger, whereas there exists a Kurdish market, a market of Kurdistan[5]."

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[1] Demirbaş, Personal Interview.

[2] Baydemir, Personal Interview.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Kışanak, Personal Interview.

[5] Demirtaş, Personal Interview.

2) State violence towards the Kurdish economic elites

Alongside the state power in the market and economic and political dependence of the Kurdish region on the center, the political elite underlines state violence towards the Kurdish economic elite, which has kept them off the Kurdish national struggle for decades. F. Önen, a senior communist intellectual and a leading member of Tev-Kurd, asserts that the Turkish state first eliminated the Kurdish upper class, then targeted the lower class in Kurdistan to consolidate its power in the region. He continues as follows:

"The aim of Turkish state was both the economic and ideational enthrallment of wealthy people in Kurdistan. In this regard, it has been successful. Speaking as a communist, in Kurdistan, before dominated classes, dominating classes were the targets of the Turkish state. They firstly sorted out the dominating class and wanted to either subordinate or eliminate them. Then, they took notice of the fact that the lower or dominated class also posed a danger. This time, they sought to take some measures regarding the dominated class. Until the 1990s, a patriotic tendency had not emerged among the wealthy people of Kurdistan. ... This group has been always on the side of Turkish politics, and functioned as a Turkish extension in Kurdistan[1]."

Likewise, Baydemir points out that there has been state violence towards non-Turkish and non-Muslim economic elites in the Kurdish region for more than a century. He argues that a century-long exploitation is the main reason why the Kurdish capitalist group is weak and not national:

"Why do I say the exploitation? First, in the late 19th century and the early 20th century, the economy was mostly under the control of non-Muslim communities. In the early 20th century, these people received a severe blow and were forcibly immigrated. Hence, the relations of production were cut. Subsequently, we experienced other blows in the 1980s and 1990s. Events like the evacuation of villages, the threatening – and even murder– of the capitalist class have caused a remarkable immigration of capital from the Kurdistan to the western side of Turkey. Most of the developing capital, of the capital dominating the city, has emerged during last 20-25 years. They are not rooted capital, and in fact, there is a capital(ist groups) developing in a war climate[2]."

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[1] Önen, Personal Interview.

[2] Baydemir, Personal Interview.

The conceptualization of S. Fırat, a senior member of the PKK, is well to the point. He highlights "statization", "centralization" and "nationalization" as three pillars of the Turkish state's economic policies. He argues that the state has eliminated and excluded capitalist forces of other cultural and national groups including Kurds in order to realize these policies for decades. Like Baydemir, he also reminds severe and bloody elimination of some Kurdish businessmen by the state power in the 1990s: "Between 1990-1998, a remarkable part of the Kurdish capitalist group were massacred. Some were killed, some were tortured, and some were arrested[1]."

There are not just the weak, unreliable, and state-dependent qualities of the Kurdish economic elite; rather, it is the economic and political peripheral qualities of the Kurdish region and the severe state violence towards the Kurdish economic elites that keep them away from the Kurdish national struggle. The democratic autonomy project that the leading Kurdish movement advocates – and its permanent alliance with the Turkish left-wing movements since the 1970s, the 1990s in particular – also constitute significant obstacles for the Kurdish economic elite to participate in the Kurdish socio-political mobilization and consensus-building process.

3) Economic aspects of the democratic autonomy project

The Kurdish movement has been advocating the democratic autonomy project since 2007. They propose an economic, political and administrative local or regional decentralization guaranteeing Kurdish self-government. However, the movement does not limit the project with a sovereignty sharing issue between the center and local-regional politico-administrative entities. It also gives remarkable importance to values and mechanisms on which each local-regional entity will be based. In this regard, as I detailed in the previous chapter, the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK has a collectivist vision regarding social, economic, political and administrative issues.

The societal base of the lower and middle classes and the left-wing heritage of the leading Kurdish movement have a remarkable influence on its anti-capitalist economic perspective about regional economy. For instance, Fırat highlights that "Kurdish movement criticizes the capitalist modernity. The Kurdish movement has some ideas and critiques that capitalism is very binding, unprogressive, and destructive in terms of ecology, labor and

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[1] Fırat, Personal Interview, October 5, 2012.

social values[1]." Likewise, S. Temel, the deputy mayor of Batman Municipality, underlines that they want to limit the destructive impact of the capitalist economy on the democratic autonomy project:

"Capital(ist groups) seeks cheap labor and capitalism is barbarian. You must not give the cheap workforce in your region as bait to barbarian capitalism. In fact, the economic model of democratic autonomy has not been sufficiently deliberated. Yet, that is the basic philosophy of the project. People must certainly be employed, the region must be developed, but not in a monopolized way. We are sensible in this regard. Our movement has such a philosophical approach. I won't allow you to see me as cheap labor[2]."

However, it is important to note that the Kurdish movement has an approach that gives a place to the liberal market economy, as Kışanak points out:

"In the regional autonomy, the capital(ist groups) will have a place. We see this place as an area where they can make efforts to reduce regional economic inequalities. However, we have to balance it with social policies, approaches guaranteeing justice. Otherwise, a situation conflicting with our political existence will emerge. In the last instance, the BDP is a left-wing mass party, and overcoming basic inequalities constitutes the main axis of the party. That is to say female-male, gender inequality, inequality between labor and capital. These are the basic fields of struggle in the history of humanity. And, here, we are standing on the labor axis[3]."

In this regard, Demirtaş underlines three important sensitivities of the Kurdish national movement that constitute the main pillars of the economic model of the democratic autonomy project: environment, labor rights, and gender liberty and equality. Noting that some anxieties of the Kurdish economic elite are baseless, he describes their economic model as follows:

"In the end, a socialist revolution will not occur here. 'A communist revolution will happen the day after tomorrow, their jeeps and villas will be confiscated, and distributed to people in public places'. ... They (the economic elite) sometimes express such anxieties, but there is no such thing. Yet, here is the thing: If people elect the BDP as the ruling party in regional governments, *the economic model that we will implement*

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Temel, Personal Interview.

[3] Kışanak, Personal Interview.

will definitely be sensitive to the environment, respectful to labor rights, and gender liberty and equality. These are the main points that we are sensitive about. Besides, our model is not close to private enterprise and capital. We do not accept enrichment at the expense and exploitation of workers, the devastation of workers. Another issue is gender emancipation. We criticize investments, approaches that subordinate women and ignore them in the fields of economic investment and the workplace (emphasis added)[1]."

The leading Kurdish movement proposes to re-organize the economic space on a cooperative basis to protect the environment, to guarantee workers' rights, and to realize gender equality and liberty. According to Co-President Demirtaş, the monopolization of capital is a serious danger to society. They propose cooperatives to avoid this danger:

"In our opinion, the monopolization of capital in one hand or in the hands of a few companies is dangerous. Yet, the model that we propose to avoid it is to develop cooperatives; it is not to confiscate people's properties. That means to distribute the capital among masses as far as possible. It means to develop models that allow masses to be job owners, employers, to produce and get their share in cooperatives[2]."

It is obvious that the lower and middle class societal base of the leading Kurdish movement is the most important dynamic determining its ongoing conflicting relations with the Kurdish economic elite. Co-President Demirtaş, who grew up as a worker's son and worked as a lawyer several years in Diyarbakır, highlights the role of the lower class in the Kurdish movement and their class conflict with the capitalist groups:

"There has always been such a conflict, a contradiction. The Kurdish movement has arisen from within the poor proletarian class, peasants. This movement has enlarged over the cost given by poor, peasant and unemployed people. Therefore, all these classes have also constituted administrative positions in the Kurdish movement. Those who worked for the movement have started to manage the movement. As they have grown, they have become more effective at arbitrating their own decisions (in the movement). This class conflict and contradiction certainly started to emerge in every

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[1] Demirtaş, Personal Interview.

[2] Ibid.

field of life. When the capitalist groups 'who had done nothing' started to become an actor, this class-based conflict and tension started to emerge from time to time[1]."

This approach is the dominant one in the leading Kurdish movement. However, there are remarkable differences in the movement. Alongside the anti-capitalist, collectivist approach, I must note the nationalist one that either gives a limited importance the class conflict or see it harmful to the nation cause. For instance, Temel points out that "BDP is not a party advocating class struggle. It ideologically defines itself as a left-wing party, however, it does not have a vision or mission privileging the class struggle." In this respect, Baydemir goes far and clearly states that the Kurdish movement must cooperate with the Kurdish economic elites:

"It is very understandable that a political movement has an economic policy, for instance, an anti-capitalist policy. Yet, in my opinion, the principal issue, the main axis of our politics in Kurdistan is the problem of freedom. We have to cooperate with all societal actors until this problem of freedom is overcome. Therefore, the Kurdish movement must cooperate with the capital(ist groups). Although the capital is not aware, the problem of freedom is also its problem. Therefore, it is understandable to have an ideology. I respect it. Yet, our principal problem is not anti-capitalism. ... When we give priority to ideological approaches rather than national unity or national claim, other components or members of the nation perhaps do not see this cause as their own cause. For that reason, they either become opposite or do not support the cause. ... In my opinion, our principal problem is the national problem[2]."

Before ending this part, it is very important to underline that the leading Kurdish movement has a very liberal practice in social and economic realms, despite its collectivist, anti-capitalist discourse. The local government experience is the most visible area where its liberal socioeconomic practices can be seen. Although the movement has almost ruled one hundred municipalities, including seven city centers and one metropolitan city, it has not achieved any noteworthy success regarding socioeconomic problems since 1999. For instance, in Diyarbakır, the *de facto* center of the Kurdish national movements, if the municipal expenditures of the last twelve years are mapped, it will be seen that municipal projects were mostly implemented in the newly settled Kayapınar County wherein middle

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Baydemir, Personal Interview.

upper classes reside. The limited resources of the municipalities have been mostly used for the spatial arrangement of this new city that doubled residential space in the Diyarbakır city center. For instance, only 8 % of the budget of the metropolitan municipality was allocated to social affairs, while 72 % was allocated for construction affairs in 2012[1].

The leading Kurdish movement has not made any remarkable effort to meet the basic needs of the victims of the Kurdish conflict concerning employment, education, health, or housing issues so far. Some field research conducted in Diyarbakir shows that the victims of forced displacement, who became the new inhabitants of the city's slums in the 1990s, still live without basic economic, social, and spatial opportunities[2], despite the thirteen-year-long local government experience of the leading Kurdish movement. Indeed, during the interviews, I noted that more than 26,000 families had demanded food assistance from a local NGO cooperating with the leading Kurdish movement[3], and nearly 25,000 families had requested social aid from pro-Islamic NGOs[4] in Diyarbakır.

4) Constant alliance of the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK with Turkish Left

It is not just political discourse but also political practices of the leading Kurdish movement that constitute significant obstacles standing in the way of the Kurdish economic elite, preventing them from participating in the Kurdish national struggle. The movement's permanent alliance with the Turkish left-wing movements can be seen as a remarkable example of its anti-capitalist quality. The leading Kurdish movement has always preferred to ally with different reformist and revolutionary socialist political parties and groups since the 1970s. Although most of these left-wing groups were eliminated or marginalized (they do not represent 1 % of the national vote in total) after the coup d'état in 1980, the politics of alliance has remained one of the distinctive qualities of the leading Kurdish movement so far. It is crucial to note that the movement has not made any remarkable efforts to cooperate with other Kurdish groups (national, religious or economic), though has built cooperation with the Turkish left-wing political groups.

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[1] Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi, *Diyarabakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi Faaliyet Raporu 2012* (Diyarbakır: Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2013), 46–7.

[2] Kalkınma Merkezi, *Zorunlu Göç Ve Diyarbakır* (Diyarbakır: Kalkınma Merkezi, 2010); Sarmaşık, *Diyarbakır Kent Yoksulluk Haritası* (Diyarbakır: Sarmaşık Yoksullukla Mücadele ve Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Derneği, 2008).

[3] Şerif Camcı, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 28, 2011.

[4] Hüseyin Yılmaz, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 25, 2012.

In the last few years, the movement has tried to extend its alliances by building a wider cooperation with different groups of socialists, feminists, environmentalists, liberal democrats, and some non-Muslim and non-Turkish minorities. HDK and HDP, which were founded in October 2011 and October 2012, respectively, can be seen as a result of this effort. There are not any Kurdish national groups (like the HAK-PAR, the KADEP, the ÖSP, or the TDŞK) or pro-Islamist groups (like the MZC, the KH, or the Azadi) in this alliance.

Alongside the HDK, however, the leading Kurdish movement has tried to build "a national alliance" with other Kurdish groups in recent years. The leading Kurdish movement initiated the DTK in order to establish a *de facto* parliament of the Kurdish region, but then it failed and the DTK became a mere umbrella organization covering different offshoots of the movement in various areas, including political, social, economic and media at local, regional and national levels. Despite the failure of the DTK, the leading Kurdish movement's efforts to build a national front continued. In the last general election held on June 11, 2011, the BDP achieved to build cooperation with the HAK-PAR and the KADEP, two other secular pro-Kurdish parties. Nevertheless, while most of the Kurdish left-wing groups supported this "national" alliance, its effects on the pro-Islamist Kurds are very limited. Most of the pro-Islamist Kurds have not participated in this alliance.

It is obvious that the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK gives more importance to the alliance with non-Kurdish left-wing (and also feminist, environmentalist, minority-rights-based and other) groups than the "national alliance". Socialist and nationalist groups dominate administrative positions of the organizations and institutions in the leading Kurdish movement and the representation of the Muslim Kurds is very limited[1]. For instance, the leading Kurdish movement limited pro-Islamist Kurdish political representation with one deputy, A. Tan, in the last general elections in 2011. It is noteworthy to underline that Tan does not represent any pro-Islamist political organization, although he receives the respect of most of them as a Muslim intellectual[2]. Besides, the political representation of other national groups was limited with Ş. Elçi, the president of the KADEP. Yet the movement supported three Turkish socialists and elected them to the Turkish parliament. The anti-capitalist quality of the leading Kurdish movement is the principal dynamic that can explain this politics of alliance.

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[1] Ali Burakgazi, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 18, 2012; Feyzi Aytar, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 19, 2012; Hamdullah Tasalı, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 22, 2012.

[2] Nurettin Bozkurt, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 19, 2011; Serdar B. Yılmaz, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 22, 2011.

C - Kurdish economic elites: Between state and BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK

While most of the national groups – and the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK in particular – see the Kurdish economic elites as weak, unreliable, and state-dependent actors, the Kurdish economic elites have a very negative perception about the leading Kurdish movement's position on economic issues. Most of them underline the state's protracted systematic discriminatory economic policies towards the Kurdish region on the one hand, while on the other they criticize the leading Kurdish movement for being an irrelevant actor in the field of economy with an outdated vision and unrealistic anti-capitalist project about regional economy.

1) The state's discriminatory policies towards Kurdish region

In the second chapter I underlined three dynamics that have led to the socioeconomic under-development of the Kurdish region so far. These are the destructive economic effects of the Armenian genocide on the Kurdish region, the construction of the Kurdish region as a peripheral economy, and the incorporation of the Kurdish ruling class into the central ruling elite. The bloody period of conflict between 1984 and 1999, which caused immense social, economic, cultural and spatial devastation, has aggravated socioeconomic problems of the Kurdish region. As a result, the Kurdish region, which was the poorest region of the country until the 1980s, has become a devastated region where there exists a weak and center-dependent economic elite.

Like national groups, the economic elite affirms that there is not a major capitalist group in the Kurdish region. M. Aslan, the secretary general of the DTSO, underlines that in the Kurdish region, capitalist groups are very young and weak in comparison to other countries' capitalist groups. Aslan highlights that there is not a single company whose owner inherited his/her accumulation from his/her family, and most of these companies were established after the mid-1990s:

"Wherever you have a look at, say, Urfa or Diyarbakır or Hakkari or Şırnak or Van, we know since we are the chamber (of trade and industry of Diyarbakir). For instance, in Diyarbakir, you cannot find a second-generation capitalist. When I say capitalist, I mean industrialist or producer. ... For instance, a German company that constructs roads came here and we will cooperate with them. The company was established in 1922. According to them, it is a middle-aged company. ... In Diyarbakir, there is not such a

company. ... I will count for you: DİMER started mining in 1994-1995. Today, it is the biggest company in Diyarbakir. Karavil Group, the second biggest investor in Diyarbakir... When you look at their background as a producer, it has just been for 10 years. When you go to the organized industrial zone, you cannot find a 20-year-old company. Here, you cannot see a capitalist group like Eczacıbaşı, Sabancı, or Koç[1] that has become a bourgeoisie by creating its own culture, one that has seen the transformative power of capital and changed and transformed its own generations[2]."

Likewise, R. Türk, president of DİSİAD and the owner of DİMER, affirms that among members of the association, which includes the most powerful companies, there are just four companies employing 1,000 or more workers[3]. A. Ebedioğlu confirms Türk's statement and stresses that "if you gather all workers of companies in the organized industrial zone in Diyarbakır, their total employment will be less than the number of workers who work in a car company in İzmit". Analyzing the 1,000 biggest companies in Turkey according to region, M. Odabaşı, a leading member of Odabaşı family (which has remarkable economic power in the Kurdish region), and who was recently elected as the president of GÜNSİAD, dramatically reveals the weakness of Kurdish economic elites in Turkey:

"If you itemize the first 500 industrial companies in Turkey, you will see that except Gaziantep, there is not a single company from the Southeast. I talk about the industrial companies. Including Ceylanpınar Agricultural Enterprises, which is a producer and rules 2.1 million acres of land, a single company cannot be placed in the first 500. Among the first 1,000 companies, there do not total five companies from Diyarbakır, Urfa, Şırnak, Batman, Mardin, Bingöl, Elazığ, or Van. However, this region has 7-7.5% of Turkey's population and constitutes 40 % of Turkey in terms of water resources, and perhaps 30 % of productive arable land in Turkey. Here is the picture. In this picture, it is not possible to talk about such a big capital[4]."

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[1] They are the leading bourgeois families in Turkey.

[2] Aslan, Personal Interview.

[3] Raif Türk, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 26, 2011.

[4] Mahmut Odabaşı, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 5, 2012.

Most members of the Kurdish economic elite, including the top figures[1], underline the Turkish state's systematic discriminatory economic policies towards the Kurdish region and Kurdish economic actors as the principal reason of this socioeconomic under-development. Even G. Ensarioğlu, former president of DTSO and AK Party's Diyarbakır deputy, stresses that the Kurdish region is not a socioeconomically backward area ("geri kalmış bölge" in Turkish), but is rather an area that the Turkish state has deliberately left behind in terms of development ("geri bırakılmış bölge" in Turkish)[2]. Even representatives of local branches of MÜSİAD and TUSKON, which are known as the two principal pro-Islamist businessmen associations alternative to or rival to TÜSİAD, accept the fact that the Kurdish region has been economically neglected so far, although they abstain from describing it as a systematic policy to prevent development[3].

M. Kaya, the former president of DTSO, and president of DİTAM, asserts that the Turkish state's fear that a rich Kurdish region will separate from the country is the principal dynamic of its discriminatory socioeconomic policies towards the region:

"If the Kurds prospered, the Republic of Turkey, which had already lost oil-countries during its establishment period, would lose a country or a region of water. That was the biggest fear of Turkey. Otherwise, who can explain to me the fact that the irrigation is in the first rank of the state investment. The state does the irrigation, has a monopoly, and makes plans for irrigation. In Turkey, including the region, the ratio of irrigated lands is 54 %. Yet, in this region it is 12 %, perhaps it has increased to 13-14 % so far. Here, you have energy from the dams, yet you have not constructed its irrigation part. How will you explain that? Societies switched to agriculture-based industry in this region after the beginning of the 1900s. They advanced with surplus value that the agriculture had provided. The Kurds have been restrained from that. ... They also restrained Kurds from trading among them. Until 10 years ago, we did not have a

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[1] Ş. İsmail Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 27, 2011; Türk, Personal Interview; Mehmet Kaya, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, February 5, 2012; Alican Ebedioğlu, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, March 5, 2012; Odabaşı, Personal Interview; Burç Baysal, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, October 5, 2012; Adnan Sarı, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 19, 2012; M. Ali Dündar, Personal Interview, Mardin, December 6, 2012.

[2] Galip Ensarioğlu, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 6, 2012.

[3] Alaattin Korkutata, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, January 5, 2012; Şahabettin Aykut, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, July 5, 2012; Mustafa Tatlı, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 20, 2012; Abdurrahman Yetkin, Personal Interview, Şanlıurfa, May 6, 2012; Mehmet Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview, Şanlıurfa, June 6, 2012.

proper road to go to Batman, Mardin or Bingöl. To go to Bingöl we were passing through another city, although it is adjacent to Diyarbakır. Muş is adjacent to Diyarbakır, yet we were passing through three cities to go there. Why was that? They were aiming to attach (Kurdish cities) to Turkish metropolises. That was the economic aspect of the assimilation of (the Kurds)[1]."

Highlighting that the biggest landlord *agha* is the state in the Kurdish region, Odabaşı confirms Kaya's argument on the state's discriminatory socioeconomic policies towards the Kurdish region:

"State's policies, policies that have been implemented since 1920, are obvious. The place of this region in the implemented policies is obvious. In fact, this region was an isolated region until 1950. They even did not allow its integration within the country. ... Integration started with the Menderes period[2]. ... In my opinion, the cardinal disparity was a result of the fact that this region did not get its share from the aggressive economic development in Turkey between 1960 and 1980. At that time, there were just several industrial companies that the state had established before the 1950s. After 1980, aggressive economic development was achieved in the West, in Kocaeli, Bursa, and in the tourism sector of the entire Mediterranean region with an unbelievable incentive system following economic decisions of January 24[3]. While the West achieved such aggressive economic development, the Southeast was struggling with a very different difficulty between 1985-1997: the destruction that the coup d'état of September 12, 1980 caused and the gradually increasing conflict and violence in the region. ... As a result, now the national income per capita, which increased to $25,000-$30,000 in the Kocaeli axis, is $1,000 here[4]."

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[1] Kaya, Personal Interview.

[2] After the 30-year-long single-party regime of the CHP, Adnan Menderes was the first democratically elected prime minister, serving between 1950-1960. He was hanged by the military junta after the 1960 coup d'état, along with two other cabinet members.

[3] January 24, 1980 is a turning point for Turkey's economy. Decisions made on that date marked Turkey's shift from "mixed capitalism" to a free market economy. The program, announced Jan. 24, 1980, mainly included a 32.7 % devaluation of the Turkish lira, shrinking the state's role in the economy, lifting or reducing support of the agricultural sector, promoting foreign investment and providing importers major tax releases. In short, Turkey tapped into neo-liberal economic policies with the January 24 decisions.

[4] Odabaşı, Personal Interview.

C. Birtane, a businessman in Diyarbakir who was previously a senior politician in the Kurdish political party in different positions, conceptualizes the state's policy as "political dispossession" ("politik mülksüzleştirme" in Turkish). According to Birtane, "the state follows a political dispossession towards Kurds". In other words, it makes efforts to prevent the Kurds from achieving economic development[1].

It is not only the Turkish state's decades-long regional policy, but also the leading Kurdish movement's position regarding the regional economy that members of the Kurdish economic elite harshly criticize. They see the movement as an irrelevant actor in economic issues, and a danger or an unreliable actor in the best case, for their economic interests in the region.

2) BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK: "An irrelevant actor in economic areas"

The members of the Kurdish economic elite commonly see the leading Kurdish movement as an irrelevant actor in economic areas. Most of them share the idea that economic issues do not constitute an important place in the agenda of the BDP-DTP/PKK-KCK[2]. They argue that the movement confines itself to political issues concerning Kurdish identity and does not make efforts to solve other problems (the economic ones in particular). Some underline that the leading Kurdish movement does not have qualified staff to direct in areas other than the political realm[3], while others claim that it does not have an economic vision for the region's future[4].

Highlighting the poverty of the Kurdish region, Türk points out that the BDP has never had an idea about any economic issue. He continues as follows: "The BDP has not made any effort in addressing economic issues, neither at national nor international levels. It has not had such an approach or a vision. The politics have been an incomplete and this continues, in my opinion[5]." Confirming Türk, Aslan states that the leading Kurdish movement extraordinarily

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[1] Celalettin Birtane, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 31, 2012.

[2] Türk, Personal Interview; Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview; Beşir Yılmaz, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 1, 2012; Aslan, Personal Interview; Odabaşı, Personal Interview; Aykut, Personal Interview; Baysal, Personal Interview; Samed Bilgin, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, October 5, 2012; Mehmet A. Uzunyaya, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 20, 2012; Aziz Gölcük, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 5, 2012; Birtane, Personal Interview.

[3] Kaya, Personal Interview; Odabaşı, Personal Interview; Baysal, Personal Interview.

[4] Türk, Personal Interview; Kaya, Personal Interview; Aslan, Personal Interview; Baysal, Personal Interview; Gölcük, Personal Interview; Uzunyaya, Personal Interview; Birtane, Personal Interview.

[5] Türk, Personal Interview.

pushes economy out of its agenda and that it is extremely unfamiliar with industry, industrialization and socioeconomic development. He stresses that one cannot find, for instance, any effort of the leading Kurdish movement to understand and direct income distribution, the issue of welfare in Diyarbakır. He continues as follows:

"I have been here for nearly five years. ... There is high unemployment. There is a lot of hidden unemployment. There are wide masses that have given up looking for work. ... (Yet), the (Kurdish) politics do not have any interest in employment, unemployment, work life, industry, etc. This much amazes me[1]."

According to the economic elite, the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK confines itself to politico-administrative status and identity issues. For instance, noting that the BDP's cadres, including MPs, are unaware of the Kurdish region's economy, Odabaşı states that the solution of identity issue will not make any sense unless regional economic disparities are not eliminated:

"If we cannot eliminate the economic disparities between us and the West, the constitutional citizenship or the certificate or charter of citizenship in the terms of de-otherization, even the usage of Kurdish language as an official language in the region, will not make any sense. Then, another thing will start: You have $20,000 per capita income, why do we have $1,000? This fight will begin[2]."

Likewise, B. Yılmaz, a businessman working in the marble sector and the deputy president of DİTAM, emphasizes that the leading Kurdish movement exclusively concentrates on the identity issue and neglects economic issues:

"This is one of the points over which we cannot come to an agreement with the BDP. Certainly, there exists an identity problem, a status problem of the Kurdish national issue. Yet life continues. Diyarbakır also needs to be a developed city. Diyarbakır's people have the right to live in villas and high-quality buildings as the region's people do. If we make efforts only for the identity issue, other aspects are lacking. They must give remarkable importance to the economy. They sometimes organize certain meetings concerning the economy, yet they are feeble works for show[3]."

Answering questions about the role of development agencies in the formation of any prospective regional decentralization and the democratic autonomy project, Ş. İ.

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[1] Aslan, Personal Interview.

[2] Odabaşı, Personal Interview.

[3] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, May 1, 2012.

Bedirhanoğlu, president of GÜNSİAD, underlines that the BDP is not interested in the development agencies:

"I have not seen any policies of the BDP concerning the development agencies. We urge the BDP to support our efforts for making the development agencies' structure more civilian, democratic and autonomous. Yet, they consider the development agencies as institutions essentially working for money, and see capital-owner groups' efforts as the actors' individual interests in this issue. I see that they are not so interested in this issue[1]."

According to some of the economic elite, beside the economic issues, there are other areas in which the leading Kurdish movement does not make a noteworthy effort. B. Baysal, deputy president of DİSİAD, describes the BDP as a party working on a "single issue" while excluding others like cultural and economic ones[2]. Similarly, underlining the leading Kurdish movement's confined agenda with the political and identity issues, Kaya suggests a larger agenda guaranteeing equality to the Kurds in the all areas including the military, universities and the banking sector:

"Kurds must ask: What is the ratio of the Kurdish population in this country? If it is 18 %, I want my rights of 18 %. I do not want 19 %, yet I do not accept 17 %. You will give me 18 % in the military, 18 % at the university, 18 % of the banks. Since, we have suffered from discrimination. This discrimination was realized with the help of laws. The *raison d'état was built on this discrimination*: Preventing Kurds from getting strong and rich. This was done in this country[3]."

At this point, it is vital to note that the economic elite's expectation from the leading Kurdish movement to support the development of local and regional capitalists constitutes the principal dynamic determining their relations. In this regard, they have a very negative perception about the movement[4]. For instance, A. Gölcük, director of Tigris İnşaat, which is a powerful construction company working in the Kurdish region, the western part of the

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[1] Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview.

[2] Baysal, Personal Interview.

[3] Kaya, Personal Interview.

[4] Türk, Personal Interview; Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview; Kaya, Personal Interview; Baysal, Personal Interview; Odabaşı, Personal Interview; Gölcük, Personal Interview.

country and the IKR, points out that the leading Kurdish movement has not a vision or perspective to support local capitalist groups[1]. Kaya's argument is well to the point:

"The Kurdish movement could not develop policies to mobilize the bourgeoisie. On the other side, these people are scared to participate in politics because of the punitive policies in Turkey. Here, the Kurdish movement must have determined the politics rather than saying, 'why are these people scared and not participating?' The Kurdish movement could have calculated how to create its own industrialists and businessmen. Any company established in Kurdistan does not belong to the businessman who is the owner of the company. Its owner is Kurdistan since a company creates new works, employments and its sub-producers. The politics must be developed on that[2]."

Even the economic elites who directly participate in politics and publicly support the Kurdish national struggle criticize the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK for not supporting the local and regional capital(ist groups)[3]. S. Bilgin, who is a senior member of Sheikh Said's family, and also worked as a high-level manager in several companies, including Veziroğlu Construction Company and Ceylan Holding Company, gives a remarkable example concerning the leading Kurdish movement's dissatisfying effort to develop the local and regional economy:

"The BDP could not protect local capital here. There are many examples. For instance, if we look at Diyarbakır as an example, in the Diyarbakır city center there are 34 stores of BİM[4] Market Chains, and three stores are in its counties. In the city center, there are also six Carrefours (three are big, three are middle size), three big Migros stores, 20 Kiler stores. Now, A-101 Market Chains also gave permission. ... In order to protect their own local market, local groceries, they do not allow you to do this thing in Konya, Eskişehir, or Kayseri cities. There are not 34 BİMs in the most conservative city of Turkey. ... This is the most important deficiency of the BDP. This also has a significant influence on politics here[5]."

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[1] Gölcük, Personal Interview.

[2] Kaya, Personal Interview.

[3] Bilgin, Personal Interview; Birtane, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, May 1, 2012.

[4] BİM is a multi-partner pro-Islamist countrywide market chains. Recep Tayyip Erdogan's son and the family member of Kadir Topbaş, mayor of Istanbul Metropoliten Municipality are two partners of the company.

[5] Bilgin, Personal Interview.

It is not only the leading Kurdish movement's political discourse, political agenda and priorities that exclude the field of economy, but also its weak institutionalized capacity that causes the economic elites to see it as an unreliable actor in the Kurdish scene[1]. Odabaşı's argument summarizes the point very well:

"The BDP does not have a very qualified team that will be able to establish a very good economic coordination. In my opinion, they do not have a team that prepares their plans about the future, has a constructive perspective, and will be able to build the future... since lawyers now dominate 90 % of the politics in the region. Things that lawyers can do are limited. The lawyers cannot develop a city. ... That resulted from the intensity of violation of human rights in the region. The violation of the law reached a peak during the last 30 years. Although it has decreased for the last 10 years, before that, for over 20 years, unimaginable violations of the law, unthinkable immoral things happened here. ... Yet, after a certain level, we need very high-quality architects, very high-quality engineers, very high-quality sociologists, psychologists, doctors that can guide social change; perhaps very humanist writers, intellectuals, people who can give their life for getting the beauties to this city and this land. Now, there are only lawyers. What can they do? They can only deal with the arrested people[2]."

3) Democratic autonomy: "An unrealistic authoritarian project"

The leading Kurdish movement has been trying to develop economic aspects of the democratic autonomy project for the last few years. Although it is an uncompleted issue and debates on the issue are ongoing, the economic model that the movement advocates is based on gender equality and liberty, labor rights and the protection of ecology. Political elites of the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK, who have an egalitarian collectivist approach concerning both political and economic issues, suggest reorganizing the regional economy in the frame of a politico-administrative autonomy in the Kurdish region. The Kurdish economic elites commonly consider this model as an outdated and unrealistic project that does not represent their interests[3]. Moreover, discussions on regional self-defense forces in the frame of the

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[1] Kaya, Personal Interview, February 5, 2012; Baysal, Personal Interview; ibid.

[2] Odabaşı, Personal Interview.

[3] Kaya, Personal Interview, February 5, 2012; Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview; Baysal, Personal Interview; Ensarioğlu, Personal Interview.

democratic autonomy project[1] have increased the fears of the Kurdish economic elite who believe that the movement is trying to establish an authoritarian power to construct a cooperative-based economic system in the Kurdish region. It is critical to underline that the PKK's violence towards the property of some wealthier members of society due to their economic and political positions has had a remarkable influence in the formation of these fears[2].

Analyzing its economic model as incompatible with both the Kurdish society and the world reality, Bedirhanoğlu represents very well the negative perception of the democratic autonomy project commonly held by the economic elite:

"When we look at the content of the democratic autonomy project, I definitely do not think that it will promote regional development. Such a thing is neither possible nor compatible with the nature of things. You talk about regional autonomy in the Republic of Turkey, and a specific socioeconomic system in this region at the same time! ... *If the state has a liberal market economy, you must have a similar economic model.* I was in the meeting when the democratic autonomy project was declared, and was one of people who severely criticized its content. ... I said that this is not compatible with the reality of our time, and such a model cannot be sustainable under current circumstances. For that reason, we must know the economic dynamics of society. If you do not know it, it is obvious that they (the leading Kurdish movement's authorities) do not know, you say that 'we will rule collective production and consumption'. Kurdish society is not such a society (emphasize added)[3]."

Similarly, Kaya highlights that the leading Kurdish movement cannot develop a socialist model among capitalist world economic powers:

"They still talk about a mechanism based on cooperatives. I really want to know those who discuss these things. Who are the supporters of the democratic autonomy? On its one side, there are oil-producing countries, on its other side, there is Europe, and on its

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[1] The leading Kurdish movement highligted the self-defense power as one of eight principal aspects (political, legal, cultural, social, economic, ecological and diplomatic) of the democratic autonomy project.

[2] Kaya, Personal Interview, February 5, 2012; Odabaşı, Personal Interview; Türk, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, May 1, 2012; Aslan, Personal Interview, March 5, 2012; Aykut, Personal Interview; Baysal, Personal Interview; Uzunyaya, Personal Interview; İbrahim Alimoğlu, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 22, 2012; Ensarioğlu, Personal Interview.

[3] Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview.

other side, there is China. How will you be able to create a model like Cuba in such an environment[1]?"

Underlining the anti-capitalist quality of the democratic autonomy project, Baysal supports Kaya's argument:

"They imagine living in a communist system, residing in adobe houses, and looking at the stars. ... They live in a world of imagination. The people who live in this world of imagination are those who do not produce. ... We have neither intellectual capacity, nor material capacity to change the economic conditions of the world. For that reason, they struggle in a wrong place. Such a hostility to the capital(ist groups), considering capital in that way is not a proper approach. In reality, people who say that I am capital-owner advocate the (Kurdish or Kurdistan) cause in a more ardent way than they (the leading Kurdish movement's authorities) do[2]."

Alongside the collectivist approach of the leading Kurdish movement, the PKK's occasional violence towards the economic elite's property feeds their fears that they will lose their economic power in the Kurdish region, if the movement rules the region. Although the political elites of the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK explicitly underline that they do not advocate an economic system that totally excludes the liberal market economy, most of the economic elites criticize them for being authoritarian. The expression "I am in favor of autonomy, I support it, but I do not want democratic autonomy"[3] summarizes the dominant idea of the Kurdish economic elites very well. They mostly see democratic autonomy as a political project aiming to build not an autonomous region for the Kurds, but a region that the leading Kurdish movement rules in accordance with its political and ideological orientation[4].

Türk asserts that a model of self-governance (regional governance, autonomy or federation) can provide regional socioeconomic development. However, there must be some restrictions of self-governance: "In my opinion, there must be some limits here. I do not want this self-governance to be a self-government having armed forces[5]." It is important to note that by using "armed forces", Türk refers to the PKK's armed forces, which targeted his

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[1] Kaya, Personal Interview, February 5, 2012.

[2] Baysal, Personal Interview.

[3] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, May 1, 2012.

[4] Türk, Personal Interview; Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview; Kaya, Personal Interview, February 5, 2012; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, May 1, 2012; Odabaşı, Personal Interview.

[5] Türk, Personal Interview.

property due to his political support for the AK Party's government during the constitutional referendum on a number of changes to the constitution held on September 12, 2010. Aslan explains the incident:

"R. Türk, owner of DİMER, said that he would say yes to the constitutional referendum, and his construction sites were then set on fire. It is a very good example how the capitalist groups can affect politics. He just expresses an idea and says that he will say yes to the constitution. He is a businessman who has representative power. He is president of DİSİAD and represents rare successful businessmen[1]."

Ş. Aykut, president of the MÜSİAD Diyarbakır section, confirms Aslan's argument: "I am the president of MÜSİAD, president of a business association. I cannot express my idea about any issue because I am fearful. Why? Because there is this violence[2]." Likewise, criticizing the demand for regional self-defense forces, Odabaşı puts forward that a regional government or provincial system can be supported in terms of the public administration system's efficiency and subsidiarity:

"Here, is there an idea of the state (of a united or federal state) on the basis of the democratic autonomy project? If so, it is not necessary to call it democratic autonomy. It is easier to say that 'the centralized administration is not effective, the population of the country increased, people's demands cannot effectively be transferred to the center, it is necessary to analyze these demands and find a solution on site, we must be autonomous at that point, and center-dependent at other points'. Why do they say democratic autonomy and talk about the self-defense power and the like?[3]"

Yılmaz confirms Odabaşı's argument and underlines that they want a more democratic, free and representative autonomy: "There is an appearance of an authoritarian governmental system. You can see this between the lines of democratic autonomy program....We want a freer and more democratic autonomy. Everyone must find and easily represent oneself in this autonomy. This is the biggest problem of the people[4]." The economic elite criticizes the democratic autonomy project not only in terms of issues of liberty, democracy and representation, but also the economy. Kaya argues, "Democratic autonomy must be a

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[1] Aslan, Personal Interview, March 5, 2012.

[2] Aykut, Personal Interview.

[3] Odabaşı, Personal Interview.

[4] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, May 1, 2012.

governmental system in which we also will be able to use state resources. Eighteen of every 100 rich people must be Kurdish. Any rich person cannot become rich unless he/she uses state opportunities[1]."

It is important to note that the Kurdish economic elite does not oppose social policies while supporting and demanding a liberal market economy in the Kurdish region. Kaya's argument is well to the point:

"We must appropriately define the principles and conditions of the social state. Economic instruments and the principles of a social state should not be seen as being intertwined while defining it. The economic instruments are important competitive elements that will promote the development of this country and increase the national income. They must be efficient tools. You must put it to one side. Then, like other countries in the world, you will have some policies to improve income distribution. To do this, you can use some specific tools. Here is the allowance for education, the allowance for school, the allowance for children; you can create some instruments that provide each family with a minimum amount of money to live. This is something else. ... You can take into consideration the social state and fair sharing, however, at the same time, you must properly make rules on how to properly use the country's resources, improve the economy, and compete in the global market[2]."

Conclusion

In this chapter, I analyzed the conflicts of interest between the Kurdish economic elite and the national groups, with regard to the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK in particular. Four conclusions can be underlined. First, it is obvious that the conflict of interests between the national and economic blocs limits their cooperation on the "national" issue in the Kurdish scene. Therefore, the main dynamic that constructs the interaction of the Kurdish national and economic blocs is the conflict of interests in the Kurdish region. The Kurdish national movement is based on the lower and middle classes, and proposes the re-organization of the economy on a cooperative basis of production and consumption in the Kurdish region. They see the Kurdish economic elite as weak, self-seeking, unreliable, and state-dependent actors. The decades-long alliance of the leading Kurdish movement with Turkish left-wing

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[1] Kaya, Personal Interview, February 5, 2012.

[2] Ibid.

movements can be seen as one of the most significant indicators of its anti-capitalist left-wing ideological and political orientation. By contrast, members of the Kurdish economic elite criticize the leading Kurdish movement for excluding economic aspects and other issues outside the politico-administrative status and identity. According to the economic elite the Kurdish national movement is absent in the socioeconomic areas, and at the discursive level they propose an outdated, unrealistic and authoritarian economic model. According to the economic elite, this model is not compatible with the reality of the world, which that is based on the market economy, and constitutes a very real danger for their economic interest in the Kurdish region.

Second, these rationalities and interests are social constructs and actor-dependent. In the Kurdish scene, the national groups and the economic elite have different, and even contesting frames of reference for social legitimacy. The national groups, which are politically and ideologically left-wing, criticize the economic elites for being "self-seeking," "stability seeking," and "devoid of any national identity". By contrast, the economic elite, in support of a liberal market economy, define their cooperation with the central authorities and powers as a "rational choice" to guarantee their economic "interest" in a political economy dominated by state power.

Third, we have a case of institutional path dependence on the Kurdish scene. The institutional context that was constructed after 1950 has mostly framed and structured the current conflict-ridden interactions between the Kurdish national groups and economic elite so far. On the one side, the social basis of the Kurdish movement changed after its institutionalization and urbanization due to Kurdish middle class socio-political and sociocultural mobilization since 1999. Moreover, given its municipal experience since 1999, the leading Kurdish movement has not had any anti-capitalist social and economic policy and implementation at the practical level, despite its anti-capitalist discourse. On the other side, most members of the Kurdish economic elite severely criticize the Turkish state's economic and political discrimination towards the Kurds, and publicly support the autonomy of the Kurds. Yet the cooperation between these two blocs is very limited. The historically constructed political economy in the Kurdish region, that is to say the Turkish state's discriminatory socioeconomic politics toward the Kurdish region, the historically constructed center-periphery relationship between the Kurdish region and the western part of the country, and the antagonistic relationship between the national bloc and economic elites structures the interactions between the two blocs, both economically and politically.

Finally, I must underline the ideational path dependence, in other words, the continuity of Kurdish groups' normative and cognitive frames and their effects on the formation of the current opposing ideas and interests in the Kurdish scene. The actors' perceptions about what is feasible, possible, desirable and socially legitimate are shaped not only by the historically constructed institutional context, but also by decades-long policy paradigms and world-views. Most of the Kurdish national movements emerged as Marxist-Leninist national liberation movements in the 1960s. Despite decades-long social, economic, political and cultural, and spatial changes at the local, national and international levels, the left-wing political and ideological references still constitute one of the distinctive qualities of the Kurdish national movements, and of the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK in particular.

In the last two chapters, I discussed the conflicts of identity and interest, respectively. Kurdish groups' differences at the levels of ideas and interests shape their different proposals for the solution of the Kurdish issue: local decentralization, regional decentralization and federation. This is the topic of the next chapter.

V - Chapter 5 Conflict on Institutional Form of Kurdish Political Region: Decentralization, Regionalization or Federation

Introduction

After the discussions on the identity and class conflicts among the three Kurdish blocs, in this chapter I concentrate on the debates on the institutional form of a prospective Kurdish political region. In the Kurdish scene, there basically exist three different proposals for the politico-administrative aspect of the Kurdish issue(s). These are (1) the local decentralization, (2) the federation, and (3) the regionalization or the regional autonomy.

It is not easy to classify the three Kurdish blocs on the basis of the three proposals as each bloc has included various groups advocating different models. Yet I must underline that there exists a dominant approach within each bloc. Beginning with the national bloc, the leading Kurdish movement advocates the democratic autonomy project that is interpreted in various ways (from the local decentralization to a single autonomous Kurdish region), while other national groups, including the HAK-PAR, the KADEP, the ÖSP and the TDŞK, demand a federal Kurdish region. On the other side, the religious and economic blocs mostly support a local decentralization guaranteeing democracy and multiculturalism. However, it is critical to note that these blocs also include some groups supporting an autonomous or federal Kurdish region.

In this regard, the cultural-national identity issue must be noted as an important point of conflict among different Kurdish groups. The Kurdish groups that support a local decentralization commonly propose the learning of the mother tongue in the public schools as a selective language class. In contrast, the groups that support a regional autonomy or a federal Kurdish region advocate the education in the mother tongue as the minimum condition for the reproduction of the Kurdish national identity. They also propose to use the Kurdish as an official language in the Kurdish region while keeping the Turkish as the countrywide official language. The main Kurdish groups and their dominant perspective about the politico-administrative and linguistic issues are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: The Kurdish groups and their approaches concerning the politico-administratiative and linguistic issues

	Group	Pillars of Social Imaginary	Politico-Administrative Issue	Language Issue
Economic Bloc	Pro-Islamist	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - Economic liberalism - Kurdish cultural identity	- Local decentralization	- Learning of mother tongue
	Alevi	- Socio-cultural Alevi identity - Economic liberalism - Kurdish cultural identity	- Local decentralization	- Learning of mother tongue - Education in mother tongue
	Secular	- Economic liberalism - Political liberalism - Kurdish cultural identity	- Local decentralization	- Learning of mother tongue - Education in mother tongue
	National	- Economic liberalism - Political liberalism - Kurdish national issue	- Local decentralization - Regionalization - Federation	- Education in mother tongue - Second official language
National Bloc	BDP-DTK/ PKK-KCK	- National and social liberation - Socialism - Gender equality	- Local decentralization - Regionalization - Federation	- Education in mother tongue - Second official language
	HAK-PAR	- National liberation	- Federation	- Education in mother tongue - Second official language
	KADEP	- National liberation - Liberalism	- Federation	- Education in mother tongue - Second official language
	ÖSP	- Socialism - National liberation	- Federation	- Education in mother tongue - Second official language
	TDŞK	- National liberation	- Federation	- Education in mother tongue - Second official language
Religious Bloc — Pro-Islamist Groups	AK Party	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - Kurdish cultural identity	- Local decentralization	- Education in mother tongue
	GC	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - Kurdish cultural identity	- Local decentralization	- Learning of mother tongue - Education in mother tongue
	MGH	- Political Sunni-Islam - Kurdish cultural identity	- Local decentralization	- Learning of mother tongue
	MZC	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - National issue	- Politico-administrative decentralization	- Education in mother tongue - Second official language
	KH	- Political Sunni-Islam - National issue	- Autonomy - Federation - Independence	- Second official language
	Azadî	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - National liberation	- Self-government rights	- Second official language
Religious Bloc — Alevi Groups	BDP-Supporting Alevi Group	- Socio-cultural Alevi identity - National and social liberation	- Local decentralization - Regionalization - Federation - Autonomous for Kurdish Alevis	- Education in mother tongue - Second official language
	CHP-supporting Alevi Group	- Socio-cultural Alevi identity - Multiculturalism	- Local decentralization	- Education in mother tongue - Learning of mother tongue
	Leftwing Alevi Group	- Socialism - Socio-cultural Alevi identity - National issue	- Respect to the Kurds' decisions including an independent Kurdish state	- Education in mother tongue - Second official language

I argue that the ideas (the social imaginaries in particular) and interests of the Kurdish groups determine their politico-administrative proposal for the settlement of the Kurdish issue. The groups that give priority to their religious (both Sunni-Muslim and Alevi) identities and economic interests over the Kurdish identity define the Kurdish issue as a problem of cultural identity and democracy, and propose the local decentralization. The groups that privilege the Kurdish identity sees the issue as a problem of territorial sovereignty beyond the

identity dimension, and demand a regional autonomy or a federal Kurdish region based on the cultural geography. On the other hand, the leading Kurdish movement gives importance not only to national liberation, but also to social liberation, criticizing the nation-state and pursuing a countrywide regional decentralization (democratic autonomy) based around 20-25 geographic regions in order to de-ethnicize the nationhood and build a multinational country.

I argue that the historically constructed context and the central state's intervention in the ongoing collective action of the Kurdish groups plays a vital role in the formation of ideas, interests, and institutions for the formation of a distinctive Kurdish political region in Turkey. The Kurdish groups that have been already integrated in the central state at levels of ideas, interests or/and institutions for decades pursue local or regional decentralization models (integrationist models) for the solution of the Kurdish issue. The Kurdish groups that have framed the Kurdish issue as a national liberation problem and have been in conflict with the central state since the beginning of the 1960s focus on the construction of a distinctive Kurdish political region.

In the following parts of the chapter, I first discuss the Kurdish groups who support the local decentralization model that proposes to reorganize the public administration system on the basis of the devolution of power from the central government to local governments. Second, I focus on the federation model that proposes to share the territorial sovereignty and establish a federal state based on both the Kurdish and Turkish nations. Third, I discuss the regionalization or the regional autonomy model, which suggests establishing new politico-administrative regions on the basis of the non-cultural geographies. Finally, I summarize the main conclusions of the chapter.

A - Local decentralization

Most economic elite and religious groups (including both Sunni Muslims and Alevis) claim a local decentralization to strengthen the local governments in the Kurdish region as a part of the solution for the Kurdish issue(s) and the ongoing Kurdish conflict. They highlight the socioeconomic integration of the Kurds to the rest of Turkey, framing the issue as a problem of democracy and multiculturalism. They also underline the weak efficiency and ineffectiveness of the hyper-centralized public administration system to justify the necessity of local decentralization. The crucial point is that these groups essentially see the Kurdishness not as a national identity, but rather as a cultural identity. However, they propose different solutions to protect and transfer the Kurdish cultural identity to the next generations. The

majority advocates education in the Kurdish mother tongue, while others support the learning of the mother tongue in the public schools as an optional class.

1) Economic elite and local decentralization

The economic elite, which is more fragmented and unorganized than the other Kurdish groups, commonly supports the local decentralization option for the settlement of the Kurdish issue. A small group of the economic elite, which mostly lives in Diyarbakır, advocates a Kurdish political region[1] or any model based on the sharing of the sovereignty between the Kurdish and Turkish nations[2]. Most members of the Kurdish economic elite see the Kurdish issue(s) as a problem of democracy and multiculturalism[3], and claim the empowerment of the local governments. For instance, A. Yetkin, the president of MÜSİAD Şanlıurfa section argues that the Kurds, Arabs and Turks are brothers, and that the Kurdish issue is a plot of external powers. However, he supports local decentralization and the learning of the Kurdish language in public schools. According to Yetkin, people must be able to learn the Kurdish language as they learn English in the public schools, adding that "one who lives in Ankara cannot understand Şanlıurfa's problems, and one who lives in Şanlıurfa will govern Şanlıurfa in a better way"[4].

Likewise, M. Öksüzoğlu, the president of ŞÜGİAD, and M. Tatlı, the general secretary of BİGİAD, two local sections of the TUSKON, underline the education and the socioeconomic development as two principal instruments to solve the Kurdish issue(s)[5]. Öksüzoğlu, who also is a member of TUSKON's Board of Directors, points out that all local branches of TUSKON follow the central perspective about the Kurdish issue(s), which propose the learning of the mother tongue in the public school and the empowerment of the

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[1] Beşir Yılmaz, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 1, 2012; Mahmut Yeşil, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, September 5, 2012; M. Ali Dündar, Personal Interview, Mardin, December 6, 2012.

[2] Mehmet Aslan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, March 5, 2012; Mehmet Kaya, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, February 5, 2012; Ş. İsmail Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 27, 2011.

[3] Abdurrahman Yetkin, Personal Interview, Şanlıurfa, May 6, 2012; Aziz Aslan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 22, 2011; Aziz Gölcük, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 5, 2012; Hıdır Bellice, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 30, 2012; İbrahim Alimoğlu, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 22, 2012; Mehmet A. Uzunyaya, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 20, 2012; Mehmet Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview, Şanlıurfa, June 6, 2012; Mustafa Tatlı, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 20, 2012; Osman Nasıroğlu, Personal Interview, Batman, August 6, 2012; Raif Türk, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 26, 2011; Yusuf Cengiz, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 27, 2012.

[4] Yetkin, Personal Interview.

[5] Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview; Tatlı, Personal Interview.

local governments[1]. According to TUSKON, the empowerment of local governments is not only to solve the Kurdish issue(s), but also to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the public administrative system[2]. However, A. Korkutata, the president of the TUSKON Diyarbakır section, who emphasizes that the Kurds have been subjected to the policies of assimilation and denial, and that the Kurds and Turks must be equal, asserts the Kurds' rights to the education and public services in their mother tongue alongside the local decentralization[3].

Like the above-mentioned pro-Islamist economic elites, the Alevi economic elites also advocate a local decentralization reform for the solution of the Kurdish issue(s). H. Bellice, the president of Tunceli ESOB, expresses that the politico-administrative system must not be based on ethnicity, religion or identity, but universal democratic values such as democracy, human rights, law, and individual rights and freedom. In such a "European model," he thereby contends that the Turkish language must be the only official language, while each one can live with its "sub-culture," "sub-language," "sub-identity," or religion. Noting the socioeconomic inequalities and social injustice as the main problems, he emphasizes that a local or regional decentralization can be supported if it serves economic development and equal and fair income distribution[4].

Y. Cengiz, the president of Tunceli TSO, highlights the economic under-development of the Kurdish region and the policies of assimilation and denial towards the "Kurdish nation" as the two principal aspects of the issue. Unlike Bellice, he gives more importance to the local cultural and linguistic diversities and asserts that the politico-administrative system must be re-organized to allow each group to live with its distinctive language, culture and identity. According to Cengiz, a local decentralization process can serve to a promote socioeconomic development on the one hand and the reproduction of local languages and identities on the other. Emphasizing cultural diversity in Turkey and the right to education in the mother tongue, he argues that local languages can be used in education in different regions, such as

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[1] Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview.

[2] TUSKON revised its proposal for a new Constitution prepared in 2007, and presented to the Commission for a New Constitition in 2002. For a detailed interview with Rızanur Meral, president of TUSKON, see: http://ekonomi.haber7.com/ekonomi/haber/850862-meral-turkiye-dunyanin-en-korumasiz-pazari, date of access: Augost 5, 2013.

[3] Alaattin Korkutata, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, January 5, 2012.

[4] Bellice, Personal Interview.

the Zaza language in Dersim, the Laz language in the Black Sea region, and other languages in other regions[1].

It is not only members of the Alevi and Sunni-Muslim economic elite, but also of other economic elite[2], who do not give any remarkable importance to the religious identity support the local decentralization. They generally frame the Kurdish issue(s) as a problem of democracy and underline that the Kurds have already integrated within the entire country, and it is not possible to establish cultural-geography-based political regions in Turkey. A. Gölcük's argument summarizes the common view of those who support the integrationist model very well:

> "For a solution, first, the Kurds must live in Turkey and be integrated into Turkey. They have lived together for centuries. Even when you look at the geographical distribution... the Kurds and Turks live together in all the regions of Turkey, and this process has continued for a long time. Therefore, in my opinion, any regional division will not be a radical solution. From that perspective, the democratic autonomy will not bring a solution to this issue. The important thing is the democratization. This (Kurdish issue) will be solved with the democratization process of Turkey. At that time, you will have your language, your culture, and your education. They will happen in time. But we should see it as a whole; I think it should not be considered at a regional level[3]."

Likewise, M.A. Uzunyaya, an influential businessman in Bingöl, elaborated on the integration of the Kurds to the entire country: "Two-thirds of the Kurds have settled in the west at the moment. In the west, they have become pharmacists, doctors, businessmen, workers, and owners of the properties. The integration has already been achieved. It is not possible to wrest them out of there[4]."

R. Türk, president of DİSİAD, points out that the Kurds must support the integrationist model, although he defines the Kurdish issue as a national problem. He emphasizes that Turkey is a big, powerful country, and that any political model aiming for the separation of the Kurds will not serve their economic interests:

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[1] Cengiz, Personal Interview.

[2] Gölcük, Personal Interview; Uzunyaya, Personal Interview; Nasıroğlu, Personal Interview; Türk, Personal Interview.

[3] Gölcük, Personal Interview.

[4] Uzunyaya, Personal Interview.

"How many provinces are there in Turkey's Kurdistan, and what are the economic levels of these provinces? What are their economic potentials? First, we must consider and take account that...I see Turkey has huge potential with its tourism industry, economic resources, underground and surface resources, and its location between the Asia and Europe. In my opinion, the Kurds can use and take advantage of these resources[1]."

For that reason, Türk argues that the Kurds must support the empowerment of the local governments in accordance with the EU acquis.

Like Alevi and Sunni-Muslim economic elites, secular economic elites underline the relationship between the socioeconomic development and the local decentralization. Discussing the current structure of the development agencies, Türk's criticism is that the agencies are dependent on the central, and are not sufficiently democratic and civilian:

"With its current structure, the development board is a non-functional, useless board; it is totally and only for show. It serves neither the economy nor the administrative structure nor the social structure in any way... If these development agencies that have very modern experts properly depend on regional dynamics, that is to say their dynamics will change; the local dynamics will be empowered; the locality will be strengthened; they will receive a large share of the budget; they will plan, and have a principal role in the planning... The existing development agencies have no one[2]."

As to the issue of linguistic rights, there is not a consensus among the secular economic elites, though they highlight that the Kurdish issue results from the policies of assimilation and denial of the Kurds. O. Nasıroğlu, the president of Batman TSO demands constitutional guarantees for the linguistic freedom[3]. Uzunyaya argues that the learning of the mother tongue as an optional class in the public school is the most realistic solution, and it will improve Turkey's democratic standards. However, he underlines that Kurdish can be used as the language of education[4]. On the contrary, Türk argues that the right to education in the mother tongue is not an indispensable demand for the Kurds in the current circumstances.

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[1] Türk, Personal Interview.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Nasıroğlu, Personal Interview.

[4] Uzunyaya, Personal Interview.

According to Türk, first, the Kurdish language must be learned and used in the daily life; then perhaps the education in the Kurdish language can be claimed[1].

2) Religious groups and local decentralization

The AK Party, the GC and the MGH, which compose the main powerful pro-Islamist front in the Kurdish region, and members of the Alevi Kurdish elite supporting the CHP also propose the empowerment of the local governments as the principal element to solve the Kurdish issue(s). As to linguistic rights, the Kurdish representatives of AK Party support the education in mother tongue, while the others advocate the learning of the mother tongue, but not official education in Kurdish.

The representatives of the TUSKON's local section, which I mentioned above, summarize the GC's ideas about the issues. Apart from the Diyarbakir section, the GC's elite supported the learning of the mother tongue during the interviews. Yet their positions were probably changed after a recent statement of Fethullah Gülen, the dignitary of the community. Gülen underlined that the basic rights and freedom cannot be negotiated and that the right to education in the mother tongue is a condition of being fair for the state[2].

Kurdish representatives of the AK Party advocate local decentralization for the settlement of the Kurdish issue on the one hand and the improvement of democratic standards on the other. Although Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and the central authorities of the AK Party regularly highlight that the right of education in the mother tongue is not on their agenda, Kurdish representatives of the AK Party argue that the government will recognize this right under the proper circumstances. They point out that the AK Party has to take into account the Turkish nationalist sensibilities in the western side of the country; and they need time to solve a decades-long issue. Therefore, they argue, the reform process allowing people to choose Kurdish language classes as an option in public schools must be seen as a step towards the education in their Kurdish mother tongue[3].

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[1] Türk, Personal Interview.

[2] See http://fgulen.com/tr/turk-basininda-fethullah-gulen/fethullah-gulen-hakkinda-haberler/fethullah-gulen-hakkinda-2013-haberleri/36070-anadilde-egitim-adil-olmanin-geregi, Date of access: Augost 06, 2013.

[3] Dengir M. Fırat, Personal Interview, Ankara, November 10, 2012; İhsan Aslan, Personal Interview, Ankara, November 10, 2012; Halit Advan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 30, 2012; Veli Aytaç, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 27, 2012; İhsan Yaşar, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, January 5, 2012; Ziver Özdemir, Personal Interview, Batman, August 6, 2012; Erkan Sözen, Personal Interview,

In this respect, D. M. M. Fırat, and İ. Aslan, two Kurdish deputy presidents of the AK Party, are representative of the opinions of the Kurds who support the party. Fırat contends that "there is not any demand for a Kurdistan, independent, autonomous, or whatever you call it"[1]. Like members of the economic elite, he emphasizes that the integrationist model is better for the Kurds' economic interests: "The Kurds are not unintelligent people. If this country was founded together, the Kurds have the right to live in Istanbul, Antalya and Marmaris. So they live like that today"[2]. Underlining the integration of the Kurds to the entire country, Aslan shares Fırat's argument and points out that a city-based decentralization process is the best solution, emphasizing that the AK Party is trying to solve the issue in a medium term:

"In Turkey, an ethnicity-based separation or political or administrative structure will never be established since the vast majority of the Kurds lives in the west. Whom and where will you carry the people? The right thing is that in each settlement the members of the majority will elect their governors and they will thereby govern themselves. In my opinion, these are the first political demands of the Kurdish opposition. The AK Party is actively trying to solve this issue with a medium-term outlook[3]."

With regard to the education in the mother tongue, Fırat makes a distinction between the native language and the official language. He argues that any attempt to change the language of a community is cultural genocide, according to the UN:

"Turkish is both the official language and native language. Once you are aware of this distinction, the native language is one thing and the official language is another thing. Nobody has objections to the official language. Since there must be a common language, the Kurds do not have any objection to the fact that this language is Turkish. The Kurds also have no objection to either the unitary structure or to the flag. The thing that the Kurds want is for their language not to be banned. Language is not a right; language is a part of being human. When you rip a society's language, prohibit its usage and improvement, I think, this leads you to the cultural genocide that the UN explicitly

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Şanlıurfa, June 6, 2012; Cevdet Çalbay, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 22, 2012; Galip Ensarioğlu, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 6, 2012.

[1] Fırat, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Aslan, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012.

describes. If you assimilate a society by eliminating its language, then you are changing its identity. To me, this is genocide. Therefore, it is not possible to accept it[1]."

According to Aslan, the AK Party refuses the right of education in the mother tongue due to conjonctural reasons, and it just needs time to prepare the western part of the country to solve the issue:

"Its rejection (of the education in mother tongue) is conjonctural, since the people living in the west are slowly become accustomed to the issue. This is because Turkey is not constituted only by the Kurds. The majority is not Kurdish, and the members of the majority have recently become aware of the social and political existence of a society that they have paid little attention to for a long time. The society even does not have a position that recognizes the rightfulness of the Kurds' demands. I think, since the power has the responsibility to govern the entire country, it tries to solve the issue in time without causing problems and new divisions among the society[2]."

Like the representatives of the GC and the AK PARTY, the MGH's elites support the local decentralization and the learning of the mother tongue. F. Aytar, deputy president of the Anatolian Youth Association's Bingöl branch points out that Turkey has not only the Kurdish problem, but rather a fundamental problem of democracy. In this matter, the local decentralization can be useful by guaranteeing the election rights of people. Criticizing the assimilation policies towards the Kurds, Aytar sees the having the learning of the mother as an optional class – rather than a mandatory one – as the best solution under the current circumstances. According to Aytar, the AK Party will not allow the education in Kurdish in a political atmosphere in which the Turkish nationalist sensibility is very high. However, he argues that he does not have any objection to the education in mother tongue. He says that Turkey may be able to use the experience of Kurdish education in Northern Iraq as an example in the future [3].

The CHP-supporting Alevi Kurds constitute the last group, which commonly support the local decentralization process[4]. M. Kurban, the president of the CHP Bingöl branch, emphasizes that the Bingöl CHP branch cannot have a different policy from the CHP's central

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[1] Fırat, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012.

[2] Aslan, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012.

[3] Feyzi Aytar, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 19, 2012.

[4] Kemal Bozkurt, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 30, 2012; Ali A. Güler, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 30, 2012; Mustafa Kurban, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 21, 2012.

policies. He argues that the CHP is a "social democratic party," and it is not a region-based or an ethnicity-based political party. Referring to the ECLSG, he contends that the CHP supports the local decentralization reforms and aims to subscribe to European standards to solve the Kurdish issue. As to linguistic rights, he says, "the CHP's policies are very clear. The official language must be Turkish. However, other languages can be taught and be the subject of optional classes"[1]. In Dersim, the CHP-supporting economic elites[2] have a similar idea about the local decentralization. However, unlike Kurban, they propose education in the mother tongue. According to A. A. Güler, a CHP politician and the former president of Tunceli TSO, the country's common language is Turkish; however, everyone must have the right to education in their mother tongue so as to be able to use their language in daily life[3].

In brief, the Kurdish actors who have already been integrated into the center at the levels of ideas, interests, and institutions advocate a local decentralization reform to solve the Kurdish issue. They commonly see the Kurdish issue as a problem of democracy and multiculturalism, and highlight the realized integration level of the Kurdish society in the entire country. They generally underline the effectiveness and efficiency problems of the centralized public administration system as a noteworthy justification for the need for local decentralization reform. All groups criticize the policies of the assimilation and denial towards the Kurds, and advocate that the Kurdish cultural identity must be protected and re-produced. However, they propose different solutions to achieve these goals. Most of them propose education in their Kurdish mother tongue, while others support the learning of languages other than Turkish as an optional class in the public schools.

B - Federation

Federation is the second proposal for institutional forms of a prospective Kurdish political region. Apart from the leading Kurdish movement, all the national groups claim a federal system based on the Kurdish and Turkish nations. The nationalist wing of the leading Kurdish movement and the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups, such as the KH, the Azadî, and the MZC, are open to finding a federative solution to the Kurdish issue. It is important to underline that apart from the leading Kurdish movement, these national and pro-Islamist

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[1] Kurban, Personal Interview.

[2] Bozkurt, Personal Interview, July 30, 2012; Güler, Personal Interview.

[3] Güler, Personal Interview.

groups have a very limited representative power in Kurdish society. The majority has been divided between the AK Party and the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK.

Unlike the Kurdish groups that support local decentralization, the Kurdish groups supporting federation contend that the Kurdish (Kurdistan) issue is not a problem of democracy and multiculturalism, but is rather a national liberation problem. Therefore, the Kurdish identity can be neither reduced to a cultural identity nor to a sub-national ethnic identity, as has occurred with other groups. The federation supporters claim that sovereignty must be shared between the Kurdish and Turkish nations and that the federative politico-administrative system is the best way to guarantee equality between the two nations. As to linguistic rights, they propose a multi-linguistic political and administrative system in which the Kurdish language will be the first official language in the federal Kurdish (or Kurdistan) region. Additionally, they propose the minority rights including the rights to education in mother tongue for the Kurds where they constitute the minority across the country.

1) National groups and federation

The HAK-PAR, KADEP, ÖSP, and TDŞK publicly advocate a federal Kurdish region in Turkey[1]. For instance, Ş. Elçi, the president of KADEP, contends that the federation is the best politico-administrative system for multi-ethnic, multi-colored and multi-lingual countries. Elçi highlights that the equality between the Turkish and Kurdish nations can be assured only in a federal system. The autonomous model is based on "the delegation of authority", while the federal model depends on "power sharing". That is to say, in the autonomous model, he argues that power belongs to the dominant nation and the central parliament; the central government can give and take back autonomous rights when it wants. However, in the federal model, the power is shared in an equal way among nations and one side cannot usurp any right of the other[2].

B. Bozyel, the president of the HAK-PAR has a similar perspective concerning the federal model. He asserts that the Kurds are a nation, making up the majority in Kurdistan, and that they have right to govern their geography. Comparing the Kurds in Turkey with the Kurds in Iraq, Iran and Syria, Bozyel points out that the geographical distribution of the Kurds in entire country does not constitute an obstacle to establish a federal Kurdish region,

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[1] Bayram Bozyel, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 21, 2011; Şerafettin Elçi, Personal Interview, Ankara, November 10, 2012; Sinan Çiftyürek, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 26, 2012; Halim İpek, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 25, 2012.

[2] Elçi, Personal Interview.

as the integrationists argue. He highlights that more than one million Kurds live in Baghdad; yet it has not constituted an obstacle for the establishment of the IKR. According to the president, the Kurds still are majority in Kurdistan. The population corresponds to the geography, and a federal Kurdish region can be founded. He states that a local decentralization reform can be a step toward the transformation of the political and administrative systems toward a federal system, though it cannot provide an ultimate solution to the Kurdish issue in Turkey[1].

Additionally, both Bozyel and Elçi highlight that the federal system is not based on cultural homogeneity, and that in each federal region linguistic or ethnic/national minorities will have cultural and political rights[2]. According to Bozyel, in the western part of the country where the Kurds constitute a minority group, the minority rights such as the education in mother tongue can be guaranteed. On the other hand, Elçi points out that the Kurds who live in the western part of the country will have cultural autonomy, while the minorities in the federal Kurdistan region will have minority rights, such as the education in the mother tongue, and will be in positions of political power. Likewise, according to Elçi, linguistic differences such as those between Zaza-speaking Kurds and Kurmancî-speaking Kurds will lead to a degree of self-governance, with the different groups using their languages where they constitute the majority in the federal Kurdistan region.

Like KADEP and HAK-PAR, the ÖSP that is recently established by Marxist Kurds, advocates a federal Kurdistan region in Turkey. Noting that it is more appropriate to say "Kurdistan issue" rather than "Kurdish issue," S. Çiftyürek, president of the ÖSP, emphasizes that Kurdistan issue is essentially a state issue. According to the ÖSP, Çiftyürek argues, the Kurdistan issue is a problem of self-determination and the Kurds have the self-determination right like other nations. They advocate a federal system based on equal conditions for the Kurdish and Turkish nations[3].

H. İpek, spokesman for the TDŞK, highlights that the Kurds are a nation and they have the rights that all the nations have. However, unlike the KADEP, the HAK-PAR, and the ÖSP, the TDŞK advocates a referendum that will propose three options to the Kurds:

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[1] Bozyel, Personal Interview.

[2] Ibid.; Elçi, Personal Interview.

[3] Çiftyürek, Personal Interview.

autonomy, federation, and independence[1]. Criticizing the leading Kurdish movement's proposal to establish 20-25 politico-administrative regions across the country, he underlines that in prospective autonomous or federal models, the unity of the Kurdish region is the aim. However, like Bozyel, İpek emphasizes that Turkey's full recognition of the ECLSG can open the way for the solution of many problems[2].

Although the leading Kurdish movement commonly criticizes the nation-state and nationalism and advocates democratic autonomy as an alternative to the nation-state, the nationalist wing within the movement supports the federal model[3]. For instance, M. Zümrüt, a member of the BDP council, and of the committee for the party's relations with other political parties, social movements and NGOs, defines democratic autonomy as a project aiming to build "an autonomous region in 'the north Kurdistan,'" which will have a regional parliament, a regional government, elected governors, a separate police force and the like[4]. Although he names it as an autonomous region, in reality he defines a federal region. In this regard, O. Baydemir, the mayor of the Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality and one of the chief figures of the leading Kurdish movement, summarizes the nationalist wing's idea about the federal model very well:

> "In my opinion, the Kurdistan cause and the Kurdistan issue will be ultimately solved when the geography of Kurdistan achieves a political and administrative status. We can call it a state system ("eyalet sistemi" in Turkish) or a regional government... The entire geography of Kurdistan must be united under a single regional government; this regional government must be a part of Turkey... I think the BDP and the entire mechanism that constitutes the BDP agrees and is pleased with this proposal. Yet the BDP cannot explicitly advocate that due to legislative limits and public pressure. Here arises the question of the freedom of expression. When we say state ('eyalet' in Turkish) or federation, they raise hell about it[5]."

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[1] İpek, Personal Interview.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Osman Baydemir, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, March 6, 2012; Mazhar Zümrüt, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 18, 2011; Mehmet Şahin, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 14, 2011; İzzet Özdemir, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 19, 2012.

[4] Zümrüt, Personal Interview, November 18, 2011.

[5] Baydemir, Personal Interview.

Referring to the leading Kurdish movement's critiques about the nation-state and nationalism, Baydemir contends that it does not matter whether one criticizes nationalism or not; the issue is essentially a national issue - a problem of Kurdish or Kurdistan nation. Yet like Bozyel, Elçi and İpek, Baydemir highlights that a local decentralization reform can be a step toward a federal Kurdish region. However, he argues that even in a prospective Kurdistan region, all the towns and cities in the region must be governed in accordance with the ECLSG, and the cultural pluralism must be assured in each local level:

> "In each administrative region, each province must be also autonomous. All the cities and towns must be governed in accordance with the ECLSG. Yet this autonomy must also exist at the regional level. Certainly the language issue, the culture issue and demands must be solved both at provincial and regional autonomy levels... For instance, in Siirt province or Mardin province, four languages are used in daily life: Arabic, Syriac, Kurdish and Turkish. Therefore, Mardin provincial assembly, or Mardin municipal assembly ... must deliver its services in four official languages. Yet Turkey's national parliament does not have to deliver the services in four languages. For instance, *the Kurdistan national parliament* must be able to deliver its services in the all languages that used in the Kurdistan geography[1]."

2) Pro-Islamist groups and federation

Unlike the national groups, the pro-Islamist groups are more fragmented with regard to the institutional forms of a prospective Kurdish region. However, like the national groups, most Kurdish pro-Islamist groups highlight "the nationhood" of the Kurds and advocate a politico-administrative system that will guarantee the equality between the Kurds and Turks, and the Kurds' self-government rights within an Islamic frame. While the Kurdish representatives of the AK Party, the GC and the MGH frame the Kurdish issue as a problem of democracy and multiculturalism, underlining the integration of the Kurds and Turks, the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups such as the KH, the Azadî and the MZC emphasize the equality between the Kurdish and Turkish nations and demand the equality of the two nations. However, the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups are more ambiguous than the national groups concerning the institutional forms of a prospective Kurdish region.

The KH, for instance, defends the idea that nationalism is anti-Islamic and that a political system cannot be established based on ethnic or national identity. Referring to the

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[1] Ibid.

22nd verse of *Ar-Room* (*The Romans/The Byzantines: 30*) and the 13th verse of *Al-Hujraat* (*The Private Apartments: 49*), the KH advocates equality between the Kurdish and Turkish nations. However, the community does not specify any particular model for the solution of the Kurdish issue[1]. In its manifesto[2], the KH advocates that Kurdish must be the second official language; and for the resolution of "the Kurdish and Kurdistan issue" … "from constitutional citizenship, autonomy, and federation to independence, all alternatives ensuring the human and Islamic (*Islami* in Turkish) rights of the Kurdish people must be discussed".

Representatives of the HÜDA-PAR, some pro-Islamist NGOs, and journals that were established by the former members of the KH, advocate a pro-Islamist multi-national politico-administrative system that will guarantee equality among or between nations in accordance with Islam[3]. H. Yılmaz, former president of the Mustazaf-Der and current president of HÜDA-PAR, argues that the Turkish state must leave the nation-state structure based on the ethnic perspective of Turkism ("Türkçülük" in Turkish) and must be re-organized on the basis of the citizenship. He points out that the Muslim and ethnic qualities of the Kurds must be constitutionally guaranteed, and that the Kurds must have the same position of Turks and Arabs within the "Ummet of Islam". Besides, in Turkey the Kurdish language must be gradually recognized as a second official language alongside Turkish[4].

N. Özdemir, a deputy president of HÜDA-PAR and editor-in-chief of Kurdish pro-Islamist journal of "Banga heq ji Kelha Amed" (*Voice of Justice from the Diyarbakır Castle* in English), underlines that power must be shared among nations within a union of pro-Islamic republics/states for an ultimate solution:

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[1] Hüseyin Yılmaz, Cemal Tutar, and Mehmet Varol, *Hizbullah Ana Davası: Savunmalar* (İstanbul: Dua Yayıncılık, 2011), 140–7. Fort the KH's idea about the Kurdish issue, the nationalim, the westernization of the Turkey, see also: Abdülkadir Turan, *Kürtlerde İslami Kimliğin Gelişmesi* (İstanbul: Dua Yayıncılık, 2011); İ. Bagasi, *Kendi Dilinden Hizbullah* (Unknown Publisher, 2004), http://www.huseynisevda.net.

[2] The manifesto is accessible at following website: www.huseynisevda.biz, Date of access: Fabruary 23, 2013.

[3] Hüseyin Yılmaz, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 25, 2012; Necat Özdemir, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 27, 2012; İsa Aydın, Personal Interview, Batman, September 6, 2012; Hamdullah Tasalı, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 22, 2012; Cemal Çınar, Personal Interview, İstanbul, August 21, 2012.

[4] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012.

"A unitarian state cannot continue. In fact, when Bediüzzaman[1] was talking about the Islamic unity, he says 'Cemahîr û Muttefîkahî Îslamiye' - that is to say 'United Islamic Republics'. He has not talked about a single republic, but republics. What does it mean? When a republic is established for each nation, then one must be established for the Kurdish nation. And these republics will unite and establish a unity like the EU[2]."

He emphasizes, however, that the minimum conditions for the settlement of the issue must include the following: "Equality must be guaranteed between nations and religions"[3]. That is to say, if the there is education in Turkish, there must be education in Kurdish; if there is a budget for Turks, there must be a budget for Kurds; if there is a Turkish administration, then there must be a Kurdish administration[4]. It is evident that the KH does not openly support the federation. Yet, they advocate the nationhood of the Kurds, the equality between the Kurdish nation and the Turkish nation, and the recognition of the Kurdish language as the second official language, which constitutes the basic political demands of the national groups supporting federation.

The Azadî advocates similar rights that constitute the basis for federation. However, the Azadî emphasizes the idea of Kurdistan more than the KH does. The movement defines itself as an Islamic organization of Kurdistan, and the issue of Kurdistan constitutes the principal concern in its political agenda. S. Zilan argues that they see the issue as a territorial problem. Given that the Kurds are a nation, Zilan contends, they have the same right to self-determination that every nation has. According to the Azadî, under the current conditions they highlight three basic demands for the settlement of the issue: self-government; the recognition of the Kurdish language as an official language; and education in the mother tongue[5].

As to the MZC, they underline the importance of the Kurds' right to self-government. M. Kaya summarizes the community's perspective with regard to the issue:

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[1] Bediüzzaman Saidê Kurdî or Said Nursî (1878 – March 23, 1960), commonly known as Bediüzzaman (Badi' al-Zaman), which means "The Wonder of the Age" was a Kurdish Sunni Muslim theologian who wrote the Risale-i Nur Collection, a body of Qur'anic commentary exceeding six thousand pages. Nursi inspired several Nur Communities including the GC that has played a vital role in the revival of Islam in Turkey. Several Kurdish pro-Islamist communities including the KH and the MZC see Bediuzzaman's ideas as their principal interpretation of Islam and Qur'an.

[2] Özdemir, Personal Interview, April 27, 2012.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Sıtkı Zilan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 30, 2012.

"The Kurds must understand the importance of self-government. When I occasionally discuss and talk about this issue, I take the example of other nations to understand our situation. A Chinese person, for instance, does not say, 'I cannot govern myself, let's call the Arabs, let the Arabs govern me,' or 'Let the Americans make a decision about China's economy or lay out China's future'. It is contradictory to the nature of a Chinese person. Yet an ordinary Kurd does not see it as contradictory. The Arabs, the Turks and the Persians have shaped our political fate[1]."

Like the KH, the MZC does not specify any particular model. The community argues that they do not specify any particular model in order to keep the politico-administrative aspect of the issue on the negotiation table. However, they emphasize that there must be equality between the Kurds and Turks; and the political sovereignty must be shared between the two nations according to Islamic references. Therefore, any prospective reform for the settlement of the issue, according to the MZC, must include not only administrative, but also political decentralization at local or regional levels. Kaya presents the community's perspective in regard to the point:

"The model that we envisage for the settlement of the Kurdish issue is to share sovereignty. Certainly, cultural freedom must be guaranteed, education in the mother tongue must be provided, the original names of the settlements must be given back. Yet for the settlement of the issue, the political status of the groups like the Kurds, which has a societal culture, must be determined. They must take place in the state establishment as an essential component with their distinctive culture, political organizations, and political status. In this regard, the concept that we put forward is the administrative and political local decentralization (*idari ve siyasi adem-i merkezileşme* in Turkish). Only an administrative decentralization or the empowerment of the local government cannot be a solution for the settlement of such an issue since this also is an identity problem. You cannot solve this issue only with the decentralization of administrative responsibilities. You must integrate the cultural existence in the politics or guarantee the representation of cultural existences in the public sphere. The only way to do this is the political local decentralization[2]."

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[1] Muhittin Kaya, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 17, 2012.

[2] Ibid.

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Alongside the above-mentioned groups, several members of the economic elite who are located in Diyarbakır[1] and opinion leaders of some pro-Islamist groups[2] have similar arguments. Although they do not specify any particular politico-administrative model, they consider Kurdishness to be a category like Turkishness, Arabness or Persianness, and underline the share of the sovereignty guaranteeing equality between Kurds and Turks.

In brief, apart from the dominant wing of the leading Kurdish movement, all the national groups, as well as the majority of autonomous Kurdish pro-Islamists who broke off from the Turkish pro-Islamist after the 1990s, support the federative model. A small group of the Kurdish economic elite also advocates this model. However, these groups have limited representation in the Kurdish political scene and are not the principal opposition to the groups supporting the local decentralization model. The real challenging group is the leading Kurdish movement that advocates the democratic autonomy proposing a kind of regional decentralization or autonomy. This is the topic of the next section.

C - Regionalization or democratic autonomy

The BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK has been proposing the democratic autonomy project as an alternative to or rival of the local decentralization and the federation since 2007. However, there is not a single democratic autonomy project. The dominant official description of the project proposes regional decentralization reform that will restructure the politico-administrative system on the basis of the 20-25 autonomous regions across the country. Yet different representatives of the leading Kurdish movement at the local and central levels define the democratic autonomy project in different ways, which vary from a local decentralization project to an autonomous or a federal Kurdistan region.

Although democratic autonomy has been described differently by the leading Kurdish movement's representatives, they commonly underline two major demands as the principal pillars of the project: the self-government right to Kurds and collective cultural rights, including bilingual or multilingual public administration services and education in the Kurdish mother tongue.

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[1] Aslan, Personal Interview, March 5, 2012; Yeşil, Personal Interview; Dündar, Personal Interview; Kaya, Personal Interview, February 5, 2012; Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview.

[2] Özdemir, Personal Interview, May 19, 2012; M. ***** Koç, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 18, 2011; Nurettin Bozkurt, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 19, 2011; Rauf Çiçek, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 23, 2011; Feyzi Güzelsoy, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 28, 2011; Selim Değerli, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 24, 2011.

The BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK presents democratic autonomy as a radical democracy project alternative to the nation-state and nationalism. According to the movement any prospective local administrative decentralization excluding the identity issue or reducing it to the liberal individual cultural rights (such as the learning of the mother tongue) will not satisfy the Kurds' demands. On the other hand, the federation, the movement argues, is a nationalist model that aims to build a Kurdish nation-state. Alongside the anti-nationalist discourse, the local linguistic, cultural and religious plurality of the Kurdish region constitutes a second important reason to justify the democratic autonomy project. Finally, the movement's representatives also underline the efficiency and effectiveness of the public politico-administrative system of the country, which has a population of more than 75 million and a huge geography. Yet other national groups criticize that the democratic autonomy project will damage the integrity of the Kurdish region and divide it, which is a part of a country that has been already divided among four states (Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria).

1) Democratic autonomy: an open-ended project?

The democratic autonomy project was for the first time declared as a regional political and administrative decentralization project for the settlement of the Kurdish issue in the second general congress of the DTK, held on November 8, 2007 in Ankara. The leading Kurdish movement proposed to re-organize Turkey's public politico-administrative system on the basis of the 20-25 autonomous regions that will be established by grouping 81 provinces[1]. In this politico-administrative system,

> "a regional assembly which assumes power through elections similar to those of the county councils is established. The regional assembly embraces those neighbor provinces, which are in close socio-cultural and economic proximity. This regional assembly assumes responsibility in the fields of service such as education, health, culture, social services, agriculture, marine affairs, industry, construction, telecommunications, social security, women, youth and sports. The central government supervises foreign affairs, finance and defense services. Security and judicial services are jointly conducted by the central and regional government. The central supervision of these services is mutually determined by both governments[2]."

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[1] Democratic Society Party, *Democratic Solution to the Kurdish Question* (Ankara: Democratic Society Party, 2008), 52.

[2] Ibid., 51.

However, after this proposal, several documents concerning the democratic autonomy project were circulated and different representatives of the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK made different statements about the project, which has caused uncertainty on the scale (81 provinces, 7, 15, 20 or 25 regions in Turkey or a single Kurdish region) and base (cultural-ethnic, socioeconomic or geographic boundaries) of the decentralization, and responsibility and power of new autonomous politico-administrative entities[1].

Indeed, during the field research, I observed that different representatives of the leading Kurdish movement at local and central levels have a different perception about the democratic autonomy project. As I mentioned above, the nationalist wing of the leading movement describes the project as a similar model to the federation[2] or a model that can be a step towards a federal Kurdistan region[3]. Similarly, some describe democratic autonomy as a model aiming to establish an autonomous Kurdistan region[4]. For instance, M. Polat, the former president of the BDP Tunceli branch, points out that the majority of BDP supporters see democratic autonomy as a political project aiming to establish an autonomous Kurdistan region including "all the cities of the Turkey's Kurdistan," although the first project declared by A. Öcalan was proposing to re-organize the entire politico-administrative system of Turkey on the basis of the 25 autonomous regions[5].

Likewise, S. Temel, the deputy mayor of Batman city, describes democratic autonomy as a united autonomous Kurdish region:

> "Democratic autonomy is a whole, and covers the entire region inhabited predominantly by the Kurds and Kurdish cities. It cannot be separated within itself. Perhaps something like this may have caused confusion. In Turkey there are 26 development agencies for socioeconomic development. We are not concerned wit h that. We are concerned with regional government. When we say democratic autonomy, that is to say, there will be a regional government; it will have a council; it will be a single united region; local

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[1] For a very good critique of the different versions of the democratic autonomy project, see: Mesut Yeğen, *Son Kürt İsyanı* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), 93–100.

[2] Zümrüt, Personal Interview, November 18, 2011.

[3] Baydemir, Personal Interview; Özdemir, Personal Interview, May 19, 2012.

[4] Serhat Temel, Personal Interview, Batman, August 6, 2012; Halis Yurtsever, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 21, 2012; Zübeyde Zümrüt, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 5, 2012; Hüsamettin Zeydanlıoğlu, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 14, 2012; Celalettin Birtane, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 31, 2012; Murat Polat, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 28, 2012.

[5] Polat, Personal Interview.

representatives will represent themselves in this council; this council will be dependent on Ankara, associated with Ankara[1]."

Unlike Temel, D. Çelik, the BDP deputy of Muş and a DTK Coordination Committee member, underlines the 26 second-level regions established for the socioeconomic development planning (for each region a development agency has been established) during Turkey's accession process to the EU as a basis for the democratic autonomy. He argues that there are 26 hydrobasins wherein several civilizations have arisen. He claims that these 26 regions established during the EU integration process can be a politico-administrative basis for the democratic autonomy project, although the government has not established these regions for this purpose[2].

Some representatives of the leading Kurdish movement describe the democratic autonomy project as a province-based local decentralization process. G. Kışanak, the co-president of BDP, presents the democratic autonomy as a local decentralization project. Noting that the project aims to establish 20-25 regions, she argues that the project will empower local governments, which is *sine qua non* of the democracy[3]. Likewise, A. Sarı, a businessman in Bingöl who was previously a senior politician in the leading Kurdish political party, contends that the democratic autonomy is a simplified project aiming to empower local governments[4]. Like Sarı, C. Birtane, a businessman in Diyarbakır who also was a senior politician in the leading Kurdish movement in different positions, points out that a province-based local decentralization system is better if the Turkish and Kurdish societies assimilate a high-level democracy. Discussing the democratic autonomy project, he advocates a city-state as the best model for a democratic system:

> "Today, in the Scandinavian countries, for example, when you go to Stockholm, there is no state, but a municipality. The municipality covers everything... Now, if you empower the local government with these authorities and responsibilities at the provincial level, then the problem will be resolved. In the 21st century, people look for a qualified life and a public service facilitating the life. It is the priority of people[5]."

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[1] Temel, Personal Interview.

[2] Demir Çelik, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, October 5, 2012.

[3] Gülten Kışanak, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 17, 2011.

[4] Adnan Sarı, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 19, 2012.

[5] Birtane, Personal Interview.

Although these diverse approaches allowed most of the economic, religious and political elites apart from the leading Kurdish movement to criticize the democratic autonomy project as an uncertain and undefined project, S. Demirtaş, the co-president of BDP argues that the issue of scale does not constitute the key pillar of the project:

"The government that we describe has two pillars. The first is the autonomy contract, which defines the relation between the center government and the local government, as well as the power sharing between them. This constitutes the autonomous part (of the project). Second, the democratic part is about which kind of government this autonomous region will constitute within itself. To describe the relationship between the center and the local is not enough for democracy. For that reason, we propose different governmental mechanisms, including urban councils, civil people councils, village councils, village communes, cooperatives for economic purposes, regional councils, de facto elected people's councils, etc… The autonomy contract between the center and the local that we talk about can be for a united Kurdistan region, or for several autonomous regions within Kurdistan, or autonomous governments at provincial level. It makes no difference. In our opinion, the important thing is the relation with the center; the bigness or smallness of the region does not change the essence of the project. The important thing is the democratic part of the project[1]."

2) Self-government and collective cultural rights of Kurds

Despite different approaches to the issue of scale, there is a consensus that democratic autonomy (be it at the provincial, sub-regional or Kurdistan regional levels) must comprise the self-government rights of the Kurdish nation and collective cultural rights, including bilingual or multilingual public administration services and education in the Kurdish mother tongue. The above-mentioned discussion shows that the leading Kurdish movement is open to negotiate the scale of the autonomy. Yet, any prospective model, according to the movement, must guarantee the Kurds' right to govern themselves and the reproduction of the Kurdish cultural identity and its transfer to the new generations[2].

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[1] Selahattin Demirtaş, Personal Interview, Ankara, November 10, 2012.

[2] Ibid.; Kışanak, Personal Interview; Çelik, Personal Interview; Baydemir, Personal Interview; Seydi Fırat, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, October 5, 2012; Zümrüt, Personal Interview, November 18, 2011; Zümrüt, Personal Interview, November 5, 2012; Temel, Personal Interview; Abdullah Demirbaş, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 23, 2011; Yurtsever, Personal Interview; Şerafettin Halis, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 30, 2012; Sihem E. Alp, Personal Interview, Mardin, November 6, 2012.

For instance, S. Fırat, a senior member of the PKK since 1979, underlines the issues of self-government and language as two principal aspects of the democratic autonomy project. According to Fırat, the language issue constitutes the primary issue of democratic autonomy; and the Kurds want to educate their children in their own language and use it without any limitation in daily life. The second issue, on the other hand, is to change the centralized state structure on which the nation-stated is based, and to build the self-government of Kurds[1].

Likewise, noting that the Kurds constitute the biggest stateless societal group, Çelik highlights that the Kurds are a nation and that they have some societal and political demands due to being a nation. For that reason, Çelik argues, the solution of the Kurdish issue must include a political status guaranteeing the production of Kurdish identity, language and culture. Given the cultural identity in the Kurdish region, Çelik points out that cultural autonomy must be guaranteed in the Kurdish geography alongside administrative autonomy, while regions like Istanbul may have only economic autonomy[2].

In this respect, Kışanak underlines three pillars of democratic autonomy by referring to the political status that Kurds had during the Ottoman Empire:

"For the solution of the Kurdish issue, first the identity must be recognized; second, the cultural rights must correspond to needs in daily life; third, the participating in the government. These three points correspond the system where in Kurds had before the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. That system was including the three. The autonomous system (of Ottoman) was including the power of self-government, cultural rights and right to relate to the central government with their own identity[3]."

3) Democracy, pluralism and efficiency of public administration

The leading Kurdish movement points out three main reasons to justify the democratic autonomy project: 1) anti-nationalist discourse, 2) the linguistic, cultural and religious diversity of the Kurds and the Kurdish region, and 3) the efficiency issue of the public administration system.

First, the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK advocates democratic autonomy as an alternative to a cultural or ethnic geography-based federation or a Kurdish nation-state. As I mentioned

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[1] Fırat, Personal Interview, October 5, 2012.

[2] Çelik, Personal Interview.

[3] Kışanak, Personal Interview.

earlier, the leading Kurdish movement conceptualizes "the democratic nation" as a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nationhood to change the existing monolithic Turkish Sunni-Muslim nation-state[1]. The movement describes the democratic autonomy as an "anti-nationalist" project to alter the destructive nationalism and nation-state that is based on the uniform and highly centralized structure, leaving no space in any way for the others, and having arisen over the enormous social, cultural, linguistic and political ruins[2].

Çelik argues that the nation-state that is a result of the capitalism does not provide any liberty and justice to the humankind. For that reason, they, as the leading Kurdish movement, do not advocate a Kurdish nation-state, but aim to build a new multi-ethnic, multi-religious democratic nationhood:

"We do not say a nation based on the ethnicity, but a democratic nation based on free and equal citizenship in a peaceful and democratic country. I mean, we do not advocate a new Kurdish nation and state hierarchy based on the Kurdish nation, but we aim to transform the existing relationship (between the Kurds and the Turkish state) to a more democratic one, to make the state more sensitive to the democracy, and to democratize the state in order to alter the existing centralized strict state structure. Federation is a little different. Throughout the history of Turkey, not only the Kurds, but perhaps 60-70% of the nations of Kurdistan[3], dispersed into the western part of Turkey and different corners of the world. Federation is more geographical, and based on ethnic identity. Thus, political models separating ethnic identities and isolating them in a particular region have already become outdated. The city wherein the largest Kurdish population lives is Istanbul. Now, there are neither historical, nor political, nor ethical, nor economic conditions to displace the 3-4 million Kurds who live in Istanbul. For that reason, a (political) mechanism in which every group can govern themselves where they live is legitimate, democratic, and politically more rational and logical. Therefore, we think that the federation or states/provinces (*eyalet* in Turkish) system do not have the necessary conditions to implement[4]."

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[1] Abdullah Öcalan, *Beşinci Kitap: Kürt Sorunu Ve Demokratik Ulus Çözümü* (İstanbul: Mezopotamya Yayınları, 2012).

[2] Fırat, Personal Interview, October 5, 2012.

[3] By using nations of Kurdistan, "Kurdistan halkları" in Turkish, he refers the Armenian, Suryani, Araps, and the like who constitute the prencipal national minorities in Kurdish region.

[4] Çelik, Personal Interview.

Alongside the anti-nationalist discourse, the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK underlines the plurality of the Kurdish society and the Kurdish region to justify the democratic autonomy project. The linguistic and religious diversity (as demonstrated by Kurmancî- and Zazakî-speaking Kurds and Sunni-Muslim, Alevi and Yezîdî Kurds, respectively) of Kurdish society and the existence of different national minorities such as Arabs and Armenians in the Kurdish region constitute the main arguments of the leading Kurdish movement to rationalize the decentralized regional autonomy in Turkey. Demirtaş, the co-president of the BDP, clearly states that even a prospective Kurdistan state must not be a nation-state, but a state based on autonomous regions:

"Even if a united autonomous Kurdistan region is established, it must be separated into autonomous regions. Dersim is an autonomous region, Amed (Diyarbakır) is an autonomous region, Erzincan, Iğdır, Ardahan, and Hakkari are all autonomous regions. These regions must be ruled by their autonomous governments... In each region where the nation-state does not exist or is weak, autonomy must be guaranteed for each group. Even if an independent Kurdistan is established, it must not be a nation-state, but rather a Kurdistan based on autonomous regions[1]."

In cities like Bingöl and Dersim, where Zaza-speaking and religious (Sunni-Muslim or Alevi) Kurds constitute the majority, the leading Kurdish movement's discourse on the local autonomy has a significant resonance. For instance, H. Yurtsever, the president of the BDP Bingöl section, argues that the people must establish their own government in their own region to preside over matters of education, culture, identity, economy and health, and to protect their distinctive way of life. Underlining the importance of local differences to justify the democratic autonomy project, Yurtsever accentuates that they will use both Kurmancî and Dimilkî (Zazakî) dialects of the Kurdish language in Diyarbakır, Bingöl and Dersim, where the Kurmancî and Zazakî speaking Kurds live together[2].

Similarly, representatives of the leading Kurdish movement in Dersim describe democratic autonomy as a project that will guarantee autonomy for Dersim where the Alevi-Kirmanc Kurds live[3]. M. Polat describes democratic autonomy as a multi-level autonomy project including an autonomous Dersim region:

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[1] Demirtaş, Personal Interview.

[2] Yurtsever, Personal Interview.

[3] Halis, Personal Interview; Polat, Personal Interview.

"The people's perception of democratic autonomy here is as follows: the 'Autonomous Dersim Region' had a good resonance here. Dersim must be autonomous with its own mother tongue, religion, and culture. When we discuss or describe democratic autonomy, we understand that Dersim will be autonomous within the autonomous (Kurdistan) region; that is to say, it will be in the autonomous region, yet with its distinctive Alevi-Kızılbaş identity and autonomy[1]."

Ş. Halis, former deputy and current president of the BDP Dersim section, also defines the democratic autonomy as a project allowing diverse groups to protect their distinctive sociological qualities:

"Although we say democratic autonomous Kurdistan, both a united Kurdistan and a Kurdistan divided into five regions are possible. Yet, the latter is more credible since Kurdistan does not have homogeneity. For instance, in this country, there are Alevi people and people from Dersim who do not see themselves as Kurdish, but rather as Alevi-Kirmanc. In the Kurdish geography, there are Turks, ethnic minorities and religious groups. As it is democratic autonomy, the autonomy must be democratic within itself, and the democratic rights must be recognized for all groups regardless of their quantity. When it will be like that, it is not any problem that it will be four or five (sub-)regions... Koçgiri-Dersim's sociology is not totally coherent with Kurdish sociology. Although they speak the same language, the democratic autonomy must be established in accordance with sociological differences in the region. If you try to design a society that does not have a sociological integrity according to a single sociological entity, then, the assimilation is put into use. That means a Kurdish version of the Turkish assimilation - Turkification efforts that we have been subject to so far - will occur, which we cannot accept after so much price, endeavor, and efforts[2]."

Finally, the leading Kurdish movement questions the effectiveness and efficiency issues of the public administration system to justify the democratic autonomy. For instance, Çelik argues that a country like Turkey, which has a large population and geography, and diverse cultures, cannot be governed from a single center. He points out that there are 26 hydro-basins in Turkey; and a politico-administrative system giving the political, administrative and financial autonomy to these hydro-basins will allow democratization on the one hand and

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[1] Polat, Personal Interview.

[2] Halis, Personal Interview.

socioeconomic development on the other[1]. Similarly, Temel contends that no one is satisfied and pleased from the strictly centralized state structure, which prevents not only the solution of the ethnic problems, but also other problems regarding freedom of expression, freedom of religion, and basic social and economic needs[2]. Likewise, discussing democratic autonomy and the solution of the Kurdish issue, Birtane contends that people seek a better quality of life and public administration that facilitates the daily life; according to Birtane, a decentralized public administration system is the best solution to provide this demand[3].

Co-president Kışanak underlines the functionality and efficiency issues as the second important justification alongside the democratization. She argues that democratic autonomy will allow people of each region to govern their economic, social and cultural affairs in accordance with their own needs:

"Regardless the existence of the Kurdish issue, Turkey needs a new political and administrative system, if the democracy has a place in its perspective... Second, we propose the democratic autonomy for all of Turkey to prevent the misunderstanding that 'the Kurds demand privileges for themselves'. We propose to establish regional governments and to let these regions find proper solutions and improve administrative measures for their own social, cultural, and economic affairs, and to design proper public services for their own needs[4]."

It is important to note that while the issues of functionality and efficiency of the politico-administrative system constitute a remarkable reason for democratic autonomy, the leading Kurdish movement gives more importance to democratization and the share of sovereignty between the center and local-regional authorities to justify democratic autonomy. In this regard, Demirtaş argues that unlike the AK Party, the leading Kurdish movement gives priority to democratization and public participation in the politico-administrative system rather than the functionality and efficiency issues[5].

To summarize, the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK advocates democratic autonomy, which proposes to re-structure Turkey's politico-administrative system on the basis of the autonomy

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[1] Çelik, Personal Interview.

[2] Temel, Personal Interview.

[3] Birtane, Personal Interview.

[4] Kışanak, Personal Interview.

[5] Demirtaş, Personal Interview.

of 20-25 non-ethnic geographical regions. Yet the movement keeps the democratic autonomy project open-ended, including different proposals, which range from a local decentralization project to a federal Kurdistan region. This flexibility of the project allows different groups within the movement to interpret the project in accordance with their political stances. While the movement is open to discuss the scale of autonomy, self-government and collective cultural rights of Kurds constitute their two principal political demands. Unlike the national groups supporting the federation and criticizing the nation-state and nationalism, the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK explicitly declares that it does not advocate a Kurdish nation-state, but rather democracy based on a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nationhood. Aside from this, the leading Kurdish movement highlights the linguistic and religious plurality of Kurdish society and the existence of the national minorities, as well as issues of functionality and efficiency within the politico-administrative system to justify the democratic autonomy project.

Before concluding the chapter, I must note that there are a few elites who advocate an independent Kurdistan state. Yet, they are generally political intellectual, and do not represent any political group. It is noteworthy that the existing Kurdish political groups exclude an independence state option to guarantee the Kurds' economic, social, political, and cultural rights.

Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the conflict over the institutional form of a prospective Kurdish political region. There are basically three political proposals that the different Kurdish groups advocate for the solution of the Kurdish or Kurdistan issue: local decentralization, federation, and democratic autonomy or regional decentralization. The majority of the economic elite and religious (both Sunni-Muslim and Alevi) groups support local decentralization. A small portion of the economic elite (mostly those who live in Diyarbakır, the de facto center of the Kurdish national movement in Turkey) and the pro-Islamist groups that separated from their Turkish counterparts advocate the equality and the share of sovereignty between the Turkish and Kurdish nations. Although most of them do not specify any politico-administrative model, their political demands correspond to the federative model. Apart from the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK, all the national groups also support the federation as a minimum condition for the Kurds to maintain their existence as a nation. Finally, the leading Kurdish movement advocates democratic autonomy, which can be seen as a regional autonomy on the basis of the 20-25 non-ethnic geographic regions. While the

movement presents democratic autonomy as an open-ended project varying from local decentralization to federation, it sees the Kurds as a nation and highlights the self-government and collective cultural rights of Kurds as two indispensable political demands.

Given the discussions on the conflicts of identity (Kurd, Muslim or Alevi) and interest (nation or class) in the previous two chapters, I can underline two principal points to conclude this chapter. First, the ideas (social imaginaries in particular) of the Kurdish groups frame their political proposal for the settlement of the Kurdish issue(s). Kurdish groups that give more importance to their economic or/and religious identities commonly do not see Kurdishness a basis for the politico-administrative system and propose the integrationist model (local decentralization). Kurdish groups that privilege the Kurdish national identity mostly highlight the nationhood of the Kurds and seek a politico-administrative system that will guarantee the reproduction of the Kurdish national identity and the Kurds' self-government rights.

The majority of the economic and religious blocs do not see Kurdishness as a political identity, but rather as a cultural identity. They give priority to their economic and religious identity over the cultural (national) identity, and support local decentralization. However, there is a small group of economic elites and several pro-Islamist groups like the KH, the MZC, and the Azadî, which place notable significance on their national identity alongside their economic and religious identity, and advocate the share of sovereignty to ensure equality between the Kurdish and Turkish nations. On the contrary, the national groups do not see Kurdishness as a cultural identity, but rather as a political identity, and underline the self-government and cultural rights of Kurds. Unlike the other national groups, the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK criticizes the nation-state and the nationalism and proposes to build a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nationhood. Despite its conceptual confusion and inconsistency, the leading Kurdish movement advocates an integrationist model that will allow for the reproduction of a Kurdish national identity. The social imaginary of the movement is based not only on national liberation, but also on social liberation (the socialism, and the gender equality), and has a remarkable influence on the formation of its political proposal.

Second, the Kurdish groups' proposals are dependent on the historically constructed context - in other words, on the multiple networks of the formal and informal institutions. The context in which the Kurdish groups have been interacting shapes their ideas and political proposal. The decades-long dependence and center-periphery relationship both between the Kurdish economic elite and the center, and Kurdish pro-Islamist and Alevi Kurdish groups

and their Turkish counterparts have a direct influence on the formation of their ideas and integrationist political proposal.

Similarly, the leading Kurdish movement's decades-long left-wing heritage and comprehension of national liberation - not in terms of ethnicity and identity, but rather in terms of ideology and class - mostly frame and confine its ongoing discourse about the nation-state, nationalism and political proposals for the settlement of the Kurdish issue. The movement does not reduce the political proposal to the reproduction of the Kurdish cultural or national identity, but rather enlarges it in a way to include social liberation. Therefore, through the democratic autonomy project, the movement aims to reproduce Kurdish national identity by advocating self-government and collective cultural rights on the one hand while trying to avoid a Kurdish version of the Turkish nationalism on the other. To do this, it describes democratic autonomy first as a politico-administrative re-structuring process based on 20-25 non-ethnic geographical regions, which will allow the coexistence of cultural/ethnic/national and religious/sectarian differences in entire Turkey; and second as a project not only aiming to restructure the relationship between the center and regions, but also proposing collectivist mechanisms and advocating communal values on which the autonomous regions will be established. I can therefore argue that the ongoing conflict on the institutional form of a prospective Kurdish political region is framed and confined by the path that has been established so far.

In this and two previous chapters, I discussed the main conflict among the Kurdish national, economic and religious bloc. In the next chapter, I analyze the negotiations among the Kurdish groups.

Introduction

The Kurdish groups have made noteworthy efforts to negotiate and build consensus on Kurdish issue(s) for the last decade, despite their serious conflicts of identity and interests, and the wide variations in their proposals for the institutional form of a prospective Kurdish political region. However, there has been only limited progress in achieving constant negotiation mechanisms for establishing a common cognitive frame, shared interests, and accepted rules regarding the Kurdish issue.

Focusing on the negotiations among different Kurdish groups, in this chapter I focus on the rule and the possible stability of the shared rules, which are set up at the end of the negotiations. So, the core aspect of this chapter is the rule and the capacity for the different actors to collectively act by recognizing each other, sharing interest, and collectively learning, despite a strong path dependency.

To this extent, the theoretical axes of this chapter is (1) the regulation, (2) the three blocs and different groups that compose the blocs, and (3) the negotiation among them. The regulation means how different groups set accepted social balance and rules by sharing common views and interests. The axis of the three blocs and their groups allows us to distinguish how the three Kurdish blocs act on the one side and differences within the each bloc on the other. Finally, the negotiations refer to a dialogue or bargain between and/or among the Kurdish groups, intended to reach a common cognitive frame, shared interests and accepted rules on proper courses of action. The empirical task is to analyze the position of each actor (representation and interests), the strategies and conflicts, and the different steps of the negotiations leading to a stable or provisory balance of powers thanks to a continuous learning process.

Several arguments are developed in this chapter. First, the historically constructed context, shaped by the controversial and/cooperative relations between and among the Kurdish groups in the 1980 and 1990s, has largely determined negotiations among the Kurdish groups since the 2000s. Therefore, there is a case of path dependency in terms of the influence of the past over the present.

Second, the context in which the Kurdish groups interact has changed for the last decade due to Europeanization, as well as the leading Kurdish movement's transition into

local government in 1999 and the establishment of the IKR in 2003. This radical change of context has provided the Kurdish groups with a new frame at the levels of ideas, interests and institutions, which has facilitated the negotiation among them. As a result, the public political space has been enlarged and become more pluralist due to the establishment and/or resurgence of new socio-political organizations.

Third, the cognitive frame surrounding the Kurdish or Kurdistan issue is the most important dynamic in determining the ongoing negotiation and cooperation between and among the Kurdish groups. There is a very limited relationship between the Kurdish groups who propose the integrationist model, defining the Kurdish issue as a problem of democracy and multi-culturalism, and those who advocate regional autonomy or federation, defining the issue as a national problem beyond democracy.

Fourth, despite the significant advance toward a common cognitive frame and shared interests concerning the Kurdish issue among most Kurdish groups, they have achieved very limited advancement to build stable accepted rules and constant negotiation mechanisms. The lack of the mixed and umbrella organizations limits the negotiation among the Kurdish groups. Hence, there is also a path dependency case in terms of "lock-in" effects due to past conflicts. In this respect, the Turkish state's intervention into the negotiations between and among the Kurdish groups must be noted as a key dynamic in the consensus-building process of the Kurds.

Finally, I argue that there is an institutional and ideational path dependence case with regard to the leading Kurdish movement's negotiation with other Kurdish groups. Despite the change of class composition of its societal support, its recent discourse about the radical democracy and some efforts at the practical level, the leading Kurdish movement is not sufficiently inclusive of the other groups, which has so far yielded a very limited sphere for others to reproduce their ideas and values, and to represent their distinctive interests. Its left-wing discourse inherited from the past, which causes the conflicts of identity and interests, confines its relations with the pro-Islamist groups and the economic elites. Additionally, its centralized organizational structure and dominance as a single political movement in the Kurdish region from the 1980s until the 2000s has had a very negative influence on its capacity to work with others.

To analyze the rule and the capacity of different Kurdish groups to build collective regulations, I first discuss the negotiation between the leading Kurdish movement and the

other national groups such as the HAK-PAR, KADEP, the ÖSP, and TDŞK. This part is composed by the examination of the influence of the past conflict between the PKK and other national groups in the 1980s, two failed attempts to build a regional Kurdish assembly, and the learning process that has resulted in some recent efforts to build a national unity since 2010.

Second, I examine the constant direct negotiation between the leading Kurdish movement and the economic elite. The Kurdish local government experience, the changed context, the existing direct negotiation mechanism between the two groups, their shared material and normative interests, and cognitive frame surrounding the Kurdish issue and a peaceful solution constitute this part.

Finally, I concentrate on indirect negotiation between the leading Kurdish movement and the pro-Islamist groups. In this part I respectively discuss the trust problem due to bloody conflicts in the 1990s between the KH and both the PKK and some pro-Islamist groups, divisions among the pro-Islamist groups, and the lack of the political pluralism as three basic dynamics confining the capacity of the relevant actors to build shared interests and accepted rules. This part also emphasizes the positive role of the intermediary organizations and groups and the learning process of the Kurdish groups and some remarks about the negotiation between the leading Kurdish movement and the Kurdish Alevis.

A - Negotiations among the national groups

There is not a common political proposal for the settlement of the Kurdish issue among the Kurdish national groups in Turkey, although they define the issue as a national liberation issue. As mentioned in the chapter five, the leading Kurdish movement represented by the BDP predominantly advocates a democratic autonomy, a kind of regional autonomy, while other national groups demand a federal Kurdish region in Turkey. However, these different proposals do not constitute the sole issue among the national groups. The leading Kurdish movement has problematic relations with other national groups such as the HAK-PAR, KADEP, ÖSP and TDŞK. The cooperation between the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK and other national groups was very limited until the last general election held on June 11, 2011. The bloody conflicts between the PKK and predecessors of the current national groups before the coup d'état of September 12, 1982 has continued to confine their ongoing negotiations.

In this part, I illustrate that despite the trust problem due to internal conflict before the 1980s, the national groups have achieved the establishment of provisional rule for several

years thanks to the learning process for the last decade. Despite the shadow of the past and the trust problem among the national groups, there have been remarkable efforts to build a national unity since the 2000s. The Tev-Kurd and the DTK must be noted as the two principal initiatives for the Kurdish national unity in Turkey. Although these initiatives were mostly failed, the national groups still try to build a general consensus: a common cognitive frame, shared interests, and accepted rules for a political Kurdish or Kurdistan region. Since 2010 there has been remarkable advancement for negotiating and building consensus in the frame of the Kurdish issue(s) thanks to the mutual learning process.

1) Shadow of the past and the trust problem

The Kurdish political scene has become more pluralist since the beginning of the 2000s. Thanks to the enlargement of the political space in the Kurdish region, new political groups emerged after the 2000s. These groups were mostly established by former members of the Kurdish political movements, which were largely eliminated by the Turkish security forces during the coup d'état of September 1982[1]. After a two-decades-long political silence[2], these groups emerged into the Kurdish political space as alternatives to the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK, which has been dominating the Kurdish political space for decades.

Despite the relatively common cognitive frame about the Kurdish issue, the cooperation between the leading Kurdish movement and other national groups remained very limited until the last few years due to the ongoing influence of the bloody conflicts between the PKK and other Kurdish national movements in the 1980s. Before the coup d'état of September 12, 1980, nearly several hundreds Kurdish political activists lost their lives due to internal conflict[3]. Apart from the PKK that initiated an armed guerrilla struggle against the Turkish state in 1984, all the Kurdish national movements were eliminated from the political space by

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[1] Halim İpek, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 25, 2012; Bayram Bozyel, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 21, 2011; Sinan Çiftyürek, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 26, 2012.

[2] Fuat Önen, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 5, 2012.

[3] Hamit Bozarslan, "Between Integration, Autonomization and Radicalization. Hamit Bozarslan on the Kurdish Movement and the Turkish Left," *European Journal of Turkish Studies (Online)* no. 14 (2012), http://ejts.revues.org/4663; Martin van Bruinessen, "Between Guerrilla War and Political Murder: The Workers' Party of Kurdistan," *Middle East Report* no. 153 (1988): 40–50; Hamit Bozarslan, "Kürd Milliyetçiliği Ve Kürt Hareketi (1898-2000)," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce - Cilt 4: Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil, 3rd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2008), 860.

the state "despotic power"[1] in the Kurdish region. While the PKK has gradually built its power in the Kurdish region so far, the others could not maintain their political existence, and either disappeared or had to leave the country in the 1980s[2]. Some national groups' chief figures have argued that the PKK as an armed organization was established by the Turkish state to undermine the Kurdish national liberation struggle so far[3].

The leading Kurdish movement that was the single political and social movement challenging the Turkish state power in the Kurdish region until the 2000s ignored other national groups (and pro-Islamists) until the recent years[4]. On the other side, as F. Önen, an influential communist intellectual, and Ş. Elçi, the president of the KADEP highlight, most of the national groups tired to implement their political power in the Kurdish region on the basis of the critiques - and even the hostility- of the leading Kurdish movement[5]. For instance, during the establishment of the Tev-Kurd, the cooperation with the BDP-DTK was one of the principal controversial issues among members of the movement. The majority decided not to cooperate with the leading Kurdish movement.

Moreover, the Turkish state intervened in the negotiations among the national groups and tried to use other national groups to undermine the influence of the leading Kurdish movement on Kurdish society. For instance, while more than 8,000 political activists were arrested between the 2009 and 2012 under the KCK police operations, K. Burkay, the former president of the PSK, was allowed to come back to Turkey in 2011, after a 30-year exile in Europe. Burkay, an ardent advocate of the argument that the PKK was established by the Turkish national intelligence organization to undermine the Kurdish national liberation struggle, was welcomed by a minister[6] and elected as the new president of the HAK-PAR in the fifth congress of the party held on November 4, 2012. In brief, the Turkish state's

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[1] Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," *European Journal of Sociology* 25 (1984): 185–213.

[2] Bozarslan, "Kürd Milliyetçiliği Ve Kürt Hareketi (1898-2000)," 861.

[3] İbrahim Güçlü, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 26, 2012; Dengir M. Fırat, Personal Interview, Ankara, November 10, 2012.

[4] Çiftyürek, Personal Interview; Muhittin Batmanlı, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 28, 2012; Sıtkı Zilan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 14, 2011.

[5] Önen, Personal Interview; Şerafettin Elçi, Personal Interview, Ankara, November 10, 2012.

[6] Demir Çelik, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, October 5, 2012.

intervention has aggravated the trust problem between the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK and other Kurdish national groups[1].

2) Two failed attempts: Tev-Kurd and DTK

Despite the shadow of the past over the relations among the Kurdish national groups, we have witnessed two noticeable attempts to establish the collective regulations for the Kurdish national unity since the 2000s. In 2005, the national groups - apart from the leading Kurdish movement and some national and pro-Islamist intellectuals - established the Tev-Kurd. Önen, who points out that the Tev-Kurd was established to build a representative institution for national unity, underlines three distinctive qualities of the movement: first, at the idea level, it was a pluralist organization, in which the communists, liberals, pro-Islamists and nationalists could work together; second, it was open to organizational and individual membership – that is to say, both the existence organizations and individuals could be member of the Tev-Kurd; finally, it was not predicated on the legality that the Turkish state defines, but the legitimacy. Therefore, it opened a new space where the legal and illegal Kurdish groups could come together[2].

The Tev-Kurd decided to stop its activities until its members achieve to complete the internal debates and build a general consensus about its objectives, internal mechanisms, organizational forms and relations with other groups, with the leading Kurdish movement in particular in the last congress held in May 2012. Three principal reasons for the failure of the Tev-Kurd can be underlined[3]. First, a national unity cannot be achieved by excluding the leading Kurdish movement, which is the most powerful Kurdish group representing a massive population. Second, in connection with this, they intended to advance on the basis of the failure of the leading Kurdish movement, which led some members of the movement to cooperate with the Turkish state. Finally, alongside hostility toward the leading Kurdish movement[4], they could not achieve a consensus on whether the Tev-Kurd must organize itself at the different levels and create news organizations or remain just a representative assembly of the existing groups[5].

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[1] Ibid.; Seydi Fırat, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, October 5, 2012.

[2] Önen, Personal Interview.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Fırat, Personal Interview, October 5, 2012; Çelik, Personal Interview.

[5] Önen, Personal Interview.

Although it ultimately failed, Tev-Kurd was remarkable in its goal to unite different Kurdish groups under a single organization. As some members of the organizations highlight, this experience led its members and the leading Kurdish movement to learn from each other and make efforts toward achieving national unity[1]. At this point, I must note the DTP experience, which was initiated in 2007 by the leading Kurdish movement to build a *de facto* regional assembly representing the Kurds with its political, cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity[2]. Like the Tev-Kurd, the DTK has failed and remained an umbrella organization of different groups, organizations, or social movements that work in different areas, yet which are affiliated with the leading Kurdish movement.

Although the leading Kurdish movement has invited most of the national groups (as well as pro-Islamist groups and members of the economic elite), the majority has refused to take place in the DTK. The national groups recognized the relative change of the leading Kurdish movement to cooperate with the others, yet, like the economic elites and pro-Islamist groups, they criticize the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK for not being sufficiently inclusive and merely using the other groups to create an image of being pluralist, democratic and representative movement[3]. For instance, S. Çiftyürek, the president of the ÖSP highlight that the leading Kurdish movement gives a strategic importance to its relations with the Turkish left-wing groups, whereas it meets occasionally with the other Kurdish national groups[4]. Indeed, M. Dekak, a senior journalist working for years in the region at different Kurdish news agencies and newspapers, emphasizes that even the names of the party and the regional assembly that the leading Kurdish movement established are the same: the *Democratic Society* Party (DTP) and the *Democratic Society* Congress (DTK)[5]. In light of these critiques, the representatives of the leading Kurdish movement mostly accept that they could not be adequately inclusive, while underlining the negative attitudes of the other groups and the necessity of the mutual efforts toward establishing unity[6].

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[1] Ibid.; Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011; Sıtkı Zilan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 30, 2012; Batmanlı, Personal Interview.

[2] Çelik, Personal Interview.

[3] İpek, Personal Interview; Bozyel, Personal Interview; Elçi, Personal Interview; Çiftyürek, Personal Interview.

[4] Çiftyürek, Personal Interview.

[5] Maşallah Dekak, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, August 5, 2012.

[6] Gülten Kışanak, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 17, 2011; Osman Baydemir, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, March 6, 2012; Çelik, Personal Interview; Fırat, Personal Interview, October 5, 2012; Serhat Temel, Personal Interview, Batman, August 6, 2012.

3) Learning process: Recent efforts for the cooperation

The national groups have continued to make efforts toward Kurdish unity in Turkey. Although these experiences have largely failed, they have functioned as a learning process for the all sides so far. Indeed, the leading Kurdish movement and the other national groups have met and negotiated to build national unity for the last three years. In this regard, cooperation among the national groups, including the BDP, KADEP, HAK-PAR, ÖSP and TDŞK, during the general election held on June 11, 2011 was the first importance attempt towards the national unity. Ş. Elçi and A. Tan were elected under the BDP election list. It is important to note that this cooperation has a remarkable influence on the Kurds and the BDP increased its deputy number to 36, up from 22 in the previous election.

The "Kurdistan Conference in Turkey" held on September 17-18, 2011 in Diyarbakır must be noted as the second critical attempt made toward establishing Kurdish national unity. Most of the national groups such as the BDP-DTK, HAK-PAR, ÖSP, TDŞK, Tev-Kurd, and some pro-Islamist groups such as the MZC, DFDG, Mazlum-Der, some leading NGOs in the region, and members of the economic elite participated in this conference. The participants achieved a consensus that "the people and religious groups constitute a distinctive nation in Kurdistan" and "have self-government rights"; for that reason, "Turkey's society must be respectful to their right to have a political status"[1]. In the conference declaration, they also highlighted the importance of the building of national unity among the Kurdish national groups given the diversity and plurality in Kurdistan.

"The Unity Meeting with Collective Mind" held in 2012 was the third turning point for Kurdish national unity. In this meeting, the principal national groups (and some pro-Islamist organizations and members of the economic elite), negotiated the current situation of the Kurds and reached consensus on the four points: (1) the identity of the Kurdish people must be constitutionally recognized and the Kurdish language must be an official language; (2) the right to education in the Kurdish language must be ensured; (3) a political status for the Kurdish people, including the right to self-government must be recognized, and (4) the right to organize must be recognized in accordance with the universal standards, and the political parties and organizations having the name of Kurd and Kurdistan must be legalized[2].

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[1] For the conference declaration, see: http://www.baweri.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=906, date of access: October 6, 2013.

[2] İpek, Personal Interview.

Finally, the "North Kurdistan Unity and Solution Conference, held on the June 16-17, 2013, must be mentioned. This conference was organized as a part of the ongoing negotiation process between the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK and the Turkish state. The political groups that participated in "the Kurdistan Conference in Turkey" constituted the principal participants of this conference. However, there were remarkable differences in this conference. Unlike the previous, the participants first highlighted the self-determination right of the Kurds and underlined that the Kurdish issue cannot be absolutely solved unless a political status (the autonomy, federation or independence) is recognized for Kurdistan. Second, the conference delegation decided to form a constant "Committee of Unity and Solution" to represent the Conference, to follow its decisions and to be an effective organization during the peace and negotiation process in Turkey. It is also important to note that this committee has a mission to represent the Kurdish political groups of Turkey in "the First Kurdistan National Congress", which was delayed several times and will be probably, be held in 2014.

It is important to note that this cooperation among the national groups does not constitute a stable rule, but rather a recently established provisory rule in the frame of the peace process between the leading Kurdish movement and the Turkish state. There exist remarkable differences at the levels of ideas, interests and institutions.

B - Direct negotiation between national groups and economic elite

The relationship between the national groups and economic elites constitute the second important dynamic that determines the formation of the collective regulation in the Kurdish region. There has been a constant relationship between the national groups and the Kurdish economic elite for the last decade. Apart from the ÖSP, which claims to represent the lower class in Kurdistan, the Kurdish national groups point out that they have a permanent relationship with the Kurdish economic elite[1]. Organizations such as city councils and development agencies create opportunities for the representatives of both national groups - and the leading Kurdish movement in particular - and the economic elite to establish and maintain direct relations, and negotiate over the Kurdish issue(s). Indeed, most of the members of the economic elite with whom I conducted interviews have confirmed that they have a direct relationship with different Kurdish political parties – and the leading Kurdish movement in particular – alongside the government.

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[1] Çiftyürek, Personal Interview; İpek, Personal Interview; Bozyel, Personal Interview; Elçi, Personal Interview; Kışanak, Personal Interview; Mazhar Zümrüt, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 18, 2011.

In this part, I argue that the Kurdish local government experience, the existing mixed institutions, the common cognitive frame and shared material and normative interests regarding a peaceful and democratic solution to the Kurdish issue by disarmament of the PKK, and the individual experiences of the Kurdish economic elite's members are the four principal dynamics that have made possible the negotiation between the Kurdish economic elite and national groups. Yet, they have not achieved the establishment of a general consensus on the Kurdish issue and constant negotiation mechanisms so far. I discuss each dynamic below.

1) Kurdish local government experience and the changed context

Since 1999, the leading Kurdish movement has become an important local power derived by the local governments. It won for the first time the municipal elections in 38 cities, including five province centers and one metropolitan city in 1999. In this election, it succeeded in becoming the first party in the provincial assemblies of eight provinces. In the local election of 2004, the movement won the municipal election in the 66 cities, including four province centers and one metropolitan city, and the election of the provincial assembly in the six provinces. This achievement continued in the local election held on 2009, when the movement increased the number of municipalities that it rules to the 98, including eight province centers and one metropolitan municipality. The number of provincial assemblies in which it became the leading party increased to 10 in this election[1]. Therefore, the movement has had a constant presence in local government in the noteworthy part of the Kurdish region since 1999.

Despite the administrative and financial tutelage of the center over the local governments, this presence has allowed the leading Kurdish movement to build its power in the economic, social, cultural and political life in a large part of the Kurdish political region. It is important to note that this presence has also promoted the establishment of multiple networks of the pro-Kurdish NGOs working in different areas such as human rights, cultural and linguistic rights, women's rights, and socioeconomic inequalities and development. This has caused the Turkish government to evaluate these multiple networks as a base of the parallel state in the Kurdish region, and initiate a large police operation against the leading Kurdish movement, arresting over 8,000 political activists after labeling them as KCK

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[1] The results of the local election (since 1963) and general election (since 1935) held in Turkey are accessible at following address: www.yerelsecim.com, date of access: September 17, 2013.

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operatives since 2009[1]. Most of them are members and managers of the BDP and pro-Kurdish NGOs. It was not surprising that the municipalities in which the leading Kurdish movement was ruling were one main target of the KCK operation. Over 30 mayors, including the mayors of Şırnak, Batman, Siirt, Hakkari, Iğdır and Van have been arrested since 2009[2].

The local governments that the leading Kurdish movement has ruled for the last decade have become a negotiation area between the movement and the economic elite. Thanks to the local governments, the leading Kurdish movement and the Kurdish economic elite worked together to build some accepted rules among themselves, in spite of the controversial relationship they have had in the past due to ideational differences and controversial interests. As O. Baydemir states:

"(The local government presence of the leading Kurdish movement) changed their opposed position. Any capitalist group does not explicitly oppose the Kurds' demands for freedom. It made them more vigilant in their relations with the state. ... Second, when we were young, we were thinking that capitalists were equal to compradors. This idea was reflected in the poems and marches. For the first time, local governments made the Kurdish opposition and the bourgeoisie or capitalists in Kurdistan gather and come in contact with one another. In the elections held in 1999 and 2004, most capitalist groups in this city made efforts to prevent the BDP's conquest. In contrast, in the local election of 2009, most of them supported the BDP. ... Therefore, the capitalist groups' fears from the Kurdish opposition, I do not say that were finished, yet mostly overcome[3]."

Similarly, A. Demirbaş, the mayor of Sur Municipality in Diyarbakır, argues that the economic elite must cooperate with both the AK Party government and the BDP to guarantee their economic success. He argues that the interest groups gather around the political powers to establish common economic interests. According to the mayor the Kurdish economic elite does not give any importance to the political identity of the power, but rather mainly exploit the local and central powers, even abuse their political relations, to win tenders and develop their economic interests[4].

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[1] Çelik, Personal Interview.

[2] For the names of the mayors who have been arrested, see: http://www.sendika.org/2012/04/tutuklu-bdpli-belediye-baskani-sayisi-31e-ulasti/, date of access: September 18, 2013.

[3] Baydemir, Personal Interview.

[4] Abdullah Demirbaş, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 23, 2011.

2) Existing direct negotiation mechanisms

At this point, I must note the role of existing organizations within the economic elite – such as businessmen's associations and chambers of trade and industries – as well as mixed organizations – such as city council and development agencies – alongside the local governments. These organizations have facilitated direct relations and negotiations between the economic elite and the leading Kurdish movement.

For instance, in Diyarbakır city council, most of the economic elite's institutions, including the DİSİAD, GÜNSİAD, DESOB and DTSO, work with the pro-Kurdish NGOs and the first-level and metropolitan municipalities. In this council, the presidents of the above-mentioned institutions and the mayors and deputies of the province can discuss the economic, social, cultural or political problems of the city, negotiate, and make some decisions to solve them. Indeed, the representatives of the above-mentioned four institutions take place on the board of directors of the city council, which has 35 members[1].

Likewise, in the development agencies, most presidents of the economic elite's institutions cooperate with the mayors, alongside the governors. For instance, in the Karacadağ Development Agency that was established for the Diyarbakır and Şanlıurfa provinces, the two presidents of the chambers of commerce and trade are the only members of the administrative board, alongside two mayors, two governors and two presidents of the provincial assemblies. Additionally, alongside the representatives of the public institutions in the two provinces, the presidents or representatives of the businessmen's associations, the chambers of the trade and industry, the commodity exchange markets, and other economic elite's institutions have places on the development committee[2].

Indeed, while I was conducting field research, I observed that most members of the economic elite were directly related to the chief figures of the leading Kurdish movement[3]. For instance, Ş. İ. Bedirhanoğlu and R. Türk, the presidents of the GÜNSİAD and DİSİAD,

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[1] For more information about the Diyarbakır City Council, see: http://www.yg21.com/, date of access: September 18, 2013.

[2] For more information about the Karacadağ Development Agency, see: www.karacadag.org.tr, date of access: September 18, 2013.

[3] İhsan Ogurlu, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, October 5, 2012; Burç Baysal, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, October 5, 2012; Mehmet Kaya, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, February 5, 2012; Mehmet Aslan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, March 5, 2012; Raif Türk, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 26, 2011; Ş. İsmail Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 27, 2011; Beşir Yılmaz, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 1, 2012; Celalettin Birtane, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 31, 2012; Mahmut Odabaşı, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 5, 2012.

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respectively, said that they negotiated with the BDP representatives to cooperate for making the development agencies more democratic, civilian, and powerful[1]. Likewise, the economic elite participates in meetings, conferences, symposiums and workshops on different aspects of the Kurdish issue, organized by the Kurdish national groups and the leading Kurdish movement in particular, such as the "Kurdistan Conference in Turkey" held in 2011 and the "Unity Meeting with Collective Mind" held in 2012. While doing field research in Diyarbakır, I attended the "Democratic Autonomy Workshop" and the "Economy in the Democratic Autonomy" meeting organized by the DTK. In the workshop, several chief figures of the Kurdish economic elite took place in a limited number of invited people, including the academicians and the representative of the Turkish left-wing political parties. Likewise, the symposium was held with the cooperation of the DESOB and the DTSO, the two principal institutions of the economic elite in the city.

At this point, the DTK experience must be underlined. The permanent relations between the leading Kurdish movement and the economic elite due to the existing institutions have allowed them to negotiate the cooperation under a pro-Kurdish regional umbrella organization. The Kurdish economic elite was one the principal groups invited by the leading Kurdish movement to take part in the DTK[2], which was initially planned as a de facto Kurdish regional parliament, though it did not reach that level. Despite the direct relations and negotiations, most of the economic elite have not attended the DTK, saying that the leading Kurdish movement has not been necessarily democratic, inclusive, and accountable; and that the DTK is not a national platform to negotiate the Kurdish or Kurdistan national issue, but a platform by which the Kurdish movement is attempting to obtain legitimacy, using other Kurdish groups to create a pluralistic and representative image[3]. The representatives of the leading Kurdish movement commonly accept the critiques and highlight that the DTK has not been organized in accordance with its initial ideas or been adequately inclusive[4].

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[1] Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview; Türk, Personal Interview.

[2] Türk, Personal Interview; Baysal, Personal Interview; Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview; Kaya, Personal Interview, February 5, 2012; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, May 1, 2012.

[3] Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, May 1, 2012; Odabaşı, Personal Interview; Ogurlu, Personal Interview; Baysal, Personal Interview; Samed Bilgin, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, October 5, 2012; Birtane, Personal Interview.

[4] Baydemir, Personal Interview; Kışanak, Personal Interview; Zümrüt, Personal Interview; Şerif Camcı, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 28, 2011; Çelik, Personal Interview; Temel, Personal Interview.

3) Peace: A shared interest

Despite their ongoing efforts, the Kurdish national groups and the economic elite have not achieved the establishment of constant and joint institutional structures. However, their similar cognitive frame and shared interests for a peaceful and democratic solution to the Kurdish issue(s) allow both sides to keep up relations and sustain negotiations. All members of the Kurdish economic elite and the representatives of the Kurdish national groups whom I interviewed highlight that the Kurdish issue(s) cannot be solved with policies privileging the security measures. They commonly argue that the decades-long Kurdish conflict must be ended by disarming the PKK, and finding a peaceful and democratic solution to the Kurdish issue(s). While the Kurdish national groups advocates a democratic and peaceful solution to the Kurdish conflict due to their normative interests about the Kurdish/Kurdistan issue, the economic elite supports a peaceful solution to the issue to ensure their existing economic interests and to have new markets in the Kurdish regions both in Iraq and Syria.

The argument of R. Türk, who sees the Turkey a big economic power and a significant source of power for the Kurds, summarizes the position of the Kurdish economic elite: "In an atmosphere of peace, the Kurds will easily have a voice at the highest level in Turkey. But, if these war conditions persist, the conditions to achieve that will gradually deteriorate, and they are already deteriorating[1]."

Indeed, as B. Bozyel confirms, the Kurdish economic elite have taken part in the efforts to settle the issue in a peaceful and democratic way in recent years:

"The middle-class bourgeoisie in the region, which has a running dialog with the region's people and is being influenced by what has taken place, has increasingly become more sensible to the Kurdish issue. They participate in discussions regarding the solution of the Kurdish issue and propose suggestions related to it. ... Depending on the advancement of the Kurdish patriotic movement, they will clarify their stance and take a position on the Kurdish side in the future – here are already some signs of that happening. Additionally, we have had very close dialogs with the businessmen's associations. For instance, they attend the recently organized conferences as associations and groups and generally have a very positive stance for a peaceful and democratic solution of the issue, positioning themselves as a main part of the issue[2]."

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[1] Türk, Personal Interview.

[2] Bozyel, Personal Interview.

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The authorities of the leading Kurdish movement also mostly highlight that the economic elite needs peace to be established for the sake of their economic interests[1]. At this point, analyzing the negotiation process between the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK and the AK Party government since 2003, the Co-president Kışanak argues that their relations with the Kurdish economic elite depend on the solution process. As the peace process advances, the Kurdish economic elite grows closer to the Kurdish movement and develops relations with the movement:

"During the solution process, new balances arise. The idea that 'if this problem is solved and the identity and share of sovereignty aspects of the Kurdish issue are solved, we also need to establish new relations with newly emerged authority', promotes a rapprochement between us. Things that we experienced in 2006, 2007 and partially 2008, were relatively something like that. There was a solution on the horizon. ... It was not due to the fact that they have national quality and claim their national identity, but rather was due to this policy of balance. It was the result of the capitalist groups' approach, which underlines the importance of building relations with all political powers. Then, it seemed that there was a rapprochement between the Kurdish economic elite and the leading Kurdish movement. Yet for the last year, a new conflict and tension has started, the solution has become foggier on the horizon and it does not seem that it is likely to be found in the near future. It even seems that more distance may have come between us[2]."

Underlining the left-wing quality of the leading Kurdish movement and the necessity of social policies one the one hand, Kışanak points out that if the movement can cooperate with the economic elite toward solving the socioeconomic development issues of the region, the distance between them can be closed in the solution process:

"One of the major aspects of the Kurdish issue is regional disparity, which is certainly a result of its character. The capitalist groups can play an important role in the elimination of this regional economic disparity. If we – as the political actors that undertook a mission for the solution of the Kurdish issue – can open such an area (to the capitalists) we have the chance to close this distance. That is to say, if we develop a policy that opens an area to the capitalist groups, gives them a role, rather than tries to give them a

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[1] Kışanak, Personal Interview; Baydemir, Personal Interview; Zümrüt, Personal Interview; Altan Tan, Personal Interview, Ankara, October 10, 2012; Çelik, Personal Interview.

[2] Kışanak, Personal Interview.

national character, a policy that motivates them with national goals or transforms them into a national capitalist groups ... - an effort like that does not have a mean or a response in the current reality of the world - ; perhaps an opportunity of cooperation can emerge, and a rapprochement can happen in this area. And, this is a policy of the solution process. If the Kurdish issue takes the path of solution, it would be possible to cooperate with the capitalist groups ... in such a solution process[1]."

Likewise, Baydemir contends that the Kurdish economic elite can play a significant role in the construction of the Kurdish region. Yet, unlike Kışanak, the mayor underlines that the movement's anti-capitalist discourse constitutes a grave obstacle against its cooperation with the Kurdish economic elite[2]. In this regard, A. Tan, the pro-Islamist intellectual, elected within the list of the BDP in the last election held in 2011, agrees with Baydemir. Yet he argues that the economic elite wants to a peaceful solution to the Kurdish issue not for the sake of the Kurdish national struggle, but their own economic interests in both the Kurdish regions of Turkey and Syria:

"The (Kurdish) region recently started to be integrated in the liberal market. The region now has more advantages than other parts of Turkey due to the construction of the irrigation canals and highways, Turkey's new relations with Middle Eastern countries, and Turkey's attention turning towards the Middle East. Now, the win rate is better in the region than in the west. Therefore, they want a political solution to be achieved in the region. Tomorrow, Qamişlo[3] will be re-constructed, Aleppo will be re-constructed[4]."

4) Economic elite and their normative interests

Alongside the above-mentioned three dynamics, finally, the personal experience of the members of the economic elite must be highlighted. These experiences facilitate the negotiation between them and the Kurdish national groups. Although most of the Kurdish political groups see the economic elite as "self-seeking,"[5] "stability-seeking,"[1] and "devoid of

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Baydemir, Personal Interview.

[3] Qamişlo, or "Qamishly" in English, is the de facto capital of the Kurdish region in Syria.

[4] Tan, Personal Interview.

[5] Zeydanlıoğlu, Personal Interview; Demirbaş, Personal Interview; Bozyel, Personal Interview; Kışanak, Personal Interview; Çiftyürek, Personal Interview; Önen, Personal Interview; Baydemir, Personal Interview; Temel, Personal Interview; Elçi, Personal Interview.

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any national identity,"[2] as mentioned in the previous chapters (see the fifth chapter in particular), the members of the economic elites mostly advocate the rights of education in the mother tongue and of self-government (at least with a local decentralization process) by criticizing both the highly centralized politico-administrative system and the AK Party's monolithic language policy.

The economic elite's behaviors cannot be reduced to economic interests. The members of the Kurdish economic elite are not simply seen as "self-seeking" and "devoid of any national identity," but rather as actors that interact in a socially, economically and politically constructed context, in which their cognitive frames, interest, and rules are constructed. Indeed, analyzing the positions of the Kurdish economic elite's members, it is evident that the essence of their behaviors cannot simply be reduced to the material interests. Like other Kurdish groups, they have not only material interests, but also normative interests; in other words, their interests are constructed in a normative context.

In this regard, I must underline three principal dynamics that influence the normative interests of the Kurdish economic elite – dynamics which do not correspond or even conflict with the economic elite's material or economic interests. These are: the institutional context in which the economic elite's members live; the effects of the Kurdish conflict on the members of the economic elite and their families; and the individual political experiences of the economic elite's members.

As S. Demirtaş underlines, the institutional context in which the economic elite's member live, and contends that the sense of denied and suppressed Kurdishness includes all the Kurds, including the Kurdish economic elite. This feeling has influenced the economic elite to take a position regarding the Kurdish issue:

"People can be poor or rich, yet their sense of denied and suppressed Kurdishness is not shaped in accordance with the money in their pocket. Those who are very rich, those who are very poor, those who are unemployed, the all feel this emotion. This is certainly a reality. Hence, the members of the economic elite are also occasionally trying to raise their voices during periods when the risk is reduced; to express themselves in all areas that they do not see risky[3]."

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[1] Zeydanlıoğlu, Personal Interview; Baydemir, Personal Interview; Temel, Personal Interview.

[2] Zeydanlıoğlu, Personal Interview; Kışanak, Personal Interview; Önen, Personal Interview.

[3] Selahattin Demirtaş, Personal Interview, Ankara, October 11, 2012.

Similarly, Ş. Camcı, the secretary-general of the *Sarmaşık* – one of the most important associations working on the poverty and sustainable development in Diyarbakır – and a former politician working at different positions in the leading Kurdish movement, highlights the effects of the Kurdish conflict on the members of the economic elite, and argues that they are sensitive to the Kurdish issue. This sensitivity can be a basis for cooperation between the economic elite and the Kurdish leading movement, he argues as "(The economic elite) have suffered so much, paid the price from their family circle, their family. They do not live in the aerospace[1]."

In addition to the influence of the context, as S. Çiftyürek, the president of the ÖSP, emphasizes, the individual political experiences of the members of the Kurdish economic elite have a remarkable importance for their ability to negotiate with the Kurdish national groups. Çiftyürek singles out the Kurdish capitalists groups and argues that they have already mostly integrated into the Turkish capitalist groups. Yet the members of the Kurdish economic elite who mostly live in the Kurdish region were initially the members of some Kurdish political movement before becoming capitalists:

"When we say Kurdish capitalists, we talk about two groups. First, we can say the capitalists having Kurdish origin...Perhaps they constitute 30% of the capitalist groups in Turkey. In the near feature, they will also say that they are Kurdish. They have already started to say that in Istanbul, for instance. Yet, are they national capitalists? They aren't. Second, there is another group, which had taken part in the A, B, or C progressive, patriotic and democratic movements, and then prospered during the process of transition from agriculture to industry, yet has revealed more clearly its Kurdish quality with the development of the national democratic movement in the last 10-15 years. These groups are both around the BDP and within the AK Party[2]."

Indeed, R. Türk, the president of the DİSİAD, was a journalist and Diyarbakır representative of the *Özgür Gündem*, the main pro-Kurdish journal in 1990s, when many Kurdish intellectuals and journalists were killed[3]. Likewise, H. İpek, the spokesperson of the

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[1] Camcı, Personal Interview.

[2] Çiftyürek, Personal Interview.

[3] More than 30 employees of the newspaper, including Kurdish intellectual Musa Anter, were killed and its headquarters in Istanbul was bombed in 1990s. *Press*, a 2010 drama film directed by Sedat Yılmaz, tells the story of six employees at the Diyarbakır office of the Özgür Gündem in 1990s, the full version of the movie is accessible at following address: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stQ-x1EwEHQ, date of access: September 20, 2013.

TDŞK, points out that they have permanent relations with the institutions of the Kurdish economic elite like the GÜNSİAD, and that some of their friends are in the board of directors in these institutions. These individual experiences of certain members of the economic elite sometimes allow them to act as facilitators between different Kurdish national groups. For instance, the president of the GÜNSİAD offered to the chief figures of the DTK to act as a mediator between them and various Kurdish national groups during the establishment of the DTK[1].

To conclude this part, we can highlight four dynamics that facilitate direct relations and negotiations between the Kurdish economic elite and Kurdish national groups. First, the leading Kurdish movement has arisen as the second-most important power alongside the central state power due to its rule over the local governments in Kurdish cities since 1999. Second, the existence of some mechanisms such as city councils, development agencies, local governments, and different chambers of the economic elite have allowed the two sides to have direct relations and negotiate different aspects of the Kurdish issues. Third, the economic elite and the national groups, including the leading Kurdish movement, have a similar cognitive frame and shared interests for a peaceful and democratic solution to the Kurdish issue(s).

Finally, individual causes must be highlighted. The economic elite's behaviors cannot be reduced to mere economic interests. Some members of the elite, including the leader figures[2], have shared normative interests with the national groups with regard to the Kurdish issue(s). The dual power structure in the Kurdish region based on the central state and the leading Kurdish movement has created a grave obstacle standing in the way of the ability of the Kurdish national groups and the economic elite to establish collective regulation, despite constant relations between the national groups and economic elite, the shared material and normative interests about the Kurdish issue.

C - Indirect negotiation between the national and religious groups

The relations between the national and religious (both Alevi and Sunni-Muslim) groups are very limited, resulting in indirect negotiation. The leading Kurdish movement and the pro-

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[1] Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview.

[2] Ibid.; Baysal, Personal Interview; Türk, Personal Interview; Ali A. Güler, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 30, 2012; Yusuf Cengiz, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 27, 2012; Kaya, Personal Interview, February 5, 2012; Osman Nasıroğlu, Personal Interview, Batman, August 6, 2012; Baran Gündoğan, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 31, 2012; Aslan, Personal Interview, March 5, 2012; Ogurlu, Personal Interview.

Islamist groups supporting the AK Party have been polarized for the last decade. This polarization has largely determined the relations between the national and pro-Islamist groups. While the national group had a limited contact with some Kurdish pro-Islamist groups such as the MZC, the Azadî, the DFDG and Mazlum-Der; they did not have any direct relations with the KH until the last few years.

The conflict between the PKK and the KH in the 1990s has stood in the way of negotiation. However, the relations between Kurdish national and the above-mentioned pro-Islamist groups have advanced relatively rapidly in the recent years. They have started to cooperate in several areas, including on the humanitarian aid campaign for the Kurds in Syria during the ongoing civil war.

Three dynamics can be noted, which confine the negotiations between the national and pro-Islamist groups: the trust problems, the divisions among pro-Islamist groups, and the problem of the political pluralism. However, the two blocs have commonly negotiated in indirect ways, such as through the media or third parties. In this regard, the pro-Islamist groups cooperating with both the national groups and other pro-Islamists have contributed significantly to the establishment of these relations between the two blocs.

This indirect negotiation between the two blocs, which has functioned as a mutual learning process, has brought the two blocs together at the idea level regarding the Kurdish issue(s), opening a politically more stable situation by building a common cognitive frame about the destructive effects of the internal conflicts in the past. It has also emphasized the importance of internal peace among the different Kurdish groups. However, this process has not allowed for the emergence of direct negotiations that can facilitate the establishment of a more regular rule in the Kurdish region.

1) Trust problems

There are grave trust problems both between the national groups and pro-Islamist groups, and among the pro-Islamist groups. The identity conflicts between the national groups, the leading Kurdish movement in particular, and the pro-Islamist groups constitute critical obstacles on the way of the negotiation and cooperation. As mentioned in a very detailed way in the third chapter, they do not see each other as political opposition, but as an existential challenger in the Kurdish region. When I discussed their relations and negotiations with the national group (the leading Kurdish movement in particular), the pro-Islamist groups' representatives mostly highlighted their ideological and existential conflicts with

"socialist" and "nationalist" groups. Most pro-Islamist groups see the national groups as "the outsiders" to the Kurds and the Kurdish region[1]. On the other hand, the national groups commonly see "political Islam" as the main instrument used by the Turkish state to undermine the Kurdish national liberation struggle; and support a secular system, despite their different approaches to the place of religion – and Islam in particular – in the public sphere[2].

The conflict between the PKK and the KH claimed nearly 1,000 lives in the 1990s[3], and the Turkish state's intervention in this conflict must be underlined as the second dynamic of the trust problem among the national and pro-Islamist groups. Even though two decades have passed since the PKK-KH conflict, it remains an obstacle to establishing a relationship between the two groups – in particular between the leading Kurdish movement and the HÜDA-PAR and affiliated institutions[4]. It is important to note that the KH was in conflict not only with the PKK, but also with some pro-Islamist groups[5]. This conflict still constitutes a significant source of distrust among the pro-Islamist groups[6].

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[1] Fırat, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012; İhsan Aslan, Personal Interview, Ankara, November 10, 2012; Alaattin Korkutata, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, January 5, 2012; Mustafa Tatlı, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 20, 2012; Hüseyin Yılmaz, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 25, 2012; Cemal Çınar, Personal Interview, İstanbul, August 21, 2012; Hamdullah Tasalı, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 22, 2012; Necat Özdemir, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 27, 2012; Serdar B. Yılmaz, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 22, 2011; Ferzende Lale, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 15, 2011; Aziz Aslan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 22, 2011; Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011; Süleyman Kurşun, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, August 5, 2012; Feyzi Güzelsoy, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 28, 2011.

[2] Demirtaş, Personal Interview; Bozyel, Personal Interview; Çiftyürek, Personal Interview; Elçi, Personal Interview; İpek, Personal Interview.

[3] Emrullah Uslu, "From Local Hizbollah to Global Terror: Militant Islam in Turkey," *Middle East Policy* XIV, no. 1 (2007): 124–141.

[4] Demirtaş, Personal Interview; İpek, Personal Interview; Bozyel, Personal Interview; Çiftyürek, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012; Baydemir, Personal Interview; Feyzi Aytar, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 19, 2012; Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011; Batmanlı, Personal Interview; Ömer Evsen, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 18, 2011.

[5] İ. Bagasi, *Kendi Dilinden Hizbullah* (Unknown Publisher, 2004), http://www.huseynisevda.net; Hüseyin Yılmaz, Cemal Tutar, and Mehmet Varol, *Hizbullah Ana Davası: Savunmalar* (İstanbul: Dua Yayıncılık, 2011), 211–247; Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011; Fırat, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012; Lale, Personal Interview; Evsen, Personal Interview.

[6] Evsen, Personal Interview; Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011; Muhittin Kaya, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 17, 2012; Fırat, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012; Güzelsoy, Personal Interview; Lale, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012; Batmanlı, Personal Interview; Korkutata, Personal Interview.

2) Divisions among the pro-Islamist groups

At this point, I must note that it is not only the bloody conflict between the KH and other groups, but also other divisions among the Islamist groups that stand in the way of negotiation between the pro-Islamist groups. Although the AK Party has become the principal representative of most pro-Islamist groups in the political sphere at the countrywide level, the cooperation among the pro-Islamist groups is still very limited at the local and regional levels. Unlike the national groups and economic elite, the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups are more fragmented and divided[1].

Two divisions must be noted. The principal of these is between the Kurdish autonomous pro-Islamist groups and western-centric Kurdish pro-Islamist groups. While conducting interviews, I observed that the autonomous Kurdish pro-Islamist groups commonly underline the western-centric quality of other Kurdish groups[2]. Second, neither the autonomous groups nor the others have a unity among themselves. They have different ideas about Islam, and the Kurdish issue in particular. The autonomous pro-Islamist groups are united under the umbrellas of the MZC, the KH and the Azadî, while the others are pro-Islamists led principally by the GC and the MGH.

Despite the divisions, there have been some efforts to unite different Kurdish pro-Islamist groups both at local and regional levels since 2010. In Diyarbakır, for instance, more than 40 different pro-Islamist groups regularly meet once a month as "the pro-Islamic NGO platform"[3] to negotiate and encourage cooperation among the pro-Islamist groups. More importantly, they established the KİAP, the Platform of Justice for Brotherhood ("Kardeşlik İçin Adalet Platformu" in Turkish) in 2010 to eliminate the trust problems and build a united common position among the pro-Islamist groups regarding the Kurdish issue[4]. Apart from the KH[5], nearly 60 different pro-Islamist groups from the all cities of the Kurdish region take

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[1] Evsen, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011; Enver Butasun, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 17, 2012.

[2] Kaya, Personal Interview, May 17, 2012; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012; Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011.

[3] Batmanlı, Personal Interview; Lale, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011; Evsen, Personal Interview.

[4] Lale, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011; Batmanlı, Personal Interview.

[5] Batmanlı, Personal Interview.

place in the KİAP[1]. S. B. Yılmaz, the president of the Diyarbakır Özgür-Der, one of the chief figures of the platform, asserts that they established the KİAP to build an alternative to the Turkish state and the PKK, which have mostly dominated the public political sphere with regard to the Kurdish issue so far. According to Yılmaz, the KİAP has allowed the pro-Islamist groups to step away from cloudy and uncertain positions and take a clearer stance on defining and analyzing the Kurdish issue and proposing some suggestions for the solution of the issue on the basis of the Islamic references. In other words, the platform has allowed them to "build a pro-Islamic discourse" as an alternative to the discourses of the state and the PKK[2].

Although the local and regional platforms allowed the pro-Islamist groups to negotiate the major problems and build some consensuses, they are still far from establishing a common cognitive frame, shared interests and accepted rules regarding the Kurdish issue(s). Unlike Yılmaz, Ö. Evsen, the president of the Diyarbakır Diyanet-Sen and the president of the executive board of the pro-Islamist platform in Diyarbakır, has a more pessimistic approach regarding the negotiation and cooperation among the pro-Islamist groups. He points out that the pro-Islamist groups are very fragmented and they do not trust each other due to the conflicts between them in the past. Evsen argues that alongside the past conflicts, there is also a struggle for hegemony among the pro-Islamist groups, which stands in the way of establishing unity[3].

3) Issue of the political pluralism

The hegemony struggle does not occur only among the pro-Islamist groups, but also between the leading Kurdish movement and the pro-Islamist groups. Most of the economic, religious and political elites underline the lack of organizational culture of political pluralism in the Kurdish region. They argue that each group tries to use the mixed and umbrella organization to build their organizational hegemony over the others[4]. In this regard, the BDP-

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[1] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011; Batmanlı, Personal Interview.

[2] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011.

[3] Evsen, Personal Interview; Kurşun, Personal Interview; Batmanlı, Personal Interview; Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011.

[4] Lale, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011.

DTK/PKK-KCK and the KH are two principal groups, which are commonly criticized by the other national and religious groups[1].

Like the Kurdish economic elite, most of the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups criticize the leading Kurdish movement, saying they are not sufficiently democratic, inclusive, or accountable. They argue that the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK uses umbrella or mixed organizations to obtain legitimacy by creating a pluralist and representative image. Yet in reality, they assert, the leading Kurdish movement has yielded a very limited sphere for others to reproduce their ideas and values, and to represent their own interests[2]. For instance, F. Lale, the president of the Ay-Der, one of the leading NGOs in the pro-Islamic NGOs platform in Diyarbakır, argues that the leading Kurdish movement wants to be the single party in the Kurdish region:

"In the (Kurdish) region it is a reality that … the BDP front does not see the pro-Islamic groups those who are not their part as an (political) actor. If it can, it attempts to intimidate. They think that they are the only power, the sole representative in the region. As long as this approach of the BDP or the PKK continues, that is to say, 'we are the only representative', the DTK cannot include all the groups. So, you say, 'come, yet only if you be like me, come only if you think like me, then come'. If they think like you, a structure or an organization based on the democracy or plurality or human rights will not be established[3]."

In fact, the argument of Lale is a common perception about the leading Kurdish movement among the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups. H. Yılmaz, the founding president of the HÜDA-PAR accuses the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK of imposing its ideological and political identity on other Kurdish groups and forcing them to unite under its umbrella[4]. N. Özdemir, the editor-in-chief of the journal of *Kelha Amedê*, points out that the PKK does not accept any political organization and tries to be the single party in Kurdistan[5]. M. Batmanlı, a Sunni-Muslim intellectual and the representative of the DFDG, which is one of the intermediary pro-

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[1] Evsen, Personal Interview; Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011.

[2] Lale, Personal Interview; Nurettin Bozkurt, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 19, 2011; Evsen, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012; İhsan Yaşar, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, January 5, 2012; Kurşun, Personal Interview; Butasun, Personal Interview.

[3] Lale, Personal Interview.

[4] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012.

[5] Özdemir, Personal Interview.

Islamist organizations, contends that the PKK has argued that it has been the single political organization against the Turkish state and has not recognized a third actor in the Kurdish region so far[1]. *Mele*[2] S. Kurşun, a very respected opinion leader among both the Kurdish national and pro-Islamist groups, criticizes the leading Kurdish movement for being of "single colour and single voice" ("yekreng û yekdeng" in Kurdish)[3].

In this regard, S. B. Yılmaz summarizes the expectation of the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups from the leading Kurdish movement:

"When we say pluralism, it does not mean to dissolve the current religious groups or the different tendencies within its own structure, but rather to cooperate with them and build a roof which allows them to represent themselves in the political sphere while protecting their own religious beliefs, ideas, and tendencies, and guaranteeing the continuity of their political existence. Is the BDP such a party, is the DTK such an organization, or are all the things just an illusion, a hyper-reality? We need to analyze that properly[4]."

The leading Kurdish movement's representatives commonly accept the critiques[5]. For instance, discussing the establishment of the DTK, D. Çelik argues that their initial objective was to build a plural democratic arena in which different religious, linguistic, cultural or political groups in Kurdistan could take their places and organize themselves on the basis of their own self-powers. However, he affirms that the movement could not sufficiently take into account different sensitivities of the Kurdish society and be inclusive. Yet he highlights that the terrorizing of the DTK by the Turkish state played a part in the failure of the DTK. More than 8,000 activists of the movement, including the deputies, mayors, co-presidents of the BDP, party assembly's members etc., have been arrested on the charge of being a member of the KCK since 2009, which caused many groups to avoid interacting with the DTK[6]. Additionally, the representatives of the leading Kurdish movement underline the other Kurdish political groups' approaches based on their distinctive group-interest and their

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[1] Batmanlı, Personal Interview.

[2] Meaning "imam" or "religious scholar" in Kurdish.

[3] Kurşun, Personal Interview.

[4] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011.

[5] Baydemir, Personal Interview; Kışanak, Personal Interview; Zümrüt, Personal Interview; Camcı, Personal Interview; Çelik, Personal Interview; Temel, Personal Interview.

[6] Çelik, Personal Interview.

disrespect to the leading Kurdish movement's "values"[1] as significant obstacles to negotiation and cooperation among them. They contend that the other Kurdish groups must give up to struggle for take place in political areas/institutions[2]; and the Kurds cannot go forward if they cannot come past the discussion on whether the leading Kurdish movement does or does not allow room for others[3].

It is important to note that the issue of political pluralism is a problem beyond the relations between the leading Kurdish movement and other pro-Islamist groups. As mentioned earlier, there is the same problem among the pro-Islamist groups. For instance, the KİAP has excluded the KH, one of the most powerful pro-Islamist groups in the Kurdish region, due to most members' objections to its membership. The issue of instrumentalizing other groups – and the NGOs in particular – to obtain the legitimacy in the eyes of society is a general tendency among the political groups, including the pro-Islamists[4]. Evsen highlights that for that reason, as past experiences have shown, most of the attempts to build a general umbrella organization or platform have failed, resulting in the hegemony of one side or group so far[5].

4) Intermediary organizations and groups

The national and pro-Islamist groups generally negotiate through the third actors or media due to the three above-mentioned reasons: the trust problem, the division among pro-Islamist groups and the issue of political pluralism. In this respect, the intermediary organizations and groups play a vital role in paving the way for negotiation. On one side, some pro-Islamist groups that give a remarkable importance to the Kurdish or Kurdistan issue maintain a critical role in negotiating between the national and other pro-Islamist groups. The Mazlum-Der, the MZC, the DFDG and the Azadî must be noted as the four principal intermediary groups. On the other side, some mixed organizations have emerged in recent years. The Tev-Kurd is the principal organization in which the pro-Islamist and national groups or individuals cooperated.

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[1] By saying, "respect to our values," the leading Kurdish movement's representatives mostly refer to the critiques, to some extent, the disrespects of other groups to their leader A. Öcalan and three-decades-long political struggle.

[2] Baydemir, Personal Interview.

[3] Fırat, Personal Interview, October 5, 2012.

[4] Bozkurt, Personal Interview.

[5] Evsen, Personal Interview.

In 1992 the Mazlum-Der organized for the first time a conference on the Kurdish issue in which the representatives of the principal pro-Islamist groups in Turkey participated[1]. In this conference, the pro-Islamist groups' stances regarding the Kurdish issue were questioned and criticized for the first time [2]. Since the 1990s, the Mazlum-Der, as a pro-Islamist human rights association, has been one very few pro-Islamist NGOs at the countrywide level that has advocated the rights of Kurds and could have cooperated with other non-Islamist groups, including the leading Kurdish movement[3]. Likewise, the MZC, which paved the way of autonomization of some pro-Islamist Kurds from their Turkish counterparts due to their Turkish nationalist and statist qualities concerning the Kurdish issue in the 1990s, today plays the role of an intermediary group between the national and pro-Islamist groups thanks to its permanent relations with both sides[4].

Unlike the Mazlum-Der and the MZC, the DFDG and the Azadî have underlined Islam and Kurdistan ("Îslamî" and "Kurdîstanî" in Kurdish) as two principal pillars of their identities. Moreover, they have been discussing the "Kurdistan issue"[5] not as NGOs, but as political actors. Both the DFDG and the Azadî, which were respectively established in 2007 and 2011 by some intellectuals and former members of different pro-Islamist groups, have mediated between the national and pro-Islamist groups thanks to their good relations with both sides. For instance, the Azadî was one of the main intermediary groups during the bloody confrontation of student groups at Dicle University, which were affiliated to the leading Kurdish movement and the KH, in April 2013[6]. Likewise, the Azadî and the DFDG

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[1] The discussion of the conference was published in 1993, see: Mazlum-Der, *Mazlum-Der Kürt Sorunu Forumu* (Ankara: Sor Yayıncılık, 1993).

[2] İhsan Aslan, the founding president of the Mazlum-Der argues that Kurdish Muslims, who were working with their Turkish counterparts, realized that they stayed away from the struggle for the rights to the Kurds in the 1990s. According to Aslan, the Mazlum-Der was established to be a part of this struggle as the Turkish and Kurdish Muslims at least in the frame of the human rights in the 1990s. Aslan, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012.

[3] Bozkurt, Personal Interview.

[4] Kaya, Personal Interview, May 17, 2012; İpek, Personal Interview; Bozyel, Personal Interview; Çiftyürek, Personal Interview; Zümrüt, Personal Interview.

[5] Batmanlı, Personal Interview; Zilan, Personal Interview, May 30, 2012.

[6] For more information about this confrontation, see: http://www.ilkehaber.com/yazi/komplo-diyen-cok-ama-adres-gosteren-pek-yok-7288.htm, date of access: October 01, 2013.

were the two principal pro-Islamist groups that took place in the delegation from Turkey for the preparatory meeting of the First Kurdish National Congress[1] held in Erbil in July 2013[2].

Alongside the intermediary pro-Islamist groups, we witnessed the emergence of a mixed organization of the pro-Islamist and national groups and intellectuals in 2005. The secular national groups and intellectuals, including the Kurdish communists and the Kurdish Sunni-Muslims, for the first time assembled and cooperated on the Kurdish or Kurdistan issue within the Tev-Kurd[3]. Although the leading Kurdish movement did not participate in the Tev-Kurd and its members decided to stop its activities in 2012 due to ongoing internal debates[4], it was a noteworthy experience for the negotiation between the national and pro-Islamist groups.

5) Learning Process

There has been a very limited direct negotiation between the national and pro-religious groups, though there have been a few intermediary groups – mostly pro-Islamist – giving significant importance to the Kurdish or Kurdistan issue for the last decade. However, this period can be noted as a learning process for both sides. As mentioned earlier, on the one side, the leading Kurdish movement has revised its orthodox secularist stance regarding the religion issues, and made some room for the Sunni-Muslims. The elections of A. Tan and Ş. Elçi to the national parliament under the list supported by the BDP, the civilian Friday prayers, and BDP's efforts in the national parliament for eliminating legal bans on the headscarf are the noticeable examples showing that the movement tries to build a new policy regarding the religion issue. On the other side, the pro-Islamist Kurds have been building new policies regarding the Kurdish issue, which at least highlight the rights to self-government and education in the Kurdish mother tongue for the last decade. Moreover, the majority of the

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[1] For the first time, nearly 40 political organizations from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and the Kurdish diaspora, including the PKK, the KDP, the YNK and the Goran – four principal organizations of Kurds with different ideological and political identities – will assemble to discuss the Kurdish or Kurdistan issues in different countries and the national unity among them. The congress, which has been planned since 2011 and delayed several times, is expected to meet in 2014.

[2] For more information about the Kurdish National Congress, see: http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/turkiyede_kurulan_heyet_kurt_ulusal_konferansi_icin_erbilde-1142844, date of access: October 4, 2013.

[3] Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011; Zilan, Personal Interview, May 30, 2012; Önen, Personal Interview; Batmanlı, Personal Interview.

[4] Önen, Personal Interview.

Kurdish groups' representatives underline the importance of the cooperation for the interests of the Kurds[1].

Two principal dynamics can be underlined that have made the national and pro-Islamist groups learn from each other. First, the bloody conflicts between both the KH and the PKK and the KH and other pro-Islamist groups have functioned as a learning process on all sides. Although these conflicts still have an influence in limiting the cooperation of different Kurdish groups, they mostly closed the way for a new, armed confrontation between any parties. Today there is a general consensus among the Kurdish groups, the leading Kurdish movement[2] and the KH[3] in particular that these bloody experiences have harmed the Kurdish national struggle and that the Kurds must solve their issues in non-violent, political ways.

Second, the polarization of political space between the BDP – the representative actor of the leading Kurdish movement – and the AK Party has paved the way for the mutual learning process for both national and pro-Islamist groups. The national groups are no longer struggling against the traditional state apparatus dominated by Kemalist cadres, which had suppressed both the Kurdish and pro-Islamist oppositions by the beginning of the 2000s. Since 2002, the rival has been the AK Party, which has integrated Turkey and Turkish Islamism into neoliberal globalization and, in the process, marginalized the Kemalists politically across the country and in the Kurdish region in particular. The leading Kurdish movement's recent efforts to build a new policy vis-à-vis Islam, therefore, as many pro-Islamists highlight[4], can be viewed as a political response to undermine the influence of the AK Party's Islamist discourse among conservative Kurds. Although most of the Kurdish pro-Islamists consider this political revision to be hypocrisy[5], as Baydemir highlights[1], in reality

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[1] Demirtaş, Personal Interview; Kışanak, Personal Interview; Baydemir, Personal Interview; Bozyel, Personal Interview; Elçi, Personal Interview; Çiftyürek, Personal Interview; İpek, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012; Özdemir, Personal Interview; Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011; Batmanlı, Personal Interview; Kaya, Personal Interview, May 17, 2012; Kurşun, Personal Interview; Lale, Personal Interview; Bozkurt, Personal Interview; Önen, Personal Interview; Fırat, Personal Interview, October 5, 2012.

[2] Demirtaş, Personal Interview.

[3] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012.

[4] Ibid; Kurşun, Personal Interview; Kaya, Personal Interview, May 17, 2012; Batmanlı, Personal Interview; Evsen, Personal Interview; Lale, Personal Interview; Tan, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011.

[5] Aslan, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012; Fırat, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012; Lale, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012; Kurşun, Personal Interview; Evsen, Personal Interview.

the movement has changed and taken shape with the people who support it, and revised its policies to respond the demands of the masses.

Like the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK, the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups have experienced a similar transformation. The rise of the Kurdish national struggle since the beginning of the 2000s in Turkey (and also in Iraq) has had a remarkable influence on the pro-Islamist Kurds. With the AK Party's rule, most of them have become partners or local representatives of the government in the Kurdish region and confronted to the Kurdish national movements. Therefore, excepting the constant stance of the MZC, the pro-Islamists' revision vis-à-vis the Kurdish issue can be seen as a political response to the rise of the leading Kurdish movement. Yet, like the national groups – and the leading Kurdish movement in particular – the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups have undergone a remarkable transformation in this process.

Although the mutual learning process has allowed the establishment of a common cognitive frame about the Kurdish issue and the necessity of political stability and peace among the Kurdish groups, it has not resulted in collective regulations. Despite the above-mentioned significant transformations on both sides, the national and pro-Islamist groups are mostly still far from negotiating directly and building accepted rules with regard to the Kurdish issue(s).

6) Negotiations with Kurdish Alevis

Before ending this section, I must take into account several remarks about the place of the Kurdish pro-Alevi groups in the negotiations among the Kurds. As a non-recognized religious minority group that has suffered from the Sunni-Islamist rules for centuries, the Kurdish, Turkish or Arab Alevis have principally concentrated on their distinctive problems and advocated rights to the Alevi community. To do this, they have mostly participated in the general Alevi organizations such as the Pir Sultan Abdal Cultural Association[2], Alevi Cultural Associations[3], the Hacı Bektaş Veli Anatolian Cultural Foundation[1], and the Cem

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[1] Baydemir, Personal Interview.

[2] It has 61 branches across Turkey; two of them are in the Kurdish political region (Diyarbakır and Muş-Varto) and six of them are in the non-political Kurdish cultural region. For the difference between the Kurdish political and cultural regions, see Map 2 and Map 3. For more information see, https://www.pirsultan.net, date of access: October 5, 2013.

[3] It has 102 branches across Turkey; one of them is in the Kurdish political region (Şanlıurfa) and six of them are in the non-political Kurdish cultural region. For more information, see: https://www.facebook.com/GenelMerkezAKD, date of access: October 5, 2013.

Foundation[2] so far. Except for the Pir Sultan Abdal Culture Association, the pro-Alevi organizations have mostly not participated directly in the discussions regarding the political issues, and the Kurdish issue in particular. Even in Dersim, the principal region of the Kurdish Alevi community, there is not a single Kurdish Alevi group that advocates the rights to the Kurds and Alevis at the same time and challenges the leading Kurdish movement. As mentioned earlier, the majority of the Alevi community perceives the Alevi religious-cultural identity to be a supra-identity over Turkishness, Arabness or Kurdishness, and do not see themselves as taking a side in the ongoing Kurdish conflict and the Kurdish issue.

Among the national groups, the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK is the single political group that has been noticeably trying to organize support among the Alevi communities, and partly obtained the support of the Kurdish Alevi community in the frame of the Kurdish national liberation struggle. The leading Kurdish movement has been trying to build a new policy vis-à-vis the Kurdish Alevi community to undermine the influence of the Turkish state's intervention into the formation of the Alevi identity as a distinctive alternative identity to the Kurdish national identity in recent years. The BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK has advocated for the Alevi communities' demands in the political space, made room for Alevis at high-level positions in its affiliated organizations, and even supported the establishment of Kurdish pro-Alevi organizations, which advocate for Kurdish national rights and the Alevi community's demands at the same time. For instance, the three co-presidents of the BDP, the DTK, and the KCK (G. Kışanak, A. Tuğrul, and B. Hozat) are Kurdish Alevi women. Likewise, the DTK decided to establish "Mesopotamia Alevis Unity" in the "First Kurdistan Alevi Conference", held in February 2013 in Diyarbakır[3]. The leading Kurdish movement established several pro-Alevi associations (as well as other religious group such as Yezidis and Sunni-Muslims) to accommodate the Kurdish Alevi community into its frontal activities in the European countries in the 1990s[4]. Since 2008, it has been trying to develop a Kurdish pro-Alevi

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[1] It has 39 branches across Turkey; seven of them are in the non-political Kurdish cultural region. For more information, see: https://www.hacibektasvakfi.web.tr, date of access: October 5, 2013.

[2] It has 53 branches across Turkey; one of them is in the Kurdish political region (Bingöl), and ten of them in the non-political Kurdish cultural region. For more information, see: https://www.cemvakfi.org, date of access: October 5, 2013.

[3] For more information about the conference, see: http://bdp.org.tr/Devam/40-haberdetay-artik-esasa-gelin!.aspx, date of access: October 5, 2013.

[4] Hisyar Ozsoy, "Between Gift and Taboo: Death and the Negotiation of National Identity and Sovereignty in the Kurdish Conflict in Turkey" (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Texas, 2010), XX.

movement in Turkey. These pro-Alevi efforts even lead to some pro-Islamist Kurds' argument that the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK has been directed by Alevis[1].

Conclusion

Using the three theoretical axes (the regulation, the three blocs and different groups that compose the blocs, and the negotiation among them), in this chapter, I analyzed the capacity of the Kurdish groups to produce accepted rules. In other words, I examined their ability to collectively act by recognizing one another, sharing interests, and learning collectively, despite a strong path dependency. Five principal points must be underlined with regard to collective regulations among and between the Kurdish national and religious groups and economic elite.

First, the controversial and/or cooperative relations among and between the Kurdish groups in the past have a significant influence on their ongoing negotiations. The conflicts between the PKK and other national groups in the 1980s, and the conflict between both the KH and the PKK and the KH and other pro-Islamist groups have still been grave obstacles standing in the way of negotiations and cooperation toward building a Kurdish consensus in Turkey. In contrast, the political experience of the Kurdish economic elite in the Kurdish national liberation struggle in the 1980s and 1990s has facilitated their negotiations with the Kurdish national groups. Therefore, there is path dependency in the formation of the collective action in the Kurdish region of Turkey.

Second, the Turkish state's intervention into the relations among or between the Kurdish groups must be noted as a vital dynamic in the formation of the collective regulations process in the Kurdish region. The majority of pro-Islamist groups and the economic elite support the AK Party and function as local agencies of the state in the Kurdish region. Additionally, the Kurdish debates on the Turkish state's role in the internal conflicts in the 1980s and 1990s have not been completed so far. Moreover, the Turkish state tried to cooperate with some national groups to undermine the power of the leading Kurdish movement in the region.

Third, the very positive role of the existing mixed or intermediary organizations or groups must be noted in the negotiations process to build accepted rules. The mixed organizations have facilitated the negotiations between the Kurdish national groups and

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[1] Tan, Personal Interview; Kaya, Personal Interview, May 17, 2012.

economic elites, while the intermediary organizations have moderated negotiations between the national and pro-Islamist groups. Yet, there is a very limited achievement to build general mixed or umbrella organizations that include the majority of the Kurdish groups at the regional level. However, they have built platforms that have paved the way for the negotiations and cooperation such as the Tev-Kurd, the DTK, the KİAP, the pro-Islamist NGOs platform in Diyarbakır, and the recently established "Unity and Solution Committee" in the North Kurdistan Unity and Solution Conference. In spite of these remarkable efforts, the Kurdish groups have not achieved to build a regional platform or assembly, which will allow the major national and religious groups and members of the economic elite to negotiate on the Kurdish issue(s) and build a consensus for a political Kurdish region.

Fourth, the direct and indirect negotiations among or between different Kurdish groups have led them to learn from each other despite relatively limited advancement so far. For instance, even the conflicts between both the KH and the PKK, and the KH and some pro-Islamist groups have functioned a mutual learning process. Both national and pro-Islamist groups highlight that these internal conflicts have damaged the Kurdish national liberation struggle, and that the Kurds must build a pluralist and democratic space in which all the groups can negotiate in political ways. This learning process recently led the Kurdish groups to meet and negotiate in the "North Kurdistan Unity and Solution Conference" held in 2011, in which most of the principal national, pro-Islamist Kurdish groups and economic elite for the first time assembled and reached some consensus on the Kurdish issue.

Finally and most importantly, the cognitive frame about the Kurdish or Kurdistan issue determines the ongoing negotiations and cooperation between or among the Kurdish groups and their ability to build collective regulations. There is a clear distinction between the Kurdish groups that define the Kurdish issue as a problem of democracy and multi-culturalism and propose local decentralization, and those who define the issue as a national problem beyond democracy and advocate a regional autonomy or federation. Relations between these two blocs are very limited. However, the Kurdish groups that describe the issue as a national liberation problem with liberal, socialist, pro-Islamist or classical nationalist references have made remarkable efforts and achieved significant advancement toward a Kurdish national unity for the last decade. Yet, it is important to underline that the achieved collective regulations are not stable, but rather very recent and provisory.

To conclude the discussions on the consensus-building process, the influence of the system of action must be analyzed. In the last part, I examine the five macro-dynamics (the

central state, the history, the geopolitics of the Kurdish issue, the Europeanization, and the globalization) that have constituted the principal pillars of the system of action, and significantly affected the ongoing conflicts, negotiations and cooperation among the Kurdish groups, by structuring their ideas, interests and institutions since 2000s.

Third Part: The System of Action

VII - Chapter 07 The System: Historical, State-Based, Geopolitical, European and Global Dynamics

Introduction

In the theoretical frame that I presented in the first chapter, I argued that the actors and issues are historical and social constructs; therefore, the micro- and macro-sociological approaches must be articulated to analyze the construction process of a social fact. Following this theoretical frame, in the previous chapters, I first concentrated on the micro-sociology and analyzed the interaction of the actors, and their ideas, interests and institutions.

Focusing on the macro-sociology, in this chapter, I analyze the system of action of actors; in other words, the structured context that privileges some actors and interests while demobilizing others[1]. Analyzing the system of action of the Kurdish groups will allow us to better understand the interaction of the diverse Kurdish groups, along with their conflicts, negotiations and cooperation. It is theoretically critical to highlight that the Kurdish actors are embedded in a historically constructed context, which is being constantly re-structured and reshaped by the macro-dynamics functioning as both constraints and resources for the Kurdish groups.

In the theoretical model, I mentioned five macro-dynamics, which have diverse effects on the ideas, interests, and institutions of the three Kurdish blocs. These are the historically constructed context, the central state, the geopolitics of the Kurdish issue, Europeanization, and globalization (see Schema 01). I put forward several hypotheses on these dyanmics structuring the context of the Kurdish reigon. First, the actors and issues are not only the constructs of history, but also constructors of history. That is to say, on the one hand, the Kurdish groups and their ideas, interests, and institutions are historical constructs. On the other hand, the Kurdish groups produce different versions of the past in accordance with their present political positions.

Second, the central state is a key actor in the formation of collective action in the Kurdish region. With the rule of the pro-Islamist and neo-liberal AK Party, the central state intervention and its asymmetrical relations with local-regional actors have played a crucial,

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[1] Michel Crozier and Erhard Friedberg, *L'ateur Et Le Système* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1977), p. 293–7.

destructive role in the collective actions of the Kurdish national and religious groups and economic elite since 2002.

Third, the geopolitical changes of the century-long transnational and international Kurdish issue have become a constructive dynamic for the consensus-building process among the Kurdish groups with diverse political and ideological orientation since 2003.

Fourth, different Kurdish groups temporarily used the Europeanization process in different ways – for example, as normative, cognitive, political, strategic or organizational resources – between the 1999 and 2005. Yet it considerably became an irrelevant dynamic in the Kurdish region after 2005, the date when the geopolitics of the Kurdish issues were dramatically changed due to the establishment and stabilization of the IKR. The IKR has presented a new normative and cognitive frame regarding the Kurdish issue by its politico-administrative model.

Finally, the system of action of the Kurdish groups has globalized for decades. The Kurdish groups' ideas, interests and institutions have been constantly reshaped due to the multi-level and multi-dimensional learning process that globalization provides thanks to new information technologies. Additionally, the cross-border and transnational networks of different Kurdish national and religious groups and economic elite allow them to build economic, political, cultural and religious cooperation beyond the limits that the nation-state determines.

In order to illustrate these arguments, in this chapter I first focus on how the history of Kurdish issue confines the ongoing discussion of different Kurdish groups on the one side, and how Kurdish groups produce different Kurdish histories by constructing different versions of the past to justify their present political demands on the other. Second, I discuss the central state's influence on the collective action of different Kurdish groups. The neo-liberal and pro-Islamist AK Party's intervention into negotiations between the leading Kurdish movement and other Kurdish groups (pro-Alevi, pro-Islamist, national and economic) is the subject of this part. Third, I analyze the influences of the IKR since 2003 and the de facto Kurdish region in Syria for the last two years on the ongoing collective action of the Kurdish groups. In this part, I discuss how Kurdish national, religious and economic groups give different levels of importance to the geopolitical changes and use them in different ways to justify or reconstruct their political position concerning the Kurdish issue in Turkey. Fourth, I examine the effects of the Europeanization process on collective action in

the Kurdish region. Diverse usages of Europeanization by the three Kurdish blocs and the failure of Europeanization in the Kurdish case constitute main discussions of this part. The last part is reserved for the effects of the globalization on the interaction of the Kurdish groups. I discuss globalization as a new multi-level and multi-dimensional learning process, and question convergence towards a global public policy regime. I conclude the chapter with a brief presentation of the main results.

A - History as a constraint and a resource

As detailed in the first chapter, history has a significant importance for analyzing the interaction of the Kurdish groups for two reasons. First, history functions as a constraint on the actors and their ideas, interests and institution. The concept of "path dependency"[1] which is defined as "the influence of past over the present"[2] or "sensitive dependence on initial conditions"[3] summarizes this aspect well. It underlines the importance of the contextual features of a given situation inherited from the past and stresses the production of the "paths"[4] and "lock-in" effects by eliminating other alternatives. This concept allows us to focus on the continuity and entirety of the past and present on the one hand, and the importance of the existing institutions –which confine and form the adaption and production of new institutions by structuring actors' preferences, identities and self-images – on the other.

Second, there does not exist a single past shared by actors, but rather different versions of the past constructed by asymmetrically structured groups embedded in the present. According to their interests, preferences, identities, and positions, the actors construct various histories as different version of the past that are viewed through the lens of gender, race, ethnicity, religion and class. In short, history is not only a constraint, but also a resource of mobilization for the asymmetrically structured actors who have challenging interests and struggle against each other in the present[5].

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[1] Scott E. Page, "Path Dependence," *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* no. 1 (2006): 87–115.

[2] David, "Clio and the Economics of QWERTY"; Page, "An Essay on The Existence and Causes of Path Dependence," 4–5.

[3] Liebowitz and Margolis, "Path Dependence, Lock-In, and History."

[4] Hall and Taylor, "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms," 941–2.

[5] For the utilization of history as a resource of the present sociopolitical struggle in the Kurdish scene: Bozarslan, "Some Remarks on Kurdish Historiographical Discourse in Turkey (1919-1980)"; van Bruinessen, "Ehmedê Xanî's 'Mem û Zîn' and Its Role in the Emergence of Kurdish National Awareness"; Vali, "Genealogies of the Kurds: Constructions of Nation and National Identity in Kurdish Historical Writing."

Table 7 Three Kurdish blocs and the history as constraints/resources

Bloc		Group	Principal pillars of social imaginary	History as a constraint and resources
National Bloc		BDP-DTK/ PKK-KCK	- National and social liberation - Socialism - Gender equality	- Assimilation - Centralization - State of emergency
		HAK-PAR	- National liberation	- Division of Kurdistan - Assimilation
		KADEP	- National liberation - Liberalism	- Division of Kurdistan - Assimilation
		ÖSP	- Socialism - National liberation	- Division of Kurdistan - Assimilation
		TDŞK	- National liberation	- Assimilation - State of emergency
Economic Elite		Pro-Islamist	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - Economic liberalism - Kurdish cultural identity	- Assimilation - State of emergency
		Alevi	- Socio-cultural Alevi identity - Economic liberalism - Kurdish cultural identity	- Assimilation
		Secular	- Economic liberalism - Political liberalism - Kurdish cultural identity	- Assimilation - State of emergency
		National	- Economic liberalism - Political liberalism - Kurdish national issue	- Assimilation - State of emergency - Regional disparities
Religious Bloc	Pro-Islamist Groups	AK Party	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - Kurdish cultural identity	- Assimilation - De-Islamization
		GC	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - Kurdish cultural identity	- Assimilation - De-Islamization
		MGH	- Political Sunni-Islam - Kurdish cultural identity	- Assimilation - De-Islamization
		MZC	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - National issue	- Centralization - Assimilation
		KH	- Political Sunni-Islam - National issue	- De-Islamization - Assimilation - Centralization - State of emergency
		Azadî	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - National liberation	- Centralization - Assimilation
	Alevi Groups	BDP-Supporting Alevi Group	- Socio-cultural Alevi identity - National and social liberation	- Assimilation - Centralization - State of emergency
		CHP-Supporting Alevi Group	- Socio-cultural Alevi identity - Multiculturalism	- Assimilation
		Left-wing Alevi Group	- Socialism - Socio-cultural Alevi identity - National issue	- Centralization - Assimilation

Following this theoretical frame, I argue that the six aspects of the Kurdish issue(s) confine the ongoing discussions of the Kurdish groups. These are (1) the division of Kurdistan into four parts; (2) the assimilation of the Kurds to "Turkishness"; (3) the de-Islamization of the Kurdish (and Turkish) societies during the modernist nation-state-building

process; (4) the Ottoman-Turkish centralization policies and the dissolution of local Kurdish sovereignties; (5) the regional disparities and socioeconomic underdevelopment of the Kurdish region; and (6) the persistence of the state of emergency in the Kurdish region. Second, each Kurdish group invokes some of these aspects (but not the all) to justify its political position regarding the Kurdish issue in the present. Therefore the Kurdish groups use history as a resource of mobilization by constructing different Kurdish histories as different versions of the past (see Table 1).

1) National groups: Nationalized history

The Kurdish national groups commonly analyze the past of the Kurdish issue through the lens of nationhood. To begin with the leading Kurdish movement, Kışanak argues that the Kurdish issue is a result of the elimination of the autonomy of the Kurds and the denial of their identity after the establishment of the republic in 1923. She refers the political status (identity rights and autonomy) that Kurds had during the Ottoman Empire to justify the democratic autonomy project:

"For the solution of the Kurdish issue, first, the identity must be recognized; second, the cultural rights must correspond to needs in daily life; third, participation in the government is necessary. These three points correspond to the system that the Kurds had before the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. That system included the three. The autonomous system (of the Ottomans) included the power of self-government, cultural rights and the right to establish relations with the central government with their own identity[1]."

Likewise, M. Zümrüt, who is a member of BDP party assembly and the committee on foreign relations, and advocates a Kurdish federal region, underlines that the source of the Kurdish issue is the dissolution of the Kurdish emirates during the last period of the Ottoman Empire. He points out that this issue was aggravated with the denial and suppression of the Kurds by Turkish state violence after the establishment of the republic[2]. Similarly, O. Baydemir, who defines the Kurdish issue as a national liberation problem, describes the BDP as the last representative actor of the "two-century-long constant Kurdish national liberation cause", and qualifies the Kurdish revolts during the end of the 19th and the beginning of the

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[1] Kışanak, Personal Interview.

[2] Mazhar Zümrüt, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 18, 2011.

20th centuries, naming Sheikh Said and Seyit Rıza as predecessors of the leading Kurdish movement[1].

The national groups apart from the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK also underline the denial of the Kurds and the assimilation policies as main causes of the Kurdish issue[2]. Yet, unlike the representatives of the leading Kurdish movement, other national groups highlight the nationhood of the Kurds, and "the division of the Kurdistan into four parts", and advocate a "federal Kurdistan region" as a minimum condition for the settlement of "the Kurdistan issue"[3]. For instance, Ş. Elçi, the president of the KADEP, points out that the four parts of Kurdistan compose a unity, despite the political divisions:

> "Kurdistan is a united geography, it is not separated into pieces. Although the political borders were established, Kurdistan is a united single geography. Our nation is the same united nation. What is difference between the parts on Turkey's side and Syria's side? There is no difference between them in terms of their geographies or nation. Iraq's side, Iran's side and Syria's side do not differ from one another[4]."

2) Economic elite: Assimilation and regional disparities

Like the national groups, the Kurdish economic elite underlines the identity aspect of the Kurdish issue. Yet unlike the national group, the division of Kurdistan into four parts and the Ottoman-Turkish centralization do not constitute noticeable aspects in their discourse about the Kurdish issue. However, they give a remarkable importance to the regional disparities and socioeconomic underdevelopment of the Kurdish region in Turkey in their discussion of the Kurdish issue. As mentioned earlier (see the part D of the fourth chapter), most members of the Kurdish economic elite, including the top figures[5], underline the Turkish state's systematic discriminatory economic policies towards the Kurdish region and Kurdish economic actors as the principal reason of this socioeconomic under-development. Even

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[1] Baydemir, Personal Interview.

[2] Bayram Bozyel, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 21, 2011; Şerafettin Elçi, Personal Interview, Ankara, November 10, 2012; Sinan Çiftyürek, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 26, 2012; Halim İpek, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 25, 2012.

[3] Bozyel, Personal Interview; Çiftyürek, Personal Interview; Elçi, Personal Interview; Fuat Önen, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 5, 2012.

[4] Elçi, Personal Interview.

[5] Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview; Türk, Personal Interview; Kaya, Personal Interview, February 5, 2012; Ebedioğlu, Personal Interview; Odabaşı, Personal Interview; Baysal, Personal Interview; Sarı, Personal Interview; Dündar, Personal Interview.

representatives of local branches of MÜSİAD and TUSKON accept the fact that the Kurdish region has been economically neglected so far, although they abstain from describing it as a systematic policy to prevent development[1].

For instance, B. Yılmaz, who underlines the nationhood of the Kurds and advocates a Kurdish federal region, underlines the assimilation, "the economic othernization," and the decades-long suppression as three principal reasons of the Kurdish issue: "The Kurds are a nation and this is a national struggle. ... The issue started in 1924, when Kurds were denied. The Constitution of 1924 denied the Kurds. Therefore, this issue continued until today with a constant suppression and assimilation[2]."

However, the pro-Islamist members of the economic elite, which mostly advocates the cultural rights and the local decentralization for the settlement of the Kurdish issue, highlight principally the denial of the Kurdish identity throughout the history of republic, as well as the state violence over the Kurds[3]. For instance, when I asked the origin of the Kurdish issue, A. Korkutata, the president of DİGİAD, underlined the century-long policies of denial and ignorance towards the Kurds, and "the violence of some state's representatives" in the Kurdish region[4]. Like the pro-Islamist members of the economic elite, the economic elite's pro-Alevi members, do not see national or ethnic identities as the main basis of the politico-administrative system and underline the denial of Kurdish identity and the assimilation policies as the main causes of the Kurdish issue. They also propose the recognition of the cultural rights and a democratization process across the country as two principal pillars of the settlement of the Kurdish issue[5].

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[1] Korkutata, Personal Interview; Aykut, Personal Interview; Tatlı, Personal Interview; Yetkin, Personal Interview; Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview.

[2] Beşir Yılmaz, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 1, 2012.

[3] Korkutata, Personal Interview; Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview; Alimoğlu, Personal Interview; Aykut, Personal Interview.

[4] Korkutata, Personal Interview.

[5] Yusuf Cengiz, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 27, 2012; Ali A. Güler, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 30, 2012; Hıdır Bellice, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 30, 2012; Baran Gündoğan, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 31, 2012.

The members of the secular economic elite who stay away from direct relations with the political groups emphasize the denial of Kurdish language and culture[1] and the century-long suppression of the Kurds[2]. For instance, M. Odabaşı argues that the Kurdish issue is,

> "the result of the mistakes of years, the fault of the policies that have been carried out since the 1920s. It is a fault resulted from the fact that the republic was established on the homogeneity. The republic was built on the Ottoman heritage; it was the remnant of the Ottomans. The Ottoman system was not based on the homogeneity. Yet those who built the new system on its remnants, our ancestors, built a structure based on the homogeneity. The structure based on the homogeneity could persist just 90 years, despite the all suppression, coercions and the power[3]."

3) Religious groups and history: Religiously filtered past

Like the national groups and most members of the economic elite, the Kurdish religious groups also underline the denial and the assimilation of the Kurds to the Turkishness as the main reason of the Kurdish issue in Turkey. However, the pro-Islamist groups mostly criticize the establishment of the republic on the basis of homogeneity and suppression to highlight not only the exclusion of Kurdishness, but also the marginalization of Islam and Islamic qualities of the Kurdish (and Turkish) society. Therefore, the critiques on the Turkish modernization constitute a principal pillar of the pro-Islamist Kurds' ideas about the history of the Kurdish issue. In contrast, the pro-Alevi groups welcome this modernist quality of the republic as a political guarantee to protect themselves against the centuries-long pro-Islamist rule. As a religious minority group, the Alevis refer to the Ottoman period as an epoch of massacres against the Alevi communities by the Sunni-Islamist rule, and for that reason support the new secular republic.

a) AK Party, GC and MGH

AK Party's representatives, who argue that the Kurdish issue will be solved as a part of the democratization process of Turkey and propose the establishment of cultural rights and local decentralization, refer to the establishment of the republic as a modernist nation-state

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[1] Ebedioğlu, Personal Interview; Baysal, Personal Interview; Odabaşı, Personal Interview; Aziz Gölcük, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 5, 2012; İhsan Ogurlu, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, October 5, 2012.

[2] Odabaşı, Personal Interview; Ebedioğlu, Personal Interview; Baysal, Personal Interview.

[3] Odabaşı, Personal Interview.

based on the exclusion of ethnic groups other than Turks and the religious group[1]. For instance, A. Altaç, the deputy president of the AK Party Diyarbakır section, describes the Kurdish issue as follows:

"In this country, the elite groups considered themselves to be the owner of the republic and did not allow any religious or ethnic group to live in comfortable conditions after the establishment of the republic. The idea based on the homogenization and creation of a monolithic society, which is the main philosophy of the republic, dealt a blow to the large part of the society[2]."

While conducting field research, it was surprising to observe that the AK Party's representatives utilized the Ottoman period to justify why a Kurdish autonomous or federal region is not possible, whereas the representatives of the national groups referred to the same period to promote the autonomy or federation. H. Advan, the president of AK Party Diyarbakır section, argues that the Ottomans recognized the autonomy for many regions, yet these regions then separated from the Ottoman. For that reason, the Turkish rulers have a phobia regarding autonomy[3].

The representatives of the GC and the MGH mostly share the frame of the AK Party's representatives. They principally highlight the denial of the Kurdish identity and the exclusion of Islamic values, which have been, they argue, a dispensable part of the Kurdish identity by the state power throughout the history of the republic[4]. F. Aytar, one influential representative of the MGH in Bingöl, argues that the Kurdish people have both identity and spiritual/moral problems. According to Aytar, those who denied Kurdish language and identity through the century also denied the Kurds' Islamic morality and values[5].

b) Autonomous pro-Islamist groups: MZC, KH and Azadî

Unlike Ankara-centric pro-Islamist Kurds, the autonomous groups such as the MZC, the KH and the Azadî have a different perspective about the history of the Kurdish issue.

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[1] İpek, Personal Interview; İhsan Yaşar, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, January 5, 2012; Aydın Altaç, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, January 5, 2012; Dengir M. Fırat, Personal Interview, Ankara, November 10, 2012; İhsan Aslan, Personal Interview, Ankara, November 10, 2012.

[2] Altaç, Personal Interview.

[3] Halit Advan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 30, 2012.

[4] Korkutata, Personal Interview; Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview; Feyzi Aytar, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 19, 2012.

[5] Aytar, Personal Interview.

Kurdishness does not constitute a only cultural identity, but beyond that it refers a national identity for these groups. Accordingly, the Kurdish issue is not a problem of the recognition of the Kurdish cultural identity in the frame of the multiculturalism and the democracy, but also a sovereignty sharing issue between the Kurdish and Turkish nations. Therefore, they see the history of the issue from a very different viewpoint by underlining the nationhood of the Kurds and the equality between the nations with Islamic references.

For instance, M. Kaya, a chief figure of the MZC, expresses that the model their community proposes for the settlement of the Kurdish issue is to share the sovereignty between nations for assuring the equality. Criticizing the Ankara-centric pro-Islamist Kurds for their efforts to reduce the Kurdish national identity to "a folkloric diversity in Turkey," Kaya underlines that a general democratization and an administrative local decentralization will not be sufficient for the solution. Underlining that the multi-ethnicity, multi-nationality, and multilingualism are Qur'anic verses, he argues that the Kurds must govern themselves with a politico-administrative system based on the equality. Therefore, Kaya states that the community proposed a multi-legal and multi-national system during the discussions regarding the new constitution to guarantee both the religious and national rights, which have been denied and ignored during the history of republic[1].

Likewise, the KH, which advocates a pro-Islamist regime in the Kurdish region, labels the Ottoman-Turkish westernization process as the principal reason of the Kurdish issue. The KH argues that this modernization process resulted in "a national disaster for the Kurds,"[2] and the Kurdish nationalism ("ulusalcılık" in Turkish) as a reaction to this modernization process means a westernist "de-Islamization project" for the Kurdish society[3]. H. Yılmaz, the founding president of the HÜDA-PAR, argues that since the second national parliament in 1923, the Turkish state has substituted Kemalism for religion and confronted the Kurdish people with regard to both religion and ethnic identity. It has challenged Islam on the one side, denied all identities other than Turkish identity, and suppressed them on the other[4]. It is important to note that the KH gives more importance to the de-Islamization of the Kurds than to their assimilation with Turkishness[5].

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[1] Muhittin Kaya, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 17, 2012.

[2] Turan, *Kürtlerde İslami Kimliğin Gelişmesi*, 186–284.

[3] Ibid., 285–389.

[4] Hüseyin Yılmaz, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 25, 2012.

[5] Ibid.; Cemal Çınar, Personal Interview, İstanbul, August 21, 2012.

The Azadî also sees history in accordance with its present political stance. Unlike the KH, the Azadî gives more importance to the Kurdistan issue, and describes itself an organization of Kurdish Muslims for the issue of Kurdistan. Highlighting Kurdistan and Islam as its two major pillars, the Azadi refers to the revolt of Sheikh Said, the most important Kurdish revolt in 1920s with Islamic references, to describe itself. For instance, its members chose the name of "Azadî", the same name of the Kurdish organization that initiated the revolt of Sheikh Said, to underline their Islamic and Kurdish qualities at the same time.

c) Alevi groups

Like other groups, the pro-Alevi groups have different ideas about the history of the Kurdish issue, while they commonly welcome the modernist quality of the republic. The BDP-supporting Alevi groups generally share the general frame of the leading Kurdish movement, while giving a remarkable importance to their Alevi identity and the modernist quality of the republic. For instance, the representatives of the BDP, who highlight the Alevi-ness as the principal identity of the Alevi Kurds, gives a remarkable importance to the Ottoman period for two reasons: First, they argue that the Alevi community was subjected to the massacres by the Ottoman rulers due to their religious identity. Second, their autonomy, which continued until the Dersim massacre of 1938, allowed them to maintain their religious identity vis-à-vis the pro-Islamist quality of the center. Although they criticize the severe elimination of the autonomy in Dersim, they confirm that the most Alevis welcome the secular quality of the republic as a political guarantee to the religious minorities vis-à-vis pro-Islamist rules[1].

The CHP-supporting Alevis mostly glorify the establishment of the republic and its modernist quality, while accepting the policies of the assimilation towards the Kurds[2]. For instance, M. Kurban, the president of the CHP Bingöl section, points out that laicism constitutes the principal resource of the republic' power: "What is the principal resource of the power of the Republic of Turkey? It is the fact that it is a secular state. In a secular state, the religion and the race of people are not asked. Since, according to laicism, all people are equal before the law[3]."

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[1] Murat Polat, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 28, 2012; Şerafettin Halis, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 30, 2012.

[2] Kemal Bozkurt, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 30, 2012; Mustafa Kurban, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 21, 2012.

[3] Kurban, Personal Interview.

Finally, the left-wing Alevi groups, who do not see the national or religious identities, but rather the class as the main dynamic of their political identities, underlines the nationhood of the Kurds, describing the issue essentially as a problem of sovereignty. Like the representatives of the leading Kurdish movement in Dersim, they give a remarkable importance to the Alevi massacres during the Ottoman period to analyze the current situation[1].

In brief, six aspects of the Kurdish issue(s) confine the ongoing discussions on the one side and function as resources for different Kurdish groups on the other. These six aspects, which are the historical and social constructs, function as constraints for the Kurdish groups. They refer to some (yet not all) aspects and build a version of the past to justify their focus on a specific Kurdish issue. In other words, they construct a discourse about the history of the Kurds to confirm their current ideas and interests regarding their specific issue.

B - Central State: A constructive and destructive power

Alongside the historically constructed context, thanks to its infrastructural and despotic powers[2] the central state plays a vital role in collective action at the local and regional levels. The central state's despotic power signifies "the range of actions which the elite is empowered to undertake without routine, institutionalized negotiation with civil society groups"[3], while its infrastructural power indicates "the capacity of the state to actually penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm[4]." The two concepts elaborated by Michael Mann are reminiscent of Antonio Gramsci's analysis of the state. Gramsci defines the state as a totality of political society and civil society; in other words, the "hegemony protected by the armor of coercion." According to Gramsci, political society refers to the doctrine of the state as a "policeman" or a "night watchman", which underlines state's coercive elements, while civil society denotes the doctrine of the state as "an ethical state", or "a regulated society", which centers on the "autonomous, educative and moral activity" of the state[5].

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[1] Hüseyin Tunç, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 29, 2012; Ali Mukan, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 31, 2012; Uğur Yeşiltepe, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 31, 2012.

[2] Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," 2003.

[3] Ibid., 54.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (New York: International Publishers, 1971), 257–264.

The Turkish state played a determinative role in the historical construction of political, economic, social, administrative and cultural contexts in the Kurdish region. The six aspects of the historically constructed context in the Kurdish region, i.e., the division of Kurdistan, centralization, assimilation, regional socioeconomic disparities, de-Islamization, and the regional state of emergency are the main areas/issues in which the Turkish state has intervened with its infrastructural and despotic powers.

In the previous chapters, I mentioned more precisely the Turkish state's intervention in the formation of collective action in the Kurdish region since 1950s. The main areas or issues that the Turkish state has intervened in the Kurdish region are as follows:

- The incorporation of the Kurdish ruling class into the central state after the 1950s (Chapter 2: Part E),

- The formation of the identity conflicts in the Kurdish region (Chapter 3: Part B/3),

- The formation of the Alevi and Zaza identities as alternative to the Kurdish national identity after the 1990s and the 2000s respectively (Chapter 3: Part F),

- The PKK – KH conflict in the 1990s (Chapter 3: Part B/4),

- The state violence towards the members of the Kurdish economic elite in the 1990s (Chapter 4: Part C/2),

- The state's socioeconomic discriminatory policies towards Kurdish region since the beginning of 1920s, after the 1950s in particular (Chapter 4: Part D/1),

- The formation of integrationist proposal (local decentralization) of the Kurdish economic elite and pro-Islamist groups in the 2000s (Chapter 5: Part B),

- The negotiations between the leading Kurdish movement and other national groups after 2005 (Chapter 6: Part B).

As mentioned in Chapter 6 (Part B), the national groups other than the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK has tried to use the government's policy of establishing an alternative Kurdish movement to the leading Kurdish movement as a political resource to reinforce their power in the Kurdish region. This policy had a very destructive effect on the negotiations and cooperation among the Kurdish national groups between 2005 and 2010.

Yet, the central state's intervention into Kurdish collective action is not limited to that. It also includes the leading Kurdish movement's relations with the religious groups and

economic elite. The state's historically constructed military, socioeconomic, and ideological powers have been substantially restructured since the AK Party came into power in 2002. I argue that this transformation process, which was shaped by the pro-Islamist and neo-liberal and Turkish nationalist qualities of the AK Party, significantly affected the interactions of the three Kurdish groups. The central state intervention and its asymmetrical relations with local-regional actors play a crucial, destructive role in the conflict, negotiations and consensus of the Kurdish region.

1) AK Party and Kurdish pro-Islamism

Most Kurdish pro-Islamist groups used the AK Party's pro-Islamist quality as a resource to reinforce their power vis-à-vis the leading Kurdish movement in the Kurdish region until 2009. Yet, the Turkish nationalist quality of the AK Party has constituted a remarkable constraint for the pro-Islamist groups to reinforce their power in the Kurdish region for last several years. Some pro-Islamist groups started to seek a third way alongside the AK Party and the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK that has dominated the political sphere in the Kurdish region for the last decade.

As detailed earlier (see Chapter 3: Part D), the pro-Islamist identity of the AK Party has made it possible to reconcile the controversial relationship between the Turkish state and most Kurdish pro-Islamist groups. After the decades-long Kemalist domination in the country, the AK Party rule has provided the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups with considerable material and normative resources to reorganize themselves in the economic, social, cultural and political arena against or alongside the Kurdish national and secular groups in general, and the leading Kurdish movement in particular. The AK Party became the principal political area for the majority of the Kurdish pro-Islamists to advocate their ideas and realize their material and normative interests[1].

Alongside direct representation of the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups within the AK Party, the pro-Islamist quality of the party has promoted the emergence of different pro-Islamist groups, including pro-Islamist NGO networks in the Kurdish region since 2002. The pro-Islamist NGOs platform in Diyarbakır, and the KİAP, the main regional platform of the more than 60 main Kurdish pro-Islamist groups, are two remarkable examples of the emergence of

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[1] Fırat, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012; Aslan, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012; Yaşar, Personal Interview; Altaç, Personal Interview; Advan, Personal Interview; Erkan Sözen, Personal Interview, Şanlıurfa, June 6, 2012; Ziver Özdemir, Personal Interview, Batman, August 6, 2012.

the pro-Islamist networks in the Kurdish region after 2002. The re-emergence of the KH after 2005 as a legal socio-political movement having a political party, a TV channel, a radio station, a newspaper, several journals in Kurdish and Turkish, and different NGOs working diverse areas is another noteworthy example. In fact, these pro-Islamist groups have composed the main opposition to the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK in the Kurdish region.

At this point, the AK Party's initial reformist quality and its Muslim-brotherhood discourse have played a significant role to cooperate with the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups. The AK Party's Muslim-brotherhood discourse and its reformist efforts concerning the Kurdish issue allowed the pro-Islamist groups to reinforce their power in the Kurdish region. Yet the Turkish nationalist and statist qualities of the AK Party constituted a significant constraint for the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups, particularly since these qualities confined the reform process with liberal individual cultural rights, providing only a partial recognition of the Kurdish identity as "a folkloric local diversity in Turkey." This process has decreased the credibility of the AK Party as a resource for the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups and resulted in a noteworthy disappointment among the pro-Islamist Kurds[1]. In fact, these characteristics of the pro-Islamist central state have forced the local-regional Kurdish pro-Islamist groups to question the Muslim-brotherhood policy and find a pro-Islamic way for resolving the Kurdish issue. Some Kurdish pro-Islamist groups have already started to build a third way alongside the AK Party and the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK[2]. The emergence of the Azadî, and the HUDA-PAR and The DFDG can be evaluated as a result of this third-way-seeking.

2) AK Party and Kurdish economic elite

Like the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups, the Kurdish economic elite saw the AK Party's rule as a useful resource for expanding both their economic and political spaces in the Kurdish region. The neo-liberal and reformist qualities of the AK Party promoted the economic elite's cooperation with the government. In this regard, I can argue that the Marxist-socialist legacy of the leading pro-Kurdish movement, and its anti-capitalist discourse have

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[1] Ömer Evsen, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 18, 2011; Nurettin Bozkurt, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 19, 2011; Sedat Doğan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 26, 2012; Serdar B. Yılmaz, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 22, 2011; Ferzende Lale, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 15, 2011; Sıtkı Zilan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 14, 2011; Muhittin Batmanlı, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 28, 2012; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012; Aziz Aslan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 22, 2011; Feyzi Güzelsoy, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 28, 2011; Necat Özdemir, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 27, 2012; Aytar, Personal Interview; İsa Aydın, Personal Interview, Batman, September 6, 2012.

[2] Fırat, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012; Aslan, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012.

accelerated the consolidation of this relationship between the Kurdish economic elite and the government. Yet the Turkish nationalist quality of the AK Party also constituted a remarkable constraint for the economic elite. Additionally, it is not only the infrastructural power of the central state, but also its despotic power that constitutes a grave constraint on the way of the Kurdish economic elite. As in the 1990s, the central state has used its despotic power to control and even to threaten the Kurdish economic elite for keeping them away from the sociopolitical mobilization for the Kurdish national liberation.

The AK Party's infrastructural power in the economic area eased its relation with the Kurdish economic elite. The AK Party has tried to keep away the Kurdish economic elite from the Kurdish national groups by offering them new economic opportunities. In this regard, the neo-liberal quality of the AK Party[1], the national economic growth across the country, the high growth of foreign trade[2] and the immense privatization process since 2002, have made the Kurdish economic elite see the pro-Islamist government as a valuable resource for expanding their economic and political spheres in the Kurdish region. In fact, members of the economic elite mostly prefer the AK Party over the BDP for political participation. For instance, compared with pro-Kurdish parties, most of the AK Party deputies in the Kurdish region are either former businessmen, presidents of chambers of trade and commerce or businessmen's associations, or members of upper-class families.

As mentioned earlier, the Kurdish economic elite has mostly been dependent on the central state due to construction of the Kurdish region as a periphery economy and the incorporation of the Kurdish ruling class into central state since the 1950s. Additionally, since 2002, two attempts of the AK Party government to reinforce the Kurdish economic elite's loyalty to the center must be particularly noted: The GAP Action Plan[3] declared in 2008 and New Incitement System initiated in 2012[4].

The GAP Action Plan, which was declared in May 28, 2008 by PM Erdoğan in Diyarbakır with the participation of most ministers and many members of the Kurdish

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[1] For the neoliberal characteristic of AK Party, see two sophisticated books: Ataay, *Neoliberalizm Ve Muhafazakar Demokrasi: 2000'li Yıllarda Türkiye'de Siyasal Değişimin Dinamikleri*; Üzgel and Duru, *AKP Kitabı: Bir Dönüşümün Bilançosu*.

[2] Henri J. Barkey, *Turkish Foreign Policy and The Middle East*, CERI Strategy Papers (Paris: Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales - CERI, June 6, 2011); Morton Abramowitz and Henri J. Barkey, "Turkey's Transformers: The AKP Sees Big," *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 6 (2009): 118–128.

[3] For more information, see: www.gapep.gov.tr

[4] For more information, see: www.ekonomi.gov.tr

economic elite was the first attempt of the government to consolidate the cooperation between the Kurdish economic elite and Ankara. The plan aimed to complete most projects of the GAP – initially planned as energy project in 1980 and transformed to a regional socioeconomic development plan including nine provinces in 1989[1]_ by 2012. Yet the plan has had very limited effects on the regional socioeconomic development and mostly remained as an energy project for the industrialized western part of the country[2]. With the New Action Plan having TL26.7 billion (nearly €14 billion with the exchange rate of May 2008, €1 = TL1.93), the AK Party government opened a large market for the Kurdish economic elite in the Kurdish region.

The Incitement System started in 2012 is the second remarkable effort of the AK Party to consolidate the economic elite's loyalty to the center. In fact, the policy of incitement of the private sector has been one of the principal economic instruments to incorporate the Kurdish economic elite into the center since the 1970s. In the first and second five-year national development plans in 1963[3] and 1968[4], the major instrument for the socioeconomic development of the Kurdish region was "regional planning" under the leadership of the public investments. Yet with the third five-year national development plan in 1973, the policy of "development areas having priority" replaced the "regional planning" and incentive of the private sector replaced the leadership of the public investments[5]. Indeed, most members of the economic actors whom I interviewed welcomed the new incitement system, although they criticizes the government not to center sufficiently on the Kurdish region, which is the least

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[1] For the history of the GAP, see: www.gap.gov.tr

[2] Mustafa Sönmez, "Regional Inequality: Aspects of Inequality in the East and the Southeast," in *Socioeconomic Problems of the East and South-East Anatolia Regions of Turkey and Suggestions of Solution* (Diyarbakır: Union of the Municipals of the South-East Anatolia Region, 2008), 38–44; Paul J. White, "Economic Marginalization of Turkey's Kurds: The Failed Promise of Modernization and Reform," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 18, no. 1 (1998): 139–159.

[3] Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, *1. Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı (1963–1967)* (Ankara: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1963).

[4] Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, *2. Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı (1968–1972)* (Ankara: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1968).

[5] Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, *3. Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1973–1977* (Ankara: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1973); Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, *4. Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1979–1983* (Ankara: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1979); Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, *5. Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1985–1989* (Ankara: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1984); Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, *6. Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1990–1994* (Ankara: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1989); Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, *7. Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 1996–2000* (Ankara: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 1995); Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, *8. Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı 2001–2005* (Ankara: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 2000); Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, *9. Kalkınma Planı 2007–2013* (Ankara: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, 2006).

developed region in Turkey[1]. Despite the limits of the new incitement system, it is obvious that it provides the Kurdish economic elite with remarkable economic opportunities in the Kurdish region.

However, it must be noted that the Turkish nationalist quality of the AK Party also confines its ability to cooperate with the Kurdish economic elite; and constitutes a grave constraint on the way of the Kurdish economic elite. In this regard, the Kurdish economic elite's experience in the IKR must be noted. While a common Kurdish identity might be expected to facilitate and accelerate economic cooperation between Erbil and Diyarbakır, the AK Party has limited and even blocked the economic integration of the two Kurdish regions in Turkey and Iraq. Instead of economic integration between Diyarbakır and Erbil, the Turkish central state has tried to develop an economic bridge between the western parts of the country and the IKR. Therefore, the Kurdish economic elite has realized that the Turkish "trading state"[2] functions differently in accordance with the cultural geographies and national identities of economic actors; and having a Kurdish identity was not an advantage but a disadvantage for the expansion of their economic activities in the IKR, the first Kurdish quasi-state in the Middle East[3].

The central state has intervened not only with its infrastructural power (principally economic opportunities), but also with its despotic power. Although the economic opportunities that the central state offers constitute remarkable resources for the economic elite, its despotic power comprises a grave constraint on the way of cooperation between the Kurdish economic elite and national groups. In this regard, I must underline "Law on the Prevention of Financing of Terrorism,"[4] which gives the power to the government to block

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[1] Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview; Korkutata, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, May 1, 2012; Kaya, Personal Interview, February 5, 2012; Ebedioğlu, Personal Interview; Odabaşı, Personal Interview; Baysal, Personal Interview; Mehmet A. Uzunyaya, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 20, 2012; Alimoğlu, Personal Interview; Yetkin, Personal Interview; Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview; Osman Nasıroğlu, Personal Interview, Batman, August 6, 2012; Cengiz, Personal Interview.

[2] Kemal Kirişçi, "The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of the Trading State," *New Perspectives on Turkey* no. 40 (2009): 29–57.

[3] For a sophisticated analysis of the Kurdish economic elite's activities in the IKR, and their limits due to the central state and the KRG, see also: Merve Ozdemirkiran, "Construire Un Etat, Briser Des Tabous: Les Hommes D'affaires de Turquie Entre La Construction Étatique Du Gouvernement Régional Du Kurdistan (GRK) et La Politique Étrangère de La Turquie" (Institut d'Etudes Politique de Paris (Sciences Po.), 2013).

[4] Resmi Gazete (16.02.2013/28561), *Terörizmin Finansmanının Önlenmesi Hakkında Kanun*, Kanun No: 6415, Kabul Tarihi: 07.02.2013.

the property of any person, company, or organization without any judicial decision, due to any suspicion that they support terrorist organizations. After two-year-long discussion, this law was adopted on February 2013. Indeed, this law has caused noteworthy anxiety among the Kurdish political and economic elites. For instance, A. Demirbaş, the mayor of Sur Municipality in Diyarbakır, highlights that the government will be able to block the property of anyone on the grounds of any suspicion about the financing "terrorist organization"; and after this law, no one will support any association or NGO[1].

In brief, the central state's infrastructural and despotic powers constitute both the resources and constraints for the Kurdish economic elite, which confines their cooperation with the Kurdish national groups. The Kurdish economic elite has used the opportunities offered by the AK Party through its neo-liberal policies at the regional and national level, and its "trading state" quality in the international market. Yet, its Turkish nationalist quality has constituted a remarkable obstacle both at international level (IKR) and the regional-national level (the law on the financing of terrorism) so far.

3) AK Party and Kurdish Alevis

As mentioned earlier, the Alevis have been subjected to policies of denial, neglect, assimilation and violence by the Sunni-Muslim rulers for centuries. As a result, the controversial relations between the Sunni-Muslims and Alevis is the most important dynamic in determining the political positions of the Kurdish, Turkish or Arab Alevi communities. I argued therefore that the Alevi identity is the suprareligious identity over the Turkish, Kurdish or Arab national identities (see Chapter3: Part E). Although the leading Kurdish movement and the left-wing revolutionary groups are relatively well organized within the Alevi communities, the Alevi-identity-based opposition has mostly mobilized within the CHP, which they perceive as guarantee for the secular political system against political Sunni Islam.

Since 2002, the pro-Islamist AK Party rule has had remarkable influence on the Kurdish Alevi groups and reinforced the CHP's power among them. The reinforcement of the CHP among the Alevi Kurds has confined the cooperation between the Kurdish pro-Alevi and national groups, and with the leading Kurdish movement in particular. In addition to the pro-Islamist quality of the AK Party, its constant exclusive and discriminative policies and Prime

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[1] Abdullah Demirbaş, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, November 23, 2011.

Minister R. T. Erdoğan's offensive discourse towards the Alevis[1], and the election of K. Kılıçdaroğlu, a Kurdish Alevi from Dersim, to the presidency of the main opposition party CHP in 2010, have secured the Alevi Kurds' loyalty to the second-most important political group in the central state so far[2]. From a bottom-up perspective, I can argue that the majority of Alevi Kurds have found the CHP – the main opposition party – to be a more valuable resource than the Kurdish national groups in the struggle against the pro-Islamism AK Party rule since 2002.

For instance, the argument of Y. Cengiz, the president of Tunceli TSO, underlines that the controversial relations between Prime Minister R. T. Erdogan and Kılıçdaroğlu, and Erdogan attacks to the Alevi identity caused the Alevi support the CHP in Dersim:

> "The reason that the CHP is successful today is the fact that K. Kılıçdaroğlu is from Dersim. The second reason is the constant fight between Kılıçdaroğlu and Prime Minister on TV. For instance, after the Prime Minister's attacks to Alevi identity by telling Kılıçdaroğlu 'I know your type, your ancestors, and what you are', the people of Dersim supported the CHP. Additionally, people of Dersim believed that Kılıçdaroğlu would be the prime minister and that is why they supported the CHP in Dersim[3]."

In brief, the central state's intervention during the AK Party rule has mostly played a destructive role in the formation of the Kurdish consensus in Turkey. The pro-Islamist quality of the AK Party has reinforced the gathering of the Sunni-Muslim and Alevi Kurds around the two centers: the government and the main opposition party, respectively. Similarly, its neo-liberal quality has consolidated the incorporation of the Kurdish economic elite into the center. Like the national groups other than the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK, the Kurdish religious groups and economic elite have used the central state as a valuable resource to advocate their ideas and material and normative interests, as well as to reinforce their institutions in the Kurdish region. Yet, the Turkish nationalist quality of the AK Party has constituted a grave constraint for the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups and economic elite to reinforce their powers in the Kurdish region. This quality of the government has also caused some pro-Islamist groups

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[1] Cengiz, Personal Interview; Polat, Personal Interview; Halis, Personal Interview; Munzur Çem, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 30, 2012; Mukan, Personal Interview; Yeşiltepe, Personal Interview; Gündoğan, Personal Interview.

[2] Cengiz, Personal Interview; Polat, Personal Interview; Halis, Personal Interview; Çem, Personal Interview; Bozkurt, Personal Interview, July 30, 2012; Güler, Personal Interview.

[3] Cengiz, Personal Interview.

and economic elite to become closer to the Kurdish national groups since 2010 (see the previous chapter).

C - Geopolitics: A new frame for the Kurdish issue in Turkey

Given the fact that the Kurdish issue is a transnational and international problem, the geopolitics of the Kurdish issue must be underlined as the third dynamic, which has remarkable effects on the formation of the ideas, interests and institutions of the Kurdish groups, alongside the historically constructed context and the central state. The significant geopolitical changes that have occurred in the Kurdish regions of Iraq and Syria since 2003 and 2011, respectively, make the transnational and international qualities of the Kurdish issue more important than before in the formation of collective action in the Kurdish region of Turkey.

Since 2003, the Turkish government has been challenged by the model (with its political, administrative, social and economic aspects) developed in the IKR, which has over five million inhabitants and is considered to be the first (quasi-)state in the Middle East[1]. The IKR has undoubtedly become an important political center for Kurds throughout the world, and in Turkey in particular. The Kurds who have been subjected to the policies of denial, assimilation, neglect and violence throughout the Turkish Republic's history, have had a Kurdish federal state just on the other side of the border. The foundation of the IKR, and increasing multi-level cooperation in economic, social, cultural and political fields among different public/political, associative and private Kurdish and Turkish actors, has been a determining dynamic that has framed and constructed different actors and their different Kurdish issues so far. The rise of Kurdish nationalism in Iraq with its *politico-administrative model* has provided the Kurdish groups with a new cognitive and normative frame concerning the Kurdish issue and increased their demands, expectations and motivations in Turkey.

In addition to IKR's challenge, Ankara has been faced with the possibility of the establishment of a new Kurdish autonomous region in Syria for more than two years[2]. Since the summer of 2011, the Syrian Kurds have taken control of large part of their homeland,

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[1] Denise Natali, *The Kurdish Quasi-State: Development and Dependency in Post-Gulf War Iraq* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2010); Ozdemirkiran, "Construire Un Etat, Briser Des Tabous: Les Hommes D'affaires de Turquie Entre La Construction Étatique Du Gouvernement Régional Du Kurdistan (GRK) et La Politique Étrangère de La Turquie."

[2] Çandar, "Suriye Rejimi Düşerse, Irak Parçalanırsa..."

celebrated the "liberation of Western Kurdistan"[1], or the Kurdish region in Syria under the leadership of the Kurdish Supreme Council led by the Kurdish Party PYD, the only armed party affiliated with the PKK. Despite ongoing debates among different Kurdish groups, the Kurdish Supreme Council has united and represented most of the Kurds in Syria so far. In brief, the IKR (the first and essential wave) and *de facto* Kurdish autonomous region in Syria (the second wave) have become two significant dynamics changing the geopolitical aspects of the transnational and international Kurdish issue and determining the collective action of the Kurds in Turkey for the last decade. The statement of S. Demirtaş, the co-president of the BDP, summarizes this historical turning point for the Kurds and their neighbors: "From Igdir to Hatay, all southern borders of Turkey will officially be Kurdistan[2]."

Although the IKR has remarkable effects on the Kurdish groups and the Turkish state, in this thesis I confine myself with its influence on the Kurdish groups and how the Kurdish groups mobilize or utilize the IKR at the local and regional level in Turkey. I argue that although the three Kurdish blocs have welcomed the foundation of the IKR, it has a different importance for each bloc. First of all, it is a resource of legitimacy and motivation for the Kurds who live in Turkey (and in Iran, Syria and all around the world). The IKR has provided all Kurdish groups (and the national groups in particular) a new cognitive and normative frame and a new political and national-cultural resource through its federal or quasi-state model. Besides, it is a new resource for the reproduction of the Kurdish language and cultural identity with its politico-administrative system assuring collective cultural rights. However, for the Kurdish economic elite, the IKR has not been only a national-cultural resource, but also a new economic market so far. As to the religious groups, the IKR has provided the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups with a new political and pro-Islamic resource. On the contrary, it has had few considerable political or economic effects for the Alevi Kurds in Turkey (see Table 2). It is also important to note the role of the flow of the information over the Internet, TV channels broadcasting by satellite across the borders, as well as newspapers, journals, and social media thanks to new information technologies in the influence of the geopolitical change on the Kurds in Turkey.

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[1] Perrier, "Les Kurdes Du PKK à L'offensive Contre Le Régime de Damas."

[2] Düzel, "Selahattin Demirtaş: Türkiye'nin Sınırı Kürdistan Olacak."

Table 8 Three Kurdish blocs and the influence of the geopolitical changes

Bloc		Group	Principal pillars of social imaginary	Geopolitics as a constraint and resources
National Bloc		BDP-DTK/ PKK-KCK	- National and social liberation - Socialism - Gender equality	- A resource of motivation - A normative and cognitive constraint
		HAK-PAR	- National liberation	- A resource of motivation - A normative and cognitive resource - A politico-administrative model
		KADEP	- National liberation - Liberalism	- A resource of motivation - A normative and cognitive resource - A politico-administrative model
		ÖSP	- Socialism - National liberation	- A resource of motivation - A normative and cognitive resource - A politico-administrative model
		TDŞK	- National liberation	- A resource of motivation - A normative and cognitive resource - A politico-administrative model - An organizational resource
Economic Elite		Pro-Islamist	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - Economic liberalism - Kurdish cultural identity	- An economic resources
		Alevi	- Socio-cultural Alevi identity - Economic liberalism - Kurdish cultural identity	- An irrelevant dynamic
		Secular	- Economic liberalism - Political liberalism - Kurdish cultural identity	- An economic resource - A cultural resource
		National	- Economic liberalism - Political liberalism - Kurdish national issue	- A resource of motivation - A normative and cognitive resource - An economic resources
Religious Bloc	Pro-Islamist Groups	AK Party	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - Kurdish cultural identity	- An economic resource - A political resource both at national/regional and international levels
		GC	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - Kurdish cultural identity	- A new economic resource
		MGH	- Political Sunni-Islam - Kurdish cultural identity	- A new cognitive and normative resource
		MZC	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - National issue	- A resource of motivation - A normative and cognitive resource - A politico-administrative model
		KH	- Political Sunni-Islam - National issue	- A political and organizational resource both for the issues of Islam and nation
		Azadî	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - National liberation	- A resource of motivation - A normative and cognitive resource - A politico-administrative model
	Alevi Groups	BDP-Supporting Alevi Group	- Socio-cultural Alevi identity - National and social liberation	- An irrelevant dynamic
		CHP-Supporting Alevi Group	- Socio-cultural Alevi identity - Multiculturalism	- An irrelevant dynamic
		Left-wing Alevi Group	- Socialism - Socio-cultural Alevi identity - National issue	- An irrelevant dynamic

1) Geopolitical changes and the national groups

There is a shared idea among the Kurdish political, economic and religious elites that the IKR has been a resource of legitimacy and motivation for all the Kurds living in Turkey. However, the influence of the IKR is not limited to the Kurdish people; it has also affected the Kurdish political groups and become an internal dynamic in the formation of the Kurdish issue(s) in Turkey. With its politico-administrative model, the IKR provides the Kurdish groups with a new normative and cognitive frame. The IKR has functioned as a normative and cognitive constraint to the leading Kurdish movement. The BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK had to change its political proposal and replaced the democratic republic project with the democratic autonomy project. In contrast, the national groups that advocate a Kurdish or Kurdistan federal region have used the IKR as a significant ideational resource and politico-administrative model to justify their political proposal to the Kurdish issue in Turkey.

a) The leading Kurdish movement

The leading Kurdish movement evaluated the establishment of the IKR in a very negative way and mostly neglected it during its early years due to its alleged cooperation with the Turkish state to undermine the influence of the leading Kurdish movement on the Kurds in Turkey. Yet, it has significantly changed its approach towards the IKR and used it as a new cognitive and normative frame to justify its ideas and mobilize the Kurds since 2005. More importantly, the new normative and cognitive frame that the IKR provided to all the Kurdish political groups with its politico-administrative model imposed the leading Kurdish movement to revise its political proposal for the settlement of the Kurdish issue.

A. Öcalan, the founding leader of the PKK, accused the PDK and the YNK, two principal parties in the IKR, of taking part in the international operation against the PKK that resulted in his capture and imprisonment in February 15, 1999. The leading Kurdish movement accused the IKR's parties of being local partners of the "international plot" led by the US against them for several years[1]. While I conducted interviews during the field

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[1] It is important to note that the relations between the PKK and the IRK's parties PDK and YNK was very controversial for years and resulted in armed conflicts on a number of occasions in the 1990s. In particular, the cross-border military operations of the Turkish state in the IKR with the cooperation of the PKD and the YNK against the PKK in the 1990s built grave obstacles against the cooperation between them. Alongside the armed confrontation of the Kurdish political groups in the 1990s, I must underline the decades-long polarization of the PKK and the PDK. Unlike the YNK, the PDK is the first pan-Kurdish political organization. The PDK was founded in 1946 in Mahabad in Iranian Kurdistan. The PDK established the Soviet-backed Republic of Mahabad, led by Qazi Muhammed and Mola Mustafa Barzani, the father of Massoud Barzani, who has been the president of the KRG since

research, the representatives of the leading Kurdish movement confirmed their controversial relations with the KRG during the early years. They argue that the Turkish state tried to use the KRG to undermine the influence of the leading Kurdish movement on the Kurds of Turkey, and the KRG preferred to cooperate with Turkey and Iran to soften their hostile political stances towards the establishment of the first quasi-state in the Middle East[1].

The negative approach of the leading Kurdish movement to the IKR changed after the 2005-06, when the IKR was constitutionally recognized, reached political stability and reinforced its power both in Iraq and the international arena and the PKK emerged from political turbulence due to the capture of its founding charismatic leader. Since that time, there has been a mutual noteworthy effort for negotiation and cooperation between the IKR and the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK[2]. In this regard, I must underline the influence of the establishment of the quasi-state in the Middle East on the Kurdish people in Turkey. Almost all the Kurdish political, economic and religious elites whom I interview share the idea that the IKR strengthened the Kurdish national ambitions and increased the Kurds' demands, expectations and motivation for the settlement of their national issue in Turkey. As many political elites underline, this influence has made the Kurdish groups stay removed from the internal conflicts[3].

2003. Alongside the KDP of Iran, the KDP of Iraq was established in Baghdad on August 16, 1946. The Kurds of Syria and Turkey were inspired by the PDK in Iran and Iraq and established the PDK of Syria and the PDK of Turkey in 1957 and 1965 respectively. For more information see: David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005); Mehrdad R. Izady, *The Kurds: A Concise History and Fact Book* (Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis, Inc., 1992); S.X. Mihoyan, "1960-1970 Yıllarında Kürdistan," in *Kürdistan Tarihi*, ed. M.S. Lazarev and S.X. Mihoyan (İstanbul: Avesta, 2010), 291–352. While the PDK was established mostly by the Kurdish ruling groups, the PKK emerged as a political movement of the rural and urban lower classes in Turkey, and criticized very severely and even targeted the Kurdish ruling classes in the 1970s and 1980s. For the societal bases of the PKK and the PDK, see: Joost Jongerden and Ahmet H. Akkaya, *PKK Üzerine Yazılar* (İstanbul: Vate, 2012); Wadie Jwaideh, *The Kurdish National Movement: Its Origins and Development* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2006), 243–266; Abbas Vali, *Kurds and State in Iran: The Making of Kurdish Identity* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011). Besides, the political competition between the PKK and the PDK is ongoing in the four countries. There are both the PKK-affiliated political parties and KDP-inspired parties in Turkey, Iran, Syria and Iraq. For instance, the political competition between the PKK and the PDK has destructive effects on the formation of the de facto autonomous Kurdish region in Syria.

[1] Kışanak, Personal Interview; Demir Çelik, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, October 5, 2012; Seydi Fırat, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, October 5, 2012; Baydemir, Personal Interview; Selahattin Demirtaş, Personal Interview, Ankara, October 11, 2012.

[2] Kışanak, Personal Interview.

[3] Zümrüt, Personal Interview; Halis Yurtsever, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 21, 2012; Baydemir, Personal Interview; Demirtaş, Personal Interview.

Today, the representatives of the leading Kurdish movement mostly welcome the establishment of a Kurdish quasi-state and use it to reinforce the Kurdish national identity in Turkey[1]. For instance, H. Zeydanlioglu, the BDP deputy of Bitlis, describes the establishment of the IKR as "the dream of thousand years" of the Kurds[2]. Likewise, H. Yurtsever, the president of the BDP Bingöl section states that he kissed three times the wall of the Kurdistan Parliament building, when he visited there for the first time in 2005[3]. However, it is important to note that the leading Kurdish movement has not utilized the IKR as a constructive element of its politics in Turkey, and mostly had a critical stance towards it[4].

Despite its critical stance, the leading Kurdish movement had to leave its Democratic Republic Project, which was defining the Kurdish issue as a part of Turkey's democratization and multiculturalism problem. The BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK replaced the Democratic Republic Project, with the Democratic Autonomy Project, which, like in the past, defines the issue as sovereignty-sharing problem beyond democratization and multiculturalism after the mid-2000s. While the leading Kurdish movement excluded the all forms of sovereignty-sharing such as autonomy, federation, and independence and labeled them as reactionary models between the 1999 and 2005, after the establishment of the IKR in Iraq, it revised its frame and proposed the Democratic Autonomy Project, which essentially centers on the constitutional recognition of the Kurdish people, and their self-government rights assuring the production and reproduction of the Kurdish national identity. It is obvious that there is not any other dynamic but the IKR that can explain this transformation. In fact, the democratic autonomy project of the leading Kurdish movement can be understood as a response to the effects of the IKR on the Kurds in Turkey. Underlining the importance of the geopolitical dynamics in the formation of the Kurdish issue in Turkey, S. Demirtas confirms the role of the IKR in this transformation:

"Taking into account the circumstance, the Kurdish movement put forwards the democratic republic thesis. Yet, it had to revise this thesis, since the Kurdish issue was

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[1] Kışanak, Personal Interview; Demirtaş, Personal Interview; Çelik, Personal Interview; Fırat, Personal Interview, October 5, 2012; Baydemir, Personal Interview; Serhat Temel, Personal Interview, Batman, August 6, 2012; Yurtsever, Personal Interview; Hüsamettin Zeydanlıoğlu, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 14, 2012.

[2] Zeydanlıoğlu, Personal Interview.

[3] Yurtsever, Personal Interview.

[4] Çelik, Personal Interview; Fırat, Personal Interview, October 5, 2012; Baydemir, Personal Interview; Altan Tan, Personal Interview, Ankara, October 10, 2012.

Cuma Çiçek – « Interaction of Nation, Religion and Class » - Thèse IEP de Paris – 2014

not solved. ... If the Kurdish issue is not solved on the basis of the democratic autonomy, I mean if we continue like that for 10 more years, the regional balances will change. South Kurdistan (IKR) may be independent; maybe there will be new things in Syria. These will affect the Kurds' demands in Turkey. Maybe, the Kurds will advocate a different political status rather than the democratic autonomy at that time[1]."

Although the leading Kurdish movement commonly did not use the IKB in political mobilization, it tried to develop cooperation at the municipal level to reinforce the idea of national identity and unity between the Kurds who live under the political dominance of the different states[2]. As O. Baydemir, the mayor of Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality highlights, this municipal cooperation has had a remarkable influence on the rising of the national emotions among the Kurds of Iraq and Turkey and paved new ways for cooperation in various areas such as economy, education, culture, and the like.

Unlike the IKR, the Kurdish region in Syria is largely under the control of the PYD, which is affiliated to the leading Kurdish movement in Turkey. While the leading Kurdish movement did not mobilize its power in Turkey to support the establishment of the IKR, it has made a remarkable effort to support the Syrian Kurds[3]. For that reason, the de facto autonomous Kurdish region in Syria became a remarkable resource of the political mobilization for the leading Kurdish movement in Turkey. This mobilization supports the idea that the Kurdish people and their homeland is divided, and that the political solutions to the Kurdish issues in four countries are related to each other. It is important to note that in Turkey sectarian, nationalist, and even hostile policies towards a de facto autonomous Kurdish region in Syria has unexpectedly strengthened the cross-border Kurdish national identity and unity.

b) Other national groups

Unlike the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK, other Kurdish national groups that advocate a federal Kurdish region in Turkey give a remarkable importance to the establishment of the IKR as the first quasi-state in the Middle East. They use the IKR not only as a resource of motivation, but

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[1] Demirtaş, Personal Interview.

[2] Baydemir, Personal Interview; Temel, Personal Interview.

[3] The Firat News Agency that is considered as close to the leading Kurdish movement has issued a number of stories about the sociopolitical mobilization of Kurds of Turkey for the Kurdish region in Syrian since 2011. For example of these news, see : www.firatnews.com.

also as politico-administrative model to justify their cognitive and normative frame about the Kurdish issue.

The HAK-PAR uses the IKR not only as a resource of motivation, but also as a politico-administrative model to justify the federative model in Turkey. President Bozyel, who underlines the solidarity and unity among the Kurdish political groups in the four countries as one of three main policies of the party, describes the establishment of the IKR as "the realization of the Kurds' 1000-year-long dream of freedom." Highlighting that the IKR has been a resource of motivation for the Kurds who struggle for national liberation, Bozyel argues that with the establishment of the IKR, the Kurds have seen that liberation is not a dream but a reality just around the corner. He also uses the IKR's politico-administrative model to justify the federative model in Turkey. For instance, to counter the arguments of integrationist Kurds, who say that the millions of Kurds in the western part of Turkey make a federal state based on ethnic/national identities impossible in Turkey, he uses the example of the one million Kurds who live in Baghdad, in spite of the existence of the IKR. While the president sees the IKR as a very important reference, unlike the leading Kurdish movement, he does not give a noteworthy importance to de facto Kurdish autonomous region in Syria. It is obvious that the HAK-PAR's constant cooperative relations with IKR's parties, the PDK and the YNK in particular for decades, and its common cognitive and normative frame about the Kurdish issue have a remarkable influence on its ongoing political stance concerning the geopolitical changes of the issue[1].

The KADEP has a similar approach about the establishment of the IKR. President Elçî, who underlines the geographical and national unity of the Kurds who live under the political dominance of the four states, argues that the IKR has become a cognitive and normative reference for the Kurds who live in Turkey. According to Elçî, the Kurds of Turkey compare their situation with the Iraqi Kurds in terms of political power, economic development and national liberty. The president highlights that the IKR has not only motivated the Kurdish people for the national liberation, but also increased the Kurdish political groups' demands and expectations in Turkey by providing them a politico-administrative model. He argues that the political groups have used the IKR as reference point so far:

> "In a part of Kurdistan, a federation was built. This federation is very powerful, almost like independence. After that, we cannot demand the less one. Until 2006, it was the

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[1] Bozyel, Personal Interview.

DTP (the predecessor of the BDP); they were saying that they wanted the individual cultural rights, the human rights. Yet after the establishment of the IKR, you cannot demand that. Turkey is obliged to either accept a federal system for the Kurds, or the Kurds will advocates a (independent) state[1]."

The president of HAK-PAR highlights that if the Kurds gain a political status in Syria, this will reinforce the influence of the geopolitical changes on the Kurds of Turkey[2].

The TDŞK also sees the IKR as a referential point. However, unlike the HAK-PAR and KADEP, the movement particularly centers on the internal democracy, plurality and unity among different Kurdish political groups in Iraq. Criticizing the leading Kurdish movement for excluding other political groups, H. İpek, the spokesperson of the movement, describes the IKR as a good model for the Kurds in Turkey to build a plural internal system:

"The election and the way of establishing the government are admirable. They developed an approach that allowed those who took 40% and those who took 1% to work together. The PDK and the YNK did not use their overwhelming majority to exclude or suppress the pro-Islamists, the socialists, the Yezidis, or other non-Muslims. They gathered them as mush as possible. This has accelerated the country-building, nation-building, and state-building process there[3]."

Finally, the ÖSP, which describes the "Kurdistan issue" as a self-determination problem and advocates a federal Kurdish region in current circumstances, also welcomes the establishment of the IKR and uses it as a referential point. S. Çiftyürek, the president of the ÖSP, asserts that the after the establishments of the IKB and de facto Kurdish region in Syria, the democratic autonomy project of the leading Kurdish movement has become an irrelevant project for the Kurds, and their demands and expectation has increased to the federation:

"Aside from everything, the Kurdistan flag is waving on the other side of the Habur[4]. There, there is a federal, even a con-federal structure. In a time that a political status is discussed for the Syrian Kurdistan, in a time that, as S. Demirtaş saying, 'Turkey is surrounded by the Kurdistan borders', the recognition of cultural rights or ELSGC or a regional autonomy based on the 20-25 regions is not possible in the Northern Kurdistan,

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[1] Elçi, Personal Interview.

[2] Ibid.

[3] İpek, Personal Interview.

[4] It is the name of the border gate between Turkey and Iraq in Silopi town of the Şırnak province.

which constitutes nearly 40% of the population and geography of Kurdistan. In fact, when our friends of BDP describe the democratic autonomy project, they describe a federal or autonomous Kurdistan[1]."

In brief, the IKR and de facto autonomous Kurdish region in Syria as a second geopolitical wave have become internal dynamics of the formation of the Kurdish issue in Turkey for several reasons. First of all, the establishment of the IKR has become a significant resource of motivation for the Kurdish people and the political cadres, staffs and sympathizers in regards to the Kurdish national liberation struggle. Second, the IKR, with its politico-administrative model under which it has come to be considered to be a quasi-state, has constituted a new normative and cognitive frame for the Kurdish political groups in Turkey. The leading Kurdish movement has received it as a normative and cognitive constraint due to its controversial relations with the IKR's parties, the PDK and the YNK in particular, and revised its political proposal for the settlement of the Kurdish issue in Turkey. In contrast, the other national groups have welcomed the establishment of the IKR and used the cognitive and normative frame that it has provided them justification for their federal solution to the Kurdish issue in Turkey. Finally, it is critical to note that unlike the other Kurdish national groups, the leading Kurdish movement has given a remarkable importance to de facto Kurdish autonomous region in Syria, which has been largely controlled by the PYD, its political branch in Syria.

2) Geopolitical changes and the economic elite

The influence of the geopolitical changes on the Kurdish economic elite differs in accordance their social imaginary, their ideas and the material and normative interests concerning the Kurdish issue, and their relations with the central governance. The pro-Islamist economic elites who have good relations with the central state mainly see the IKR as an economic resource. The secular economic elites who primarily cooperate with the central state and remove themselves from the participation in the political issues also see the IKR as an economic resource, yet they criticize the government for not sufficiently supporting the companies in the Kurdish region of Turkey. The members of the economic elite who consider the Kurdish issue to be a national matter and try to intervene in the political area through their specific institutions (businessmen's associations, industry and trade chambers, etc.) give a remarkable importance to the IKR for providing not only a significant economic resource, but

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[1] Çiftyürek, Personal Interview.

also a cognitive and normative frame for the Kurdish national issue in Turkey. This group accused of the government for its socioeconomic discriminative policies towards the Kurdish economic elites in the IKR's market, and criticizes the leading Kurdish movement for not supporting the economic cooperation between the two Kurdish regions in Turkey and Iraq. Finally, the pro-Alevi Kurdish economic elites do not give a noteworthy importance to the IKR and underlines that the influence of the IKR on the Alevi Kurds is very limited both in economic and political terms.

a) The pro-Islamist economic elites

The pro-Islamist economic elites do not give a specific "national" or "political" importance to Northern Iraq (IKR)[1]. They mainly see the IKR as a new economic resource, a new market where they can invest and expand their economic activities[2]. For instance, all the members of the pro-Islamic elite whom I interviewed have at least once gone to Northern Iraq individually or with their local businessmen's association[3]. Indeed, according to AK Party's authorities, Turkey's export to the IKR was nearly $8-9 billion in 2012[4]. Underlining that they have the local branches nearly in 140 countries, M. Öksüzoglu, the president of ŞÜGİAD (a local member of the TUSKON), clearly states that what they are interested in is a safety region for their economic activities:

"Turkey is a big brother in the region. It has to solve this (Kurdish) issue. The federation, confederation or other things, these are not our business. The thing that we are interested in is a safety region. In Şanlıurfa, my company is one of the companies that does the largest amount of exports. I export largely to the Kurdistan region in Iraq. All my clients are from the Kurdistan region in Northern Iraq[5]."

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[1] The Turkish state and government authorities have avoided using the expression "Iraqi Kurdistan Region," which is constitutionally recognized in Iraq. Being influenced by this political stance of the state, most members of the economic elite also avoid using this expression. The Prime Minister Erdogan used this expression for the first time on November 16, 2013, when he met M. Barzanî, the president of the KRG in Diyarbakır.

[2] Aykut, Personal Interview; Korkutata, Personal Interview; Tatlı, Personal Interview; Dündar, Personal Interview; Galip Ensarioğlu, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, April 6, 2012; Fırat, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012.

[3] Aykut, Personal Interview; Korkutata, Personal Interview; Tatlı, Personal Interview; Alimoğlu, Personal Interview; Ensarioğlu, Personal Interview; Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview; Dündar, Personal Interview.

[4] Ensarioğlu, Personal Interview; Fırat, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012.

[5] Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview.

However, the pro-Islamist economic elites note that the majority of Turkey's companies working in the IKR, are from the western part of the country and the companies from the Kurdish region have a small part in the IKR's market. Although they criticize the government for not sufficiently promoting the companies from the Kurdish region[1], they primary underline their institutionally and financially low capacity to invest in the IKR[2]. In this regard, most members of the elite highlight the economic influence of the IKR on Turkey border provinces in particular. The expression of G. Ensarioğlu, the former president of the DTSO, and the current Diyarbakır deputy of the AK Party, confirms that reality. Yet, the comparison that he makes between Gaziantep and Diyarbakır unquestionably shows that the economic influence of the emergent market in the IKR on the economy of the Kurdish (political) region[3] in Turkey is very limited; and the principal provinces that benefits from IKR's market are not the Kurdish ones, but those in the western part of the country:

> "The industry cannot be developed own by own. You should be close to the border, or to seaport, or raw material. There are none of them in Diyarbakır. Now, the export of Şırnak is three times of our exports, the export of Mardin is two times of ours, the export of Gaziantep is 30 times of ours[4]."

Although the members of the pro-Islamist elite have a common idea that the emergent market in the IKR has constituted a remarkable economic resource for the economic elite in Turkey, they have different perspectives about the political aspects of the IKR. Some underline the imperial policies of the imperial powers, the US in particular towards the Middle East to analyze the IKR's existence[5]. Some argue that the IKR can be a model that Turkey can learn many things to solve its own Kurdish issue[6]. Others put forward that they prefer to live in a democratic, economically developed Turkey rather than in an area that is economically underdeveloped and isolated by its neighbors, like the IKR[7]. According to the

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[1] Aykut, Personal Interview.

[2] Ibid.; Tatlı, Personal Interview.

[3] Gaziantep is mostly considered as part of the Kurdish cultural region. Yet, the province has been largely integrated into the Turkish political, economic, cultural and social system, and its population has been mostly assimilated to the Turkishness. Therefore, it cannot be considered as a part of the Kurdish political region.

[4] Ensarioğlu, Personal Interview.

[5] Korkutata, Personal Interview; Yetkin, Personal Interview.

[6] Dündar, Personal Interview.

[7] Fırat, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012; Ensarioğlu, Personal Interview.

latter, the sole thing that the Kurds of Turkey can benefit from the IKR is the Kurdish cultural identity. The IKR has helped the Kurds of Turkey to solve their identity crisis and publicly present their Kurdish identity[1].

b) The secular economic elites

The secular economic elites who try to keep themselves away from participating in the political issues directly and cooperate principally with the central state share the ideas of the pro-Islamist economic elites concerning the IKR. They also consider the IKR principally as a new economic resource and highlight the limited economic influence of the IKR's emergent market on the Kurdish region's economy in comparison with the western part of the country due to the AK Party's policies and the weak institutional and financial capacity of companies in the Kurdish region[2]. For instance, M. Aslan, the general secretary of the DTSO underlines that the export of Diyarbakir was $165 million, while it was $4.5 billion in Gaziantep in 2011[3].

Unlike pro-Islamist economic elites, this group sees Kurdish cultural identity as a resource that can facilitate economic cooperation with the IKR. They also criticize the government more severely in comparison with the pro-Islamist economic elites for its policies that have not supported – and have even limited –economic integration between Diyarbakır and Erbil[4]. For instance, they highlight that there is still only a military airport in Diyarbakır, which is closed to international airlines despite their constant critiques since 2003[5]. However, like the pro-Islamist elites, some underline that the Kurds seek a future not to with Erbil, but Ankara[6]. The argument of M. Odabaşı is well to the point:

> "As a Kurd who lives in Diyarbakir, my objective is never Erbil. I do not think that the objective of the Kurds in Turkey is Erbil. If the Kurds can build a very modern life standard, a very developed economic level, and a more developed circumstance in the

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[1] Fırat, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012.

[2] Ebedioğlu, Personal Interview; Odabaşı, Personal Interview; Mehmet Aslan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, March 5, 2012; Gölcük, Personal Interview; Uzunyaya, Personal Interview; Nasıroğlu, Personal Interview.

[3] Aslan, Personal Interview, March 5, 2012.

[4] Ebedioğlu, Personal Interview; Odabaşı, Personal Interview; Aslan, Personal Interview, March 5, 2012; Uzunyaya, Personal Interview.

[5] Gölcük, Personal Interview; Odabaşı, Personal Interview.

[6] Ebedioğlu, Personal Interview; Odabaşı, Personal Interview.

Republic of Turkey, they will be more satisfied. They do not have the chance to find this satisfaction in Iraq[1]."

c) National economic elites

The economic elites who frame the Kurdish issue as a "national issue" share the ideas of the two former economic groups concerning the limited influence of the IKR due to the central state's discriminative policies towards the Kurdish region and the weak institutional and financial capacity of the companies in the Kurdish region. However, they have a different normative and cognitive frame about the IKR. This group has used the IKR not only as an economic resource, but also as a normative and cognitive resource for the settlement of the Kurdish national issue in Turkey (and in Iran and Syria). Therefore, they highlight the influence of the IKR on the Kurdish national issue in Turkey, the reform process in particular. Additionally, they criticize more severely the government discriminative socioeconomic policies towards the Kurdish region, and the Kurdish economic elite in particular[2].

The expression of R. Türk, the president of DİSİAD reveals a very striking way the "national" frame of this economic group concerning the IKR:

"Imagine a family waiting for an heir, yet this heir is not somehow born. And imagine how this family will dote on him. For the Kurds, the Kurdistan federal state is like that. For that reason, I think, each Kurd has an emotion to protect this structure[3]."

This national frame lets the economic elites analyze the Turkish state's policies towards the IKR and the Kurdish region in Turkey, not only with the economic dynamics, but also political dynamics. Although they underline the very weak capacity of the companies in the Kurdish region, they explicitly criticize the Turkish state for implementing the discriminative socioeconomic policies towards the Kurdish economic elite in the IKR's market.

The emergent market in the IKR has been a remarkable resource in eliminating the regional disparities and developing the Kurdish region in Turkey. Yet, they argue, the government has aimed to limit the cooperation between two Kurdish regions so far. As a

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[1] Odabaşı, Personal Interview.

[2] Türk, Personal Interview; Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, May 1, 2012; Kaya, Personal Interview, February 5, 2012; Mahmut Yeşil, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, September 5, 2012; Baysal, Personal Interview; Samed Bilgin, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, October 5, 2012; Sarı, Personal Interview; Celalettin Birtane, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 31, 2012.

[3] Türk, Personal Interview.

result, despite the common language and cultural identity, the main provinces that make export with the IRK are not the Kurdish ones, but essentially Gaziantep, Mersin, Kayseri, Ankara and Istanbul. It is important to note that this group does not criticize only the government, but also the leading Kurdish movement. They point out that the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK has done for the development of socioeconomic cooperation between two Kurdish regions and the building a bridge between Diyarbakır and Erbil[1].

d) Pro-Alevi economic elites

Unlike the previous three economic groups, the pro-Alevi economic elites do not give any significance to the IKR and the de facto Kurdish autonomous region in Syria[2]. They make clear distinction between the Alevi and Sunni-Muslim Kurds and highlight that the IKR does not constitute an issue in the political agenda of the Alevi, unlike its influence on the Sunni-Muslim Kurds. Some members even view the IKR in a negative way due to the imperial power's role in its establishment[3]. Even in terms of the economic relations, they underline that the influence of the IKR's market on Alevi Kurds in Dersim is a negligible level. Although, they underline that some Alevi Kurds who live outside of Dersim (in Istanbul, Ankara or European countries) have economic activities in the IKR, the companies that work in the IKR are just one or two working at very limited economic levels.

However, the pro-Alevi economic elites also confirm that the "self government" of the Kurds in Iraq represents a model for the (Sunni-Muslim) Kurds who live in Turkey. For that reason, they argue, the establishment of the IKR has functioned as a positive political dynamic for the leading Kurdish movement. The arguments of H. Bellice summarizes very well the influence of the IKR on the Alevis and pro-Alevi economic elites:

"When we look at from the local level, we cannot say that there is a noteworthy effect. Yet, in general political level, it has served to the BDP. It provides a good atmosphere in political terms. People think that if Kurds govern themselves in Iraq and Syria, why we do not govern ourselves[4]."

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[1] Ibid.; Birtane, Personal Interview; Bilgin, Personal Interview; Kaya, Personal Interview, February 5, 2012; Aslan, Personal Interview, March 5, 2012.

[2] Cengiz, Personal Interview; Bellice, Personal Interview; Güler, Personal Interview; Gündoğan, Personal Interview.

[3] Bellice, Personal Interview; Gündoğan, Personal Interview.

[4] Bellice, Personal Interview.

In brief, the geopolitical changes in Iraq and Syria have affected the Kurdish economic elite in very different ways. Their social imaginaries, and normative and material interests concerning the Kurdish issue and relations with the central state are the main dynamics determining how they deal with the new geopolitical dynamics. Although they commonly see the IKR as a remarkable economic resource, it is just the economic elite that believes the Kurdish issue as a national issue gives a significant importance to the IKR (and de facto Kurdish autonomous region in Syria) due to the cognitive and normative frame that it provides for the Kurds who live in Turkey. In contrast, the pro-Alevi Kurdish economic elite evaluates the geopolitical changes as irrelevant dynamics among the Alevi communities.

3) Geopolitical changes and the religious groups

Like the national groups and the economic elite, the religious groups deal with the geopolitical changes in different ways. Ankara-centric Kurdish pro-Islamist groups predominantly see the geopolitical changes, and the IKR in particular, as an economic and political resource at national/regional and international levels. In contrast, the autonomous Kurdish pro-Islamist groups mostly consider the establishment of the IKR and de facto Kurdish region in Syria within a Kurdish national frame and use it as a new cognitive and normative frame to justify their Kurdish national political demands. Unlike the previous two groups, the Kurdish pro-Alevi groups do not give any remarkable importance to the geopolitical dynamics and consider them as irrelevant elements among the Alevi community, which privileges their Alevi identity over the Kurdish national identity.

a) AK Party, GC, MGH

The members of the pro-Islamist economic elite mostly represent the GC's approach to the IKR. The Kurdish representatives of the GC do not give a specific "national" or "political" importance to the "Northern Iraq" (IKR). They mainly see the IKR as a new economic resource, a new market for Turkey[1].

The local representatives of AK Party consider the IKR to be both an economic and political resource. They share the idea that the IKR is a very important market for the Turkish economy. The Kurdish deputies of the AK Party underline that for that reason both Turkey and the KRG give significant importance to economic cooperation[2]. The Kurdish

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[1] Korkutata, Personal Interview; Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview; Tatlı, Personal Interview.

[2] Fırat, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012; Aslan, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012; Özdemir, Personal Interview, August 6, 2012.

representatives of the AK Party also consider the economic and political cooperation between Turkey and IKR as a political resource both at national/regional and international levels. At the national/regional level, they use the cooperation between Turkey and the IKR as a political resource to justify that the AK Party government makes efforts to solve the Kurdish issue[1]. By doing that, they opposite the leading Kurdish movement and try to undermine its influence on the Kurds. At the international level, they consider the economic and political cooperation between Turkey and the IKR as a resource for becoming a regional political and economic power[2]. Accordingly, Turkey has tried to become a regional (and even an international) economic[3] and political power in the Middle East and the Muslim world[4]; and the AK Party government's political and economic cooperation with the IKR is a main pillar of this new state policy[5].

Compared with the previous two pro-Islamist groups, the representative of MGH sees the IKR in a Kurdish "national" frame. Like many national groups, F. Aytar, an influential figure of the MGH in Bingöl, welcomes the establishment of a Kurdish state and describes it as a response to the decades-long denial of Kurdish identity:

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[1] Fırat, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012; Aslan, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012; Özdemir, Personal Interview, August 6, 2012; Sözen, Personal Interview; Yaşar, Personal Interview; Altaç, Personal Interview.

[2] Sözen, Personal Interview; Özdemir, Personal Interview, August 6, 2012; Aslan, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012.

[3] Kirişçi, "The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of the Trading State."

[4] For sophisticated analyses of the AK Party's ambitions, see: Henri J. Barkey, *Turkish Foreign Policy and The Middle East*, CERI Strategy Papers (Paris: Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales - CERI, June 6, 2011); Morton Abramowitz and Henri J. Barkey, "Turkey's Transformers: The AKP Sees Big," *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 6 (2009): 118–128.

[5] I discussed this issue in a very detailed way in a recently published work, see: Cuma Çiçek, "La Question Kurde à Nouveau Après Le Printemps Arabe : Au Mirroir de L'interaction Des Dynamiques Internes et Externes," in *La Politique Turque En Question, Entre Imperfections et Adaptations*, ed. Emel P. Dal (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012), XX–XX. For more discussion on the Turkish foreign policy see also: Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2003); Svante E. Cornell, "Changes in Turkey: What Drives Turkish Foreign Policy?," *The Middle East Quarterly* no. Winter 2012 (2012): 13–24; Soner Cagaptay, "Is Turkey Leaving the West? An Islamist Foreign Policy Puts Ankara at Odds With Its Former Allies," *Foreign Affairs* 2009, no. October (n.d.); Ian O. Lesser, "What to Read on Turkish Politics," *Foreign Affairs* no. September 2009 (2009); Henri J. Barkey, *Turkish Foreign Policy and The Middle East*, CERI Strategy Papers (Paris: Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales - CERI, June 6, 2011); Kirişçi, "The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of the Trading State"; Taspinar Omer, *Turkey's Middle East Policies: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism*, Carnegie Papers (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2008).

"The IKR is a big response to those who have denied the Kurdish identity, and have argued that anything could have been done in Kurdish language. We see that it is possible to do education in this language; a state can be governed in this language. Although it does not have a name yet, with this (Kurdistan) state, the Kurds have a state; and I think, it is very important for Kurds to have a state that will support and advocate for their rights[1]."

b) Autonomous Kurdish pro-Islamist groups

The MZC welcomes the establishment of the IKR as a Kurdish quasi-state and describes it as "very valuable" and "necessary" for the Kurds[2]. They consider the IKR as a new political and organizational resource, and develop their relations with the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups and institutions in the IKR. However, the MZC highlights that the influence of the IKR on the Kurdish region of Turkey has been limited due to cultural and linguistic differences so far. As M. Kaya underlines, although the people of two regions are Kurds, they speak two different dialects and have different cultures, which have made it difficult to develop relations with each other. Moreover, the opinion leaders of the MZC also argue that this influence has been more limited on the Zazakî-speaking Kurds[3]. Despite the limits that Kaya highlights, the IKR has functioned as a national dynamic for the MZC. While the community does not describe itself as a Kurdish pro-Islamist group, and highlights that they are principally an Islamist group, they have been one of the leader groups organizing the first Kurdish National Congress, by which different Kurdish political movements and groups from Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria will gather and discuss Kurdish national unity for the first time in the history.

For the KH, the IKR constitutes a political and organizational resource not only for the Kurdish national identity, but also for Islamic identity. However, the representatives of the KH give different importance to the issues of Islam and national identity concerning the IKR. The representatives in the Diyarbakır and Batman provinces – where the Kurdish national movement is very powerful and where there is a strong consciousness about the Kurdish national identity – have a "national frame" and give a remarkable importance to the IKR as a

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[1] Aytar, Personal Interview.

[2] Kaya, Personal Interview, May 17, 2012.

[3] Ibid.; Enver Butasun, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 17, 2012.

Kurdish federal or quasi-state[1]. The representatives in Şanlıurfa and Bingöl provinces, where the Kurdish national movement is weak and the pro-Islamist groups and their representative AK Party dominate the political sphere, mostly concentrate on the issue of Islam in the IKR and analyze it with their pro-Islamist frame[2].

The central chief actors, however, are close to the later groups[3]. The former representatives mostly highlight the importance of the establishment of the IKR for the Kurds, while criticizing it in the frame of Islam. In contrast, the latter representatives underline the role of the imperial power, the secular quality of the IKR, and the difficulties that the pro-Islamists groups face, while welcoming the establishment of the IKR. Despite internal differences, the KH cooperates with the pro-Islamist groups in the IKR and tries to build a Kurdish and pro-Islamist bridge between the two Kurdish regions in Turkey and Iraq. For instance, they give a remarkable place to the other Kurdish regions, and the IKR in particular, in their journals, newspapers, TV channels, conferences, and political rallies to build this bridge[4].

Besides, the IKR provides the KH a new normative and cognitive frame for political pluralism. The argument of N. Özdemir, the editor-in-chief of the journal of *Kelha Amedê*, supports this point:

"In order to develop the idea of pluralism, I think, it (the IKR) will contribute to us. In Northern Kurdistan, there was not such an idea of pluralism. We have been closed to the issue of pluralism since the people did not see any organizations but the PKK. Yet since the Kurdistan region has achieved pluralism...it will be an experience and model for the Kurds who live in North (Kurdistan)[5]."

As for the Azadî, unlike the KH, they principally consider the IKR with a "national frame" and use it as a new cognitive and normative frame to justify their federal model for the settlement of the Kurdish issue. S. Zîlan, one of the founding members of the Azadî, argues that the political status that the Kurds have in Iraq can be a model for the Kurds who live in Turkey, Iran and Syria. Accordingly, the Kurds must have a federal region, be constitutionally

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[1] Özdemir, Personal Interview, April 27, 2012; Aydın, Personal Interview.

[2] Hamdullah Tasalı, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 22, 2012; Mehmet Kışlar, Personal Interview, Şanlıurfa, June 6, 2012.

[3] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012; Çınar, Personal Interview.

[4] Özdemir, Personal Interview, April 27, 2012.

[5] Ibid.

recognized as a nation, and their language must be an official language. Unlike the KH, the Azadî emphasizes that the important thing is not the experience of the pro-Islamist parties in the IKR, but the experience of the government; and for that reason they do not cooperate with the parties, the pro-Islamist parties in particular, but with the KRG. It is also important to note that the Azadî has participated in the committee of preparation for the first Kurdistan National Congress, alongside the MZC in Turkey[1].

Finally, I must note that the IKR has also significantly affected other small pro-Islamist groups and communities. For instance, F. Guzelsoy, an influential opinion leader of the *Meşverek Community*, describes the IKR as a *de facto* state, and highlight that thanks to the establishment of the IKR, the Kurdish issue has taken place in the agenda of the international community. He also argues that the IKR has promoted the national emotions and ambitions among the Kurds, and led them to compare their situation with other nations[2]. Likewise, F. Lale, the president of Ay-Der in Diyarbakır, welcomes the establishment of the IKR and asks why the Kurds should not have a state[3]. Underlining the cooperation between the NGOs and bars of the two Kurdish regions for the human rights, N. Bozkurt, the secretary of the Mazlum-Der in Diyarbakır, argues that the IKR has constituted a model for the all Kurds and showed what the Kurds can achieve with their struggle[4].

c) Kurdish Alevi groups

Unlike the pro-Islamist groups, the influence of the IKR on the pro-Alevi Kurdish groups has been very limited so far. Underlining that the Alevi identity is a supra-identity over Kurdishness, Turkishness and Arabness, the Alevi elites commonly share the idea that the effects of the geopolitical changes on the Alevi Kurds is at negligible level[5]. Even the representatives of the leading Kurdish movements in Dersim emphasize that the people of Dersim do not like the president of the KRG due to its good relations with the pro-Islamic AK Party government[6]. As S. Halis, the former deputy of leading Kurdish movement in Dersim,

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[1] Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011; Sıtkı Zilan, Personal Interview, Diyarbakır, May 30, 2012.

[2] Güzelsoy, Personal Interview.

[3] Lale, Personal Interview.

[4] Bozkurt, Personal Interview, November 19, 2011.

[5] Veli Aytaç, Personal Interview, Dersim, July 27, 2012; Tunç, Personal Interview; Halis, Personal Interview; Çem, Personal Interview; Bozkurt, Personal Interview, July 30, 2012; Mukan, Personal Interview; Yeşiltepe, Personal Interview.

[6] Halis, Personal Interview; Polat, Personal Interview.

highlights "everyone who has relations with a pro-Islamic party causes reactions" among the Alevi communities[1]. In this regard, Halis gives a remarkable example to reveal the influence of the geopolitical changes on the Alevi Kurdish community. Discussing the ongoing regime crisis in Syria and the establishment of a *de facto* autonomous Kurdish region in the northern Syria, he underlines that the Alevi-Kızılbaş Kurds in Dersim are more interested in the situation of Alevi (Arab) communities than the Kurdish (Sunni) communities in Syria[2].

In conclusion, the Kurdish groups have a common idea that the establishment of the IKR and the de facto Kurdish autonomous region in Syria has provided the Kurds with a new resource of motivation with its politico-administrative model. The geopolitical changes have also provided remarkable resources to the Kurdish political groups. However, each Kurdish group has utilized the geopolitical changes in different ways in accordance with their social imaginaries, their normative and cognitive frame about the Kurdish issues and their relations with the central state.

D - Europeanization: A temporary and limited resource

The Europeanization process of Turkey is the fourth macrodynamic that constituted a noteworthy constraint/resource for the Kurdish groups. As detailed in Chapter 1 the Europeanization process affected Turkey's Kurdish issues at multiple levels; and the Kurdish scene has undergone considerable transformations throughout this process. Despite its noteworthy limits, the Europeanization process was an unquestionable dynamic utilized by the different Kurdish groups to reconstruct their ideas, interests and institutions in order to reshape domestic polity, politics and policies.

In order to analyze the influence of the Europeanization process on the collective action of the Kurdish groups in the theoretical frame (see Chapter 1), I confined the debates of Europeanization within the context of the influence of European integration at the domestic level[3], although they also cover the emergence of distinctive governance structures at the European level, and the interaction of European and domestic levels. Alongside the interactive approaches defining Europeanization as "all institutional, strategic and normative

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[1] Halis, Personal Interview.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Christiansen, Jorgensen, and Wiener, "Introduction"; Landrech, "Europeanization of Domestics Politics and Institutions: The Case of France," 69; Radaelli, "The Domestic Impact of European Union Public Policy: Notes on Concepts, Methods, and the Challenge of Empirical Research"; Palier and Surel, "Analyser L'européanisation Des Politiques Publiques."

adjustment processes induced by European integration"[1], I also emphasized the different forms of "usage of Europeanization"[2] that center on how domestic actors use the European integration process as a constructive or destructive constraint/resource to re-shape the domestic area[3]. As a result, I argued, "Europeanization denotes complex interactive processes of institutional, strategic and normative adjustments induced by the European integration, in which domestic actors use the integration process to reshape polities, politics and public policies."

In this part, I show that the Europeanization process of Turkey was a new resource at multiple levels for the Kurdish actors between 1999 and 2005. Each Kurdish group used the Europeanization process in different ways. The Kurdish national groups used the process as a new cognitive and normative frame and a new political resource to gain strategic leverage in bypassing the obstacles of the Kemalist regime. Although most of the pro-Islamist groups are Euro-skeptics, they used Europeanization as a new organizational resource to re-organize themselves in the public sphere thanks to the enlargement of the political sphere and freedom of association during the process. Unlike the pro-Islamists, the Alevi groups supported the Europeanization process and utilized it to expand freedom of association and freedom of religion to bypass the obstacles of the dominant Sunni-Islam politics of the Turkish state. Finally, the Kurdish economic elite used the Europeanization process as a new cognitive and normative resource for political and economic stability. Despite these different usages of Europeanization by the Kurdish groups, Turkey's adhesion to the EU provided a new multi-level learning process for the all groups (see Table 3).

However, the Europeanization process was a temporary and limited resource in the Kurdish scene. There is a correlation between the decline of the Europeanization process and the influence of the IKR on the Kurdish region. The Kurdish groups considered Europeanization to be a useful resource for bypassing obstacles at the national levels between 1999 and 2005. Yet, it became an irrelevant and ineffective dynamic after the stabilization of the IKR in 2005, which has changed the main parameters of the Kurdish issue in Turkey by providing a new cognitive and normative frame, as well as immense economic and political resources to different Kurdish groups.

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[1] Palier and Surel, "Analyser L'européanisation Des Politiques Publiques," 39.

[2] Sophie Jacquot and Cornelia Woll, *Les Usages de l'Europe. Acteurs et Transformations Européennes*, Logiques Politiques (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004).

[3] Dyson and Goetz, "Living with Europe: Power, Constraint and Contestation," 5.

Table 9 Three Kurdish blocs and Europeanization process

Bloc		Group	Principal pillars of social imaginary	Europeanization as a temporary and limited resources between 1999 and 2005
National Bloc		BDP-DTK/ PKK-KCK	- National and social liberation - Socialism - Gender equality	- A strategic resource - A normative and cognitive resource - A resource of legitimacy
		HAK-PAR	- National liberation	- A normative and cognitive resource - A resource of legitimacy
		KADEP	- National liberation - Liberalism	- A normative and cognitive resource - A resource of legitimacy
		ÖSP	- Socialism - National liberation	- A normative and cognitive resource - A resource of legitimacy
		TDŞK	- National liberation	- A normative and cognitive resource - A resource of legitimacy
Economic Elite		Pro-Islamist	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - Economic liberalism - Kurdish cultural identity	- A strategic resource - A resource of legitimacy
		Alevi	- Socio-cultural Alevi identity - Economic liberalism - Kurdish cultural identity	- A normative and cognitive resource
		Secular	- Economic liberalism - Political liberalism - Kurdish cultural identity	- A normative and cognitive resource
		National	- Economic liberalism - Political liberalism - Kurdish national issue	- A strategic resource - A normative and cognitive resource
Religious Bloc	Pro-Islamist Groups	AK Party	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - Kurdish cultural identity	- A strategic resource - A resource of legitimacy
		GC	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - Kurdish cultural identity	- A strategic resource - A resource of legitimacy
		MGH	- Political Sunni-Islam - Kurdish cultural identity	- A normative and cognitive resource - An organizational resource
		MZC	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - National issue	- A normative and cognitive resource - An organizational resource
		KH	- Political Sunni-Islam - National issue	- An organizational resource
		Azadî	- Socio-cultural Sunni-Islam - National liberation	- A normative and cognitive resource - An organizational resource
	Alevi Groups	BDP-Supporting Alevi Group	- Socio-cultural Alevi identity - National and social liberation	- A strategic resource - A normative and cognitive resource - A resource of legitimacy
		CHP-Supporting Alevi Group	- Socio-cultural Alevi identity - Multiculturalism	- A normative and cognitive resource
		Left-wing Alevi Group	- Socialism - Socio-cultural Alevi identity - National issue	- A useless dynamic - An imperialist power

1) National groups and Europeanization

In the Kurdish scene, most national groups used Europeanization as a source of legitimacy, as a cognitive and normative reference, and a strategic leverage to bypass

obstacles at the national level[1]. The leading Kurdish movement that passed an existential crisis after the capture and imprisonment of its founding charismatic leader in 1999 used the Europeanization process at multiple levels. Describing the Kurdish issue as a problem of democracy and multiculturalism in Turkey, the leading Kurdish movement tries to frame the Kurdish issue as a part of Turkey's Europeanization process and bypass the obstacles of the Kemalist regime, which framed the Kurdish issue as a problem of security and terrorism threatening the unity of nation and state. With the usage of Europeanization at different levels, the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK built a new normative and cognitive frame around the Kurdish issue, legitimized its struggle for the Kurdish national cause, and found a strategic resource to overcome the existential crisis.

For instance, G. Kışanak, the co-president of the BDP, argues that Turkey's adhesion process to the EU opened new horizons for the country. Underlining the EU's standards, documents, charters and contracts such as the ECLSG and the ECRML, the co-president points out the Europeanization process provided a remarkable cognitive and normative frame for the settlement of the Kurdish issue in Turkey[2]. S. Demirtaş, the other co-president, agrees with Kisanak and contends that the Kurds considered the Europeanization process a significant resource for solving their problems of human rights, identity and democratization. For that reason, he underlined that 85-90 % of the Kurds supported Turkey's adhesion process to the EU[3].

Other Kurdish national groups mostly share the leading Kurdish movement's approach to the adhesion process. Highlighting the role of Europeanization alongside the internal dynamics in the reform process, B. Bozyel, the president of HAK-PAR puts forward that the EU is not only an economic union, but also "a world of democracy and norms"[4]. Similarly, Ş. Elçi, the president of KADEP, and H. İpek, the spokesman of the TDŞK, describe the EU as a normative and cognitive reference, and highlight the role of the Europeanization process in Turkey democratization process[5]. Unlike above-mentioned political groups, S. Çiftyürek, the president of ÖSP, considers the adhesion process to be a significant threat to the unity of a

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[1] For the three types of usage of the Europeanization, see: Jacquot and Woll, *Les Usages de l'Europe. Acteurs et Transformations Européennes*.

[2] Kışanak, Personal Interview.

[3] Demirtaş, Personal Interview.

[4] Bozyel, Personal Interview.

[5] Halis, Personal Interview.

Kurdistan that is separated among the four countries. He highlights that as a communist he supports the EU and sees it a progressive step for the world, yet, if Turkey becomes a member of the EU, it will be not easy to unite "the Northern Kurdistan" (in Turkey) with "Southern Kurdistan" in Iraq[1].

Most of the Kurdish national groups supported the adhesion process for the first years. Yet, they argue that the Europeanization process has lost its credibility in the eyes of the Kurds for several reasons since 2005. First, the AK Party government, which also used the Europeanization process to bypass the Kemalist state tradition and reinforce its power in Turkey, gave up this policy in the middle of the 2000s[2], when it managed to make significant gains in control over state power[3]. I must note that this argument is also shared by most of the other Kurdish groups.

Second, there was a clear cleavage between the EU's frame and the Kurdish national groups' political demands concerning the Kurdish issue. The Kurdish groups expected to obtain their collective cultural rights and self-government rights from the Europeanization process. Yet, the EU principally adopted an Ankara-centric approach and just proposed the liberal individual cultural rights for the settlement of the Kurdish issue[4]. Kurdish national groups today are not satisfied with this policy[1].

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[1] Çiftyürek, Personal Interview.

[2] This is a common idea of the economic, political and religious elites. Yet, they also underline different dynamics that made the AK Party to leave using the Europeanization process. Since the aim of this thesis is not to analyze this process, this issue is not discussed in a detailed way here. Yet, principal dynamics can be briefly underlined as follows: The new geopolitical dynamics in the Middle East and Muslim world; the AK Party's neo-Ottoman ambitions towards the region; the EU's negative policies towards Turkey and the objections of Germany and France against Turkey's EU membership; the EU internal economic crisis; the Cyprus issue; and finally the rising role of the US in the Middle East.

[3] Demirtaş, Personal Interview; Kışanak, Personal Interview; İpek, Personal Interview; Elçi, Personal Interview; Bozyel, Personal Interview; Baydemir, Personal Interview.

[4] European Commission, *1999 Progress Report. Turkey's Progress Toward the Accession* (Brussels: European Commission, 1999); *2000 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, November 8, 2000); *2001 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, November 11, 2001); *2002 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, October 9, 2002); *2003 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 2003); *2004 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, October 6, 2004); *Turkey 2005 Progress Report* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, November 9, 2005); *Turkey 2006 Progress Report* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, November 8, 2006); *Turkey 2007 Progress Report* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, November 6, 2007); *Turkey 2008 Progress Report* (Brussels:

Last, the EU's authorities mostly preferred to cooperate with the central state, and did not build an inclusive political sphere that allowed the local and regional Kurdish actors to participate in the adhesion process[2]. As mentioned earlier, after the establishment of the IKR, which provided a new cognitive and normative frame with its politico-administrative model, and immense economic and political resources to the Kurdish groups, the Europeanization process became an irrelevant dynamic for the national groups.

The leading Kurdish movement, in particular, disappointed and even felt it was "being betrayed" by the EU in this process[3]. The argument of S. Demirtaş is well to explain why the Europeanization process lost its credibility in the eyes of the Kurdish national groups, the leading Kurdish movement in particular:

"For several years, the EU has had a pragmatist relation with the AK Party. The EU's norms and values that were created thanks to the centuries-long struggle for democracy, human rights, liberties, and liberal rights have been subjected to bargaining, and were violated during the EU's pragmatist relations with the AK Party. Since the EU gave more importance to maintaining positive relations with Turkey good, EU's economic crisis, Turkey's market, the market of Middle East through Turkey, and Arab market, than the democracy and human rights, it took largely no notice of the all violation of rights by the AK Party. They did not even give it a mention in their reports. The EU did not pass beyond Ankara. The European delegations started not to go Diyarbakır, and chose to write their reports on their places instead of observing local situations. And this was clearly understood by the Kurds. ... The Kurds mostly lost their belief for the EU[4]."

2) Religious groups and Europeanization process

Like the national groups, except the pro-Alevi groups supporting the left-wing movements, most of both pro-Alevi and pro-Islamist groups saw the Europeanization process

Commission of the European Communities, November 5, 2008); European Commission, *Turkey 2009 Progress Report* (Brussels: European Commission, 2009); European Commission, *Turkey 2010 Progress Report* (Brussels: European Commission, 2010); *Turkey 2011 Progress Report* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, Ocotober 2011); *Turkey 2012 Progress Report* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, October 10, 2012).

[1] Baydemir, Personal Interview; Demirtaş, Personal Interview; Bozyel, Personal Interview; İpek, Personal Interview; Elçi, Personal Interview; Çiftyürek, Personal Interview.

[2] Baydemir, Personal Interview; Demirtaş, Personal Interview.

[3] Baydemir, Personal Interview.

[4] Demirtaş, Personal Interview.

as a useful resource at multiple levels to bypass the obstacles in the political area and to obtain their political objectives. The pro-Islamist groups commonly used the Europeanization process a strategic lever to legitimize their political ideas and interests, despite their historical Euro-skeptic quality. After the AK Party gradually eliminated the military and juridical tutelage of the Kemalist state power over the politics and largely took control of state power[1], they gave up this approach after the middle of the 2000s. The pro-Alevi groups supporting the leading Kurdish movement used the Europeanization in a similar way. Additionally, they used the Europeanization process as a normative and cognitive resource. Yet, they realized the normative/cognitive and strategic limits of the EU in a very short time and the process lost its credibility in their eyes. As to the pro-Alevi groups supporting the CHP, they commonly give a remarkable importance to the normative and cognitive frame of the EU. Yet the instrumentalization of the process by the AK Party limited their ability to mobilize the Europeanization process at the strategic level. Finally, the pro-Alevi groups supporting the left-wing political movements took the EU into consideration as an imperialist power and did not see the process as a useful resource.

a) Pro-Islamist groups

Most of the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups are Euro-skeptic. However, they used the Europeanization process both as a resource of legitimacy and a strategic resource to bypass the obstacles of the traditional Kemalist state. In this regard, the AK Party's policy of instrumentalizing the Europeanization process played a critical role in the formation of the pro-Islamist groups' stance concerning Turkey's adhesion to the EU. This policy allowed the AK Party to legitimize its ideas and interests and delegitimize the traditional Kemalist state's policies and the military and juridical tutelage on the politics[2]. Yet, while conducting the field research, I observed that the Europeanization process has also lost its credibility in the eyes of the pro-Islamist groups. Today, they consider the Europeanization process to be neither a politically nor economically useful resource.

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[1] Henri J. Barkey, *Turkish Foreign Policy and The Middle East*, CERI Strategy Papers (Paris: Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales - CERI, June 6, 2011); Henri J. Barkey, "Turkey and Iraq: The Making of a Partnership," *Turkish Studies* 12, no. 4 (2011): 663–674.

[2] Henri J. Barkey, *Turkish Foreign Policy and The Middle East*, CERI Strategy Papers (Paris: Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Internationales - CERI, June 6, 2011); Henri J. Barkey, "Turkey and Iraq: The Making of a Partnership," *Turkish Studies* 12, no. 4 (2011): 663–674.

Although some pro-Islamist groups such as the Mazlum-Der[1], and the Azadî[2] appreciate the European standards and norms as universal references for the democracy and the human rights[3], most of the pro-Islamist groups are Euro-skeptics and see the EU as a "Christian club". They consider the EU as a real danger to the pro-Islamic values and lifestyle in Turkey[4]. For instance, local representatives of the AK Party underline the religious difference (Islam and Christianity) between Turkey and Europe as the principal reason that the EU does not accept Turkey membership[5]. Likewise, M. Öksüzoğlu argues that some tried to cause people to forget their past in the name of modernization during the Europeanization process[6]. The representatives of many local pro-Islamist groups and NGOs discuss the Europeanization process in the frame of "moral degeneracy[7]," "individual liberties threatening Islamic way of life[8]," "being a Christian club[9]," "Crusade mentality[10]," "drug usage[11]," and "the colonial past of Europe[12]."

Despite this Euro-skepticism, the AK Party and its local and regional alliance used the Europeanization process both as a strategic resource and a resource of legitimacy. Although the MGH, the predecessor of the AK Party, is a Euro-skeptic movement, the AK Party presented itself as a political movement, which ardently advocates Turkey's adhesion process to the EU. The majority of pro-Islamist groups (and also national groups and economic elite) highlight that this strategy of the government helped it to eliminate the military and juridical tutelage over politics and to reinforce its power in Turkey after 2007[13]. Indeed, İ. Aslan, the

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[1] Bozkurt, Personal Interview, November 19, 2011.

[2] Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011; Zilan, Personal Interview, May 30, 2012.

[3] Dündar, Personal Interview; Lale, Personal Interview.

[4] İzzet Özdemir, Personal Interview, Bingöl, May 19, 2012.

[5] Yaşar, Personal Interview; Aydın, Personal Interview.

[6] Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview.

[7] Butasun, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011; Tasalı, Personal Interview.

[8] Aykut, Personal Interview; Lale, Personal Interview.

[9] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011.

[10] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012.

[11] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011.

[12] Aydın, Personal Interview.

[13] Lale, Personal Interview; Bozkurt, Personal Interview, November 19, 2011; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011; Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011; Özdemir, Personal Interview, April 27, 2012; Korkutata, Personal Interview; Aykut, Personal Interview; Kaya, Personal Interview, May 17, 2012; Butasun, Personal Interview; Ali Burakgazi, Personal Interview, Bingöl,

founding president of the Mazlum-Der, and one of the influential Kurdish Muslim figures in the AK Party, confirms this policy of instrumentalization that many local representatives support:

"We saw the EU process as necessary for our democratic transformation and economic development. Frankly speaking, we have taken big steps concerning the democratic transformation, human rights and freedoms for the last decade. In the economic area, we have also shown significant progress. We have increased the GDP per capita from $2,000 to $10,000. ... Despite that, there is no one who objects to political integration within the EU. Yet, we do not need the EU like before[1]."

Like the representatives of the AK Party, many local pro-Islamist groups and the NGOs consider the Europeanization process to be a very important dynamic of the transformation of Turkey between 1999 and 2005. Despite their Euro-skepticism, they mostly highlight that the Europeanization process provided them with a remarkable resource during the democratization process[2]. Yet, like the representative of the AK Party, except some pro-Islamists[3], the majority also emphasizes that the Europeanization no longer constitutes a noteworthy resource, neither economomically nor politically nor normatively, neither at a national nor a local/regional level. At this point, it is critical to note that the central state's relations with the EU determine the local context. When the Europeanization process was considered to be a useful resource by the central government, it also became a significant dynamic at the local and regional levels. Similarly, when the process lost its importance at the central level, it also lost its importance in the eyes of the local and regional actors.

May 18, 2012; Aytar, Personal Interview; Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview; Özdemir, Personal Interview, August 6, 2012; Aydın, Personal Interview; Dündar, Personal Interview; Çınar, Personal Interview; Tan, Personal Interview; Aslan, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012.

[1] Aslan, Personal Interview, November 10, 2012.

[2] Lale, Personal Interview; Bozkurt, Personal Interview, November 19, 2011; Evsen, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011; Zilan, Personal Interview, May 30, 2012; ibid.; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012; Özdemir, Personal Interview, April 27, 2012; Korkutata, Personal Interview; Aykut, Personal Interview; Kaya, Personal Interview, May 17, 2012; Butasun, Personal Interview; Burakgazi, Personal Interview; Aytar, Personal Interview; Yetkin, Personal Interview; Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview; Aydın, Personal Interview; Dündar, Personal Interview; Çınar, Personal Interview.

[3] Bozkurt, Personal Interview, November 19, 2011; Zilan, Personal Interview, May 30, 2012; ibid.; Alimoğlu, Personal Interview.

b) Pro-Alevi groups

The BDP-supporting Alevi groups mostly share the general idea of the leading Kurdish movement concerning the Europeanization process. They considered the Europeanization process to be a strategic lever to build a new normative and cognitive frame about the Kurdish issue, and to legitimize their social, economic, political and cultural demands[1]. Besides, they underline that the EU preferred to cooperate with the AK Party government and neglected the Kurds and the Kurdish political groups[2]. When the Europeanization process lost its strategic importance in the eyes of the central government, the leading Kurdish movement also removed the Europeanization process from the first lines of its agenda[3]. The argument of M. Polat, the former president of the BDP in Dersim, summarizes very well the pro-Alevi Kurds who support the leading Kurdish movement:

"The BDP thought like the AK Party. It thought that when the Copenhagen criteria were implemented the obstacles in front of the Kurdish issue could be overcome. For instance, the bilingual education, the bilingual public services or the education in the mother tongue exist in the ECLSG. Therefore, the Kurds and the BDP thought that the EU's norms could play a role in the democratization of Turkey. ... Why did we have to give up the EU? We think like the AK Party. There is the project for Big Middle East, the Turkish state cooperates with the US, and political borders of the Middle Eastern geography are being redrawn with the Arab Spring. We also have to change our axes. You took the EU train, yet, this train stopped at the half-way point[4]."

Although they criticize the usage of the Europeanization process by the AK Party government to mask its "secret agenda", the CHP-supporting Alevis also considered the Europeanization process and European social and political criteria as an important dynamic for the democratization of Turkey[5]. For instance, M. Kurban, the president of the CHP Bingöl section, underlines the EU's social, cultural and political criteria as very important references

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[1] Halis, Personal Interview; Polat, Personal Interview.

[2] Aytaç, Personal Interview; Polat, Personal Interview.

[3] Halis, Personal Interview; Polat, Personal Interview; Aytaç, Personal Interview.

[4] Polat, Personal Interview.

[5] Kurban, Personal Interview; Bozkurt, Personal Interview, November 19, 2011; Güler, Personal Interview.

for democracy. Yet, like other national and pro-Islamist groups, they highlight that the process has already lost its credibility in Turkey[1].

Finally, unlike the previous two Alevi groups, the supporters of the radical left-wing movements do not see the Europeanization process as a resource and mostly criticize it due to its "imperialist" quality[2]. H. Tunç, the representative of the EMEP in Dersim defines the EU's philosophy as "a collapsed philosophy"[3]. Likewise, U. Yeşiltepe, the representative of the DHF in Dersim, argues that the EU is an imperialist power and there is nothing that it can give the people[4]. However, the left-wing political groups also underline that the Europeanization process was considered to be a remarkable resource by the central government and the Kurdish political groups to realize their political agendas. Yet, like other groups, they also think that the EU's status as a vital dynamic in the national politics and local-regional politics ended in the mid-2000s[5].

3) The economic elite and Europeanization process

Like national and religious groups, the economic elites have different approach regarding the Europeanization process. However, they also highlight that the Europeanization process was a temporary and limited resource at multiple levels. Like the pro-Islamist groups, the pro-Islamist members of the economic elite saw the Europeanization process as a valuable strategic resource to legitimize their ideas and interests, despite their Euro-skepticism. The national members of the economic elite also considered the Europeanization process to be a strategic resource. Yet unlike the pro-Islamists, this group gives remarkable importance to the EU's norms and standards and uses it as a cognitive and normative resource. Unlike the previous two groups, the Alevi economic elites and the secular economic elites who stay away from participating in political issues directly do not give a strategic importance to the EU, although they also see it a remarkable normative and cognitive resource. While conducting the field research, it was suprising to observe that the economic elites mostly discussed the Europeanization process in political terms and saw the economic influence of Turkey's adhesion to the EU as very limited.

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[1] Bozkurt, Personal Interview, November 19, 2011; Güler, Personal Interview.

[2] Tunç, Personal Interview; Yeşiltepe, Personal Interview.

[3] Tunç, Personal Interview.

[4] Yeşiltepe, Personal Interview.

[5] Mukan, Personal Interview; Yeşiltepe, Personal Interview; Tunç, Personal Interview.

Despite their Euro-skepticism, the pro-Islamist members of the economic elite saw the Europeanization process a significant resource for the democratization in Turkey during the first years of the AK Party government[1]. Yet they mostly state that Turkey no longer has need for the Europeanization process economically or politically[2], despite some exceptions[3]. For instance, M. Öksüzoglu argues that Turkey eliminated "the 50-year gap" during the last decade "under the pretext of the EU". Yet, he underlines that their principal guiding force is Islam, and they do not need the EU to solve their economic, social or political problems today. Likewise, A. Korkutata, who also appreciates the role of the Europeanization in Turkey's democratization process, points out that Turkey's exports total $136 billion and it will not need to be a member of the EU in the near future[4]. Similarly, Ş. Aykut explicitly expresses that there is not a big ambition in the government towards the EU today, yet, "the reforms advanced more easily under the name of the EU membership process". Although Aykut emphasizes the role of the Europeanization process in the transformation of the country, he argues that the individual liberties in the EU are a real danger for Muslim countries like Turkey[5]. Despite this skeptical yet instrumentalist approach towards the Europeanization process, it is also important that some pro-Islamist economic elites still give a remarkable importance to the EU's norms and standards for the democratization of Turkey.

Like pro-Islamists, the members of the secular economic elite primarily see the EU not an economic resource but a political resource[6]. However, unlike the pro-Islamists, the secular economic elites see the EU as a normative and cognitive resource concerning the democracy and human rights[7]. For instance, M. Odabaşı, the recently elected president of GÜNSİAD, puts forward that the implementation of the EU's norms will develop the human rights, democracy and a better standard of life in Turkey. He asserts that this will also facilitate the solution of the Kurdish issue[8]. Yet, they do not see the Europeanization process as a valuable

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[1] Korkutata, Personal Interview; Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview; Aykut, Personal Interview; Alimoğlu, Personal Interview; Yetkin, Personal Interview; Dündar, Personal Interview.

[2] Korkutata, Personal Interview; Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview; Tatlı, Personal Interview; Aykut, Personal Interview.

[3] Alimoğlu, Personal Interview; Dündar, Personal Interview.

[4] Korkutata, Personal Interview.

[5] Aykut, Personal Interview.

[6] Odabaşı, Personal Interview; Ebedioğlu, Personal Interview; Gölcük, Personal Interview; Uzunyaya, Personal Interview; Nasıroğlu, Personal Interview.

[7] Odabaşı, Personal Interview; Uzunyaya, Personal Interview; Ebedioğlu, Personal Interview.

[8] Odabaşı, Personal Interview.

economic resource[1]. In this matter, Odabaşı emphasizes that the EU's membership will change nothing for the economic cooperation between Turkey and the European countries since they have already traded with the Europe without any problem due to the customs union[2]. Additionally, they highlight that the economic influence of the EU membership process on the Kurdish region is very limited[3].

The national economic elites mostly share the secular group's ideas concerning the Europeanization process. They also see the process chiefly as a political resource and do not give a noteworthy importance to its economic influence on the Kurdish region. Similarly, they appreciate the EU's norms as very valuable cognitive and normative resources[4]. Unlike the previous groups, the national economic group concentrates on the influence of the Europeanization process on the Kurdish national issue. The argument of B. Yılmaz, the deputy president of the Organized Industrial Zone in Diyarbakır, summarizes very well the basic approach of this group:

"We, as businessmen, give great significance to the EU. We want to implement the EU's democracy in Turkey. We expect that the EU process will develop the democracy, rather than the economy, in Turkey. If democracy and accountability develop in Turkey, then the Kurdish national issue will be solved very quickly and in a more equitable way. We supported Turkey's adhesion to the EU mainly for that reason[5]."

Finally, the Alevi economic elites also deal with the Europeanization process in political terms, and see its economic influence on the Kurdish region very limited. Yet, the Alevi economic elites have different ideas about the political influence of the Europeanization process on Turkey. Some consider the EU to be a valuable normative and cognitive resource to solve the Kurdish issue and the Alevi people's problems of religious rights. For instance, Y. Cengiz, the president of Tunceli TSO, underlines that the main reason that they supported Turkey's adhesion to the EU is the expectation that this process will allow solving the

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[1] Ibid.; Ebedioğlu, Personal Interview; Gölcük, Personal Interview; Nasıroğlu, Personal Interview.

[2] Odabaşı, Personal Interview.

[3] Ibid.; Ebedioğlu, Personal Interview; Nasıroğlu, Personal Interview.

[4] Türk, Personal Interview; Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview; Aslan, Personal Interview, March 5, 2012; Kaya, Personal Interview, February 5, 2012; Baysal, Personal Interview; Ogurlu, Personal Interview; Yılmaz, Personal Interview, May 1, 2012; Birtane, Personal Interview.

[5] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, May 1, 2012.

Kurdish issue and religion problem of the Alevis[1]. Likewise, H. Bellice, the president of Tunceli ESOB, argues that "the European model based on the universal democratic values" can solve the ethnic and religious problems in Turkey. On the contrary, some sees the Europeanization process as a useless resource to solve their ethnic or religious issue. For instance, A. A. Güler, the former president of Tunceli TSO, puts forward that the EU is a Christian club; and that is why it does not accept Turkey's membership[2]. Despite different approaches, they share the idea that the Europeanization process has lost its credibility in the eyes of both the political and economic actors in Turkey for the last years[3].

4) Europeanization as a learning process

Despite the temporary and limited importance of the Europeanization process, it is vital to note that it functioned as a learning process for the all groups by enlarging the political area and promoting the idea of governance and the civil society, and NGOs in particular. For instance, most pro-Islamist groups were established after 2002 thanks to the relatively enlargement of the political sphere during Turkey's adhesion process to the EU. Alongside the start of AK Party rule in 2002[4], this process had a remarkable role in the formation of the pro-Islamist political networks thanks to the progress in the freedom of association and the freedom of speech.

Additionally, the Europeanization process also promoted the idea of governance and the role of NGOs in the formation of the public political sphere. The pro-Islamist groups started to emerge and participate in the public sphere as NGOs after the Europeanization process[5]. The transformation of the KH from an armed illegal organization to a legal sociopolitical movement is the best example of the promotion of this civil society idea. As mentioned earlier, the KH has returned to political sphere as a new sociopolitical movement based on the multiple networks of NGOs, newspapers, journals, TV channels, news agencies, more than a hundred associations working on different areas, and a legal political party in the Kurdish region. Therefore, it is obvious that the Europeanization process was used by the pro-Islamists not only as a resource of the legitimacy, but also as an organizational and cognitive resource.

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[1] Cengiz, Personal Interview.

[2] Güler, Personal Interview.

[3] Cengiz, Personal Interview; Bellice, Personal Interview; Güler, Personal Interview; Gündoğan, Personal Interview.

[4] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, April 25, 2012.

[5] Ibid.; Zilan, Personal Interview, November 14, 2011.

The same analysis can be done for the national groups and the economic elites. The Kurdish national groups aside from the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK were mostly established and became more visible in the 2000s. The leading Kurdish movement has also founded many NGOs working in different areas like human rights, linguistic rights, poverty and socioeconomic development and the like. During this period, the institutions of the economic elites like the businessmen's associations and trade and industry chambers have emerged in the public political sphere and participated in the public political discussion as NGOs. Alongside the organizational level, it is also important to note that there have been remarkable changes in the political discourse. Today, the all Kurdish groups use a discourse, which gives a significant importance and place to the role of the NGOs in the political sphere.

E - Globalization: Multi-level and multi-dimensional system of action

The globalization process is the fifth principal constraint/resource, which has had a remarkable influence on the collective action in the Kurdish region on the one side, and on the central state, the Europeanization process, and the IKR on the other side for decades. Given the fact that globalization is a subject of broad debate, in the theoretical frame, I confined the issue of globalization with its effects on the rescaling of the collective action of Kurdish groups. Discussing theories on "re-scaling of state power"[1], "multi-level governance"[2], and "public policy transfer"[3] (see the Chapter 1), I emphasized that the ideas, interests and institutions of three Kurdish groups are shaped and reshaped in a new multi-scale and multi-dimensional system of action in the globalization process.

Two important dynamics must be noted about this mutely-scale and multi-dimensional system of action: the global diffusion of ideas thanks to the developing information technologies and the global/transnational mobilization of the Kurdish groups by the transportation facilities. I argue that the globalization process has functioned as a learning process that has affected the ideas, interests and institutions of different Kurdish groups due to these two dynamics.

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[1] Brenner et al., *State/Space: A Reader*; Jessop, "The Future of the State in an Era of Globalization"; Jessop, *The Future of the Capitalist State*; Brenner, "Beyond State-centrism? Space, Territoriality, and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies"; Brenner, "Glocalization' as a State Spatial Strategy."

[2] Hooghe and Marks, "Unraveling the Central State, But How? Types of the Multi Level Governance."

[3] Saurugger, *Théorie et Concepts de L'intégration Européenne*; Dolowitz and Marsh, "Learning from Abroad: The Role of Policy Transfer in Contemporary Policy-Making"; Palier and Surel, "Analyser L'européanisation Des Politiques Publiques."

Thanks to the new information technologies, and the Internet (websites, online journals, social media, etc.) in particular, the globalization process provides different Kurdish actors with new learning opportunities. Given the political borders among the Kurds living in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria, these opportunities lead them to go beyond the political borders and build new communication and learning spaces. The Kurdish TV channels being broadcasted by satellites are good examples of how the Kurds go beyond the borders thanks to new information technologies and transnational networks. Although broadcasting in the Kurdish language was totally banned until 2002, and the first state-owned Kurdish TV channel started to broadcast in 2009 in Turkey, the first Kurdish TV channel broadcasting by satellite was established in 1995 in Europe.

Second, most Kurdish groups are transnational actors. They have transnational economic, social, cultural, religious and political networks. In this regard, I must note that the role of the Kurdish diaspora is situated essentially in the European countries. The Kurdish diaspora constitutes a remarkable resource to the leading Kurdish movement not only for its economic and political support to ongoing socio-political mobilization in Turkey, but also for the new normative and cognitive frames that it provides to the movement. The similar remarks can be noted for the Kurdish Alevi community. In most European countries, there has been a relatively well-organized Alevi diaspora, which has influenced the formation of the Alevi communities' ideas, interests and institutions in Turkey for decades[1]. In comparison with the leading Kurdish movement and the Kurdish Alevi community in Europe, the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups have relatively weak transnational networks. Yet, they also have transnational relations with pro-Islamist movements in other countries. As to the economic elite, they are the most trans-nationalized of the actors, seeking their economic interests not only in a regional/national market, but also in a globalized one, despite the socioeconomic disadvantages of the Kurdish region.

1) Globalization as a resource for a multi-level and multi-dimensional learning process

Globalization provides most Kurdish groups a multi-level and multi-dimensional learning process thanks to the new information technologies and their cross-border multi-level cooperation. Their ideas are no longer shaped on the basis of information resources at the local-regional or national levels, but rather on the basis of those at the global level. As

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[1] Hıdır Eren Çelik, "Almanya'da Bir Göçmen Toplum: Dersimliler," in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim*, ed. Şükrü Aslan, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2010), 591–611.

Dolowitz and Marsh note "the knowledge concerning the policy, the administrative arrangements, the institutions and the ideas in a (past or present) political system are used for the development of policies, administrative arrangements, institutions or ideas in a political system"[1].

The Kurdish case is a good example of the global diffusion of knowledge. Most Kurdish groups use the other knowledge concerning the policies, politics and polity in different countries for the development of new ideas, politico-administrative systems, institutional arrangements, and political order in the Kurdish region and Turkey. For instance, S. Demirtaş, the co-president of the BDP, refers to the autonomous regions in England, Spain, Germany and US to describe their democratic autonomy project. When I asked why the pro-Islamist groups generally cooperate with the conservative and nationalist groups, but not with the left-wing movements in Turkey, the co-president underlined that the right-wing interpretation of Islami was not dominant only in Turkey, but also in most Muslim countries[2]. Similarly, O. Baydemir, the mayor of Diyarbakir Metropolitan Municipality, makes a parallelism between the Arab Spring and the Kurdish issue in Turkey[3].

The Kurdish national groups supporting the federation refer to federal states like Germany and US to justify that the federal system is the best solution for the multi-ethnic or multi-national countries[4]. On the other hand, those who support the independence also give the examples from other countries and states to advocate their ideas. For instance, F. Önen, an influential communist intellectual gives world-wine examples to refute the integrationist arguments of some Kurdish groups. For instance, he underlines that 30 nation-states have been established after the collapse of the Soviet to challenge those who argue that the period of nation-state has already been passed. Similarly, he recalls the Arab Spring and Syria to disprove the argument that it is not the period of armed struggle, but the democratic struggle[5].

The same remarks can be noted for the religious groups. For instance, S. B. Yılmaz, the president of Özgür-Der, one of the principal pro-Islamist NGOs in Diyarbakır, analyzes the Kurdish issue as a result of the nation-state building and homogenization process and

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[1] David P. Dolowitz and David Marsh, "Learning from Abroad: The Role of Policy Transfer in Contemporary Policy-Making," *Governance* 13, no. 1 (2000): p. 5.

[2] Demirtaş, Personal Interview.

[3] Baydemir, Personal Interview.

[4] Bozyel, Personal Interview; Elçi, Personal Interview.

[5] Önen, Personal Interview.

underlines the similarity between the Kurdish case in Turkey and the cases in Yugoslavia, Spain, Ireland, Syria, Iran and Iraq[1]. Similarly, İ. Yaşar and A. Altaç, the two deputy presidents of the AK Party Diyarbakır section, give the examples of North Korea and Palestine issues to analyze the negative role of the international powers – and of the states that are the members of the UN Security Council in particular – in the emergence and the deadlock of the Kurdish issue in Turkey[2]. In contrast, referring to several documents of the UN and EU, some pro-Islamists underline "universal standards and norms" for the settlement of the Kurdish issue in Turkey[3].

Like pro-Islamists, the Alevi groups' ideas are shaped at the transnational level. For instance, discussing the Alevi issue in Turkey, Y. Cengiz, the president of the Tunceli TSO, points the Holocaust museum that he saw during his visit to Berlin as a good example for how to deal the Alevi massacre in Dersim[4]. Similarly, A. A. Güler, the former president of the Tunceli TSO, highlights the European integration to disprove separatist arguments concerning the Kurdish issue in Turkey[5]. In contrast, M. Polat, the former president of the BDP's Tunceli branch, who lived for 10 years in Germany, uses the German politico-administrative system to justify the local-regional autonomy for the national and religious groups in Turkey: "I lived in Germany. In Germany, there is not the governor; the highest authority in the province is the mayor....Each province has a parliament in Germany. The provinces have their own budget. The provinces have their prime minister[6]."

As to the economic elite, they also point the other national/ethnic conflicts and minority issues, and the politico-administrative systems that were developed to solve these problems in other countries such as Germany, US, Spain, France, and Belgium[7]. They do not refer only the politico-administrative models, but also economic systems in other countries to justify their ideas. For instance, M. Kaya, the former president of DTSO, refers to the Cuba model to disprove the economic model of the leading Kurdish movement: "On one side, there are oil-

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[1] Yılmaz, Personal Interview, November 22, 2011.

[2] Yaşar, Personal Interview; Altaç, Personal Interview.

[3] Bozkurt, Personal Interview, November 19, 2011.

[4] Cengiz, Personal Interview.

[5] Güler, Personal Interview.

[6] Polat, Personal Interview.

[7] Odabaşı, Personal Interview; Aslan, Personal Interview, March 5, 2012; Birtane, Personal Interview.

producing countries, on its other side, there is Europe, and on its other side, there is China. How will you be able to create a model like Cuba in such an environment[1]."

2) Global and trans-national system of action

There are many dynamics of this trans-national and global learning process. Yet, I must particularly underline the economic, social, cultural and political trans-national networks in which most Kurdish groups are embedded, alongside the role of the information technologies. The leading Kurdish movement, which is organized not only in Turkey, but also in Iran, Iraq and Syria, has multiple social, economic and political networks in almost all European countries. These multiple networks provide the leading Kurdish movement with the ability to interact in a transnational context, to learn from the multiple interactions and constantly revise its ideas, interests and institutions. Given its 35-year-long lifetime and constant renewal at the levels of ideas, strategies, methods, instruments, it is obvious that the BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK constitutes a very good example of "learning organization"[2].

As mentioned earlier, the other national groups were mostly established by the former members of the principal Kurdish movements, which were largely eliminated in Turkey after the coup d'état of 1980s, and had to leave the country and settle in Europe. Although these groups have tried to re-organize in Turkey for the last decade, they still have constant relations in the Kurdish diaspora in Europe[3]. Although their organizational skills are very limited in the Kurdish diaspora in comparison with the leading Kurdish movement, these trans-national networks provide them multiple learning facilities.

The economic elite constitutes the most transnationalized Kurdish group. Although the Kurdish region is the poorest region in Turkey, the members of the Kurdish economic elite have trans-national economic cooperations with their European, Arab, African, Asian, and Caucasian counterparts. For instance, O. Nasıroğlu, the president of Batman TSO highlights that they visited China as a delegation of Dicle Development Agency. He states that their members have commercial relations with Asian, European and Arab countries[4]. Similarly, Ş. İ. Berdihanoğlu, the president of GÜNSİAD, asserts that their members export to 34

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[1] Kaya, Personal Interview, February 5, 2012.

[2] Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of The Learning Organization*, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House Business, 2006).

[3] Bozyel, Personal Interview; İpek, Personal Interview; Çiftyürek, Personal Interview.

[4] Nasıroğlu, Personal Interview.

countries[1]. M. Dündar, the president of MÜSİAD Mardin section, underlines that their association has 119 sections in 50 countries[2]. M. Öksüzoğlu, the president of the TUSKON Şanlıurfa branch ŞÜGİAD, proudly says that they are the members of an association that has 40,000 members, having networks in 140 different countries[3]. It is obvious that the Kurdish economic elite interact in a relatively well-globalized context.

It is important to note that MÜSİAD and TUSKON are two principal pro-Islamist businessmen's associations that were established as alternatives to the secular TUSİAD. These two groups represent a large part of the Ankara-centric pro-Islamist groups, which are affiliated to the AK Party and the GC in particular. Among the autonomous pro-Islamist groups, the KH has trans-national networks. The KH is trying to develop its pro-Islamist networks in Iran and among the Kurdish diaspora in Europe. For instance, *Keleha Amedê*, the HUDA-PAR affiliated pro-Islamist journal is sold both among the Kurdish diaspora in the European countries and Iran. Likewise, Çağrı TV aims to reach not only the Kurds of Turkey, but also those who live in Europe and the other three countries[4].

Unlike the autonomous Kurdish pro-Islamist groups, the Alevi Kurds have very well-developed trans-national cultural and religious networks. While conducting the field research in Dersim, it was surprising to observe the young people speaking French, English, and German on the streets of this small Kurdish city. In Dersim, almost each family has some family members who live in different European countries. Since 2001, they have gathered in Dersim each summer thanks to the International Munzur Culture and Nature Festival. This festival has already become an international meeting point of the Kurdish Alevis living in different cities in Turkey and Europe. It can be argued that Dersim, which is one of the cities from which there has been a large migration to European countries, is the most trans-nationalized Kurdish city in Turkey.

In brief, the principal Kurdish groups are trans-national actors who have cross-border economic, social, cultural, religious and political networks. Thanks to the new information technologies and multiple cross-border mobilizations, most Kurdish groups can access the new knowledge resources, learn from them, and use them to develop new cognitive frames, and to revise their interests and institutions. In this regard, the Kurdish diaspora in Europe

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[1] Bedirhanoğlu, Personal Interview.

[2] Dündar, Personal Interview.

[3] Öksüzoğlu, Personal Interview.

[4] Özdemir, Personal Interview, April 27, 2012.

constitutes a remarkable resource to the Kurdish groups, the leading Kurdish movement in particular. Yet, it is critical to note that there is not a transfer of the ideas, policies, or institutional forms, but rather a learning process at multiple levels. Each Kurdish group has a distinctive learning process in accordance with their existing ideas, interest and institutions. They commonly learn in different ways within the trans-national contexts, and adopt their ideas, interests and institutions to new surroundings.

Conclusion

Focusing on the interaction of the micro- and macro- sociological approaches, in this chapter, I analyzed the Kurdish groups' system of the action to understand in a better way their conflicts, negotiations, cooperation and consensus. In the Kurdish scene, there are principally five macro-dynamics, which have diverse effects on the ideas, interests, and institutions of the Kurdish groups. In order of importance, these are (1) historically constructed context, (2) the central state, (3) the geopolitics of the Kurdish issue, (4) Europeanization, and (5) globalization. Kurdish collective action occurs in a historically constructed context, which is re-constructed by dynamics at the national (the central state), trans-national (Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria), European (Europeanization process) and global (globalization process) levels.

First, I argued that the actors and issues are not only constructs of history, but also constructors of history. In the Kurdish scene, that is to say, the Kurdish groups with their ideas, interests, and institutions are historical constructs on the one hand; and they produce different versions of the past in accordance with their present political positions on the other. Analyzing the discourse of the Kurdish groups, there are principally six historical aspects that confine and structure the Kurdish groups' ideas, interests and institutions about the Kurdish issue. These are (1) the division of Kurdistan among the four countries, (2) the assimilation of the Kurds to Turkishness, (3) the Ottoman-Turkish centralization policy, (4) the socioeconomic underdevelopment of the Kurdish region, (5) the de-Islamization of the Kurdish (and Turkish) societies and (6) the state of emergency in the Kurdish region. Yet, each Kurdish group does not use all six aspects, but rather some of them in accordance with their political stance in the present.

Second, the central state is a key actor in the formation of collective action in the Kurdish region due to its infrastructural and despotic power. The central state played a very negative role in the Kurdish consensus-building process until 2000. The Turkish state's

intervention must be noted at least for three cases. These are the socioeconomic underdevelopment of the Kurdish region, the formation of the Zaza and Alevi identities as alternative identities to the Kurdish national identities, and the PKK-KH conflict in the 1990s. Since 2002, with the rule of pro-Islamist and neo-liberal AK Party, the central state's intervention and its asymmetrical relations with local-regional actors have mostly played a destructive role in the Kurdish consensus-building process in Turkey. Most Kurdish pro-Islamist and economic groups considered the pro-Islamist and neo-liberal qualities of the AK Party, respectively, as valuable resources to reinforce their power in the Kurdish region as an alternative to or parallel powers in the Kurdish region. Some Kurdish national groups also tried to cooperate with the central government to become an alternative to the leading Kurdish movement in this period. This process also consolidated the Kurdish Alevis' political relations with the CHP. In this process, most Kurdish Alevi groups, which commonly perceive the pro-Islamist governments as historical others, saw the CHP as a more useful political resource than the BDP to opposite the pro-Islamist AK Party government. Yet, the Turkish nationalist quality of the AK Party has constituted a grave constraint for the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups and economic elite since 2010. This quality of the government has also caused some pro-Islamist groups and economic elites, who describes the Kurdish issue principally as national issue, to become closer to the Kurdish national groups since 2010.

Third, given that the Kurdish issue is a trans-national and international issue, the geopolitical changes must be articulated to the analysis of the Kurdish collective action in Turkey. The establishments of the Kurdistan Region in Iraq since 2003 and the de facto autonomous Kurdish region in Syria in 2011 have become constructive dynamics for the Kurdish consensus-building process among in Turkey. The geopolitical changes, the establishment of the IKR in particular has provided the Kurds in Turkey a significant resource of motivation as the first Kurdish or Kurdistan (quasi-)state in the Middle East. The IKR (the first geopolitical wave) and de facto Kurdish region in Syria (the second geopolitical wave) have also impressively influenced the Kurdish groups. Yet, the Kurdish national, religious and economic elites have used the geopolitical changes in different ways: as a resource of motivation, as a normative and cognitive frame, as an organizational resource, as an economic resource, and as a politico-administrative model. In this regard, their social imaginaries, normative and cognitive frame about the Kurdish issues and relations with the central state are the principal dynamics determining how each Kurdish group has utilized the geopolitical changes.

Fourth, the Europeanization process provided the Kurdish groups with noteworthy normative, cognitive, political, strategic and organizational resources. Yet, the influence of the Europeanization process was temporary and limited. While the Europeanization process was the principal dynamic that framed the Kurdish issue between the 1999 and 2005, and most Kurdish groups used it in different ways, it became an irrelevant dynamic after the stabilization of the IKR in 2005. With its quasi-state structure, the IKR offered Kurdish groups a new normative and cognitive frame and immense economic and political resources both at national and international levels. It is also important to note that the EU's approach limits its influence on the Kurdish groups. The EU mainly cooperated with the central state and did not sufficiently include the Kurdish groups and take their expectations into account. However, the Europeanization process functioned as a learning process for the all groups by enlarging the political area and promoting the ideas of governance and civil society, the NGOs in particular.

Finally, I must note that the Kurdish collective action occurs in a globalized context. Their ideas, interests, and institutions have been constantly re-constructed due the learning process at global level. Thanks to the new information technologies and the trans-national quality of most Kurdish groups, they easily learn from the experience of other countries and geographies, adopt them, and revise their ideas, interests and institutions to the new environment that surrounds them. In this regard, the sizable Kurdish diaspora in the European countries has a remarkable influence on the formation of the Kurdish groups' cross-border economic, cultural, social, political and religious cooperation. This trans-national cooperation allows Kurdish groups to build cross-border multiple networks and bypass the borders that the nation-states determine. Yet, it is important to note that each Kurdish groups interact in different ways in this globalized context in accordance with their ideas, interest, and institutional capacity. Additionally, they do not transfer knowledge concerning the policies, institutional forms, strategies and methods, but rather learn and adopt them at multiple levels in accordance with their existing ideas, interests and institutions.
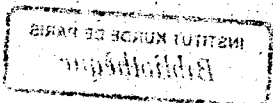
Conclusion: Towards a Kurdish Political Region?

In this research, I analyzed how the three main types of Kurdish groups – national, religious, and economic – cooperate to establish a consensus on a certain concept: a Kurdish political region in Turkey. I problematized the capacity of these three groups to establish a common cognitive frame, shared interests and accepted rules to form a political Kurdish region. In other words, I asked whether three Kurdish groups could found a political region in the historically existing Kurdish cultural region in Turkey.

The theoretical frame (see Schema 01 in the first chapter) that I used to analyze these questions is based on several elements, which can be classified under two levels, following M. Crozier and E. Friedberg's approach: (1) the issues and the actors' strategies (issues/challenges, conflicts, negotiations, cooperation, consensus), and (2) the system of action (the large dynamics structuring the game or the rules of the games). Using the analytical frame based on the two levels that Crozier and Friedberg describe, I therefore examined the Kurdish consensus-building process, which led to remarkable changes at the levels of polity, politics and policies between 1999 and 2013.

At the first level, the three Kurdish blocs - national, religious and economic blocs- and the groups and sub-groups composing each bloc constitute the central elements element of the analysis. At the second level, I underlined five main dynamics that determine the system of action. These are history, the central state, the geopolitics of the Kurdish issue, the Europeanization process and globalization. These dynamics structure the context in which the Kurdish groups interact, the rules of the games that the actors have to take into account, and the actors themselves by influencing their ideas, interests, and institutions.

Focusing mainly on the micro level, I took the micro- and macrosociological approaches to analyze the issue. The microsociology analyzes the interaction of the actors, while the macrosociology centers on the system of action of actors – in other words, the structured context which privileges some actors and interests while demobilizing others. Following the theory of constructivism, I relied on the works of the sociology of collection action in general and the "Three I" (ideas, interest and institutions) model in particular to articulate the micro and macro levels that Crozier and Friedberg describe. The "Three I" model basically proposes to use ideas, interests and institutions as three interrelated analytical elements for examining the changes at the levels of polity, politics and policies. I used this

model to show how Kurdish collective action is constantly re-constructed in a historical context, which is itself constantly re-constructed by dynamics at national, trans-national (geopolitical), European and global levels. As to the empirical task, I examined the conflicts, negotiations, cooperation and consensus of these three Kurdish groups regarding the Kurdish issue(s) and the influence of the above-mentioned five structuring dynamics.

The main conclusion of the research is the fact that the divisions due to on the national, religious and class-based dynamics have constituted grave obstacles on the way of consensus-building process among the Kurdish groups for the establishment of a Kurdish political region in Turkey. There are many dynamics and processes that lead to convergence of three blocs at the levels of ideas and interests in the frame of the Kurdish issue. Yet, they have not achieved to build a common organizations and accepted rules so far. The actors have retained their identities, margins, and individualized strategies; therefore the conflicts are latent and the relative consensus is fragile, despite reduced uncertainty during the negotiation process. At this point, it is evident that the groups' ideas, interests and institutions are not equivalent and the groups' distinctive interests have weighed on the collective action in the Kurdish region. That has constituted very strong for the establishment of a Kurdish political region in Turkey, alongside the destructive role of the central state and strong path dependency so far.

In the following sections, I first present the main theoretical conclusions. Second, I summirze the empirical concluions regarding both the first and second levels of analysis - that is to say the conflicts and negotiations, and the system of action that comprises the historical, étatique, geopolitical, European and global dynamics. Finally, I underline the limits of this research and propose some research topics and areas that can be further investigated to complete this work, or areas to which my results could contribute.

A - Theoretical conclusions

Given the results of this research, several theoretical conclusions can be highlighted concerning the collective identities and groups, the state, the "Three I" model, path dependency, the geopolitics of the Kurdish issue, and Europeanization.

It is obvious that the collective identities and/or groups are not "substantial things-in-the-world", but historical, political and relational constructs having dynamic borders. They are not discrete, concrete, tangible or bounded, but are rather relational, processual, dynamic, eventful and disintegrated. The collective identities and groups are not constructed in an isolated environment, but rather in a context based on inter-group contact and dependence. In

other words, the inter-group relations occur in a historically constructed dynamic context, which includes the social processes of exclusion and incorporation. Besides, the collective identities and groups are not actor-free, but actor-dependent; that is to say they are constructs of the actors or the political entrepreneurs. Moreover, the critical role of the "constructive other(s)" of each group must be highlighted in the process of constructing the groups and collective identities.

As this research confirmed, the "Three I" model provides a frame to analyze the changes at levels of the polity, politics and policies. Additionally, this research makes a noteworthy contribution to the "Three I" model at several points. First, I articulated the Three I model, the sociology of organization and the sociology of collective action in this research. That is to say I used the ideas, interests and institutions to examine the collective action of the different actors, which occur where the dynamics at the micro and macro levels interact. Second, this research affirmed that ideas, interests and institutions must be taken into consideration, not as given discrete, concrete and bounded facts, but as historical, relational, and uncompleted/open political constructs. Third, by underlining the historical construction process of the ideas, interests, and institutions, this research also highlights the relationship between the "Three I" and path dependency. Fourth, this research underlined that the formation of the ideas, interests and institutions must not be analyzed only at local-regional or national levels, but also at trans-national, European and global level. Finally, this research underlined that the "rationality", which is one determinative element in the formation of the ideas, interests and institutions alongside the "culture" ("the calculus approach" and "the cultural approach" are the two principal approaches that the new institutionalists use to analyze the human behaviors), is also a social construct. Therefore, "the interests" shaped by the ideas and institutions are not just material, but also normative. In brief, although the Three I model provide a very useful analytical frame for the researchers, as this research shows, it must be applied with other theoretical approach and analytical elements.

Path dependency is another key concept that I used in this research. I highlighted that the Kurdish case presents a good example of the path dependency both in terms of "the influence of the past over the present" and "lock-in effects". However, path dependency, in its first definition in particular, takes into account the relations between the past and present as linear and one-directional. In reality, as this research reveals by using the concept of "politics of memory", and making a distinction between the history and past, the relationship of the past and the present is not linear and one-directional, but rather cyclical, dynamic and two-

directional. Therefore, when the concept of "path dependency" is used for analyzing the current changes or the resistances to changes at the levels of polity, politics and policies, the cyclical and dynamic relations between the past and present must be taken into account.

The state's determinative role in the construction processes of the collective identities and groups must be underlined in particular. The state is not only ethno-political, but also religious and economic entrepreneurs. They construct and maintain some ethno-political, religious and economic identities and groups to build the capacity "to actually penetrate civil society, and to implement logistically political decisions throughout the realm." This allows us to describe the state not as an entity above the society, located at the central level, but rather as a relational entity within and as a part of the society at multiple levels: from the local to the center, from the micro to the macro levels.

At this point, several aspects must be emphasized regarding the relations between the center and the local/regional. The center-periphery relations confine and structure the collective action at the local/regional level. The historically constructed sociopolitical and socioeconomic context at the local/regional level as a part of the center has a determinative influence on the conflict, cooperation, negotiations and consensus between and among the local/regional actors, particularly given the state's quality as a relational entity within and as a part of the society at multiple levels: from the local to the center, from micro to the macro, the distinction between local and center is not sociological but analytical.

The transnational and international qualities of the Kurdish issue are commonly highlighted. The research on the Kurdish or Kurdistan issue mostly underlines the political dependence of Kurdish regions in Turkey, Iraq, Syria and Iran. However, most works center on the dynamics at the state level and underline them as a constructive cause of the issues. Yet the role of the transnational and international quality of the Kurdish issue in the solution process in Turkey is a very new subject of research. In this research, the influence of the IKR on the Kurdish issue of Turkey at the interaction level of the three different groups is analyzed. The same claims can be made for the influence of the establishment of the de facto Kurdish region in Syria, although it is a very recent development. The comparative analysis of the three Kurdish groups' usage of the geopolitical dynamics makes this research more valuable. As the results of the research reveal, the influence of the geopolitical changes on the Kurdish issue(s) differ in accordance to the central state's relevant policy on the one side and the Kurdish actors' ideas, interests and institutions, as well as their relations with their counterparts in the Kurdish regions of Iraq and Syria, on the other.

Finally, I confined the concept of Europeanization within the context of the influence of European integration at the domestic level, although it also covers the emergence of distinctive governance structures at the European level and interaction at the European and domestic levels. To go further, I articulated the approach of "usage of Europeanization" to analyze how the domestic actors use the European integration process as constructive or destructive constraints/resources to re-shape the domestic areas. This research reveals that Europeanization denotes complex interactive processes of institutional, strategic and normative adjustments induced by European integration, in which domestic actors use the integration process as a normative, strategic and organizational resource and a resource of legitimacy to reshape polities, politics and public policies.

The original contributions of this research to the concept of Europeanization are numerous. This research underlines the limits of the Europeanization concept in several terms: the issue of temporality; its dependence on the actors' ideas, interests and institutions; its dependence on the central state's policies and strategies; and the role of other historical, transnational or global dynamics. First, the temporality of the Europeanization process matters. As this research revealed, the Europeanization process can be a useful dynamics for the domestic actors to restructure the regional or national polity, politics and policies in the first years; whereas it can become an "insufficient" or an "unneeded" dynamic after fundamental transformations at the national or transnational levels. Second, the local/regional actors give importance to the Europeanization, if only the central state gives a priority to the Europeanization process to reshape the domestic areas. Third, as the pro-Islamist groups' approach confirms, the Europeanization process can be a useful organizational resource for some Euro-skeptic actors to reinforce their organizational networks. Although the Euro-skeptic groups do not consider the Europeanization process to be a normative and strategic resource and a resource of legitimacy, they can use the opportunities such as the freedom of association, freedom of expression, governance, NGOs and civil society ideas that it provides to the actors at the local/regional and national levels. Finally, I must underline that the Europeanization process is not a proper concept to analyze the changes at the levels of polity, politics and policies. It must be subsumed with other local/regional, national, transnational, geopolitical and global dynamics. As this research showed, the Europeanization process can become a useless or unsatisfactory dynamic after a dramatic geopolitical change determining the new parameters of the collective action, although it was the one principal dynamic structuring the domestic area.

After these theoretical conclusions, in the next section, the main empirical conslucion are summarized.

B - Empricial conclusion

1) The system: Historical, state-based, geopolitical, European and global dynamics

The collective action of the Kurdish actors does not occur in isolated local/regional context, but in a historically constructed context which is constantly re-structured by the historical, étatique, geopolitical, European and global dynamics. These dynamics structure the rules of the game for the Kurdish actors on the one side, are used or mobilized by the actors reinforce their positions in the ongoing processes of conflicts, negotiations, cooperation and consensus on the other.

a) Historical dynamics

The historical dynamics mostly have a very negative role in the ongoing collective actions of the Kurdish groups for the establishment of a Kurdish political region at least for two reasons. First, the actors and issues are the historical constructs. The historically constructed sociopolitical and socioeconomic context in the Kurdish region as a part of the Turkish polity has a very negative determinative influence on the current conflict, cooperation, negotiations and consensus between and among the three Kurdish blocs. In this regard, Turkey's sociopolitical and socioeconomic context after 1950s, the period between the 1960s and the 1980s, must be underscored in particular. The distinctive qualities of the three Kurdish blocs and their constant conflicts were mostly inherited in this period. The Kurdish region has been on the periphery of Turkey both in economic and political terms for decades. These center-periphery relations still confine and structure Kurdish collective action. Although the Kurdish national bloc, and the leading Kurdish movement in particular (with a Marxist-Leninist and orthodox secular ideological and political orientation), separated from the Turkish left-wing politics after the mid-1970s, most religious groups (both Alevi and Sunni-Muslim) and the economic elite are still peripheral actors in Turkey. The decades-long conflicts between the national groups and both the religious groups and the economic elite have still a significant influence on the current conflicts, negotiations, cooperation and consensus in the Kurdish scene.

Second, the actors are not only historical constructs, but also constructors of history. In other words, the history is a social construct of the actors. In the Kurdish scene, the actors

produce and re-produce various Kurdish histories as different versions of the past in accordance with their political stances in the present. Looking into the historical construction process of the Kurdish issue(s), I underlined six principal aspects of the Kurdish issue that confine and structure the Kurdish groups' relevant ideas, interests and institutions. Not all Kurdish groups use all aspects of the Kurdish issues, and give the equal importance to all of them, but rather they utilize some of them, giving different importance to each one to advocate and justify their current political stance regarding the Kurdish issue. Therefore, these different constructions of the past have constituted very important obstacles in the way of the consensus-building process at the ideas level, and subsequently at the interests level.

b) State-based dynamics

The Turkish state's intervention into the Kurdish collective action also has mostly influenced the consensus-building process in the Kurdish region in a very destructive way. The Turkish state has played a critical role in the historical process of constructing collective identities and groups in the Kurdish region. The emergence of the Kurdish national movements; the construction of the Kurdish region as a peripheral economy and the incorporation of the Kurdish ruling class into the center; the formation of the Alevi and Zaza identities as distinctive alternative identities vis-à-vis the Kurdish national identities; and the Kurdish pro-Islamist and Alevi groups' dependence to their central Turkish counterparts can not be analyzed unless taking the Turkish state's intervention into account.

Given the peripheral quality of the Kurdish region in economic, political and religious terms, the very damaging role of the pro-Islamist and neo-liberal AK Party government must be underlined in particular in the consensus-building process among the Kurdish national and religious groups, and economic elite since 2002. Most Kurdish pro-Islamist and economic groups, as well as some national groups considered, the rule of AK Party as valuable resources to reinforce their power as an alternative or parallel powers to the leading Kurdish movement in the Kurdish region. The neo-liberal and pro-Islamist quality of the AK Party facilitated the usage of the AK Party by the Kurdish economic elite and pro-Islamist groups, respectively. In this process, most Kurdish Alevi groups, as a religious minority, saw the CHP as a more useful political resource than the BDP to oppose the pro-Islamist AK Party government. Yet, the Turkish nationalist quality of the AK Party has also caused some pro-Islamist groups and economic elites, who describes the Kurdish issue principally as national issue, to become closer to the Kurdish national groups since 2010.

c) Geopolitical dynamics

Unlike the historical and étatique dynamics, the geopolitical dynamics mostly have played a very constructive role in the consensus building process regarding the establishment of a Kurdish political region since 2003. The establishments of the IKR as the first Kurdish (quasi-)state in the Middle East in 2003 and the de facto autonomous Kurdish region in Syria in 2011 provided significant resources of motivation to the Kurds who live in Turkey (and also in Iran and Diaspora). The establishment of the IKR as the main geopolitical wave particularly broke many taboos and obstacles at the ideas level among the Kurds. After a centuries-long political domination of the four states, their policies of violence, denial, assimilation and neglect towards the Kurds, the Kurds established their own federal state in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, which is mostly considered to be a (quasi-)state in the Middle East. After a two-century-long domination, the Kurds had their own politico-administrative region in a part of their homeland. Today, the IKR provides a remarkable model with its politico-administrative model to the Kurds who live under the political domination of the other states. The establishment of the de facto Kurdish region in Syria in 2001 can be considered a second geopolitical wave among the Kurds.

The influence of the establishment of the Kurdish political regions in Iraq and Syria has not been limited with the Kurdish people. The Kurdish national and religious groups and economic elite have also been significantly influenced by the geopolitical changes. Except for the Alevi Kurds, most Kurdish groups have used the IKR and the de facto Kurdish region in Syria as a resource of motivation, as a resource of normative and cognitive frame, as an organizational resource, as an economic resource, and as a politico-administrative model. It is critical to note that the Kurdish national, religious and economic groups have used the geopolitical changes in different ways in accordance with their social imaginaries and normative and cognitive frames about the Kurdish issue(s), and their relations with the central state. Yet, it is evident that by providing a model the establishment of the Kurdish or Kurdistan political region in Iraq and Syria has been playing a constructive role in the formation of a Kurdish political region in Turkey.

d) European dynamics

The Europeanization process had both negative and positive effects on the consensus-building process for a Kurdish political region in Turkey. On the one side, the Kurdish groups used the Europeanization process in different ways – such as normative, cognitive, political,

strategic or organizational resources – between 1999 and 2005 to reinforce their power in the Kurdish region and to bypass the obstacle at the national level. At the normative level, except for some Euro-skeptic pro-Islamist groups, most Kurdish groups used the Europeanization process to build a new cognitive and normative frame for the Kurdish issue, which defines the issue as a problem of democracy and minority rights, and to invalidate the traditional frame of the Turkish issue, which has represented the Kurdish issue essentially as a security and terrorism problem threatening the unity and integrity of the Turkish state and nation for decades. At the legitimacy level, they used the Europeanization process to legitimize their ideas and interests by delegitimizing the Turkish state's ideas and interests concerning the Kurdish issue. At the strategic level, most Kurdish groups used and supported the Europeanization process to achieve the changes at the polity, politics and policies levels.

The Europeanization process also functioned as a learning process for all groups, including the Euro-skeptic pro-Islamist groups, by enlarging the political space and promoting the ideas of governance and civil society, and the NGOs in particular. The establishment of the new political parties, the NGOs networks, media institutions, the establishment of the pro-Islamist NGOs, and the re-emergence of the KH as a sociopolitical movement in the 2000s after its bloody conflict with the PKK in the 1990s, cannot be analyzed unless taking the Europeanization process into consideration.

Alongside these positive effects of the Europeanization process, it must be noted that it had a negative effect on the establishment of the Kurdish political regions at least for two reasons. First, it framed the Kurdish issue as a problem of minority rights and proposed the individual cultural rights to Kurds. This approach excluded the collective cultural rights such as the education in the mother tongue and the deliverance of the public services in Kurdish on the one side and excluded the politico-administrative aspects of the Kurdish issue on the other. Second, the Europeanization process consolidated the integrationist approaches among the Kurdish political groups. "The Kurds do not look at Erbil (the capital of the IKR), but Istanbul and Europe." Most economic elite and religious groups put forward this point of view during field research, showing the negative influence of the Europeanization process on the consensus-building process for a Kurdish political region. The integrationists would rather have a decentralized, democratic Turkey that is integrated into EU than a Kurdish political region.

Yet, the influence of the Europeanization process was temporary and limited, at least for three reasons. The AK Party, which also used the Europeanization process, gave up the

policy of instrumentalization after 2005-07 and the Europeanization process lost its importance at the national level and subsequently at regional levels. Besides, the EU had an Ankara-centric approach, both at the idea and institutional levels during the Turkey accession process. Lastly, the Europeanization process became an irrelevant dynamic after the stabilization of the IKR in 2005, which dramatically changed the parameters of the Kurdish issue in Turkey.

e) Global dynamics

Given the fact that globalization is a subject of broad debate, in this research I confined the issue with its effects on the rescaling of the collective action of different Kurdish groups. From this perspective, the influence of globalization cannot be classified as a positive or negative dynamic on the formation of a Kurdish political region in Turkey. Rather, the Kurdish groups advocating the integrationist models refer frequently to the globalization process as a dynamic that makes the nation-state and national borders irrelevant in the current circumstances. Yet the Kurdish groups supporting an autonomous or a federal Kurdish region in Turkey – which even include some economic elite – also use the globalization process to justify their ideas and interests by referring to the interaction between the four Kurdish regions on the one side and similar cases like the Kurdish issue in the other countries on the other.

Despite the different usages of the globalization process, it is obvious that the Kurdish collective action occurs in a globalized context. The Kurdish groups' ideas, interests and institutions have been constantly reshaped due to multi-level and multi-dimensional learning process, which the globalization process provides them thanks to new information technologies and cross-border and trans-national networks. In this regard, the big Kurdish diaspora in the European countries has a remarkable influence on the formation of the Kurdish groups' cross-border economic, cultural, social, political and religious cooperation. However, it is crucial to note that the multiplication of the scales does not mean a transfer of ideas, norms, values, standards and the like. Rather, the historically and socially constructed actors filter and reproduce them in accordance with their conditions in a specific time and space.

The Kurdish collective action has occured in this multilevel and multidimensional system of action. In the following section, I summarize the conflicts, the negotiations, and consensus of the Kurdish groups in the frame of the Kurdish issue.

2) Towards a Kurdish political region?

The divisions based on nation, religion and class among the Kurdish groups in a multilevel and multidimensional system of action have constituted grave obstacles for the establishment of a common cognitive frame, shared interests and accepted rules for consensus on a Kurdish political region in Turkey so far. The Kurdish groups are far from building a political region in the historically existing Kurdish cultural region in Turkey under the form of a united autonomous or federal region, despite their remarkable efforts and noteworthy advancements in the consensus-building process.

These divisions cause the Kurdish groups to define the Kurdish issue in different ways and propose different solutions to the issue. As a result, although most actors commonly use the notion of "Kurdish issue", in reality, there is not a single Kurdish issue, but there are various "Kurdish issues" of different Kurdish groups, which have different social imaginaries, ideological and political orientations, interests and institutions. Therefore, the Kurdish groups' different ideas and institutional networks at local/regional and national levels largely determine the formation of their interests regarding the Kurdish issue(s) and conflicts, negotiation and cooperation with others.

Given the results of this research, the three areas of conflict – the identity conflicts between national and religious groups; the conflicts of interest between national groups and economic elite; and, consequently, their three different proposals (local decentralization, regional decentralization or regionalization and federation) for the solution of the Kurdish issue – have prevented the Kurdish groups from building a consensus on a Kurdish political region, in spite of the noteworthy negotiation process that has taken place in recent decades.

a) Nation or religion?: Politically constructed plural identities

There is an ideological and existential conflict between both national and religious groups and Sunni-Muslim and Alevi groups at the idea level, which limits their capacity to produce a common cognitive frame, shared interests, and accepted rules in the Kurdish scene. These ideational differences between the religious and national groups also cause several conflicts around issues such as secularism, gender, and religious freedoms.

The national, pro-Islamist and pro-Alevi groups have different social imaginaries, which are historical constructs and largely determine their ideas, interests and institutions, and political positions concerning the Kurdish issue in particular. The national groups that constitute the most powerful bloc in the Kurdish region have a social imaginary based on

secular Kurdish national identity. The leading Kurdish movement, however, has a social imaginary based on not only Kurdish national identity, but also on socialist, secular and disgendered references. The pro-Islamist social imaginary constitutes the principal rival to the social imaginary of the national groups in the Kurdish region. Most of the pro-Islamist groups do not consider ethnicity or nation, but rather Islam, as an appropriate base for social order. Finally, the Alevi Kurds, the main religious minority in the Kurdish region, have a distinctive religion-based social imaginary. Like the Kurdish pro-Islamist groups, most of the Alevi Kurds privilege their religious identity over national identity.

The historically constructed antagonism between pro-Islamist politics and both secular/left-wing politics and pro-Alevi politics in Turkey frames the interaction of the three blocs in the Kurdish region, which mostly constitute the periphery of Turkish polity in economic and political terms. The historical integration of pro-Islamism, Turkish nationalism and conservatism as the three pillars of the right-wing politics since 1960, and the orthodox secular quality of the left-wing politics, has mostly confined the cooperation between the pro-Islamist and national groups in the Kurdish region so far. Besides, the antagonistic relation between the pro-Islamist and pro-Alevi groups has played a significant role in the construction of the Alevi identity as a left-wing oppositional identity, and of the Alevis' relations with the left-wing secular movements both at national and Kurdish regional levels. The secular and left-wing qualities of the leading Kurdish movement have allowed it to gain the support of a significant part of the Kurdish Alevis.

b) Structural antagonism: Nation or class?

Alongside the ideational conflicts based on the three different social imaginaries, there is also a conflict of interests between the Kurdish national bloc and economic elite, which constitutes a remarkable obstacle to build a Kurdish consensus in Turkey. First of all, as with the relations between the national and pro-Islamist groups, there is a case of path dependence with regard to relations between the national groups and economic elite in the Kurdish region. The institutional context that has been constructed since 1950 has mostly framed and structured the current conflict-ridden interactions between the Kurdish national groups and economic elite so far.

The historically constructed political economy in the Kurdish region has framed and confined the relations between the national groups and economic elite. Within this political economy of the Kurdish region, while the Kurdish economic elite has been incorporated into

the center since the 1950s, the national groups have emerged as Marxist/Leninist national liberation movements with their lower- and middle-class societal basis in the 1970s. The Kurdish lower and middle classes have suffered from the state socioeconomic policy causing regional disparities and have had uneasy relations to the state establishment for decades, whereas the Kurdish upper class has retained good relations with the state to guarantee its economic interests. The antagonistic relationship between the national bloc and economic elite still largely structures the interactions between the two blocs, both economically and politically.

In this regard, the social imaginaries of the two blocs must be underlined. In the Kurdish region, the national groups (the leading Kurdish movement in particular) and the economic elite have different, and even contesting frames of reference for social legitimacy. Although most national groups such as HAK-PAR, KADEP and TDŞK have given up their left-wing heritage, the socialist and dis-gendered social imaginary still marks the ideological and political orientation of the leading Kurdish movement (and also ÖSP). The BDP-DTK/PKK-KCK in particular advocates a cooperative-based economic model in the Kurdish region. The leading Kurdish movement views the economic elite as weak, self-seeking, unreliable and state-dependent. On the other hand, the economic elite considers the leading Kurdish movement's economic model to be a real danger for their economic interests in the Kurdish region. According the economic elite, what the leading Kurdish movement proposes is an outdated, unrealistic and authoritarian economic model, which is not compatible with the reality of the world based on the market economy. It is evident that the rationalities and interests are social constructs and actor-dependent.

c) Local decentralization, regionalization or federation?

Kurdish groups' differences at the levels of ideas and interests shape their different proposals for the solution of the Kurdish issue. In the Kurdish scene, there are basically three different politico-administrative models for the solution of Kurdish issue(s): local decentralization, federation, and regionalization or regional autonomy.

The political proposals of the Kurdish groups largely depend on their ideas (the social imaginaries in particular) and interests. The Kurdish groups that give priority to their economic interests and/or religious identity over Kurdish identity see Kurdishness not as a proper basis for the politico-administrative system, but rather "a cultural identity". They commonly propose the integrationist proposal – in other words, a countrywide local

decentralization. The groups that privilege the Kurdish "national" identity see the Kurdish issue as a national liberation problem and advocate an autonomous or a federal Kurdish region in Turkey. The leading Kurdish movement, on the other hand, frames Kurdish national liberation not only within the ethnic/national identity, but also as a social liberation issue (socialism and gender equality), criticizing the nation-state and the Kurdish and other nationalisms. It proposes a countrywide regional decentralization to de-ethnicize the nationhood or to build a multinational country.

The role of the historically constructed context and the central state must be underlined – in particular in the formation of the ideas, interests and institutions of the Kurdish groups. The Kurdish economic elite and the religious groups have been incorporated into the center since the 1950s. The decades-long dependence and center-periphery relationship both between the Kurdish economic elite and the center, and between the Kurdish religious (both pro-Islamist and pro-Alevi) groups and their Turkish counterparts, have a direct influence on the formation of their ideas and integrationist political proposals.

In contrast, the national groups that frame the Kurdish issue as a national liberation problem and aim to build a Kurdish political region have been in conflict with the Turkish state since the 1960s. Not only their contradictory relations with the central state, but also decades-long heritage have shaped the proposals of the Kurdish national groups. For instance, the leading Kurdish movement's decades-long left-wing heritage and comprehension of national liberation – not in terms of ethnicity and identity, but rather in terms of ideology and class – mostly frame and confine its ongoing discourse about the nation-state, nationalism and political proposals for the settlement of the Kurdish issue.

d) The ongoing negotiations

As to the capacity of the Kurdish groups to produce accepted rules concerning the Kurdish issue(s), there has been only limited progress due to three principal reasons over the last decade. First, the historically constructed context, shaped by the controversial relations between and among the Kurdish groups in the 1980 and 1990s, has largely determined negotiations among the Kurdish groups since the 2000s. Therefore, there is a case of path dependency in terms of the influence of the past over the present.

Second, the Turkish state's multiple interventions into the relations among or between the Kurdish groups must be noted as a destructive dynamic in the formation of the collective regulation process in the Kurdish region. In this regard, while the neo-liberal quality of the

AK Party has re-structured the relations between the Kurdish economic elite and the center, its pro-Islamist quality has reinforced the religion-based political positions of both the Kurdish pro-Islamist and pro-Alevis.

Finally and most importantly, the cognitive frames about the Kurdish or Kurdistan issue determine the ongoing negotiations and cooperation between or among the Kurdish groups and their ability to build collective regulations. There is a clear distinction between the Kurdish groups that define the Kurdish issue as a problem of democracy and multiculturalism and propose local decentralization, and those who define the issue as a national problem beyond democracy and advocate a regional autonomy or federation. The relations between these two blocs have been very limited so far.

Despite the above-mentioned limits, there has been remarkable progress towards the development of accepted rules and the capacity for the different actors to collectively act by recognizing each other, sharing interests, and collectively learning, despite a strong path dependency. In this regard, it is critical to note the very positive role of the existing mixed or intermediary organizations or groups in the negotiations process. The pro-Islamist groups that give a remarkable importance to the Kurdish national issue have played a very constructive role in the development of the cooperation between the national and pro-Islamist groups.

Although, the three Kurdish blocs could not achieve to build stable collective regulations, the direct and indirect negotiations among or between different Kurdish groups have led them to learn from each other. Particularly, the Kurdish groups that describe the issue as a national liberation problem with liberal, socialist, pro-Islamist or classical nationalist references have made remarkable efforts and achieved significant advancement towards a Kurdish national unity for the last decade. Alongside the Kurdish groups' efforts for the negotiation and cooperation (and also the influence of the geopolitical dynamics in Iraq and Syria), the AK Party's Turkish nationalist policies towards the Kurds and the Kurdish issue since 2009, has had very critical role in the achievement of this advancement. Yet it is important to underline that these achieved collective regulations are not stable, but rather very recent and provisory.

In the last section of the conclusion, I underline the basic consensus that has been achieved among the Kurdish national and religious groups and economic elite. Despite the above-mentioned conflicts of ideas and interests and various proposals regarding the institutional form of a prospective Kurdish political region, the Kurdish groups have managed

to build a relatively common cognitive frame, shared interests and accepted rules or institutions concerning the Kurdish issue so far.

3) Achieved Consensus

The Kurdish national and religious group and economic elite have not managed to build a common consensus for a Kurdish political region in a form of an autonomous or federal region. The divisions based on the nation, religion and class have constituted significant obstacles on the way of consensus building process. Yet, there have been noteworthy efforts to build a common cognitive frame, shared interests and accepted rules regarding the Kurdish issue in Turkey.

a) Common cognitive frame

At the normative and cognitive level, the three Kurdish groups agree on three main issues. First, the Kurdish issue is not a problem of terrorism and security as the Turkish state has argued for decades, but rather a political problem. Second, they consider the Kurds to be a distinct nation. Finally, they support equality between Kurds and Turks (and other nations), despite different classifications, such as classical nationalist, socialist, liberal, and pro-Islamist.

The Turkish state has argued that the Kurdish issue is principally a problem of terrorism and security that has threatened the unity of Turkish state and nation for decades. Therefore, it has tried to solve the issue through a policy of assimilation, neglect and denial on the one hand; and through its despotic power based on state violence towards the Kurds on the other. It is obvious that the Turkish state's frame regarding the Kurdish issue has collapsed in the Kurdish region. Except for the two representatives of the Ankara-centric pro-Islamist groups, among the 132 interviews, there is no one who advocates this approach. The Kurdish national and religious groups and economic elite have a common normative and cognitive frame that the Kurdish issue is not a problem of terrorism and security, but a national problem having socioeconomic, cultural, political, administrative and psychological aspects.

The Kurdish groups agree that the Kurds constitute a distinctive nation like Arabs, Turks, Persian, French or German. Although they use the different notions such as "halk", "millet, "etnik grup," "ulus" to describe the Kurds, they do not see the Kurds as a sub-group of the Turkish nation, nor do they view Kurdishness as a cultural or ethnic sub-identity under

the Turkish national identity. They see the Kurdishness as an equal category with the Turkishness (and other national identities).

Finally, they advocate equality between the Kurdish and Turkish nations, with different references such as classical nationalist, socialist, liberal, and pro-Islamist. Although, the Kurdish groups give different importance to the nationhood of the Kurds, they demand equal rights for the Kurds and Turks. They propose various proposals such as independence, federation, autonomy, regional decentralization or local decentralization, yet they underline the equality between and among the nations in each model.

b) Shared interests

Alongside the common cognitive and normative frame, the Kurdish groups have shared interests in several issues. These are a peaceful solution to the Kurdish issue; the constitutional recognition of the Kurdish nation; collective cultural rights, including education in their Kurdish mother tongue; the rights to the self-government; a regional socioeconomic development; the development of the economic and political relations between the IKR (and a de facto autonomous Kurdish region in Syria) and Turkey; and Turkey's accession to the EU.

A peaceful solution to the Kurdish issue is the first shared interest of the all Kurdish groups. Although they have different reasons and objectives, the Kurdish national, religious and economic groups highlight that the first and foremost issue is peacebuilding in the Kurdish region through the disarmament of the PKK-KCK and a democratic solution to the Kurdish issue. Criticizing the state strategies that give the priority to the security-based policies, they commonly argue that there is no way aside from a peaceful political solution for the Kurdish issue to end the Kurdish conflict in Turkey.

Second, they demand the constitutional recognition of the Kurds. They commonly propose to prepare and adopt a new, de-ethnicized constitution since the current constitution is based on the Turkishness and denies the existence and rights of the groups other than Turks, including the Kurds. Most members of the Kurdish elite advocate a constitution that does not explicitly or implicitly refer any ethnic/national groups. Yet, they underlined that the new constitution must refer to and recognize the Kurds and other groups to guarantee equality between all groups, if it gives a place to the Turkishness.

Third, at the cultural level, there exists a consensus on the reproduction of the Kurdish identity. Except for a small set of pro-Islamist groups that advocate liberal individual rights, the clear majority of Kurdish groups demands collective cultural rights guaranteeing a

bilingual or multilingual public administration system and public education. Despite different approaches on the schedule of the reform process concerning the collective cultural rights, they agree that the education in their Kurdish mother tongue and the usage of the Kurdish language in the public institutions are the indispensable conditions for the protecting and reproducing the Kurdish national identity.

Fourth, at the politico-administrative level, there is a common consensus for the Kurds' right to self-government. The Kurdish groups mostly demand that the Kurds be able to govern themselves and make decisions about their social, economic, cultural, political affairs at the local and regional levels. Despite their different proposed politico-administrative models (local decentralization, regional autonomy and federation), the self-government right constitutes the principal justification of the Kurdish groups. They also put forward the issues of democratization and the increasing quality and effectiveness of the public services to justify the necessity of the self-government right. A local decentralization process that will provide the Kurds the ability to govern their own affairs at the local level is a shared interest of the Kurdish national, religious and economic elites. However, there remains an incomplete on a regional decentralization based on the 20-25 geographic regions at countrywide level, and a united autonomous or federal Kurdish region.

Fifth, the socioeconomic development of the Kurdish region constitutes a noteworthy shared interest of the Kurdish groups. The Kurdish groups have a common cognitive frame that the essence of the Kurdish issue is not economic as Turkish state has constantly argued for the decades, but a national issue having political, administrative, social, economic aspects. Besides, they agree on that the decades-long regional disparity between the Kurdish region and western part of the country is not the reason of the Kurdish issue, but a result of the issue. Despite this common cognitive frame, it is evident that the Kurdish groups give different importance to the socioeconomic problems of the Kurdish region. However, they have a shared interest regarding the socioeconomic development of the Kurdish region.

Sixth, it is obvious that the common cognitive and normative frame of the Kurdish groups about the nationhood of the Kurds (that is to say the Kurds compose a nation like Arabs, Turks, Persians, and other nations), determines their approaches to the situation of the Kurds who live in other countries. Most Kurdish groups welcome the establishment of the IKR in 2003 and the de facto autonomous Kurdish region in Syria in 2011. They share a normative interest concerning Turkey's good with the IKR; and support the economic, social, cultural and political multi-level cooperation between Turkey and the IKR. The Kurdish

groups also commonly support the idea that Turkey must develop its relations with the autonomous Kurdish region in Syria, like it has done with the IKR for the last several years. It is important to note that only some members of the Kurdish economic elite who give a remarkable importance to "the Kurdish national issue" share the normative interest. Yet the economic elite mostly has an economic interest regarding Turkey's good economic and political relations with the two Kurdish regions in Iraq and Syria.

Finally, Turkey's adhesion to the EU is a shared interest for the Kurdish groups, except for some Euro-skeptic (and western-skeptic) radical pro-Islamists. The Europeanization process lost its importance in the eyes of many groups at local and national levels. Besides, the Kurdish groups commonly do not believe in that Turkey will be accepted as a member of the EU for different reasons. Yet, they commonly support the process for the reason that it will contribute to the democratization of Turkey and to the ripening of conditions for the settlement of the Kurdish issue.

c) Accepted rules

The Kurdish national, religious and economic groups have achieved remarkable progress toward build a common cognitive frame and shared interests concerning the Kurdish issue. However, their abilities and capacities are limited to establishing accepted rules, which allow them to act collectively by recognizing each other and learning mutually. Several dynamics can be underlined in this regard, such as strong path dependency, the controversial social imaginary beyond the Kurdish issue, the very negative role of the central state, the lack of experience concerning political pluralism and cooperation at the practical level.

However, there has been noteworthy progress toward building accepted rules among the Kurdish national, religious and economic elites. These are the relative elimination of the political violence among the Kurdish groups; the consensus-building processes within both the pro-Islamist groups and the groups who give significant importance to the Kurdish national liberation issue; and the establishment of umbrella organizations such as the KİAP and the Northern Kurdistan Unity and Solution Conference. Yet it is critical to note that there is a clear distinction and very limited dialogue between the Kurdish groups that compose the KİAP and the Northern Kurdistan Unity and Solution Conference. Moreover, the accepted rules within each platform are not stable, but very recently established and provisory.

The internal conflicts between and among the Kurdish groups in the 1980s and 1990s have had a remarkable influence on the ongoing collective action in the Kurdish region. The

Kurdish groups agree on that these conflicts played a destructive role in the Kurdish national liberation struggle. Today, there is a general consensus that the Kurdish groups must recognize each other and completely eliminate political violence against each other in the Kurdish region. Although there have been several cases of conflict between the PKK-affiliated and KH-affiliated groups since 2006, in which two people lost their lives in 2011 (Yüksekova town) and in 2013 (Batman city), the two sides have explicitly and consistently declared that internal conflict will damage the Kurds' struggle; and they do not want to be a part of a new internal conflict in the Kurdish region. In fact, not only the PKK and the KH, but also other Kurdish groups have arrived at a consensus that the political violence against each other must be completely and absolutely eliminated in the Kurdish region; and the Kurdish groups must use political and democratic means and instruments to reinforce their power among Kurdish society.

Despite their remarkable efforts, the Kurdish national, religious and economic groups have not succeeded in building a general umbrella organization at the regional level so far. However, both the pro-Islamist groups and the groups privileging the national issue or giving remarkable significance to the national issue have built a common platform to negotiate and cooperate on the Kurdish issue. Except for the KH, more than 60 pro-Islamist groups composed the KİAP to be a third actor alongside the Turkish state and the national groups (the leading Kurdish movement in particular) by building a common cognitive frame, shared interests and accepted rules among the Kurdish pro-Islamists concerning the Kurdish issue.

The Kurdish national groups and the pro-Islamist and economic groups that give remarkable importance to the Kurdish national issue have established a general umbrella organization for establishing a common cognitive frame, shared interests and accepted rules on the one side, and a general national representative actor/institution for the settlement of the Kurdish issue on the other. After several attempts to establish national unity since the 2000s, such as the Tev-Kurd and the DTK, the Kurdish groups describing the Kurdish issue as a national issue with liberal, socialist, classical nationalist, and pro-Islamist references managed to unite, negotiate, cooperate, and even build a permanent committee representing the objectives and decisions that the groups determined in the Northern Kurdistan Unity and Solution Conference.

The Kurdish pro-Islamist groups composing KİAP and the groups composing the Northern Kurdistan Unity and Solution Conference have very limited dialog, despite their common cognitive frame and shared interests concerning the Kurdish issue. They are very far

away from cooperating with each other for the settlement of the Kurdish issue, although there are some pro-Islamist groups that participate in the two organizations. Additionally, the two umbrella organizations were recently established, and the accepted rules that they establish are not stable but provisory.

It is evident that Kurdish collective action depends on many dynamics at local, regional, national, trans-national, European and global levels. These multi-level and multi-dimensional dynamics will shape the future of both the KİAP and the Conference, or of any prospective umbrella organization of the Kurdish groups and the consensus-building process for a Kurdish political region. However, the roles and positions of the leading Kurdish movement and the Turkish state– the two chief actors dominating political space in the Kurdish region for decades – and the geopolitical changes in Iraq and Syria in particular must be underlined.

The Kurdish national, religious, and economic groups have mostly built a common cognitive frame and shared interests, although they have only achieved limited progress toward establishing accepted rules regarding the Kurdish issue so far. Yet it can be anticipated that these common cognitive frames and shared interests will probably allow them to build more accepted rules, despite the strong path dependency.

C - New research perspectives

In this research, I analyzed the interaction of the Kurdish national, religious and economic groups to build a common cognitive frame, shared interests and accepted rules for the development of a Kurdish political region in Turkey. I also examined the influence of the historical, étatique, geopolitical, European and global dynamics on the collective action of the Kurds.

However, it is important to note that this research had some limits such as time, economic resources, and the security problem in the field where the research was conducted. Therefore further projects could be carried out to elaborate upon this research. First of all, I principally focused on the elite to analyze the Kurdish consensus-building process in Turkey. Yet, the elites who are the representatives of different Kurdish groups are not the only source of knowledge. Conducting a field research based on the knowledge of the ordinary people who support the Kurdish national movements, religious groups or who are members of the lower class can reveal noteworthy results concerning the conflicts, cooperation or consensus at the level of ideas, interests or institutions in the Kurdish region. Given the last immense

social movement that took place in the summer of the 2013 around Istanbul's Taksim Gezi Park, largely spurred in protest of the government's policies, the knowledge and experience of the ordinary people must be taken into account to analyze the changes in policies, politics and polity in Turkey.

Research on the border area between the Kurdish regions of Turkey, Iraq and Syria also can be carried out on the basis of these research results. Although this research mentioned that that the IKR and de facto Kurdish region in Syria have had a remarkable influence on the Kurdish region in Turkey, and the Kurdish provinces at border areas in particular, I could not elaborate on this issue. Field research on the city of Şırnak and Hakkari (for the influence of the IKR), and Mardin and Şanlıurfa (for the influence of the de facto Kurdish region in Syria) could provide interesting analysis of the influence of the recent geopolitical changes on the Kurdish issue of Turkey. Given the fact that the leading Kurdish movement has a very clear hegemony in Şırnak and Hakkari (on the border of the IKR where the PKK-KCK is weak), and relatively weak public support in Mardin and Şanlıurfa (on the border of the Kurdish region of Syria where the PKK-KCK is very powerful), this research can serve as a starting point for a comparative analysis of the influence of geopolitical changes on the different parts of the Kurdish region in Turkey. I could not go to Şırnak and Hakkari due to time constraints and security issues during the field research.

Although this research underlined the transnational and international quality of the Kurdish issue, I confined my research to the influence of the Kurdistan region in Iraq and de facto Kurdish region in Syria, and excluded the Kurdish region in Iran. While the dramatic changes in Iraq and Syria are the main reasons that I confined myself to the two Kurdish regions, there exist consistent social and economic relations and cooperation between the Kurdish regions of Turkey and Iran, and between the border areas in particular. Given the importance roles of étatique actors on the formation of the Kurdish collective actions in Kurdish regions of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria, a research on the influence of Iran on the interaction of the Kurdish groups can be a real contribution to this research.

Research into the ideas, interests and the institutions of the national (such as Armenian, Arabs and Assyrian-Chaldeans) and religious (such as Christians, Yezîdîs) minority groups in the Kurdish region of Turkey could provide a very different perspective about a prospective Kurdish political region in Turkey. Research on the Kurdish issue and the Kurdish region in Turkey can be seen as a study focusing on "the margin". For that reason, research

concentrating on the national and religious minorities in the Kurdish region will be a study of "margins of margins" or a study of margins at multiple levels.

Finally, I must note that "the issue of political violence" that the PKK-KCK has used against the Turkish state for decades was excluded in this research for ethical reasons in both political and intellectual terms. In fact, the usage of political violence as a method to obtain national rights is a noteworthy contentious issue among the Kurdish groups. Yet, given the delicate nature of the issue, and the Turkish state's severe violence towards the Kurds, and its ongoing policy terrorizing and marginalizing the BDP-DTK due to its sociopolitical and cultural relations with the PKK-KCK, the issue of political violence was not included in the analysis of the Kurdish collective action in Turkey. The political violence issue needed to either be analyzed in a comprehensive way including the state's violence and structural dynamics in a historical perspective, or excluded altogether. Given the limits of this research, I chose the second option. Yet, a comprehensive analysis on the issue of the political violence that the leading Kurdish movement has used against the Turkish state for decades is still necessary for a better understanding the conflict, negotiation, cooperation and consensus in the Kurdish region[1].

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[1] The articles of Bozarslan and Günay can be a good starting point for those who will study the Kurdish issue and political violence in Turkey. Hamit Bozarslan, "'Why the Armed Struggle?' Understanding the Violence in Kurdistan of Turkey," in *The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey: Obstacles and Chances for Peace and Democracy*, ed. Ferhad Ibrahim and Gülistan Gürbey (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 17–30; Onur Günay, "Towards a Critique of Non-violence," *Dialectical Antropology* 37, no. 1 (2013): 171–182.

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Annexes

Annex 1: The List of Interviews with Political Elites

NAME	TITLE	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	SCALE OF INFLUENCE	DURATION OF INTERVIEW (minute)
Abdullah Demirtaş	Mayor of the Diyarbakir-Sur Municipality	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	85
Ayse Agılgat	Co-President of BDP Batman City Section	Batman	Batman	53
Bayram Bozyel	President of the pro-Kurdish Rights and Freedoms Party (HAK-PAR)	Diyarbakır	Region	65
Cemal Artık	Spokesman of Mardin City Council	Mardin	Mardin	50
Cevdet Çalbay	President of AK Party Bingöl Section	Bingöl	Bingöl	67
Demir Çelik	Muş Deputy of BDP and Member of Coordination Committee of DTK	Diyarbakır	Region	77
Dengir Mir Mehmet Fırat	Former Vice President and Spokesman of the AK Party	Ankara	Region	75
Erkan Sözen	Vice President of AK Party Şanlıurfa City Section	Şanlıurfa	Şanlıurfa	103
Fuat Önen	Member of Tev-Kurd	Diyarbakır	Region	186
Galip Ensarioğlu	Diyarbakır Deputy of AK Party	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	40
Güten Kışanak	Co-President of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)	Diyarbakır	Region	91
Halim İpek	Spokemen of the TDŞK	Diyarbakır	Region	77
Halis Yurtsever	President of BDP Bingöl Section	Bingöl	Bingöl	109
Halit Advan	President of AK Party Diyarbakir Section	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	45
Hüsamettin Zeydenlioğlu	Bitlis Deputy of BDP	Bitlis	Bitlis	139
Hüseyin Tunç	Regional Representative and Former President of Tunceli City Section of Labor Party (EMEP)	Tunceli	Region	69
İbrahim Güçlü	Pro-Ethnic Intellectual	Diyarbakır	Region	123
İhsan Yaşar	Vice President of AK Party Diyarbakir Section	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	157
Aydın Altaç	Vice President of AK Party Diyarbakir Section	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	78

İhsan Aslan	Vice-president of the AK Party	Ankara	Region	78
Kemal Bozkurt	President of CHP Tunceli City Section	Tunceli	Tunceli	47
Mazhar Zümrüt	Member of the BDP Party Council, and of Committee of Relation with NGOs and other Political Parties	Diyarbakır	Region	123
Mehmet Çiçek	Vice President of BDP Şanlıurfa City Section	Şanlıurfa	Şanlıurfa	102
Mehmet Emin Kardaş	Spokesmen of Kurdistan Party Initiative	Diyarbakır	Region	146
Murat Polat	Former President of Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)	Tunceli	Tunceli	80
Mustafa Kurban	President of CHP Bingöl Section and Businessman	Bingöl	Bingöl	52
Orhan Bezirganoğlu	President of BDP Bitlis Section	Bitlis	Bitlis	57
Osman Baydemir	Mayor of the Diyarbakir Metropolitan Municipality	Diyarbakır	Region	100
Sedat Yurttaş	Former Deputy	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	72
Selahattin Demirtaş	Co-President of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)	Ankara	Region	49
Selahattin Kaya	Former Mayor of Bingöl	Bingöl	Bingöl	73
Serhat Temel	Deputy Mayor of Batman Municipality	Batman	Batman	60
Seydi Fırat	Member of Permanent Assembly of DTK	Diyarbakır	Region	131
Sihem Elveren Alp	Co-President of BDP Mardin City Section	Mardin	Mardin	128
Sinan Çiftyürek	President of the Freedom and Socialism Party (OSP)	Diyarbakır	Region	101
Şerafettin Elçi	The founding president of the Participatory Democracy Party (KADEP)			50
Şerafettin Halis	President of BDP Tunceli City Section and Former Deputy	Tunceli	Tunceli	52
Uğur Yeşiltepe	Tunceli Representative of Democratic Rights Federation	Tunceli	Tunceli	57
Ziver Özdemir	Batman Deputy of AK Party	Batman	Batman	63
Zübeyde Zümrüt	Co-president of BDP Diyarbakir Section	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	77

Annex 2: The List of Interviews with Religious Elites

NAME	TITLE	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	SCALE OF INFLUENCE	DURATION OF INTERVIEW (minute)
Ali Burakgazi	Opinion Leader of Meşveret Community	Bingöl	Bingöl	61
Altan Tan	Pro-Islamist Intellectual, and Diyarbakır Deputy of the BDP	Ankara	Region	85
Cemal Çınar	Opinion Leader of Movement of Oppressed People (Mustazaflar Hareketi)	Istanbul	Region	166
Enver Butasun	Spokesman of Bingöl Marifet Association, Opinion Leader of Med-Zehra Community	Bingöl	Bingöl	107
Ferzende Lale	President of the Ay-Der, a pro-Islamist NGO in Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	78
Feyzi Aytar	President of Anatolia Youth Association Bingöl Section	Bingöl	Bingöl	77
Focus Group Meeting	Serdar, Mehmet and Cihat, Pro-Islamist People	Bingöl	Bingöl	112
Hamdullah Tasalı	President of Mustazaf-Der Bingöl Section	Bingöl	Bingöl	76
Hüseyin Yılmaz	President of the Mustazaf-Der	Diyarbakır	Region	186
İsa Aydın	President of Batman Association of Downtrodden People (Mustazaf-Der affiliated local association)	Batman	Batman	72
Mehmet Kışlar	President of Mustazaf-Der Şanlıurfa Section	Şanlıurfa	Şanlıurfa	41
Mele İzzet Özdemir	President of Bingol Kurdî-Der	Bingöl	Bingöl	80
Mele Süleyman Kurşun	Pro-Islamist Opinion Leader of Med-Zehra Community	Diyarbakır	Region	129
Mücahit Deniz	Pro-Islamist Opinion Leader	Bingöl	Bingöl	69
Muhammed Hadi Koç	Vice President of the Assistance and Solidarity Association of Clergies (DIAYDER)	Diyarbakır	Region	48
Muhittin Batmanlı	President of the Dicle-Fırat Dialog Group	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	114

Muhittin Kaya	Opinion Leader of Med-Zehra Community	Bingöl	Bingöl	160
Necat Özdemir	Editor in chief of Banga Heq ji Kelhaamedê	Diyarbakır	Region	141
Nurettin Bozkurt	Member of Directors of Mazlum-Der, a pro-Islamist Humant Right Association	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	79
Ömer Evsen	President of Trade Union of Imams in Diyarbakır (Diyanet-Sen)	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	62
Rauf Çiçek	President of the Nubihar Association, a pro-Islamic NGO in Diyarbakır, affiliated to Med-Zehra Community	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	89
Sedat Doğan	Pro-Islamist Intellectual and Member of Board of Directors of Mazlum-Der Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	110
Serdar Bülent Yılmaz	President of the Association Free Thought and Education Rights, a pro-Islamist NGO in Diyarbakır (Özgür-Der)	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	140
Şeyh Fevzi Güzelsoy	Representative of the Meşveret pro-Islamist Community	Diyarbakır	Region	67
Şeyh Selim Değerli	A Local Muslim and pro-Ethnic Community Leader	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	81
Sıtkı Zilan	Pro-Islamist Intellectual, A founder of the Kurdistan Islamic Initiative for Rights, Justice and Freedom (Azadî)	Diyarbakır	Region	110
Zeki Hülagü	Pro-Islamist Opinion Leader	Bingöl	Bingöl	30

Annex 3: The List of Interviews with Economic Elites

NAME	TITLE	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	SCALE OF INFLUENCE	DURATION OF INTERVIEW (minute)
Abdurrahman Yetkin	President of Şanlıurfa Local Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MUSİAD)	Şanlıurfa	Şanlıurfa	35
Adnan Sarı	Businessman, Vice President of Sarıoglu A.Ş.	Bingöl	Bingöl	57
Alaattin Korkutata	President of Diyarbakır Entrepreneur Businessmen's Association (DİGİAD)	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	52
Ali Asker Güler	Former President of the Tunceli Chamber of the Trade and Industry	Tunceli	Tunceli	63
Alican Ehedioğlu	President of Unity of Chambers of Tradesman and Artisans of Diyarbakir (DESOB)	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	56
Aziz Aslan	President of Memur-Sen Diyarbakır City Section, The Biggest Pro-Islamic Trade Union	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	69
Aziz Gölcük	Vice President of Diyarbakır Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (DİSİAD)	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	31
Baran Gundoğan	President of Tunceli Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (TUNSİAD)	Tunceli	Tunceli	69
Beşir Yılmaz	Businessman, Beden Mermer (Marble)	Diyarbakır	Region	99
Burç Baysal	Vice President of Diyarbakır Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (DİSİAD)	Diyarbakır	Region	79
Celalettin Birtane	Businessman, Birtane İnşaat	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	100
Hıdır Bellice	President of Unity of Tunceli Chambers of Tradesman and Artisans	Tunceli	Tunceli	65
İbrahim Alimoğlu	President of TUMSIAD Bingöl Section	Bingöl	Bingöl	73
İhsan Ogurlu	Vise President of Diyarbakır Organized Industrial Zone	Diyarbakır	Region	65

Mahmut Odabaşı	President of Southeast Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (GÜNSİAD)	Diyarbakır	Region	87
Mahmut Yeşil	Businessman	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	84
Mehmet Ali Dündar	President of Mardin Local Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD)	Mardin	Mardin	95
Mehmet Ali Uzunyaya	Businessman	Bingöl	Bingöl	72
Mehmet Aslan	General Secretary of DTSO	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	63
Mehmet Kaya	Former President of the Diyarbakır Chamber of the Trade and Industry (DTSO)	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	103
Mehmet Öksüzoğlu	President of Şanlıurfa Young Businessmen's Association (ŞÜGIAD)	Şanlıurfa	Şanlıurfa	44
Mustafa Tatlı	General Secretary of Bingöl Entrepreneur Businessmen's Association (BİGİAD)	Bingöl	Bingöl	67
Osman Nasıroglu	President of the Batman Chamber of the Trade and Industry (DTSO)	Batman	Batman	44
Raif Türk	President of Diyarbakir Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (DİSİAD)	Diyarbakır	Region	81
Remzi Ocak	Businessman, Arda Muhendislik	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	60
Şah İsmail Bedirhanoğlu	President of Federation of Southeast Industrialists' and Businessmen's Associations (DOGÜNSİFED)	Diyarbakır	Region	67
Şahabettin Aykut	President of Diyarbakir Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD)	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	107
Şamet Bilgin	Businessman	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	89
Şerif Camcı	General Secretary of Sarmaşık Association for Sustainable Development and Struggle to Poverty	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	91
Unnamed	Businessman	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	45
Yusuf Çengiz	President of the Tunceli Chamber of the Trade and Industry	Tunceli	Tunceli	54

Annex 4: The List of Interviews with Cultural and Intellectual Elites

NAME	TITLE	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	SCALE OF INFLUENCE	DURATION OF INTERVIEW (minute)
Ali Mukan	President of Dersim Culture Association and of Federation of Dersim Associations (DEDEF)	Tunceli	Tunceli	31
Azad Zal	Editor in Chief of Kurdish Journal of "Kovara W"	Diyarbakır	Region	116
Behvad and Barzan Şerefhanoğlu	Journalists	Bitlis	Bitlis	145
Deniz Gündüz	Director of the Vate Publication House			173
Doğan Karasu	President of Bingöl Social, Cultural, Economic Development Association (Bin-Der)	Bingöl	Bingöl	118
Emin Yıldırım	Editor in Chief of Daily Kurdish Newspaper "Azadiya Welat"	Diyarbakır	Region	103
Farqîn	Famous Kurdish Musician and Member of Directors of Dicle-Fırat Culture and Art Association	Diyarbakır	Region	61
Faruk Balıkçı	President of the Southeastern Journalists Community	Diyarbakır	Region	49
Fazil Hüsnü Erdem	Professor at Diyarbakır Dicle University	Diyarbakır	Region	80
Felat Özsoy	Pro-Kurdish Intellectual	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	121
Feratê Dengizî	Member of Board of Directors of the Diyarbakır Kurdish Language Institute	Diyarbakır	Region	70
Günay Aksoy	Editor in chief of GÜN TV (Local TV Channel in Diyarbakır)	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	55
Handan Çoskun	Feminist Kurdish Activist	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	143
Hasan Çakır	Member of Editorial Board of "Newepel" Zazaki Newspaper	Diyarbakır	Region	190
Kadri Yıldırım	Vice Rector of Mardin Artuklu University	Mardin	Region	80
Lezgin Yalçın	President of the Civil Society Development Center in	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	85

	Diyarbakır (STGM)			
Mahmut Bagik	Director of A Private Company Zorking for "Kurd 1" and Other Kurdish TV Channels	Diyarbakır	Region	103
Maşallah Dekak	Pro-Kurdish Journalist, Kurdistan News Agency	Diyarbakır	Region	70
Mehmet Çakmak	Member of Directors at Cegerxwin Cultural Center of Yenişehir Municipality	Diyarbakır	Region	83
Mehmet Emin Aktar	President of Diyarbakır Bar	Diyarbakır	Region	63
Mehmet Şahin	Spokemen of the Kurdish Language and Education Movements (TZPKurdi)	Diyarbakır	Region	83
Mehmet Tüzün	Founder President of Zaza Language and Culture Association	Istanbul	Region	85
Mücahit Ceylan	Editor in chief of CAN TV (Local TV Channel in Diyarbakir)	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	65
Muharrem Cebe	President of Culture and Turism Department of DMM (DBB)	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	118
Munzur Çem	Intelactual and Researcher	Tunceli	Region	73
Necdet İpekyüz	Diyarbakir Representative of the Turkey Human Right Foundation (TIHV)	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	102
Şabahattin Korkmaz	Pro-Kurdish Intellectuel	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	152
Şami Tan	Former President of Istanbul Kurdish Institute	Istanbul	Region	128
Serdar Şengül	Professor at Mardin Artuklu University	Mardin	Mardin	176
Şehmus Sefer	President of the Association of Kurdish Writers	Diyarbakır	Region	58
Umut Suvari	Member of Coordination Council of Diyarbakir City Council	Diyarbakır	Diyarbakır	96
Vahap Çoskun	Professor at Diyarbakir Dicle University	Diyarbakır	Region	76
Veli Aytaç	Former Mayor of Tunceli of Republican People's Party (CHP)	Tunceli	Tunceli	55
Yusuf Baluken	Opinion Leader of Med-Zehra Community	Bingöl	Bingöl	76
Zana Farqînî	President of Istanbul Kurdish Institute	Istanbul	Region	144

Annex 5: The Field Research Questions and Topics

WHY THE KURDISH REGION

- Personal and/or institutional introduction

- The problems that the Kurdish people have (Kurdish issue, southeastern problem, socioeconomic under-development problem, identity issue, ethnic separatism, terrorism and so on?)

- The reform process since 2002 (Cultural reform, TRT6, new law for district and metropolitan municipalities and special provincial administration, socioeconomic development plan, development agency etc.)

- Democratic Autonomy Project of the leading Kurdish movement?

- Their proposal for the solution of the Kurdish issue(s)

COOPERATION

Local/Regional Actors

- Relation with other local and regional actors, groups, institution (political, economic, pro-Islamist and pro-ethnic)?

- The main cooperation areas

- Common projects with local and regional partners

- Relationship with the municipalities and other public institution

- The position of the leading Kurdish movement local and regional partners

National Actors

- The cooperation with actors, groups, and institutions at national level.

Central State

- The central state effort to cooperate with local and regional actors

- Socioeconomic development plans, administrative reforms and cultural-linguistic reforms since 2002

Iraqi Kurdistan Region

- General ideas about the establishment of autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan Region since 2003

- The affects of the establishment of Iraqi Kurdistan on the Turkey in general and on its Kurdish Region in particular with its political, economic, cultural and cognitive aspects?

- The influence of the IKR on Kurdish people, Kurdish political groups (the leading Kurdish movement in particular) and the central state and government

- Cooperation with the actors, groups, and institutions in IKR.

Europeanization Process

- The general ideas about the Turkey's accession to the EU

- The domestic affects of Turkey's accession to the EU since 1999

- The affects of Turkey's accession to the EU on Kurdish Issue considering socioeconomic, cultural, political and administrative aspects

- The government efforts for the EU membership process

- The regression of the Turkey's accession process

- The EU's approach and efforts about Turkey's membership process

- Their cooperation at European level

- Common project with European or international partner

- The project founded by a European or international institutions or donors

OBSTACLES AND CONFLICTS

- The main obstacles, which prevent to find a political solution to the issue

- The key-issues that the relevant actors conflict on

- The conflict between the secular left-wing national groups and pro-Islamist groups

- The re-emergence of the Kurdish Hizbullah in the political space and several Kurdish pro-Islamist groups like the Azadî

- The Kurdish pro-Islamists' recent efforts to build a new policy vis-à-vis the Kurdish issue

- The leading Kurdish movement's recent efforts to build a new policy vis-à-vis the issue of Islam

- The historical background of the issue

- Both negative and positive affects of the historical background of the issue on the present obstacles and conflicts

- The main obstacles caused by the central state, which prevent regional cooperation and consensus (vertical governance)?

- The main obstacles preventing regional actors to cooperate and to build consensus (horizontal governance)?

NEGOTIATION

- Institutional effort to cope with the obstacles, to enforce cooperation and build regional consensus on the Kurdish issue so far

- The basic frictions and consensus that they have with other regional actors

- Permanent or temporary mechanism of dialogue or negotiation that they take place

- General ideas about the Democratic Society Congress

- The Democratic Society Congress' achievements and failures

- The conditions of local and regional consensus

EVALUATION

- Their evaluation about their own efforts to cooperate with other local and regional actors

- Their evaluation about other local and regional actors' efforts to cooperate and build consensus, common rules and institutions

- Their plan for the future in order to build a local-regional cooperation and consensus