Political Violence and Kurds in Turkey

Fragmentations, mobilizations, participations and repertoires

Mehmet Orhan
The Kurdish conflict is an acknowledged long-standing issue in the Middle East, and the emergence of radical Kurdish nationalist movements in the twentieth century played a decisive role in the evolution of political violence.

*Political Violence and Kurds in Turkey* examines how this political violence impacts Kurds in contemporary Turkey, and explores the circumstances that move human beings to violent acts. It looks at the forms political violence takes and in which times and spaces it occurs, as well as the roles played by micro and macro factors. It takes a theoretical approach to violence, as both producer and product of interrelations between many actors, and contextualizes this with studies of violence in Kurdish villages and towns. The book evaluates the three levels at which political violence operates; between the state and Kurdish movements, among Kurdish groups, and between Kurdish political organizations and Kurdish society, and divides it into its different aspects and processes; fragmentation-segmentation (signifying intra-ethnic struggles between Kurdish actors), mobilization (the course leading the Kurdish movement to armed conflict), participation (the use of violence by individuals) and repertoires (the forms taken by political violence).

Offering an in-depth analysis of the dynamics behind political violence and its use amongst Kurds in Turkey, this book will be a key resource for students and scholars of Middle Eastern Studies, Kurdish Studies and Conflict Studies, and offers new understanding and approaches to the study of political violence.

**Mehmet Orhan** obtained his PhD in political sociology at EHESS in Paris. His articles have appeared in *Turkish Studies, Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* and *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict.*
1 Algeria in Transition
   Ahmed Aghrout with Redha M. Bougherira

2 Palestinian Refugee Repatriation
   Edited by Michael Dumper

3 The International Politics of the Persian Gulf
   Arshin Adib-Moghaddam

4 Israeli Politics and the First Palestinian Intifada
   Eitan Y. Alimi

5 Democratization in Morocco
   Lise Storm

6 Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey
   Ümit Cizre

7 The United States and Iran
   Sasan Fayazmanesh

8 Civil Society in Algeria
   Andrea Liverani

9 Jordanian–Israeli Relations
   Mutayyam al O’ran

10 Kemalism in Turkish Politics
    Sinan Ciddi

11 Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey
    William Hale and Ergun Özbudun

12 Politics and Violence in Israel/Palestine
    Lev Luis Grinberg

13 Intra-Jewish Conflict in Israel
    Sami Shalom Chetrit

14 Holy Places in the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict
    Edited by Marshall J. Breger, Yitzhak Reiter and Leonard Hammer

15 Plurality and Citizenship in Israel
    Edited by Dan Avnon and Yotam Benziman

16 Ethnic Politics in Israel
    As’ad Ghanem

17 Islamists and Secularists in Egypt
    Dina Shehata

18 Political Succession in the Arab World
    Anthony Billingsley
19 Turkey’s Entente with Israel and Azerbaijan
   Alexander Murinson

20 Europe and Tunisia
   Brieg Powel and Larbi Sadiki

21 Turkish Politics and the Rise of the AKP
   Arda Can Kumbaracibasi

22 Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World
   Francesco Cavatorta and Vincent Durac

23 Politics in Morocco
   Anouar Boukhars

24 The Second Palestinian Intifada
   Julie M. Norman

25 Democracy in Turkey
   Ali Resul Usul

26 Nationalism and Politics in Turkey
   Edited by Marlies Casier and Joost Jongerden

27 Democracy in the Arab World
   Edited by Samir Makdisi and Ibrahim Elbadawi

28 Public Management in Israel
   Itzhak Galnoor

29 Israeli Nationalism
   Uri Ram

30 NATO and the Middle East
   Mohammed Moustafa Orfy

31 The Kurds and US Foreign Policy
   Marianna Charountaki

32 The Iran–Iraq War
   Jerome Donovan

33 Surveillance and Control in Israel/Palestine
   Edited by Elia Zureik, David Lyon and Yasmeen Abu-Laban

34 Conflict and Peacemaking in Israel-Palestine
   Sapir Handelman

35 Arab Minority Nationalism in Israel
   Amal Jamal

36 The Contradictions of Israeli Citizenship
   Edited by Guy Ben-Porat and Bryan S. Turner

37 The Arab State and Women’s Rights
   Elham Manea

38 Saudi Maritime Policy
   Hatim Al-Bisher, Selina Stead and Tim Gray

39 The Arab State
   Adham Saouli

40 Regime Stability in Saudi Arabia
   Stig Stenslie

41 Sacred Space in Israel and Palestine
   Edited by Marshall J. Breger, Yitzhak Reiter and Leonard Hammer
42 The UN and the Arab-Israeli Conflict
   Danilo Di Mauro

43 Sectarian Conflict in Egypt
   Elizabeth Iskander

44 Contemporary Morocco
   Edited by Bruce Maddy-Weitzman and Daniel Zisenwine

45 Political Regimes in the Arab World
   Edited by Ferran Brichs

46 Arms Control and Iranian Foreign Policy
   Bobi Pirseyedi

47 Everyday Arab Identity
   Christopher Phillips

48 Human Rights in Libya
   Giacomina De Bona

49 Negotiating Political Power in Turkey
   Edited by Elise Massicard and Nicole Watts

50 Environmental Politics in Egypt
   Jeannie L. Sowers

51 EU–Turkey Relations in the 21st Century
   Birol Yesilada

52 Patronage Politics in Egypt
   Mohamed Fahmy Menza

53 The Making of Lebanese Foreign Policy
   Henrietta Wilkins

54 The Golan Heights
   Yigal Kipnis

55 Iranian Foreign Policy since 2001
   Edited by Thomas Juneau and Sam Razavi

56 Modern Middle East Authoritarianism
   Edited by Noureddine Jebnoun, Mehrdad Kia and Mimi Kirk

57 Mobilizing Religion in Middle East Politics
   Yusuf Sarfati

58 Turkey’s Democratization Process
   Edited by Carmen Rodriguez, Antonio Avaloz, Hakan Yilmaz and Ana I. Planet

59 The Formation of Kurdishness in Turkey
   Ramazan Aras

60 Egyptian Foreign Policy From Mubarak to Morsi
   Nael Shama

61 The Politics of Truth
   Management in Saudi Arabia
   Afshin Shahi

62 Transitional Justice and Human Rights in Morocco
   Fadoua Loudiy

63 Contemporary Kemalism
   Toni Alaranta

64 Urbicide in Palestine
   Nurhan Abujidi

65 The Circassian Diaspora in Turkey
   Zeynel Abidin Besleney
66 Multiculturalism and Democracy in North Africa
Edited by Moha Ennaji

67 Strategic Relations Between the US and Turkey, 1979–2000
Ekavi Athanassopoulou

68 Ethnicity and Elections in Turkey
Gül Arıkan Akdağ

69 The Kurdish Liberation Movement in Iraq
Yaniv Voller

70 Arab Regionalism
Silvia Ferabolli

71 The Kurdish Issue in Turkey
Edited by Zeynep Gambetti and Joost Jongerden

72 The Turkish Deep State
Mehtap Söyler

73 Koreans in the Persian Gulf
Shirzad Azad

74 Europeanization of Turkey
Ali Tekin and Aylin Güney

75 Turkey’s Kurdish Question
H. Akin Unver

76 The Israeli Conflict System
Harvey Starr and Stanley Dubinsky

77 Political Violence and Kurds in Turkey
Fragmentations, mobilizations, participations and repertoires
Mehmet Orhan
Political Violence and Kurds in Turkey
Fragmentations, mobilizations, participations and repertoires

Mehmet Orhan
To the memory of my mother
(1953 to 17 August 2012)
## Contents

*Acknowledgments*  
xiv

**Introduction**  
1

- Theoretical frame and political violence  2
- Fieldwork  13
- Thesis statement: basic hypotheses  26

### 1 Emergence of the Kurdish political field and internal violence (1960–1980)  
42

- Emergence and autonomization of the Kurdish field  
  (1960–1980)  42
- Internal violence  62

### 2 Mobilization for political violence  
98

- Introduction  98
- The use of political violence as a force of ethnic mobilization  99
- Militant habitus and mobilization for violence  108
- Organizational dynamics: armed struggle, social base and proximity  124

### 3 Participation of individuals in violence  
142

- Introduction  142
- Social mechanisms of the move to violence  143
- Symbolic dynamics of the move to political violence  161
- Contingent factors: why does the contingency matter in the use of violence?  169
Contents

4 Repertoires of political violence 181
   Introduction 181
   Kurdish insurgencies 182
   Self-sacrificial violence 196

Conclusion 224

Appendix 1: chronology 229

Appendix 2: abbreviations and acronyms used in the book 237

Sources 240
Bibliography 245
Index 272
Acknowledgments

The present book is drawn from my doctoral dissertation defended at the EHESS de Paris in 2012. The French version was published by L’Harmattan in 2014. I translated the manuscript from French to English.

I would like to note that the section about the relationship between the use of political violence and mobilization in the Kurdish organization was already presented to the scientific world in a conference of the ECPR held in Reykjavik in 2011. The clear summary about the role of violence and mobilization was published on the conference website in 2011. Apart from this argument, no section was published in English.

The author would particularly like to thank his doctoral thesis directors Professor Hamit Bozarslan (EHESS) and Professor Jean Marcou (IEP de Grenoble) for their precious help. The work was financed by the Middle East Research Competition in 2011. The Kurdish library of Stockholm, whose staff I am grateful to, enriched a part of my corpus of the texts. I am also grateful to a number of friends: particularly Marie Barral and Jean-Philippe Mosca for the rereading in French; and Stephen Andrew Lo and Joanne da Cunha for the rereading in English. That is why I would like to thank them as well.

Mehmet Orhan
Paris, 2015
Introduction

This work is about political violence in the Kurdish space of Turkey. If the Kurdish conflict is considered to be a historical problem of the Middle East, the emergence of radical Kurdish nationalist movements and violence were more determinant factors of this conflict in the twentieth century. Turkish history, though rife with violence, does not merit being termed exclusively as violent. One of the most democratic countries of the Middle East, Turkey paradoxically went through one of the most enduring processes of political violence in the region. Even if the Middle East has become a stage of violence since the second half of the twentieth century with the Palestinian question, the war of six days, Iranian revolution, civilian war in Lebanon, two Gulf Wars and the recent Arab uprisings, Turkey is one of the few countries that has not experienced any war, revolution or big massacre during that period, instead going through a more enduring low intensity conflict. The Kurdish conflict could have claimed about 60,000 lives in the last 40 years.¹ The casualty number is no doubt much less than in Iraq, Lebanon, Afghanistan and Syria where hundreds of thousands of people were killed in the conflicts and wars. Nevertheless, it can be said that the durability of a violent conflict is as serious as its resulting losses and damages.

Three types of political movements challenged the official power of the Turkish state during the second half of the twentieth century: the radical leftist movement, the Islamist movement and the Kurdish movement. These movements diverged when analyzed regarding political violence. The Radical Turkish left moved to violence in the 1970s and became marginal in the 1980s and 1990s. Nowadays, the radical left is characterized by a latent violence. Compared to the 1970s, its capacity for action has weakened and it is no longer capable of creating a popular movement. As for the Islamist movement, its historical configuration is completely different. The religious movement has long challenged power through non-violent means and today shares it.

Radical groups such as IBDA-C (İslami Büyük Doğu Akıncıları/Cephesi, Great Eastern Islamic Raiders’ Front)² and Kurdish Hizbullah,³ which were influential in the 1990s, constituted minority parties. The former almost disappeared in the political field and the latter adopted non-violence tactics. Contrary to these radical groups, whether it was Marxist or Islamist, the Kurdish movement in the 1970s turned to armed struggle which became a guerilla
movement in the 1980s and 1990s. Nowadays, the problem of violence remains at the heart of the agenda in Turkey’s political field. This short presentation helps to highlight two points. First, Turkey goes through a form of permanent political violence, unlike other Muslim countries where political violence was more massive but without such continuity. Second, the Kurdish movement is the principal actor of political violence.

Why did the Kurdish movement result in the use of political violence? Which are its agents? How are these actors and their actions formed? How do they become radical? What are actors’ repertoires of action? More importantly, what does political violence signify in the Kurdish regions? This work will attempt to answer such questions among others.

The introduction is composed of three sections. In the first section, I will explore different theories that would serve to study political violence. This section will help to show the theoretical framework as well to delimit the topic. In the second section, I will present the methodology and show how I produced an empirical field research. At the end, I will showcase my hypotheses and the thesis statement.

Theoretical frame and political violence

It is possible to study political violence based on three categories: social movement, conflict, and war or terrorism approaches. I would like to specify that in addition to displaying the theoretical tools of this book, this section will serve as a means to present my approach and question with regard to political violence. In order to discuss these categories in-depth, I will focus on the following problems. In what way should one handle social movement, conflict and terror studies in an analysis of political violence? Is political violence a product of social movements? Is it inherent to conflict, or to war and terror? Can we study political violence in the same frame of analysis as the categories of social movement, conflict and terror? My goal, rather than to critique the theories per sé, which has been done elsewhere, is to explore how I worked with these theoretical and conceptual categories, and handle the differences between them and the study of political violence.

Political violence and social movements

First, my analysis on political violence refers to social movement studies. The obvious question to follow would be: is it possible and relevant to study political violence within the social movement framework?

The idea of social movement has progressed as opposed to an approach of collective behavior which regarded mobilization as a reaction to a situation and reduced human actions to social change in the 1950s and 1960s. The latter approach laid emphasis on psychological factors and presented human behavior as a phenomenon which resulted from an atomization process. Sociology of social movement criticized much this explanation of action because the theories
of collective behavior linked to marginality, pathology and irrationality. Since then, scholars working in this area have developed different analytical devices such as the paradigms of resources of mobilization, political process model, and structure of political opportunities.

The paradigm of resource mobilization was illustrated particularly by Charles Tilly (1978) in his book *From Mobilization to Revolution*, which tends to define mobilizations in a political context rather than psychological. Similar theories of resource mobilization have suggested that social movements are explained by a pursuit of collective interests and acquisition of control over rare resources. They have assumed that social actors act rationally and strategically in order to mobilize the resources for dissenting ends. Models of “political process” and “structure of political opportunities” have offered different frames even though they follow the approach of resource mobilization at the same time. Unlike the latter one, the political process model has taken into account – as its name indicates – “historical processes” operating both at micro and macro levels in an attempt to explain the birth and decline of a protest movement. This theory has focused on “the level of organization of protest groups within the aggrieved community”, “the social assessments of the prospects for successful collective action” and the “structure of political opportunities available to opposing groups or communities”.

The idea of structure of political opportunities, which was a part of the political process model, constitutes another approach. It has been based on the hypothesis that any social movement does not emerge unless it benefits from favorable circumstances or the structure of political opportunities.

These three approaches, which are resource mobilization, political process model and the structure of political opportunities, marked the field of social movement in the 1970s and 1980s. By developing different arguments, new theories have enriched the previous literature. Among them, we might distinguish the model of strategic and/or organizational interaction, a cognitive approach and an identity paradigm.

The approach of interaction seemingly has two main arguments. The first one reveals that the protest arises according to a strategic logic shaped in an interactive context. For the second, a social movement is founded on the basis of interactive ties formed between mobilized and mobilizing actors, and from which the organization of the movement stems. The cognitive approach has suggested that collective action takes place through identification and framing of individuals with a social movement. This approach has proposed that social movements are, above everything else, actors producing collective meanings, beliefs and representations. The term “framing”, often used by the scholars of this trend, refers to the adoption of schemes of interpretation, senses and values by participants, which results in the mobilization. Finally, the identity centered paradigm has insisted upon the notion of collective identity, supposing that social mobilization includes a dimension of identity. In this respect, collective action is claimed to be associated with the idea of a society or a culture in transition where new social movements rise (such as peace, ecological, feminist and LGBT groups). The theory is founded on the concept of the “subject”, in the sense of Alain Touraine, which has politics of
identity questioning dominant cultural codes as well as claiming cultural rights and a specific social group or community.\textsuperscript{15}

These different approaches refer to various dimensions and hypotheses regarding social action, each of which occupies a particular place in social movement theories. But in which respect are social movement studies useful in the analysis of political violence?

The central problem that scholars research in a study of social movement and political violence is not the same. The main hypotheses of social movement scholars are underlined above. Studying a social movement is like asking how a mobilization pursues collective interests; in which respect a movement is associated with a common identity; how this movement is founded on social networks, what its repertoires are; or if collective action is derived from framing or not, etc. I herein view political violence partly in terms of mobilizations, of social conflict, of networks and of repertoires. It is in this frame that my research was influenced by some social movement studies. Social movement and political violence categories are not the same, but they are likely to merge.

In the Kurdish space, I studied four mechanisms of political violence: fragmentation-segmentation (internal violence), mobilization, participation of individuals in violence and violent repertoires. I will explore them below. Political violence, or an insurgent movement, can be associated with analogous – if not completely identical – processes with a social movement. But what are they?

In the first place, I observed that the notion of Kurdish movement is comparable with that of social movement. The Kurdish movement, as a social movement, takes place mainly because it is a historical form of contentious politics in the sense of Tilly and Tarrow.\textsuperscript{16} Another formulation is possible when taking into consideration the terms of Alain Touraine. Kurdish movement is an action of a collective subject defined by specific cultural norms and relations of social domination and, thus, situated within the field of historicity.\textsuperscript{17} These definitions mean that the Kurdish movement is not born from anything. On the contrary, its actors have a historicity, and they have contributed to the production of great normative orientations of social and political spheres. This movement turned into a conflict aimed at altering one or more aspects of social, cultural and political organization. Indeed the Kurdish movement is founded upon distinct historical processes such as sheikh and tribal rebellions in the 1920s and 1930s, “Eastism” in the 1950s and 1960s, and the rise of radical organizations in the 1970s, which almost resulted in a breakdown of the political system. These processes are not universal; rather, they are specific to the Kurdish world. Nevertheless, as I will study below, they seem to display an aspect of social movement because they contributed to formation of the field of political conflict.

Second, I use social movement studies in the analysis of intra-Kurdish violence through the concepts of fragmentation and segmentation because the emergence of violence is particularly associated with internal organization of the Kurdish field, movement and community. My hypothesis on internal violence is partly based on works by Anthony Oberschall, Mayer N. Zald and John McCarthy, and the like.\textsuperscript{18}
For these authors, as I will soon explain in detail, internal structure of a community or movement impacts on collective action in a considerable way. The kind of relationship may apply to the study of political violence.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, I study political violence partly within the framework of mobilization. Any rebellious, “revolutionary” or “terrorist” group may draw its forces from organizations, networks, traditions and solidarities. In other words, some mechanisms of mobilization of armed organizations are similar to those of social movements. Armed groups may perceive and take advantage of political opportunities, take over civilian and democratic associations, social solidarities, and make a sustainable campaign of demands (as observed also in the Palestinian conflict or in the Syrian rebellion, etc.).

In the same way as an activist of a social movement, a militant or a revolutionary can take part in an armed struggle using his or her social networks. There is no doubt that there exists an ontological difference between a social movement and an armed group. Nevertheless, the difference may be tiny in some configurations: for instance, visiting a café might be a determinant of participation in both a legal democratic party and an illegal organization.

Finally, I frequently will apply the notion of repertoire, which is used by social movement scholars, in order to analyze political violence. A repertoire may designate a more or less institutionalized form of collective action. I will resume discussion of this notion further below. I will herein focus on why I adopted this notion to study violence. A clandestine and radical organization, comparable with a social movement, might recourse simultaneously to various repertoires of action. The concept of repertoire enables a distinction between forms of violence in that each repertoire implies a universe of rarity, a stock of knowledge and a whole of common representations of conflict.

On the other hand, current social movement and mobilization theories seem to have serious problems regarding the study of political violence, even if it is partly possible to make an analysis of violence within the framework of these theories, for the following reasons:

The first problem comes from the application of concepts of social movement and collective action into a very vast domain. These concepts apply to several cases at the same time. Social movement is associated with struggles of workers, students, feminists, challenging ethnic and religious minorities, revolution and civilian war. Collective action analyzed by scholars of social movements is abundant such as organizing of sit-ins, strikes, trade unionism, lobbying, petitioning, stone-throwing, parades, demonstrations, riots and so on. Likewise, there are many actors. Some are organizations such as churches, leisure clubs, trade unions, political parties and universities. Others are groups of individuals: friends, neighbors, co-workers, choirs, homosexuals, handicapped people, immigrants without papers, farmers and the like. Even though these phenomena are distinct from each other, they are not analytically distinguished in the works of social movements. However, applying the same term to these different situations creates ambiguity. Social movement studies inevitably weaken and go through a serious crisis because the problem they address to explain any kind of
collective action and mobilization seems to be generic to all forms of social conflict.\textsuperscript{22}

The second, which is an important problem, comes from the question of a research object in social movement studies. Violence is too poorly analyzed in these works. The majority of collective action such as festivals, meetings, demonstrations, sit-ins, trade unionism, are not violent per se.\textsuperscript{23} Similarly, actors of social movements such as political parties, churches, workmates and homosexuals are not so radical, and they do not resort to the use of arms. Furthermore, some forms of political violence are almost absent in the works of social protests: armed struggle, bomb explosions, political murders, tribal conflicts, attacks on military barracks and so on. I will return to this criticism in the following chapters. I must herein underline that political violence and social movement do not constitute the same research topic.

The third problem results from the key arguments of social movement studies. Theories of social movement claim \textit{grosso modo} that human beings come together and act collectively for mutual interests. Mobilization refers to a process through which members of a specific group obtain, accumulate and use different types of resources in order to achieve a common goal.\textsuperscript{24} It is generally admitted that actors struggle in order to penetrate a political field, hold power or exercise external pressure on the power groups, or, if they are institutionally established, in order to prevent outsiders from entering the political sphere.\textsuperscript{25} The essential stake is thus action and mutual interests. However, this hypothesis, which is useful for studying a social movement, may sometimes fail to aptly analyze political violence because a researcher working on violence, before everything, is likely to problematize the use of violence. It shall be seen that political violence is instrumental in the Kurdish case; but this dimension of action will be questioned by hypotheses regarding the approaches of the subjective and the symbolic.

In sum, there are interspaces between political violence and social movement. Political violence and social movement can be associated with similar mechanisms and processes such as mobilization, networks and repertoires. In this respect, theories of social movement are useful to understand political violence. Nevertheless, an analysis of social movement is different from that of violence regarding its specific field of application, research question and central statement. We should therefore seek alternative tools to explore political violence.

\textbf{Political violence and conflict}

Second, this study refers to the works related to conflict. I am more interested in classical theories about conflict in political science and sociology. Indeed, the topic of conflict encompasses a wide range of disciplines, from economy to biology or ecology, from history to anthropology, and from psychology to international relations.\textsuperscript{26} The conflict is studied through various methods, ranging from case studies to abstract mathematical models.\textsuperscript{27} It would be impossible to treat it within the framework of all these disciplines. In a general sense, the
conflict is associated with various social, political, interpersonal and psychological experiences. According to the nature of the study, the term can have a precise signification, for example, that of unequal relations between two people, communities or two social groups situated in the same social field. In the frame of that definition, I have particular interest in the works by Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Georg Simmel, Lewis Coser, Anthony Oberschall and Ralf Dahrendorf, all of which carry a dimension of social conflict.

For instance, according to Karl Marx, the origin of the conflict is found in relations of production that cause clashes of interests. Marx suggested that society is founded on a central relation of economic domination, which provokes a conflict of classes between capitalists and proletariat deprived of any form of property. According to Durkheim, conflict emerges about the division of work in society. From his point of view, which is different from Marx’s, interdependency of actors in the division of work constitutes a specific mechanism to provide social integration. Georg Simmel placed the conflict at the center of his analyses about the individual and society. In his opinion, the conflict is an essential element of formation and functioning of society. As a socializing force, this conflict has various characteristics: it gives the individual a feeling of not being totally dominated in a social relation, thus, enabling one to resist domination and alienation. The conflict structures social relations, strengthens identity even though it does not really create it. In the Simmelian theory, the conflict is also used as a conceptual tool to help show the links between the social and the psychological. It gets linked with the unity of the individual as well as social antagonism. As for Lewis Coser, whose theory is derived from Simmel, he suggests that the conflict maintains the cohesion of a social group. For Coser, the question is more concerned with the exterior conflict that unites members of a group.

The theory of conflict gains a very original dimension in the sense of Anthony Oberschall. For this author, the conflict results from an interaction that takes place between two or more actors in a competitive setting. Oberschall also analyzes the conflict between actors departing from social cleavages. His approach to social conflict is not reduced exclusively to spontaneous interactions. Finally, one may cite Ralf Dehrendorf who emphasizes the fact that unequal distribution of authority determines social conflict. This approach is similar to that of Marx, which focuses on conflict and social classes because, for Dahrendorf, the structural origins of group conflicts should be found in the hierarchies of social roles to which domination and subordination are attached.

It is useless to continue mentioning these different conceptions of conflict in a detailed way. Another practical question is perhaps more important: why are these theories useful in the study of political violence?

First of all, conflict theories enable the handling of political violence in an analytical way. They help us go beyond the logic of Hobbes according to which the state of nature is a war of all against all. The origin of the conflict, violence and war is not explained by human nature by these theories. For example, for Marx, the war against each other originates with regard to property in society.
Thanks to Simmel, we understand that conflict is not a part of human nature but that of society of human beings. Conflict is organized around competition in Oberschall and unequal distribution of symbolic goods in Dahrendorf. All of these contributions go beyond the idea of social Darwinism.

Second, theories of conflict are relevant to my study because they can be combined with social movement theories. Theories of social movement and conflict are indeed compatible. These two different approaches are used without contradicting each other. This kind of convergence is observed in the works of Charles Tilly and Anthony Oberschall. According to Tilly, social cleavages that are a specific subject of conflict, play a role in the formation of collective action. The author questions conflict through mobilization, collective organization and action. As for Oberschall, who is said to have systematically integrated the notion of conflict in the theory of social movement, the formation of a social movement is inherent in the production of conflict. His analysis of conflict combines with that of formation of social groups and collective action. There is no need to mention other authors; I consider that theories of conflict are in general compatible with those of social movement, and thus make my ideas coherent.

Third, works on conflict serve to construct my thesis about political violence through two questions. The first one deals with the constitution of actors who use political violence. In the theories that I have mentioned, one finds the hypothesis that individual and collective commitments can be linked to different types of social cleavages resulting in violence. These theories pay attention to the idea that explains unification of groups, commitment of actors and identity construction within the conflict. Similarly, the existence of close social links and personal commitment intensifies the conflict. The second question is concerned with internal violence. Indeed, the conflict with exterior groups is partly associated with the structure of the group in some of the conflict theories. This statement reminds us that the relationship of an actor with an exterior actor is influenced by the relationship of this actor with his interior rival.

In addition, internal relations and structure of a community or a movement contribute to defining the intensity of real or supposed conflict. These hypotheses related to formation of radical actors and internal violence are of great importance in my argument. Nevertheless, theories of conflict also might cause problems in the analysis of political violence if we are not aware of some characteristics of conflict:

Conflict is not equal to violence. In the theories I have cited, the conflict is not necessarily violent. Class struggles were for instance not considered in terms of violence by Marx, but as a confrontation of economic interests. Conditions of formation of the conflict in Durkheim (and Tönnies) are not associated with violence either. Similarly, in the readings of Coser, one notices that hostile attitudes predispose to conflict behavior but not necessarily to the use of physical force. According to Oberschall, constitution of groups does not seem to lead to violence. It must be pointed out that the conflict is not necessarily violent, either in the Kurdish problem or in other cases. The Kurdish question, for example,
comes from different types of economic, cultural and political conflicts that converge and are interlinked in many cases, all of which are not actually of a violent nature. This argument may extend to other examples of community conflict. The expression of community or ethnic conflict, as Elise Féron and Michel Hastings note, does not designate only armed confrontations and wars, but also the situations where communities having divergent interests are peacefully opposed to each other, for example, by institutional means. The best example can be the case of community conflict in Belgium between the Wallons and the Flemish who come from a relatively prosperous economic environment and have no apparent historical preconditions of bloody clashes.

Second, some theories of conflict appear to be quite functionalist. Even if the merit of these theories is using an analytical and non-pathological approach, one should not fall into the trap of pure functionalism, because, given the latter approach, any conflict could have something to contribute. From the perspective of R. Collins and A. Gouldner, the conflict might, for example, be the unique principle of functioning of the social system. For Coser, the phenomenon restores the unity and cohesion.

A significant question comes up, related to the functionalist interpretation of the conflict: If the conflict unites, then what separates, segments or draws the actors to physical clashes? The authors of the functionalist approach do not respond clearly to this problem. It has been above stated that theories of social movement generally tend to have a utilitarian approach. As for classical theories of conflict, they tend to be functionalist. For all of these reasons, one should be cautious with this functionalist interpretation.

Third, the link between conflict and violence is not problematized in these works. In reality, the conflict covers a larger domain than violence. A conflict is likely to arise for cultural, social and political reasons whenever at least two tribes, confessions, cultures, states, or a state and a protest movement are present together. Violence is much less frequent than the conflict in social life. It might be said that political violence is a modality of conflict. The latter might result in violence in some configurations, but it is not absolutely synonymous with violence.

Furthermore, the emergence of violence is not always associated with radicality of the conflict. Kurdish conflict has been old news for several centuries while Kurdish political violence has been a recent phenomenon. Political violence may emerge even when the conflict is not so intense. As it shall be seen later, violence itself provokes the conflict in some configurations. This means that conflict can be both endogenous and exogenous to political violence. Political violence might structure the conflict. Even as Michel Wieviorka notes, violence can be a negation of the conflict. In each conflict, there is a possibility of violence. It is nevertheless possible that the conflict does not only combine with violence, but also opposes it. Indeed, violence might block the discussion, rather than promoting it, and thus make the debate more difficult, and the exchange more unequal in the profit of a breakdown. Besides, violence may allow one to destroy the adversary in the sense of Georges Sorel and liquidate relations of domination in the sense of Frantz Fanon.
Introduction

To sum up, theories of conflict are useful in the study of political violence as they offer plausible analyses which help understand violence better. They are compatible with theories of social movements. Theories of conflict mainly help one to study the formation of actors, their internal struggles which bring about political violence. Nevertheless, these theories pose problems for three reasons. First, they sometimes appear to be extremely functionalist. Second, they do not clearly explore the relationship between conflict and political violence. (This study has an ambition to show how conflict leads to violence and vice versa.) Finally, and most importantly, political violence is a particular research topic of sociology, anthropology and political science while conflict is a central problem of social sciences.

Violence and terror

A large amount of scholarly and non-scholarly research about political violence is carried out within the framework of terror. With regard to these works, we can ask the following questions: Is political violence merely a phenomenon of terror? Is it possible to handle political violence from this angle? Terms such as terror, terrorism and terrorists are typically used by governments, the media and social scientists. These terms are applied to situations such as revolutionary wars, civil wars, national liberation, national armed resistances and violent actions of cellular groups. So it might be claimed that the terms are used for portraying phenomena which have very little in common. The abuse of the terms confuses their signification. It becomes really difficult to attribute a proper sense to the notion of terror. One can nevertheless list some criteria on this phenomenon.

In the works that I have consulted, terror globally means violent behavior of individuals and political organizations which are opposed to a legal authority such as states, transitional governments, international organizations, colonial armies. Terror is particularly defined by five aspects: the kind of victims, principal of asymmetry, ideology, psychological impact and strategy. The first concept refers to the types of victims. It is considered that terrorism is associated with attacks on symbols of the state (army, police and governments), civilians or goods (public buildings, transportation, banks and so on.) For some definitions, terror constitutes also a form of conflict. It is an asymmetrical war between states and non-state actors among which balance of power is unequally shared. In the light of this definition, terrorism appears to be an arm of the weak, the marginal and the illegitimate. Third, terror is associated with the ideology of the actors such as Marxist-Leninism, nationalism and Islamism. The Irish Republican Army, ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, Basque Homeland and Freedom) in Spain, Tamil Tigers, FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia), the Red Brigade in Italy, Hamas and Lebanese Hezbollah are placed in the same category, although they have different ideologies. Fourth, works about terror emphasize their psychological impact in order to qualify this phenomenon. Given the conception, terror signifies a regime of fear and a system of intimidation. The final aspect is linked to strategy.
For most of the definitions, the intention of terror is to “influence the public” and to “constrain the government” to act in favor of demands of the terrorist organization which recourses to violence. This argument signals the fact that terrorism is a strategic struggle to reach political goals by means of threats and force.

It seems that the existing scientific and non-scientific works on terror and terrorism do not constitute a complete and systematic theory. Research in this domain is usually based on general observations, political and journalistic reports as well as varied classifications and definitions of terror and terrorist movements. Although some works carried out within this framework are helpful to understand political violence, we can identify five common elements which provoke serious problems in the study of this form of violence.

The most serious problem stems from the fact that terror/terrorism is a normative concept. It is concerned with pathology rather than analysis. The concept of terrorism is not constructed by social sciences. Even though the concept of terror goes back to the French Revolution, it was developed mostly by politicians, governments and the media. As I have already noted, the term is nowadays overused. It covers any act of violence, sometimes even including non-political ones. The words terror, terrorist and terrorism are apolitically and emotionally charged, and are thus not neutral terms. They serve to condemn political violence rather than analyze it. The condemnation of political violence is a moral and political issue, but not necessarily scientific. Ideological and political interpretations and demonizing connotations may seriously blur the investigation. Because of these problems, the use of the notion of terror enters into conflict with one of the fundamental principles of sociology established by Durkheim according to which sociology is not a normative science.

Second, it is relevant to clarify the nature of victims. Studies in this domain tend to argue that the terrorist tactic is generally used for striking governments and states. Though this observation is true, victims of violence are also individuals who belong to the same religion or ethnic group as those who use violence (not only in the Kurdish space as I will study in this book, but also in Afghanistan and Iraq and the like). Moreover, terror is rarely attributed to repression of a government on its own nationals or to belligerent actions of a state against other states. In reality, the number of victims of state coercion could be higher than that of violence of organizations which are considered to be terrorist.

Although the conception of terror is usually associated with an ideology, the link between ideology and the use of violence is not sufficiently figured out in these works. It has been commonly argued that violence corresponds to a period when nationalist and Marxist movements progress. This hypothesis can be defended in the Kurdish case. As it shall be seen in the following chapters, Marxist and nationalist organizations really moved to violence in the Kurdish field. This parallelism between nationalism and increase in violence is observed in other political fields in the world as it was in Ireland or Vietnam. But if there is an association between ideology and political violence, how can we explain
Introduction

it? Why do all forms of nationalism not lead to violence? Why did some nationalist movements such as Basque, Tamil, and Irish or Kurdish ones end in violence while many others did not evaluate toward radicalism? How can nationalism lead to guerilla warfare or to a war of decolonization? If political violence is derived from Marxism, why don’t most class struggles result in armed struggle? If Islamism constitutes a dynamic of political violence, why did the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, Afghan Taliban and Palestinian Hamas use violent means while Turkish mainstream Islamist movements did not engage in armed struggle in the past? In which configurations do religious and ethnic contestations combine with armed struggle?

It is not possible to handle all of these questions in this book. I ask them in order to put into question the relationship between ideology and terror. Their answers are almost absent in the works about terrorism. Existing works left these problems unresolved. It will be seen that a link does exist between ideology and violence, but this relationship does not operate exactly in the way that specialists of terrorism study.

Another problem is related to the interpretation of psychological impact. It is argued that terror is an act of violence intended to produce a psychological impact on governments. This observation is correct to the extent that violence of underground organizations produces undeniably psychological effects. This interpretation is however not sufficient to make a distinction between terror and other forms of political violence, as a psychological dimension is inherent to all forms of violence. State massacres, genocides, assassinations, civilian wars and even revolutions usually make victims fear, anguish and intimidate them. If terror is a system of intimidation, all forms of violence should be considered to be terror because any act of violence can produce a regime of terror. Is it right to state that every form of violence, whether executed by the state or an illegal organization, is terror?

A final problem comes from the absolute adherence of the current studies to a strategic approach. The latter approach suggests that terrorist organizations use violence in order to compel governments to act in favor of rebel interests. I never exclude this hypothesis because the strategy is an unquestionable dimension in the use of political violence. When their demands are not met, political actors are inclined to use military means in order to make pressure. “Violence is instrumental by nature”. However, the notion of strategy that we find in terrorism studies leads to serious problems. First of all, even though violence is strategic, it cannot be exclusively reduced to a pure and simple strategy. Political violence is not an end in itself, yet its rationality and strategy are not unlimited. Rationality and strategy are incorporated in a definite historical context that specialists of terror do not seem to take into account. In addition, the domain in which they apply the concept of strategy poses a problem. Most of the research about terrorism and violence is committed to explore relationships between insurgent organizations and governments, but rarely to intra-ethnic or intra-religious relations, internal organizations and relationships between rebels and their social base.
It shall be seen that when violence is really associated with a strategy, this strategy includes several dimensions all at the same time. Rebels are committed to politics of violence not only against governments, but also in relation to themselves, their comrades, community, social base and internal adversaries. This suggests that political violence, before calling the outside world into question, would perhaps involve the questioning of oneself, self-image and one’s own community. Lastly, the strategic approach can be dangerous when it invites one to consider that rebels, revolutionaries, terrorists or political subjects understand and master everything. It may induce the analysis to be pure utilitarianism and rationalism. Because of all these reasons, I give up on the concept of terror and suppose that it is not possible to aptly analyze political violence within the framework of terrorism.

Fieldwork

The sample

Which people, political organizations and places did I study?

The construction of a thesis is strictly associated with fieldwork and a method of observation. A theoretical statement is not an accumulation of ideas and abstractions. The latter ones must be based on empirical and methodological justifications.

In an empirical study, the sample is fundamental. A sample is one of the objects the researcher works on. Of course, I study political violence. But political violence is a quite abstract scientific concept. I will return to the conceptual definition of political violence as it is a part of this study. A conceptual definition of violence in the first step is not a useful way to explore my sample. It is better to start with what is more concrete and tangible. The precision of a sample helps provide the meaning of what political violence is and what it refers to in the research. A sample can be a militant, a group, political party, tribe, village, city, murder or massacre in this study. My sample is defined by three criteria. First, it is related to militants. I organized non-guided interviews with former Kurdish militants (committed to armed struggle in their past) or their families, and tribes committed to mobilization for the Kurdish nationalist cause, and individuals of the civilian population who witnessed the Kurdish conflict. Second, my sample deals with Kurdish organizations. I studied the Democratic Party of Kurdistan in Turkey (PDKT, 1965), the Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan (PDK-T, 1971), Riya Azadî (Way to Freedom, 1974), Rizgarî (1976), Kawa (1976), DDKD (Cultural Associations of Revolutionary East, 1976–1977), Stêrka Sor (Red Star, 1976), the PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, Kurdistan Workers’ Party, 1978), KUK (National Liberators of Kurdistan, 1978), Têkoşîn (Struggle, 1978). Except for the PKK, these Kurdish groups are no longer active in the Kurdish space: but they were important actors in the Kurdish political field in the 1970s. Last but not least, the sample is situated in a spatial framework. I
studied Pazarcık, Bingöl, Batman, Siverek (as well as Antep and similar villages and towns).

Based on empirical research, I came up with two questions regarding samples: Why do I observe this sample? and Why do I present some examples of the sample that I have observed? I will herein answer the first question but the second question will be answered in the following chapters when I focus on each example in greater detail.

Why did I conduct interviews particularly with the individuals that I have underlined above? Why did I observe these political organizations?

The position of individuals with regard to political violence was the determining aspect of my fieldwork. I tried to interview actors who used violence or contributed to production of political violence. The reason also applies to Kurdish political organizations which moved to violence. These organizations will be discussed in the first chapter of the book. Doing exhaustive fieldwork on these organizations had two major utilities. It allowed one to avoid bias. In addition, because one of the central arguments of my thesis statement refers to intra-Kurdish relations, it was necessary to carry out a meticulous study of each organization.

Finally, why do Batman, Pazarcık, Bingöl, etc. form part of my sample? This is a question of empirical knowledge. I was aware of the fact that these regions had served as places of recruitment and political violence since the 1970s. The fact that several Kurdish militants and movements came from these milieus obliged me to do more documentation work. But why were these regions significant from the viewpoint of violence?

Pazarcık, a district (ilçe) of Maraş has been a space of mobilization for Turkish leftist organizations and the PKK since the 1970s. From among the people I interviewed, a significant number hails from the region of Pazarcık. The Kurds from Pazarcık are of Alevi confession, a heterodox community of Islam due to philosophical, ritual and cultural divergences from Sunni tradition. There is a social fracture between Sunnis and Alevis in this region. The 1960s and 1970s marked a convergence between leftist parties and Alevis in this region. Many groups from the radical left were present in Pazarcık during that period. The first wave of these movements encompasses communist parties such as Devrimci Halk Birliği (Union of Revolutionary People) and Halkın Kurtuluş Cephesi (The Front of Liberation of People). The second wave, which is more important than the first one, consists of the PKK, active in the region since the 1980s (and to a moderate extent the DHKP-C, Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi Cephesi, Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party-Front). In addition to these radical leftist movements, the specificity of the political field of Pazarcık is characterized by communitarian violence in 1978 in which at least 105 people were killed. I will come back to the analysis of pogroms in the first chapter. Even if the Kurdish Alevi community experienced state repression following the coup d’état in 1980, the PKK still continued to strengthen its social base. The Kurdish organization mobilized thousands of militants and sympathizers in this area. The region went through a violent radicalization with armed conflicts and popular
uprisings toward the end of the 1980s. A significant part of the Kurdish Alevi community immigrated to Western Europe after the end of the 1980s.

Batman is deeply marked by social and political characteristics and has reserved an important place in the Kurdish movement about four decades now. It is historically a political field wherein many Kurdish groups such as the KUK, the PKK and Kawa operated in the 1970s. These groups clashed with each other. For instance, the PKK and the KUK entered into conflict because they sought to be founded on the same social base. However, the PKK developed more speedily compared to other groups. Violent clashes between this organization and the Turkish army increased after 1984. On the other hand, Kurdish Hizbullah also emerged in Batman. It is an organization founded by Kurdish Islamists in the early 1980s. The political violence between nationalist Kurds and Islamist Kurds escalated in the 1990s with the support of state actors, who sought to benefit from the conflict. It is estimated that the killers of about 700 people are still unknown in this province. When Batman is analyzed from the point of view of legal Kurdish politics, it is known as a province where the Kurdish legal movement is strong. Since 1999, “Kurdist” candidates have won the municipal elections. One should nevertheless point out that all mayors of Batman have experienced repression since 1979. The first Kurdist mayor was killed in 1979. I will return to analyze this case. The last three mayors up to now, Abdullah Akın (1999–2002), Hüseyin Kalkan (2002–2009) and Necdet Atalay, were jailed in Diyarbakır for several months or years.

As for Bingöl, the Kurdish conflict has been going on there for the past century. It is in this zone that the Sheikh Said rebellion took place in 1925. Kurdish sheikhs and notables, frustrated by the abolition of the Islamic caliph and Turkish nationalist reforms, mobilized various social segments in traditional religious and tribal structures and networks. The rebellion was severely crushed by the newborn Turkish government. Similar to Batman, Kurdish militants from Bingöl played an important role in the formation of the Kurdish movement since the 1960s. On the other hand, Islamist or Turkist parties formed their political actors in this region. Legal parties such as Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (Nationalist Movement Party) in the 1980s and Refah Partisi (Welfare Party) in the 1990s were structured in the society. The AKP (Adalalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, Justice and Development Party) has a significant social base. The MHP won the mayor election in 1977; the mayor Hikmet Tekin was assassinated by the PKK in 1979. The presence of these Turkist and Kurdist opposite camps was a source of political violence which at the same time affected civilians, especially in the 1970s. The MHP (especially in the end of the 1970s and 1980s), Kurdish and Islamic movements have been major political actors in this political field since time immemorial.

Bingöl, Pazarcık and Batman are, therefore, not random choices of sample because many Kurdish militants mobilized there. This study not only relates to these three places but also uses other experiences and examples in order to develop hypotheses. It shall be seen that Siverek, Antep, Diyarbakır, Mardin as well as small villages are used as places of observation regarding political violence. Lastly,
Introduction

it is necessary to note that, whatever the type of study undertaken by the researcher, the issue of samples constitutes a problem, no doubt. Whatever may be the subject of my interest, I cannot observe all the cases, nor do I have any reason to do so. As Howard Becker affirms,

> every scientific pursuit endeavors to find out something which can be applied to a certain type of pattern by studying some empirical examples, and the result of this study is considered to be “generalizable” to every member of the relevant category. The observer should therefore constitute a representative sample to convince people that he knows something about the whole of this category, society or movement.

Modes of investigation

I undertook plenty of fieldwork between 2005 and 2011 in Batman, Diyarbakır, Bingöl, Istanbul, Berlin, Hamburg, Stockholm and Paris. Fieldwork in Paris, Stockholm, Berlin and Hamburg is justified by two reasons. A number of Kurds took refuge in France, Sweden and Germany. The fieldwork in these countries relates both to interviews with former militants whose witnesses enriched my corpus and with members of the Kurdish community who immigrated. A significant part of my corpus about Maraş and Pazarcık, for example, was obtained through research undertaken in France and Germany. The same reason applies to Istanbul. The town hosts millions of Kurds including many former militants. It is a metropolis that has experienced intensive Kurdish conflict. My field method can be considered to be a political ethnography in the sense that I established an extended long-term contact and direct communication with the Kurdish community instead of accessing empirical evidence via indirect testimonies, secondary sources and supposed political interaction. This ethnographic approach includes diverse modes of investigation and observation: non-guided interviews, development of links with informants, informal conversations, transcribing texts, keeping a diary, monographs on Kurdish organizations and the like.

Non-structured interviews constitute one of my principal tools of investigation. A prime question could arise as to contacts. I knew people from different political milieus who could articulate me in the field, but these individual meetings were time-consuming. Establishing of contacts does not correspond to a scientific scheme or methodology. The meetings that led me to interview relevant people are usually random. What is important as a method is to know how to act on the field. It would be a mistake to consider that the most important step is to find the right people to interview about political violence. Violence is not a subject whatsoever; it might have ethical and psychological implications. It is possible that an interview lasting several hours with the right person does not provide anything significant to the researcher. The researcher should give their interviewees a feeling of confidence so as to empower them to share their political experiences adequately. The interviewed persons don’t appreciate that a scientist does research solely for academic work. This idea seems too egoistic to
them. It might give them a feeling that they are being manipulated once more, but this time not by a political power, state or journalist but by science and a scientist. Conversely, the social scientist should be capable of showing that he/she does such research with passion and personal motivation regardless of the outcome of the study. The idea is to show that his/her engagement is inspired by humanistic ideals.

I now come to the technical aspect of interviews. The first step of the fieldwork was to formulate the scientific question in the interviews. What did I seek information on? My research problem had been well defined since the initial fieldwork. The question related to the use of political violence: through which processes do individuals and organizations move to violence? Interviews might help study this problem. But how is it possible to formulate it via questions in an interview? How many and what types of questions should one ask? I preferred to use non-structured questions and ask minimum questions tailored to get maximum information. Indeed, in an interview about political violence, when the researcher asks too many questions without beating around the bush, the interviewee might respond briefly or not respond. The best question to start with is a biographical question, particularly about the childhood of the interviewee: Could you please tell me how you spent your childhood?" or, “Where did you spend your formative years?”, or “When you were small, were you in Pazarcık, Beşiri (Batman)?” etc. This question at first sight, does not have any relation with the problem of radicalization. But it might be helpful for three reasons. The first reason is because the question opens the interview and it is preferable to start with a question not directly dealing with political activism or organization. Moreover, it allows one to know the actor; the researcher learns more about whom he/she interviews. For instance, where does the actor come from? The question enables one to not only access the information about the militant’s biography but also the political milieu he/she comes from. Lastly, this question leads the interviewee to talk about his/her politicization from the beginning, and thus reduces the risk of omitting the processes of sympathizers and other political activities relating to the process of political engagement.

Second, it is advisable to formulate the questions by using “how” instead of “why”. Indeed, when social scientists ask their interviewees why they did a certain thing, for example, “Why did you become a militant?”, “Why did you choose to participate in the Kurdish movement?”, the interviewees might get the impression that the researcher is asking them to justify themselves, and find a reason explaining the action in question. These types of questions might also provoke negative or guilt-laden reactions. For example, the question “Why did you break the window in the Kurdish uprising?” might give the impression that we are accusing the act of violence. Also, the questions of why may be answered with short and defensive answers. With regard to the Kurdish question, the interviewee would probably respond to such a question, saying: “It is because I am a Kurd that I participated in the Kurdish movement for the Kurds...” This response is important but insufficient to develop a scientific problem. Indeed, I am specifically interested in the causal chain of events, or how a particular
contextual factor or a whole of conditions make an individual, a group, a village or a political organization turn to violence.

When the observer asks about how such a thing occurred, “How is it that you participated in the Kurdish movement?”, “How is it that you visited a café or acted in favor of an organization?”, the questions function more correctly. As Howard Becker noted, I remarked that, in addressing this question, the interviewed people speak for a longer time, telling stories with many interesting details which deal not only with why they did such a thing, but also with the actions of other people who contributed to the outcome which I am interested in. Since the question of “how” refers to a process, it usually led to interviews in which I discovered other people, events and conditions that are implicated in the individual history of the relevant actor.

Finally, I formulated particular questions according to the status of the interviewed person, his/her political organization, the period of his/her radicalization, given the interview proceeding. These questions are also non-guided, open and short. An interview with a militant in the 1970s cannot be the same as an interview with a young activist who participated in street insurgencies in the 1990s. Similarly, interviews about the PKK, the KUK and the DDKD are also different. It is certain that all cases relate to political violence but the interview takes a definitive form according to what is reported to me. In some cases, conversations deal with the conditions of imprisonment while some of them correspond to the establishment of militant social networks, social base and recruitments.

Once and for all, it is necessary to underline an important point regarding interviews. To be in the position of observation, ask questions, begin a debate, let the interviewed express details about his/her militancy and political violence are quite a delicate task. Some interviewed people would prefer not to talk about certain events, themes or people. In my opinion, the researcher should not demonstrate a willingness or constraint to reveal secret aspects of their existence that they prefer to dissimulate. Indeed, the observer’s unhappiness on being faced with unanswered questions might produce constraining effects; one should therefore avoid such a reaction that resembles soft blackmail. I always respected the choice of the interviewed. One must respect their integrity because it is their life and nobody is obliged to give the information he/she has. This attitude is perhaps not found in scientific principles, but it is ethical.

Some recurring themes in interviews which are not included in the topic of the book

Unguided interviews were about biographic elements and different dimensions of radicalization and violence. I shall amply study them in the following sections. Here, I will briefly mention four important themes. The first theme is about scenes of the armed conflicts. I noticed that when conversations became deeper, the interviewee tended to move away from political issues and describe scenes of “pure violence”. Many of them mentioned how they were injured and almost killed in their struggles against Kurdish peshmergas and Turkish soldiers.
Others, bitterly crying, said they had lost their friends this way. Most stories do not correspond to problems and hypotheses that I attempt to study. I don’t know exactly why these stories are seemingly ever-present in the interviews. They resembled Hollywood films about war, especially *Saving Private Ryan* which is a realist film with great sensibility and extreme violence along with scenes of intense and harsh confrontation.

The second theme is torture. Many interviewed persons recalled how they experienced torture in their political lives. I will study some of them in the following chapters because this is one of the factors explaining the move to violence. I shall mainly explore how torture is a dynamic of polarization. It also plays a role in the emergence of self-sacrificial violence in prisons even though this type of violence does not depend exclusively on the practice of torture. It means that I study torture related to radicalization, but torture as a whole is normally an altogether different topic to study because of its multiple implications, and would consequently deserve more meticulous attention in future studies.

It is nevertheless possible to defend some hypotheses concerning the second and third themes. Practices that the interviewed told me about are sometimes far removed from political and social significance. It could have been impossible to discover different forms and meanings of violence without undertaking some intensive fieldwork. This observation leads me to believe that the researcher cannot always remain at the political level in order to explore violence. In fact, violence may escape from political determination in some configurations. It may reach an extreme level and translate into a desire to destroy and humiliate. Michel Wieviorka calls this type of action *cruauté* (cruelty) which exceeds all political significance, a hypothesis I will return to in the last chapter.

The third unstudied theme relates to peace. Most of the interviewed wish for the end of armed conflicts and usually refer to peace. But violence continues despite this discourse. I don’t exactly know why the theme of peace is so present in the interviews. Is it a question of ideology to legitimize actors? Does the condemnation of violence make the state responsible for armed conflicts? Or is peace just a childlike, innocent dream?

The fourth theme concerns Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK leader who is often cited in the fieldwork. Former militants who do not belong to the PKK accuse him of attacking other Kurdish organizations in the 1970s and consequently breaking the unity of the Kurdish movement. On the contrary, for PKK supporters, “Öcalan is a personality that established the Kurdish movement”.

The figure of Öcalan is both the object of hatred and love. Even though I shall discuss the PKK leader’s charisma in following sections, the phenomenon of Öcalan is not entirely analyzed in this monograph.

**Participatory action research: establishment of links with the informants**

This is the second method of observation. I remained in contact with about ten of the interviewed in Europe and Turkey for three years. These people with
whom I was in contact were either former militants (PKK, KUK, Têkoşin and so on.), active members of the Kurdish legal movements or members of the civilian population who were relatively neutral. They became my regular informants. This method, though not the same, is similar to the participatory action research in the sense of William Whyte, through which the researcher invites some members of the group to participate in the research processes, its initial elaboration, the collection and sometimes the analysis of the empirical material. The principles and conditions of this observation are quite different from the interviews:

In this method, the observer bridges the distance with actors who are studied. That is to say that the observer presents his or her own work and personality, and interviewees understand the observer better. The observation is more or less participant because the social scientist studies individuals and social groups by communicating with them, which suggests that he/she “shares their existence in a sustainable way” (in the sense of Marcel Griaule, Bronislaw Malinowski and William Whyte). This kind of field study is continuous and events are noted as far as they are reported. It focuses on the same individual, family or topic. It is furthermore retrospective because the events are analyzed by looking back into the past, for example the biography of an individual, history of a murder or a massacre. This mode of observation is extremely useful thanks to the objectivity in the commitment and distancing. An observer cannot be objective and neutral and thus distant before he/she is engaged in deep empirical research because it is impossible to be objective without knowing deeply and truly. As Simmel admitted long ago, objectivity is not absence of participation. Working with informants helps to avoid the traps of superficial observations and to be so neutral in the observation as in the exposition of the empirical material and hypotheses. Likewise, the specificity of this method relies on the fact that a narrative of the interviewed person is not a finished product but raw material on which the investigator and the narrator verify, correct and add on to the material. We may thus ask for preciseness on some topics, dates and actors to refine the work. Indeed, a social scientist usually needs to verify and correct some information in this phase of analysis. During the fieldwork, missing points are not always noted. It may happen that the researcher needs further information about them in post-interview processes. The informants also help to collect documentation, reviews and significant work. For example, I had the opportunity to consult historical documents, local journals and pamphlets of political groups which are only found in private archives.

**Monographic studies on Kurdish organizations**

I also made a monographic study on each Kurdish organization which appeared in the 1960s and 1970s and also constitutes my research topic in the first chapter. The monography herein is not used in the complete sense of the social anthropologist. In classical anthropology, monography is a long enduring, in situ study.
My monographic study lasted a few years, yet it was not *in situ* because most of these organizations are no longer existent. I attempted to accomplish empirical research on each group that used force. (Their names and dates of founding were mentioned above; detailed information will be provided in the first chapter.) The research on them was done mainly in Istanbul, Stockholm and Paris.

Before starting to work on these political groups, it seemed to us that the Kurdish field was very complicated to study because I was unable to understand the events in the 1960s and 1970s. Who were these actors? Why were they struggling? When did they appear? For instance, what is Têkoşîn, Stêrka Sor, the KUK, etc.? I remarked that most of the organizations were taken for granted in pre-existing Kurdish studies. Their names and dates of emergence were not even correctly cited. To sum up, these organizations were the black boxes of the Kurdish field. To solve the problem, I had to carefully study each of them. Any information regarding these organizations was obtained by a third party. Of course, a part of the information the author will report was already published by members of these parties. But even that information was carefully verified. An empirical study is sometimes the confirmation of pre-existing material, it is not always important that all information be newly discovered by the researcher. For instance, there is confirmed evidence to suggest that *Kawa* is a party founded in 1976. My work took so much time as it was necessary to use diverse sources of information. This was the result of intensive and complex fieldwork. Such was the delicate way of working which influenced my thesis statement. It will be seen that my general arguments are structured around multiple Kurdish organizations.

I do not claim that my method should serve as a reference point for researchers. My method is neither unique nor exemplary. As Marcel Griaule remarked, every field study is particular and the investigator develops his/her own style of working, as well as his/her own rules. One should not perceive ethnographic work to be a rigid activity the details of which are surely determined in advance, on the contrary, it should be foreseen that, even in methodic search, there are too many procedures that no rule could codify.

**Making of case studies**

After producing empirical fieldwork composed of different samples and modes of observation, I had to gather and classify the empirical material. I stored the data in different files in chronological order (e.g. 1970, 1980 and 1990), according to places of observation and Kurdish regions (Batman, Bingöl, Antep…), political parties (PKK, KUK, *Riya Azadî…*) and themes of violence (revolts, insurgencies, suicide attacks and the feast of Newroz…). This ranking is, of course, not always post-fieldwork. As far as I classified my data, I remained in contact with the relevant persons. The files also got a bit mixed up. For example, a theme or an organization was sometimes found in many files at the same time. It is not always important to delimit their borders. Moreover, I classified some documents by groups and then redistributed them by theme as far as things were
being clarified. When new questions or issues cropped up, I constructed new documents and files. I eventually realized that I was facing an empirical diversity and complexity. The richness of the data may become a serious problem if the researcher is not able to find a solution.

After classifying the data, I processed it in order to make the case studies at multiple levels: biographical cases, cases of the village, organizations, prisons and so on. (I will return to the issue of variation of levels.) First of all, case studies enable management of empirical diversity and complexity. It is thus, all in all, a very practical method to present the evidence. The reality appears to the researcher in an overly complex and disorganized way that it is impossible to represent it as it is. Case studies permit showing that the investigator knows the field and the reality and that his/her theory has an empirical base. Therefore, and most importantly, I constructed the cases in order to articulate them with theory. I elaborated and tested hypotheses case by case. This method seems to have been founded on analytical induction although one should underline that I rarely use the method of analytical induction in its classical form.\

Even if the method seemingly involved analytical induction, I was not so rigorous or exclusive concerning it. Indeed, it is normal that some categories of the study are formed during the process of analysis. Similarly, it sometimes happens that theories or concepts explain the cases and thus we are not always obliged to depart from these cases. Evidently, when a case is constructed, we formulate an explanation that applies to it. Then, when we have evidence about the second case, it applies to the theory. Nevertheless, when we find a different or negative case, we modify our explanation by integrating new elements to it or changing the definition of what we try to explain in a way that does not exclude the things to be explained regarding that case. On the other hand, it is sometimes pre-constructed concepts and hypotheses which explain the cases. For instance, as it will be seen in the following chapters, it is not me who invented the “field” or “habitus”. The latter are the concepts of classical sociologists who served to explain the empirical evidence. In short, case studies are a means to connect hypotheses and empirical evidence.

My analysis also relies on the cases and material drawn from the documents published by the Kurdish organizations (particularly the PKK)

The construction of cases drawn from oral sources are significant and constitute an essential part of my account. I at the same time collected the information through written sources such as militant pamphlets, reviews and books. These sources are primary and have some importance since they were produced by the militants. This type of material permits an increase in the ample sources and produces other cases. This technique is justified for two reasons:

First, biographies of some militants I was searching for were not accessible in the field. A researcher cannot obtain all information sought during fieldwork. To take an example, an ordinary interviewed person will probably not know biographies of the
militants killed in the 1970s, which is usually the case because of the generation gap. I remarked that interviewees sometimes did not remember some events or were mistaken with the dates and names. This is one the central problems I will return to below. Due to failure to obtain required information, the documents become indispensable to consult.

The second reason comes from enrichment of the material. It also proves that the cases that I constructed through fieldwork are not exceptions. I usually attempted to observe the phenomenon of violence via various sources. This served as a way to check whether a case coming from other sources has the same characteristics as other members of the same category or not. If new elements and variables are discovered in these cases, they are incorporated in the definition of the phenomenon that the researcher studies. The cases drawn from written sources also enable the formulation of hypotheses. As presented in this book, a case corresponds to at least one element described by my concepts and hypotheses.

How much to describe and analyze?

One will later notice that an important part of my book is dedicated to empirical examples. The scientific demonstration, besides being theoretical and analytical, should also be empirical and descriptive. The author sometimes prefers profound observations to sophisticated analyses. This is a question of approach. I may share an idea by Howard Becker which suggests that interpretations are sometimes not as necessary as believed to be. Simple observations can teach one a lot. It is not always necessary to analyze. In a qualitative case study, e.g. a biography, a political party or a village, there is generally not just one but a series of phenomena to observe, which we are not necessarily meant to figure out. The analysis may become unreadable if one attempts to analyze everything.

Yet, the observation is not an easier task than interpretation or analysis. The description in a study of political violence poses two questions. Is it possible to go further when we describe? Is it necessary to go further? I have already tried to answer the first question. In my fieldwork, I attempted to note my observations, and obtain the maximum information possible. I departed with an idea that the purpose is entire and complete description. But is this objective possible to reach? For example, is it possible to completely describe Batman, a local Kurdish insurgency, or the KUK, Têkoşin, etc.? The researcher has limits. The themes, individuals and events are not available in any unique form. I faced a complex chronology, multiple political actors with many individuals and collective trajectories, a diversity of references of contexts as well as micro and macro contradictions. In spite of these difficulties, I will present various research outcomes in this book even if it was impossible to get all the requisite information. The observation unfortunately has some limits from a certain point.

This is where the second problem arises. It is a study of contemporary political violence. I studied the acts of violence, their actors and victims, all of which are not sometimes possible to recount in detail. I will thus refrain at times from
describing such issues in detail. Political violence is a topic that one cannot describe in an idealistic way, keeping in mind its victims. Violence stigmatizes both its actors and victims. But does abandoning the goal of complete description constitute a problem in the research? In my opinion, the researcher working on violence can be content while reducing it to some benchmarks which allow a proper introduction and development of hypotheses. This is why it is totally legitimate to leave something out on the condition that it does not contradict the hypothesis that the researcher defends.

Variation of scales of observation

As my fieldwork indicates, I made observations at several levels about political violence: micro, local, regional. These observations led me to use the method of variation of scales in the analyses as well. Before exploring my hypotheses, I shall insist on two questions: What is the variation of scales? Why does the researcher use this technique? Political violence operates at different levels. I should then empirically validate my hypotheses through experiences of agents on different scales: individuals, groups, organizations and movements. This implies both micro, local and macro vision.

But what do I mean by micro and how does it differ from local? It seems that scholars in general tend to mix the micro analytical approach and methodological individualism. The latter is not equivalent to micro analysis. It can be so sometimes, but not necessarily always. Indeed, methodological individualism promotes points of view centered on actors rather than structures and systems. Nonetheless, to my conception, the specificity of a micro analysis is not found in the opposition between individualism and structuralism. A micro approach inevitably relates to spaces and social mechanisms which are situated on the same scale as in reality. Individuals and their biographies are of course important elements of the micro approach, yet the micro approach cannot be reduced to a mere biographical study. A micro logic can analyze a small group, a street, a prison, a village and a tribe. It is useless to present my research outcome now, but, as an example, I can infer that the murder of the Bingöl mayor or a militant in Antep, which I will discuss, requires a micro approach. This is first because the description relates to a defined milieu and political mechanism, which is real political violence, and the protagonists are concrete individuals. Likewise, a case study on the prison can be considered as a micro analysis because it is a small and concrete situation in the sense of Goffman. Indeed, the space is characterized by micro relational dynamics that are possible to reconstitute a political group through such relations which are really formed between individuals. In short, a micro analytical approach could refer not only to individuals but also to small groups, situations, places and real processes.

From the perspective of my method, the micro and the local are inextricably interconnected. Nevertheless, a difference should be noted. A local scale signifies that the researcher observes the acts of individuals and political parties in a defined context. In local cases, one can refer to an individual, a group or a
community situated in a street, district, village, city or a province. A study about a village in Batman, the town of Maraş or the province of Bingöl can be given as examples. This also means that the local can have different levels. Yet a localized study cannot be simply reduced to this aspect. What matters in a local study is the fact that the observer should explain an ethnic identity or a political organization which results in political violence through local accounts. So it is not only the spatial unity which matters, but the hypothesis must be constructed according to local logic. For example, how do Bingöl or Siverek constitute factors of explanation in the use of violence?

The third scale of observation is regional. In a regional frame, the researcher considers Kurdish space as a constructed whole. Indeed, micro and local approaches are not always sufficient to study political violence. The actors and their actions are being formed on a regional scale and political violence is particularly associated with regional or transregional dynamics since the Kurdish guerilla is mainly extended to the Middle East.

While using the method of variation of scales, the problem is not to oppose the top and the bottom, and the big and the small, but to acknowledge that the use of violence does not operate in the same way given the level of analysis and the scale of observation. The conclusions are not necessarily contradictory from one level to another. They can be accumulated on the precondition that one takes into account different levels at which they are established. Political violence that we can think of in macro terms such as nation-state building, centralization, emergence of a nationalist movement, Marxist ideologies, etc. can be read in different ways if one attempts to conceive violence through individual strategies, local dynamics and biographical, communitarian and organizational trajectories. It shall be seen that they are no less important for being evident, yet they are constructed differently.

The relations of causality and methods of observation may vary given temporal and spatial dimension and considered actors. If there are more relevant scales than others to devise theses and test hypotheses, one should know how to vary scales for each subject and draw analytical outcomes. The level of observation chosen in order to test the validity of an explanation is relevant because it is related to the reality in which individuals live. The change of level does not depend on the researcher, nor is primarily the product of process of construction of the study. It is above all the fate of the actors. One may thus consider that “the technique of variation of scales is a methodological relativism that results in a form of epistemological realism”.

Nevertheless, variation of scale leads to neither change of topic nor thesis statement. The move to violence at individual, local, organizational or regional levels is strictly interdependent. The uses of violence are not exactly symmetrical, but correspond to various facets of the same scientific topic and address a common problem, namely political violence.
Introduction

Thesis statement: basic hypotheses

The success of fieldwork is a good sign for the researcher but it is not enough to guarantee a thesis’s value or quality. It would now be relevant to talk about my hypotheses about political violence. The empirical field research enabled me to construct a research problem about violence at various levels. Here are some points to mention before explaining the thesis statement:

“The reasoning is based on a complex relationship between several more or less confirmed affirmations” which are associated with different scales of observation. It is not meant to prove the existence of particular relationships in an absolute way, but to describe a system of relationships, to show how things are interdependent or, in the sense of Howard Becker, to show the links between different dynamics which I simply knew because I was there and I observed.

It is rare that a scientific problem is elaborated through a direct approach. I had a profound experience of fieldwork over the years. The empirical material was rich and confusing. I carefully studied it while mobilizing all of my capacity to analyze and draw some basic hypotheses. It is important to note that it is impossible for all the empirical information to fit in a coherent framework of analysis constructed around these hypotheses. Nevertheless, my basic concepts and hypotheses aptly represent some elements of the phenomenon of political violence which I observed and consider relevant to explain. As per William Whyte’s view and on the basis of my experience, I claim that, during research, the evolution of ideas does not exactly correspond to formal propositions which are found in books of methodology. Ideas progress partially thanks to immersion of the researcher in a massive amount of empirical material, and the global flow of experience on the ground and through multiples exchanges with the interviewed people. Because a part of the process of analysis functions subconsciously, one cannot report all of the things that have been observed.

I shall herein discuss the four basic hypotheses since it is not possible to explain all of the ideas in the introduction. My thesis statement is structured around four concepts (1) fragmentation-segmentation, (2) mobilization, (3) participation, (4) repertoire. These concepts are generalizations. Their definitions rely on the similarity of the empirical examples upon which each one is built. On the basis of these examples, one may formulate hypotheses to evaluate any problem in question. The entirety of these concepts and hypotheses constitute the general argument.

The four concepts apply to political violence. The reason why I apply different concepts to study violence is because it is impossible to define political violence by one criterion. The concepts and hypotheses which interested me are governed by criteria, problems, variables or factors. I shall not define, for example, the phenomenon of fragmentation by a unique criterion, problem or factor. The hypotheses and formulations are furthermore not simply ideas, speculations or definitions but empirical generalizations which the author has explored on the basis of empirical accounts obtained in the fieldwork that is the basis of the knowledge of the social world. The concepts are abstract generalizations and images of reality in the sense of Wittgenstein. Of course, the world
is never completely the same as my cases and hypotheses illustrate. The social world is more complex than what our concepts define. Hypotheses of fragmentation, mobilization, participation and repertoires enable one to illustrate a part of this world that has been observed.

*The plan of the book.* This work is composed of four chapters. The first chapter is about the emergence of the Kurdish political field and internal violence. The second chapter deals with mobilization by the PKK for political violence. The third chapter concerns the participation in violence of individuals. The last chapter is about repertoires of political violence.

**Fragmentation and segmentation**

Political violence is a phenomenon which operates on at least three levels in the Kurdish space: between the Kurdish movement and the state, between society and the Kurdish movement, and among Kurdish political groups. Fragmentation and segmentation correspond more particularly to the last level. It refers to violence which arises between two or more Kurdish social and political groups. The hypothesis of fragmentation and segmentation depends on a fundamental observation: the Kurdish space is a “political pluriversum” in the sense of Carl Schmitt.115 There are several actors, centers and political and social attachments which are mixed up and cross each other. The fracture in the Kurdish field is a historical phenomenon that has been going on in contemporary times. It is an inevitable observation for the researcher who studies the Kurdish field. The analysis deals with two major problems: How can one study internal conflict since theories are almost absent about this phenomenon? How can one problematize the fact that internal divisions translate into political violence?

Current theories pay little attention to analyze intra-ethnic relations. Despite the existence of abundant information on inter-ethnic,116 inter-class117 or inter-civilization relations,118 the intra-ethnic problem creates a huge gap in social sciences. The works by Paul Brass119 and Anthony Oberschall120 nevertheless seem to have an analytical view on this issue. Brass is a theorist on ethnic groups while paying attention to their internal cleavages. The author proposes three forms of conflicts. The first one relates to struggles between ethnic communities in order to accede to rights, privileges and available resources. The second form deals with conflict between a state that a privileged ethnic group controls, and a population which belongs to another ethnicity or religion dominated by the state. The third form, according to Brass, corresponds to the conflict which takes place inside an ethnic group in order to control material and symbolic resources. The latter hypothesis matters because it shows that ethnic groups should not be considered exclusively according to their exterior relations with the state but also with regard to their internal dynamics. As for Oberschall, as I have already mentioned, his thesis is situated between conflict and social movement studies. The thesis is original in that it explores the nature of social ties inside the community to analyze the mobilization. It is argued that collective action takes place related to segmentation and internal organization
which are based on communitarian structures. For the author, the internal conflict may also have an associative character. Yet, this theory seems to focus exclusively on the social structure. It does not pay attention to emergent conflicts, and is not interested in ethnic violence.

The analyses about the Kurds constitute another problem. I am not the first to discover intra-ethnic violence among the Kurds. Works by Muzaffer İlhan Erdost, İsmail Beşikçi, Basile Nikitine, Robert Olson, Martin van Bruinessen, Hamit Bozarslan and Gilles Dorronsoro among others make references to internal conflicts. The internal struggle is in fact seen in these works but never becomes the principal research topic. The term birakuji (fratricidal war) is often used by journalists and researchers. It refers empirically to intra-Kurdish violence but the term does not constitute an analytical category. However, internal relations and conflicts are not given; they should be interpreted. They gain two dimensions in the Kurdish space: fragmentation and segmentation. Please note that it is scientifically necessary to differentiate between these two notions. Fragmentation applies to political groups and segmentation to a social field. In reality, both of them form the same process namely internal violence.

The hypothesis of fragmentation applies to the fracture of the Kurdish political field by and in violence. It seems that this rupture is explained by at least four processes of violence during the 1970s. The first one is associated with generational conflicts. Indeed, Kurdish violence is clearly marked by the commitment of the Marxist revolutionary and nationalist generation in that period. The latter generation establishes a new political and subjective regime, provides its own circles of socialization and opposes the nationalist-conservative generation through violent and radical means.

This violence also appears at ideological and interpersonal levels. Kurdish political space is quite representative of the divisions and oppositions inside the worldwide Marxist Leninist movement. The ideologies of the radical left seem to have two functions: each ideological fragment serves on the one hand to dissociate Kurdish groups around their own doctrine or representation. Ideologies, on the other hand, enable one to legitimize some private conflicts and dissipate some personal interests. As for interpersonal problems, they appear to govern political relations in some cases, and lead to political violence.

The third dynamic of fragmentation is associated with the monopoly of political violence in the intra-Kurdish struggle. This hypothesis supposes that political violence of the Kurdish groups may result from comparable mechanisms to that of the state apparatus. Indeed, it is accepted that the contemporary state is like a human community which successfully claims its monopoly of legitimate violence within the limits of a given territory. Kurdish organizations, in this case, challenge the monopoly of legitimate violence by the state and competition over the monopoly results in a process of conflict that we may call “privatization of political violence”. The conflicts between the PKK and the KUK on one hand, and the PKK and Tekośin on the other hand illustrate this phenomenon. The competition over the recruitment of militants leads to divisions of underground organizations while increasing violence. This radicalization results
from the politics of promoting itself as the main representative of the Kurdish people, while wanting to monopolize symbolic resources such as ideology, speech, vocabulary and so on. Finally, political fragmentation corresponds to a spatial fracture at the micro and regional level. I shall remark that mobilization of each fragment takes place on a local level and, in each local milieu, different movements struggle in order to conquer associations, cafés and high schools, and the like.

Segmentation constitutes another process of internal violence. This phenomenon was already observed in tribal societies by anthropologists. I shall return to the principle of segmentarity in the following chapters. Among these anthropologists, I am particularly interested in the work by Martin van Bruinessen who studied the phenomenon in the Kurdish case.\textsuperscript{126} For the author, the principle of segmentary opposition applies to several intra-Kurdish divisions on a social level. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is observed that many tribal segments were juxtaposed among the Kurds, but they were not integrated with each other for several reasons. This fact refers to the notion of polysegmentary societies by Emile Durkheim\textsuperscript{127} that is not incompatible with the Kurdish case. The divisions between confederation of tribes (\textit{aşiret konfederasyonu}), tribal (\textit{aşiret}) or clan (\textit{kabile}) groups were characteristics of the Kurdish community during that period.

I must however notice that my field of application applies to the analysis of mobilization for violence. At the beginning of the twentieth century, segmentary organization contributed to the formation of rebellious and counter groups. Violence seems to have operated at two levels: violence of insurgent Kurdish tribes against the state and intra-ethnic violence. The similar process of segmentation seems to arise in the contemporary period as well. This form of violence appears to be situated between political and social fields in the 1970s and 1980s. I will make a hypothesis of segmentation based on two criteria. The first one underlines that social conflicts are associated with political violence. In that configuration, violence is based on pre-existing fractures in the society. They can be tribal, denominational or familial. For instance, if a vendetta between two tribes turns into violence, I will qualify this process as segmentation. For the second criterion, I will focus on inclusion of Kurdish organizations in public and rural spaces. Indeed, the organizations politicize actors and their stakes in these spaces, if they may do so, and then transform their meanings. At the same time, they produce new ones. In this configuration, segmentation corresponds to different political significances, rather than classic divisions.

**Mobilizations**

I use the concept of mobilization in order to study political violence on the level of Kurdish political movement. I will analyze it particularly in the case of the PKK. In the studies of social movements, the mobilization signifies a process aimed at increasing the resources of a political actor while promoting its collective demand.\textsuperscript{128} I have already criticized this approach of social movement
regarding political violence and it is useless to resume it. Beyond this critique, one should add a remark by Bert Klandermans and Dirk Oegema that social movement scholars must be aware of which aspect of mobilization they are studying; otherwise one can draw false conclusions. The mobilization herein is the aggregate of mechanisms and processes through which a clandestine political movement is being formed and moves to armed struggle. This definition clarifies that I am analyzing political violence and not collective action. Nevertheless, it refers to an extremely large process and a broad phenomenon. This is why one should clarify that the researcher can never study all of the things which take place in a situation of mobilization. Based on empirical observations, I will study some variables among others. A set of interdependent mechanisms are combined to form the mobilization process in the case of the PKK. They involve three arguments.

The first one supposes that political violence and mobilization present a zone of convergence in the Kurdish case. In the Kurdish conflict, armed struggle is theoretically inspired by the models of “revolutionary guerilla” and struggles of national liberation in the 1970s in Asia and Africa. It is an ideology rather than a practice, and “a way to be counted and to make the group of mobilization aware of the relations of power it is capable of creating against the adversary”. I shall focus on this imagery because I observed that it might turn into a political action. Likewise, radicalism impacts mobilization. This is relevant to subjective violence in the sense of Michel Wieviorka because if violence is a mobilizing force, it involves a subjectivity. Political violence is subjective as far as it is strictly associated with the way the subject is being built and the move to violence.

Second, one remarks that, in the Kurdish party, a militant habitus is constituted via armed struggle and repression. It is reasonable to explain what is meant by habitus. The concept helps to study structural violence. From the viewpoint of Pierre Bourdieu, habitus is a system of dispositions to act, perceive, feel and think in some way. It is interiorized and incorporated by agents throughout their history. For him, the systems of continuous and transferable dispositions function as principles which generate and organize practices and representations. However, habitus should be interpreted with flexibility. Indeed it is an analysis of violence and a strict acceptance of the notion would relegate us to determinism. I shall return to this point in the chapter about mobilization.

I will make another reference to the armed struggle to study habitus. Indeed, martyrdom as a product of armed conflicts plays a role in the formation of the PKK and maintenance of loyalty to the party and radical behavior. It is essential to show a long enduring conflict which structures a radical culture observed through militant trajectories. This culture authorizes radical behavior and violence although the configurations change over time. Habitus is at the same time generated by political structures and institutions. It is not necessarily a simple form of adaptation to a whole of objective conditions. It operates as a structuring structure and tends to perpetuate from generation to generation. It is transmitted through socialization of militants and is devoid of neither rationality nor subjectivity.
It is essential to recall a significant point: if the study of a systematic link between habitus of an organization and the move to violence is empirically difficult, I will not give up defending the idea of habitus because one should distinguish between this structural violence and direct violence in the sense of John Galtung, which is face to face violence, arising in an interaction or interpersonal confrontations and constitutes an event.\textsuperscript{136}

The third hypothesis is about the relationship between the Kurdish guerilla and the society. Armed struggle, when accompanied by repression and conflict, is a mechanism of mobilization in the Kurdish movement knowing that violence alone is not sufficient to sustain the mobilization. One should absolutely associate the organization of actors with structural and subjective factors. The organizational factor is explained by the analysis of relationships taking place between militants and the civilian population. It is not possible to deliberate over the use of violence of a guerilla without focusing on its relationships with the society. Some authors, like Carl Schmitt, underlined that the civilian population is the guerilla’s best friend.\textsuperscript{137} Stathis Kalyvas, on the other hand, has focused on the role of the civilian population in the production of political violence.\textsuperscript{138} However, to the best of my knowledge, there is no systematic or comprehensive study which questions the relationship between a guerilla and society. How are these relations established? Why do they matter in the production of violence?

The use of violence is based on some forms of human relationships that one may call “proximity”. The concept is borrowed from Simmel who used it in micro sociological analyses.\textsuperscript{139} For the author, human relations are characterized by the proximity as well as the distance.\textsuperscript{140} Proximity is a question of reciprocal action between human beings as filling of the space and it is a form of socialization.\textsuperscript{141} For Simmel, the definite space in the sense of Kant is a possibility of coexistence.\textsuperscript{142} It means reciprocal action producing a space that was wide and hollow, and filling it.\textsuperscript{143} I apply this idea in the study of violence because my hypothesis suggests a relationship between Kurdish armed groups and peasant society. Long enduring political violence is a question of power constituted by and in proximity. Proximity becomes an instrument of production of power, knowledge and ideology of the armed group. It allows the transmission of militant habitus to civilian society.

\textit{Participation}

The term “participation” signifies the move to violence on an individual level. The problem of commitment of individuals in armed struggle should be distinguished from the armed struggle of a political organization. I have specified that the second problem will be studied through the hypothesis of mobilization. I therefore distinguish how a radical party moves to violence and how an individual uses violence in two chapters. Although the two processes are interlinked – because a party cannot mobilize without the participation of individuals – the use of violence by an organization and an individual does not always
depend on the same conditions. The use of violence by an individual and a political organization is constructed differently for reasons that I will soon explain.

The problem of participation consists of research about how individuals having different trajectories engage in the same political action. It must be pointed out that the use of violence in the case of a guerrilla movement is more difficult to explain than the case of small groups which do not have a huge social base like, for example, ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, Basque Homeland and Freedom) in Spain. When participation in a political movement is weak among a civilian population, the study of some significant biographies can help construct a hypothesis that is relevant to explain the violence. On the contrary, in the case of a guerrilla movement, for example in the PKK, tens of thousands of people joined the four-decade-long armed struggle. It means that the more the researcher studies biographies, the more possible it is to find hypotheses. Nonetheless, as already pointed out, I can neither study trajectories endlessly nor construct a hypothesis for each case. I observed a number of interdependent dynamics which allowed me to construct a hypothesis on the use of violence acquiring social and symbolic dimensions.

Social dimension refers to social networks, polarization and ʿasabiyya (esprit de corps). Social network has a rich but polysemous meaning in social sciences which I shall cover at length in the second and third chapters. I adopt an approach by social networks, assuming that it clarifies some conditions authorizing the Kurdish organization to recruit. It thus enlightens a defined scientific problem. This means that I will apply the notion in a precise manner. Social network herein is a component of socialization. According to configurations, it can be a question of integrating a political milieu (muhit), experiencing an event or meeting one or more people already politicized which promote the participation of individuals in armed struggle. Furthermore, some patterns of the use of violence refer to polarization. We find war logic in these situations. Collision of actors drives them to assert themselves in radicalism and armed struggle whether the collision is with the state or a rival Kurdish organization. Political violence is defined in accordance with this hypothesis of bipolarity which opposes actors, their ideas, methods, feelings and objectives.

Another social dimension refers to ʿasabiyya, that that can be translated as esprit de corps. I in part mentioned it regarding the hypothesis of segmentation. The use of violence was founded on the esprit de corps and religious confession in the 1920s and 1930s. In the contemporary period, political violence is still not completely independent from Kurdish tribalism. Nonetheless, there is a difference. During the contemporary period, the link between the political and the tribal is much more obvious since tribal solidarity is combined with a political identity. This process was less clear in the 1920s and 1930s in which the tribe was not a dynamic that one may call nationalist because the consciousness of actors was not really political. On the contrary, it is at present possible to observe that tribes socialize individuals through a political cause resulting in collective participation. The move to political violence operates in the frame of social solidarity between people belonging to the common tribe and village.
The participation in violence also has a symbolic dimension. While adopting a symbolic approach in order to discuss political violence, I reject the utilitarian paradigm mainly represented by methodological individualism. This criticism was already successfully done by Pierre Bourdieu and Philippe Braud who focused on the symbolic in their work. Two reasons led me to adopt the hypothesis of the symbolic to explain the move to violence. It is not because I am opposed to the notion of “utility” in politics that I am cautious about the utilitarian paradigm – this is an undeniable dimension of the political world – but it is because this paradigm usually applies to an absolute economism and substantialism and pays little attention to emotions and symbolic goods which contribute to explain individual action. Second, the utilitarian dogma is moot since it dictates that human beings seek to experience only enjoyment, material possessions and consumption; and immediate outcomes of participation to armed struggle are usually not material interests, unlike violence, repression, death, injuries, torture and rape. This observation induces the researcher to focus on symbolic motives rather than material gains because there is much risk and the price of the use of violence is very high.

By departing from these preliminary observations, the hypothesis of the symbolic assumes that in the Kurdish conflict, the agent demands the recognition of his/her ethnic identity whether this identity would be hidden or declared, at individual or collective levels. In this case of symbolic, we shall also witness a subjectivity acquiring a huge political significance. A person who turns to violence is then considered a rational being who pursues symbolic goals. He/she would be placed in networks of expectations which characterize his or her path to political violence, whilst ensuring that one does not neglect structures of obligations or networks of reciprocities. The demand for identity results from an experience of symbolic violence which takes the form of denial of recognition and deprecation, and sometimes suffering in the labor market in urban space and stigmatization of the body.

**Repertoires**

Through a hypothesis of repertoire, I will not seek the same problems that I search for with fragmentation, participation and mobilization. It is not asked how an organization or an individual uses political violence; rather how a particular form of violence prevails: Why do actors resort to popular insurgencies? How does self-sacrificial violence emerge? What are the dynamics of continuity and discontinuity of these repertoires?

It is relevant to focus on the notion of repertoire particularly because it is a concept drawn from social movement studies. For Charles Tilly, the concept of repertoire designates a whole of means of action of one or more groups on the basis of mutually shared interests. One may distinguish three characteristics of a repertoire. First, as already underlined, a social movement is not born from nothingness, but inspired from records and using a range of pre-existing actions. Second, the notion of repertoire takes into account historicity of political action. It means that agents have a determined range of actions. A repertoire supposes a
Introduction

universe of limits. It emerges according to constraints and opportunities given a historical time or a definite context in the sense of Charles Tilly. This implies at the same time a limited rationality. A collective action is rational only within the frame in which it defines its boundaries since the reason is, in a manner of speaking, confined to the borders of repertoire. Lastly, a repertoire is not a static concept because collective action evolves given the context and shifts from one period to another. In other words, each historical period is characterized by its repertoire of actions.

On the other hand, there are some problems. As I have explained above regarding the works of social movement, a repertoire does not necessarily constitute political violence but collective action. Similarly, despite the transformations and evolution that one may observe, the repertoire seems to be quite an objectivist concept. Charles Tilly does not seem to sufficiently take into account the fluidities and political crises. But, as it shall be seen in the Kurdish case, violence is usually associated with crises and threats that agents experience in different times. The objectivist character of the notion prevents one from taking into account perceptions, actors’ feelings which are very essential to the emergence of political violence. I have suggested through other hypotheses that there is even an undeniable link between rationality and subjectivity of actors. It is impossible to study the strategy of a political action independently from subjectivity since hopes as well as despair participate in shaping the politics of violence. I will nevertheless apply the concept of repertoire to study forms of violence assuming that it will not be deployed in such an objectivist manner that Tilly uses.

After underlining these particularities, I may formulate my hypothesis about the repertoire: repertoires of the Kurdish conflict include both individualized and collective violence among which I will analyze serhildans (insurgencies) and self-sacrificial violence. The emergence and continuity of two actions are interdependent with the evolution of armed struggle in the Kurdish conflict. It is not possible to study these two repertoires independently from the armed struggle. However, one may notice divergences between these two types of violence. Insurgencies appeared especially in the transborder villages and towns while self-sacrificial violence emerged in prisons. Insurgencies become relatively autonomous from armed struggle whereas self-sacrificial violence has three rather distinct forms: self-immolation, fasting to death (ölüüm orucu) and suicide attack.

Such are the main hypotheses that I shall deal with in this book. But then, what is political violence in the Kurdish case? This is an essential problem which I will work on. I would ideally avoid coming up with any strict definition of political violence, as it is virtually impossible to present a unified and linear representation of the functioning of this phenomenon. The use of political violence cannot be easily understood without interpreting it in different scales. Violence is both the outcome and the generator of interrelations that take place among many actors who operate on three levels: between the state and Kurdish movements, among Kurdish groups, and between Kurdish parties and Kurdish society. There are at least four processes combined to signal configurations of
Introduction

violence: fragmentation-segmentation, mobilization, participation and repertoires. Fragmentation-segmentation signifies intra-ethnic struggles that take place between two or amongst many Kurdish actors. Mobilization relates to the course leading to armed struggle by the Kurdish movement. Participation explains the use of violence by individuals. Repertoires represent forms of political violence. All these dynamics are produced in a relationship of interdependence and result in political violence.

Notes

1 I share the argument by Jean François Pérouse: “the history of the Turkish Republic is characterized by an almost permanent state of violence which is variable in intensity in the Kurdish regions”. Pérouse, Jean François, “Reposer la ‘question kurde’”, in Vaner, Semih (ed.), La Turquie, Paris, Fayard, 2005, p. 370.
3 An Islamist and Kurdish organization that was founded in 1980.
7 It should be underlined that, as McAdam states, rather than posing a causal sequence linking historical processes to collective action, the political process model suggests that “social processes such as industrialization promote insurgency only indirectly through a restructuring of existing power relations”. McAdam, Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, op. cit., p. 41.
9 McAdam, Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency 1930–1970, op. cit. This model was later developed especially by the works of Tilly, Tarrow and McAdam. See McAdam, David, “Tactical Innovation and the Pace of Insurgency”,
Introduction


10 As Brockett suggests, it is preferable to use the concept of “configuration” rather than “structure” because opportunities are not stable over time but “they can and do vary for the overall social movement sector generally, from individual movement to movement, and for any one movement over time”. Brockett, *Political movements and violence in Central America*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 16.


16 As Tilly and Tarrow noted, a social movement is not a universal category, but historical. Tilly, Charles and Tarrow, Sidney, *Politiques du conflit*, Paris, Presses Sciences Po, 2008, pp. 26 and 199.


19 The emergence of a counter movement radicalizes the Kurdish movement. One finds similar observations relevant to social organizations in McCarthy and Zald.

Introduction


25 This critique about the social movements belongs to Michel Wieviorka. Cf. Wieviorka, La Violence, op. cit., p. 174.
27 Ibid.
29 Ibid., p. 24.
34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
37 Oberschall, “Theories of Social Conflict”, op. cit.
38 Oberschall, Social Conflict and Social Movements, op. cit.
41 Wieviorka, La Violence, especially chapter 1, pp. 23–46.

Charles Tilly frequently refers to classical authors such as Karl Marx, Léon Trotsky and John Stuart Mill. Cf. Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, op. cit.

The model constructed by Simmel seems relevant to the analysis of various types of conflict. For this commentary, refer to Birnbaum, “Conflit”, op. cit.

In particular the works by Charles Tilly and Anthony Oberschall.


Oberschall, *Social Conflict and Social Movements*, op. cit.


Ibid.


Coser himself poses these questions, ibid., p. 52.

The expression “Kurdist” (kürtçü) signifies nationalist ideology whereas the term “Kurdish” refers to an ethnic group.

I shall later return to this hypothesis.


Ibid., p. 25.


Terror is a prénotion in the sense of Emile Durkheim. It is not scientific as it is formed without any method and outside the science. For “prénotion” see Durkheim, Emile, *Les Règles de la Méthode Sociologique*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1973, especially pp. 15–46.


It seems that the attacks of 11 September in 2001 enlarged the field of application of this concept.


The concept sometimes serves to justify state oppression.

Crenshaw, “The causes of terrorism”, op. cit.

The works by Crenshaw, Laqueur, Merari and Chaliand defend this thesis.


That is why it seems much more reasonable to use the term politics of violence than strategy of violence.

74 Ibid., p. 118.
77 Ibid., p. 106.
78 Kurdish fighters linked with Barzani and Talabani movements are called *peshmergas* in Iraq.
79 *Saving Private Ryan* is a film made by Steven Spielberg in 1998.
85 Ibid., p. 13
86 The feast of *newroz* is traditionally celebrated as the first day of the spring or new year (21 March). I shall return to this topic in the final chapter.
87 See for this topic, Becker, *Ficelles du métier*, op. cit., p. 303.
88 Ibid., p. 303.
89 In order not to clutter up the Notes, translations of these documents are provided in the bibliography section.
90 There is an exception in the third chapter because I use some biographies drawn from the book by Bejan Matur, *Dağın ardına bakmak*, Istanbul, Timaş Yayınları, 2011.
92 Ibid.
99 Ibid.
100 For this interpretation in variation of scales, see Revel, “Présentation”, op. cit., p. 12.
102 Ibid., pp. 92–93.
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid., p. 81.
105 Ibid., p. 81.
106 For this approach, see Cerutti, Simona, “Processus et expérience: individus, groupes et identités à Turin au XVIIème siècle”, in Revel, *Jeux d’échelles*, op. cit., p. 182.
Introduction


109 Ibid., p. 64.


111 Ibid.

112 Ibid.


114 Ibid., p. 205.


120 Oberschall, *Social Conflict and Social Movements*, op. cit.


127 Durkheim, Emile, *Les Règles de la Méthode Sociologique*, op. cit., p. 64. I shall return to study the phenomenon in the first chapter.

128 Tilly and Tarrow, *Politis du conflit*, op. cit.


135 See, for this comment, Dorronsoro, Gilles (ed.), *La Turquie conteste: Mobilisations sociales et régime sécuritaire*, Paris, CNRS Editions, 2005, p. 29.


140 Ibid.

141 Ibid.

142 Ibid.

143 Ibid., p. 601.


152 My comments here are based on the readings by Charles Tilly.

1 Emergence of the Kurdish political field and internal violence (1960–1980)

Emergence and autonomization of the Kurdish political field (1960–1980)

Introduction

The Republic of Turkey has gone through several Kurdish conflicts since its foundation in 1923. The Sheikh Said rebellion was the first popular movement against the state. Various local Nakşibendi sheikhs, some of whom were motivated by ethnic aspirations, were frustrated with the abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 and revolted, particularly in Palu, Bingöl and Muş regions in 1925. The newborn Turkish government crushed the movement by using severe tactics. Following the Sheikh Said rebellion, the Kurdish space still remained a place of conflict with the central authority. According to estimates based on observations in different regions, at least 150 conflict groups emerged due to psychological, religious and ethnic tensions with the state authority between 1925 and 1940 in Eastern Anatolia. The Dersim massacres were no doubt the bloodiest conflict between Kurds and the state. The Turkish government, unable to construct its authority and legitimacy over the Kurdish Alevi region, used massive coercion, which resulted in the killing of thousands of people in the 1930s.

However, Kurdish contestation continued in different dimensions. Between 1930 and 1980, apolitical social banditry (eşkiyâcılık) and cross-border smuggling (kaçakçılık) were significant means of Kurdish opposition to the state authority. These meant that, after the crush of the Kurdish rebellions and conflict groups during the late period of the Ottoman Empire and early Turkish Republican period, Kurdish contestation persisted in different social dimensions. But unlike Iran, with the proclamation of the Kurdish Mahabad Republic in 1946 (destroyed some months later), and Iraq, with the return of Molla Mustafa Barzani in 1958, the Kurdish space in Turkey did not produce genuine political movements. In Turkey, from the 1940s to the 1960s, Kurdish political activities were particularly influenced by the movement of Barzani in Iraq. Even if some cultural and political organizations arose in the 1960s, it is only from the 1970s onwards that radical political movements appeared in Turkey. The emergence of these parties opened a new cycle of violence which is different from the 1920s and 1930s.
This chapter hence deals with the emergence of Kurdish political movements and violence in the contemporary period. The chapter is divided in two sections. I will first look into the emergence and autonomization of the Kurdish political field in the 1960s and 1970s. And, second, I will analyze the split of this field through internal violence.

It is relevant to explain the notion of the Kurdish political field. Because the notion of the field is vague, one must make some clarifications regarding its application in the Kurdish case, and this will also delimit the subject matter. The notion of the political field is used in the sense of Pierre Bourdieu. A field is, on the whole, a place of power relations between different agents and institutions which have habitus linked with the exercise of domination positions. I must however underline that this chapter does not aim to analyze the entirety of the Kurdish political field and its functioning. It will especially focus on the formation and relative autonomization of this field more specifically with respect to the space of the Turkish left. It shall be seen that the constitution of the field comprises a long process which involves three phases: Eastism (doğuculuk), emergence of the Kurdish organizations and construction of new realities.

The political field as it is defined here is not a total adoption of the notion by Bourdieu. The political field is an empirical and theoretical construction and the concept is deconstructed in the Kurdish context. Indeed, the Kurdish political field is not an institutionalized field. The mechanism of interaction between agents obeys in part a logic of fluidity. This is why I do not propose herein the political field as a structure of objective relations enabling exploration of institutionalized forms of interactions as Bourdieu takes it in his works. Relationships between agents are fluid and permanently shifting in the Kurdish field.

Furthermore, the boundaries of the Kurdish political field remain vague. There is a structural and functional homology between the Kurdish political field and the Turkish political field; and the Kurdish political field in Turkey and the Iraqi Kurdish political field (this one is less evident than the first one). Ultimately, the Kurdish political field is neither unitary nor homogeneous. It is divided, which is what makes a significant feature of the Kurdish political space.

The second section of this chapter addresses internal violence in the 1970s. As already defined, intra-ethnic violence corresponds to two processes: fragmentation and segmentation. Far from being a priori concepts, the use of these terms are justified by the fieldwork undertaken for about three years. As already explained in the Introduction, fragmentation relates to intra-ethnic violence which takes place especially between Kurdish groups; I will hence study on the basis of Kurdish movements. Segmentation, on the other hand, corresponds to intra-ethnic violence in communitarian level, namely the interactions between political movements and the Kurdish society. I here do not distinguish between violence as “event” and violence as “process”. It empirically signifies radical forms such as massacres, pogroms, armed clashes, attacks, murder and the like. I will in some sections focus on symbolic processes which are an integral part of physical violence. Furthermore, in the two cases, namely fragmentation and
Political field and internal violence

In this chapter, I intend to elaborate the following hypotheses. The Kurdish political field is characterized by the presence of hegemony of radical organizations endowed with logic of violence. The field is split by violence which is explained by fragmentation and segmentation. The process of fragmentation results in and from four dynamics: generational gap, interpersonal tensions and ideological differences, struggle over the monopoly of political violence and spatial dynamics. Segmentation is associated with pre-existing conflicts in the local community, multiplication of radical organizations and local political mobilization, and emergence of new lines of conflict. It must be pointed out that both fragmentation and segmentation are concepts, processes or configurations of political violence. They are empirically merged, and not isolated from each other in reality. They are required to be distinguished for scientific constructions.

Emergence of “Eastism”

Introduction: historical context in Turkey and the Middle East (1940–1970)

If the violent contestation was absent from the 1940s until the 1960s (in the Kurdish East of Turkey), new Kurdish movements appeared along with the transformation which occurred both in Turkey and the Middle East, in particular in the political, economic and constitutional fields. In 1947, the suppression of Meburi Iskân Kanunu (the law on forced settlement established following the Kurdish rebellions and conflict groups) enabled some families and tribes, exiled in Western Turkey, to return to the Kurdish region. The return of Kurdish families was promoted particularly by the Democratic Party (Demokrat Parti) which came to power in 1950 (and remained until 1960). The multi-party system was established in 1945. According to David McDowall, Kurdish religious and political solidarities were reconstructed under the rule of the DP. For the author, it is through legislative and municipal elections that Kurdish aghas (tribal chief) and sheikhs were co-opted into the Turkish political system.

During that period, the Kurdish community found some availability of freedom of expression and political action. The new system promoted the participation of the Kurds to the legal political field within Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP, Republican People’s Party) and the DP; and the semi-authoritarian and semi-liberal regime relatively improved the freedom of expression. These two parties also built the kind of client relations in the Kurdish region. On the other hand, and paradoxically, the repression remained together with the forced assimilation which went to the extent of changing the names of towns and villages to Turkish names in the region. Regional boarding primary schools (Bölge Yatılı İlkokullari) were established in the Kurdish region and favored Turkish education in the rural milieu.
On 27 May 1960, the military overthrew the government of the DP. A new political phase was begun with the military coup d’état and this transformed the structure of the partisan system of the Turkish political field. A relatively more democratic constitution was put in place in 1961, and afterwards legislative elections were organized in October 1961. The CHP won the elections and came to power after eleven years’ opposition while the heirs to the DP regrouped in a new formation: Adalet Partisi (AP or the Justice Party). The constitution of 1961 led furthermore to the foundation of student trade unions and youth organizations during that decade: Turkish nationalism, Islamism and republicanism found the means to organize. It also enabled for the first time the foundation of a legal Turkish communist party, entitled the TİP (Türkiye İşçi Partisi, Turkish Workers’ Party).

On the economic and social level, it is observed that some change impacted on Kurdish immigration to the West of Turkey. This movement may have resulted from three factors. First, in the 1940s, members of some Kurdish notable families settled in the big Turkish cities, particularly in Ankara and Istanbul, for educative and professional reasons. Second, the Kurdish population’s growth and economic problems led to immigration of a part of the rural population into the Turkish and Kurdish urban centers. Finally, mechanization (makinalaşma) in agricultural milieu, while reducing the need of labor force in the countryside, favored immigration. This migration movement was not less important than simultaneous political evolutions because it contributed to the formation of a community of the Kurdish youth sensitive to the Kurdish nationalist cause in the villages (kasaba) and towns.

On the other hand, Iraqi and Iranian Kurdistan went through important evolutions from the 1940s to the 1960s. As already remarked, Kurdish rebellions occurred in Turkey, Iraq and Iran between 1919 and 1949. The non-rebellious time lasted only fifteen years, namely from the end of 1946 (with the fall of the Kurdish autonomous republic which lasted some months) to the insurgency launched by Mustafa Barzani in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1961. This revolt ended, fourteen years later, in 1975. It particularly promoted the foundation of an illegal but non-violent party, Partiya Demokrata Kurdistana Türkiyê (Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan), which gathered some intellectuals, artisans and medrese graduates in 1965 (I will subsequently discuss this organization).

That is the historical and political context between the 1940s and the 1960s in Turkey and the Middle East. A new political generation is perceptible in the Kurdish space immediately after the decade 1950; it is the generation of Eastism.

“Eastism”

It seems that “Eastism” (Doğuculuk) is the first dynamic of emergence of the Kurdish political field in that period. This movement appeared particularly among Kurdish intellectuals and students and seems to include three historical processes. The first one relates to the Forty-Niners (49’lar) in 1959. The term
“Forty-Niners” refers to the affair of the 49 nationalist and intellectual Kurds who were arrested in 1959. The second process represents the “meetings of the East” (Doğu Mitingleri) which took place between 1967 and 1969. These meetings were manifestations organized in the Kurdish villages and provinces for protesting against the underdevelopment of South-Eastern and Eastern Turkey. The third process is associated with Devrimci Doğu Kültürü Ocakları (Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths) between 1969 and 1971, one of the first Kurdish legal organizations in Republican Turkey.

These three historical cases will be explored in detail. But, it is first relevant to explain what is meant by “Eastism”. The concept of “East” was used by the actors themselves in that period and signifies the Kurdish region of Turkey. Eastism refers to common dispositions to act in the name of the “East” and to elaborate a political, cultural vision and program. It is hence considered to be one of the first processes of the emergence of the Kurdish field which would become relatively autonomous. Eastism includes the elements of ethnicism; this movement among the Kurdish students would shift later into Kurdism or nationalism. It is also important to note that this is a political mechanism combining different forms of traditional solidarity (hemşehrilik, friendship ties, ethnic links), modes of cultural and social organization (oriental nights [doğu geceleri], associations [dernekler], publication of magazines, student pensions [yurtlar] and so on).

The Forty-Niners

The movement of the Forty-Niners, the first process of Eastism, designates a protest group that consisted of fifty Kurdish intellectuals (in majority, lawyers), and students. Forty of them were imprisoned and ten of them were judged without arrest in 1959. Because one of the accused died in prison (Harbiye, Istanbul), this affair was called “the process of the Forty-Niners” (₄₉’lar) or simply “the Forty-Niners”. The Forty-Niners were accused of “Kurdism” and “Communism” and having sent a telegram to foreign embassies in Turkey and Turkish newspapers in order to protest the events linked with the Kurdish question. The most notorious ones were A. Efem Dolak, Ali Karahan, Canıp Yıldırım, Fadıl Budak, Faik Savaş, Halil Demirel, Hasan Akkuş, Haydar Aksu, Koço Elbistan, Medet Serhat, Mehmet Ali Dinler, Mehmet Bilgin, Mustafa Ramanlı, Musa Anter, Naci Kutlay, Necati Siyahkan, Sait Elçi, Sait Kırızıtöprak, Selim Kılıçoğlu, Şahabettin Septioğlu, Şerafettin Elçi, Şevket Turan, Örçi Akkoyunlu, Yaşar Kaya, Yavuz Çamlıbel, Yusuf Kaçar, Ziya Şerefhanoğlu, Ziya Acar.

But how can one explain the emergence of such a collective action in the 1950s? According to the reports I have gathered about that period, the protest group was born with regional and transregional dynamics around particularly two facts: the event of Qimil and anti-Kurdish declarations of a CHP deputy in the National assembly following the “events of Kirkuk”. Qimil (an insect which devours grain, metaphor of the destruction used for state power) is the title of a satirical poem in the Kurdish language published in 1959 in the journal
İleri Yurt (Advanced Country) in Diyarbakır. The arrest of the author of the poem, namely Musa Anter, triggered the Kurdish nationalist protestations known as “events of Qimil”. A second wave of protestation took place after the declaration of a deputy of the CHP in the National Assembly, Asım Eren: “The Kurds killed our brothers, and so we will kill so many Kurds as they killed Turkmen?” (mukâbele-i bi-l-misil). The deputy spoke about the killing of Turkmen, charged to the forces of Barzani. In fact, Molla Mustafa Barzani, a historical figure of the Kurdish nationalist movement in the 1940s, returned from exile to Iraq after the coup d’état by General Abdüllerim Kâсим against King Faysal in 1958. The forces of Barzani, motivated by a hope of autonomy, were struggling for General Kâsim in order to crush the Nasserist insurgency in Iraq. According to the Turkish nationalists, the men of Barzani killed the Turkmen who were anti-Kâsim. Asım Eren was indeed advising a policy of coercion towards the Kurds in Turkey and justifying it by these murders. The Kurdish students and intellectuals (the Forty-Niners) protested this proposition, which caused their arrest by the police.


It should be noted that the Forty-Niners did not know each other closely and had divergent ideologies between the left and the right. Some members were gathering around religious and conservative values while the others were influenced by the Marxist ideology specific to that period. Another feature of the group is that they did not go outside legality. Although some of them were judged with capital punishment, the members of the Forty-Niners always utilized democratic and non-violent means to promote their ideas.

Their action appeared to be radical given the political and historical context of the 1950s, but it did not characterize a political breakdown with the Turkish political field since most of the Forty-Niners were maintaining relations with
Kurdish ministers, deputies and public servants integrated in the Turkish political system. Some of the accused ones, like Ziya Şerefnanoğlu and Ali Karahan, later became senator, deputy or lawyer. Some of them, on the other hand, and particularly Musa Anter, Yaşar Kaya, Sait Elçi and Sait Kırmızitoprak, became key actors in Kurdish politics in the 1970s and the 1980s.


The Eastern meetings were collective actions organized by Türkiye İşçi Partisi (the Turkish Workers’ Party) with the participation and contribution of Kurdish socialist students. Organized in the Kurdish provinces, districts (ilçe) and in Ankara, they were constituting non-violent forms of action to protest the “underdevelopement of the East”.22

The interviews suggest that Partiya Demokrata Kurdistanı Tırkîyê (the Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan) also contributed to the organization of the Eastern meetings.23 The principal participants were members of the Kurdish peasantry. The list of the places and meetings were as follows: Silvan (1967), Diyarbakır (1967), Siverek (1967), Batman (1967), Tunceli (1967), Ağrı (1967), Ankara (1967), Diyarbakır (1969), Hakkâri (1969), Hîlvan (1969), Suruç (1969), Varto 1969, Siverek (1969), Lice (1969).24

The TİP was the principal organizer of these meetings. One may pose the question of how this party could mobilize the Kurdish space:

As has been stated, the new constitution, in 1961, enabled the foundation of new parties such as the TİP and Adalet Partisi (the Justice Party), liberal right party.25 After that Mehmet Ali Aybar became the secretary general of the TİP and thanks to the participation of Turkish intellectuals like Behice Boran in 1962, the party got 3 percent of votes in the legislative elections in 1965. Fifteen candidates (five of whom were from the Eastern provinces: Kars, Malatya, Diyarbakır, Urfa and Antep) were elected in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, TBMM). Due to its socialist ideology and politics of tolerance towards the “Kurdish question”, some socialist Kurds like Tarık Ziya Ekinci, Kemal Burkay and Mehmet Ali Aslan joined the party, and founded an “Eastern group” (Doğulular grubu) inside the party.

The multi-party system introduced the mechanism of vote and accordingly governments and political parties developed new visions and perceptions on the “East” of Turkey. Until that period, the question of the East had been viewed as a problem regarding the formation of the nation state by government authorities. The question then gained a new dimension. The East became an electoral stake, and at the same time continued to be the subject of a struggle around questions: ethnic (the East as a Kurdish question), religious (the East as an Islamist question or problem of reactionarism [gericilik]), social (the East as a tribal question) and economic (the East as a problem of underdevelopment).

As Nicole F. Watts notices, the role of the TİP in Kurdish mobilization is explained by three reasons. First, the party provided the Kurdish youth generation with the opportunity to develop their political capital in an institutional
space. Second, its discourse of protest against the government created an availability of contestation for the Kurds. Third, it offered a legal organization to articulate their demands. Indeed, the organizations which put the Kurdish question in the political agenda were rare in the 1960s. This legal aspect gave an advantage to the party against the PDKT which was a clandestine nationalist Kurdish organization.

Furthermore, the Eastern meetings (1967–1969) provoked the first political confrontations between socialist Turks and Kurds: between the TİP and the PDKT, and between the “group of the East” (Doğulular grubu) and cadres of the TİP. In the first case, that is the struggle between the TİP and the militants of the PDKT, resulted from competition over the “East” and the Kurds in a debate crossing ethnicity and the economy. The PDKT, which was not socialist but nationalist and conservative, promoted meetings by nationalist motivations whereas the TİP was a communist party. In the second struggle, the conflict is explained by the critical positioning of the cadres and the members of the TİP towards the nationalist ideas of the “group of the East” inside the party. The TİP had a heterogeneous structure, including various tendencies of the Turkish and Kurdish left, as it was the unique legal socialist party of Turkey. The party, while recognizing the existence of the Kurdish people and question, considered at the same time “the Kurdish nationalism as a risk of split of socialism” and proposed “a solution to the Kurdish question by socialist principles and democratic and egalitarian struggle”.

A protest form of the mobilization. Although the ultimate goal of the Eastern meetings was to protest “underdevelopment”, Kurdish mobilization resulted from subjective and conjunctural dynamics closely linked with each other: the increasing repression of the Kurdish peasantry in the transborder region, and repercussions of Barzani rebellion in Iraq, emotional reactions of Kurdish intellectuals to Turkish nationalist newspapers and magazines, lobbying activities of the Eastern group inside the TİP and the competition between the TİP and the PDKT (I will return to these factors shortly).

Nonetheless, one cannot always establish parallelism between causes of the mobilization and its objectives and content. Indeed, the meetings handled “the problem of the East” only in terms of education and economy by leaving aside the ethnic question. Some slogans of the meetings prove it:

“In Balıkesir, there are schools in 75–80 percent of villages while in Bingöl only half of the villages have schools.”

“We want teachers not gendarmerie!”

“Civilization for the West, ignorance for the East: Why?”

“Our goal is to realize fraternity, equality and happiness.”

“The destiny of the East is hunger, unemployment and contempt.”
Another significant observation can be made about the mobilization process in the Eastern meetings. It is particularly related to mechanisms of cultural framing and the role of local social capital of the young Kurdish socialists. Framing here means that some of the work of organizers culturally attracted participants to the meetings. Local social capital is used in the sense of Bourdieu, namely relations including friendships, social ties and cultural resources of the individuals. Some empirical material obtained in the field confirms this argument.

One of the organizers of the meetings reported:

Kurdish poems were recited. […] In the meeting of Silvan, Mehmet Ali Aslan recited the Kurdish poem called “Rev” (flight). The poem inspired the masses. This is the poem by Edo Dêran (Abdurrahman Alaca). It deals with poverty and suffering of two brothers who went to the mountain to escape from the repression of gendarmerie.

What Mehdi Zana, former mayor of Diyarbakır, said about the meetings is similar to the above report:

Mehdi Zana points out that during the speech of Mehmet Ali Aslan who was the TLP’s chairman in Ağrı, the participants did not seem affected and even stopped concentrating when he was talking about the scientific socialism, class and labor; however when he altered the direction of his speech towards a more nationalistic tone and read a poem titled Rev (Escape), there emerged a considerable fervor and enthusiasm among the crowd.

Another participant to the meetings talked about the organization of the events. I posed a question about what determined the place of the meetings, why for example, in Ağrı:

in Ağrı, there were influential persons … Naci Kutlay and Mehmet Ali Aybar were the persons capable of organizing the meetings; they had some prestige in Ağrı, where they were respected. In Diyarbakır also, there were influential people, like Tarık Ziya Ekinci. It could have been impossible to organize the meetings everywhere.

With regard to mobilization forces of local leaderships, one may cite the names of Kemal Burkay, a lawyer who played a prominent role in the meetings of Tunceli; and Mehdi Zana, in Diyarbakır.
It is noteworthy to interpret the meetings with regard to the autonomization of the Kurdish movement. Because the meetings viewed “the East as a question of underdevelopment” and thus this view converged with the Turkish left, one cannot completely suggest the autonomization of Kurdish movement at that time. However, the meetings created a distinction when considered as collective actions. They were organized in specific geographic space, that is the East, even though the East was represented within social and economic dynamics rather than ethnic. In addition, it is young Kurdish socialists who organized the meetings, this is why one may put forward that the meetings, as being collective actions, had consequences over the autonomization of the Kurdish movement in the 1970s (the issue that I will handle later).

_DEVİRİMCI DOĞU KÜLTÜR OCAKLARI (DDKO, REVOLUTIONARY EASTERN CULTURAL HEARTHS) (1969–1971)_

The DDKO was the first separate organization of Kurdish youth in the republican era of Turkey. Founded in 1969 by about twenty-four members, the first networks of the DDKO emerged in the Student Committee of the Academy of Economic and Commercial Sciences of Ankara (Ankara İktisadi Ticari İlimler Akademisi Talebe Cemiyeti, AİTİATC). The DDKO appeared then first in Ankara and later in the Kurdish provinces and districts such as Diyarbakır, Silvan, Ergani, Kozluk, Batman (1969–1971). Its objective was to assemble the Kurdish youth who lived in Ankara and Istanbul in order to protest “poverty, feudalism, injustice and oppression of the state in the East”. Although the DDKO was limited to the milieu of Kurdish socialist students, it could touch some traditional categories in the Kurdish society.

The students of the DDKO were gathering in the local organizations, associations of fellow citizens (hemşehri dernekleri), cafés (kahveler), universities, student apartments (öğrenci evleri) or oriental nights (Doğu geceleri) in Ankara and Istanbul. One of the most important reunions took place in the student boarding school of Siverek (Siverek Öğrenci Yurdu) in Ankara and others, in the boarding schools of Diyarbakır, Bitlis, Muş, Van, Siverek in Ankara. These reunions brought together (Kurdish) students coming from the East, particularly around Mümtaz Kotan, Necmettin Büyükkaya, Halit Çetin Yalap, Yümmü Budak, Ümit Fırat and so on. Student groups for instance organized the activities in the Cultural Association of the East (Doğu Kültür Dernekleri, DKD) or associations of fellow citizens and published bulletins. These local associations served as the baseline of political groupings of students. They provided funding along with bases which benefited the founders of the DDKO.

The DDKO was a form of organization and collective action. It seems more relevant to view the DDKO in terms of its effects on the autonomization of the Kurdish field rather than to focus on only its content. The DDKO defined, in great part, the Kurdish question as a problem of underdevelopment (poverty, unemployment), or a social problem (the question of tribal chiefs and inequality). This view, lacking ethnic dimension, was similar to the vision of Kemalism and
the Turkish left (even if the DDKO explained the underdevelopment while linking it to the Kurdish question).

The DDKO especially played a role in the process of autonomization of the Kurdish field. In fact, as Bourdieu explains, the move from one trajectory to another one depends on the events and collective organizations.\footnote{One may defend this proposition regarding the role of the DDKO for two reasons. Many cadres of the Kurdish organizations in the 1970s came from the DDKO, which I will study in the following pages. Moreover, an important part of the Kurdish mobilization (not all of them) in the 1970s and 1980s took place in the regions where the DDKO had been present.}

In this respect, two mechanisms contributed to the processes of autonomization. First of all, the DDKO permitted the establishment of social ties between Kurdish youth and society. Indeed, student groups went to villages and established face to face relations with the peasantry. They attempted to construct a public opinion while discussing the problems. They for instance distributed bulletins about the commando operations and their repression on the peasantry. The military operations of the commandos were organized for “preventing the arming and smuggling” especially in Siirt, Şırwan, Nusaybin, Ergani, Midyat, Mardin, Silvan, Diyarbakır, Urfa, etc. Even letters of some peasants presenting their problems were published in the bulletins of the DDKO.\footnote{Second, the DDKO provided spaces of autonomous socialization for Kurdish youth in the big towns. One must remember the political context at the end of the 1960s. In that period, the Turkish left was divided between the National Democratic Revolution (\textit{Milli Demokratik Devrim}) and Socialist Revolution (\textit{Sosyalist Devrim}). The group of the East (\textit{Doğulular grubu}) had already emerged inside the TİP and other similar Turkish socialist circles. Before the emergence of the DDKO, Kurdish students took part in Turkish organizations: the TİP, Association of Socialist Culture (\textit{Sosyalist Kültür Derneği}), the Federation of Intellectual Clubs (\textit{Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu}, FKF), the Federation of Turkey’s Revolutionary Youth (\textit{Türkiye Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu}, or \textit{Dev Genç}), other trade unionist associations and similar parties as well as the Union of Turkish National Students (\textit{Milli Türk Talebe Birliği}) and the Federation of Turkish Students (\textit{Türk Talebe Federasyonu}). One must keep in mind that in any moment of Turkey’s history Kurdish students were not completely absent from the Turkish right and left movements, but a portion of the young socialist Kurds created autonomous spaces with the DDKOs.}

\textbf{Emergence of the radical Kurdish groups}

I attempted to show that Kurdish youth mobilized through demonstrations in order to claim democratic rights in the Kurdish provinces at the end of the 1960s. The demonstrations of the students, especially from the left wing – even if this is not exclusively – played a capital role and so differ from the Kurdish opposition in the 1920s and 1930s which were tribal and ethno-confessional. Moreover, as Hamit Bozarslan remarked, the DDKO as well as the demonstrations did not
constitute a clear political project but an associative network. It is in 1969 and 1970 that some Kurdish militants like Dr Şiwan (alias Sait Kırmızitoprak) began to advocate armed dissent against the Turkish government. In spite of these examples of radicalization, one may suggest that the Kurdish space remained still legalistic. However, the legal Kurdish opposition was crushed by military intervention in March 1971. All Kurdish claims, including cultural ones, were severely punished. The DDKO and the TİP were quickly dissolved following the coup d’état. Most of the DDKO members were imprisoned, especially in Diyarbakir, which would become a place of radicalization. If they were granted amnesty by the government of Bülent Ecevit in 1974, the Kurdish militants did not believe anymore in legal action as a means of political expression.

In fact, during the 1970s, the Turkish political field got radicalized. Street combats between the partisans of each side became daily. Student contestations shook the country starting at the end of the 1960s. Turkish radical left, as well as Kurdish nationalism, were repressed by the military regime. Three charismatic figures of the Turkish left were executed – of whom, Deniz Gezmiş was very emblematic. Dozens of others including Mahir Çayan and İbrahim Kaypakkaya were killed or tortured to death. The coup d’état, on the other hand, got the Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel to resign. The military gave the power to a technocrat government directed by the academic Nihat Erim. After twenty-nine months of martial law, democracy was reestablished in 1973 with the holding of elections. The CHP, whose leader was Bülent Ecevit, allied with the Party of National Salvation (Milli Selâmet Partisi, MSP) to govern. However, Turkey for a period of time became ungovernable. The legislative elections of 1977 led to governments of three political parties, the CHP by Bülent Ecevit, the AP by Süleyman Demirel and the MSP by Necmettin Erbakan, which could not prevent violent escalation. All in all, from 1973 to 1980, the country changed six governments and this ungovernability was aggravated by the economic crisis. By its cycles of devaluation and inflation, the economic crisis impoverished the urban and rural populations, and increased social inequalities in urban milieus. In the second half of the 1970s, the country was economically sanctioned by its Western allies, following the Cyprus crisis (1974) while it had to face with the consequences of the rise in the prices of petroleum product and confront one of the most serious political and social problems of its history.

In Iraq, the insurgency launched by Mustafa Barzani in 1961 ended in 1975 mainly because of the Algiers agreement between Iraq and Iran. By this agreement, the Shah regime withdrew its support from the Barzani movement. The end of this rebellion led to both deep deprivation as well as loss of political reference among the young Kurds who were pro-Barzani. In Iran as well as in Turkey, the militants sought to fill the emptiness through a new mobilization.

It is in these circumstances that clandestine and violent movements emerged in the Kurdish space immediately in the early 1970s. Partiya Sosyalista Kurdistan (PSK, Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan), Kawa, Rizgarî (Liberation), Devrimci Demokratik Kültür Derneği (DDKD, Revolutionary Democratic Culture Association), the KUK (National Liberators of Kurdistan), Partiya


Karkarên Kurdistan (PKK, Kurdistan Workers’ Party), Stêrka Sor (Red Star), Têkoşîn (Struggle). One might suggest the formation of the Kurdish movements in the 1970s as a second principle of autonomization of the Kurdish political field because they were independent from Turkish movements.

The following section is rather descriptive than analytical. It has two functions. First, it explores the foundation of Kurdist movements as a significant process regarding the emergence of the Kurdish field. (Because self-organization of the Kurds is one of the dynamics of the autonomization.) Second, this study suggests a critical report about the Kurdist movements in the 1970s. Indeed, social and political origins of these groups, their foundations (where, whom, when) and activities seem to be unclear in previous studies. This narration about the Kurdish organizations also is necessary for a better understanding of the following sections, because political organizations are numerous in the field and an analysis without presentation of key actors would be sketchy for readers.

It is relevant to remember the method of observation regarding with these organizations in the 1970s. I attempted to lead a meticulous monographic study on each political group by using primary sources and organizing non-guided interviews in Turkey, Sweden, Germany and France for about three years.  

Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan (Partiya Sosyalista Kurdistan, PSK)

Established by some Kurdist socialists, such as Kemal Burkay, İhsan Aksoy and Faruk Aras in 1974, the group published “Riya Azadi” and “Özgürlük Yolu” (Way to Freedom in Kurdish and Turkish) in June 1975. Accordingly, the movement also was known as Way to Freedom. The party established a legal youth organization named Devrimci Halk Kültür Derneği (Revolutionary, Popular and Cultural Association) in 1976. There were more than twenty DHKD in 1977, which aspired to assemble Kurdish students, peasants and workers. The party published Roja Welat/Vatan Güneşi (Sun of the Homeland) in both Turkish and Kurdish. The organization continued its activities within the Komkar association in Europe. From the ideological perspective, the PSK defined itself pro-Soviet, viewed that “Kurdistan was a colony, semi feudal, pre-capitalist” and aimed “a revolutionary, democratic, anti fascist, national and anti-colonialist struggle”.

Rizgarî (Liberation)

Formed around Mümtaz Kotan, Orhan Kotan, Ruşen Arslan, İbrahim Güçlü and Hatice Yaşar and others in 1975, the movement was rather known by its organ of publication called Rizgarî magazine which was first published in 1976. The movement focused more on intellectual activities. The militants of Rizgarî defended particularly the thesis that “Kurdistan was a colony divided in four countries” and an ideology which was “anti colonialist, anti fascist, anti imperialist, anti militarist, anti feudal, nationalist, and socialist”. The publications of Rizgarî targeted structures of sheikh, tribal chiefdom and “seyyid”.

On the
other hand, the *Rizgarî* movement established “Anti Colonialist Culture Association” (*Anti Sömürgeci Kültür Dernekleri*). A historical intra-Kurdish violent event provoked the conflict inside the movement. An armed clash between Barzani and Talabani forces killed some 400 peshmergas in Hakkâri in 1978. The Hakkâri “events” divided *Rizgarî* movement. *Ala Rizgarî* (Flag of Liberation) appeared in 1978 and the group took a position in favor of Talabani. *Ala Rizgarî* established a guerilla camp in Iraqi Kurdistan. However, the group became weaker after the 1980 coup d’état.

**Kawa**

*Kawa* was a Kurdist Maoist group which was formed around Nurettin Elhusaynî, Reşit Delek, Yalçın Çakıcı, Davut Kurun, Mahmut Firat, Ahmet Zeki Ökçuoğlu and Ferit Uzun, etc. in 1976. In fact, the group was detached from *Devrîmci Demokratik Kültür Dernekleri* (Revolutionary Democratic Cultural Associations) since it defined the Soviet Union as “social imperialist”. Another reason for the detachment: the cause of Barzani’s failure in 1975 was attributed to the Soviet Union which was always defended by the DDKD. It is reported that the group struggled to realize an ethnic, “anti imperialist”, “anti feudal” mobilization particularly among Kurdish peasantry and students for the establishment of Kurdistan. The *Kawa* movement was divided around the conflict concerning the “The Theory of Third Worlds”, and a pro-Albanian splinter group called *Dengê Kawa*, arose in 1977. Due to its violent actions, protest meetings, associational struggle and particularly militant activities in rural areas (such as land occupations, collective actions in cotton fields and so on), *Kawa* became one of the most radical Kurdist action groups with the PKK and the KUK (National Liberators of Kurdistan) in the 1970s. Its spaces of militant mobilization and actions were generally in Mardin, Antep, Adıyaman, Urfa, Elazığ, Dersim, Diyarbakır, Van, Ağrı and Batman.

**Revolutionary Democratic Culture Association (Devrîmci Demokratik Kültür Derneği)**

The Revolutionary Democratic Culture Association was founded in Diyarbakır in 1977 by a group of Kurdist militants such as Mahmut Çıkman, Paşa Uzun, Nezir Çetin, Medeni Ave, Şakir Tutal. It should be underlined that the DDKD of Diyarbakır was different and independent from the DDKD found in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir after 1975. The association in Diyarbakır was a gathering of young Kurds who called themselves “Democratic Revolutionary”, “Revolutionary Democratic Youth” and “Revolutionary Democratic Workers”. The association was a legal organization under the direction of illegal *Kürdistan İşçi Partisi* (Kurdistan Workers’ Party) founded in 1975. The DDKD defined “a struggle ideologically nationalist, anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, anti-Maoist, pro-Soviet as well as against ‘local backwardness’ and fascism in the name of Kurdish people and Kurdistan”. It mobilized particularly Kurdish students, teachers and
peasants. For instance, its members took part inside the Töb-Der (Türkiye Öğretmenler Birleşme ve Dayanışma Derneği, Association for Union and Solidarity between Turkey’s Teachers) under the name of the group of “Revolutionary Democratic Teachers” (Devrimci Demokrat Öğretmenler, DDÖ) and struggled with Maoist students over the recruitment of militants in the Science Faculty of Diyarbakır (Diyarbakır Fen Fakültesi) and the Education Institute of Diyarbakır (Diyarbakır Eğitim Enstitüsü). The DDKD was one of the most popular organizations in the Kurdish region in the 1970s in that it had about forty branches in different provinces and districts. Some of their branches were as follows: Diyarbakır, Bismil, Çinar, Silvan, Lice, Piran, Siverek, Viranşehir, Derik, Siirt, Batman, Baykan, Eruh, Uludere, Sason, Şırnak, Bitlis, Van, Başkale, Istanbul, Kahta.66

KUK (National Liberators of Kurdistan)

The KUK (Kürdistan Ulusal Kurtuluşcuları) was a Kurdish organization derived from the PDKT which was founded in 1965. The PDKT, which was a clandestine, nationalist, autonomist (non-separatist), was born under the influence of Iraqi PDK or Barzani movement.67 Because of its autonomist demands and the traditional nature of its nationalism, the PDKT remained ideologically marginal among Kurdish groups in Turkey. Indeed, most of the Kurdish groups were “revolutionary nationalist” and separatist during that period. Accordingly, the party had problems in recruiting senior members and militants among Kurdish youth during the 1970s. This is why the PDKT was able to mobilize only some traditional segments of Kurdish society. The organization was severely criticized for being “nationalist bourgeois” by a young group which became formed inside the party.68 In addition to its ideological marginality among Kurdist socialist factions (hizibler), state repression and internal conflict contributed to its transformation into a more radical and violent movement. Among its three leaders, as stated above, Faik Bucak was killed in 1966. His followers, Sait Elçi and Sait Kırmızıtoprak, also were murdered in Iraq in 1971. The party was transformed into the KUK in its third congress under the leadership of some Kurdist militants such as Daraf Bilek and Mustafa Fisli. The fragmentation of the PDKT between “older conservative nationalists” and “nationalist revolutionary militants” is a case of generational conflict that will be studied later. One may suppose that the radicalization of the KUK was influenced by a shift in the focus of its policy in the Middle East. The PDKT defined Iraqi Kurdistan as the center of Kurdish nationalism while the KUK conducted its more radical activities in Turkey.69 The organization of KUK mobilized particularly in Bingöl, Elazığ, Diyarbakır and transborder regions between Turkey and Iraq. The group had violent conflicts with the PKK in Mardin and Batman at the end of the 1970s.

Partiya Karkarên Kurdistan, PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party)

The PKK, currently the largest Kurdist movement in Turkey, was founded in Diyarbakır (the village of Fis in Lice district) in 1978. However, its formation
goes back to 1973 when Abdullah Öcalan, Haki Karer and Kemal Pir and others were students in Ankara. Members of the group took part, in 1974 or 1975, in the Association of Higher Education of Ankara (Ankara Yüksek Öğrenim Derneği, AYÖD), a leftist organization. Kurdish students started to go to the Kurdish region in order to mobilize as a first step young students as well as poorer categories of society, particularly in Antep, Pazarcık, Dersim, Urfa, Bingöl and Batman. The group was rather called “national liberators” (Ulusal Kurtuluşcular), “revolutionaries of Kurdistan” (Kürdistan Devrimcileri), “students” (talebeler) and “Apocus” (Apocular) until the 1980s. The organization remained outside the ideological discussions between Stalinist and Maoist models of that period in the 1970s. Most of its leadership cadres went to Syria before the coup d’état. The organization began guerilla warfare in the early 1980s. The conflict between state security forces and the PKK led to the killing of tens of thousands of people – most of whom were Kurdish.

Têkoşîn (Struggle)

*Têkoşîn* was a Kurdist group founded in 1978. It was a splinter group which emanated from the Kurtuluş (Liberation) movement, a Turkish radical leftist group in the 1970s. Both *Têkoşîn* and *Kurtuluş* defended the idea that “Kurdistan is a colony”; nevertheless, they differed on the question of political organization as *Têkoşîn* aimed at an independent political organization of the Kurds or Kurdish militants. The group published a review entitled *Têkoşîn*, which treated in its first three issues, the “national question”, “separate organization from the Turkish left” and “economic and social structures of the Kurdish society”. The organization mobilized particularly in the regions of Dersim and Antep. The militants of *Têkoşîn* had armed clashes with the PKK in Antep and Dersim in 1979.

Stêrka Sor (Red Star)

*Stêrka Sor* was a Kurdist group emanating from Halkın Kurtuluşu (Liberation of People), a Turkish leftist movement, in 1975–1976. Ali Rıza Koşar and his social environment formed the group and mobilized in Dersim, Palu, Antep, Adana and İskenderun. Because the group claimed that “Kurdistan is a colony divided in five countries rather than four (it means Turkey, Syria, Iran, Iraq, and the USSR)”, it was more known with the name of *Beş Parçacilar* (Partisans of Liberation of Five Parties). Indeed, *Beş Parçacilar* viewed the USSR as an “imperialist” socialist power and also defended the existence of a part of Kurdistan in Russian territories. Such an argument opposed views of pro-soviet Kurdish and Turkish organizations. It is claimed that the leader of the group, Ali Rıza Koşar was killed in Elazığ by Dev-Yol (Revolutionary Way), a Turkish radical leftist organization, in 1978.

One should take into consideration confrontations of this organization with *Apocus* (followers of Abdullah Öcalan) even if *Beş Parçacilar* constituted a small group in the Kurdish field. The conflict between the two groups had an
undeniable impact on the political trajectory of *Apocus* (PKK) which I shall later study. The clash broke out in 1977 in Antep after the murder of Haki Karer, a prominent leading member of *Apocus*, by *Stêrka Sor*. The *Apocus* then organized “the actions of reprisals” against the group in İskenderun and Antep. Alaattin Kaplan, the alleged author of the murder of Haki Karer was killed by the PKK in İskenderun. Both the PKK and *Stêrka Sor* accused each other of being “agitator” and “state agent”. *Apocus* ultimately eliminated *Beş Parçacilar* through the use of violence (1977–1980).

**The making of a symbolic space**

I have defined the political field in the sense of Bourdieu, as a field of struggles which aim to transform power relations at any given time. It has been maintained that in the Kurdish context, this field seems to be articulated with “Eastist” collective actions and the foundation of Kurdish organizations during the decades of the 1960s and 1970s. In addition, it is necessary to notice that Bourdieu proposes to study a political field in symbolic as well as material terms. There is a homology between the structures of the objective world and the symbolic world. The symbolic world refers to space of representations, ideas, ideologies and imaginaries which actors produce, develop and struggle over.

The Kurdish political field is not always objectively perceptible. The emergence of the Kurdish movements seems to be closely associated with the making of an imaginary space. We witness the autonomization of the field of ideological, subjective and cultural productions that can be called symbolic in the sense of Bourdieu. This is why it would be relevant to pay attention to these dynamics to better understand the Kurdish political field. The construction of this Kurdish symbolic space is perceptible at least through three elements: (1) symbolic struggle on the existence of the Kurds, (2) Marxist-Leninist nationalism, anti-colonialism and anti-feudalism, (3) the foundation of Kurdist magazines and reviews.

**Symbolic struggle for recognition of the existence of the Kurds**

Symbolic struggle is a political stake between Kurdish actors, the state and the Turkish left. There was a competition between the agents who produce politics, problems, concepts, programs and analyses in the field during the 1970s. I will return to this topic of internal fight in the following section. I am here interested more particularly in political works of Kurdish agents whose fundamental goal is the recognition of the Kurdish nation.

The recognition was articulated around the struggle aiming to show the existence of the Kurdish people and language against the negationist discourse of the state. I have already suggested that the Kurdish actors claimed that “there exist a people of the East in Turkey”. It would be interesting to call to mind that Eastism was connected with the recognition of the Kurdish community which is economically and culturally different. In the minds of Kurdish actors, the East was
characterized by poverty and a culturally specific way of life. It was a “tribal”, “patriarchal” and “folkloric” space. The Kurdish movement in that period advocated no more than the recognition of culture and the development of the “East”. This demand was expressed quite timidly. Nonetheless, Kurdish organization progressively evolved the notions linked with the “East” towards the “Kurdishness”. The trials of the DDKO (DDKO davaları) which began in 1971 marked a historical turning point because, for the first time, Kurdish militants collectively defended the existence of the Kurdish nation. Different militant groups, comprising detainees of the DDKO, while preparing the text of defense (savunma metni) declared that there is a Kurdish people in Turkey.

The Kurdish movement has been built upon a project of the recognition of the Kurds either in legal and democratic ways as it was in the case of Eastism or radical ways in the following decades. The motive of recognition resulted in the claim of an independent Kurdish state in the 1970s. The link between the recognition and the use of political violence is however complex. Later, we will see in which configurations the desire for recognition leads to political violence.

The symbolic struggle also dealt with the defense of the Kurdish language which manifested in different ways during that period. Kurdish militants and activists attempted to prove that the Kurdish language is independent from the Turkish language by developing the arguments through different linguistic works. For instance, by arguing that the Kurdish language is derived language (müştak) while the Turkish is agglutinative language (eklemeli) or that the structure of syntax, personal pronouns, etc. differ from the Turkish language. Kemal Badıllı published a Kurdish grammar in 1965. Musa Anter, after writing Brîna Reş (Dark Sore) and Qimil in 1959, completed Ferhenga Kurdî (Kurdish Dictionary) in 1967. Mehmed Emin Bozarslan published a Kurdish alphabet and translated Mem û Zîn (Mem and Zîn) in 1968. All of these works impacted on popular perceptions about the Kurdish language and accordingly contributed to objectivation of this language.

Marxist-Leninist nationalism, anti-colonialism and anti-feudalism

The second principle of the construction of the symbolic space concerns the adoption of nationalist, “anti-colonialist” and “anti-feudal” ideas. Kurdish nationalism in that period is tied to Marxism-Leninism. Communism seems to have had two legitimizing functions in the Kurdish movement in the 1970s. First, Kurdish nationalism was legitimized by Marxist and revolutionary ideologies. Second, Kurdish organizations sought to make the ethnic struggle internationally recognized, namely, from their point of view, Kurds were imagined to be “a colonized people” through a communist ideology. Indeed, Marxism was a means of universal opposition in the 1970s. Most of the Kurdish nationalist organizations took the example of the popular wars in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique.

Kurdist parties also were founded on the Leninist principle of self-determination of nations. Separate political organizations and self-determination
became political stakes of the symbolic struggle both between Turkish leftist movements and Kurdish movements, and among Kurdish movements. Most of the Turkish leftist movements defended that “separate organization of Kurdish parties divides the revolutionary forces”. This is why they qualified separatist organizations as “agents of imperialism”. On the contrary, Kurdish groups qualified Turkish organizations to be “national-socialist”, “chauvinist” and “militarist”.84

The definition of concepts of “colonialism” and “feudalism”: as previously described, in the 1970s, most of the Kurdish groups shared the idea that “Kurdistan is a colony”.85 The thesis of colonialism enabled legitimization of the organization of Kurdish militant youth into a separate movement from that of the Turkish left. Even though nationalism was perceived to be a product of the capitalist development by the socialist and communist generation in the 1970s, some Kurdish movements, being in line with the Leninist argument, made a distinction between “nationalism of oppressor peoples” and “nationalism of oppressed peoples” in order to legitimize their nationalist actions.86 In fact, the idea of nationalism of oppressed peoples is in particular linked with the thesis of colonialism. In this regard, this thesis became an ideological apparatus legitimizing “nationalist and revolutionary violence” by the Kurdish movement.

In parallel with the ideology of “colonialism” which theorizes the relationship between the state and the Kurds, Kurdish agents constructed the thesis of “feudalism”: this latter deals with the organization of Kurdish society, namely internal relations.87 Consequently, Kurdish groups advocated that “there are feudal or semi feudal modes of production in Kurdistan”. In relation with this Marxist perspective, Kurdish tribal chiefs and land owners became the first targets to attack because they were imagined to be belonging to “dominant and traitor classes of the feudal society”. The thesis of feudalism contributed to producing an intra-ethnic violence which I shall focus in the following section whereas the thesis of “colonialism” enabled legitimization of the use of violence against the state.

**Foundation of Kurdish newspapers and magazines**

The construction of a symbolic universe is associated with the foundation of Kurdish reviews and newspapers. I previously made a mention about the establishment of reviews and journals in the 1950s. In the 1970s, they increased in number and got radicalized. Kurdish agents clashed over political texts in which they used Marxist and nationalist vocabularies to analyze the situation of Turkey’s Kurds and the global world. The names of these publications are as follows: Özgürlük Yolu Dergisi (Review of the Way to Freedom, 1975), Roja Welat (Sun of the Country, 1977), Rizgari (Liberation, 1976), Têkoşin (Struggle, 1978), Kawa (1978), Devrimci Demokratik Gençlik (Democratic and Revolutionary Youth, 1978), Jina Nû (New Life, 1979), Tirêj (Light, 1979), Ala Rizgari (Flag of Liberation), Dengê Kawa (Voice of Kawa, 1979), Pêşeng (Vanguard, 1977), Xebat (Effort). Furthermore, Komala publisher was founded in 1974.

In addition to their role on political thought, Kurdist newspapers and magazines were a means of socialization, a form of construction of political groups, circles or networks. This construction is explained for the following reasons. Several former militants reported that activities related to journals and reviews provided a legal means to found clandestine organizations. The acquiring of political capital in cultural circles became then a basis of militant engagement. With regard to the constitution of political groups around journals and magazines, *Rizgarî* is maybe the best example. The latter group was formed around the editions of *Komal* (1974) and *Rizgarî* magazine (1976). For this organization and others, the activities of the magazine and newspaper provided a legal basis and a space of socialization and a fringe.

**The question of violence in the Turkish radical left and the Kurdist movements: two different perspectives**

Political violence appears to be one of the key dynamics of both formation and fragmentation of the Kurdish political field; and an important means of Kurdish mobilization in the 1970s (these propositions will be discussed in the following sections). The argument in this section is that the Kurdish political field seems to be autonomous concerning the question of violence as well. Violence in the radical Turkish left was rather a mechanism of defense while it was relatively a product of strategy of attacks in the Kurdist movements of the 1970s. It can be indeed said that the Kurdish nationalist movements in Turkey moved to offensive mobilization for the first time in history in the 1970s. All Kurdish movements before the 1970s were defensive rather than offensive before the constitution of the young radical generation in the 1970s.

Political violence seemed to constitute a mechanism of self-protection in the Turkish left particularly before 1974. For Ertuğrul Kürkçü, the use of violence was partly due to the start of contra-guerilla activities before the guerilla struggle in Turkish Marxist movements. For instance, Dev-Genç, a mainstream Turkish socialist movement, was not such a violent organization. Exceptionally, the bloody Sunday, the killing of Taylan Özgür in 1969 and the execution of Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan and Yusuf Aslan promoted the idea of armed struggle in the Turkish left before 1974.

Although the Turkish radical left seemed to be more offensive after 1974, most of the violent actions in TKP (*Türkiye Komünist Partisi*, Communist Party of Turkey), Dev-Yol (*Devrimci Yol*, Revolutionary Way), Dev-Sol (*Devrimci Sol*, Revolutionary Left) and TSİP (*Türkiye Sosyalist İşçi Partisi*, Socialist
Workers’ Party of Turkey) were to establish a balance of power against radical Turkish right movements. Finally, armed actions of the Turkish left were not in general against government and its symbols. One must yet notice some exceptions: the experiences of TİKKO (Türkiye İşçi Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu, Army of liberation of Peasant Workers of Turkey), Halkın Kurtuluşu, and Kurtuluş were quite different from other Turkish socialist groups. The latter three organizations mobilized in the Kurdish Alevi region and their move to violence was similar to that of Kurdish organizations since they were more offensive and the phenomenon of the armed struggle in these groups was less ambiguous compared with other Turkish left organizations.

For Kurdish movements as well, contra-guerilla activities formed an important factor in the move to the armed struggle in the 1970s. However, the experiences of Sait Kırmızıtoprak (Dr Şiwan) and the cases of PKK, KUK and Kawa, which I will discuss later, show that Kurdish militants had more offensive strategies in mind. The party led by Sait Kırmızıtoprak was the first party which projected a systematic guerilla struggle in Turkey. Kırmızıtoprak was preparing a guerilla unit in Iraqi Kurdistan when he was killed in 1971. The PKK had been planning an armed struggle since its formative years although its violent tactics were initially used against some social categories of the Kurdish community and opposing Kurdish organizations. The Kawa group was essentially violent as well. The KUK was a product of generational conflict founded on the armed struggle.

Violence in Kurdish organizations was more than a revolutionary principle or ideology; it became a practice of ethnic struggle and survival. Political violence is discontinuous in the Turkish left whereas it became a permanent dynamic in the Kurdish movement after the 1970s. I will explain in a detailed manner the logics of violence in the Kurdish organizations in the following section.

**Internal violence**

**Political fragmentation**

Laius, taking his cue from the oracle, violently rejects Oedipus out of fear that his son will seize his throne and invade his conjugal bed. Oedipus, taking his cue from the oracle, does away with Laius, violently rebuffs the sphinx, then takes their places – as king and “scourge of the city,” respectively. Again, Oedipus, taking his cue from the oracle, plots the death of that unknown figure who may be seeking to usurp his own position. Oedipus, Creon, and Tiresias, each taking his cue from the oracle, seek one another’s downfall.

This is an extract of the oedipal myth as interpreted by Sophocles; its metaphoric value helps to better understand the internal violence that will be studied in this section. Until now I have revealed that the Kurdish political field was characterized by the foundation of nationalist and revolutionary movements, most of
which were projecting a war against the state, and the fact that it was detached from the radical Turkish left in the 1970s. Nevertheless, these organizations rarely targeted the government during this period. Instead, they clashed with each other, which constitutes the topic of this section. Even though intra-Kurdish violence has been mentioned by scholars, the phenomenon has not been systematically studied. Several questions regarding the phenomenon remain unexplored. Why did the Kurdish organizations clash with each other? To what extent was this conflict characteristic of the Kurdish political field? Is violence exclusively linked with political problems? How did pre-existing divisions play a role in the emergence of violence? Does political violence bring about new splits?

In order to respond to these questions, two conceptions will be discussed below for analyzing internal violence among the Kurds: fragmentation and segmentation. The first one signifies the breakdown of the Kurdish political field through violence. The second one deals with political violence at a societal level. It is a pattern in which political violence is intermingled with social violence with consequences on the fracture of the social field. As already mentioned in the Introduction, both fragmentation and segmentation are concepts, processes or configurations of political violence. They are empirically merged, and not isolated from each other in reality. They are required to be distinguished for scientific constructions.

Conflict of generations

The conflict of generation (kuşak çatışması) is one of the factors of Kurdish internal violence. The phenomenon seems to have played two simultaneous functions in the Kurdish space during the 1970s. It had effects on the formation of political movements as well as their disintegration. The case of the PDKT and the KUK, among others, will be studied in order to test this hypothesis.

First, what do “generation” and “conflict of generation” mean? The concept of generation is herein used in the sense of Mannheim. For Mannheim, belonging to a generation signifies participation of actors with common experiences, trend of thought, psychological and spiritual dispositions and places of socialization. Belonging to a generation is thus, not only derived from biological structures and socio-economic conditions, but also through participation in a common historical process. A generation is not necessarily a class of age; rather it constitutes a milieu (muhit) of socialization which is more or less common. Moreover, as Bourdieu points out, generational conflicts do not oppose classes of separate ages, but habitus. These different habitus are produced according to changing generations and, at the same time, signify conditions of existence which impose various definitions of the impossible, the possible and the probable. This conception of Bourdieu is quite meaningful as long as the younger subject the older to practices which seem unimaginable and scandalous, but for the previous ones they seem natural and reasonable. Indeed, as will be below shown, young Kurds despised the pacifism of their predecessors (selefler) while the latter ones found the former’s radicalism scandalous, provocative and crazy.
The conflict of generation becomes noticeable in the division of the PDKT into two parties as well as in the emergence of the KUK, a splinter group of the PDKT in the 1970s. Let me first study the division of the PDKT into two factions (PDKT and PDK-T). The PDKT was illegally founded in 1965 by Peşmergê Welat (Sait Elçi), Evîndarê Welat (Şakir Epözdemir), Jîrek (Derviş Akgül or Derwêşê Sado), Bendeyê Welat (Ömer Turhan) and Durnas (Şerafettin Elçi) in Diyarbakır. Faik Bucak entered into the party after its foundation and became secretary general in 1965. Bucak, the leader of the party, was killed in 1966. It should be noted that the PDKT appeared under the influence of the Democratic Party of Iraqi Kurdistan. Some interviewees mentioned organic links of the party with the PDKI while some of them talked about this link as a social relation. Both arguments are credible because, in the 1960s, the PDKI was the unique model of inspiration for Kurdish movements in the Middle East.

The PDKT was a traditional conservative nationalist movement. The party was organized into traditional milieus, particularly in Mardin, Siirt, Bitlis, Bingöl and Diyarbakır. It defended the recognition of the Kurdish language and people, aimed at publishing magazines and papers in Kurdish and representing Kurds in the Turkish National Assembly. It seems that the organization did not plan an armed struggle in Turkey even though it was an illegal party. It is indubitable that the murder of Faik Bucak and imprisonment of party cadres produced a radicalization effect in the Kurdish movement in the 1970s. That is why it can be argued that repression of this traditional, conservative and nationalist organization contributed to the emergence of a new generation of radical Kurdish left.

There are two levels for explaining the generational conflict which promoted fragmentation and internal violence in the history of the PDKT: individual and organizational. The conflict that will be studied at the individual level is called “the event of two Said” (İki Sait Olayı) by the militant milieu of the PDKT. The event concerns the assassination of Said Elçi and Said Kırmızıtoprak because of the internal conflict. Said Elçi became secretary general of the PDKT in 1966 following the murder of Faik Bucak while Said Kırmızıtoprak, known under the name of Dr Şiwan, was the founder of the PDK-T, the splinter organization of the PDKT.

Said Elçi was born in the village of Zeyneb in Bingöl in 1925. In the 1950s, he settled in Istanbul in order to work in a library called Asâr-i İlimiyye (scientific works). This stay was due to intellectual and financial reasons, and enabled him to mix in Kurdish circles there. It is believed that Ziya Şerefhanoğlu, a Kurdish nationalist figure, influenced him in his commitment to the Kurdish cause. Elçi also became a member of the DP, the party led by Celal Bayar. He directed this party in Bingöl in 1954. He was arrested in the process of the Forty-Niners in 1959. After his release in the 1960s, he moved to Diyarbakır where he contributed to the foundation of the PDKT in 1965. He also participated in the organization of Eastern meetings at the end of the 1960s. Said Kırmızıtoprak (Dr Şiwan) was born in the village of Civarik in Dersim in 1935.
Kirmizitoprak, a brilliant student, registered in the Public Boarding School of Balikesir (devlet yatılı okulu) in Western Turkey. He later studied in the Medicine Faculty of Izmır and Istanbul in the 1950s. Kirmizitoprak, like Elçi, committed to the cause of the Forty-Niners and was imprisoned in 1959. After his release, he started to write articles in the magazine of Yön (Yön dergisi) which belonged to the Turkish left in the 1960s. He also participated in meetings of the East and the DDKO.

Two biographies show both divergences and convergences between these two political figures who marked the Kurdish space in the 1960s. It would be advisable to specify some points. The two figures, Elçi and Kirmizitoprak came from the regions where Kurdish rebellions and massacres occurred in the 1920s and the 1930s: Bingöl and Dersim. Even if Elçi was ten years older than Kirmizitoprak, both of them were born during the political and social troubles. The family of Said Elçi participated in the rebellion of Sheikh Said and a part of Said Kirmizitoprak’s family were killed in the Dersim massacres. The above section described the immigration of young Kurds in the 1950s, who joined Western Turkish cities in order to work or study. This observation indeed applies to the cases of Elçi and Kirmizitoprak. Elçi and Kirmizitoprak were arrested because of the affair of the Forty-Niners. Their commitment to the Kurdish cause depends on their socialization in Kurdish cultural and intellectual circles at the beginning of the 1950s. But how can one explain the generation gap in that case? Indeed, generational rupture comes out as a confrontation between radical left and conservative right. Elçi was a Sunni Kurd from Bingöl and belonged to the Kurdish right. It was an “old” and traditional style. As for Kirmizitoprak, a Kurdish Alevi from Dersim, he was influenced by the Marxist left movement in the 1960s. According to research evidence, the conflict between Kirmizitoprak and Elçi worsened following the sending of a group of militants to Iraq by the PDKT. In 1969, the party sent this group under the leadership of Dr Şiwan (S. Kirmizitoprak) for political and military training. The latter established a revolutionary faction with his friends Çeko (Hikmet Buluttekin) and Brûsk (Hasan Yıkılmış) which transformed into the Democratic Party of Kurdistan in Turkey around 1969–1970. Elçi was set on going to Iraqi Kurdistan in order to resolve this problem of factionalism inside the party. Following the violent disputes on the future and strategy of the party, Said Elçi, Mihemedê Begê and Abdulletif Savaş were killed by Dr Şiwan and his friends in 1971. Being accused of organizing these executions, Dr Şiwan, Çeko and Brûsk were sentenced to death by the PDKI in 1971.

This is the history of the murder of the two Saids which resulted from the division between the traditional generation and the radical leftist generation inside the PDKT. One should be reminded that the radical left was a phenomenon on a regional (Turkey and the Middle East) and global scale at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. Dr Şiwan and his friends Çeko, Brûsk, Reşo and Soro were most definitely influenced by the Marxist generation not only in Turkey but also in the Middle East and around the world. The group, for instance, added the terms of socialism and imperialism in the program of the
Political field and internal violence

PDK-T. This fact explains the existence of two types of Kurdish nationalism. Nationalism of the PDKT (Said Elçi’s party) stems from the traditional conservative right while nationalism of the PDK-T is inspired by the revolutionary left. Nevertheless, this difference does not allow per se an explanation of the generational conflict as the clash focuses particularly on the question of use or non-use of violence.\(^{104}\)

In reality, this generational conflict opposed two political milieus around two forms of struggle. First of all, it should be noted that Dr Şiwan was the first militant who projected a guerrilla struggle in Turkey. He formerly planned to organize a guerrilla unit in Iraqi Kurdistan. On the other hand, the party led by Said Elçi was not intending an armed struggle in Turkey; two secretaries general of this party – Faik Bucak, killed in 1966 and Said Elçi, killed in 1971 – were moderate personalities.\(^{105}\) Even though the organization was clandestine, its high ranking members and militants sought to integrate as nationalist Kurds in the Turkish political system which was very closed to it in that period. This moderation can be due to influence of the party of Barzani in Iraq. From a diametrically opposite position, Dr Şiwan and his community opted to exit from legality via an armed struggle.\(^{106}\)

Consequently, the death of Dr Şiwan and Said Elçi as well as the coup d’état in 1971 led to the dissolution of “old” parties and the rise of new Kurdish nationalist groups. The conflict of generations became more precise and intense in the late 1970s.

THE CASE OF THE KUK

It is now appropriate to study the movement of the KUK as a second example of generational conflict. The division of the PDK through internal violence, namely the assassinations of the two Saids, had impacted the formation of two Kurdish movements. The first one was that of a movement stemming from the tradition of Dr Şiwan. The latter contributed to the emergence of a new generation. Young disciples of Dr Şiwan, known as Şiwancılar, continued to organize around new Marxist and nationalist groups. They founded a clandestine party as a continuation of the PDK-T in 1977: the KİP (Kürdistan İşçi Partisi, Kurdistan Workers’ Party).\(^{107}\) The movement of Şiwanı established legal associations under the name of the DDKD (Devrimci Demokratik Kültür Derneği, Association of Democratic and Revolutionary Culture) and DDKAD (Devrimci Demokrat Kadınlar Derneği, Association of Democratic and Revolutionary Women) in the same year. This organization of successors of Dr Şiwan (Dr Şiwan’ın halefleri) became one of the largest in the Kurdish region throughout the 1970s. This will be discussed in the following sections.

Second, the PDKT, that is the party of Said Elçi, also perpetuated. In 1977, the organization was divided into two factions because of internal disagreement which was a source of generational conflict between Marxist and traditional groups: the classical nationalist PDK and revolutionary nationalist KUK.\(^{108}\) Indeed, the PDKT organized a congress in 1973 in order to get the party going
after the death of Said Elçi, during which Derwêşê Sado (Jîrek), one of the five founders of the party in 1965, became secretary general of the PDKT. Interviewed ex-militants reported that, during that period (1973–1975), the movement had a right wing political persuasion, which was very conservative due to domination by traditionalist, high-ranking members inside the party. According to what they reported, it was even forbidden to discuss the left, leftism and to read socialist publications inside the party.

It is therefore observed that a new Kurdish radical and Marxist group appeared inside the PDKT from the second part of the 1970s. Participation of young militants in the movement led to an internal conflict around two distinct generations: one is traditional (gelenekçi), conservative (muhafazakâr) and comparatively composed of older members, and another one is young Marxists.109 A second fact also played a role in the conflict: failure of Barzani in Iraq in 1975. When the regime of the Iranian Shah withdrew support from the insurgency of Barzani, the latter collapsed immediately.110 The shock was harsh for young Kurdish militants. The end of this rebellion, which was a central reference, created both a profound frustration and an emptiness which turned to a new mobilization in the Kurdish struggle.111 In the minds of young Kurdish socialists, betrayal of imperialism was the reason for this defeat. They felt obliged to immediately found a new party which aimed at establishing a communist and unified Kurdistan. In the second congress of the PDKT in 1975, they introduced “revolutionary” principles such as “anti-colonialism”, “anti-imperialism” and “anti-fascism”. As for the principle of “anti-feudalism”, it was not accepted in spite of the effort of radical Marxists. This cleavage became more and more radical and the generational conflict opposed two milieus: a revolutionary group which included militants such as Mustafa Fisli, Molla Emin, M.E.K., Seyithan M., Hamit Kılıçaslan and a traditional right wing group whose leading members were Mehmet Ali Dinler, Ahmet K., Ramazan H., Haci S.Ş., Molla Abdullah, Faysal K., Ferhat Aydın and so on.

In addition to interviews, it would be reasonable to cite two extracts from a prosecution summing up of the KUK in order to illustrate the emergence of this new political structure:

During the congress [1977], Mustafa Fisli, who was opposed to the ideology and the strategy of the party [PDKT], introduced a new regulation. The latter one was completely opposed to old regulation of the party. It aimed at setting up Marxist-Leninist ideology and establishing independent Kurdistan and emphasized on Kurdish nationalism […] The right wing group clearly opposed to the judgment [in the program of the party] according to which “the party is an illegal front of national liberation. It organizes anti-feudal, anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, revolutionary democratic and socialist elements.” Because the group of Mustafa Fisli was majority, the proposition was accepted as regulation in the congress.112

In November 1977, in the house of Mutafa Fisli, Diyarbakır, Bağlar a meeting of Central committee of the PDKT took place. This meeting was
organized for the election of members of Political Bureau. Participants from the left wing group were Mustafa Fisli, Mehmet E.B., Mehmet E.K., Seyithan M. and Hamit Kılıçaslan. Participants from the right wing group were Mehmet Ali Dinler, Ramazan H., Abdülkerim S., Faysal K. For the Political Bureau, Mustafa Fisli, Seyithan M. and Hamit Kılıçaslan were elected by the majority [...] Exclusion of all the members from the right wing faction deepened breakdown inside the party.  

The Young Kurdish Marxist group managed to dominate the movement. This group transformed the party into the KUK after the third congress which took place in the strait of Kasik (Kasık Boğazı) situated between Cizre and Şırnak in 1977. The membership of the previous secretary general, Derwêşê Sado, was suspended. A young Marxist, Mustafa Fisli, was elected in his place. He was the first to succeed the older traditional generation (Faik Bucak, Said Elçi, Derwêşê Sado, Şerafettin Elçi, Mehmet Ali Dinler). Following the congress in 1977, the group started to use the name of the KUK. This was communicated to the public for the first time in a manifesto “illegally” distributed in Cizre in 1978.  

Following is an extract from article 1 of the regulation of the PDKT written by communist militants: “Article 1: our party struggles against imperialism, feudalism and colonialism in order to establish independent Kurdistan through a popular democratic revolution.” The right wing formation continued to raise an objection to the KUK and to call itself the PDKT while the radical leftist group adopted the name of the PDKT-KUK. It can be supposed that the emergence of the KUK led by fragmentation of the PDKT refers to the principal issues of the Kurdish political field in the 1970s. Indeed, the conflict of generations is founded upon the type of struggle, forms and principles of nationalism and positioning of actors with regard to the Barzani movement in Iraq.  

The first issue of internal conflict relates to the use of political violence by Kurdist actors. Young socialists of the KUK despised “pacifism” and were contemplating a guerilla war in Turkey, something older traditionalist members of the PDKT found scandalous. But why did these militants slip into violence while the others, also being nationalist Kurds, remained non-violent? In reality, they came from different generational socializations. Not having common political experiences, they found themselves in extremely opposite situations. High ranking members of the PDK such as Faik Bucak, Said Elçi, Mehemedê Bêgê, Derwêşê Sado, Şerafettin Elçi, Mehmet Ali Dinler ... were all trained by the Kurdish movement of the 1960s. The biography of Said Elçi was previously mentioned. Biographies of other leading members and militants can also be presented to illustrate this point:  

Faik Bucak was born in the village of Hedro in 1919. He belonged to the Bucak tribe, which was very influential in the region of Urfa. He studied in primary and secondary schools in Siverek and a high school in Diyarbakır. He commenced his studies in the law department of the University of Istanbul in 1939 and contributed to the foundation of the Student Dormitory of Dicle (Dicle Talebe Yurdu) in Istanbul in the 1940s. Upon graduation in law, Bucak worked
as a judge in different cities. In 1956, he left his profession, settled in Urfa and started to work as a lawyer. Bucak was killed in 1966. As for Derwêşê Sado, he was born in Kurtalan (Siirt) in 1938. He belonged to the Çeto tribe, which went into exile in Syria at the end of 1920s. Sado grew up in exile. After his family returned to Turkey, he worked there as a public servant. Mehmet Ali Dinler was born in Cizre in 1937. He belonged to a wealthy family in the region of Mardin. He studied law and then became a member of the Forty-Niners. Like M. Ali Dinler, Şerafettin Elçi was born in 1938 in Cizre. He studied law in Ankara.

As their biographies suggest, most of the PDKT members were born in the 1920s and 1930s. Their socialization is cited in the context of the 1950s and 1960s in Turkey and the Middle East. One of the most important characteristics is that many members studied law and had a professional activity. They were therefore relatively integrated in the Turkish economic and political system. In contrast, radical young Marxists were socialized in the events of the 1970s. I am not authorized to fully present their biographies. But from what I was told, it can be stated that most of them were only nineteen or twenty years old during that period. Mustafa Fisli, a young Marxist, for example, joined the movement at the beginning of the 1970s. Hamid K., militant and senior member, came from the movement of Dev-Yol. Selim Watê, senior member of the KUK, was socialized in the events of the 1970s in Elazığ where political clashes took place between radical youth organizations. It is possible to give many more examples. It should be furthermore added that these Marxist militants of the KUK experienced violent conflicts with Turkish nationalists and Kurdish organizations especially in Bingöl, Elazığ and Mardin. In effect, they went through radical experiences and acquired dispositions enabling them to move to violence more quickly than their “predecessors” (selefler).

Second, the struggle regarding the definition of Kurdish nationalism and positioning with regard to the Barzani movement seem to have played an important role in internal conflict. Kurdish nationalism of the KUK was legitimized by an “anti-imperialist”, “anti-colonialist” struggle and for the independence of Kurdistan while Kurdish nationalism of the PDKT was based on traditional values, the culture, the past, democratic rights of the Kurds and the principle of autonomy of Kurdistan. It was for that reason that Marxist militants accused the right wing generation of “reformism” and “bourgeois nationalism”. The PDKT adopted the policy of Mustafa Barzani as a model, and its nationalism was historically under the influence of the struggle of Barzani in Iraq. For the PDKT, the center of the Kurdish nationalist movement should have been Iraq and its activities first aimed at the independence of Iraqi Kurdistan. Therefore, the party functioned almost as a branch of the PDKI (Democratic Party of Iraqi Kurdistan) particularly from 1972 to 1975. In contrast, following the congress of 1977, the militants of the KUK became more autonomous from the PDKI. They adopted a principle of independent organization in Turkey. With the emergence of the KUK (1977–1980), the center of actions and mobilizations was displaced from Iraq to Turkey.

In short, the two cases studied above suggest that the conflict of generations was a dynamic of fragmentation in the Kurdish movement. The first one is
related to the division of the PDKT into two generations: socialist generation of Dr Şiwan (DPK-T) and traditional generation of Said Elçi. Disciples of the first one later constituted different Kurdish Marxist groups that will be studied in the following sections. On the other hand, even if the right wing generation continued to mobilize, the internal conflict led to the formation of the KUK, a Kurdish radical Marxist group.

I ideological divisions and interpersonal tensions

It was already remarked that Kurdish organizations distinguished themselves in different socialist ideologies. It is then reasonable to ask the following questions: What is an ideology? What place can be given to ideological commitments in the process of fragmentation? Is there a link between ideology and split? In which respect are ideological divisions affected by other factors?

According to Philippe Braud, ideology is one of the key concepts to describe a whole of values, references and beliefs which contribute to shape individual behavior.117 The term “ideology”, being overloaded with significations borrowed from various intellectual realms, can cause a difficulty of analysis.118 Some confusion may arise around this term which was abundantly used in extremely different contexts.119 Nevertheless, owing to its importance regarding what it designates and its frequent use, it is not possible to give up using it to the profit of a similar concept.120

In the Kurdish case, it seems completely plausible to view the mechanism of ideology as a doctrine which legitimizes fragmentation and violence. Given this perspective, it may be assumed that “political cleavages are partly due to ideological divisions”.121 First, one needs to go through the summary regarding fragmentation of Kurdish organizations in order to be reminded of the ideology of each of these groups. Following the coup d’état in 1971, the amnesty of 1974 allowed the freeing of Kurdish militants and activists. The Kurdish nationalists, who were mobilized in the TİP, DDKO, PDKT and PDK-T, started to reorganize. In 1975, two Kurdish pro-Soviet groups appeared: the disciples of Dr Şiwan known as KİP-DDKD and Özgürülk Yolu (Riya Azadi). On the other hand, the traditional nationalist PDKT had started to reorganize at the beginning of the 1970s. The PDKT, as was noted above, was divided into two groups because of the foundation of the KUK in 1978. Afterwards, Kawa, a Maoist group, appeared in 1976 in detachment from the KİP-DDKD, a pro-Soviet organization, because Kawa had accused the USSR of leading “social imperialist” politics and hence not being a socialist state. In 1978, Kawa was divided into two factions: Dengê Kawa and Kawa-Red. The former was based on an ideology of the Third World and the latter opposed it. In 1975–1976, a Kurdish socialist group called Rizgarî coming from the DDKO movement appeared. This organization was separated into two factions upon the emergence of Ala Rizgarî, a pro-Talabani group defining the USSR as “revisionist”. Şêrka Sor, another Kurdish group, detached itself from Halkın Kurtuluşu (Liberation of People), a Turkish communist organization, in 1976. The former deemed the USSR “social-imperialist” and, to defend
its viewpoint on the Kurds, asserted that “Kurdistan is not divided in four but five parties.” Also, the disciples of Apo (Apocular) started to mobilize in 1974, and later founded the PKK in 1978. This organization remained relatively far from ideological debates regarding the international left. And, finally, Tekoşin was born in 1978 upon the merger between a splinter group from Kurtuluş, a Turkish communist political organization, and a group which defected from the PKK.

This presentation demonstrates that Kurdish parties were divided around universal ideologies of the left. Indeed, Marxism (marksizm), Leninism (leninizm), Maoism (maoculuk), Sovietism (sovyetçilik) or Third Worldism (üç dünyacılık) found places in the Kurdish movement. Debates over the social and economic structures of the Kurds (“feudal or semi-feudal”) should be added to these divisions: the Kurdish movements were partly focused on “the semi-feudal character of the Kurdish society” while some of them considered Kurdish society to be completely “feudal”. There were also intellectual trends suggesting that the “modes of production of the Kurdish society were capitalist”. It is useless to report the details of this ideological struggle around different Marxist notions and theses among Kurdish organizations. To sum up, internal conflict was also a result of ideological struggle and combat over how to define Kurdish society between Kurdish actors who had similar interests and resources.

One should however clarify the argument of ideology. In many cases, ideology plays a role a posteriori in fragmentation. It is then noteworthy to ask a significant question: Were ideological divisions, at least in some cases, endogenous to private conflicts? Research evidence shows that ideological differences over Marxist tendencies played a role in the legitimization of interpersonal tensions. Likewise, purely personal conflicts could have been transferred into ideological conflicts. It is possible to state that interpersonal tensions interact with material gains, psychological benefits, jealousy between two senior members and, more particularly, the desire to dominate the party. Below are some examples of interviews: the first one is about division of the Kawa organization into two factions, Dengê Kawa and Red Kawa at the end of the 1970s.

[The Kawa group was ideologically opposed to your group?]
The question was the theory of Third World.122 For me, this theory is a betrayal to the revolution of Kurdistan.

[Was this group then defending the international left?]
In fact, this theory of the Third World is not from the left wing. For me, this is the right wing because it defended the unity of the world against the USA and the USSR together with the MHP [Turkish Nationalist Action Party], this means that different people can unite together against global powers. I cannot believe it. Moreover, the friends defending this ideology joined the group led by Doğu Perinçek. As high ranking members of Dengê Kawa….

They disappeared.
Political field and internal violence

[It is known that these types of divisions also took place in other Kurdish groups.]
Among the Kurds [Kurdish organizations], divisions were not due to political reasons. Some people created problems ... it was because of feudal reasons ... individual reasons: for example jealousy. These divisions were not based on political principles.

[Were they personal?]
Yes. In any case of Kurdish parties, divisions were not political. For instance, if there was a conflict between two people, one of them says something; and another one says no. After the separation, ideology becomes a reason, a pretext. They become separate, they are divided and later they say it was ideological. It is like that. For example, the division of Rizgarî.¹²³

This former militant links the division of the Kawa organization to interpersonal conflicts. Another militant who belonged to Rizgarî pointed out the same factor concerning cleavages within this party at the end of the 1970s. “There was a dispute inside Rizgarî […] about how Rizgarî should have been organized. This dispute caused the division of Rizgarî in 1978 […] it was personal disputes which were the source of this division.”¹²⁴

An example can also be given about the case of the DDKD: two militants of the DDKD who tried to establish a faction were attacked by the militants of the DDKD in 1979. Mehmet Oruç was killed and Mahmut Çıkman was injured in this clash. Some ex-high ranking members and militants of the DDKD reported that this conflict was founded on “factionalism” (hizibciliği) inside the organization and added that “egoistic interest was its source”. Finally, it is necessary to remember that relations of the PKK with other Kurdish organizations as well as internal conflict inside the PKK included interpersonal tensions.

By giving these examples, it is not intended to exclude the role of political principles in the fragmentation of the Kurdish movement. Personal tensions seem to have been a dynamic which combined with political scissions and hence constituted an undeniable factor among others. On the other hand, it seems necessary to underline some difficulties regarding the analysis of interpersonal conflict. The first one relates to an empirical obstacle. For the interviewed people, it is difficult to talk about details of intimate relations that were the source of factionalism. Second, a psychological process merges with a political process even though they do not function in the same way.¹²⁵ Therefore, distinguishing these two processes in the mechanism of fragmentation becomes tricky and difficult. For instance, in the fragmentation of Rizgarî, one should take into account the transborder phenomenon together with interpersonal divisions. Indeed, it is reported that the pesh-mergas of Barzani and members of some pro-Barzani tribes killed about 400 men of Talabani in Hakkâri in 1978. This violent event was a noteworthy factor in the division of the Rizgarî organization. A group which took position in favor of the Talabani founded Ala Rizgarî. But, in spite of this scientific problem, it was necessary to pay attention to interpersonal tensions in order to study fragmentation.
**Struggle for monopoly over political violence**

The competition over means and use of violence is an important factor in the fragmentation of the Kurdish political field. As Anthony Oberschall suggests, the conflict results from an interaction process in a competitive space. For scholars studying conflict and violence, this mechanism of competition is related to a struggle taking place between actors whose objectives are different. Yet the competition, as has been observed in the case studies, appears between Kurdish political actors who have similar political goals. Internal violence associated with competition here is thus not the question of opposing political objectives; rather it is a question of struggle being shaped among those who aim at dominating the political field.

Intra-Kurdish violence took on extreme forms of armed conflict, political murders, torture and threat of death. All of these repertoires were observed among Kurdish organizations between 1975 and 1980: PKK and KUK, PKK and DDKD, PKK and Dengê Kawa, DDKD and Kawa, Rizgarî and Ala Rizgarî, PKK and Riya Azadi, PKK and Têkoşîn, PKK and Stêrka Sor. Among these conflicts, it is noted that those between the PKK and the KUK, the PKK and Têkoşîn and the PKK and the Stêrka Sor were more regular. In other cases, political violence was sporadic and irregular although a certain degree of tension existed among them. There were many actors, events and places. The conflict between the PKK and the KUK, the PKK and Têkoşîn and, finally, the PKK and Stêrka Sor will be studied below for analyzing the process of battle over monopoly of political violence.

**THREE CASES OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE BETWEEN KURDIST GROUPS:**

**PKK and KUK, PKK and Têkoşîn, and PKK and Stêrka Sor**

The **PKK and the KUK.** The first case deals with armed conflict between the PKK and the KUK. The PKK is a Kurdish organization whose formation started around Kurdish students (talebeler) in Ankara in 1973. It was founded in 1978. One should pay attention to its social formation from the end of 1974. It is observed that Kurdish talebes had political discussions with their relatives and local community during the summer holiday in South-Eastern Turkey. Their discourse and relations with the local community were however ambiguous and not very organized in 1974. The students launched local mobilizations in an organized way in 1975. The first places of mobilization were Antep, Pazarcık, Dersim, Bingöl, Urfa and Batman. As for the KUK coming from the tradition of the PDKT, it was already organized in transborder provinces between Turkey and Iraq. The KUK was indeed founded on pre-existent social networks of the PDKT, which were mingled with political and commercial relations with Iraqi Kurds and the PDKI. For this political tradition, support of meles (title given to those who received religious formation), feqîs (religious juriconsultants), imams and talebes of medrese were important in nationalist mobilization. In Kurdish provinces situated far from Iraq such as Diyarbakır, Elaziğ, Bingöl and Van, the
organization was based on similar traditional nationalist categories. In addition, militants coming from the Marxist generation into the KUK expanded their space of action by mobilizing radical youth in these provinces.

The domination of the KUK, especially in transborder regions, constituted an obstacle to the mobilization of other Kurdish nationalist organizations including the PKK. The latter one had difficulty entering this region in order to mobilize. However, the Apocos speedily mobilized in Dersim, Pazarçik and some districts of Antep, Batman, Bingöl and Suruç. The struggle for territorial domination in transborder regions, particularly in Mardin, produced armed clashes between the PKK and the KUK at the end of the 1970s. These bloody confrontations caused the loss of around 150 militants from both sides and the PKK finally managed to enter the region. The KUK did not lose this small war against the PKK, but was badly weakened because of the loss of militants before the coup d’état. Later the repression of the military coup d’état practically put an end to this organization.

The PKK and the Têkoşin. The second case relates to the conflict arising between the Têkoşin and PKK. Têkoşin, born in 1978, was composed of an amalgam of two factions coming from the PKK and Kurtuluş (Liberation). Indeed, a group of Kurdish militants inside the Kurtuluş movement, a Turkish communist organization, got dissatisfied with the position of this movement about the Kurdish question. This Turkish left organization was considering that the Kurdish problem would be solved following a communist revolution in Turkey. Some Kurdish militants opposed this political vision of Kurtuluş. Seyfi Cengiz was the pioneer of this faction. Kamer Özkan, a PKK militant, joined this dissident group and together they founded Têkoşin. However Têkoşin was operating in Antep and Dersim which were first places of mobilization of the PKK. In 1978–1979, at least fifty high ranking members and militants of the PKK in Antep left their party and participated in Têkoşin. The PKK assassinated two of them, Balta (his pseudonym) and Mehmet Uzun, on the eve of the coup d’état. Têkoşin was physically and completely eliminated by the PKK.

The PKK and Stêrka Sor. The third case concerns the conflict between Stêrka Sor and the PKK. As was noted above, Stêrka Sor was a Kurdist group which came from Halkın Kurtuluşu. The group was formed under the initiative of Ali Riza Koşar and Aladdin Kaplan in 1975–1976. It was mobilized in Antep and Dersim. The history of Stêrka Sor’s conflict with Apocu militants started with the murder of Haki Karer, one of the leading members of the Apocu organization, in Antep, in 1977. The Apocu attacked Stêrka Sor in Antep and Dersim. Aladdin Kaplan, one of the leaders of Stêrka Sor, was killed in Adana by the armed branch of the PKK. The conflict between the two Kurdish organizations from 1977 to 1980 put an end to Stêrka Sor, some militants of which later joined the Kawa group.

I presented three cases of conflict between PKK, KUK, Têkoşin and Stêrka Sor from 1977 to 1980. It seems to be not necessary to describe all the cases of conflict among about ten Kurdish organizations which I noted on the field study. I remarked that the relations between them were not peaceful. An enduring tension was leading to violence. Based on these observations, I might study at least three dynamics of fighting over the monopoly of political violence.
THREE DYNAMICS: PRIVATIZATION OF VIOLENCE, POLITICAL COMPETITION AND SYMBOLIC DOMINATION

First of all, inter-organizational relations are associated with privatization of violence in the Kurdish political field. The concept of privatization of violence is employed by several scholars in order to study the use of violence by individuals and groups opposed to the monopoly of legitimate state violence. In the current literature, there are different dimensions of the privatization of violence that apply to warlords, self-appointed vigilance patrols, militias, gangs and private firms, etc., which challenge or collaborate with the state. Here, privatization of violence is a process in which rebel organizations challenge the state and eliminate their political rivals with the aim of monopolizing the use of force. It allows small organizations and individuals to increase their ability to use destructive force. As Diego Gambetta remarks, coercive violence is not always massive; it can be sometimes exercised by an individual or a specific small group. The use of violence may end up with the monopoly of violence even on a micro level. In the Kurdish case, political actors fought each other to obtain this capacity or monopoly of physical and symbolic destruction in the political field. And it was the PKK that monopolized the use of violence among Kurdish movements. Let’s analyze intra-Kurdish conflict in order to understand this process of violence.

Internal violence for the monopoly of physical violence arose between almost all Kurdish movements, but more frequently between PKK, Têkoşîn, KUK and Stêrka Sor. The PKK was usually the principal actor with regard to these confrontations. Evidence obtained in the field helps to interpret this fact. These four organizations – Kawa can be added to them – were the most radical groups which moved to violence more quickly than other organizations. Political violence was then a means, a scarce resource over which agents were competing. Furthermore, these movements as well as other ones belonged to the same social context. This was a noteworthy factor which promoted internal conflict. For example, Antep and Dersim were among the first few places of mobilization for the PKK. In addition, the transborder region mostly controlled by the KUK was a territory which Apocu militants tried to enter. According to former KUK militants’ reports, violence was the unique means of the PKK to enter the transborder areas. Abdullah Öcalan claimed in a journalistic interview that the KUK was committed to prevent the PKK in that region and that Apocu militants used violence in order to mobilize in the region of Mardin-Şırnak. This is why it should be emphasized that the struggles for the monopoly of violence led to privatization of political violence. Actors used violence not only to reach political objectives but also to neutralize, injure and eliminate their political rivals.

Second, this combat for monopoly is linked with a competition over recruitment of militants. This fact was usually observed at times when a splinter group broke away from a Kurdish organization. As an example, the move of a group of militants from the PKK to the ranks of Tekoşîn caused clashes between the two parties since they were fighting over the same social base. Likewise, one of the
violent actions arising between Rizgarî and Ala Rizgarî was due to the struggle over militants after the emergence of the second group. Ala Rizgarî was a faction of Rizgarî. After the division of Rizgarî, there was combat over the Boarding School of Van in Istanbul. Two factions were competing to recruit students in the boarding school. Because of this, the director of the boarding school was killed by one of the two groups. Another example is the competition on recruitment of students from Diyarbakır, which provoked some armed clashes between disciples of Dr Şiwan (DDKD), one of the main political forces in Diyarbakır during that period, and other Kurdist movements towards the end of the 1970s.

The third dynamic of the struggle over the monopoly of political violence is associated with symbolic domination. The issue of political struggle between organizations is not only about the use of private violence and recruitment of militants, but also about a symbolic hegemony in the Kurdish field. Each organization is believed to have a legitimate right to speak about as well as in the name of Kurdish people. This aspect is quite different from the ideological divergence discussed above since the content of political discourse does not matter at this point. To use a popular expression, each of the Kurdish agents would have said: “it is only me who speaks here”.

This struggle for symbolic domination materializes into political discourse, magazine and paper publications, communication of manifestos, display and writing of slogans on walls. Kurdish militants published several magazines and papers which was clear evidence of autonomization of the Kurdish field. The increase in these types of publications is also related to an internal dynamic, that is the competition on the monopoly over cultural goods and intellectual apparatus. The combat on symbolic domination in the Kurdish field was in reality associated to the use of internal physical violence. Indeed, it was reported that many militants belonging to PKK, DDKD, Riya Azadî, KUK, Rizgarî and Kawa were killed or injured by their rivals when they were displaying and throwing slogans, diffusing pamphlets and leaflets, etc. in Dersim, Siverek, Batman, Bingöl, Mardin, Diyarbakır…. In many cases, encounters for political discussion in cafés turned into physical conflict.

Furthermore, as Philippe Braud admits, physical violence usually operates together with symbolic violence. Symbolic domination interacts with symbolic violence which is at the same time a cause and a result of physical violence. Kurdish actors accused each other of being a “state agent”. It is still unclear whether they actually perceived their rivals as state agents or they assumed it in order to legitimize the use of physical violence against each other. It seems really hard to distinguish a “real” assessment of the situation and “suppositional” judgments. It may be claimed that both of these two logics functioned jointly in the minds of Kurdish subjects. As a consequence, there is no doubt that the imaginary and the symbolic were significant dimensions of the struggle over the monopoly of physical violence.

Here are some examples about the discourse which shows how Kurdish subjects perceived their rivals. The PKK distributed a leaflet called Doğru Yolu Kavrayalım (Let’s Comprehend the Right Way) which deemed other Kurdish
parties as a “pawn or agent of the state”. Similarly, other Kurdish organizations accused the PKK of “being agent of state”. Têkoşîn, the KUK and Riya Azadî adopted a very radical discourse against the PKK. Têkoşîn, for example, focused on severe criticism towards the Apocu militants in its earliest issues. One of the causes of the armed conflict between Têkoşîn and the PKK was that the previous one published a text “accusing the PKK of being an agent of the state”. Therefore reciprocal attacks took place between them. The KUK made the same accusation against some high ranking militants of the PDKT. Moreover, Riya Azadî, Rizgarî and the DDKD adopted a similar language against their emerging factions.

Spatial dynamics: analyses at micro and regional levels

A final factor in the fragmentation of the Kurdish movement relates to spatial dynamics. The breakup of the Kurdish field is clear evidence of this hypothesis. One should make an analysis at the micro and regional level to show spatial divisions. On a regional scale, it is observed that Kurdish organizations were associated with some regions (before the PKK monopolized the Kurdish space from the 1980s). This is not to say that Kurdish groups did not co-exist in the same place. Most of the Kurdish parties tried to mobilize in several Kurdish provinces in the 1970s but mobilization of each organization was limited to a geographical area. First of all, the disciples of Dr Şiwan mobilized in a larger space than other ones. Şiwançı militants (DDKD) were quite powerful in Diyarbakır, Bismil, Silvan, Dersim, Siverek, Kahta, Bitlis, Batman and Siirt. The KUK found a social base in transborder regions of Mardin, Şırnak, Hakkâri as well as in the provinces of Diyarbakır, Bingöl, Elaziğ (especially Palu). The primary mobilization of the PKK took place in Pazarcık, Bingöl, Dersim, Batman, Urfa and Antep. Kawa generally mobilized in Van, Diyarbakır, Siirt, Kahta, Dersim and Diyarbakır. As for Riya Azadî, Diyarbakır, Dersim, Ağrı, Muş and Bingöl should be cited in particular. Rizgari was present in Diyarbakır, Muş, Varto, Van and

Map 1.1 Kurdish organizations in the 1970s in Turkey.
Ağrı. As it was already underlined, two small groups, Têkoşin and Stêrka Sor, operated in Antep and Dersim.

Almost all of these organizations were operating in many provinces, especially those of Diyarbakır, Batman, Bingöl, Muş and Siverek. Because of the co-existence of radical movements in the same place, micro and local divisions should be taken into account. Political associations, high schools, cafés, teacher colleges (öğretmen okulları), professional schools (meslek okulları) were divided between Kurdish groups in many regions. Ethnographic observations show that spatial fragmentation was so radical that districts of a town (ilçeler) were sometimes distributed or shared between the groups. For example, Bismil, a district of Diyarbakır, was the stronghold of the DDKD while Silvan, a neighboring district to Bismil, was the bastion of Kawa. The community of Ergâni, another district of Diyarbakır, was mobilized by Rizgarî. And so the list continues.

On the basis of this information, it may be asserted that there was no unique local center; rather, a system of multiple local centers existed in the Kurdish space. This is why several Kurdish villages and towns such as Siverek, Pazarcık, Varto, Nâzimiye, Bismil, Silvan, Batman deserve a more meticulous analysis. In all of these local centers, Kurdish militants established such an anarchic system that there was no local legitimate political authority recognized by them all. And these groups attempted to build political authority on one another by using coercive physical and symbolic violence. Spatial dynamics were a major dimension of this political fragmentation.

**Segmentation**

Before going on to analyze segmentation, it is relevant to focus on the notion of segmentation and be reminded of some points that were underlined in the Introduction. The concept of segmentation in this study differs from that of segmentarity or segmentation in social anthropology. First of all, their scopes are different: segmentation herein refers to the process of intra-ethnic violence while the principle of segmentarity usually applies to the study of so-called “primitive” societies. As per Emile Durkheim’s analysis, a polysegmentary society (société polysegmentaire) signifies social segments that are juxtaposed in the same territory and not integrated with each other for various reasons. The starting point of my study is violence, whereas the term segmentation is used for analyzing social organization of tribal cultures in classical anthropology. For Martin van Bruinessen, segmentarity refers to the split among tribal groups in Kurdish society. In this respect, it is quite similar to the notion of segmentation in my research. The difference is that, according to van Bruinessen’s theory, segmentarity applies to divisions of Kurdish society along traditional lines while analysis of this phenomenon here is not just limited to traditional cleavages.

Second, principles of division in the work of social anthropologists are different: segments are formed by genealogical structures (called lineages), by distribution of economic resources, the system of age groups, physical environment (for example, pasture) and ways of life, and so on. Segmentation of social
structure obviously involves a kind of conflict in classical anthropology. But this conflict seems to appear as a pragmatic and functional mechanism since it is claimed to be serving mutual interests of rival segments. On the contrary, in this study, segmentation is a dynamic that produces violence and prevents common action among Kurdish segments.

On the other hand, the concept of segmentation in this research shares some similarities with the notion of segmentation held by social anthropologists. Even though principles of division and conflict and domains of application have divergences, there are some points in common. Some principles of division are similar. In this work, distribution of material and symbolic resources constitute a determinant factor in local cleavages. This hypothesis is defended by anthropologists. Likewise, for them, the conflict is also an essential dynamic of segmentation. It will be seen below that social conflicts are partly associated with the struggle for material and symbolic resources in Kurdish society especially between tribal (aşiret) and sectarian (mezheb) communities. Another point of comparison is related to the concept of age groups by anthropologists for whom the system of age groups is a factor of tribal segmentation. From an anthropological viewpoint, the difference between the old and the youth can be a source of tribal division. Even though this conception is mechanical to explain political scissions, generational dynamics which are discussed above are comparable to the system of group ages. Indeed, even if generation does not mean an age group and refers to common socialization, individuals belonging to the same generation are almost about the same age.

Finally, the phenomenon of segmentation signifies the positioning of groups in social and political spaces in anthropology. This view is adopted by the author of this piece because segmentation also constitutes a spatial concept. It is nevertheless necessary to notice that divergence and convergence between two notions will be better understood in the following analysis. In order to summarize the study of segmentation, namely a process of political violence, I suggest that the space of social conflict among the Kurds becomes a space for political violence. To present this argument, I will first focus on the role of local cleavages activated by war and violence. I hypothesize that pre-existing social and tribal divisions, and sectarian fractures impact segmentation. In addition to these historical and structural dynamics, I claim that segmentation is related to emerging factors. The multiplication of radical illegal organizations and activities of institutional local political parties have a segmenting effect. Violence, at the same time, introduces new lines of cleavages in Kurdish society.

**Qualitative case studies**

It is reasonable to first present Bingöl, Maraş, Siverek and Batman before making an analysis of segmentation. What are Bingöl, Maraş, Siverek and Batman?
Bingöl was a place of Kurdish rebellion in the 1920s. Just to remind one and all, this region was characterized by groups of nakşibendi sheikhs, medreses and different tribal segments during that period. Though the Kemalist repression considerably checked the influence of sheikhs, medreses still functioned until the military coup d'état in 1980 despite being abolished by the law in 1924. The culture of medrese is one of the important factors in that Sunni religious men played an undeniable role in the community of Bingöl. Relationships of the Bingöl community with state power were paradoxal following the Sheikh Said rebellion. On the one hand, state coercion led to protest and riots in the region: a part of the population moved to banditry in the decades of 1940 and 1950. The banditry of this period can be interpreted as a form of social resistance to the political and economic regime. On the other hand, political co-optation of the ağhas and sheikhs in the 1950s and 1960s partly promoted the integration of this region in the state.

The emergence of the PDKT in 1965 impacted the formation of Kurdish nationalism in Bingöl as the party established ties of solidarity with conservative milieus on the basis of ethno-nationalism. It is remarkable that many Kurdish nationalist figures during the 1950s and the 1960s came from Bingöl. For instance, Sait Elçi, whose biography was presented above, one of the founders of the PDKT and originally from Bingöl, contributed to the formation of nationalist networks. Furthermore, Faik Savaş (born in Genç in 1938), Haydar Aksu (born in Kiği in 1938) and Sait Bingöl (date of birth not known), members of the Forty-Niners, are from Bingöl.

In the 1970s, radical movements appeared in Bingöl like in other Kurdish provinces. Its social and political field was divided between opposing political forces. On the one hand, the Turkish nationalist movement (MHP), also deemed as idealist (ülküçüler), was mobilizing. On the other hand, Kurdish movements
influenced by Marxism-Leninism particularly KUK, *Riya Azadî* and *Apocus*, were operating. Highly segmented around political lines, Bingöl society went through internal conflict in social and political terms between 1975 and 1980, which got radicalized with the murder of *ülkücü* mayor of Bingöl, Hikmet Tekin by the PKK in 1979.

**THE CASE OF MARAŞ-PAZARCİK**

The province of Maraş is situated between the South-Eastern and Mediterranean regions of Turkey. Communitarian division is founded on sectarian and ethnic principles. From a denominational point of view, the Alevi community generally lives in Pazarcık, Nurhak, Elbistan and in the city of Maraş. Other districts (*ilçe*) are populated mostly by Sunnis. At a linguistic level, both Kurdish and Turkish speaking communities are found in the province. Ethnic division seems to be influenced by sectarian factors in Maraş. Indeed, Alevi Kurds in general present themselves as Kurds and Sunni Kurds are affiliated to Turkism (*türkçülük*). It can be supposed that religious confession plays a fundamental role in ethnic identification in this province. Yet research indicates two observations: some Alevi Kurds perceive the conflict to be religious between Sunnis and Alevis whereas some of them attribute an ethnic meaning to the conflict, namely Kurds versus Turks, even if the religious sect is an ethnic differentiator. Alevi Kurds who lived in rural regions of Pazarcık started to immigrate to the city of Maraş at the beginning of the 1970s for economic reasons. Immigration of Alevi Kurds to the center of the city led to economic competition between Alevis and Sunnis. The conflict of economic interests in the local market of Maraş (*Maraş pazarı*) as well as sectarian conflict resulted in the separation of the two communities in the city. The Alevi Kurds congregated in districts such as Yörükselim, Yenimahalle, Mağaralı and Karamaraş. Other sites of Maraş were in majority inhabited by the Sunni community. In the 1970s, the province of Maraş and Alevi and Sunni districts went through a strong politicization around radical movements. The Kurdish Alevi community gathered around Turkish and Kurdish leftist organizations such as *Apocular*, *Halkın Kurtuluşçuları* and *Acilcililer* (Urgentists), while Turkish and Kurdish Sunnis were mobilized by radical right movements such as Turkish *ülkücü* and the MTTB (*Milli Türk Talebe Birliği*, National Union of Turkish Students).

Polarized around these sectarian, ethnic and political lines, Maraş went through a massacre of Alevi Kurds particularly those coming from Pazarcık, who had settled in the city since the beginning of the 1970s. From 23 to 26 December 1978, at least 105 people, most of whom were Kurdish Alevis, were killed. Bloody events had started before this date. On 3 April, Güzik Dede, an important local personality for Alevis of Maraş, was killed in a café (*kahvehane*). On 19 December, a bomb exploded in the cinema of *Çiçek* (*Çiçek Sineması*) in Maraş. Later, two school teachers (*öğretmen*) affiliated with the left were killed on 21 December. The next day, during the funeral of the teachers, shooting at the participants left many injured. Some victims or relatives of
victims reported that each of the homes attacked between 23 and 26 December had been marked with a cross before the gory events. Following the massacre in December 1978, a significant part of the Kurdish Alevi community in Maraş returned to the villages of Pazarcık or immigrated to Antep, where some of them were mobilized around the PKK ideology. Also thousands of Kurdish Alevi emigrated to Germany, Switzerland and France after the military coup d’état in 1980.

The Case of Siverek

Siverek is a district of Urfa, which is situated between Kahta and Diyarbakır. One should absolutely mention its local actors when analyzing Siverek. The village is organized into tribes. The tribes of Bucak and Kirwar constituted two principal actors in the region. These tribes were rivals in the social field of Siverek. The conflict was based on a vendetta (kan dâvası) and struggle for political power.\textsuperscript{148} It is reported that social relations between the Bucak and the Kirwar were long determined by violence. The blood feud between two big families became radicalized upon the murder of a notable member of the Kirwar tribe, the mayor of Siverek. After the system of political pluralism began to be applied in 1946, the Bucaks held the status of deputy (vekillik statüsü) while members of the Kirwar tribe were reserved the governance of mayor (belediye yönetimi) in Siverek.

A new page turned in Siverek’s social and political history in the 1970s. Many Kurdish movements committed to violence for mobilization. There were indeed thousands of students (high school and university level) from Siverek, who were radically politicized by the left and Kurdish nationalism: DDKD, Kawa, Rizgarî and Riya Azadî – all of them found opportunities to recruit. The political field of Siverek was not only characterized by the Kurdist movement. Turkish nationalism had a social base in the region. An Islamist movement organized around the MTTB (Milli Türk Talebe Birliği) also constituted an important force in conservative milieus. In parallel with this mobilization taking place between several political and tribal groups, “black events”, the expression used by interviewees, started in 1976. Even before the violent outbreak towards 1977 and 1978, social violence – namely fires, thefts, rapes – increased considerably in Siverek, while at the same time the perpetrators of most of these acts remained unknown. In 1978, for example, the high school of İmam Hatîp (religious school) was burnt down and its responsibility was attributed to Dr Şiwan’s disciples (militants of the DDKD). The latter group found themselves in a difficult situation because of Siverek’s conservative structure, though they were able to convince the local community of not having committed this act.

In 1978, Kurdist communist movements began to take action against land owners in the region. The DDKD radicalized its discourse against the aghas. The Kawa occupied lands in collaboration with poor peasantry. The Apocus declared war on the Bucak tribe in Siverek and the Süleyman tribe (Süleymanlar) in Hilvan. While these violent politics persisted in the village,
Ferit Uzun (1950–1978), a high ranking militant of *Kawa*, was assassinated in 1978. Even though the perpetrator(s) remain unknown to this day, the responsibility for his killing was attributed to the Bucak tribe during that period. Ferit Uzun’s family reported that a vengeful ambience had suddenly surfaced against the Bucaks after this event. Indeed, Ferit Uzun had a local charisma. He possessed cultural capital, having got a diploma in agricultural studies, as well as social capital in the sense that he had good relations with the local community. All of this increased feelings of anger against the Bucaks. Subsequently, a war was waged under the direction of the PKK against the Bucak family. Ferit Uzun’s murder deepened the conflict between the Bucaks and the *Apocus*. Motivated by Ferit Uzun’s revenge, some militants of *Kawa* and the DDKD got into the ranks of *Apocus*. Likewise, tribal actors who were in rivalry with the Bucak tribe supported the PKK. Hence, a kind of civil war broke out with the participation of social and political actors, and lasted until the military coup d’état in 1980.

THE CASE OF BATMAN

In the region of Batman, a social resistance appeared after the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923. The insurgency in Batman during the republican period was due to government repression which took place after the resistance of tribes to disarmament and state intervention in their daily life. Riots in Sason as well as the conflict of the Raman tribe with government forces increased the feeling of discontent in the Kurdish community of this region. Some tribes were exiled into Western Turkey and Syria. Politics of exile was particularly applied on socially powerful families. For instance, members of Zilan (*Zilanlar*), especially sheikhs of Zilan and the Ramans were exiled.

In the 1950s, the Democratic Party (*Demokrat Parti*) used politics of co-optation of Kurdish tribes in the political system. The Ramans, for example, acquired again their social and political status. The sheikhs of Zilan continued to exercise their influence on the *Nakşibendi* community, not only in Batman but also in several regions of Turkey. By the end of the 1960s, Batman became one of the chief places of demonstration during the meetings of the East (*Doğu Mitingleri*) and the DDKO (*Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları*, Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths). The society of Batman became even more politicized upon the emergence of Kurdist movements in the 1970s. The *Apocus*, the *Şiwancı*, the KUK as well as Kurdish militants belonging to the TKP (*Türkiye Komünist Partisi*, Communist Party of Turkey) were powerful in the town. On the other hand, the MTTB, one of whose leaders was Hüseyin Velioğlu,149 constituted an important social and political force. Violent clashes between these political organizations divided society into different segments between 1977 and 1980. In 1977, the CHP won the local municipal elections. But after the resignation of Batman’s mayor, elections were held to elect a new one. Competition in the context of elections turned into a radical fight between the candidates of *Apocus* and the Ramans who had long dominated the local institutional politics of
Batman. This time, the candidate for the *Apocus*, Edip Solmaz won the elections; but the mayor was killed in 1979. Responsibility for the killing was attributed to the Raman tribe. This led to an armed conflict between the Ramans and the *Apocus* which lasted until the military coup d’état in 1980.

The four qualitative cases presented above enable us to form a hypothesis of segmentation in different social spaces.

*Pre-existing conflicts in the Kurdish community*

Pre-existing conflicts as a structural factor have become the subject of some empirical and theoretical studies about political violence. Charles Tilly underlined the role of the rivalry between families, clans, regions and factions in the repertoire of action in the region of Vendée in French history. Ted Swedenburg presented Palestinian military structure as reflections of pre-existing divisions among the Palestinians in the context of 1936–1939. For Swedenburg, because Palestinian guerilla forces were founded along familial and tribal lines, their mobilization transformed intra-Palestinian cleavages into new disputes by consequently dragging the rebellion against the British to a civilian war among the Palestinians. Competing villages took advantage of rival rebel factions for their own interests; each group denounced member(s) of the opponent family to be a spy so that rebels would punish them. Consequently, many Palestinians collaborated with the British and fought against their opponent tribes. According to Michel Wieviorka, the space of a social conflict can become a fortress from which political action is organized. Indeed, social and political repertoires of violence can exist in parallel and mutually reinforce each other. Finally, Stathis Kalyvas provides important clues on political violence in the context of civil war in Greece during the Second World War. The author presents an original theory according to which political violence is endogenous to local cleavages. As part of this approach, Kalyvas acknowledges the role of violence in the activation of local conflicts. He also notes that violence is not a binary conflict as generally admitted, but a rather complex and ambiguous process that involves the combined actions of several local and supra-local actors.

Four qualitative cases presented above offer enough evidence to show how pre-existing local cleavages played a role in the segmentation, a form of internal violence.

First, in the case of Siverek, the phenomenon of segmentation relied on tribal conflicts in the 1970s. Indeed, a part of the rival tribes to the Bucaks supported the *Apocus* when they entered Siverek and used violence against the Bucaks. In other words, the *Apocus* gained social support against the Bucaks, thus benefiting from pre-existing conflicts. This concerns the positioning of Kurdish tribes in the social field of Siverek. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Bucaks played the role of *primus inter pares* among big tribes. The Kirwar tribe was its chief rival. The war against the Bucak tribe promoted “Kurdist and revolutionary politics” in the minds of some members of the Kirwars. In reality, the conflict between the Bucak and Kirwar tribes had a history of almost one century, which is explained by
blood feud, the combat for power, the representation of two tribes in two political parties (that is to say the Kirwars in the CHP and the Bucaks in the DP). The process of political violence structured the positioning of the Bucak tribe in favor of the state. The Bucaks had at least 3,500 village guards, pro-governmental Kurdish militia men paid to combat the PKK in the 1980s and 1990s.

On the other hand, segmentation does not relate only to tribes but also to smaller social groups or families. Research evidence suggests that during the “civilian war” in Siverek, various kinds of disputes and conflicts were reflected in political violence. Internal violence caused the deaths of hundreds of people in the village. It was reported that the population of Siverek decreased from 60,000 to 20,000 because of the high emigration rate only in just a couple of years. This information explains that Siverek was one of the radical conflict regions during that period not only in Turkey but also in the Middle East.

Second, the case of Batman is about violent clashes between Kurdish militants and the Raman tribe. Indeed, the murder of Edip Solmaz, mayor of Batman, was attributed to the Raman tribe to whom the opponent candidate to Edip Solmaz belonged in local elections. Thus, in 1979, the Apocus declared an armed struggle and notable members of the Raman tribe (Ramanların ileri gelenleri) became targets of the Apocus. The conflict increased in intensity because the two actors were almost equally powerful in Batman. The armed conflicts between the Ramans and the Apocu militants cost at least sixty lives in Batman at the end of the 1970s.

Tribal politics led by actors also impact internal violence. It seems that neither state nor Kurdish organizations were able to produce supra-tribal politics particularly in Siverek and Batman. Indeed, for state actors, it was easier to establish an alliance on tribal principles for territorial control. Kurdist actors on the other hand instrumentalized tribal conflict in order to pave the way for mobilization. In the third chapter, it will be discussed how this dynamic promotes individuals’ participation to violence. The relationship between tribal conflict and political mobilization requires more attention in future studies because a similar phenomenon was observed in Kızıltepe, Hilvan, Muş, Ceylanpınar and so on. But it would take too long to discuss all of these cases in this work.

So far I have discussed segmentation, which is associated with tribal conflicts in Siverek and Batman: pre-existing tribal conflicts are intermingled with political violence and constitute a dynamic for internal violence. A third factor is community conflict with regard to sectarian divisions and this is clearly marked in the case of Maraş/Pazarlık. The Sunni and Alevi communities were historically in opposition in this province. It should however be underlined that this case of Maraş was not completely related to intra-Kurdish violence. Indeed, it included three dimensions: most importantly inter-sectarian violence (Alevi versus Sunni) as well as inter-ethnic violence (Turkish versus Kurdish) and intra-ethnic violence (Alevi Kurds versus Sunni Kurds). The Alevi community generally belongs to Kurdish ethnicity and the Sunni community to Turkish ethnicity in Maraş. In this respect, bloody events of 1978, one dynamic of which was denominational (Alevi versus Sunni) represented inter-communitarian (Turkish and Kurdish) and inter-sectarian (Alevi and Sunni) violence. Nevertheless, this
interpretation has some limits as a part of the Kurdish population in the region of Maraş, belonging to Sunni confession, were not victims of violent events during this period. Besides, the conflict between the Kurdish Alevi community and the Kurdish Sunni community was radical in the 1970s. The Sunni Kurds were close to the MHP thanks to its anti-communism and anti-Alevism whereas the Alevi Kurds constituted an important part of the social base for radical left organizations as well as for Kurdist movements during that period.

Segmentation being influenced to a large extent by sectarian dynamics, it is important to take previous conflicts into account. Pazarcık, a district of Maraş, is the best example. When entering the village in 1975, the Apocus realized a very speedy mobilization inside the Alevi Kurds. The massacre of 1978 structured the segmentation of the population on two levels: both between the Sunni Turks and Alevi Kurds and the Sunni Kurds and Alevi Kurds. Indeed, as previously noted, most victims of the Maraş massacre belonged to the Alevi community coming from Pazarcık. Following the massacre that occurred against the Alevis, Apocu militants launched attacks on Sunni villages of the region. These violent events were both a cause and a consequence of communitarian divisions. (I will continue to discuss this issue in the next chapter.)

Fourth, let’s treat the case of Bingöl within the hypothesis of segmentation. In the region of Bingöl, pre-existing conflicts were not so radical as in Siverek, Batman, Maraş/Pazarcık because neither denominational dynamics nor tribal oppositions had such a determining role in the process of segmentation. Even if it is observed that the radical left was more rooted in Kurdish Alevi districts and the radical right movement was only supported by Sunni Kurds, it cannot be stated that the denominational factor was the key element: Kurdish movements were supported by both Sunni and Alevi Kurds in Bingöl. Nevertheless, Bingöl went through a polarization at the community level due to intra-Kurdish conflict founded on the opposition between the right movement represented by Islamism and Turkism and the one represented by socialist revolutionarism and Kurdism. But it seems more appropriate to explain internal divisions through other factors rather than pre-existing conflicts in the province. The following section will be more devoted to the analysis of the Bingöl case.

*Multiplication of radical movements and local politics in the Kurdish space*

It was suggested above that the emergence of various Kurdish organizations impacted the fragmentation of the Kurdish political field. Kurdish groups belonged to the same social and political context. The struggle of political actors on the same social base produced segmentation effects at the community level. In other words, the split of the political field contributed to segmentation in the social field, where internal violence appears at the community level.

The case of Bingöl is significant in this respect. It was underlined that the society was divided into radical right and left. The left and the right are of course universal categories and their simple implication in Bingöl does not quite explain
the fact of internal violence. In reality, the right represented the MHP in that town in the 1970s. On the contrary, Kurdish movements such as the KUK, Riya Azadî and the PKK linked themselves with Marxism and Leninism. But how can the power of the MHP, a Turkish nationalist party, be explained in the Kurdish milieu in the 1970s?

Turkish nationalism was legitimized and perceived to be Islamism and anti-communism in Bingöl in the 1970s. This phenomenon was inextricably bound up with the affiliation to religion. The attachment of Sunni Kurds to the MHP was partly due to the popular perception of communism as “atheism” in some social categories. The speedy reaction to communism in politics produced a space of radical militancy for some Kurdish youth in the ülkücü movement in Bingöl. Moreover, Turkist idealist militants (ülkücüler) mobilized popular classes through the image of belonging to the common country (vatan) and destiny (kader) of the Kurds and the Turks. On the other hand, Kurdist actors quickly managed to create a “revolutionary” counter society. From 1976 to 1980, the ülkücüs clashed with the militants of the PDKT and the Apocus. Bingöl was segmented into several spaces in a very short period. The districts (mahalleler), cafés (kahveler) and schools were shared between different radical movements.

Besides, it is noticeable that segmentation was linked to local politics of different organizations in the Kurdish space. Municipal elections constituted an important process in the 1970s as it is observed that Batman and Bingöl went through radical violence during the post-electoral processes. In both cases, the mayors were assassinated in 1979. On the one hand, Bingöl mayor, Hikmet Tekin was killed by the Apocus. On the other hand, belligerent reprisals were conducted after the mayor of the Apocus was murdered in Batman. In Bingöl, the ülkücüs killed lawyer Şâkir (avukat Şâkir) in “retaliation” for the killing of Hikmet Tekin. Indeed, avukat Şâkir was a well known and prestigious personality in the social base of the leftist movement in Bingöl. In Batman, the Apocus attacked the Ramans. The conflict in the two towns became so intense that the violence affected even those people who were not really participants in violent actions at the end of the 1970s.

In addition to Batman and Bingöl which were characterized by internal violence during the electoral processes, similar intra-ethnic tensions also were present in other provinces. Elections became a stake of conflict in Diyarbakır, Dersim, Mardin, Muş, Ağrı and Van, etc. between political movements. In the region of Dersim, some people supported the candidate of Halkin Kurtuluşu (Liberation of People), this support was protested by others. In Diyarbakır, a similar tension was being felt between those supporting the candidate of disciples of Dr Şiwan and supporters of the candidate of Riya Azadî in the elections of the municipal council. In the region of Mardin, involvement of the KUK in municipal elections radicalized armed conflicts of this group with the Apocus. In Antep the idealists (MHP) and the Apocus also entered into conflict during the elections in the 1970s. There are many more similar examples.

A final remark should be added with regard to local political elections. These processes concerned not only the social base of “illegal” movements such as the
Political field and internal violence

Apocus, the Şiwancis, Riya Azadi or Halkın Kurtuluşu, but also legal political parties such as DP, CHP and MHP which had an important social base among the Kurds during the period. Therefore partisans of these parties were drawn into the armed conflict. The opposition between militants of the MHP and Kurdish militants was not only linked to electoral processes as it had already been radical. It can however be argued that the conflict got more radicalized and turned out to be violent particularly in the context of elections. Indeed, a combination of institutional political dynamics with clandestine movements impacted the partition of Kurdish space. The Apocus organized several attacks against the candidate of MHP in Bingöl and candidates of the AP (Adalet Partisi) in Siverek and Batman. Mechanisms of local elections usually operated jointly with the logics of struggle for power and armed violence at the end of the 1970s. Furthermore, on the one hand, there was a confrontation between institutional politics enacted by legal political actors, and the politics of clandestine groups, on the other hand, clan-destine Kurdish organizations sought out institutional political means in order to challenge “instruments of state regime” (according to their own statements). These constituted a dynamic of segmentation and led to violence in the space of institutional legal politics.

Emergence of new lines of cleavages in the Kurdish society

It is observed that through case studies, for example in Pazarcık/Maraş and Siverek, conflict was structural and historical. It was added that in these cases, social repertoires seem to be mixed with political violence. The above analyses indicate that internal violence is not completely independent from pre-existing conflicts in Kurdish society.

However, it cannot be stated that social conflicts are alone relevant to political violence. Indeed, as it was already indicated, it was the emergence of radical movements and local political mobilizations which resulted in political violence. Based on this hypothesis, it can be put forward that political violence produced new tensions in Kurdish society. Hence, emerging factors should be studied for explaining the outbreak of violence. The questioning of Stathis Kalyvas is reasonable when structural and emerging dynamics are altogether taken into account: are allegiances endogenous to political violence?

It is preferable to adopt an approach of structural duality as Giddens proposes in order to study these kinds of social and political problems because the process of segmentation is both a cause and consequence of social and political cleavages. In other words, segmentation also signifies cleavages which are posterior to violence; intra-ethnic divisions do not always depend on social disagreements. This fracture is associated with the emergence of Kurdish movements. It is necessary to further develop this observation by analyzing new lines of conflict which appear during the processes of political violence.

First, it is supposed that segmentation was associated with the formation of ideological battles in the 1970s. Intra-communitarian violence is not completely independent from nationalist motivations. Kurdish students introduced a new
ideology in the Kurdish region, namely “revolutionary independentist nationalism”. This form of nationalism sought to break away from the state as well as Turkish left and right movements, and “destruct feudal relations in the society” during the 1970s. Indeed, nationalist and revolutionary movements politicized the peasantry and youth and formed a noteworthy dynamic in the move to violence in some regions whereas some segments of Kurdish society were not affiliated with this ideological phenomenon for various reasons. For example, this fracture was observed at a local level in Siverek and Bingöl. The local community was segmented along with different ideologies such as Kurdistan, Turkism, Islamism or socialism. From that perspective, intra-Kurdish violence refers to ideological polarization in the sense of Carl Schmitt (1972) and René Girard (1972). This phenomenon was also observed on a regional scale. For example, transborder regions, in which Kurdish nationalism is nowadays more visible, were not so receptive to revolutionary nationalism during the 1970s. In addition, Kurds were mobilized by Turkish nationalism in some regions like for example some districts of Elazığ. In short, the introduction of new ideologies had effects on segmentation both on a local and regional scale.

Second, segmentation around ideological factions radicalized or transformed social tensions into political stakes. Social hostilities were sometimes ideologically loaded. The cases of Batman and Siverek illustrate this observation. The Bucaks and the Ramans became very close to state power while their opponents became more Kurdist. However, it should be underlined that, in any case of intra-Kurdish conflict, social tensions do not check nationalist motivations of actors. Definitely, political violence is not completely political. Yet, it is never a linear expression of social divisions. It would be a mistake to suggest that the Kurdish peasantry, which was opposed to the Ramans in Batman and the Bucaks in Siverek, mobilized simply around pre-existent traditional cleavages. Actors were indeed motivated by politics. They used a political language while expressing that “the state is a colonizing force” and “Kurdish society was feudal”, and perceived “some segments of the society as agent of the government” and “traitor”. All of these political subjectivities and categories contributed to internal violence among the Kurds.

Third, segmentation was a product of construction of multiple political loyalties and identities in Kurdish society like adherences to the Apocus, the idealists (ülkücüler) and disciples of Dr Şiwan, Riya Azadi, Maoist Kurds, Liberators of People, National Liberators and so on. These kinds of allegiances (aidiyetlikler) were new in society; it is not possible to explain them through traditional loyalties. Indeed, political partisipations relate to ethnic and political mobilization. Since they were not gathered in one organization, the society was separated into several political parties (siyāsi hizibler).

Fourth, segmentation relates to a conflict of generations (nesil çatışmaları). Above, I have studied the latter as a dynamic of fragmentation of Kurdish groups. It was suggested that the battle between Marxist and traditional right generations played a role in the division of the PDKT (1965) in two factions.
Political field and internal violence

in 1971 as well as the emergence of the KUK in 1977. Similarly, generational conflict applies to segmentation of society. The conflict of generation this time signifies the fact of opposition of radical Kurdish youth to their fathers, big brothers and uncles. This phenomenon was particularly noticed at times when young Kurds were radically opposed to the institution of tribal chieftain. In reality, there were many militants who were sons or close relatives or fellow countrymen of aghas and land owners. As a consequence of belonging to the same family or tribe of aghas and territorial proximity, the rupture was sometimes very radical and this led to intra-familial or intra-tribal divisions. Many interviewed militants reported that they experienced extremely difficult moments because of the generational conflict. Indeed for them, the rebellion at the first stage meant political action against their social and familial entourage. I observed the conflicts of generations more generally in the lives of Kurdish militants coming from Elazığ and Bingöl, which were more conservative and less receptive milieus to revolutionary ideologies. In some cases, it was observed that young militants belonging to a Kurdist organization were fighting against an agha whose son was at the same time a revolutionary nationalist. For instance, the father of a leading member and founder of the DDKD was killed by Kurdish Maoist militants in Bismil.165

As a final remark, it would be necessary to point out that the researcher encounters a very complex chronology in the study of Kurdish space. There are many events, processes and actors who acted at local and regional levels. This difficulty may have led to some gaps in the analysis. The complexity of events goes beyond their actors whose horizons of visibility are very limited. More particularly, actors experienced a crisis of meaning while sometimes not being able to give sense to violent events. Furthermore, political violence arises in configurations characterized by uncertainties and permanent urgencies. These dimensions of violence were not sufficiently analyzed in this section.

Notes

2 With respect to the phenomenon of autonomization, one must underline that ways of domination and autonomy are complex, or impenetrable as Bourdieu suggests. Bourdieu, ibid., p. 93.
3 The liberal and conservator party was founded in 1946.
5 Ibid.
6 Kemalist and Republican Party founded in 1923.
7 The CHP and the DP formed two major parties in that period.
9 It was the first coup d’état in Turkey. Adnan Menderes, the Prime Minister, was executed.
11 Ibid.

13 I use the term because in that period, Doğuculuk constituted the principal form of socialization and contestation among Kurdish students. Furthermore, the term refers to subjectivity of agents since they used themselves the notion of the East.


15 Ibid.

16 Interview with Ümit Fırat in Istanbul in 2009. For more information on this topic, see Anter, Musa, Anılarım, Istanbul, Doz, 1990.

17 The “events of Kirkuk” took place following a Nasserist insurgency led by General Şavfâf against the regime of General Kasım. Kurds took a position in favor of the latter. It was reported that the crush of this insurgency resulted in the killing of Turkmen in Kirkuk and Mosul.


19 McDowall, A Modern History of the Kurds, op. cit., p. 403. On the other hand, one must underline that the relations of Kurds with the Iraqi regime and Turkmen in Iraq impacted on the politics of Turkish nationalist movements and the state in the Kurdish region of Turkey. Moderation and radicalization of state politics, especially in transborder regions (Şırnak, Cizre, Hakkâri and Siirt) were influenced by different historical processes in Iraqi Kurdistan.


21 Although all of these journals and magazines were not published exclusively by the Forty-Niners, some members, e.g. Musa Anter, Canip Yıldırım, Medet Serhat, Yaşar Kaya, played key roles in these publications.

22 As İsmail Beşikçi reports, the complete name of the meetings were “protest meetings of the under-development of Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia”. Beşikçi, Doğu Mitingerinin Analizi, Ankara, Yurt Yayınları, 1990 [1967], p. 15.


27 Ibid., p. 40.

28 Ibid., p. 41.

29 For these slogans, see Beşikçi, İsmail, Doğu Mitingerinin Analizi, op. cit., pp. 23–24.


33 The poem had already been published in Yeni Aks. Cf. Deran, Edo, Yeni Aks, n°4, November 1966.
Fieldwork in 2008.

For this passage, see Gündoğan, “The Kurdish Political Mobilization”, op. cit., p. 136.

Interview with one of the participants of the meetings, in Istanbul in 2008.


Interview with one of the participants of the meetings, in Istanbul in 2008.


Interview with one of the participants of the meetings, in Istanbul in 2008.


Interview with one of the participants of the meetings, in Istanbul in 2008.

For ideology of Kawa, see El-Hüseyni, Nurettin, “Kawa”, in Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi, op. cit., p. 2316–2317. One must add that the publications of and about Kawa and other Kurdish groups attribute so little place to historical facts.

This party carried the same name with the PKK. The difference is that the first one (Kürdistan İşçi Partisi) is in Turkish and the second one (Partiya Karkarên Kurdistan) is in Kurdish.

Anonymous author, KIP/DDKD Davası, Jina Nû, Ankara, 2006, p. 83. For the organization, the term “local backwardness” (mahalli gericilik) signified “pro-government categories and feudal forces” in the Kurdish region.

“Şaxên DDKDê” (Branches of the DDKD). This is a document of which date, place and author are unknown.

In the following section, I will more analytically handle the foundation of the PDKT and the KUK.

Fieldwork in Stockholm in 2010.

Anonymous author, Nasnameya Şehidan, Weşanên Niştîman, Kista [Sweden], date unknown.


Monographic studies about Têkoşin in France and Turkey (2008–2010).

Ibid.

Interviews about Siérla Sor in Turkey and France (2008–2010).

Whether they were small or grand, the Kurdish movements continuously and violently opposed each other during their formation period (1975–1980).

Fieldwork notes on the group, France, 2009. See also, Aydınlik, 9 July 1979.


Ibid.


Bozarslan, Hamit, Conflit kurde, op. cit. p. 56.


One may suggest that the denial of the existence of the Kurds, a form of symbolic violence, radicalized the nationalist interpretations of the events and historical processes. This reconstruction of the past includes a nationalist perception of the Kurdish rebellions in history and so politicizes all forms of conflict between the state and the Kurds. This means that “it is because the Kurds are Kurds that the state represses the Kurds”. The kind of radical interpretation excluded the administrative and judicial categories such as “crime”, “outlaw” and “security”. For example, the DDKD and the Association of Higher Education of the Students of Viranşehir (Viranşehir Yüksek Tahsil Talebe Derneği) considered the murder of nine Kurdish smugglers by state security forces in 1974–1975 not only as a conflict between smugglers and the state, but also as “an oppression and terror of the state against the Kurds”. For this event, see Anonymous author, Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi, op. cit., p. 2307.

Note once again that Kurdish organizations, at the same time, opposed each other. This internal radicalism will be studied in the following section. Most of them defined each other to be “feudal nationalists”, “primitive nationalists”, “agents of the state”, “revisionists” and “traitors”, etc.
Political field and internal violence

See for instance about the thesis of colonialism, the issues of Özgürülk Yolu Dergisi from 1975 to 1979, and Tekoşin, n°1, n°2, n°3, 1978.

Between 1976 and 1979, one notices this type of ideological debate in the publications of Kurdish nationalist movements.

See for feudalism, C. Aladağ, “Doğuda Feodalite ve Aşiret”, Özgürülk Yolu Dergisi, n°2, 1975, pp. 19–38; and Beşikçi, Doğu Mitingleri, op. cit.


Ibid., p. 496.

90 Ibid.


93 Ibid., pp. 44–46.


95 Ibid.

96 Ibid. See also for a comment by Gérard Mauger on habitus and generation in the afterword to the book by Mannheim, Le Problème de générations, op. cit.

97 Gündoğan, Cemil, “From Traditionalism to Modernism: The Transformation of the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey In the Case of Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan”, BA Dissertation, Stockholm University, Department of Social Anthropology, 2002; Epözdemir, Şakir, “Yakın Tarihimizde Doktor Şıvan ve Said Elçi Olayı», no place or date given.

98 Even though some works indicate it, Faik Bucak was not among the five founders of the party. He joined the party after its foundation.


100 Ziya Şerefhanoğlu, lawyer and member of the Forty-Niners and elected senator as independent candidate in Bitlis in 1966.


102 Ibid., pp. 151–170.

103 It was reported that another reason why he traveled to Iraq is because he was wanted by the Turkish authorities following the coup d’état in 1971.

104 It should be reminded that the conflict about the question of violence was associated with the political program and leadership. Also, Elçi was being supported by Barzani who did not want an armed Kurdish movement in Iran and Turkey.


106 Barzani seems to have played a role in this conflict. Iraqi Kurdistan was not a space of resolution of internal conflict in Kurdish movements.

107 Again please note that this party held the same weightage as the PKK but was different from the latter.

108 Please note that the classical name of the PDKT was still used for a long time by the militants and sympathizers of the KUK.


110 Bozarslan, “Le nationalisme kurde, de la violence politique au suicide sacrificiel”, op. cit., p. 103

111 Ibid., p. 103.


113 Ibid., pp. 89–90.
114 *KDP-KUK Bildirisi (communiqué of KDP-KUK)*, Mardin, 1978. This communiqué constituted the first document in which the term KUK was written. The party is called the KDP-KUK in this document. The organization later dropped the usage of the term KDP.

115 *Kürdistan Ulusal Kurtuluşcuları Diyarbakır-Mardin-Siirt Grupları İddianemesi*, op. cit.

116 Pacifism had a pejorative connotation in the Kurdish milieu in the 1970s.


118 Ibid.

119 Ibid.

120 Ibid.


122 The ideological thesis suggests that the world was divided into three parties: the USA, the USSR and the “Third World”. The two big forces are qualified as “exploiter nations”.

123 Interview with an ex-high ranking member of Red Kawa, in France, in 2008. Let’s remember that Red Kawa was detached from the Kawa organization at the end of the 1970s.

124 Interview with ex-leading member of Rizgarî in Germany in 2008.


133 For Bourdieu, one of the important stakes of the political struggle is symbolic domination since particularly the political field is characterized by the battle of ideas and words which agents formulate and use. It is a question of competition over the monopoly to speak and act in the name of a part or totality of a group. Bourdieu, “La représentation politique”, *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, n°36/37, 1981, pp. 3–24.

134 This configuration of conflict is similar to that of conflict in Northern Ireland studied by Elise Féron. Indeed, protagonists of the conflict in Northern Ireland deploy a lot of energy to control the production and diffusion of political and social imaginary taking a discursive form (discourse, programme pamphlet…) or not (street manifestations, parades, communitarian ceremonies like funeral of militants, etc.).

Some examples can be given to defend the argument about how symbolic and ideological discourses turned violent. Haki Karer, Apocu militant killed in 1977, had met with two militants of Beş Parçacılar in Antep, for a political discussion. He was injured by one of these militants and succumbed in the hospital of Antep. There were also violent conflicts between Kawa and PKK militants in Siverek. Other similar situations were noted in many Kurdish provinces. It is estimated that several militants were killed that way during the 1970s.


Doğru Yolu Kavrayalım, November 1978.

Tekoşîn, n°1, n°2, n°3, 1979.


It is not known what percentage is Alevi population in the province of Maraş. Every supposition can be misleading since the Kurdish Alevi community changed considerably due to immigration.

They are districts of Maraş.

These are Afişin, Andiran, Çağlayancerit, Ekinözü, Göksun and Türkoğlu.

Ideology and *ethnie* here should be distinguished: a part of the Kurdish speaking population call themselves Turkist (*türkçü*) or Turkish nationalist in some Kurdish provinces especially in the 1970s.

From this point of view, the conflict of Maraş is comparable to the conflict in Northern Ireland. Religious sects are considerable social markers. It prefigures communitarian and political identity in both cases. It should be underlined that Maraş has a specific configuration due to the fact that ethnic and denominational elements are intermingling. The denominational factor does not play a considerable role in Batman and Siverek because the Kurds are majority Sunnis in these provinces. Therefore, commentaries about each province should not be generalized. For different interpretations about the Irish conflict, see Féron, Elise, “New Wines in Old Bottles? Recompositions et renouveaux des recherches sur la violence en Irlande du Nord”, in Crettiez, Xavier and Mucchielli, Laurent (eds), *Les Violences politiques en Europe*, Paris, La Découverte, 2010, pp. 89–104, and Féron, Elise, “Les Eglises et le conflit nord-irlandais”, *Projet*, n°281, 2004/4, pp. 28–31.


Hüseyin Veloğlu was the founder of Kurdish *Hizbullah* in the 1980s in Batman.

The Raman tribe never took responsibility for the murder of Edip Solmaz.


This remark does not concern the totality of the Kirwar tribe. It would be wrong to argue that all members of the tribe engaged in the struggle against the Bucaks. In general, members of the Kirwar tribe were more affiliated with “revolutionary” movements.

Friends of lawyer Şakir reported that he was a pacifist figure. They added that he was politicized around the Kurdist left and so chosen to be targeted according to the logic of vendetta because he had a social status akin to Hikmet Tekin who was assassinated by Kurdish nationalists.

Radicalism is not a phenomenon which is limited to clandestine organizations. Actors of legal parties were very radical too. One should take into consideration not only the involvement of clandestine groups in institutional legal politics during the elections but also the move to political violence by legal parties in the Kurdish space during the 1970s.


Schmitt, Carl, La Notion de politique: théorie du partisan, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1972; and Girard, La Violence et le Sacré, op. cit.

Girard, La Violence et le Sacré, op. cit.


For Stathis N. Kalyvas, motivations of actors are multiple during the civil war. Besides, research of violence includes different levels of analysis (individual and organizational). Kalyvas, “Aspects méthodologiques de la recherche sur les massacres: le cas de la guerre civile grecque”, Revue Internationale de Politique Comparée, Vol. 8, n° 1, 2001, pp. 23–42.

The murder of an agha whose son was one of the predecessors of a Kurdish organization shows how radicalization was strong in the Kurdish political field during that period.
Mobilization for political violence

Introduction

Mobilization: armed struggle, militant habitus, organizational dynamics

As I started to study in the Introduction, political violence and social movement constitute two distinct but intermingled processes. I criticized social movement studies because for a long time they handled political violence as a marginal phenomenon. This chapter aims at studying interdependency between violence and mobilization of the PKK. What is the role of political violence in the mobilization of this organization? How does political violence produce structuring effects on mobilization of the militants? How do armed groups organize themselves within society?

It is relevant to explain what mobilization means since the term remains quite vague in the works of social movements. Mobilization herein signifies the whole mechanisms and processes whereby a movement is being formed, maintains itself and moves to violence. Given the observation of this phenomenon in the case of the PKK, one may notice three interdependent dynamics, that is to say the use of violence, militant habitus and proximity.

First, the use of violence impacts PKK mobilization and even becomes one of its central dynamics. This implies that violence is neither a simple product of mobilization nor a mere process of accumulation of resources which enables the actors to use various repertoires of collective action. In fact, political violence might itself create and maintain resources, networks, structures as well as political organizations. More precisely, it may serve to mobilize, politicize and radicalize individuals.

The second factor deals with the links between political violence and formation of a militant habitus. Radicalism is one of the characteristics of the Kurdish political field. The PKK militants develop a radical habitus. It is indeed suggested that a militant logic is institutionalized within the form of habitus, namely a whole of dispositions more or less shared by militants and cadres of the organization, which is historically constituted. Habitus as a militant culture seems to be one of the conditions of violence. Recognized by Kurdish militants and
inscribed in their practices, it permits the persistence of mobilization in favor of political violence.

The third one deals with organizational dynamics of violence which refer to relations between the PKK and Kurdish society. The phenomenon of organization is a broad topic to study; I will limit it to ties between a civilian population and a guerilla force, a relationship which has been quite neglected in social sciences. The role of society matters in the guerilla force’s mobilization. In this respect, I will use the concept of social base which helps to explain the support and attachment to the PKK as well as local logistics. Likewise, I will question the relations between guerilla and social base through the mechanism of proximity. The concept by Simmel which I started to define in the Introduction enables one to study reciprocal action or socialization taking place between guerilla and social base. As a principal modality of relations between actors, proximity seems to have a major influence on mobilization.

The use of political violence as a force of ethnic mobilization

As already underlined in the Introduction, social movement studies have paid so little attention to the role of violence in the mobilization of political groups, viewing armed struggle as an unproblematic extension of political movements. Most of these works have defined political violence as an ordinary form of collective action. This approach appears to be inadequate for two reasons. First, it seems to reduce the use of violence to only accumulation of resources. Second, it tends to ignore the impact of violence on the mobilization process. The perspective herein differs from the studies of collective mobilization as far as it considers the role of political violence to be central in Kurdish mobilization.

This section is divided into two. First, I shall analyze interdependency between armed struggle and mobilization through written primary sources of the PKK such as pamphlets, manifestos and communiqués: how does the PKK establish a link between the use of force and mobilization? Second, I will develop this analysis through qualitative case studies.

The PKK and politics of violence

My hypothesis is first of all based on documents of the PKK regarding political violence. These documents constitute a primary source as they were written by militants and cadres of the organization. I consulted brochures, books, reviews and pamphlets of the PKK, which have ample information on different topics. A careful reading of these documents enables identification of three principal representations concerning the use of violence: violence as a principle means of political struggle, the use of force (zor) and founding violence.
Mobilization for political violence

Political violence as a principal strategy of struggle

According to the first and main category, political violence is defined as a principal maneuvering of struggle by the organization. The party distributed several brochures and manifestos in its formative years. These documents help to understand how the radical clandestine group imagines a link between violence and recruitment. According to them, the logic of mobilization is based on the assumption that, during an armed conflict, recruitment of peasantry would not only be a question of intention and ideology but also an obligation. It is supposed that peasantry would be necessarily drawn to the conflict. Because this logic already existed in the Maoist guerilla perspective, it can be asserted that the PKK was influenced by Maoist doctrines. Mao justified guerilla warfare as a necessary phase in revolutionary ethnic war and argued that war could succeed only if it was firmly based on society. According to this method, guerilla warfare and armed propaganda constitute a priority in mobilization since guerilla tactics would resolve the problem of military imbalance between the regular army and guerilla militants, and thus accelerate, strengthen and protect political development.

Guerilla war is thus being projected to provide political organization and mobilization. Another theoretical and practical inspiration for the Kurdish guerilla was the experience of General Giap in Vietnam. In the case of Vietnam, the initial objective of guerilla and its violence was not the military conquest but the gathering of different organizations and the mobilization of the peasantry. The PKK’s first manifestos and brochures seem to have encouraged the adoption of Maoist and Vietnamese strategies of guerilla warfare. In summary, it can be said that the organization theoretically aspired to mobilize and politicize Kurdish peasantry through guerilla war.

The use of force and violence

The second category of violence in early PKK sources conveys the notion of “force” (zor). The party seems to have borrowed the Leninist notion of “force”. Given the PKK’s vocabulary, force signifies “colonialist” coercion, organization and domination of the state in Southern and Eastern Turkey. Consequently, it means the “power” of the Turkish state compared to individual and collective “weakness” of the Kurds. Force is theorized to be “counterrevolutionary” and “colonialist” while the use of violence is “revolutionary” in this context.

The PKK gives priority to struggle against colonialist forces as well as their extensions in Kurdistan. Politics of these forces are against popular interests. They are therefore not legitimate. Emancipation from colonialism is possible only through the use of language, which is theirs. Colonialism is the cause of absence of personal and cultural personality [ulusal ve kültürel kişiliksizlik] and it is nourished by confessional and feudal values […] It is the revolutionary force which enables our people to live as human beings …
One of the PKK’s objectives is to speedily eliminate fascist and social chauvinist ideologies. The PKK uses violence in its struggle against these forces, and does not employ the method of conviction \([iknâ]\) in any case.22

The organization combined the discourse of “anti-colonialism” and “national liberation” struggle in which “revolutionary” violence had a central place against “colonialist” force.23 In this context, political violence is encouraged to be an arm of the “weak”, the “powerless” and “oppressed”.24 It is supposed that the weak is capable of starting an armed struggle even before any political activities under condition that mobilization immediately follows armed struggle.25 Indeed, according to this conception from PKK sources, one may conclude that an essential source of the “colonial” state is force (\([zor]\)). It is a question of permanent situation of violence.26 For Kurdish organizations, the use of violence appears therefore to be an answer to violence of a “colonialist” state, because, this type of ideology implies that not only is the method of consensus ineffective, but armed struggle is also a unique way of national “liberation”.27

**Founding violence**

The third one relates to the foundation of political actors. The party seems to have borrowed the Fanonian approach of the use of political violence.28 For Fanon, the world is reduced to two categories: master and slave; man and no man.29 According to him, political violence signifies both breakdown and birth. In early brochures and manifestos of the PKK, Kurds are considered to be “exploited”, “primitive”, “patriarchal”, “feudal” and “without personality”.30 Violence is thus supposed to serve the “liberation of people”,31 creation of the party and most importantly a new Kurdish personality.32 This is the question of elimination of a manicheistic world through violence. Indeed, for this conception of political violence, disappearance of an “unjust”, “primitive”, “feudal” and “backward” world is not an affair of time but a product of violence.33 The PKK’s declaration of the foundation points it out:

The PKK considers that cultural and social development is possible only through war. The PKK’s goal is to create a people which struggles in the name of independence and freedom. Therefore, it prefers to be reborn in war instead of disappearing in peace.34

Also, a link is imagined to be established between the use of violence and moral obligation or principle.35 These two quotations show this link: “The role of war is to eliminate cultural, social and moral obstacles in the Kurdish society.”36 “In order to construct a national personality \([ulusal kişilik]\) and to protect our future, let’s participate in the struggle directed by the PKK.”37

I presented three different representations of political violence according to PKK sources. However, political violence is not an abstraction. This discourse about violence and its probable effects are important. The written sources
constitute, of course, proof of the argument about the use of violence and radicalism. But one cannot justify mobilizing the force of violence without taking into account ethnographic findings on this issue. As René Girard admits, “violence is a founder, but invisible” in the texts. Political violence becomes scientifically intelligible only through fieldwork. This is why some empirical observations will be presented to defend my thesis and understand violence better.

**Empirical observations on the role of political violence**

Empirical observations suggest the impact of armed violence on political mobilization in three Kurdish regions. The examples which will be given below deal with primary mobilization of the PKK between 1976 and 1980.

**The case of Maraş**

Maraş was discussed in the previous chapter. As previously noted, it is an ethnically mixed province. Both Turks and Kurds live there. The province is also profoundly divided by confessional lines between Sunni and Alevi communities. Kurds belong to both confessions there. The PKK and radical Turkish Marxist groups aimed at mobilizing the Alevi community while Sunni Kurds and Turks were mostly affiliated with Turkish nationalist and Islamic parties in the province during the 1970s. Some interpretations were made in the previous chapter. The reason Turkish and Kurdish Marxist groups were interested in the Alevi community in Maraş depended mostly on the structural character of the religious community. Alevis constitute a heterodox community of Islam. They led a more secular life and were receptive to revolutionary ideologies during this period. The feeling of “apathy” against the political regime among this community provoked a favorable condition for political activism of both Turkish and Kurdish Marxist youth which used mainly “injustice frames” for mobilization and recruitment in Maraş. The example of the mobilization of the Alevi community by Marxist groups proves the idea that prior cultural and social organization is one key to the mobilization of conflict groups. On the other hand, mobilization of the PKK does not escape from the dynamic of violence in this region. According to empirical observations, different interconnected processes of violence appeared in Maraş.

It should be first noted that the PKK eliminated Turkish Marxist groups through armed and ethnic propaganda since they constituted a risk to its recruitment in the region. The followers of “Apo” (Apocu) used force mainly against the militants belonging to Halkın Kurtuluşçuları (Liberationists of People) and Acılcı (Urgentist) organizations. Although these Marxist groups were not Kurdish nationalist, they were struggling to gain the support of the same Alevi base as the PKK in Maraş.

Furthermore, the Maraş pogrom in 1978 was a milestone in the PKK’s mobilization in the region. It has been stated above that the pogrom killed several Alevi Kurds. The pogrom resulted from and in Sunni–Alevi denominational
polarization. But counter-guerilla activities seem to have been more determinant factors leading to the killings. In reality, the Maraş massacre was paradoxical in terms of the PKK mobilization. On the one hand, the repression provoked large-scale immigration of the Kurdish Alevi community to neighboring provinces particularly to Antep and later to Europe. And that is why the PKK lost an important part of its potential social base in Maraş. On the other hand, repression increased the level of its organization, popular support and recruitment in the Pazarcık region. But how exactly did the repression and social polarization become a political resource and instrument for the PKK in Pazarcık?

The PKK was already active in the region. It has already been underlined that most victims of the Maraş pogrom came from Pazarcık, a Kurdish Alevi village in Maraş. Pazarcık had been a place of mobilization for the PKK since the mid-1970s. After the Maraş pogrom, Kurdish militants radicalized their action in the region. The Pazarcık plain became a prime space of action. Ethnographic evidence shows a significant form of violence that emerged in the Pazarcık plain: destruction. Some important farms and lands were burned by PKK militants. It is worthwhile to ask the following question: Why did the PKK destroy lands and farms in the Pazarcık plain in 1979? The observation suggests that the use of violence depends on several dynamics. The Pazarcık plain was a scene of overlapping ethnic, class, cultural and confessional conflicts between tribes, villages and families, all of which the pogrom radicalized. The militants destroyed two big farms after the pogrom. It was reported that perpetrators of these actions had different motives. For them, farms represented Turkish domination in the Pazarcık region since their owners were Sunni Turkish. They believed that state sponsored lands and farms were exploiting Kurdish peasants. At this point, the mobilization relates to the dynamic of social class since the use of violence aimed at mobilizing Kurdish peasantry who were working in the farms. One of the interviews signals the situation of poor laborers: “The farm was historical. It had been established in our region since the Ottoman Empire period. It was a big problem for us. Alevi Kurds were working there as laborers [ırğat].”

This type of destruction is comparable to the case of “machine breakers” suggested by Hobsbawm. Indeed, PKK militants used the destruction and burning as a means of political action. Destructive violence can bring rational and symbolic resources to the radical organization in order that they use them in their recruitment. A further interpretation is plausible. The PKK’s social base became victims of state repression by the end of the 1970s. It seems that political violence in rural areas was to balance between dispossession, marginality, victimization of its social base and state power. One of the former militants defended the view that violence established a relation between the PKK and its deprived social base: “Our people started to think after these actions. They thought that they are not alone and left behind. The actions brought them to feel that there were always the people who would protect them in Pazarcık and in Maraş.” That same case can be interpreted in terms of protection and group making by the use of violence. Indeed, the victims of political repression can support or join the political radical organization that claims to protect them.
The cycle of attack and counter attacks can sharpen ethnic and confessional groupness thereby generating greater support for the political organization. While group making is a political project, the use of political violence may transform some social categories or classes into an ethnic group. Violence can reinforce the sense of groupness and subjectivity, both of which can be structured in the long run, especially when these patterns persist over time. It may well be asked what groupness means here. Judging by the above contexts derived from rural and urban Maraş, groupness refers to being a peasant, being an Alevi or belonging to the Kurdish Alevi community. But this is variable, because somewhere else, this sense can relate to being a Kurdish woman, a Kurdish immigrant, a Kurdish student, tribe or a Sunni Kurd, or simply a Kurd. The following sections and chapters will continue to consider violence in terms of subjectivity as well as temporality, fluidity and variability.

The case of Antep

The second empirical case deals with Antep. In the first chapter, I analyzed intra-ethnic violence which took place between the PKK, Stërka Sor and Têkoşîn in that region. The conflict of the PKK with Turkish nationalists constituted another type of armed clash. The PKK used violence against the ülkücû (idealists) during its formative years in Antep. These ülkücû were particularly teachers and young people who were radicalized around Turkish ideology of the MHP. Ethnographic observation suggests that the conflict between PKK and ülkücû persons had mobilizing effects on Kurdish subjects. Some young Kurds in the districts of Düztepe and Karşıyaka speedily engaged in favor of the PKK in Antep:

The PKK quickly found a social base ... in one or two years only. On the one hand there was MHP, on the other hand we were existing there [Antep]. It was a question of polarization between us and them [...]. one of the radical actions of the PKK was to neutralize some fascist persons.

The organization actually killed an ülkücû teacher in 1977 in Antep. Regarding this murder, it might be claimed that the use of violence against the ülkücû resulted from the specificity of the political field in Antep that was divided between the Turkist ülkücû right and Kurdist revolutionary left. By striking out at the ülkücû, Kurdish militants played over the social base which was composed of radical young Marxists. But how can one establish a relation between the type of violent action and subjective mobilization in that context? Can we suggest a hypothesis similar to that of Murray Edelman who addressed a link between political action and satisfaction? Perhaps, the use of violence against rival organizations incited some contentment among young Kurdish partisans, since the political field was highly polarized. This kind of psychological dynamic can be involved with the mobilization when the actors are found in oppressive conditions or in rivalry with a challenging organization. The case of Bingöl can be analyzed in terms of similar observations and interpretations.
While discussing Bingöl in the previous chapter, I noticed that the town was divided between radical revolutionary parties and Turkish nationalist organizations in the 1970s. Ethnographic evidence exhibits two repertoires of conflict in Bingöl during that period. On the one hand, Kurdish nationalist organizations clashed with each other to dominate the political field. On the other hand, they were struggling against Turkish nationalist organizations and state security forces. Because the first repertoire conveys intra-ethnic violence which has been already discussed in the case of Antep, I will focus on the second repertoire to illustrate my thesis about mobilization.

I noted two local processes whereby political violence impacted on mobilization in Bingöl during the late 1970s. The first one concerns the passage of the militants belonging to the Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan (Partiya Demokrata Kurdistanê Tîrkiyê in Kurdish) to the PKK.

Before the PKK became a considerable force in Bingöl, the DPTK was in conflict with Turkish nationalist groups. The clash became radical with the assassination of Cihad Elçi, one of the leading cadres of the DPTK in 1976. The ex-DPTK militants reported that the killing of Cihad Elçi considerably lessened the influence of the DPTK in Bingöl. In 1977, the DPTK went through more radical repression. During one of the operations, seven DPTK militants faced an armed attack, in which one militant was killed and the others were seriously injured. These kinds of armed operations against the DPTK transformed the political wing of some Kurdish militants. The PKK was a relatively new movement in Bingöl during that period. The organization was more actionist and radical. Thanks to armed attacks against the DPTK, a group of Kurdish militants passed to the rank of the PKK. There were two reasons for this collective passage from the DPTK to the PKK. According to what the former militants reported, the attacks developed a perception or feeling that Kurdish mobilization was possible only within a radical movement. In their minds, radicalism and political violence were strategies of exit from the political crisis. The second reason relates to the need for protection because they believed that only a radical organization could protect them in such a context of armed conflict.

The second local process of political violence concerns the assassination of the mayor of Bingöl in 1979. I already made the hypothesis that the murder of Hikmet Tekin by the PKK resulted both in and from fragmentation of the political field. One may add another interpretation based on the argument by Clausewitz according to which “war is the continuation of politics by other means”.

Local elections were indeed followed by political murders (siyasi cinayetler) in Bingöl. It seems that the differentiation line between politics and violence almost disappeared. But why is this case particularly relevant to study movement mobilization? How does a critical event, for example murder, impact mobilization? Are some moments much more important than others in radical politics? If so, why? I can ask several questions without being able to respond to them all. But even just asking them might help explain the use of political violence in certain
contexts and moments. The PKK seems to have strategically resorted to violence against the Turkish nationalists in order to pave the way for its mobilization. Some former PKK militants pointed out a link between armed conflicts and their political organization during that period:

People asked themselves: who can sacrifice themselves for the Kurdish people? And who can take risks [for the Kurdish people]? Who can take a position against attacks? Of course the PKK. The organization was called Kurdistan Revolutionaries during that period. Cadres of the party resisted and fought. This led the youth to sympathize with the movement. The youth were told that this is the group which can do everything [for the Kurdish people]. It was a serious and brave movement. This belief was developed amongst the Kurdish youth. So the youth was organized around the [PKK] movement.

The above information is similar to what has been obtained about Antep, which implies that the use of violence against rival groups may have aroused satisfaction in the social base, particularly among young partisans and sympathizers during the conflict process. In the following section, I will continue to mention these particular emotions that partly constitute subjective violence. Here, it is worth paying attention to two important implications cited in my case study. The first one is the methodological and theoretical levels that have already been underlined in the previous pages. The empirical cases defend the critical approach of Seidman, according to which the armed struggle should not be handled as a mere direct continuation of social movements. There is indeed a complex interplay between the armed struggle and social movements. The second one relates to a historical reality. The examples of political murders show that the PKK did not start the armed struggle in 1984, as usually admitted by common people and scholars, but in its formative years.

**Subjectivity, political violence and mobilization**

In the introduction, I signaled a subjective dimension of political violence. Although some interpretations have been made in the discussion of three representations of violence and case studies derived from the PKK history, it would be appropriate to provide a more detailed explanation regarding this question. In which respect does subjective violence matter in the mobilization of actors? The examples provided above lead to a study of subjective violence around particularly two mechanisms: political ideology and emotions.

I above discussed three imaginations of political violence, in other words, violence as a principal strategy of political struggle, perception of the use of force (zor) and founding violence. This is not to say that political violence is reduced to them. They are however a part of the PKK’s ideology that promotes the use of political violence. To what extent is political violence built on an ideology?
The notion of ideology, which I attempted to define in the first chapter, is criticized and debated by scholars. Although the ideology constitutes one of the key concepts to define values, references and beliefs which contribute to shape individual behavior, the term, being overloaded by different significations coming from several intellectual realms, may cause problems of analysis. The term can be criticized to be a rhetoric, a hermeneutics and/or a “monolithic concept”. Probably, because of these kinds of critiques, social movement scholars have remained cautious of using the term. Consequently, it did not serve as an analytical tool for explaining collective action and mobilization. We can share these critiques to a certain extent, but it would be a mistake to consider that political ideologies are devoid of any function and that they play no role in the emergence of violence.

The works by Martha Crenshaw make a link between “terrorism”, and the rise of nationalist and “revolutionary” ideologies. This argument is plausible. Nevertheless, as Jean Baechler explains, a movement or a political action is not born just because an individual designated a value or constructed an ideological system. It is born because passions are awakened and combined and afterwards, they pursue interests by using or provoking representations. Similarly, Pierre Ansart pointed out that political ideologies are primordial conveyors of the imaginary which drives individuals to act. For the author, they also constitute a symbolic place of confrontation and legitimization of powers. In an original way, Michel Wieviorka presented the ideology in order to study subjective violence. For Wieviorka, subjective violence, whose definition is given above, contains ideological as well as emotional, mythical and legendary elements. Some questions arise in that respect: How does ideology get related to subjective violence in the Kurdish case? What impact do ideological commitments have on the process of mobilization? Most importantly, how do these subjectivities turn into political action?

Above all else, ideology is a kind of doctrine legitimizing the recourse to violence. Although the armed struggle is not a simple derivation of Marxism, Leninism and Maoism in the Kurdish movement, the latter ideological currents promoted the adoption of the armed struggle. Whether they were Marxism, Leninism or “anti-colonialism”, they enabled one to exceed local frames and individual passions by linking them to a universal message. Second, political conflict is associated with a revolutionary and “nationalist imaginary” in the Kurdish context. In the minds of militants, Kurds are an “imagined community” since they are considered to be both awakened and mobilized through the use of violence. Political violence in this sense is imaginary depending on what exists in the fantasy of those who use it as a means of “liberation” of the self and their community. This imaginary, comparable to the role of the myth of working class proposed by Sorel, is one of the means to act on the present time. Furthermore, violence is linked to a “desire of appearance”. The emergence of illegal movements or the fact that they become publicly known is sometimes not merely related to their social organizations, but to the organization of political murders, bomb or suicide attacks.
The construction of the new Kurdish man refers to subjective and imaginary violence because violent action is associated with the way in which the political person is constructed. The subject seemingly imagines to be constituted from “no-man” to “man” in the same process through which he/she uses force against its adversaries. From this point of view, the role of violence seems to conform to the logic by Sorel so that violence is not only a constituent of an actor but also his/her adversary, and political relations and consequently social links bind and oppose the actor and the adversary. Death stigmatizes the adversary, defines the boundaries of a mobilized group while transforming the adversary into an enemy and the sympathizer into a militant.

In the minds of its initiators, political murder is functional for mobilizing society. Does this mean that the use of arms is instrumental? I will certainly respond affirmatively to that question. However, the hypothesis of instrumental violence is not sufficient to analyze mobilization. Though violence is by nature instrumental, as Hannah Arendt noted, it is not only instrumental violence which mobilizes, but also subjective violence, which activates and assembles. Violence, even when it is carefully thought out and planned, reveals some subjectivity for some reasons. First of all, passions and emotions trigger political action. And, violence prompts feelings of hate and victory leading to action. Likewise, the use of force may constitute a mechanism of encouragement among militant persons, their followers and sympathizers.

**Militant habitus and mobilization for violence**

After studying the interdependency between violence and mobilization, I shall focus on militant habitus. At the first step, one should state the limits of this analysis because habitus is a large concept and a little ambiguous. The goal herein is not to provide a complete study of militant habitus in the Kurdish movement. The author’s ambition is more restricted. A study about habitus and its relationship with violence includes different scales of observation; I will herein be reduced to the case of the PKK’s militant habitus, namely habitus of a political organization. The analysis does not deal primarily with the mechanisms of learning and transmission of militant habitus by individuals. The objective is rather to show the existence and formation of a militant habitus which seems to “condition” the actors for mobilization in favor of violence.

I briefly defined habitus in the Introduction; it is relevant to make a more elaborate critique over this notion while discussing its application in the Kurdish case. What conception of habitus ought to be adopted in the Kurdish context?

Due to Bourdieu’s and Elias’ contributions, habitus became an important conceptual tool in sociological studies. While using the concept, two authors went beyond the dichotomy between the society and the individual. Bourdieu suggested that habitus of an individual reflects his/her respective social class or group as a subjective (not individual) system of interiorized structures, common frames of perception, conception of action, which constitute the condition of every objectivation. For the author, each system of individual disposition is a
structural variant of the others, in which singularity of the position within the social class and trajectory is expressed.\footnote{77} As for Elias, social habitus is a common characteristic which the individual shares with others in the society.\footnote{78} Social habitus is then linked to commonly learned and internalized dispositions by a group, community or nation. Individual habitus on the other hand designates both emotional and behavioral dispositions of an individual.\footnote{79} 

Bourdieu’s and Elias’ conceptions have similarities in that habitus is a product of social history.\footnote{80} The concept is herein used in the sense of both authors. There are however some divergences between them. The concept of habitus by Elias was not as developed or elaborated as that of Bourdieu. Nevertheless, it is useful to apply Elias’ conception to this research. Habitus in the sense of Bourdieu is not repetitive, mechanical or automatic, yet it appears to be a bit rigid while Elias attempts to be flexible concerning the functioning of habitus. Because the latter approach is fluid and vague, it makes shifting of characteristics highly possible. It may consequently apply more easily to a situation in which several habitus function at the same time in a given society. Furthermore, the notion of Elias can apply to different levels through which social habitus are being formed, whether it is in the national state, with the formation of national specific characteristics, or it is a particular form, for instance in an ethnic group, clan or family.\footnote{81} This conception of Elias is thus relevant for two reasons in this research. First, the concept is applied in the case of a political radical organization, that is the PKK. Moreover, habitus does not mean an unchanging system in the Kurdish case. It is neither finished nor defined once and for all.

The idea of departure in this section is that the use of violence depends on a militant habitus which is historically constituted inside the PKK. In the first step, I will study the militant history of the Kurdish organization. I will later elaborate on some hypotheses about the formation of the militant habitus of this party.

**Habitus: militant history and “martyrs” of the PKK**

As already underlined, violence under the form of habitus is not given. It is inscribed in a historicity. This is to say that the conflict of the PKK with the state and other Kurdish organizations played a huge role in its formation. Militant habitus constitutes a culture, an ethos or a political heritage given the bloody clashes the organization went through over the years. But how can one study this militant habitus? How can one show the link between the move to violence and habitus? If there is really a militant capital, how can one justify that it is commonly shared? If habitus is really expressed in the action of individuals and groups, and if there exists an articulation between the individual and the organization, how can one analyze their interdependency? These problems are as important as the definition of habitus and theoretical debates around this concept. I will attempt to answer at least some aspects of these questions. Therefore, in the first step, I will propose to study militant history of the Kurdish organization through militant figures belonging to three different historical times or
categories: first militant “martyrs” of the PKK, militants of the prison of Diyarbakır and militants of guerilla warfare.

It must first be noted as to why the presentation of these militants is necessary. These militants clearly appear as actors of reference for their “successors” (halefler). Their biography is a part of the PKK’s history and the conflicts which the organization has gone through since its foundation. This is to say that the party’s history can be read through biographies. One cannot in any way conceive an organization and its habitus as a transcendent reality to its members or militant experiences of these members. Armed struggle and repression played an essential role in the constitution of habitus; militant “martyrs” of the PKK may serve as a departing point to develop some arguments.

First “martyred” militants

As already noted, the PKK was founded in 1978, but its formation goes back to 1973. From 1976–1977, an armed conflict was already raging between several political organizations including the PKK in the Kurdish field. It is estimated that at least twenty cadres and senior militants of the party were killed in 1977 and 1978, among which Aydın Gül, Cuma Tak, Salih Kandal, Haki Karer, Mehmet Ece, Mahir Can and Halil Çavgun are most notable. The PKK calls them the first “martyrs”. It is appropriate to present a briefly history of some of these militants.

Aydın Gül, a young militant of the Apocu group, was born in the village of Turişmek in Dersim in 1959. He came from a working class family. In Dersim, the revolutionary left movement was active in the 1970s. It is highly possible that he was influenced by communist ideas before he had met the Apocu. PKK sources indicate that he was already making the organization’s propaganda when he was a high school student. He was killed by Halkın Kurtuluşu (HK or Liberation of People) in March 1977. It is estimated that the conflict broke out over an ideological dispute between the Apocu and HK in a high school in Dersim. Unfortunately, I could not obtain more information about this militant; but the lack of evidence does not prevent one from making an interpretation based on what was obtained. The murder of Aydın Gül impacted radicalization of the Apocu. This radicalization can be explained by two factors. Indeed, it is remarked that the militant was killed before he moved to violent action. He is considered to be one of the first “martyrs” by the PKK. Similarly, he was so young. In contrast to other militant “martyrs” whose biographies I shall present, this militant was just a high school student. He did not even get to go to university. Some months after his assassination, Haki Karer (1950–1977) was killed by a militant of Stêrka Sor in Antep in 1977. Karer was Turkish and came from a middle class family. Influenced by the revolutionary left movement during his studies in Ankara, Karer contacted Kurdist milieus in Ankara and participated in the activities of ADYÖD (Democratic Association of Higher Education of Ankara). He shared an apartment with Abdullah Öcalan and Kemal Pir. He left the university when he was in the last year of a Bachelor of Arts in the Science
Faculty in Ankara University and played a role in the formation of the PKK. Karer traveled to the Kurdish region in order to mobilize in favor of the Apocu particularly in Antep in 1976. A former militant who shared the same home with Haki Karer in Antep reported that he read a lot and radically engaged in intellectual discussions about colonialism, nationalism, Kurdish society and the state. These ideological constructions were mentioned in the previous chapter. Karer was killed in a café (kahve) in Antep during one of these intellectual discussions in 1977. Research evidence suggests that Karer’s murder was of historical importance for the PKK. On the one hand, the assassination increased the tension between Apocu militants and other political organizations (that was studied in the previous chapter). On the other hand, it radicalized the Apocu and accelerated the process of the PKK’s foundation. Abdullah Öcalan, himself, considered that the murder of Haki Karer provoked a shock inside the Kurdish group.

In May 1978, the PKK lost another cadre named Halil Çavgun in Hilvan in the province of Urfa. After primary and secondary studies in Urfa, Çavgun went to the Institute of Education of Urfa (Eğitim Enstitüsü) in the 1970s, and was affiliated with the revolutionary left movement. He discontinued his university studies and joined the Apocu while the organization was mobilizing in Urfa. Çavgun became a member of the Central Committee of the PKK and was entrusted with regional responsibility of the party in Hilvan. He was killed in a conflict with the police in Hilvan in May 1978 while displaying posters and graffiti for the anniversary of the assassination of Haki Kareri. The murder of Halil Çavgun in Hilvan in 1978 radicalized the actions of the PKK in the Urfa province. The party organized armed actions particularly against the Bucak tribe in 1979, while promoting bloody confrontations between the Bucak and the Apocu, which led to the killing of several militants including two historical figures of PKK’s militancy: Salih Kandal and Cuma Tak. Salih Kandal (1944–1979) participated in the PKK in 1977 during organizational work by Apocu militants in Urfa province. He was one of the militants who organized armed operation against the Bucak in the village of Kırbahşi in Hilvan (Urfa). Mehmet Celal Bucak, tribal chief of Bucak and deputy of Adalet Partisi (Party of Justice), was injured in this attack. Kandal was killed in the conflict of Kırbahşi. Cuma Tak (1956–1979) was another important militant of the PKK during this period. His trajectory is similar to that of Salih Kandal. He joined the Apocu while the latter were organizing in Urfa. He was also killed in a conflict with the men of Bucak in Siverek-Hilvan in 1979. Two militants, Salih Kandal and Cuma Tak, belonged to the Union of Armed Propaganda of the PKK (Silahlı propoganda birliği) in rural milieus of Siverek-Hilvan.

Hundreds of Apocu militants were killed in the armed conflict between 1978 and 1980. I have above tried to display more significant cases which contributed to the constitution of a radical militant culture. The coup d’état in 1980 introduced a new category of militant “martyrs” in the PKK.
Three types of militants with radical experiences appeared following the coup d’État in 1980 within the PKK. The first type corresponds to a group which passed to the Middle East, in Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. The second one consists of armed groups which remained in rural milieux and mountains in Eastern Turkey. The third one is composed of arrested militants and sympathizers who were distributed in different prisons, more particularly the Diyarbakır prison. The third one, according to my research evidence, is seemingly the most important because this category played a huge role in the formation of militant habitus in the PKK’s history.

But how did the prison of Diyarbakır become a place of militant grouping? On 12 September 1980, the Turkish army obtained power by a coup d’État. The military regime exercised harsh coercion in the Kurdish space. In fact, some Kurdish militants were captured during the emergency law (sıkıyönetim) which was established after the Maraş massacre in 1978. Martial law was applied in different regions of the country, including Kurdish provinces such as Bingöl, Elazığ Gaziantep, Kars, Malatya, Maraş, Urfa, Adıyaman, Diyarbakır, Hakkâri and Mardin. Turkish authorities arrested and imprisoned thousands of militants and sympathizers belonging to different Kurdish groups such as DDKD, Kawa, KUK, Rizgari, Riya Azadi, Têkoşin, etc. It is reported that at least 4,000 militants of Kurdish organizations were put in the military prison of Diyarbakır.

Diyarbakır prison brought on a new process of radicalization which emerged with new repertoires and meanings of violence. I will study this topic in a detailed manner in the final chapter. I will herein focus on experiences of some militants and cadres of the PKK in Diyarbakır prison such as Mazlum Doğan, M. Hayri Durmuş and Kemal Pir. Their experiences seem to have structured Kurdish radicalism in the 1980s.

Mazlum Doğan (1955–1982), originally from the province of Elazığ, was one of the founders of the PKK. After studying in Eskişehir and Balıkesir, in the Western part of Turkey, he entered the University of Hacettepe in Ankara, Department of Economics, in 1974. He left the university in 1976 and went back to the Kurdish region in order to organize political works. He played a key role in the PKK’s foundation in 1978. Mazlum Doğan was arrested by the Turkish police in 1979 when he was preparing to leave for Syria. He was imprisoned in Diyarbakır. Several sources indicate that the prison became a place of systematic torture of Kurdish militants. In 1981, Kurdish militants started protest actions against repression in the prison to demand the right of political defense in tribunal. In 1982, Mazlum Doğan, tortured by prison authorities, committed suicide by hanging himself in order to protest the conditions of detention.

M. Hayri Durmuş (1955–1982) is said to be a key militant and cadre in the history of the PKK. He was one of the founders of the party and member of the Central Committee. Born in Karakoçan in 1955, he finished his primary and secondary studies in Bingöl. According to his former friends, Hayri Durmuş was a
remarkable student. He therefore entered the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Hacettepe in Ankara in the beginning of the 1970s. He met Kurdish students in the Turkish capital, with whom he would found the PKK in 1978. In 1977, he left the Faculty of Medicine while he was a student in the third year. He worked for the organization and mobilization of the PKK in Bingöl, Diyarbakır, Mardin and Urfa. He was arrested in 1979 and incarcerated in Diyarbakır prison. Hayri Durmuş appears to have been one of the leading militants who played a vanguard role in the actions of protest and disobedience against the rules of the prison. After Mazlum Doğan’s suicide in March and the self-immolation of four PKK militants (Ferhat Kurtay, Mahmut Zengin, Necmi Öner and Eşref Anyık) in May 1982, he began a “fast of death” (ölüüm orucu) with Kemal Pir, Ali Çicek and Akif Yılmaz in July 1982. He died in this protest action in September 1982.

Kemal Pir (1952–1982) is another militant characterized by self-sacrificial violence in the prison of Diyarbakır. Like Haki Karer, Kemal Pir was Turkish. Born in 1952 in Giresun, he went to the University of Hacettepe, Faculty of Language, History and Geography, at the beginning of the 1970s. Influenced by revolutionary movements in Ankara, he took part in the political works of Apocu Kurds, and left the university. He was elected a member of the Central Committee during the foundation meeting of the PKK and went to Lebanon for military training in Palestinian guerilla camps. Arrested in Batman in 1979, he was incarcerated in Diyarbakır prison. Former prisoners of Diyarbakır reported that Kemal Pir was one of the organizers of protest actions in 1982. He died in prison in September 1982 during a fast of death.

Militants of the guerilla warfare

It was defended above that the military coup d’état divided the PKK militants into three spaces: militants in the prison, militants in Syria and Lebanon, and militants in rural milieus of the Kurdish region in Turkey. Some of the militants trained in the guerilla camps in Lebanon began to go back to Turkey in the early 1980s. The return of these militants increased the armed forces of the PKK organization. Confrontations between Turkish security forces and Kurdish guerrillas during the 1980s and 1990s gave rise to a new dimension of Kurdish militancy. I will herein study three militant trajectories related to this period: those of Mahsum Korkmaz, Gülnaz Karataş and Zeynep Knacı. In fact, they constitute omnipresent figures in the sources of the PKK, and have a considerable reputation in social and political circles of the organization.

Mahsum Korkmaz (1956–1985) is definitely an important figure in the PKK’s history. Born in 1956 in Silvan, he came from a modest milieu. He moved to Batman with his parents in 1970. As already stated, Batman went through political radicalization with the emergence of Kurdish organizations during that period. Mahsum Korkmaz joined the Apocu circles under the influence of Mazlum Doğan and Kemal Pir, who were directing the Kurdish organization in Batman. He also went to Lebanon within the armed forces of the PKK following the coup d’état. Known by his pseudonym “Agit”, Mahsum Korkmaz went back
to Turkey with other militants trained in Lebanon. He was both a member of the Central Committee of the PKK and military commander of *Hêzên Rîşgariya Kurdistan* (Forces of Liberation of Kurdistan). Korkmaz played a central role within the armed units of the PKK in the transborder region. He was one of the organizers of the military attacks in Eruh-Şemdinli in 1984. He was killed during armed conflict in the Gabar Mountains in 1985.

Gülnaz Karataş (1971–1992), better known under the pseudonym “Beritan”, was a militant who died in armed conflict in Iraqi Kurdistan. Her parents, Alevi Kurds, were from Dersim. Born in Solhan (Bingöl) in 1971, she finished her primary and secondary studies in Elazığ. In 1989, she entered the University of Istanbul, Department of Economics. Around 1990, she met the networks of the PKK. According to sources at the PKK, she did not define herself as Kurdish before this period. It is reported that she was arrested in 1990–1991 even before participating in PKK activities. After a short term of imprisonment, she was freed in 1991 and then left the university. It is remarked that she was rapidly engaged in the armed struggle because she joined the armed forces of the PKK in 1991. She carried out a self-sacrificial act during an operation led by Kurdish *peshmergas* (belonging to the PDK) and the Turkish Army in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1992. According to the PKK sources, she committed suicide in order not to be arrested by the *peshmergas*.

Zeynep Kıncacı (1972–1996), finally, appears as a figure of militancy in the 1990s. Known under her pseudonym “Zilan”, she was the militant who organized the first suicide attack of the PKK in 1996. Born in a village of Malatya in 1972, she entered the University of Malatya. During her university years, she met PKK partisans. She participated in the guerilla attacks in 1995 and just after one year’s experience within the PKK milieux, she organized a suicide attack in Dersim in 1996. The attack, perpetrated against Turkish soldiers during a military ceremony, killed nine people.

These different trajectories, in three historical time periods of the PKK, can be considered as prototypes since the militants are shown to be models within the Kurdish organization. The following analyses will demonstrate that there are hardly any exemplary militant figures who haven’t made sacrifices within the organization. Radical experiences of these actors are instruments of propaganda for the armed struggle. Some more biographies will be studied in the following chapters. In this section, I focus on the constitutions of militant habitus. Formation of habitus as well as its evolution are linked to several interdependent factors which are both objective, subjective, individual and organizational. The repression which the militants went through over time, the construction and elaboration of history by the organization, militant institutions and schismatic structure of the Kurdish political field are significant dynamics among others.
Three factors of the formation of militant habitus: repression, schismatic structure and militant institutions

Repression, conflicts and confrontations

In the trajectories that I have discussed, one can empirically observe a common militant habitus despite the variations in time and space. The move to violence seems to take place very quickly. The militants went through a harsh repression sometime before or during engagement, as was the case for Haki Karer, Aydin Gül, Gülnaz Karataş. Most of them, registered in university, left their studies, except Zeynep Kınacı who finished her university education. We may therefore consider exit from the school system to be a sign of radicalism. These examples refer especially to polarization, one of the configurations of the move to violence which I shall study in the next chapter. Nevertheless, I shall fully exclude the argument that militants of the Kurdish movement have identical experiences, and that their militancy and radicalism operate in the same way. It will be seen that configurations and processes of the use of violence are quite diverse.

These trajectories relate on the other hand to some factors such as armed struggle, repression, subjectivity I have previously mentioned. Here, it can be noted that armed struggle, which plays a role in mobilization, also intertwines with the construction of militant habitus within the PKK. The phenomenon of armed struggle as well as repression progressively forge a militant capital. It seems certain that the loss of militants and cadres impacted radicalization of the movement between 1977 and 1984.

The experiences of the first “martyred” militants were determinants in the radicalization of the Kurdish organization. The case of Haki Karer constitutes a significant case. Research evidence suggests that Haki Karer’s murder in 1977 contributed to the formation of an authoritarian party structure. It would be worthwhile explaining the notion of authoritarianism. This term signifies that the Kurdish organization adopted a more severe position against internal divisions and rival organizations since Haki Karer lost his life following a conflict with Stērka Sor, a rival Kurdish party, in 1977. This also implies a highly centralized organization which allowed members of the Central Committee to take decisions and manage the party around a unique apparatus. One of the former militants in Antep explained this process in that way:

The murder of Haki Karer . . . himself, he was a very important comrade for us and the party. He was a member of the Committee. When he was killed, we were a political group. His assassination accelerated the formation of the party [PKK]. Indeed, when we were a political group, there was less control, and power. To increase it, the group transformed itself into a party.

This Apocu militant operated in Antep when Haki Karer was killed in 1977. This is why his evidence is vital for the argument above. Several written sources of the PKK confirm it as well. Some passages can be cited:
The death of comrade Haki Karer is not an ordinary event for us. We live in a society where it is really difficult to struggle and die for a sacred value. It is not easy to die for independence and freedom in a society where people massacre each other in the name of simple things. Our comrade was so attached to the party that he advanced the struggle. This was of course a necessity because we lived in difficulty, repression and exploitation. All of these led to materialize and finalize our program defined by ideological works in order to reach an official organization and begin a political struggle.\textsuperscript{102}

Regarding the second period, that of the militants of Diyarbakır prison, it would be appropriate to defend the same hypothesis. Suffering of militants, repression, especially the death of militants under torture, structure a radical habitus.\textsuperscript{103}

A document of the PKK, named “the memory of comrade Mazlum is a torch which enlightens our way” deals with militant practices of this second period.

If Kurdish people became honorable members of international community, the role of first resistance fighters who bravely shed their blood was a determinant. It could have been impossible to discard seeds of revolution without these sacrifices. If we don’t understand the base of the struggle of popular resistance, we cannot understand the greatness of resistance fighters of the period post 1975.\textsuperscript{104}

It is in these difficult conditions that behavior of resistance emerged. These actions certainly did not occur in a pacific situation. They appeared in the prison, the mountain as well as other spaces of struggle \[.\] The resistance in prison of the PKK is an accomplished\textsuperscript{105} stage of process by Mazlum, Hayri and Kemal, and it started a new period of national liberation.\textsuperscript{106}

I consulted many pamphlets, manifestos and journals of the PKK dated from 1982 to 1983.\textsuperscript{107} It seems that militants’ deaths under torture in prison radicalized the milieus of the PKK (including not only militants, but also families and sympathizers). Prison conditions in Kurdish provinces were indeed much worse than in prisons of other provinces in Turkey. According to a report, one of the lawsuits of the PKK ended in twenty-three capital punishment sentences while thirty-two militants of the organization died in prison during this period.\textsuperscript{108}

Guerilla warfare enlarged the space of violence and repression. The PKK lost thousands of militants. It is difficult to determine the exact number. Likewise, the average age of death for the militants decreased, sometimes to seventeen or eighteen years in the 1990s. Parallel to radicalization and armed confrontations between the PKK and the Turkish Army, development of paramilitary organizations, among which JITEM (Gendarmerie Intelligence and Antiterrorist Struggle) is the most famous, and their exactions (assassinations of Kurdish intellectuals and politicians), as well as displacement of population of some 5,000 villages, are all factors of repression that contributed to the constitution of militant
Mobilization for political violence

habit. This coercion transcends the Kurdish party, as it is not limited to militants, and therefore widened militant habitus to other parts of Kurdish society. Each of these forms of repression surely need a meticulous study of their relations with habitus at the societal level, which I will not analyze in this work because I focus on the PKK.

On the other hand, the analysis of subjectivity that I began in the previous section can be extended to habitus. Indeed, habitus when taken in the sense of Bourdieu is a system of interiorized and incorporated dispositions to act, perceive, feel and think in a similar way by individuals. This definition is partly related to subjectivity of actors because emotions and perceptions are also components of systems of dispositions. Two significant points can be added. First, this is a question of habitus which includes subjectivity set in a historical context. Second, conflicts are perpetually modified by extremely diverse exchanges that hold subjective meanings.

For instance, as observed in the 1970s in the previous chapter, actors of the PKK acted radically against those appearing to them as “feudal”, “agents of the state” and “reactionary”. During this period, a regime of subjectivity founded on urgency and revolutionary violence triggered an armed struggle to establish itself as the dominant force in the Kurdish space of Turkey. As for the second period, torture and executions produced radical meanings and subjectivities which impacted not only prisoners but also militants who were not in prison: while self-sacrificial violence arose in the prison, guerilla warfare became more intense outside the prison space.

Widespread incarceration and destruction of the body under torture in the prison launched a rather gloomy regime of subjectivity within the organization. In the 1990s, the armed struggle in the form of guerilla warfare was maintained as a principal repertoire, but violence was charged with new senses and subjectivities playing a role in the emergence of suicidal acts. Bloody confrontations in which thousands of young militants died became a new source of radical passion. The arrest of Abdullah Öcalan provoked a remarkably veritable crisis of sense, a factor in the emergence of self-sacrificial violence. I will analyze this topic in the final chapter. Here, I will be content to state that shifting regimes of subjectivity during the course of armed conflicts impacted the construction of militant habitus.

Militant habitus and schismatic structure

In the first chapter, I analyzed the split of the Kurdish political field by and in violence. There are relations between the political field and militant habitus. Indeed, habitus seems to be formed given a schismatic structure of the political field. This relationship is quite perceptible when militant biographies are observed.

During the first period of militancy, most of the actors, whose biography I described earlier on, entered into conflict with Kurdish organizations and tribes. Cuma Tak, Salih Kandal and Halil Çavgun were killed in the armed confrontations with Kurdish tribes by the end of the 1970s. Furthermore, Gülnaz Karatas
Mobilization for political violence

organized a suicide attack during a conflict with Kurdish peshmergas of Barzani in 1992. When looking into the cases of “martyred” militants, the following phenomenon merits attention: intra-Kurdish war seems to have produced a radical habitus since a section of the emblematic militants of the PKK were victims of internal fights.

It is possible to develop this hypothesis beyond the biographic cases while studying two other cases of intra-ethnic conflicts which emerged in the 1990s. The first one concerns the system of village guardians (köy koruculuğu). The conflict of the PKK with Kurdish village guards is a determinant in structuring militant habitus, even in the militarization of civilian society in some Kurdish regions particularly in Şırnak and Batman. The second case deals with Hizbullah. The emergence of Kurdish Hizbullah in the political field considerably radicalized the PKK. Hizbullah was founded by some Islamist Kurds in the beginning of the 1980s and developed mainly around personalities such as Hüseyin Velioğlu (1952–2000), Edip Gümüş (1958) and “Isa Altoy”. The Hizbullah movement was influential in the provinces of Diyarbakır, Batman, Bingöl and Mardin. While intra-Kurdish violence is characterized by the struggle taking place between Kurdish nationalist organizations belonging to the radical Kurdish left in the 1970s and the 1980s, it refers generally to armed conflicts which take place between the PKK and Hizbullah in the 1990s. The loss of its militants and members of social base in this conflict constitutes a factor of radicalization in the PKK’s militant habitus.

On the other hand, observations suggest another form of internal violence: defection. This is an intra-organizational conflict. One should thus distinguish the defection and the conflict of the PKK with other Kurdish organizations. Defection signifies the exit of a political actor from a coalition, organization or coordinated action which he/she was a part of. Since its formative years, many cadres have left the Kurdish organization. The departure of cadres and militants no doubt impacted the movement’s militant habitus. Indeed, the exit phenomenon radicalizes the organization considerably. Defectors are portrayed as anti-models, traitors and betrayers against which one should protect himself or herself. The publications of the PKK show a borderline between betrayal (ihânet) and loyalty (sadâkat) to the party. Abdullah Öcalan uses the term münafıklık (hypocrisy) to designate the act of treason. The most important cadres and militants who defected from the organization are as follows: Şahin Dönmez, Ali Çetiner, Mehmet Şener, Cihangir Hazır (pseudonym: Sarı Baran), Baki Karer, Selim Çürükkaya and so on. One requires a meticulous analysis regarding each example of defection to show its impact on militant habitus in the PKK, however there is unfortunately not enough space in this work.

*Militant institutions and elaboration of habitus*

Although militant habitus of an organization is constituted by a whole of historical relationships in conflict, its durability is not ensured a priori. At first, it depends on institutions of the movement which enable it to be maintained.
The PKK founded its military institutions and organizations in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1984, the party established a military branch called *Hêzên Rizgariya Kurdistan* (Forces of Liberation of Kurdistan). It is the HRK which organized the military attacks in 1984 and 1985. In 1986, the HRK was renamed *Artêşa Rizgariya Gelê Kurdistan* (Army of Popular Liberation of Kurdistan); the latter was replaced with *Hêzên Paraştina Gel* (Forces of Defence of People) in 2000. At the same time, the party established politico-military organizations: *Eniya Rizgarî Netawa Kurdistan* (Front of National Liberation of Kurdistan) was created in 1985. The ERNK gathered several militant organizations of youth, and members from various social categories in the society. The PKK also founded military training camps in Syria and Iraq. There is no point describing these military institutions and organizations in detail. Nevertheless, one should acknowledge that all these structures played a role in the persistence of the PKK’s militant habitus as they are part of the guerilla institution. Militants are trained in techniques of struggle and production of explosives within these organizations. They also receive ideological training there.

Habitus includes both unconscious and elaborated processes. It may be interpreted as a product of imagination thanks to which the Kurdish organization shapes hopes, things which are easily believed to be true by its members. This means that the organization’s history and its militants are constructed; in other words, its history is not completely objective. History is carefully manipulated, subjectively constructed, ideologically invented and emotionally charged. Biographies of the militants are used to glorify deaths for the party and armed struggle. Thus, a mystical and political ideal and a cult of suffering and “martyrdom” are created specific to the organization. I noticed, for instance, that, in the PKK’s historiography, the figures of Sheikh Said, Seyyid Rıza as well as Molla Moustafa Barzani are rarely cited. It even happens that they are qualified to be “reactionaries” and “feudal”. On the contrary, Mazlum Doğan, Hayri Durmuş and Kemal Pir as well as other “martyrs” are central figures in this elaborate history. The organization seeks to term the practices of these subjects as heroic actions and exemplary behavior. Using these sacralized militants, the PKK proposes a general conception of militant subject.

Some passages help to show how the PKK makes this elaboration through idealized militant types. Abdullah Öcalan, for example, attributes an important place to the militants of the first period and the prison of Diyarbakır:

It is a bridge through which one passes from the obscurity to independence, freedom and enlightenment. Mazlum, Kemal, Hayri and other political prisoners are expressions of this noble reality. One can understand and commemorate them as symbols of the spirit of resistance only by struggling in a determined way. Personalities, lives and memories of Mazlum, Kemal, Hayri and other martyr comrades are so rich that they guide the fighters of Kurdistan’s national liberation. They are big heroes of the freedom struggle, they reached the status of martyr. […] In each moment of our revolutionary activities, one should adopt their lives as guides of our actions.
It might be noticed that “martyrs” are imagined to be historical actors. Another passage proves that the organization attempts to construct a militant model: “In every country, revolutionary struggle must create its own militant model and have cadres and militants who fulfill these conditions. It would be impossible to succeed without constructing this type of militant.”

Elaboration of habitus leads to a rather significant process, homogenization of militant capital. Cultural resources of the Kurdish organization play a considerable role in the latter phenomenon. For instance, press organs of the organization, songs, images and pamphlets or audio visual tapes are agents of the homogenization process. Similarly, mobilization via rituals such as feasts, commemorations and burials establish a militant ethos. A whole of symbolic works promote the standardization of customs, modes of action and vocabulary. Control of the organization aims at homogenizing cultural goods and invents symbolic codes. Militant identity gets characterized by words, gestures and clothing.

**Three characteristics of habitus**

**Diffusion of militant capital**

In parallel with that elaboration, one notices a process of diffusion of militant capital among generations. In fact, there is a concordance between dispositions of militants who mobilize, especially between 1976 and 1984, and habitus of the militants who succeed them. It seems, indeed, that radical experiences are recognized in the practices and discourses of the latter. In other words, the militants inherit a radical political culture.

Habitus seems to be an internalized form of militant conditions and practices, particularly those of the first militant “martyrs” in the history of the organization. These radical aspects are incorporated in militant bodies and minds under the schema of perception, appreciation and political action. The sources of the organization allow us to justify transmission of radical habitus between generations:

The roots of militant tradition of the PKK are found in its past. This is why one cannot separate future militancy of the PKK and that of its recent past. On the contrary, new characters are strictly attached to old ones and formed on the basis of the past [...] The militant must assimilate its recent past which is full of resistances [...] If the militant wants to play a historical role, the past should be well understood.

Upon analysis of letters and reports written by the militants, I notice how radical experiences are adopted as models. Below is provided a letter of one of the militants who was condemned to death in the 1980s. The letter mentions Haki Karer, Cuma Tak and Salih Kandal who were killed at the end of the 1970s.
Mobilization for political violence

The tree of our independence is nourished by blood shed by Haki Karer, killed by the agents of colonialism, and Cuma Tak and Salih Kandal, killed by feudal pawns of colonialism [...] I will carry the flag which was inherited from martyrs of revolution.

One might find an articulation between actions of militants in 1977–1978, 1982–1984 and 1990. For example, a pamphlet written by Mazlum Doğan, when he was in prison in 1981, alludes to Cuma Tak and Salih Kandal: “In Kurdistan’s struggle, on the one hand, there are cowards like ‘Dönmez’ who are submitted to the enemy, and on the other hand, there are examples of heroism such as Cuma Tak, Salih Kandal and Sait Şimsek.” Emblematic militants are also idealized by the organization as actors of historical actions:

Resistance of comrade Beritan is similar to the resistance of the prison [Diyarbakır]. Its ideological dimension is more important than military dimension. As the resistance in the prison signifies non-submission to the colonialisst system and the defense of the ideology of the party, the Beritan’s resistance signifies non-submission to tribal and feudal reactionarism [gerici-lik], and failure of reactionarism.

The letter Zeynep Kınacı (Zilan) wrote before her suicide in 1996, implies that she was influenced by militant trajectories of the first generation:

I believe that it is through war that I can overcome my underdevelopment and liberate myself. I want to defend the struggle of my comrades Mazlum, Hayri, Ferhat, Besê, Bërîtan, Berivan and Ronahi and follow them. I want to be an expression of the will for liberty of my people. I want to explode myself to show my hate and to become the symbol of Kurdish women against imperialism which exploits women.

An accordance between habitus of the militants in the 1980s and militant dispositions in the 1990 was noted in the fieldwork. The interviewed former militants cited the names of the militants belonging to the first generation:

We were respecting and commemorating the martyrs … especially in the Kandil mountain. Our comrades of the Council of the Presidency were talking about the ideologies of Mahsum Korkmaz, Kemal Pir, Mazlum Doğan, etc. It is them who marked the destiny of the party. They made history by their actions. We were organizing big operations to commemorate these comrades. For instance, we organized an armed operation in 1998. The operation was dedicated to those who resisted in the death-fasts in 1982.

This militant engaged in armed struggle at the end of the 1990s. The interview shows traces of militants corresponding to the three periods: Kemal Pir (1977),
Mobilization for political violence

Mazlum Doğan (1982) and Mahsum Korkmaz (1985). In accordance with his discourse, one should remember that historical experiences of conflict and violence are inscribed in militants’ selves and are reflected within ideological frames and violent actions. Indeed, this militant underlines that they organized armed attacks in the name of “martyred” militants. This suggests that past experiences of the first generations constitute a factor in the use of violence. Habitus provides frames and meanings of political violence. It is noteworthy to develop my hypothesis focusing on this point.

Habitus as legitimizing the violent action

In social movement studies, the attempts by collective agents to determine and justify their positions and actions are treated within the frame analysis. It is argued that social actors define the problems, identify protagonists, antagonists and fundamental lines of action through the framing process. However, the frame used by social movement scholars does not seem sufficient to explore how agents legitimize their political actions particularly because the concept does not permit one to contextualize the agents. Likewise, the frame pays very little attention to emotions, dreams and fears. There is another serious problem: frame is a non-historical tool. However case studies suggest that legitimization of political violence is usually set in a historicity.

In the Kurdish case, one may observe through the above empirical examples that there are a number of historically constructed frames legitimizing the use of political violence. Experiences of the first “martyrs” in Diyarbakır prison and guerilla war constitute different frames and sources of the move to violence. They enable the organization to legitimize political violence. It is remarked that history of militant “martyrs” becomes a mode of ideal engagement for succeeding generations. It is this aspect which shows that habitus is structured and has structuring effects. It constitutes a system of rationalization which attributes a subjective sense to radicalism. This fact supports the argument that violence may quickly become a legitimate mode of action once it arises. It enables the formation of socialization processes through which the young fighters learn to justify or legitimize the use of violence.

It is noteworthy to underline a quite “surprising” point: the past experiences of self-sacrifice provide a frequent source of the move to political violence among guerilla fighters. This observation can be surprising because self-destruction is a form of action which is much less used when compared to guerilla warfare. Violence in the form of suicide attacks, especially as it was seen in the case of Zeynep Kıncı (pseudonym Zilan), is a rarely used repertoire by the organization; yet the actions of Zeynep Kıncı and Gülşen Karataş (pseudonym Beritan) are frequently cited by the organization. It ought to be pointed out that the number of guerilla militants who died in the clashes increased much in the 1990s and that the militancy was usually related to classical armed fighters engaged in conflict with the Turkish security forces. In spite of this fact, the
PKK sources refer to self-sacrificial militants more frequently than classical fighters.

Why does self-sacrificial violence constitute a frame of the use of “classical” violence, a source of the legitimization of “classical” repertoire, namely, guerilla warfare? Why does self-sacrificial violence become a symbolic source for the use of other forms of violence and not only violence against the self? It is possible to put forward some suppositions. It seems that trajectories of self-sacrificial “martyrs” (fedai şehidler) transform into a “perfect model” by the obligation to imitate them. Heroic narration of sacrificial practices serves to estheticize the conflict and the death. Sacrificial narratives let the fighters go beyond the simple obligation to combat and make them ready to die any moment. They necessitate the action and loyalty for the party and Abdullah Öcalan. The narrative of self-destruction via “martyrdom” also enables the organization to sacralize its political cause.

**Fluid habitus**

The Kurdish political field is formed on the basis of a militant habitus. This habitus matters in the mobilization of the PKK as it allows the permanence of militant commitment for violence. As already admitted, militant dispositions were transmitted from one generation to another and they constitute a source of the move to political violence.

On the other hand, and it is an important point to remember, this habitus, comparable to the notion of culture in the sense of Geertz, does not allow us to find a direct cause for the events and radical practices; rather, it presents a context which enables us to describe them intelligibly and a configuration in which radicalism and violence evolve. Perhaps more importantly, as already underlined, this context or configuration should not be interpreted to have rigid and stable frames; habitus should be considered in a flexible way. It is for this reason that I qualify habitus to be fluid in the Kurdish case. This margin of indetermination or uncertainty explains that although agents master registers of action, things cannot be predicted much by them since the action is sometimes determined day after day even by the hour. In other words, there are usually fluid spaces and contexts. Indeed, militant habitus of an organization is definitely not equivalent to a linguistic habitus or habitus of a social class. It is naturally less institutionalized and rigid. Similarly, it is more likely to shift or even disappear in time and space. This is to say that future militant generations may be less violent or on the contrary, more radical; the legacy of all these older militant trajectories can be put into question by future generations.

One of the most important characteristics of fluid habitus concerns the complexity and plurality. Indeed, as it is observed in all political cultures, militant habitus is not a simple accumulation but a complex of features; some of them can be found in other social categories, for instance, in the social base or among PKK sympathizers or in the legal Kurdish movement. In this respect, it is not so surprising to observe a deputy of HADEP (Party of Democracy of People,
Halkın Demokrasi Partisi) at the end of the 1990s or today’s BDP (Party of Peace and Democracy, Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi) idealize the mode of radical and violent action while the legal party is supposed, because of its position, to promote legal and non-violent action. In addition to the presence of militant habitus in the legal field, competitive, alternative or peaceful habitus can arise in the Kurdish movement. As Hamit Bozarslan admits, the Kurdish conflict led to a series of habitus. One may witness many action records and a capacity of the organization to mobilize several repertoires at the same time. I might cite the emergence of legal Kurdish parties in the 1990s. The legal parties which I shall mention in the last chapter did not succeed structuring an alternative habitus. Nevertheless, as Nicole Watts studied, legal Kurdish contestation can be considered as a crucible of new political habitus.

Organizational dynamics: armed struggle, social base and proximity

After having studied interdependent relations between violence, mobilization and militant habitus, I shall focus on organizational dynamics of the armed struggle in this section. An analysis of the organizational dimension is imperative in order to explore political violence in the Kurdish field for the following reasons. While analyzing habitus, it has been seen that violence is spread over a long process, namely it is structural. The Kurdish movement results in a permanent and organized action capable of mobilizing society. So it is necessarily based on an organized power. In any case, one cannot reduce armed struggle exclusively to its manifestations of violent physical confrontations. Armed struggle is prepared and produced by the participation of civilian population that I call herein “social organization”. But how can one study this phenomenon of organization? What does it refer to?

The question of organization of armed groups is usually neglected in social sciences. To the best of my knowledge, there is very little empirical and analytical research. On the contrary, the organizational dimension of non-violent mobilizations is frequently studied by researchers working in different parts of the world, whether in the Middle East, Europe or Latin America. Most social movement scholars handle the phenomenon of organization through the concept of social networks. Social networks seem to be a required concept to study political violence. In fact, although the organization of a guerilla movement is distinct from a social movement, its organization is in some configurations founded on social networks similar to social movements’ networks: social institutions, associations, interpersonal relations, which are different components of social networks, matter in the mobilization of an armed movement. Furthermore, as it will be seen in the next chapter, the move to violence by individuals operates sometimes through social networks.

On the other hand, I am quite critical about the way the notion of social networks is used in social movement studies, for two reasons. The first one is due to the fact that the notion is utilized in an extremely large sense. Indeed, social
networks signify a social structure, political and cultural institutions as well as interpersonal relations. The argument that “a social movement is founded on social networks” remains quite ambiguous because the network applies to very distinct phenomena. The overuse makes it difficult to understand what social network means. The notion sometimes seems to remain only metaphorical. This is why, without giving up on the concept of social networks, because it is highly useful, I prioritize herein two key notions, which I began to define in the Introduction, namely “social base” and “proximity”. I stress on the term social base because social base actually constitutes a real community. It is not only a theoretical abstraction but also represents a community which, for example, supplies food to the guerrilla movement, dialogues and makes solidarity with it. One can also adopt the definition of social base as networks, frames, memories and cultural predispositions in the sense of Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow. The recourse to this conceptual tool is necessary because a guerrilla movement cannot exist without a social base.

Armed groups benefit from the mechanism of proximity which I already began to explain about. Proximity constitutes a form of interdependence and socialization which takes place between social base and militants. It allows one to study the phenomenon of organization in terms of social relations. In the light of these key concepts, this section suggests that proximity constitutes one of the dynamics of the move to violence because it signifies a principal form of organization. Therefore it becomes one of the conditions of both physical and psychological rapprochement between militants and social actors. In this respect, I shall analyze the phenomenon of talebe (student) in order to show the genesis of a social base. I shall later formulate my hypothesis with regard to proximity departing from some empirical cases.

**Phenomenon of talebe, youth and Kurdish society**

In an earlier article, I attempted to show how Kurdish notables such as sheikhs, ağa, beys, etc. mobilized networks and became chief instigators of the rebellions and conflict groups in the 1920s and 1930s. As the previous chapter indicates, the leadership of the rebellion shifted in the 1960s and 1970s. It was hereafter Kurdish student youth who founded Kurdish groups and organizations. I later suggested that Kurdish youth established political relationships with society at the end of the 1960s, especially via the organization of meetings of the East and the DDKO. I called this historical cycle “Eastism”. Political relations between Kurdish students and society during this period impacted the mobilization of Kurdish groups in the 1970s. Nevertheless, these relations did not constitute structured ties between the talebe (students) and Kurdish society. They became institutionalized from the 1970s onwards thanks to the mobilization of Kurdish organizations. The young members of political groups went down into the village and helped to construct informal networks by the establishment of direct relations. This mobilization was operated by activities of different Kurdish
organizations. However, only the PKK was able to maintain the mobilization following the coup d’état in 1980.

The phenomenon of *talebe* matters in the formation of social base of the PKK. The term *talebe* should be clarified in the Kurdish context. This concept signifies students both at the university and high school level because there were also youngsters aged around fourteen to fifteen years old. Though the term is originally Arabic and has been long used to refer to religious students, it has no religious connotation herein. Nowadays, as it was in the 1970s and 1980s, the use of the word *talebe* was not exclusively limited to the religious field. More particularly, in my case study, the *talebe* represent the students who mobilized the social base: they were thus actors who mobilize and agents of socialization. I shall herein refrain from analyzing all social categories which constituted the Kurdish movement. All militants were certainly not *talebe* because the PKK was never an organization formed only by students. It also included peasants, women, urban settlers, the unemployed and workers, and the like. It would be a mistake to reduce the organization to a unique social category. However, during the 1970s and 1980s, most of the “mobilizers” were students, the reason why I insist upon the application of the term mobilizers. Social movement studies rarely distinguish between “mobilizers” and the “mobilized”. The non-distinction is likely to give rise to an ambiguity in the analysis. Another reason why I use the term mobilizers for speaking about *talebe* is justified in empirical observations. Though one cannot generalize the fact, the mobilizers of the PKK were called *talebe* in some Kurdish provinces, especially in Urfa and Batman. İsmet İmset’s observation confirms this finding. İmset reports that PKK militants were deemed as “the talebe in the mountain” (dağdaki talabeler), namely those who took to the hills or went underground in the 1980s.

This phenomenon of Kurdish *talebe* is quite similar to what Michel Wieviorka analyzed in the case of Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) in Peru. For the author, Shining Path developed a network in villages through militant students and teachers originally coming from rural milieus. The latter returned to their community while behaving in an exemplary manner and became active agents of political conscientization. Their activities allowed the perception that misery is neither natural nor inevitable, but social and political. In the Kurdish field, quite similar to the case of Shining Path, students detached from schools and universities, overtaken by a very radical ideology, settled both in villages and towns and moved to political violence.

One may make remember biographical examples which were already mentioned. Most of the PKK’s founders and senior militants were young students such as Abdullah Öcalan, Mazlum Doğan, Haki Karer, Kemal Pir, Hayri Durmuş, and the like. Öcalan was a student in the Faculty of Political Science in Ankara. Doğan was registered in the University of Hacettepe in Ankara, Department of Economics. Durmuş was a student of medicine also in the Turkish capital. Karer and Pir were on the other hand two Turkish students in Ankara while Çavgun was registered in the Institute of Education of Urfa (Eğitim Enstitüsü). The organization also recruited many militants among student
youth during the last three decades. Although armed struggle became a large scale phenomenon which included the participation of different social categories and classes in Kurdish society, the youth, composed mainly of students, played a fundamental role in the history of the organization.

But to what extent did the phenomenon of talebe matter in the Kurdish mobilization? The response to this question requires an analysis of the relations of talebe with Kurdish society. First of all, it is worth recalling that the PKK militants were named “Revolutionaries of Kurdistan” (Kürdistan devrimcileri), “National Liberators” (Ulusal kurtuluşçular), “Apocu” (Apocular) in the 1970s and 1980s. The term “talebe” differs from the other ones in that it was not chosen by the PKK itself, but invented by the local community among which the militants began a campaign of mobilization. The term was not necessarily a positive concept in the eyes of the militants because, naturally, they preferred to be named “Revolutionaries”. It seemed that being a student formed an principal dynamic, maybe more important than being a “revolutionary”, in the formation of their image in the eyes of popular classes. This popular identification and sympathy with the term talebe permits focus on the role of being talebe.

Second, it appears that possession of cultural capital by the students explains why they become mobilizers. One might denote cultural capital as intellectual and ideological acquisition and a capacity to convince and manipulate the ideas. This argument also partly explains why Kurdish peasants were sympathetic towards talebe militants. Indeed, in Kurdish society, cultural capital can determine social capital, that is the relationship of the militants with the social base.

Similarly, relations of young militants seem to have straightened out the effects of cultural capital. Social capital is not under the monopoly of a social class in Kurdish society, an important part of the young militants possessed social capital while coming from poorer classes. I shall later return to the role of cultural and social capital like solidarity, trust, prestige and so on.

In short, the Kurdish nationalist youth, particularly the talebe, played a considerable role in the formation of a social base. They were founders of social networks and organic links for the Kurdish organization in the 1970s and early 1980s. Nonetheless, the impact of the talebe phenomenon has some limits. Indeed, though the talebe’s influence remained considerable, one cannot put forward that all mobilizers were talebe or “instructed” persons in the sense of having political capital (ideology, knowledge, intellectual tools, mastering of Marxist nationalist discourse). Furthermore, the importance of talebe as agents of socialization and mobilization decreased considerably from the 1980s onwards. Being a student in the 1980s and 1990s provided a less important social capital because there were many more students in the Kurdish space. The third reason: once mobilization becomes popular, social categories of mobilizers become more diverse. Some peasantry, working class and youth who did not posses cultural and social capital played important roles as mobilizers in the Kurdish field. It seems impossible to cite any particular group that was responsible for the mobilization in the 1990s.
Two points of analysis have to be distinguished. Mobilizers are agents of construction of social networks and base whereas proximity constitutes a form of interdependence, socializations taking place between militants and social base. While focusing on the mechanism of proximity, I propose to study social and political ties between actors. Mobilization of a guerilla movement is a question of power which is founded on dialectics or combination of constraint (zor) and voluntary support. A guerilla movement which does not benefit from minimum support and legitimacy inside society will not be a permanent force in time and space. If rebels are fish according to an image dear to Mao, its social base is then a sea. This may appear to be a simplistic metaphor at first glance, but provides a useful image to understand the relationship between armed groups and their social base.

What exactly take place between militants and the social base? How can one explain the link between them? What do these mechanisms of constraint (zor) and legitimacy (meşruiyet) constitute? What does constraint mean in the context of armed mobilization? Is it exclusively physical? Through which means does mobilization of an armed group take place? This section aims at responding to these research problems.

I have agreed to test my hypothesis through empirical investigations. The village of Zindê seems to offer evidence to study the problem of proximity. Before presenting this case, I wish to return to the question of sampling which I started to discuss in the Introduction. The relation between the value of a case in the sampling and the value of this case in the population is a universal problem. Whichever topic a researcher studies, he/she can neither study nor present all the cases. This question is more important in my research because the possibility of observation is mostly restricted in the study of armed struggle. The author herein studies the relation between a community and an armed organization. The conditions of observation are difficult. The village of Zindê does not constitute a unique example that I have observed with regard to proximity in the fieldwork. But Zindê is an empirical example within a general category so that everything that I learned through Zindê teaches me about the phenomenon of proximity which I am about to study.

Observations on the village of Zindê. It is a rural milieu situated in the district of Gercüş in Batman, with some hundreds of peasants employed in the field of agriculture. The village seems to be insular. For instance, there was not television until the 1990s. Although there was a primary school, the rate of alphabetization was very weak. The family of Zero is one of those which became close to the PKK. On the contrary, several families became korucu in favor of the government in the 1990s. The family of Zero entered in relation with the guerilla movement for the first time at the beginning of the 1990s. Members of the family defined themselves to be “Kurmanc” but not Kurdish. They had a consciousness of belonging to the Kurmanc community. However, the term “Kurmanc” did not have a political connotation among them before relationships were established.
with the Kurdish guerilla movement. The use of Kurmanc simply corresponds to a local identification like peasantry or plebian. It means that, in this village, the Kurmanc ethnic identity gained a political dimension after the establishment of ties with the militants. While remaining focused on the topic to be addressed, one may open a parenthesis regarding this observation: this finding supports the constructivist and interactionist thesis which opposes primordial approaches. The latter handle cultural and political identities to be immutable and imposed by nature and reduce the identities to a heritage which is transmitted more or less automatically. The passage from reʿâyâ, namely peasantry linked with the land, to a political loyalty is neither direct nor automatic in this case study. Kurdish consciousness, whether it is individual or collective – in spite of the language that Kurds speak – is dependent on social and political elaboration.

Similarly, one notices a gradual change in the perception about the guerilla movement operating in the region of Gercüş in the 1980s. Armed militants were considered to be bandits (eşkiya) in the 1980s. For the peasants, it meant that they would attack the village and take away the girls. This is why the coming of the guerilla movement frightened the family of Zero. Nazlı, a member of the family saw a guerilla for the first time when she was working alone in the field during sunset. An armed woman dressed like a soldier surprised and frightened her. Nazlı was not courageous enough to talk with her during this first meeting. Once she learned that she belonged to an armed group, she wanted to discover and meet the militants. Indeed, there was a rumor circulating that there was a group of fighters which would go down to the village to look for food. She took decisions more often in the field where she saw the militants for the first time. Afterwards she met three other guerillas, one of whom was a woman settling near the field where the family of Zero was working. During the rendezvous, she discussed the Kurdish problem at length with them. Step by step, Nazlı developed relations with them, and later the entire family was in contact with the militants. They were indeed coming to meet the peasants to make propaganda in favor of the armed struggle or to search for food. These meetings became regular while shifting the Zero family’s attention towards the PKK. From then on “bandits” appeared as “fighters for the Kurdish liberation” to her and her family. In short, in the village of Zindê, one witnesses that political socialization corresponds both to the process of inculcation of beliefs and representations related to the guerilla movement’s power (vertical dimension) and to ethnic construction (horizontal dimension).

Some forms of proximity

That is the history of relations of the Zero family with the guerilla movement. But, in a more general context, what does “proximity” signify in the village of Zindê? It is worth developing the problem of proximity on the basis of common observations. I noticed similar findings about Pazarcık, Karlıova, and the like. First of all, proximity is a geographical concept. It represents herein a physical rapprochement between a community and armed forces. This rapprochement
takes several forms. The most significant ones are conversation (*sohbet*) and sharing of meals. When Kurdish peasants are ready to receive militants, they traditionally offer them something to eat; thereupon I would like to add two remarks. The first one deals with the anthropology of Kurdish peasantry. Sharing a meal constitutes a major component of daily life, and generally food and drink are offered to guests. The second one is with regard to the situation of the guerillas in rural milieus. Armed militants are generally hungry when they go into the village. Food is thus a fundamental need for them.

Conversation (*sohbet*) represents another form of proximity. It constitutes a major dimension of social relations as Gabriel Tarde studied long ago. It is a means of production of power, construction of a social base. It was above remarked that the militants found occasions to talk with the peasants in the evening or at night in the village of Zindê. There are a number of factors bringing them together. For instance, lack of electricity created a space of power for the guerilla movement in Zindê. Electricity even became an issue of propaganda:

We ate dinner together [with the militants]. We saw their fondness towards our children. They were organizing meetings, insisting on the fact that the government defined the Kurds to be terrorists, but they were fighters of the Kurdish liberation and equality. In that period, there was no electricity in our village. The guerillas defended that it was unequal. They were saying that, in Western Turkey, there was electricity in each village. Their propaganda helped to improve daily life. The government then provided electricity to prevent their propaganda. The attitude of the guerillas towards the people was very important […] Peasants were participating in the meetings at home. The guerillas were talking to them. They were, for instance, talking about martyrs.¹⁶¹

The conversations and meal sharing are not only festive events. Speaking, eating and drinking give rise to feelings and bonds even among very heterogeneous groups and persons.¹⁶² This means that proximity has a psychological and political dimension.

*Emotional dimension of proximity: feelings of pity, fear and admiration*

The militants have both arms and the spoken word. I previously mentioned the role of guns in mobilization. Speech is a component of conversation. It is not surprising that armed men and women who addressed the peasantry gave birth to multiple feelings. The role of these sentiments is not less important than other forms of proximity. Admiration and fear are two types of feelings that I observed among peasants. In many cases, they may coexist.

When I passed near him [an armed militant], he told me nothing. I went to my father and told him … I learned that he was a guerilla … fighters of
Kurdish liberation. I learned this. At the same time, I was afraid. I was always going to the field where they were staying. It was both fearful and exciting. But still I wanted to see them.\footnote{163}

Similar emotions were noticed in the interview with Nazlı.

\begin{quote}
[When you saw them under the tree that evening, did you talk with them?] Yes, I talked with them that evening. But I was very afraid. People were talking about them in a sensitive manner. I was told that they can even eat human beings.\footnote{164}
\end{quote}

Fear is not only a sentiment related to the period before the people know the guerillas. I am unable to historicize the fear among peasants. But even when they become their supporters, this emotion stays with some people. Other passages show the coexistence of different emotions among social bases in different contexts and times.

Sometimes, these men [guerillas] came to our village. We were asking ourselves: who are these men … these armed men?\footnote{165}

In that period [in the beginning of the 1980s], in the region of Bingöl, the villagers were afraid of them; they admired them at the same time.\footnote{166}

On the other hand, I sometimes noticed emotions of pity and respect towards the armed guerillas.

I was 8–9 years old. The guerillas came home one day. While I was serving one of them water, I first gave him the glass [by this gesture, he orders him to hold the glass], and then I filled the glass with water. I really regretted having behaved like that. I repented it a lot. How could I give him an empty glass? I should not have served water in that manner. I was a child during that period.\footnote{167}

When I went near the guerillas, I saw that three guerillas were eating bread. Their bread was rotten. That really affected me. I returned home. I could not tell my mother that I was with the guerillas. She was always warning me not to approach or talk with them. My mother had prepared fresh bread for dinner that evening. I remembered that the guerillas ate rotten bread. I stole some bread from my mother and brought it to the guerillas […] they ate it. Later, I returned home. My mother realized that some bread was missing. It seemed obvious that I had met the guerillas. One day, a conflict broke out in one of the villages and these comrades left. It was around the end of the 1980s. They returned in the coming years. In that period, soldiers disguised as guerillas were also coming to the village. But we understood that they were real guerillas when they arrived. We knew one of them. We ate dinner together.\footnote{168}
It is noteworthy to clarify that interviewed people sometimes spoke of their direct relations or face to face relations with the militants within hours. These types of relations, meetings or sympathy may quickly transform into admiration – in short, emotional dynamics operate to establish networks and found ties of social base. It also happens that sentiments of pity, fear and admiration may shift to political resources. This is one of the reasons why particular attention must be focused on political impacts of proximity.

**Socializations and transmission of militant habitus by the phenomenon of proximity**

One may consider proximity as a political phenomenon, a dynamic which contributes to the formation of social base by the Kurdish guerilla and mobilization for violence. In the next chapter, it shall be seen that it also becomes a factor of recruitment for the armed struggle. I studied above some forms of proximity and their psychological dimensions; the exchanges of words of the militants with peasants, their sentiments of admiration towards them, for instance, have at the same time political senses. As Gabriel Tarde suggested, the political role of the conversation is not less important than its linguistic role. That is why we should not study psychological and political dimensions of proximity separately. Proximity is a phenomenon as psychological as it is geographical, and its political effects need to be further studied.

Foremost, informal networks between militants and the social base constitute a milieu of socialization. The phenomenon of socialization is first related to the youth class. One observes, in the village of Zindê and many similar villages that the guerillas made their first contact with young people. Some observations about this point were made in the field:

The entrance into the village by the guerilla brought about new political socializations in the province of Batman. Socializations deal with both space and time. It may happen that the young people contact armed militants in the places where they work and raise animals. When the militants are invited home, this happens in general as a result of persuasion of the young on the older, the home seems to become a milieu of political socialization common to all members of the family, tribe or village. Visits of the militants to the villagers’ homes constitute an important step because not only young men and women but also housewives and the old and especially the children socialize in these reunions. In fact, some people who joined or supported the guerilla said that they were influenced by armed militants during these home assemblies when they were small. Furthermore, socialization generally operates in the evening and at night because it is risky to receive the guerillas during the day. Many young sympathizers and partisans of the PKK reported that they waited impatiently to meet the guerillas after sunset.
One may adopt a more analytical approach with regard to socialization. Political socialization, as I observed through empirical examples, is comparable to the functioning of the logics of rupture/discontinuity of the militants in the Basque country in the sense of Michel Wieviorka. The latter author indeed signals three logics of socialization which may apply to my case study. The first one related to the call for “conviction” (iknâ). It is founded on the direct link between the meaning of armed struggle and the logics of rupture, and on the principle of the militants’ capacity to recognize this link. This signifies that the militants call for armed struggle in their mobilization activities. Regardless of whether convictions are based on reason and sentiments, it elicits adherence and support for the guerilla movement.

The second characteristic is with regard to constraint (zor) which explains the relations of power between militants and the social base. Indeed, it might be said that the socialization process includes a mechanism whereby the exercise of constraint by the militants on the peasantry transforms into self-constraint by internalization in the sense of Norbert Elias. Elias had suggested that one of the principles of the construction of state authority was the progressive substitution of subjugation of individuals to physical violence by self-constraint. In this regard, it might be assumed that construction of power and hegemony of the guerilla movement imply a mechanism of constraint and coercion quite similar to what is observed in the functioning of the state by social scientists. Socialization by proximity leads to conviction and acceptance of ideas whether voluntarily or by constraint to the extent that political socialization favours regression of direct coercion.

Finally, a third aspect of socialization is the condemnation of repression, misery and poverty, which enables reinterpretation of the hypothesis of frustration by Ted Gurr. It is evident that frustration of the social base due to repression, misery and poverty is likely to result in violence. But this passage does not operate exactly in the model drawn by Ted Gurr. According to a psychological approach by Gurr, frustration is explained by the variance between expectations and the possibilities of satisfaction. However, violence as a political behavior is not a simple response, a direct product of unhappiness or deprivation. It is the outcome of political socialization. I shall revisit this topic in the following chapter dealing with the move to violence by individuals.

On the other hand, political socializations play a capital role in the transmission of the organization’s militant habitus. I have suggested above that networks enable the militants to transmit their knowledge and radical experiences to the social base. The following observation is one of the many illustrations:

People of the village were participating in meetings [with the militants]. The guerillas were talking about martyrs. People showed lots of enthusiasm. The guerillas had projects for the women. They were talking about women’s oppression … they were defending the liberation of women and for this reason they were talking about Bêrivan [Bineviş Agal]. We were told that Bêrivan was a young Yezidi girl who joined the movement in Europe and her participation changed the popular perception of the movement.
Mobilization for political violence

They added that her tomb is now in Cizre and people visit it. Moreover, they were talking about Zekiye Alkan ... the fact that she immolated herself in Diyarbakır ... she burned the fire of newroz in her own body.¹⁷⁹

Bêrivan, whose real name is Binevş Agal,¹⁸⁰ and Zekiye Alkan¹⁸¹ are presented as two militant models in the PKK’s sources. Their biographies can be added to those I have discussed above in the section about militant habitus. The reference by the organization to these figures demonstrates the extent to which the history of the PKK, inscribed in militant biographies, is a subject of conversation between the organization and social base. It must be noted that extension of militant habitus to social base is not only linked to the direct and simple propaganda of the militants via their conversations with peasants. At the same time, the militants themselves seem to influence the social base in their face to face relations and activities:

I was reading ... papers, magazines and novels. The guerillas were talking, and me, I was listening them. I was so interested in their life. I saw the way they behaved. This influenced me a lot.

[What did they tell you?]

Our rights ... the fact that everybody must speak their mother tongue ... people’s education, etc. The way the guerillas imagined life influenced the people. They were doing everything they were asking us to do. Their words matched their actions. For instance, if somebody did something unjust, they would punish him.¹⁸²

Through these experiences drawn from fieldwork, one may assume that extension of militant habitus to the social base signifies the “generalized other” in the use of the expression by Mead.¹⁸³ I use this notion in the sense of a typical militant image which is internalized by Kurdish agents as a permanent reference and frame of action. This militant and radical image is acquired on the basis of social experience.

I will revisit the issue of proximity in the analysis of the move to violence by individuals and in the study of repertoires of political violence. Indeed the proximity does enable one to explain not only the organization of armed groups, but also their recruitment and the emergence of some forms of violence, especially local insurgencies (serhildan) in the 1990s.

Notes

¹ My analysis only deals with the militant habitus of the PKK and does not constitute a study about political habitus of Kurdish society.

Mobilization for political violence  135


4 Here, I am not making any distinction between the theories of “resource mobilization”, “collective action” and “new social movements” as, in spite of some diverging perspectives on political action, they adopt an almost similar approach of violence that was criticized in the Introduction.


8 One of the most important documents is Doğru Yolu Kavrayalım (Let’s comprehend the right way). The text consulted has no author, but belongs to the PKK (November 1978).

9 Please note that these texts constituted instruments of armed propaganda at the same time.

10 It is possible that Mahir Çayan’s writings may have contributed to the diffusion of the Maoist perspective of guerilla war in Kurdist milieus in the 1970s. Çayan (1945–1972) was a Marxist intellectual and militant, and founder of THKP-C (People’s Liberation Party/Front of Turkey). His theoretical writings including various references to Maoist guerillas got published at the end of the 1960s and early in the 1970s in Turkey. Çayan, Mahir, Teorik Yazılar, Istanbul: Gökkuşağı Yayınları, 1996.


12 One can find similar observations in the following sources of the PKK: Seviyorsan Savaş (If you love, make war), no author, no place, no date; Ayaklanma Taktiği Üzerine Tezler ve Görevlerimiz (Theses on the strategy of rebellion and our responsibilities), no author, no place, no date.

13 Öcalan, Abdullah, Kürdistan’da zorun rolü [The role of force in Kurdistan] Cologne, Weşanên Serxwebûn, 1993 [1983], p. 297. The work that I consulted has no author. It is assumed to have been written by Abdullah Öcalan.


15 PKK Kuruluş Bildirisi [The communiqué of the PKK’s foundation], no author, no place, no date, p. 47. This is the manifesto written for the foundation of the PKK. The original text which was consulted has no written date but the manifesto was first distributed by PKK militants in Urfa, one of the Kurdish provinces in Eastern Turkey, in 1978.


17 The use of “force” is a central theme in the PKK. “Force” and “violence” are used as synonyms to each other in most texts of 1970 and 1980.


19 One should be reminded that the term “colonialism” was much used in the 1970s and 1980s. Today, its use is rare in PKK texts.

20 PKK Kuruluş Bildirisi, op. cit., pp. 52–53.
The word is underlined in the original text: “sömürgecilikten kurtuluş onun anladığı dille mümkündür”.

PKK Kuruluş Bildirisi, op. cit., pp. 52–53.


Michael Lipsky conceives the protest as a strategy used by weak groups trying to increase their bargaining capacity. Lipsky, Michael “Protest as a political resource”, American Political Science Review, Vol. 62, n°4, 1968, pp. 1144–1158. Similarly, Martha Crenshaw suggests that terrorism results from the decision of the organization which uses it as a means of opposition to the government. I share these points regarding strategic use of violence. It should however be underlined that this study is not about bargaining situations. Martha Crenshaw, “The causes of terrorism”, Comparative Politics, Vol. 13, n°4, 1981, pp. 379–399.

Regarding this point, the strategy of the PKK is similar to that of the guerilla proposed by Nguyễn Van Tiêu, “Notre stratégie de la guérilla”, in Gérard Chaliand (ed.), Les guerres irrégulières, Paris, Gallimard, 2008, pp. 638–639.

Amilcar Cabral also suggests that “political domination implies a permanent state of violence against nationalist forces”. Amilcar Cabral, “L’armée de la théorie”, in Chaliand, op. cit., pp. 640–652.


No information could be obtained about how the Fanonian approach became diffused in the PKK milieu.


The term “liberation” is taken in a moral and psychological sense by the militants.

See for example, [the PKK] Yurtsever işciler, köylüler, gençler! no date, no place. Please note that early sources of the PKK focus on the notion of “personality” rather than “identity”.

The article by Olivier Gorojean deals with the production of new man inside the PKK. Gorojean, Olivier, “La production de l’Homme nouveau au sein du PKK”, European Journal of Turkish Studies, Thematic Issue, n°8, 2008, Surveiller, normaliser, réprimer. I will not enter into the details of discourse analysis on the project of production because I am more particularly interested in the desire of production of new man as an integral part of the use of violence and ethnic mobilization.

PKK Kuruluş Bildirisi, op. cit., p. 53.


Öcalan, Kürdistan’da zorun rolü, op. cit., p. 201.

See [PKK] Yurtsever işciler, köylüler, gençler!


The term means the disciples of Abdullah Öcalan, one of the founders of the organization. In some regions, local people called the PKK militants Apocu during that period.

Particularly Germany, Switzerland and France.

For the respect of farm owners, the names of farms are not given in this piece.

Mobilization for political violence  137


46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.

48 Empirical data on political violence in Antep was collected through field research in Turkey, Sweden and France, which lasted for several years.

49 Idealists (*ülkücü*) constituted a Turkish nationalist movement in the 1970s. They used both Turkish nationalists and Islamic elements in their mobilization during that period. A part of the Kurdish population adhered to the movement particularly due its reference to religious values and symbols.

50 Interviews with an ex-militant of the PKK from the Antep region in 2009.


52 See the first chapter.

53 The party was established by some Turkish Kurds in 1965. They were inspired by *Partiya Demokrata Kurdistanê* (Kurdistan Democratic Party) in Iraq, the organization of Mullah Mustafa Barzani. The DPTK in Turkey was divided into two parties in 1971.


55 This remark relates to the hypothesis by Edelman, *Politics as symbolic action*, op. cit., p. 17.

56 Seidman, “Guerillas in their Midst”, op. cit.


58 Ibid.

59 For instance, the ideas of Fanon and Sorel about violence are qualified to be rhetorical and without historical grounds. For this type of critique, for example, see Kalyvas, Stathis, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p. 6 and Wieviorka, Michel, *Sociétés et terrorismes*, Paris, Fayard, 1988, p. 490.

60 Della Porta, Donatella, “Research on Social Movements and Political Violence”, op. cit.


63 Ibid.


65 Ibid.


74 This remark is related to the hypothesis of polarization: state coercion and armed struggle provoke a kind of process leading individuals to participate in a radical group.
Arendt, *Du mensonge à la violence*, op. cit., p. 65.


Ibid., p. 101.


About the armed clash between the PKK and *Stêrka Sor*, see the first chapter.


The provinces wherein martial law was applied were as follows: Adana, Ankara, Bingöl, Elazığ, Erzincan, Erzurum, Gaziantep, İstanbul, Kars, Malatya, Kahramanmaraş, Sivas, Şanlıurfa (26 December 1978); Adıyaman, Diyarbakır, Hakkari, Mardin, Tunceli (Dersim), Siirt (26 April 1979). See *Milliyet*, 27 December 1978 and *Hürriyet*, 27 April 1979.

According to Turkish police sources, a total of 19,978 people belonging to different organizations were arrested or held in custody between 12 September 1980 and 31 March 1981. İmset, İsmet G., *PKK: Ayrılıkçı Şiddetin 20 Yılı (1973–1992)*, Istanbul, Turkish Daily News Yayınları, 1993, p. 83.

The Garbar Mountains constitute one of the most important places of armed conflict between the Turkish army and the PKK. They are situated in the province of Şırnak.


See the first chapter.


A. Dicle “Mazlum Yoldaşın anısı yolumuzu aydınlatan sürekli bir meşaledir”, 5 April 1982, no place.

I have translated the PKK vocabulary word by word, though some expressions are not used in English. They correspond to the organizational jargon and I prefer to remain faithful to the original version of the texts. Indeed, some of the vocabulary
Mobilization for political violence

and expressions are not used in any language, neither in Turkish nor Kurdish. They are completely specific to the PKK.

106 [PKK], *Kürdistan’da kişilik sorunu, devrimci militanın özellikleri ve parti yaşamı*, op. cit., pp. 77 and 138.


109 For a comment about the significance of a situation, see Berger and Luckmann. Indeed, for the authors, the reality of daily life comprises categorical schemes according to which the others are apprehended and treated in face to face meetings. Berger, Peter, and Luckmann, Thomas, *La construction sociale de la réalité*, Paris, Masson Armand Colin, 1986 [1966], p. 46.


111 Unknown date of birth.

112 Kurdish *Hizbullah* also targeted the faction of *Menzil* in the 1990s. This faction known under the name of *Menzilciler* was a splinter group of *Hizbullah*.


114 Bozarslan, *Violence in the Middle East*, op. cit., p. 55.

115 The last chapter will mention to what extent the defection of Şahin Dönmez played a role in the emergence of self-sacrificial violence in the prison of Diyarbakir.


117 Ibid., pp. 118–121.


119 For a comment about the relation between habitus and the techniques of struggle, Crettiez, “High Risk Activism”, op. cit., p. 10.

120 Furthermore, the texts, pamphlets and publications of the organization are a means of diffusion of militant knowledge and culture in Kurdish milieus. These instruments constitute socializing agents.


123 [PKK], *Kürdistan’da kişilik sorunu*, op. cit., p. 75.


125 [PKK], *Kürdistan’da kişilik sorunu*, op. cit., p. 141.

126 The defection of Şahin Dönmez is frequently cited in the texts published by the PKK.

127 Direnmek Yasamaktır*, Cologne, Weşanên Serxwebûn, 1984 [1981], p. 67. The author of the book that I consulted is anonymous. It was reported that the author of this work is Mazlum Doğan.

128 I use the term “typification” in the sense of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann because typification is one of the agents of institutionalization of militant practices. Berger, and Luckmann, *La construction sociale de la réalité*, op. cit., pp. 69–175.
Mobilization for political violence

129 [PKK] Silahli Miçadele Tarihimiz ve Komuta Sorunlarımız [author, date and place are unknown].
130 www.rojaciwan.com/haber-37531.html.
131 Interview with a former militant of the PKK in 2006 in France.
134 Hamit Bozarslan also underlines that self-sacrificial violence may become a symbolic source for using other forms of violence. Bozarslan, Violence in the Middle East, op. cit., p. 4.
135 For the notion of culture by Clifford Geertz, see Geertz, The interpretation of cultures, op. cit., p. 14.
136 Bozarslan, Conflit kurde, op. cit.
138 Wiewiorka, Sociétés et terrorisme, op. cit., p. 348.
139 For the notion of culture by Clifford Geertz, see Geertz, The interpretation of cultures, op. cit., p. 14.
140 Diiani, Mario, and McAdam, Doug, Social movements and networks: relational approaches to collective action, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 3–12. Indeed, the notion of networks applies to individuals, organizations, events and collective actors.
143 Tilly and Tarrow, Politiques du conflit, op. cit.
145 See the first chapter.
146 I study herein the case of the PKK. But the phenomenon of talebe was not only limited to the PKK; most of the Kurdish organizations that I discussed in the first chapter were founded by the talebe.
148 For this analysis, see Wiewiorka, Sociétés et terrorisme, op. cit., p. 129.
149 For more information about these militants’ biographies, see the section about militant habitus.
150 The PKK was never exclusively a movement of the talebe and youth. However, those who mobilized were students especially in the 1970s and 1980s.
151 The notion of “talebe” was more important than that of “revolutionary” due to its strong resonance within Kurdish society.
152 Social capital is a whole of resources which depends on the possession of an enduring network of relations that are more or less institutionalized. See Bourdieu, Pierre, “Le capital social: notes provisoires”, Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales, n°31, 1980, pp. 2–3.
153 According to Pierre Bourdieu, social capital strengthens the effects of other types of cultural capital. I share the argument in the case of relations of the talebe with...
Mobilization for political violence


The name is a pseudonym.

Please see the Introduction.

The term herein signifies those who speak Kurmančî, a Kurdish language dialect.

The Ottoman Turkish term is written as reaya in modern Turkish and comes from Arabic raʿâyâ.


Field study in Batman in 2005.

Interview with Nazlı in Batman in 2005.

Simmel, *Sociologie*, op. cit.

Interview with Nazlı in Batman in 2005.

Interview with Nazlı in Batman in 2005.

Interview with Nazlı in Batman in 2005.

Interview with H in Batman in 2005.

Interview with M in Paris in 2011.

Interview with H in Batman in 2005.

Interview with Nazlı in Batman in 2005.

According to McCarthy and Zald, feelings may translate into structural resources. See Zald and McCarthy, *Social movements in an organizational society*, op. cit., p. 5.


One may herein take socialization in several senses: a form of sociability in the sense of Tarde, a process of construction of reality in the sense of Berger and Luckmann, and reciprocal actions in the sense of Simmel. See Berger and Luckmann, *La construction sociale de la réalité*, op. cit.; Simmel, *Sociologie*, op. cit.

Field notes in Batman in 2005.

*Wieviorka, Sociétés et terrorisme*, op. cit., p. 335.

Ibid.


*Braud, Sociologie politique*, op. cit., p. 233.


Ibid.

Interview with Nazlı in Batman in 2005.

Born in Bazivan, a Yezidi village in Beşiri (Batman), Binevş Agal joined the PKK in Europe in the 1980s. She was killed in Cizre in 1989. Her death anniversary led to a popular insurgency in Cizre in 1990. I will talk about it in the section dealing with serhildan in the last chapter. One must add that Bazivan is situated in proximity with the village of Zindê where Nazlı, the interviewed person, came from.

Zekiye Alkan was born in Erzincan, afterwards she settled in Izmir with her parents where she completed primary, elementary and high school. She joined the PKK when she was a medical student at the University of Diyarbakır. She set fire to herself in Diyarbakır during newroz in 1990.

Interview with D in Batman in 2005.

3 Participation of individuals in violence

Introduction

If I have studied till here the move to violence by political groups, movements and organizations in the previous chapters, I have not sufficiently analyzed the use of violence by individuals. The use of violence by a social or political organization evidently cannot be treated separately from the use of violence by individuals belonging to that organization. In reality, the two phenomena form a single phenomenon. A party cannot move to violence without its members using violence. However, as pointed out in the Introduction, one should analytically distinguish the use of violence by individuals and organizations as far as the two phenomena imply differing explanations. The difference depends on the fact that the scale of observation changes. This chapter will study political violence at the micro level: Through which processes do individual actors turn to violence? This is the research problem the author will attempt to find a solution to.

It is noteworthy to clarify my method and sources for this chapter. Empirical material was obtained through fieldwork and primary sources drawn from PKK publications. I carefully studied militant trajectories, and released a series of factors, variables and configurations. The factors I observed are divided into three groups:

In the first instance, I will study social mechanisms of the move to violence. One might notice at least three: socialization in political networks, ʿasabiyya and polarization. In a second step, I will pay attention to symbolic dynamics: the motive for recognition and symbolic violence play an undeniable role in the move to violence. Finally, two contingent factors are added to social and symbolic mechanisms: proximity and path of violence. Indeed, whether socialization, polarization, ʿasabiyya (esprit de corps) and symbolic violence lead to political violence or not depends mostly on two contingent processes: (1) proximity of rebel forces to civilian population and (2) historical configurations of local and regional violence.
About the case studies

I will still debate the topic which I began discussing in the Introduction, in order to clarify the case studies used in this chapter.

Through the observed and studied cases, one can make a generalization but it does not mean that the researcher finds identical things in every case. It has been already noted that each case is an example within the general category. Everything that we learn about it teaches us about the general phenomenon at the same time. One cannot proceed as if this case was absolutely similar to other cases, or at least as if it was similar regarding the most relevant points while putting it aside to ignore all local and specific characteristics. If a biographical case is found in Batman, it differs on certain grounds from another case located, for example in Mardin, Pazarcık, Hakkâri or Bingöl. Indeed, everything related or dependent on the geographical pattern influences the research topic. Likewise, a case in Batman in the 1980s will never be identical to any other case in Batman in the 1990s. Possibilities are multiple. Evidently, the author observed and studied much more than he is about to present herein. As already pointed out, regardless of how much one studies a particular topic, it can never be wholly observed or presented in totality. It is certain that the biography of every individual moving to political violence matters, but it is impossible to document everybody’s life. All we know is that an example is chosen within the social system because of its content, to represent at least one or some significant aspects of a group, community or organization which we analyze.

I noticed that individuals have something in common, for instance their integration to social networks, polarization or search for recognition. The same phenomenon occurs in not just one, but several cases although its form is variable, given the time and space. Furthermore, all criteria of a category do not go hand in hand. For example, a network may be a café, a district or simply meeting with a charismatic personality. It is usually possible to multiply the examples but it is useless. As Howard Becker admitted, the researcher should stop, once he/she has sufficiently presented the cases enabling one to demonstrate a significant fact.

Social mechanisms of the move to violence

Political socialization in the networks and Kurdist milieus

I prioritized the phenomenon of social base to social networks related with mobilization in the previous chapter. I attempted to show to what extent the guerilla movement’s mobilization depends mostly on the social base. As for social networks, I considered them as a component of the social base. In order to distinguish two notions, I herein assume that social base is analytically related to the PKK’s mobilization for violence while social networks concern the move to violence by individuals. In this respect, I will focus on social networks in this section. To provide a tangible example, I am interested in activities or phenomena such as frequenting a place, a cultural association by actors or their
relationships with the militants, or reading a Kurdish nationalist newspaper, and so on. These networks, among others, are factors leading to the use of political violence.

Socialization in the networks signifies interactions taking place between individuals and the Kurdish movement. I will not try to construct typologies or distinguish different steps of socialization. I will instead focus on the interdependence between socialization in militants’ networks and milieu (muhit) and the utilization of violence. My view is that the move to political violence operates through political socialization.

Social networks and political movements in social sciences

The use of the notion of social networks in the studies of social movements and political violence was defended by opposition to theories of mass society. In the latter theories, participation in a social group or political movement was formulated within the paradigm of “crowd” and “collective behavior.” These classical theories were criticized by social movement scholars for two reasons; first, because they established a theory according to which political movements emerge in situations of unorganized turmoil or unease linked with especially great changes; second, due to the fact that they suggested they were atomized people who join social and political movements. The two critiques are relevant as far as the theory of mass society tends to explain political action within a normative perspective.

Being cautious about the thesis of pathology and social turmoil, social movement scholars have emphasized the integration of actors in a social or political community to study political action. From their viewpoint, participation in a political movement is explained by networks and effects of socialization. On the other hand, the problem of socialization and network was studied in a parallel manner by specialists of violence. For instance, Crenshaw pointed out that violence is linked with group interactions as well as personal choices. This approach is relevant because a “terrorist” is defined by his/her integration to a network and political group or culture which shapes his/her decision. Braungart and Braungart later put forward that a political group is the source of radicalization to violence. In a more elaborated way, della Porta indicated that the passage of individuals to violence is rarely unexpected. For the author, violence is associated with a specific process marked by socializations, meetings as well as networking leading to high risk activity. Della Porta emphasized that spaces of socialization such as districts, bars, associations may enable engagement in armed struggle. Likewise, Somnier demonstrated the role of squats as places of integration, acceptance of illegality in milieus of the radical left in Europe. All this research defended the following thesis: the entry to an armed organization may be founded upon networks, namely friendship ties, meetings, frequenting a political or cultural place.

This thesis seems to be tenable in the Kurdish context. The process of participation in armed struggle is strictly associated with network dynamics. I will
present eight empirical cases to help verify the role of social networks in the passage to political violence: Şixo, Roza, Mehmet Karasungur, İbrahim Bilgin, Mihriban, Cahide, Şevîn, Bawer. The examples of Şixo, Roza and Bawer are based upon a non-guided interview with them. Five other cases are drawn from primary sources of the PKK. I will present them in chronological order.

Analysis of the cases: Şixo, Roza, Karasungur, Bilgin, Mihriban, Cahide, Şevîn, Bawer

Şixo

Born in 1959, a militant and cadre of the PKK in the 1970s, Şixo played a role in the mobilization of the Kurdish organization in the region of Antep. He was a militant recruited by the Apocu in Antep, who left the PKK around 1978–1979. In fact, most Apocu militants of this period that I, in previous sections, studied were themselves founders of networks in Ankara and the organization in the Kurdish region. On the contrary, Şixo was a worker in Antep. His parents came from an underprivileged social milieu. He finished his secondary studies in the 1960s. He lived most of his life in the region of Antep prior to his militancy. Before meeting with the Apocu, he sometimes visited an association of the Turkish radical left movement in Antep. It seems that the start of his relations with the Apocu was a determinant in his participation in armed struggle.

I became conscious of the Kurdish problem towards the end of 1975.

[Could you tell me how this process took place?]
Oh… in that period, there was a man called Cin Ali. There was also a man studying in the educational institute [eğitim enstitüsü] in Antep. He invited us to talk, me and Cin Ali… there were also three other persons. We were invited. We met in a café. Cin Ali… then Cin Ali told us that we are Kurdish and that our Kurdish identity is forbidden. He said that the fact of being Kurdish is denied. He affirmed that we are being exploited and the Kurds are a colonized sect of people. For him, our country, Kurdistan, was divided between two empires: the Ottoman Empire and the Farsi Empire; then after the First World War, our country was divided between four states… following these discussions, we stopped little by little to visit the association of the Turkish left. There was a group named Revolutionaries of Kurdistan… I joined them.19

The theme of colonialism mattered during that period. I mentioned it in the first chapter. The discussion about colonialism and anti-colonialism in political circles was part of the formation of a radical political field in Kurdish time and space. It shall be seen that the theme of discussion in the networks shifts in the 1990s. This section’s main concern is not the meaning of these discussions but the process of socialization in the networks. Cin Ali was one of the first cadres of the Apocu in the Antep region.20 Social networks established by him enabled
him to recruit not only Şixo but many young people in Antep. Cin Ali was later arrested and imprisoned in Diyarbakır. He lost his life there in a hunger strike to death in 1981. Getting acquainted and having discussions with him prompted Şixo’s participation in the militant organization.

ROZA

Born in 1959 in a Kurdish Alevi village of Pazarcık, Roza finished primary school in Maraş. She reported that she lived most of the time in the Kurdish Alevi milieu in the town of Maraş during her secondary studies. Her high school years correspond to the period of polarization occurring between the Sunni and Alevi communities. Roza joined the high school of teachers (öğretmen lisesi) in Niğde in 1974. The school was strongly segmented between the right and left movements during her studies in Niğde. She did not really participate in any political group at that time, but was sympathetic towards Halkın Kurtuluşu and Halkın Yolu. As a high school pension lodger, she sometimes visited the Turkish left milieus in Niğde. Afterwards, in 1977, she entered the University of ODTÜ (Ortadoğu Teknik Üniversitesi) in Ankara. On holidays, she visited her family in Maraş. During her stays, she would meet the Apocu who were mobilizing in Maraş:

There were political activities of Apocu in Maraş. I went to listen to them. They were reading a book about the capitalist society. I talked with them … it was a type of political education. They learned that I was studying in the ODTÜ University in Ankara. They told me they had comrades in ODTÜ and suggested that I meet them. I agreed to it. It was in 1977. Therefore, a tie between me and Apocu began to form.

Roza returned to her studies in ODTÜ, in the Turkish capital. She developed relations with the Apocu. In 1978, the massacres of Maraş took place. It seems that the pogrom promoted her engagement with the Kurdish cause. Indeed, the murders created a sentiment of insecurity and injustice. According to her, her university years in ODTÜ were characterized by a distant suffering because of the critical situation in Maraş. She indicated that without the solidarity of the Kurdish talebe, she would not have borne the pain of her relatives being killed in 1978. This is a political solidarity among students belonging to the same community. It is thus logical to claim that participation operates through networks of personal acquaintance based on belonging to the same culture and ethnic group. Roza finally left the university and joined the PKK camps in Syria in 1980. From the findings in the PKK’s review of Serxwebûn, I studied other biographies of militants whose move to violence corresponded to almost the same period. I will discuss some of them in order substantiate the observation about the role of socialization within the networks.
Mehmet Karasungur was born in Darabi at Kığı (Bingöl) in 1947. He studied in the Darabi primary school. He studied in the high school of Bingöl where he also completed his secondary education. He graduated from the Erzurum Educational Institute [eğitim enstitüsü]. In 1971–1972, he taught in Maraş where he was involved in revolutionary activities [...] In 1975, he began to work in the Bingöl high school. He contributed to the foundation of the branch of “TÖB-DER”. [...] He was tortured by the police because of his political activities in TÖB-DER. During his stay in Bingöl, he met Hayri Durmuş. His relations with Hayri Durmuş determined the rest of his life. He engaged in the “Movement of liberation of Kurdistan”. He carried out political work in Varto and Genç.  

Mehmet Karasungur was involved in the politics of the revolutionary left. That may or may not have resulted in the armed struggle. There is no doubt that his friendship with Hayri Durmuş as well as “face to face” relations with the Apocu influenced his militancy. In the case of Karasungur, one should remember an observation shared by several researchers. If a person already knows a member of the political movement, it is more probable that he/she adheres to that movement. When this member is charismatic, the probability is higher. Since I emphasize the function of charisma in this case, it is noteworthy to add an interpretation: the charisma in the sense of Max Weber as supernatural power may strengthen the effects of socialization over the use of political violence. The charisma herein is also associated with the superior status of a charismatic person within the organization. For instance, being a cadre of the political organization can constitute a source of charisma. Karasungur’s meeting with H. Durmuş, a charismatic figure of the PKK, should be distinguished from the meeting of any member of the Kurdish organization. It may be argued that individuals entering into contact with charismatic leaders are more likely to join the movement. M. Karasungur left his job as a teacher in the high school of Bingöl in 1978. He participated in armed conflicts in the Urfa region. He became one of the members of the Central Committee (Merkez Komite) of the PKK. Following the coup d’état in September 1980, he left for Iran and then for the PKK camps in Libya. He went to Iraqi Kurdistan to direct PKK activities. He was killed with Ibrahim Bilgin, in 1983. Bilgin was also a member of the PKK. In addition to Karasungur, he was put in charge of the organization’s relations with other Kurdish movements in Iraqi Kurdistan. His biography also manifests how the place of socialization was a determinant in the participation in political violence.
İbrahim Bilgin’s trajectory is relevant because he joined the Apocu networks in the district (mahalle) of Tuzluçayır in Ankara. It was in fact the district where the Apocu group began to form a Kurdish circle in the 1970s. Bilgin was a student in the high school of Tuzluçayır during that period. It seems that the place of his socialization favored his meeting with the Apocu:

Born in the village of Kangal (Sivas) in 1963, he moved with his parents to Ankara. He attended the primary and secondary school and then high school of Tuzluçayır. Affiliated with revolutionary ideas when he was small, he met Apocu talebe during his studies at the high school of Tuzluçayır. He thus left the high school and participated in activities of the Apocu in Antep. He was sent by the PKK to Iraqi Kurdistan to organize the party with Mehmet Karasungur. He was killed there in 1983.

So one may notice that the place of political socialization of Bilgin matters in the move to violence because he was located in proximity with the places of mobilization of Kurdish students in the Turkish capital. In reality, the case of Bilgin is not an exception, for I noticed other similar political socializations. I may also cite the case of İdris Ökmen. The latter was born and brought up in Kars. He came from the middle class. Ökmen also met Apocu students in Ankara when he was a student in high school in 1977. His meeting with them in Ankara seems to be a determinant for him to become a militant particularly because Apoist (Apocu or followers of Apo) networks were absent or almost weak in the province of Kars during that period. Before that he may have been influenced by left wing ideas in Kars. However this is not always a condition of the move to violence. It is usually observed that individuals, thanks to networks, can become radicalized rapidly to violence without any prior step. Ökmen, after becoming a PKK militant, was committed to the construction of Apoist networks in Kars. He went to the Bekaa camp following the coup d’état in 1980. He was killed in an armed clash in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1985. A final example is relevant to defend the thesis according to which the district (mahalle) impacts the politicization of the youth, namely the case of Ali Doğan Yıldırım. It resembles the cases of Bilgin and Ökmen. Indeed, Yıldırım was born in Pülümür (Dersim) in 1956. His parents immigrated to Ankara for economic reasons. He went to high school in the district of Tuzluçayır. He registered in the University of Gazi in Ankara, but left the university. According to PKK sources, he adhered to the Kurdish “group” in 1974–1975. It is estimated that Yıldırım joined Kurdist networks when he was a student in the district of Tuzluçayır.

The case of Mihriban enables us to show Kurdish nationalist networks, at the same time involving associative milieus, for instance TÖB-DER.
MİHRİBAN

Born in Varto (Muş) in a Kurdish Alevi family in 1957, Mihriban participated in the Kurdish organization at the end of the 1970s. A graduate from the High School Teacher of Van (Van Öğretmen Lisesi), she started her profession in the village of Varto. Mihriban talks about how she was committed to the Kurdish cause:

The PKK entered the region of Varto in 1977. [...] It was different from other movements with regard to goal, strategy and mode of organization. I became interested in the PKK. We were hoping for independence. Members of the PKK were precise and sensitive. They were decisive, sure about themselves, uncompromising and much more reasoned [...] This attracted my attention. I did not take position right away. I was following them. During that process, I began to discuss with them. I met with M. Can Yüce and Zeki Palabıyık and discussed with them. They made efforts to convince me. I was skeptical towards other political movements. Mehmet Karasungur gave a seminar in TÖB-DER. It was very impressive. He went out. We were very impressed. Five hundred people listened to him with great attention [...] I later had a chance to have a discussion with Mehmet Karasungur.

It seems that the meeting with M. Can Yüce, Zeki Palabıyık and Mehmet Karasungur encouraged the commitment of Mihriban for the Kurdish cause. The visit of TÖB-DER, left wing association, enabled her to meet Kurdish militants. Therefore, Mihriban progressively adopted the ideology of the organization. She participated in the activities of the PKK in the region of Varto in 1978 and joined the Kurdish guerilla movement one year after the military coup d’état.

Other cases of the move to violence which operated in different configurations can support my thesis. I shall present the militant history of Cahîde, Şevîn and Bawer. Their socialization is set in the 1980s and 1990s.

CAHÎDE

Cahîde’s trajectory presents a different situation. She participated in the Kurdish organization in 1989 when she was 15 years old. Born in a village of Uludere (Şırnak), Cahide never went to school. Her move to violence seems to be dependent on the guerilla activities in the 1980s:

My relatives began to join the guerilla in 1987. Their participation and martyrdom influenced us. I learned about the party [PKK] little by little. The guerillas were coming to our village. I was 12 years old. My parents were not ready to accept my participation. I took the decision without asking them. The guerillas had come to the village. [...] I left the village with them. My parents were feudal. [...] They were content with the party. They were supporting it within the limits of their possibilities. But they did not want anybody in the family to die. This is why I did not talk to them about my
Participation of individuals in violence

willingness to participate. [...] I had complex sentiments. They may not have agreed to my becoming a guerilla. On the one hand, the mountain and the arms attracted me; on the other hand, I was worried about whether I would be sent back to my village.48

Cahîde remained in the mountain.49 Based on this information, it can be supposed that her integration into networks drove her to the armed struggle in spite of some ambivalent feelings and unfavorable factors. Her participation in violence resembles that of the residents of Zindê village that was presented in the previous chapter, that is to say, proximity considerably impacts the decision of individuals.

ŞEVÎN

Şevîn’s military history shows similar characteristics with that of Cahide.50 She participated in the organization in 1992 when she was only eleven years old:

I was born in Nusaybin [Mardin] in 1981. [...] My father is a worker. I never went to school. I participated in the ARGK (Popular army of the Liberation of Kurdistan)51 two years ago. [...] There were many guerillas around our family. I grew up with these feelings. I started being a messenger for the guerilla when I was ten years old. I attended to Serihîldan insurgencies. I was distributing the pamphlets. I wanted to go to the mountain. The person in charge of the town (of the organization) was against me participating. If I had told my mother, she would have made fun of me. She would have believed me. When I left [home], I was eleven years old. I did not say goodbye. My older sister also wanted to participate. I participated without waiting for her.52

Şevîn’s example, just like that of Cahide, corroborates the fact that militant persons, during that period, could become radicalized and move to violence from very early on, when their social entourages and circles are already committed, or else when they are situated in a Kurdish nationalist milieu. It then becomes difficult to determine from what age individuals use political violence, because this is variable, given the social networks.

BAWER

Born in a village of Kozluk (Batman) at the end of the 1970s, Bawer finished his studies in the village primary school and secondary school in Batman. He finished high school in 1992. He witnessed the violent conflicts between the PKK and Hizbullah and the state security forces during his high school years. He was radically socialized to violence. It seems that the relative disappearance of public space in a repressive context increased the importance of nationalist social networks in Batman in the 1990s.53 The interaction of Bawer with Kurdish nationalist networks corresponds to that period:
[How did you become attached to the Kurdish question?]
At that time, I was going to high school ... high school [hesitating a bit]. Yes, it was the time of high school. My comrades took me to the office of the “HEP”\(^{54}\) in Batman. The HEP was in existence during that period. There were comrades over there. I talked with the party leaders. That is how I became attached to the Kurdish question.

[Could you talk about your friends in that given time? About what were you discussing?]
In fact, I was not so active within the HEP. I was frequenting here sometimes. We were all talking to each other. Before visiting the HEP, I did not know about the party [by party he means the PKK]. I had remained for long in the village. I had not heard about the PKK. We were living in the village ... the party’s first movements had already begun in Hakkâri. But it was being said that they were terrorists. The first channel on the TV [TRT] qualified them to be terrorists. We were influenced by this news. But when we visited the party, we were told everything. They told us that it was like that. And it was not as the others were saying. That way we became attached to the party.\(^{55}\)

Bawer and his family did not consider the PKK militants as “fighters of liberation”, but “terrorists” when they lived in their village at Kozluk. The Kurdish guerilla movement had not mobilized in their village in the 1980s. He and other members of the family met the militants in the Kurdish nationalist milieus in the town of Batman. The contacts, meetings and knowledge networks influenced the militant trajectory of Bawer; he was imprisoned for five years in the 1990s because of his political activities.

Conclusions on the role of social networks and Kurdist milieus in the move to political violence

Because this study is qualitative, I have presented different empirical examples with regard to political socialization in networks. Eight examples each correspond to different times and spaces. Şixo was socialized into violence in the 1970s in Antep; Roza in the 1970s in Pazarcık; Karasungur, at the end of the 1970s in Bingöl; Bilgin, at the end of the 1970s in Ankara; Mihriban, towards the end of the 1970s and at the beginning of the 1980s in Muş; Cahîde at the end of the 1980s and at the beginning of the 1990s in Uludere; Şevîn in the 1990s in Mardin; Bawer in the 1990s in Batman. In spite of this temporal variability, each of them has a dimension of socialization in the Kurdist networks and spaces.

These qualitative cases show that, as Wieviorka admits, the use of political violence results from the learning process based on membership to social networks whereby political identities are constructed and strengthen primary ties of solidarities and function in opposition to repression.\(^{56}\) Individuals start learning political violence through a process of socialization.\(^{57}\) The move to violence here is not associated with individual characteristics or atomization as classical
Participation of individuals in violence theories long defended, but to the integration of individuals into political groups which constitute a reservoir of evident recruitment. These groups or networks may even directly result in political violence without any intermediary politicization. The examples of Cahîde and Şewîn help to confirm this observation. Their politicization seems to be weak before moving to political violence. Social networks may also serve as a place of long transition to armed struggle and thus form a starting point of politicization and a rigorous, militant experience. One observes this in the case of Şixo, Roza and Bawer: the degree of commitment and politicization is quite intense in these militants.

Second, it is noteworthy to remember one of the previously defended hypotheses, especially in the case of the PKK, that participation in armed struggle and mobilization is strictly associated with each other. Socialization in the networks structures the belief among participants to armed struggle that only non-peaceful means can promote the Kurdish cause. Social networks generate a sentiment of political identity, a common destiny and collective commitment to defend the political organization as well as the relevant ethnic community. Likewise, these political socializations enable individuals to adopt and transmit the militant habitus of the PKK.

Socialization within the militant networks has another dimension for female participants. As can be noted in the example of Cahîde, it can help them escape from family or feudal and patriarchal conditions. In this respect, the use of violence seems to be a project for emancipation from oppressive social conditions. Whether the escape from feudality and patriarchy is really accomplished by joining the organization is a different topic of discussion. But I may or must state that socialization in the networks gives them hope and a goal to live for.

Socialization within a political organization and a social community reduce the burden of repression as well. It is evident that most of the militant individuals went through repression before engaging in political violence. This is why it would be noteworthy to study the impact of repression on becoming radical.
Polarization

The second significant configuration of the move to violence is polarization. It refers to radicalization of the conflict taking place between actors. The use of violence should not be considered only as an integration of individuals to Kurdish networks. Violence also corresponds to the phenomenon of “interactions in conflict” which happen between rebellious actors and the state.

My approach to polarization is founded on some theoretical works. The classical theories of conflict, first, support my argument in that the conflict gives rise to polarization, polarization which itself can promote participation. According to Carl Schmitt, society’s polarization into a tandem “friends–enemies” constitutes even the essence of politics and war. In the light of this conception by Carl Schmitt and Jacques Sémelin, Stathis Kalyvas defines polarization to be a dynamic of political violence. Similarly, Eric L. Hirsch conceived polarization as a factor of commitment in protest movements.

My conception of polarization, though linked with these scientific problems of conflict and violence, operates differently from the previous ones. I indeed place experiences of individuals at the center of the analysis to see how polarization can constitute a dynamic of the use of violence and function on two levels: between Kurdish rebels and the state and in some configurations among Kurdish movements. To speak more clearly, political polarization occurring between insurgent actors and the state generally corresponds to repressive regimes by the government. As for polarization taking place between two or more Kurdish agents, it is related to intra-Kurdish violence.

Polarization between Kurdish actors and the state

The most important process of polarization relates to radicalization of individuals against the state. This process is explained especially by state repression. The question of repression is present in almost every militant life that I have observed. Some empirical examples can be presented.

Welat. Born in 1987 in Batman, Welat lived in a Kurdish nationalist milieu when he was a child. His family immigrated to Batman under military pressure. Indeed, his two brothers had links with the Kurdish guerilla movement and were imprisoned with their friends in the 1990s. It seems that the militancy of Welat is in part associated with coercion:

[Could you tell me how it happened to get you engaged in the Kurdish cause?]

[In that period we [the family] had a lot of trouble. The police were always coming to our home. My brother was in prison. Many of his friends were killed. They were working with him. I remember a friend of my brother. He was tortured while he was detained . . . He suffered a lot, but he resisted. He told the police nothing. Finally, he was shot dead just near my brother. We were told that he disappeared, but we knew very well that he was killed while he was detained by the police.72]
In most of the cases, just as one may notice in the trajectory of Welat, the militants refer to physical repression which they went through when they talk about their commitment to political violence. What is repression herein? It may take several forms according to the case: torture, unknown murder\(^3\) of a friend, brother, sister or parents (*faili meçhul cinayetler*), forced immigration (*zorunlu göç*), massacre, imprisonment, detention, descent of the police and gendarmerie at home and so on. Physical violence impacts on radicalization. Indeed, it develops a particularly binary mentality of “we against us”\(^4\) which is one of the characteristics of political polarization. Another person who was in the same political circle as Welat explained: “A violent logic developed in us. We had to destroy and fire away. Every time we saw a military, we would look at him with hate.”\(^5\)

Any kind of crisis can develop in “fluid configurations of conflict”\(^6\) and promote the use of political violence. In these types of configurations, the actor can become a “floating subject”\(^7\) in that violence corresponds to the drive of pure destruction. The subject may also lose the sense of action as well as moral and political principle. Another actor belonging to the the same militant circle as Welat reported:

> The burnt down villages, depopulated villages … in Batman or somewhere else … I visit them sometimes. Their photos are so lively. But now we cannot talk about these villages. Their homes are in ruins. They were set ablaze and destroyed … This has psychological effects on me … the murders whose perpetrators are unknown … the one who frequents a political institution was afraid in the 1990s. One could not say that he/she was Kurdish, a partisan of the “Hadep”\(^8\) a patriot … the fear which makes me think that I would be killed, if I went outside tomorrow. Many men were assassinated. I was afraid. A fear, an emotion, boredom…. A friend is killed; an assassinated patriot and you are really touched. But I continued to militate because it was an obligation … Noises of arms were coming from the streets. I was still a high school pupil. I heard gun shots, but I was still participating in the struggle. Because fear was disappearing at this moment, and I was not worried about it.\(^9\)

This militant’s experience can be seen as an existential situation in the sense of Goffman.\(^10\) It may happen that the militants feel constrained to use political violence in order to survive or modify existing relations of power between themselves and their environment.\(^11\) The descriptions of this militant as well as general observation in the field help to make another significant point. In some configurations of polarization, the difference between “strong and soft” (terms by Sluka) participants, “passive and active” (Bard O’Neil) supporters, “direct and indirect” (Kerlvliet) participants and “sympathizers and militants” (Lichbach) tends to disappear.\(^12\) This depends on several dynamics. First, the state may deploy the politics of polarization in order to constrain each actor to choose its side (*taraf*).\(^13\) Moreover, the enlargement of space of coercion may determine
the process of radicalization and violence, namely when repression influences not only the Kurdish militants, but also their relatives, sympathizers, villages, district or town.

Other examples of participation permit analysis of different effects of repression on polarization.

**Brusk.** Born in 1968 in a modest social milieu in Diyarbakır, he joined the PKK at the beginning of the 1990s. A comparison between Welat and Brusk would be reasonable. One of them was born in 1987 and the other, in 1968. Their context of socialization and politicization greatly differ. Brusk’s youth corresponds to a time of radicalization and multiplication of Kurdish political organizations at the end of the 1970s. Welat’s socialization, on the contrary, is associated in the context of popular mobilization of the PKK and the emergence of legal Kurdish politics and forced immigration to Batman. One nevertheless finds a common dynamic which traverses eras. In spite of differing temporalities, personal history of the use of violence by Brusk is similar to that of Welat and possesses characteristics of radicalization linked with repression:

Brusk grew up in Bağlar, a popular district in Diyarbakır. His childhood was characterized by a repressive period which succeeded the military coup d’état of 1980. During a visit of one of his relatives in Diyarbakır prison, he, for instance, witnessed that prisoners did not have a right to speak Kurdish with their families. Brusk was imprisoned in 1987 because he had damaged a police car. He stayed there for three months. The prison determined his life a great deal. He knew the PKK in the prison. He was tortured. And there he received political education. After his release, he performed military service. During the military service, he was punished because he was speaking in Kurdish. The 1990s was a period of unknown murders in Diyarbakır. Brusk adhered to the PKK during that period. Because of his participation, his family went through police repression. His parents then immigrated to Mersin in 1994. Brusk kept up the guerilla activities in the Kurdish region. During a family visit in Mersin, the police noticed this. He escaped them, but his brother was killed. His wife, who was also a militant, as well as his mother, were held in police custody and tortured.

Regardless of the form it takes – imprisonment, torture or loss of close relatives – repression radicalized Brusk. This is a pattern of polarization taking place between the individual and the state and being shaped by different conflict interactions. One might suppose that militant agent is produced through polarization. In order to help advance the debate around this thesis, one may study other examples.

**Mazlum Newroz.** Born in the 1970s, he joined the Kurdish guerilla movement at the end of the 1980s. When he was three years old, his parents immigrated to Manisa in the Aegean region, Western Turkey, for economic reasons. His father was a smuggler in Mardin while other members had blue collar jobs. Mazlum Newroz himself began to live by manual labor, especially as a hamal or...
burden bearer, when he was small. He studied while simultaneously working in very difficult economic conditions. He affirms to not having lived his childhood. He entered in relation with the PKK in 1986–1987, and decided to join the organization in the same year. He explains his participation in the armed struggle this way:

We were a family coming from a rural milieu in Kurdistan. We then had a break down with our own milieu [because of immigration]. We imbibed values completely alien to us. Maladjustment, economic problems were causing different reactions. My mother was working in fields of cotton and citrus fruit until evening. After she returned home, she was occupied with housework and children. My father, being unhappy with his job, did not get along with my mother [...] there was no love and respect [in the family]. When I became politicized, I began to find responses to my questions: why, when and how. When I found responses to the questions, we began to get along with each other. Then, in this situation, your hatred is directed completely against the enemy, and those who exploit you. Besides, the conditions are favorable. You take arms.

Polarization is founded herein on social class, economic exploitation, poverty and exclusion. The radicalization of Mazlum Newroz seems to be associated with the place of immigration, even though radicalism may happen in connection with school, family, prison, exile or mountain given the configurations. With regard to the phenomenon of immigration, it is important to note that it was not observed only in the case of Mazlum Newroz but also İbrahim Bilgin, Brusk and many militants’ cases which were cited in this work; whether it is forced or voluntary, immigration seems to play a considerable role in the radicalization process, especially when the economic problem persisting in the places of immigration is perceived to be a sort of humiliation. Indeed, the conflict which actors go through enables one to translate frustration linked with social and economic orders into ethnic and political stakes. Immigration, on the other hand, enlarged the space of recruitment of the PKK in the 1980s and 1990s. Even out of the thesis of polarization, one ought to underline that the process of migration or displacement may promote the raising of identity consciousness or crisis of identity, and lead to adoption or development of an ethnic identity in reactive or relational ways. I observed this phenomenon among Kurds living in Western Turkey in different times, like in the 1950s and 1960s (see the first chapter).

Also, politicization sometimes seems to be vague or weak before the move to violence. Mazlum Newroz seems to have participated smoothly in the organization. This is why one may suppose that actors become radicalized and utilize violence under the effects of repression without really becoming politicized. Polarization might at the same time precede politicization. Different aspects of this proposition can be studied with regard to the case of Sabriye.

_Sabriye._ Born in Mardin in the 1970s, she grew up in a rural milieu, with farmers for parents. She never went to school, and got married when she was
Participation of individuals in violence

Our village was attacked by the soldiers. My husband and other peasants were detained. Once the soldiers entered our homes, they insulted and beat us. Everything was spilled and broken. You see all of these with your own eyes. Then, the guerillas came to our home. I expressed my willingness to participate, which was accepted. The first night I participated, a conflict took place. We were ten persons. Later, we learned from the peasants that thirty soldiers were killed.

Charles Tilly defines polarization as deepening of the ideological gap between actors. Ideological gap is no doubt a significant dimension of polarization of the conflict. But, given the empirical examples presented above, one needs to acknowledge the importance of sentiments and perceptions in the polarization process. As Coleman admits, during the polarization, the protagonists perceive their position to be good and the position of their adversaries to be bad. So polarization is not merely ideological or social, but also subjective. There is usually a gap between representation of the other, the self and the objective reality in times of polarization. PKK militants frequently use excessive vocabulary which constructs an autonomous reality commensurate with their political messages. For instance, in the eyes of the militants, Turkish prisons are called “extermination camps”, repression as “genocide”, the Kurds not close to the PKK are considered as “collaborators” (işbirlîkçi) and “traitors” (hain), and arrests as “summary executions”. These kinds of subjective expressions indicate to what extent emotions can be strong during moments of polarization.

Lastly, the examples of Brusk, Mazlum Newroz, Sabriye and similar others show once again solid evidence about the complexity of the relationship between polarization and politicization. It may happen that physical polarization led by repression results in political polarization. This observation generally corresponds to the situations where torture and imprisonment spark polarization. These sort of processes are not rare to find in militant biographies.

**Polarization linked with intra-Kurdish violence**

Polarizations are also associated with the struggle among Kurdish organizations. This observation leads to revisiting intra-ethnic conflict. As studied in the first chapter, the conflict among Kurdish groups leads to fragmentation while promoting political violence, especially in the 1970s. There is no point reviewing the examples mentioned in that period. Armed confrontations were maintained among Kurdish organizations in the 1990s. The battles between the PKK and Hizbullah, Kurdish Islamist movement, provide a typical conflict in the context...
I noticed that the clash between two Kurdish organizations considerably determined the participation in violence by individuals especially in the region of Batman. The case of Milan presents an example among others. 

*Milan.* Born in the 1970s, Milan began to be interested in the Kurdish question in Batman, when he was just a high school student. He experienced repression when he was implicated in the Kurdish networks as observed in many militant trajectories. Milan, on the other hand, admits that the threats by the Kurdish *Hizbullah* were a determinant in his participation in violence in Batman in the 1990s:

> I was participating in political activities ... I was arrested [in the 1990s]. Furthermore, I was freed. In that period, in Batman, many people were arrested, and then liberated. But those who were freed, were later killed by *Hizbullah*. I too was arrested. And I was freed. I thought that I would be killed. I was receiving threats from *Hizbullah*. 

According to my fieldwork, several persons like Milan decided to join the PKK and not the HADEP (Kurdish legal party) in the 1990s in order to protect themselves from imminent death at the hands of the Kurdish *Hizbullah*. Indeed, in that period, in Batman, activism within HADEP seemed to have been more risky. The members of HADEP were quite visible because it was a legal organization. The activists, for instance, had to return home in the evening, namely going through dark streets of the town after leaving the café or office while the PKK militants remained comparatively safe in the mountain. The move to violence in this configuration seems to correspond to one of the figures of the political subject, constructed by Wieviorka who explains the use of violence. That is the “subject’s survival” (*sujet en survie*). Indeed, violence may sometimes appear as a struggle of self-preservation by the person who feels that his/her own being is threatened. It may accordingly pose some essential problems of the individuals’ survival such as a choice between life and death, and killing or being killed.

Moreover, it is remarkable that intra-Kurdish violence does not ease the radicalization against the state. Indeed, the actors qualify each other as spies of the government, which makes polarizations more complex. Internal Kurdish conflict increases the effects of repression and promotes the use of violence.

**ʿAsabiyya and participation in political violence**

I observed a configuration in the move to violence quite different from configurations of socialization in networks and polarization. It is ʿ*asabiyya* which provides a base for using violence in some actors.

I here take ʿ*asabiyya* in the sense of Ibn Khaldūn, more specifically as tribalism (*aširetçilik*), *esprit de corps* and feelings of a social group. The concept operates simultaneously in a similar way to the logic of *qowm*, used by Gilles Dorronsoro in the Afghan context. For the author, *qowm* designates familial,
Participation of individuals in violence

tribal, clan and professional identities which are stimulated within solidarity networks.\footnote{16} Although ‘asabiyya was researched by several scholars working on the Middle East, such as Martin van Bruinessen who studied political power of tribal chiefs frequently combined with religious power,\footnote{17} Michel Seurat who showed that esprit de corps could be mobilized not only in rural but also urban milieus,\footnote{18} Ghassan Salamé who established a link between tribal solidarity and political power, etc.,\footnote{19} most of the existing works, to the best of my knowledge, do not seem to focus on the relationship between political violence and ‘asabiyya. In which configurations does esprit de corps play a role in the move to political violence? How does tribalism combine with an armed struggle? How do village solidarities result in political violence?

In one of my previous works, I studied the role of tribal communities in the move to violence and the emergence of conflict groups in Kurdish rebellions during the Turkish Republican period. Religious and social institutions contributed to the mobilization of Kurdish tribes against the Turkish regime in the 1920s and the 1930s since they constituted a base of massive participation in the conflict. In fact, traditional ties and communities remained even with the formation of Marxist-Leninist and national movements in the Kurdish political field. It is certain that the rebellion of the PKK is not simply a tribal insurgency. Nor do I attempt to homogenize Kurdish society in its social and psychological organization. Nevertheless, the support of some actors to the Kurdish party is not completely independent from tribal dynamics in some configurations. Gundê Xelîlê,\footnote{20} a village in Batman, provides a good example to discuss this research problem.

Gundê Xelîlê was a small remote village, composed of about sixty to 100 homes, in the region of Batman-Siirt, in the East of Turkey. Agriculture was a chief occupation of this community. Until the 1980s, the village possessed a closed structure. Indeed, its habitants went rarely into town. There was no electricity, water or television before the 1980s. Most marriages were endogamous. Besides this, state authority was not very well implanted. Until the emergence of the Kurdish guerilla movement, peasants led an almost apolitical lifestyle. Given these specificities, Gundê Xelîlê can be considered as an inward-turned society characterized by indo-training and indo-socializations. It means the production and reproduction of men and women inside the local intimate unit in the sense of Ernest Gellner.\footnote{21}

At the beginning of the 1980s, peasants remarked that armed youth lived around mountainous areas of Gundê Xelîlê. However, the guerillas had trouble accessing the local community particularly because of the closed social structure. For their part, peasants manifested no willingness to enter into contact with the guerillas. They were considered as outsiders by the local community due to their different Kurdish accent, physical appearance and their place of origin.\footnote{22} The militants operating there were indeed from Bingöl and Mardin during that period. They attempted to establish social relations with Sidar, a young student from Gundê Xelîlê. At the beginning, for the reasons mentioned above, Sidar refused to meet them. But finally he accepted. For several weeks, they met in a
rock cave at night. The rebels led a political campaign and made propaganda of their activities. Who were they? Why did they enter the zone of Gundê Xelîlê? They especially criticized the Turkish political system and affirmed that Kurds should take up arms against the government. Sidar consequently became the first person to join the PKK in the village. This participation started increasing little by little among members of Sidar’s family and tribe. To conclude, about eighty people joined the PKK in a couple of years. After this massive participation, the village was forcefully depopulated by the Turkish authorities in 1994. The rest of the inhabitants immigrated to Turkish towns and Europe. Today, Gundê Xelîlê no longer exists.

This is a short presentation of the history of the tryst of Sidar, his tribe and village with violence. In this example, the move to political violence seems to operate in the frame of ‘asabiyya though it cannot be claimed that violence is completely reduced to it. Indeed, support for the PKK began with the commitment of Sidar in 1984. It was reported that the process of Sidar’s engagement provoked conflicts inside the tribe and the village. Sidar aligned himself with the organization, and tried to proselytize his brothers. At the beginning, his father, his tribe and peasants radically opposed the PKK, and thus begged for his non-engagement. But, once two of his brothers and some cousins joined the guerilla movement, esprit de corps or village solidarity appear to have accelerated participation for several reasons. First, tribal links and solidarities were quickly mixed up with guerilla networks because Gundê Xelîlê presented a close social organization which eluded permanent control of the state. Peasants known to each other, were in proximity with each other and quite close to the outside. Second, after some cases of commitment, it seems that state repression strengthened feelings of ‘asabiyya in Gundê Xelîlê. Faced with immense state coercion, tribal and village members respected an honor code and developed a communal solidarity encouraged by the guerillas. These factors enabled the political engagement of a considerable number of people only in a couple of years.

Tribalism in the use of political violence seems to correspond to two processes. On the one hand, it helps form a unified group bent on a political mission; on the other hand, it constitutes a dynamic of split in the Kurdish space, which is called internal violence (I studied in the first chapter). The latter phenomenon takes place especially when each tribe, or at least two tribes, are engaged in separate political solidarities and parties. The conflict between the “tribe of Türk” and the tribe of Temelli, in the district of Derik in Mardin during the 1980s, is a typical example.

The case of the Türk and Temelli tribes. There had been contention spanning nearly half a century, between the Türk and Temelli tribes in the region of Derik (Mardin). The Türk tribe is situated in the village of Qesro Qenco while the Temelli tribe is set in the village of Misûrî. It was reported that the Türk tribe got affiliated with the PKK in the late 1970s, and that this affiliation was in part determined by the tribal conflicts in Mardin. There was indeed a vendetta between the two tribes. Hence, some members of the Türk tribe participated in the Kurdish guerilla movement while the Temelli tribe took up a position for the
Participation of individuals in violence

In 1984, Cebrail Temelli, one of the tribal chiefs of Temelli, was killed in an attack in Derik. The PKK rejected responsibility for the attack, but the family of Temelli maintained that it was the Türk tribe which encouraged the organization to orchestrate the murder.

Violence radicalized the conflict. Among the Türk tribe, the number of participants to the PKK considerably increased while at least sixty people belonging to the Temelli tribe became village guards (korucu) at the government’s disposal.

In conclusion, it seems that political violence is shaped by belonging to ‘asabiyya’ in the above examples. It is usually characterized by internal conflict. Armed struggle in the kind of patterns may become an opportunity for familial or tribal vengeance. Nationalist and ethnic sentiments are certainly not absent since they participate in the process of fragmentation and segmentation. It may happen that actors acquire new political dispositions and solidarities without giving up their previous solidarities and dispositions.

Symbolic dynamics of the move to political violence

“Symbolic” is included in several disciplines such as psychology, psychoanalysis, anthropology, sociology, literature, linguistics and art. Thanks to this omnipresence, the category of symbolic is quite rich, but, at the same time, it could lead to confusion and ambiguity. For example, in linguistics, the use of symbols is considered to be integral to communication. The symbol is sometimes defined simply as a sign, whereas in the Freudian tradition in art history or in psychoanalysis, it refers to complex systems of psychological associations. In anthropology, one of the disciplines paying keen attention to symbolic, the concept is strictly associated with religious and cultural order. It would take too long to revisit the theory of symbolic in the whole of these disciplines. One must however clarify the conception of the symbolic in this chapter: What does symbolic mean in the analysis of the move to political violence?

It must first be pointed out that the use of a symbolic approach is based on the critiques of some social and political theories of action, among which methodological individualism is perhaps the most important. The latter was long represented by Mancur Olson who theorized collective action. In his historically important work, the author explained the voluntary participation of an individual in a mobilization departing from the notion of selective incentive, namely a motive resulting from the possibility of accessing an individualizable good.

Mancur Olson’s theory was already criticized by a number of researchers now that it presented a strictly economist paradigm as well as a mathematical application. It does not invoke moral or subjective incentives to enlighten participation in political or associative action by actors or individuals who, as several scholars pointed out, among whom I should particularly cite Elisabeth Wood, are very motivated to act for symbolic goods and emotions like pleasure, prestige and notoriety.

On the contrary, it is mainly Pierre Bourdieu who leads us to refer to the symbolic because of one of his approaches that one may call symbolic
structuralism. Indeed, sociology by Bourdieu frequently resorts to the notion of symbolic, mainly associated with the hypothesis of “capital”, “power” and “violence”. Thanks to Bourdieu, it is clearly understood that the political universe cannot elude the symbolic phenomenon. However, it is not exactly in the sense of Bourdieu that I use the symbolic in the study of political violence. This is mainly for two reasons. In Bourdieu, symbolic violence does not necessarily generate physical violence since it is unknown by the agents experiencing it. Without denying this dimension of symbolic violence constituting an integral part of daily life, I am interested, in this work, in symbolic violence as being a “cause” of physical violence. Second, the symbolic theory by Bourdieu is not really set in microsociology. His theory gains a significant value now that the symbolic is a part of the political field while reproducing inequality and relations of domination as material conditions do so. But, the symbolic in the sense of Bourdieu does not permit sufficient understanding of why symbolic motive leads human beings to act. The thesis of Bourdieu as well as that of several scholars working on the symbolic issues remain at the macro level; they are situated between psychology and sociology, yet rarely at a micro sociological level.

Thus, if these theories do not really respond to my research problems to explain the use of political violence, in which way can one apply the hypothesis of the symbolic in the analysis of violence? Indeed, the symbolic operates in two ways. First, symbolic violence leads agents to resort to violence, as already suggested. Unsettling of symbolic and subjective benchmarks provokes a process of political violence. Second, the symbolic seems to constitute a motive while driving the actors to act in search of recognition. It is through these two hypotheses that I shall try to explore the symbolic thesis with regard to the move to political violence.

The motive of recognition

The problematic of recognition leads to focus on a symbolic dimension of political violence.

“The motive behind all conflicts is an expectation of recognition” as Axel Honneth admitted. For Honneth, the quest for recognition is a part of the making of an individual, and a response to social expectations. The struggle for recognition occurs when the individual or the community is a victim of contempt in a way that he/she is not recognized in his/her own being. Recognition may occur through conflict; the outcome of the clash may enable construction of the self and the other. In this respect, the struggle for recognition is made up of historical and political processes. This motive is above all related to identity in the Kurdish conflict. The quest for recognition of ethnic identity is always present in Kurdish movements. This argument may be justified by using different methods and sources. As the focus herein is the use of violence at the micro level, I will pay attention to motivation formulated by the militants themselves in the interviews.
The recognition of Kurdish identity is a normative expectation among several actors with whom I conducted interviews. One of the interviewees was saying:

Many things changed … so many things for the Kurds. Not only in Turkey, but also all over the world for the Kurds. The Kurds reemerged. The Kurds appeared. The Kurds became conscious. The Kurds learned. This is due to the PKK. Nobody can steal these gains from us. Whether the PKK exists or not, Kurdish people shall not give up these gains. Never giving up! The Kurdish question was revealed. The Turks and the Europeans recognized the Kurdish question. Nobody can live with the Turks because of the Kurdish issue. To find a solution is necessary. What will the solution be then? This is linked with the combat. The more we struggle, the better our chance of winning … it even depends on what we want and what they give us. We don’t want much. We reduced our demands to a minimum … we don’t seek the independence of Kurdistan. The Kurds want to live out their culture and identity. In a country where their rights are guaranteed by the constitution. These demands are not so huge. But they are afraid. Because they will not be able to say that the Kurds do not exist … but that will come true one day.143

In the eyes of this militant, violence contributes to the “emergence of the Kurds”. Indeed, a number of interviewees articulated the “notoriety” and “recognition” of the Kurdish people with the use of political violence. The interviewees interpret political violence as a tool which breaks “isolation” and “exclusion” of the Kurds both in Turkish and international politics.144 This type of discourse refers once again to the thesis of subjectivity which I already mentioned, that is to say, the negations of the subject, its interdiction, its impossibility of existing and self-constitution promote political violence. One may thus admit that violence is subjective as far as it is founded upon the motivation of recognition. The symbolic and the emotional are in fact strictly associated with each other.

For instance, Seyithan, born in 1975 in Dersim, talks about his participation with the motive of recognition:145

Why does each one have an identity whereas we don’t? It is for this reason that I went to the mountain. […] if you do not have an identity in the society you live in, it means that you do not exist. The Kurds do not feel like they exist in Turkey. There is great denial. We went to the mountain to end this denial.146

Some of the interviewees link the use of political violence with valorization of the ethnic community to which they belong. A former militant in Bingöl reported:

The Apocu told people how this struggle would continue and not be as it was before. People adopted what they told them to. People sacrificed themselves. They paid this price in the region of Bingöl. […] If there is a value
that human beings defend . . . for instance, if we accept that Kurdistan is not only a colony, but a colony of a colony . . . in order to make our identity recognized, we must accept all of the sacrifices. In fact, there is a conception according to which the Kurds were dependent. The Apocu explained to these people that they would not act by speaking against the denial . . . Our comrades were deemed to be terrorists. It was like that when we were children. We lived with inferiority. We then said that our friends were terrorists. But by giving a different sense to that terrorism. At the same time, there was an extreme [Turkish] nationalism. We were constrained to recite ten stanzas of the national anthem [istiklal marşı]. In that period, the guerilla had limited space. The first terrorists appeared in our region. And we were living with the inferiority of the propaganda led against them. . . . But we understood that this was honorable for us. It was a kind of honor for us. They were not terrorists, but sacrificial individuals for a national cause. We then knew the Kurdicity. We read it. That is patriotism.

A young nineteen year old activist mentions the motive of recognition through an anecdote which deals with the interdiction of the Kurdish language:

The state does not punish those who speak Kurdish as it was in the 1980s and the 1990s. But it constrains us to speak Turkish if we want to profit from the health services. These are politics of assimilation. Cezmi Ersöz says in his book entitled Give me bread in Turkish [Bana Türkçe bir ekmek ver] that an old man goes one day to the town and hears them announce the obligation to speak Turkish. He is hungry but does not know how to speak good Turkish. He goes to the bakery and fearfully says in Kurdish: “give me bread in Turkish”. After that, he is tortured. Then it is the state which defines and imposes our identity.

The motive of recognition is not exclusively “instrumental”, but also “moral”. I made an observation about the militant circle in Batman. On this occasion, I particularly noticed this phenomenon. One of the interviewed people was recalling during a conversation:

We were humiliated. We were touched by the social and political situation of the Kurds . . . The language of the Kurds. The question of Kurdish culture. Even the music was forbidden in that period. This is the inferiority of the Kurds. Speaking Kurdish on TV and in public buildings was out of the question. We could not even speak in the village. There was a professor at school. He forbade us to speak Kurdish. Why this repression? Why prohibit the Kurdish language? Why do the Kurds feel inferior? I participated in this struggle against this sentiment of inferiority.

For this person, the status of the Kurds, and the situation of the Kurdish culture as they were perceived or considered by his social environment and the state, are
not only a question of strategic order, but at the same time refer to subjectivity and imaginary. The phenomena of “resistance”, “struggle” appear to be moral and sentimental obligations among them in order to get the Kurds out of this inferior situation and get them recognized.\textsuperscript{151}

These surveys enable drawing of an important conclusion. The actors are in a quest of recognition as a collective subject. In fact, political violence may be associated with individualized symbolic goods such as prestige, valorization and personal status, and the like. I never exclude such a hypothesis. However, in the empirical account that I presented above, recognition clearly refers to acceptance of an ethnic community, namely the Kurds. Political violence herein again corresponds to a symbolic dimension with huge political content.

\section*{Symbolic violence}

I have attempted to show how recognition constitutes a political and moral motivation of the participation in political violence. Equally, recognition plays a role in the move to violence according to another modality: the denial of recognition produces an effect of symbolic violence driving actors to use political violence.

Inspired by the Goffmanian perspective of interpersonal relations, Thomas Lindemann suggests that “denial of recognition can be designed to create a distance between the claimed image by the self and the image perceived by the others”.\textsuperscript{152} According to him, “there is a denial felt when the image that the individual has about the self is superior to the image that the others perceive”.\textsuperscript{153} So he admits that the bigger the distance, the stronger the feelings of frustration, humiliation and loss of self-esteem.\textsuperscript{154} The denial of recognition, according to Lindemann, constitutes a form of symbolic violence referring to the principal thesis of Philippe Braud, according to which “violence is symbolic in that the caused damage operates at the level of identity; namely, it affects, in a depreciative manner, self-representation”.\textsuperscript{155} Such a depreciation may constitute in fine a dynamic for the use of political violence.\textsuperscript{156}

The thesis of this section is that symbolic violence impacts on the move to political violence.\textsuperscript{157} The empirical evidence mainly suggests that interdiction of the Kurdish language at school produces the effects of symbolic violence on the participants in physical violence.\textsuperscript{158} The example of Berxwedan is an illustration among others.

Born in 1979 in the village of Pazarcık, Berxwedan participated in the Kurdish guerilla movement in the 1990s. His parents were farmers. He spent his childhood in the region of Pazarcık, where the Kurdish guerilla movement was present during this period. Berxwedan met Kurdish guerillas while he was working in the field for his parents. Because the conflict increased between the Turkish security forces and the Kurdish guerillas in Pazarcık, his parents sent him to Europe so that he would work there. In spite of efforts by his relatives in Europe and parents in Turkey to stop him, his relations with the PKK got so intensified that he left Europe to join the organization. Neither the move to
Participation of individuals in violence

violence by Berxwedan nor that of other militants can be reduced to just symbolic violence; one must however take into account the role of symbolic violence as it was expressed in that interview:

In that period, Kurdish music was forbidden. [He talks about his childhood]. In fact, as we were small, we did not ask why. We knew that it was forbidden, but not the meaning of interdiction, what interdiction means … we just knew that it was forbidden. A slightly older generation than ours, namely those who were 19–20 years old during that period, this generation, knew. The old folk also knew why. They were listening to Kurdish music secretly. During that period, people were for instance listening to songs by Şivan Perwer, entitled “Oh Kurdistan, Kurdistan”. I loved this song a lot. But why were we not listening to it freely? It was a question I was asking myself. […] it was like that. But I was not very conscious. I did not have a nationalist or patriotic consciousness. I was interested in that question [of language]. I was interested because … in fact, we were speaking Kurdish at home. My parents know just a little Turkish. But we could not speak Kurdish at official milieus. No longer in the towns. This was a problem for me. I was asking myself why we could not speak Kurdish in public institutions while we knew only Kurdish … in public institutions the Kurdish language was forbidden. On the other hand, there was a war. 1992, 1993, 1994 … Numerous people were participating in the guerilla. As for me, I learned who I was. I found the solutions to these questions. I entered into a milieu where I found the answers to my questions.\(^{159}\)

Given the trajectory of Berxwedan and my general observations, it is important to note that symbolic violence usually does not directly translate into physical violence. It may be dependent on *a posteriori* interpretation. Indeed, in the case of Berxwedan, symbolic violence seems to be “soft” and “unrecognized” in the sense of Bourdieu. It is while being politicized that Berxwedan will be acquainted with symbolic violence.\(^{160}\) This example enables the suggestion that when “symbolic violence is soft, invisible and unrecognized”,\(^{161}\) it does not provoke physical violence. It is socialization around a political cause whereby actors reinterpret symbolic violence and give it a political meaning.

It may happen that some militants experienced symbolic violence more radically or less delicately than Berxwedan. For instance, one of the former militants reported:

Particularly in 1984 … my father in 1984 … he was imprisoned. He remained for two years in the prison of Diyarbakır. During these two years, only … Uh … [He stops for a while.] During the visits, when I went there, two soldiers, one on my left, another on my right, stayed with me … my father found himself face to face with me. There were also two soldiers around my father, one on his left, another on his right; our conversation lasted only five minutes. And we were compelled to speak Turkish.
Forbidden to speak Kurdish. If we spoke Kurdish, we could not see him anymore. They would beat us, and keep me outside. I suffered a lot in that prison, much suffering . . . although I was so little.\textsuperscript{162}

Similarly, a young militant born in 1983 in the region of Batman, partly links his radicalism with the ban on the Kurdish language at school:

We already knew about the Kurdish movement in the family. The family was speaking Kurdish. In fact, it was interdictions which determined the family. When I was small, it was forbidden to speak Kurdish at school. Whenever we spoke Kurdish, they beat us.\textsuperscript{163}

Born in 1973 in Maraş, Kendal mentions symbolic violence when he talks about his participation in the Kurdish guerilla movement. Indeed, he did not know how to speak Turkish when he began primary school:\textsuperscript{164}

The first day of school, the teacher asked me my name [in Turkish]. I answered him. It was okay. […] Later, I was asked the names of my father and mother. I could answer that as well. The teacher asked me another question. I did not understand. While I remained silent [without answering the question], the teacher beat me.\textsuperscript{165}

In these examples, the ban on the mother language appears to be a form of symbolic violence, which is exercised by physical punitive ways. One may thus suppose that physical violence increases the effects of symbolic violence. I remarked that mainly the primary school and prison constitute places of this type of symbolic violence while contributing to the production of political violence. The total or partial prohibition of the mother language is a refusal of recognition, which gives rise to frustration. Nevertheless, symbolic violence is not only associated with the mechanism of denial of the recognition that is the interdiction of the language. It is also linked with the phenomena of stigmatization and intimidation. Milan, whose trajectory was mentioned above, provides an example:

Before making a commitment, I was not so interested in the Kurdish movement. […] I felt Kurdish anyway. In fact, I was about to go to Batman during the holidays to work and support my family. In Antalya, I had relatives. I used to work at restaurants and construction sites. One day, while I was working at a construction site, I met a man selling vegetables in his cart. I asked him if there were aubergines to buy. But it was only written “tomatoes” in the chariot. He got very angry with me. I was only 15–16 years old during that period. He nearly struck me with his cane. I was rather struck by what he told me: “Here, it is not Kurdistan!” Till that time, I did not know much about Kurdishness and Kurdistan. But I reacted suddenly: “No, it is not Kurdistan, but one day, there will be a Kurdistan.” After this
Participation of individuals in violence

event, I took an interest in the Kurdish cause. There were comrades who were making Kurdish propaganda in Batman. One day, a friend came to see me in Batman; he made me become a member of the PKK.  

Rojin, born to a large and poor family in the region of Mardin, joined the guerrilla movement in the 1990s. Her history presents a case of stigmatization and intimidation:

We had settled in Istanbul for three and a half years. My husband was a construction worker. We were dwelling in Gaziosmanpaşa [a popular district]. There, I observed the situation of Kurdistan. We did not know Turkish. Because we were speaking our own language, we were accused of being wild. My brother-in-law’s children were quarreling about this issue with our neighbors’ children. We were not wearing our ethnic attire. Other Kurdish families were lost. [...] they were trying to be and behave like others. [...] our reactions became more pronounced day by day. But we were not all thinking the same way in the family. The fact of being mocked and not recognized made me more nationalist. We were spiritually alone. I returned to Mardin. There were six korucu [village guards] in our family. I talked with them about our situation in Istanbul. I quarreled with them. 

The situations mentioned above, especially that of Rojin, may have been experienced differently. But such are their perceptions and interpretations of the situations. Given these examples, stigmatization and exclusion seem to have been founded on the belonging to an ethnic community, characterized by a bad Turkish accent, Kurdish traditional wear and physical traits, and so on. It might be added that these stigmatized and excluded individuals were not integrated into the Kurdish movement before these experiences they went through. It may thus be suggested that “negativized”  and “excluded” identities lead to political violence. The construction of radical identities seems to be partly founded upon “disdainful” and humiliating behavior whether it was objectively or subjectively defined. Finally, one may or must point out that “physical” practices of violence have a “symbolic dimension”. Symbolic violence is exercised by physical violence, especially via torture, which has strong emotional aspects. Physical repression is first of all associated with humiliation in the eyes of the militants. Imprisonment, torture, rape injure not only the physical body but also the moral individual. Several persons reported that they felt inferior and humiliated when they went through physical repression. For instance, undressing a man in the middle of the village constitutes a form of symbolic violence, in the Kurdish context. I noticed in the interviews that when people talk about the kind of torture, they refer to their symbolic and subjective dimension rather than the physical one. One of them, for example, said that “he was beaten in front of his wife” or “public”, which in fact represents an attachment to the “honor” (şeref). At this point, we find once again gender aspect of violence in the society that is characterized by patriarchy because humiliation clearly concerns not merely
being beaten but being beaten in front of the woman. Another actor cited a case of repression to justify the use of political violence:

In our village, we were facing many constraints. The military came into the village every day. Sometimes at midnight or at dawn. They would brutally enter homes with their shoes ... [Kurds do not enter homes with shoes] they were commanding us to gather in front the school. All of the men were going in front the school. They made us wait for four, five or six hours there. One day I remember very well. An armed conflict had taken place two kilometers from our village, two days before. They came to the village at night. They lined us up in front of the school wall. There was a military commander of the regiment who had grey hair. They insulted us. They beat and insulted all of the men there ... he stroked somebody's head by pulling his hair, then thumping him on the head. I did not understand why they were beating us so hard. I believe that it is just because they sometimes get pleasure beating us... Everybody knew each other in the village. We were so close to each other.¹⁷³

In most of the cases, the actors seem to use political violence because of a feeling of physical and psychological vulnerability as well as a crisis led by putting into question their personal identity and the image of their ethnic community.¹⁷⁴ In some situations, the attack and insults can target not really political ones but exclusively male or female identity of the person. Janice Bially Mattern underlines the psychological importance of identity damage: “Threats to psychological integrity are certainly so real that they threaten the body.”¹⁷⁵ There is no doubt that symbolic violence strikes the integrity of the body and may thus provoke feelings of insecurity, revenge and rebellion.

Contingent factors: why does contingency matter in the move to political violence?

In the previous sections of this chapter, it was suggested that participants to violence are socialized in Kurdish nationalist networks. Then it was remarked that some actors experience polarizations. It was added that the process of violence is sometimes characterized by solidity or inversely by spontaneity, fluidity and ambiguity, given the pattern in which it arises. Third, I defended the thesis that political violence is in some configurations shaped by ‘asabiyya. Finally I studied symbolic dynamics of the move to violence while suggesting that the motive of recognition and symbolic violence form two dynamics of the use of guns.

On the other hand, whether socialization, polarization, ‘asabiyya, the motivation of recognition or symbolic violence lead to political violence or not depends a great deal on two contingent processes: proximity of rebel forces and historical configurations of local and regional political violence. The move to violence is path dependent, according to terms by Elisabeth Wood, namely, the participation
Participation of individuals in violence linked with the pertaining factors is at the same time shaped by the proximity of insurgent forces and local state violence. What do the terms “path dependence” and “contingence” mean exactly? By “path dependence” Elisabeth Wood intends to tell that outcomes could have been different if the initial events had themselves been different. As for the idea of contingence, according to Ian Shapiro and Sonu Bedi, it means that things could have been otherwise if something else had taken place differently. The categories of contingence and the possible are crucial to sociological analysis, and there are different ways to handle them. I will consider, on my part, two contingent processes – proximity of rebel forces and local historical violence.

In other words, I will once again return to the notion of proximity. As I have already said, this may consist of a geographical factor (space available to the guerilla movement, presence of armed forces in a place), a social factor (relations between the rebels and civilians, local activism of militants) or a psychological factor (emotional ties), according to the context. As for local and regional patterns of violence, they are being formed by state repression, “indiscriminate coercion” and armed conflicts between rebels and government forces. These two processes concern both time and space.

These contingent processes demand careful attention because of the relevance of the following questions over political violence: How do proximity and local violence exercise an influence on the socialization of agents in the networks? When does repression lead to polarizations? Why does ʿasabiyya transform into political violence in some configurations and not in every case? Does the recognition, or its opposite – the denial of recognition – always constitute a dynamic of the move to physical violence? Sometimes, how can we explain the social contempt resulting in a feeling of injustice, revenge while taking a form of participation in rebellion while some other times, or even usually, this is not the case? I may multiply the type of questions.

I will return to some of the cases that I have studied in order to show the importance of contingent processes. Indeed, in some cases which I cited, the role of proximity and local state violence already appear to be quite relevant.

When we revisit the question of socialization in the networks, it is remarkable to note that the formation of networks is strictly linked with the mobilization of the Kurdish movement. In this respect, proximity signifies local activism of Kurdish groups, while constituting one of the dynamics of network formation. The more the rebels are in proximity with the civilian population, the more they form networks by increasing the probability of individuals’ socialization in the networks.

Proximity is relevant in the case of Şixo, Bawer, Mihriban and so forth. These persons were in fact situated in proximity with Kurdish militants and activists. They were inscribed in the space of mobilization by the PKK: Şixo was in a popular district in Antep, Bawer was socialized in his village and the office of the legal Kurdish party and Mihriban in TÖB-DER. These were the spaces of mobilization by the Kurdish organization. On the other hand, socialization of
some militants seems to have been influenced by configurations of local violence. The militancy by Roza seems to be partly determined by the massacres of Maraş while Şevîn and Cahîde’s participation are influenced by local political violence in transborder regions in Mardin and Hakkâri. It must be reminded that these transborder regions went through local insurgencies at the end of 1980s and 1990s (I will analyze them in the next chapter).

With regard to the analysis about polarization, it is important to note that the use of political violence is path dependent on proximity and local violence. The radicalization of the group or circle to which Welat belongs is not independent from the armed conflicts taking place between the PKK and Hizbullah, as well as unknown murders throughout the 1990s. The participation of Sabriye, among other examples, is shaped by indiscriminate repression. Moreover, in each case of polarization, the more the rebels are in a situation of proximity with the civilian population, the more the latter runs the risk of becoming a victim of state repression. It means that state repression on the civilian population may have sometimes taken place in an unprepared or unplanned manner. In a zone of conflict, there is always a possibility that “neutral” and “sympathizer” civilians would become victims of state counter-insurgency violence. It may, for instance, happen that troops get caught in an ambush with guerillas while they are about to go through a neutral village where a house of peasants may be shot. This may sometimes be accidental, unwanted. But in any case, proximity exercises an impact.

It is relevant to make a parenthetical comment regarding the case of participation in the places of immigration, whether it is in Europe or in Western Turkey, though these spaces do not make my thesis about contingency any less firm. Indeed, it is not only the individuals who immigrate, but also their history and collective memory. A participant coming from a family from Pazarcık living in France, Germany or Switzerland probably bears the suffering from the massacres of 1978. Memories of local violence are transmitted from one generation to another. In this type of configuration, the individuals that did not directly experience local massacres may use violence. As for the phenomenon of proximity, the factor is also present in the immigration space. Proximity is not just reduced to the zone of armed conflicts; it concerns every type of political or militant activity in the immigration space.

The move to violence by ʿasabiyya depends also on contingent factors because esprit de corps and violence interact according to contingent processes in a zone of armed conflict. On the one hand, guerilla and state provide tribal enemies with a chance to choose their side: on the other hand, political violence offers them the possibility to kill politically their private enemies and tribal adversaries. There are many cases of vendetta and esprit de corps and tribalism in the Kurdish space. But all of them certainly do not lead to political violence.

Finally, the relationship between symbolic dynamics and the use of political violence does not escape the logic of contingency. The motive of recognition of Kurdish actors does not always translate into armed struggle since there are always Kurdish actors who demand recognition without using violence.
Symbolic violence (for example, humiliation) as well as physical violence (for instance, torture) can provoke participation in armed struggle, even when contingent factors are absent. I do not exclude this possibility. On the other hand, according to my observations, feelings of humiliation, social contempt and denial of recognition take the form of armed rebellion under some conditions. Indeed, I remark in the case studies that actors having experienced symbolic violence use physical violence when they have at least a minimum linkage with militants, though the modalities change, given the temporal and spatial contexts. Incidentally, even if symbolic violence is an integral part of almost every political and social life in the world, it does not always give rise to a concrete form of physical violence. And this general observation also reminds us of the importance of contingency in the move to violence.

Notes

1 The concept signifies that political violence is path dependent in the sense of Elisabeth Wood (2003). It enables taking into account historical and geographical factors in the explanation of the use of political violence. For instance, whether an individual participates in violence would depend on the local historical repression in the village of Pazarcık. The terms path of violence and path dependency were explained in the Introduction of the book and I shall develop them in the last section of this chapter.


3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., p. 129.

6 There are certainly several models of explanation of political socialization. The conception herein is quite used in the sense of Simmel. Also, the analysis deals with the integration of actors in the social and nationalist networks.


9 See also the Introduction.


Participation of individuals in violence


16 Ibid.


18 For this argument and a review on militant engagement, see Crettiez, Xavier, “High risk activism: essai sur le processus de radicalization violente” (first part), Pôle Sud, Vol. 1, n°34, 2011, pp. 45–60.

19 Interview with Şixo in France in 2009.

20 His real name is Ali Erek. He died by death-fasting in Diyarbakır prison in 1981. See the last chapter of the book.


22 Interview with Roza in Paris in 2009.

23 One finds similar phenomena among black students in the USA. See, for instance, Orum, Anthony M., Black students in protest: a study of the origins of the black student movement, Washington, DC, American Sociological Association, 1972.


25 All Teachers’ Association for Unification and Solidarity.


27 On the importance of face to face communication in social movements, see Snow, David A., Louis A. Zurcher, Jr and Sheldon Ekland-Olson, “Social networks and social movements: a microstructural approach to differential recruitment”, American Sociological Review, Vol. 45, 1980, especially p. 790. Indeed, according to the observations, when a political organization is physically present, its influence increases on the actors.

Participation of individuals in violence

29 Serxwebûn, special issue 7, May 1985, p. 2.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
33 According to PKK sources, Mehmet Karasungur and İbrahim Bilgin were killed by the forces of Yekîti (the party led by Celal Talabani) in the Kandil mountains in 1983.
34 Serxwebûn, special issue 7, May 1985, p. 2.
35 The members of this group were not necessarily calling themselves Apocu and did not have an official name when they were in Ankara. However, I use the term even for that period in order to distinguish them from other Kurdish circles. In fact, the title or term Apocu was used by some members of the organization or local people towards the end of 1970 and became institutionalized in the 1980s.
36 A short biography of İbrahim Bilgin was compiled via different issues of Serxwebûn. See especially Serxwebûn, special issue 5, May 1984, p. 5 and Serxwebûn, special issue 7, May 1985, p. 2 and Serxwebûn, special issue 3, July 1983, p. 2.
37 Serxwebûn, special issue 7, May 1985, p. 7.
38 I stress the term “group” as the Kurdish organization constituted a political group before the PKK’s foundation in 1978.
40 See for history of Mihriban, Evîn, Seviyorsan savaş, Sweden, Medya yayınları, 1998, pp. 88–108. This source is a publication of the PKK. Evîn is used as a pseudonym of the author in the source I consulted.
41 Ibid., p. 89.
43 Evîn, Seviyorsan savaş, op. cit., p. 90.
44 Ibid., p. 91.
45 Ibid., for the biography of Cahide, see pp. 20–22.
46 Ibid.
47 The term is used in a pejorative sense by her.
48 Ibid., p. 20.
49 Ibid., p. 21.
50 Ibid., pp. 138–144.
51 The armed wing of the PKK.
52 Ibid., p. 138.
53 See on the role of networks in the case of restriction of public space in an authoritarian context, Singerman, Diane, “Réseaux, cadres culturels et structures des opportunités politiques: Le mouvement islamiste en Égypte”, in Filliéule and Chraïbi, Résistances et protestations, op. cit., pp. 219–241. Indeed, the author suggests that Islamist movements in Egypt developed cultural campaigns in professional associations, organizations, magazines, newspapers, mosques, universities over the relative disappearance of public space in the authoritarian context.
54 The HEP (People’s Labour Party) was a legal Kurdish national party (1990–1993).
55 Interview with Bawer in Batman in 2005.
57 The argument is borrowed from Howard Becker. The author puts the socialization process at the center of his analyses regarding the learning phenomenon among marijuana smokers. Becker, Howard, Outsiders, Paris, Métaillé, 1985 [1963]. About
Participation of individuals in violence


59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.


63 Furthermore, one must underline that the adoption of militant habitus is not always a condition of the move to political violence because individuals and groups may utilize political violence without adopting the habitus of the organization.

64 About the effects of repression in the group process, see Fireman and Gamson, “Utilitarian Logic in the Resource Mobilization Perspective”, op. cit. and Hirsch, Eric L., “The Creation of Political Solidarity in Social Movement Organizations”, op. cit..

65 The kind of encounter was studied by Gamson, Fireman and Rytin. Cf. Gamson, William B., Fireman, Bruce and Rytin, Steven, *Encounters With Unjust Authority*, Homewood, IL, Dorsey Press, 1982. However, one must remark that they studied this phenomenon in the context of protest mobilization and not necessarily to explain the move to political violence by individuals.


70 One must also note some nuances. Carl Schmitt does not directly analyze violence—which is an aberration to him. For Schmitt, the enemy has neither legitimacy nor protection; it is the state which determines who the enemies are.


72 Fieldwork in Batman in 2005.
The term signifies an assassination whose perpetrator is unknown. Especially in the 1990s, a number of murders were perpetrated in the Kurdish space, which were never claimed and whose authors still remain unknown.


Ethnographic research in Batman, 2005.

Polarization is usually associated with a political crisis and fluidity of contexts. I shall herein focus on the way in which radical actors experience political crises. On the notion of crisis, see Dobry, Michel, Sociologie des crises politiques, Paris, Presses de la FNSP, 1992.

The term is employed in the sense of Michel Wieviorka, cf. Wieviorka, La Violence, op. cit., pp. 292–293.

Founded in 1994, the Hadep (People’s Democracy Party) was a legal Kurdish nationalist party.

Ethnographic research in Batman, 2005.

Cited in Dobry, Michel, Sociologie des crises politiques, op. cit., p. 21.

Ibid. Indeed, Michel Dobry points out that the coups affect the expectations of the protagonists in an existential situation.

Sociologie des crises politiques, op. cit., p. 21.


On the other hand, it is necessary to remark that the exit is also an option in the high risk and uncertain context. But I limit the study to participation in violence. See for the notion of exit, Hirschman, Albert O., Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States, Cambridge, MA, and London, Harvard University Press, 1970.


One should be reminded that performing military service (askerlik hizmeti) is obligatory for all Turkish citizens.

I summarized the militant trajectory of Brusk from the book by Bejan Matur. For more information, see Matur, Dağın ardına bakmak, op. cit., pp. 111–139.


For the argument, see Pérouse, “Les migrations kurdes à Istanbul. Un objet de recherche à reconstruire”, op. cit., p. 170.

I refer to the thesis by Stathis Kalyvas: political violence can be endogenous to polarization. Kalyvas, The Logic of Violence in Civil War, op. cit.


Fieldwork in Batman in 2005.

Interview with Milan in Batman in 2005.

Wieviorka, La Violence, op. cit., pp. 298–299. Wieviorka develops this figure on the basis of work by French psychoanalyst Jean Bergeret. The latter’s concept is “fundamental violence” that is quite interesting but has no political sense.


Participation of individuals in violence


The name of the village is a pseudonym.


It was reported that this was not because of a different Kurdish dialect, but because the accent of the militants appeared to be strange and unknown to the inhabitants of Gundê Xelîlê.

Fieldwork in Batman in 2005.

Even though the contexts are different, this configuration is similar to what Lipset (1950), Lipset and Wolin (1965) and Oberschall (1973) observed: pre-existing solidarities can constitute a basis of recruitment. Lipset, Seymour, M., Agrarian Socialism, Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1950; Lipset, Seymour M., and Wolin, Sheldon S., The Berkeley student revolt, Garden City, NY, Doubleday-Anchor, 1965; Oberschall, Social Conflict and Social Movements, op. cit.

Ahmet Türk, born in 1942, and ex-deputy of the DTP (Demokratik Toplum Partisi/Party of Democratic Society), belongs to the Türk tribe in Derik. One should add that the murder of his brother who was a deputy had an impact on his engagement in politics. He was elected deputy of the CHP in Mardin in 1974.

Field survey at Stockholm in 2011.

One should take note that this is a collective participation, but not total participation of tribal members. The second case is rare to observe. One should not look for absolute political unity of the tribes. As Hosham Davod and Faleh Abdul Jabar suggest, socialism and nationalism might reproduce diverse forms of ʿasabiyya. Jabar, Faleh A. and Dawod, Hosham, “Introduction”, in Jabar, Faleh A. and Dawod, Hosham (eds), Tribes and power: Nationalism and ethnicity in the Middle East, London, Saqi, pp. 7–11.

Milliyet, 29 September 2010.

Ibid.

The blood feud between the two tribes ended in 2010.


Ibid., p. 76.


For this remark, see Braud, L’émotion en politique, op. cit., p. 74.


The motivations of participants in violence are of course complex and multiple, as Stathis Kalyvas argues. Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*, op. cit. One may usually find different motivations of participation in political violence. But the motivation for recognition seems to be quite central in the Kurdish case.

In fact symbolic violence has multiple forms. One of the most important ones in the Kurdish case relates to the discourse of the state, which did not recognize Kurdish identity by the 1990s. However, my study does not comprise a discourse analysis.

My research does not deal with “the politics of recognition” by the Kurdish movements, but the motivation of recognition among the participants in political violence. These two problems constitute different topics.

Interview with an ex-militant in Paris in 2006.

The refusal of isolation may constitute a factor in the move to violence of political organizations which have different ideologies and objectives. For instance, Gilles Kepel admits that violence of the jihadist militants can be a refusal to accept their isolation. Cf. Kepel, Gilles, *Le Figaro*, 2 September 2004.


Field study in Bingöl in 2007

Field study in Bingöl in 2007.

I do not favor much a thesis of “pure rationality” of actors who resort to violence, for violence is never wholly instrumental. About the instrumental and emotional reasons in the quest for recognition, see Lindemann, Thomas, *Causes of war: the struggle for recognition*, Colchester, ECPR Press, 2010, pp. 1–2.

Field study in Batman in 2005.

Please note that Kurdish demands shift in time. In the 1980s, they dealt with separation, while separatism was almost absent in the discourse in the 1990s, and the objectives may still change in future. I herein do not study the goals of the Kurdish cause. Whatever definition we give to the Kurdish movement: “Marxist”, “democratic”, “separatist”, “revolutionary” or even “terrorist”, the actors frequently engage in the politics of recognition. The struggle for recognition is a basic motivation among the militants and sympathizers, which can be on behalf of the creation of an independent state or autonomous region, obtaining of cultural rights, recognition of the organization (the PKK) or its leadership (*muhatap alma*). The desire for recognition can appear under different forms given the period, but it is always present.


Lindemann, *La guerre*, op. cit.

It is noteworthy that symbolic violence covers a vast domain. The objective here is to analyze in which respect and how symbolic violence plays a role in the participation of actors in violence.

Kurds were long considered as mountainous Turks, and the Kurdish language as a deteriorated form of Turkish language. This discourse even went on to deny the existence of the Kurds and Kurdish language.
Participation of individuals in violence

The article by Xavier Crettiez on the Basque ETA also shows that symbolic violence is posterior to political engagement. Cf. Crettiez, “Violence symbolique d’Etat contre violence terroriste basque”, op. cit., pp. 59–75.


Field study in Batman in 2007.


Matur., p. 37.

Mîlan, a former militant, was imprisoned for several years and freed with an amnesty. Interview with him in Batman in 2005.


The term is used by Alexander Wendt. Cited in Lindemann, La Guerre, op. cit., p. 50.

For Axel Honneth, one may link the violent action with an anterior experience of individual contempt. Honneth, La lutte pour la reconnaissance, op. cit., p. 33.

According to Philippe Braud, physical violence is usually associated with symbolic violence. Braud, Violences politiques, op. cit., p. 161.

Field study in Batman in 2005.

From Lindemann’s perspective, one may suppose that militant actors are engaged in a political crisis by a feeling of vulnerability and identity insecurity. Lindemann, Causes of war, op. cit.


One may quote the whole expression by Wood, “By path-dependent outcomes, I mean persistent outcomes that might have been different if initial events had been different (in the language of economists, there are multiple equilibria); path-dependent processes shape such outcomes.” See Wood, Insurgent collective action and civil war in El Salvador, op. cit., pp. 231–232.


See the presentation by Raymond Boudon, in Tarde, Gabriel, Les lois de l’imitation, Paris, Slatkine, 1979 [1895], p. 49.

Elisabeth Wood uses the term “past pattern of local violence” and “path of violence”. For the terms, see Wood, Insurgent collective action and civil war in El Salvador, op. cit., pp. 231 and 237.

I use the term to signify blind violence or perpetrated randomly and targeting both the combatants and non-combatants.

The author takes up this question posed by A. Honneth on the topic of the relation between social contempt and the motivation of recognition and revolt. Indeed, the question is relevant in this research. Honneth, “Le motif de tout conflit est une attente de reconnaissance”, op. cit.; “Le mépris”, Pensée de midi, no. 24/25, 2008, pp. 8–161.

One must admit that desire for recognition may go hand in hand with political integration. There is no absolute link between the quest for recognition and the move to political violence.
4 Repertoires of political violence

Introduction

This chapter aims to study repertoires of political violence in the Kurdish movement. There are several repertoires of violence and collective actions in the Kurdish conflict which include not only armed struggle, political murders, bomb attacks, but also civilian disobedience, demonstrations, strikes, sit-ins, legal assemblies and the like. Although each of them is worthy of serious attention, I will focus mainly on two repertoires: those of Kurdish insurgencies and self-sacrificial violence.

I will beforehand explain the reasons why I privilege these two repertoires above others. The choice results from a constraint. Given that any research is a limited study in time and topic, it would be difficult to study the whole of repertoires. I preferred to study insurgencies and self-sacrificial violence which constitute two distinct forms of political violence. Kurdish insurgencies are a type of collective violence, whereas self-sacrificial violence is a form of individualized violence, knowing that at the same time it can occur collectively. Without an exhaustive study of repertoires of violence, studying two clearly different repertoires can help highlight the research topic from a perspective of two sides.

In this respect, I will first explore insurgencies called “serhildan”¹ by Kurdish participants, which entered in the repertoire of violence in the 1990s. Serhildan signifies troubles, popular assemblies including a multiplicity of violent actions – their possible outcomes are death, injury and physical damage – and can be defined as popular and local movements which precede or succeed armed struggle. I will return to this definition or hypothesis in the analysis about insurgencies. The study regarding serhildan consists of three parts. First, I will define what a Kurdish riot means. The second part is to study the institutionalization of the insurgencies in the Kurdish space through three mechanisms (1) diversion of rituals and traditional practices, (2) proximity and armed conflicts, and (3) scale change. I shall finally be interested in a specific characteristic of insurgencies, namely fluidity.

In a second phase, I shall analyze the repertoire of self-sacrificial violence. I will proceed to define three ideal types of self-sacrificial action, which are fasting to death,² self-immolation and suicide attack. The goal is to draw common points
and differences which have been rarely taken into account in the study of self-sacrificial violence. I will provide afterwards some hypotheses to explain the emergence of self-sacrificial violence, namely, mortification of the self, charisma of the leader of the PKK, militant habitus and politics of violence. Mortification of the self seems to impact suicide action, especially in prison. Furthermore, the charisma of the PKK leader appears to have played a role on self-sacrificial violence during some periods. There is also a linkage between militant habitus and self-sacrifice within the PKK. Finally, I will attempt to show why the politics of the PKK seems to be crucial in the organization of suicide actions.

Kurdish insurgencies


Serhildan appeared for the first time in 1989. In March 1989, the funeral of a guerrilla, killed in an armed ambush, was organized in the village of Savur (Mardin). The funeral shifted into a violent manifestation. In fact, guerrilla warfare gave rise to local riots, especially in the transborder regions, in 1989. These regions, called Garzan and Botan by the PKK, constituted places of violent action and very intense collective mobilization by armed militants. They include the provinces of Mardin, Hakkâri, Siirt, Şırnak, Van (Çatak), etc.

In 1990, local insurgencies were characterized in parallel with the intensification of armed conflicts in these regions. In March 1990, armed conflicts caused at least forty-five victims among guerrillas, soldiers and civilians. During the funerals of Kurdish guerrillas, on 15 March 1990, almost 5,000 people demonstrated in the village of Nusaybin in Mardin and a demonstrator was killed. In order to protest this event, the craftsmen (esnaf) shut down the stores in the village for two days. Serhildan occurred in the villages of Cizre, İdil, Silopi and Midyat during the newroz (new year’s celebration) on 21 March. At least, four persons were killed in Cizre. The same day, a PKK militant, Zekiye Alkan, set

Map 4.1 The zone of Kurdish serhildan in the 1990s.
herself on fire in Diyarbakır. The radical action of Zekiye Alkan led to a violent protest against the government as well as strikes in Diyarbakır.

Serhildan perpetuated throughout the summer in 1990. From April to August, at least 300 persons were killed in armed clashes which took place between Kurdish guerrillas and Turkish security forces. During the conflicts, the militants or activists used other repertoires of action. In some Kurdish villages (kasaba) and provinces, boycotts, strikes and sit-ins were organized in favor of the PKK. For instance, following the arrest of eleven Kurdish women for militant activities, craftsmen shut down stores in Kerboran (Dargeçit) in June.

In July 1990, a new legal party, the HEP (People’s Labour Party), was established in the Kurdish political field. Legal representation thus entered the political repertoires of the Kurdish movement. Indeed, seven Kurdish members of the SHP (Social Democratic Populist Party) had been expelled from the party because they attended the international conference of the Kurdish question organized by the Kurdish Institute of Paris in 1989. The excluded deputies of the SHP gathered with other Kurdish personalities and founded the HEP, which was the first Kurdish nationalist legal party. The HEP allied with the SHP and obtained twenty-two seats in the Turkish National Assembly in the elections of 20 October 1991. Leyla Zana, elected to be deputy, took an oath in the Kurdish language in the Turkish National Assembly. She was imprisoned in 1994, with three other Kurdish deputies. Two Kurdish papers, Yeni Ülke (New Country) and Özgür Halk (Free People) also appeared in fall 1990.

In February 1991, with the democratic initiative of Turgut Özal (President of Turkey between 1989 and 1993), the ban on Kurdish music was lifted. This can be interpreted as the first de facto recognition of Kurdish identity by the Turkish state since the establishment of the Constitution of 1924. On 4 March, two persons were killed in a pro-PKK demonstration in İdil (Şırnak). On 7 March, violence extended to Kerboran (Mardin), three days only after the protest movement in İdil. A crowd of almost 2,000 people clashed with Turkish police to protest violence which was taking place in İdil. One person was killed and about 100 were injured and another 100 persons were arrested by the security forces. On 15 March, on the anniversary of the massacre of Halabja (in Iraqi Kurdistan), once again in Kerboran, a demonstration of a crowd of several thousand people shifted into serhildan. One of the participants was killed by the police. A week later, the celebration of newroz became the scene of violent serhildan in the Kurdish space. In several villages, the Kurds demonstrated against the events in Kerboran and Iraq’s repressive politics against the Kurds during the Gulf war. One person was killed in Nusaybin (Mardin), during one of the popular riots. These ones succeeded to armed clashes in the following months in different Kurdish provinces and villages. For instance, about ten people were killed in the conflicts between Kurdish guerrillas and Turkish security forces in Pazarcık in May and June, and at least 150 people were killed in conflicts which occurred between April and July in the south-east of Turkey.

The year 1991 was characterized by two other important violent phenomena in the Kurdish space: armed clashes between the Kurdish Hizbullah and the
Repertoires of political violence

PKK, and “unknown murders”. The two phenomena already existed in the Kurdish region. But ethnographic evidence indicates that they became recurrent and visible in 1991. The conflict between the two parties began to radicalize in the provinces of Mardin and Batman, and “unknown murders” became more frequent. On July 8, 1991, Vedat Aydın, departmental president of the HEP in Diyarbakir, was taken away from his home and tortured to death. His body was found on July 9. The murder of Vedat Aydın led to grassroots indignation in Diyarbakir. About 20,000 people participated and threw out slogans in favor of the PKK in the funeral organized on July 10 in the town. Firing against the funeral convoys killed at least ten and injured about 100 people. During the protest of these events, local riots took place in Diyarbakir, Nusaybin, Lice, Bismil, Cizre and Uludere. Four days later, on July 14, the PKK organized simultaneous attacks in Hizan (Bitlis), Kulp (Diyarbakir) and Harmançık (Maraş), while killing at least eighteen people. On the same day, a bus full of passengers was shot in Midyat; six persons were killed in the shooting.

In August 1991, the Turkish army organized a transborder operation against the PKK in Iraq. Armed conflicts killed at least ninety people in Turkey and Iraq. In parallel with these conflicts, several demonstrations and strikes were organized in August in Batman, Kızıltepe, Silvan, İdil, Kerboran, Lice, Hazro, Suruç, Midyat, Bismil, Kulp, Kurtalan, Nusaybin and Adana. Fifteen tourists were kidnapped by Kurdish rebels in the Kurdish region during the month of August in 1991.

Between September and December 1991, violent clashes caused the killing of about 200 people including Kurdish militants, Turkish soldiers and civilians in the Kurdish region. The funerals organized following one of these clashes generated _serhildan_ in Lice and Kulp towards the end of 1991. At least twelve people, including three Turkish security force members, were killed during the riots. Strikes followed in Diyarbakir, Mardin, Batman. In the end of December 1991, violence extended to Western Turkey and Europe. PKK militants set fire to a commercial shop in Istanbul; this act of arson killed eleven people. The PKK also attacked the Turkish consulates in different European towns in Germany, Belgium and Netherlands.

_Serhildan_ seems to have occurred more frequently and became popular and violent in 1992. Two local insurgencies took place in Silvan and İdil after the murder of a Kurdish militant and a Kurdish nationalist teacher in January 1992. On 24 February, in the province of Batman, Cengiz Altun, a journalist of Kurdish nationalist newspaper, _Yeni Ülke_, was killed. The next day, the funerals shifted into a _serhildan_ in the town center. During the first months of 1992, two phenomena of violence dominated daily life particularly in Batman, Silvan, Nusaybin, Mardin and Bingöl. First, _Hizbullah_ and the PKK began to clash with each other in the streets. Second, unknown murders increased considerably. About seventy people were killed in three months.

A bloody _newroz_ characterized March 1992. In some Kurdish villages and towns, the feast of _newroz_ transformed into _serhildan_. In Cizre, on the morning of 21 March, a crowd entered into conflict with Turkish police on the way to the
cemetery of the guerrillas.\(^7\) Eleven persons were killed. In addition to conflicts in Cizre, Kurdish militants clashed with Turkish security forces in the center of Şırnak during twenty-two hours while killing at least twenty-seven people.\(^8\) Several houses, stores and offices were entirely destroyed. Violence later extended to Nusaybin, İdil, Kerboran, Beşiri, Silopi and Yüksekova.\(^9\) In Nusaybin, for example, in three days, at least fifteen persons died. All in all, during insurgencies of \textit{newroz} in 1992, almost 100 people were killed in the Kurdish region.

During the second half of 1992, violent conflict intensified, causing thousands of deaths. One must underline that during this period the PKK targeted military posts and public buildings. At the same time, the Turkish army organized two grand operations against the PKK in Iraq, in the spring and autumn of 1992. Şırnak became once again the scene of armed clashes lasting one week in August 1992. Consequently about 10,000 people left the town in a couple of days. Furthermore, in August 1992, local riots happened in Hazro, Derik and Malazgirt. In September 1992, Musa Anter, a very popular Kurdish nationalist journalist, was killed in Diyarbakır.

In 1993, \textit{newroz} was peacefully celebrated, probably due to the declaration of a ceasefire by the PKK before the feast. \textit{Serhildan} continued in 1993, but riots seem to have been less frequent and popular when compared with the preceding three years even though there were some violent \textit{serhildan}. One of them occurred in the village of Digor in Kars, in August 1993. Seventeen people were killed during the demonstration which gathered some 3,000 people. Moreover, a poor district (\textit{mahalle}) populated by Kurdish immigrants in Adana went through an insurgency due to the murder of a fourteen year old girl.

During the same year, the history of the country was marked by four forms of violence. First, the armed conflict between the PKK and \textit{Hizbullah} radicalized, especially in Batman, Bingöl and Silvan. Second, the number of unknown murders increased substantially. Some 400 people were estimated to have been killed in 1993; most of these murders have not been solved yet. Third, many Turkish and Kurdish personalities, who were implicated in the Kurdish question, died or were killed in 1993: Eşref Bitlis, general commander of gendarmerie (\textit{Jandarma Genel Komutanı}),\(^{10}\) Bahtiyar Aydin, regional commander of gendarmerie in Diyarbakır,\(^{11}\) Turgut Özal, President of Turkey, (on 17 April 1993), Mehmet Sincar, Kurdish Deputy of Mardin,\(^{12}\) Cem Ersever, a former commandant in October 1993.\(^{13}\) Finally, many massacres were perpetrated in 1993. One may give some examples among others. (1) At least forty people, the vast majority of whom were Turkish soldiers, were killed in Bingöl in May 1993.\(^{14}\) (2) At least, thirty-seven persons, who were mostly Alevi intellectuals, were burnt to death on 2 July 1993 in Sivas, a province in the East of Turkey. (3) A week later, after this massacre, thirty-three people were shot down in Başbağlar, a very conservative Turkish Sunni village in the province of Erzincan in Eastern Turkey.\(^{15}\) (4) Thirty-two people were gunned down in Yavi, a Sunni conservative village in the province of Erzurum, also in Eastern Turkey.\(^{16}\) (5) In Derince, a small village of Baykan (Siirt), twenty-two people, most of whom
were women and children belonging to *korucu* families (village guards) were shot in the primary school of Derince.\(^{17}\) (6) At least thirty people were killed in Lice (Diyarbakır) between 20 and 25 October. (7) Twelve members of a *korucu* family were killed in Ağackonak (Adıyaman), and so forth.\(^{18}\)

From 1994 to the ceasefire of 1998, the PKK was no longer capable of keeping the initiative in armed conflicts. However, the organization had already extended its space of action, from the transborder region to interior regions of Turkey, that is, the regions of Dersim, Bingöl, Hatay and the like. Similarly, Kurdish militants organized several attacks in Turkish towns and seaside resorts. Even if political violence continued to endure in the Kurdish space, popular insurgencies remained rare during this period.

The second period of violent *Serhildan* began in 1999 with the arrest of Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK leader, on 15 February. This processes also incited different repertoires of violence both in Turkey and Europe such as self-sacrificial violence, strikes, firing cars, acts of sabotage, throwing Molotov cocktails and so on.

From 1999 to 2004, the PKK applied a unilateral ceasefire. Kurdish space was less violent than in the 1980s and 1990s. Violent *serhildan* seems to have been almost absent in that period, except for some riots in Kurdish provinces and towns in Western Turkey. In 2004, armed conflicts resumed. The clashes brought a new cycle of *serhildan*. In 2005, a member of the Turkish security forces was arrested when he was about to prepare an attack on a Kurdist bookshop in Şemdinli, in the province of Hakkâri. This provoked a popular indignation in Şemdinli, and protestors clashed with Turkish police. In 2006, twelve Kurdish militants were killed in an air attack. The funerals of these militants produced clashes between protestors and security forces, especially in Batman and Kızıltepe. Fourteen people died in the *serhildan* which lasted about five days. These violent events of the early 2000s seem to signify a third wave of *serhildan* in Kurdish space.

**What is a Kurdish insurgency?**

Although my presentation is essentially chronological, the goal is not to provide an exhaustive panorama of the Kurdish problem in the decades 1990 and 2000, but rather to show basic features and describe the context of emergence of *serhildan*.

It seems on the other hand to be noteworthy to define more clearly what an insurgency means. I above defined *serhildan* as pre- or post-armed conflicts in the Kurdish political field. It is relevant to develop three points which support this thesis.

**Insurgencies are an extension of the battle field**

I consider the riots as an extension of the battle field and a form of militant participation to political violence. The experiences of some participants to *serhildan* in the 1990s support this argument. One of them witnessed:
I knew the resistance better during the period of *serhildan* in 1991 and 1992. The police was always controlling the streets and stopping people. In a demonstration, the tanks crushed two persons. I personally knew one of them. His death brought fear unto me. I said to myself that if we are killed or killed like that, then I have to participate in the struggle. So I made a decision.\(^{19}\)

Another former militant reported experiences of *serhildan*:

> [Were armed clashes were taking place in *serhildan*?]
> Yes, there were armed conflicts. We were always hearing gun shots in our district. There were armed clashes between the civilian population and security forces. I was in high school in that period. I was able to hear the shooting of guns. Nevertheless, I was participating in *serhildan*. Because fear was evaporating during those moments.\(^{20}\)

These examples indicate that insurgencies are not a form of peaceful collective action but rather a repertoire of collective violence. So it might be said that the armed struggle of the guerrilla movement was determinant in making riots violent. In addition to this, the role of state violence must be taken into account.

*The impact of coercion on insurgencies*

The emergence of insurgencies was shaped at the same time by police policies of the government. The state possesses different means of substantial coercion such as army, police forces, tribunals, prisons, etc.\(^{21}\) I will present a quick overview of insurgencies with regard to state repression. The first episode corresponds to a very repressive period (1989–1993), particularly along with popular mobilizations in Kerboran, Nusaybin and Diyarbakır in 1991, as well as in Cizre, Nusaybin and Şırnak in 1992, which shifted into violent demonstrations under the influence of state coercion and the intervention of government forces. Shooting at civilians in this respect seems to have constituted one of the inciting elements of *serhildan*. Many *serhildan* also resulted from abductions, “unknown” murders and local massacres during that period. The second cycle of *serhildan* covers the years of 1998–1999. During this second wave of *serhildan*, the arrest of Abdullah Öcalan and his charisma as the leader of the organization played a role in provoking violent riots. Finally, the resumption of armed conflicts seems to have given rise to a third cycle of insurgencies, after a period of appeasement in the beginning of the 2000s.

However, a relevant question may be posed in regards to the link between state coercion and political violence. Why did repression lead to *serhildan* more in the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s? It may be assumed that repression did not crush the Kurdish movement in that period because the level of mobilization, both within society and the armed guerrilla movement, was quite high in the regions where *serhildan* took place.\(^{22}\) This repression, far from
discouraging popular contesting, rather provoked political violence for at least three or four years. It seems that different state apparatus were then used to repress as much as is necessary while using different means such as counter-insurgency activities, unknown murders, and forced immigration and imprisonment. These means in part were able to crush Kurdish popular mobilization which formed a threat to the political regime and state power in the regions of serhildan towards the end of the 1990s.

**Insurgencies are the product of the politics of violence of the rebels**

The third aspect refers to the politics of violence by insurgents themselves. The politics of violence, of which insurgencies are a part, implies both a strategy of rebellion in the long term, militia activities and logic of production of violence.

* A strategy of insurrection. The Kurdish guerrilla movement had already an ambition of popular insurrection in some villages (kasabalar) and towns such as İdil, Cizre, Nusaybin, Batman or Şırnak, in the 1980s even if serhildan appeared only at the end of the 1980s. This observation supposes that a riot as a repertoire of violence constitutes a whole of conflict representation available in a specific historical period. Its emergence does not result from the intention of only one political actor, but obeys a web of complex interactions amongst several agents such as the street, the villages, the government, the police, the army and the ruling strata of the PKK, the guerrilla, social base. Whilst saying this, one must make sure never to underestimate the guerrilla strategy to encourage popular insurgency ever since the early 1980s. Indeed, the emergence of insurrection is never completely spontaneous. This one, even if not wholly, but at least partially, is prepared.

* Provocation and agitation. The politics of violence also relates to some radical actions. The categories of provocation and agitation are unfortunately ignored in social sciences. To kill in the course of a riot, a policeman, a soldier or demonstrator, for instance, is an act of provocation. This may come from either a militant “demonstrator” or the security forces. A provocative act, when it takes the form of a massacre, may also incite violent reactions. The chanting of war slogans, chanting of illegal slogans, the wearing of PKK colors (red, yellow and green) agitate the crowd. The fire caused by the burning of used tyres, for instance, is a mobilizing factor too. It should be underlined that, in the Kurdish case, it is not always collective interests in the sense that social movement scholars use, which mobilize the people in favor of violence, but also provocation, agitation, the murdering of people, the spreading of rumors are significant mobilizing forces.

* The logic of the production of violence. There is lastly the logic of production of political violence. Insurgencies are the acts of destruction which make profit to insurgents. One may spot some logic in the use of violence in a serhildan: damage to a public building, throwing Molotov cocktails and stones, clashing with the police, killing or being killed and the like. On the other hand, insurgencies seem to aim at activating the social base of the guerrilla movement, to
legitimize the armed struggle or make the leader of the PKK recognized by the government, given the context. In other words, insurgencies may be associated with diverse motivations. Nevertheless, the claim of insurgents does not seem to exclude peace or democracy, although serhildan, and in particular, their process of emergence, echo the context of war.

**Institutionalization of insurgencies or “serhildan”**

I may list three mechanisms of institutionalization of insurgencies in the Kurdish field. Diversion of traditional repertoires into violence, proximity of armed clashes and change in scale.

**The diversion of rituals and traditional practices into insurgencies**

Every social movement may be confronted with a pre-existing range of protest forms that are more or less codified, unequally available given the identity of mobilized groups. For Charles Tilly, the emergence and institutionalization of a repertoire would depend on particularities of the mobilized group and the nature of political conflict. The student world would theoretically be predisposed to use school means, for example, the occupation of an amphitheatre, while the working class put into question their power of production by going on strike in times of conflict with their boss.

In the previous pages I defined serhildan as pre or post situations to armed clashes. My study of serhildan will be based on this definition because one observes that there is an interaction between pre-existing religious ritual and guerrilla war, that is to say diversion of the funerals into insurrections. This is a very crucial mechanism of institutionalization of insurgencies in the Kurdish political field.

The guerrilla war politicized or militarized some pre-existing social organizations, and transformed them into repertoires of collective actions. Funerals are one of the examples. They are part of the daily life in Muslim societies because funerals, as a religious and ritual practice, have an important place. The crowd gathers together for burial (cenâze), mourning (yas) and condolences (tâziye). Here, one may refer to the concept of social appropriation by Tilly and Tarrow to signify the process of diversion or exploitation of funerals as far as popular organizations, solidarities, representations, networks converge to produce a repertoire of political violence.

The three cycles of Kurdish insurgencies help to show that funerals became spaces of insurgent violence. The first popular uprising broke out in Savur (Mardin) during the funeral of a guerrilla in 1989. Another bloody insurrection took place in the village of Nusaybin at the funeral of a militant in 1990. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the Kurdish space experienced several uprisings similar to those in Savur and Nusaybin. There is no point in making a new temporal presentation; it is however relevant to present one of the observations in the fieldwork to defend the argument. It is one of the ethnographic descriptions constructed through the experiences of a participant to serhildan in Sason:
In the 1990s, three PKK militants were killed in Sason, a district of Batman. It was a time when there were frequent and very intense armed conflicts between the PKK and the Turkish Army. The Turkish Security Forces brought the three bodies in a military garrison in the center of Sason. Afterwards, it was announced in the loudspeaker that three terrorists were killed in an address to the inhabitants of Sason. It was being defended in this announcement that three terrorists were not Muslim but Christian. It was added that “the bodies are not circumcised and they are Armenian bodies... neither Kurdish nor Muslim... If you doubt, you can come to see and verify”. After this announce, thousands of people gathered in front the garrison in Sason to react against this event. A crowd demonstrated in front of the military garrison. The people chanted slogans in favor of the PKK. It was a serhildan. It was a moment when the slightest reaction of the soldiers or people could provoke a violent conflict and several deaths from both sides.

The crowd demanded the bodies by crying. The garrison gave them to the crowd after waiting some hours. People put them on the shoulder and carried from the garrison till the bazaar of Sason while chanting “Bijî Kurdistan” [live Kurdistan], “bijî serok Apo” [live the president Apo], “lêxe lêxe gerilla” [strike, strike guerrilla], “şehîd namirin” [the martyrs do not die]. They washed the corpses which were only shreds of flesh because of the bullet effects, while paying attention to sexual organs. Later, from the bazaar, two or three people moved forward in front the crowd to make an announcement. There were thousands of people. “Come to see and check who these men are!” “come to verify they are circumcised or not!” The crowd carried them until the graveyard. The crowd dispersed after the funerals. This is of course just an example on which I do not aim to base the whole of my hypotheses. Nonetheless, it constitutes an empirical illustration of what the funerals signify, namely, that they are traditional rituals and practices, but at the same time they are the occasions, the theme, the means and the cause of the insurgent event. They enable people to gather and express anger collectively. The assembly appears to be an important fact. Indeed, Kurdish gatherings and demonstrations were almost forbidden or risky in the 1990s. Mobilization around the funerals of the “martyrs” seems to be based on two essential dynamics: familiarity and popular legitimacy. Familiarity means herein that gathering for funerals is already a popular representation. As Michel Dobry suggests, familiarity is not strange to legitimacy helping the use of demonstration. Due to their strong subscription to daily life, funerals produce “effects of umbrella” for mobilizations, namely a legitimacy to serhildan. Consequently, they seem to have contributed to consolidating the uprisings in time and space.

Newroz offers the second example of diversion of rituals in Kurdish uprisings. Newroz is celebrated as the day of new year in some oriental societies. It is a traditional and ethnic celebration among the Kurds. One notices that the celebration of newroz became a pretext to violent demonstration or brutal repression in the early 1990s. Newroz of Nusaybin, Cizre and Şırnak in 1992 constitutes
significant examples. One might consider the celebration as a traditional occasion enabling *serhildan*. However, this is not to say that all celebrations and demonstrations of *newroz* give birth to uprisings: *newroz* celebrations occurred especially in a peaceful way in the 2000s. Furthermore, *newroz* is less likely to become an uprising than funerals. In spite of these peaceful trends, I may still suggest that celebration of *newroz* provided a favorable milieu for the emergence and invention and structuration or success of uprisings in the Kurdish case.

**Proximity of armed conflicts**

One may once again cite the mechanism of proximity in the study of political violence. The phenomenon of proximity between rebel forces and local society indeed contributed to the emergence of the institution of uprisings in Kurdish space. It has been noted that Kurdish insurgencies appeared in the regions where guerrillas and armed clashes were strongly present in the 1990s. My chronological presentation indicates that the uprisings are endemic: *serhildan* emerged in particular in provinces such as Diyarbakır, Batman, Şırnak, Mardin, Siirt and Hakkâri. But how did the proximity to rebel forces play a role in this phenomenon?

First of all, funerals are situated in the continuity of armed conflicts. As I previously indicated, conflict is usually likely to produce “martyrs”. By producing “martyrs”, the conflict activates the social base. In other words, the “martyr” is a resource produced by armed struggle. It constitutes a dynamic of mobilization promoting popular insurrections. It thus becomes a fundamental dynamic of *serhildan*. Furthermore, armed struggle in the long term has, no doubt, impacts on the frame of action of participants to insurgencies. It seems to have structured the militant habitus, while providing a legitimacy to uprisings.

The linkage between civilian uprisings and armed conflict is a relationship of duality. On the one hand, armed clashes provoke civilian uprisings, on the other hand, the latter lead to confrontations between the guerrillas and security forces. Indeed, it happens sometimes that local uprisings result from clashes between guerrillas and security forces. This means that *serhildan* are not only ulterior to the armed struggle, but may also trigger a riot.

**Change in scale**

According to Tilly and Tarrow, the change in scale is a complex process through which the conflict diffuses from one place to another place or from one sector of society to another sector, and also whereby new bodies of coordination are formed at a higher level than in the beginning. The Kurdish uprisings, as I have defined them, are a form of collective violence. The change in scale should be considered as both a cause and outcome of institutionalization of the uprisings. Given the observations, I identified three mechanisms of change in scale: multiplication and autonomization of factors of emergence of uprisings, diffusion of the use of violence from one sector of society to another, and finally diffusion of violence from one place to another.
This is first of all a question of multiplication and autonomization of factors of emergence of *serhildan*. I noticed that uprisings follow or precede armed conflicts and this continues to be true. Most of the insurgencies that I observed in 2006 and 2007 depended on the evolution of armed conflicts. For instance, most violent uprisings of the 2000s broke out in Batman and Kızıltepe in 2006 in reaction to the death of fourteen Kurdish militants in an armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish army.

On the other hand, armed struggle and similar forms of violence such as unknown murders, massacres and abductions do not constitute anymore the unique factors of emergence of *serhildan*. The arrest of the PKK leader led to, at the end of the 1990s, a second cycle of Kurdish uprisings, a historical time which is certainly not independent from armed conflicts. But it is rather the charisma of Abdullah Öcalan and conditions of his imprisonment in the prison of İmralı which motivated the social base to provoke *serhildan*.

Moreover, electoral processes appear sometimes to be the sources of uprisings. I must remind that the legal Kurdish party was born in 1990s. Nevertheless, in the 1990s, the electoral processes were far from, bringing collective action to the street. The foundation of legal Kurdish parties progressively favored and legitimized assemblies in the Kurdish field, and one may suggest that it is only from 1999 onwards that electoral processes caused mobilizations in the street. The HADEP (People’s Democracy Party) was perhaps the first Kurdish legal party which gave rise to popular mobilizations in the street. In the 2000s, electoral mobilizations took the form of demonstrations, parade, and assemblies, which did not seem to be violent.

But how do these mobilizations end up as uprisings? In addition to peaceful mobilizations, it is observed that electoral processes instigate riots in times of political crisis. For instance, the ban of Kurdish nationalist candidacies provoked the crises in 2011. I may cite a case of protest in April 2011:

The Higher Committee for Elections (*Yükseğ Seçim Kurulu* or YSK) canceled on Monday 18 April the candidacy of seven independent candidates, presented by the principal Kurdish party, the BDP [Party of Peace and Democracy] for the legislative elections to be organized on 12 June 2011. The invalidation of these candidacies incited several protests. The BDP threatened to boycott the voting after the reject by the YSK. Thousands of people took the street in Diyarbakır, Van, Batman, Hakkâri, Mersin and Istanbul following the announcement of the Electoral Council. Hundreds of demonstrators took part in a sit-in on the place of Taksim in Istanbul. The police intervened to disperse the crowd. Later, radical Kurdish youth groups attacked the metro stations, buildings of schools and post offices by throwing stones and Molotov Cocktails. They also targeted buses and cars in Istanbul. Turkish police reacted while using tear gas. In one of these protest movements, the police brutally intervened in Bismil, a district in Diyarbakır.
Some five thousands demonstrators entered in conflict with the police chanting “Bîjî Serok Apo” (live the president Abdullah Öcalan). A protester was killed. Another demonstration caused tens of injuries in the province of Van. About one hundred persons were detained in the Kurdish provinces. The YSK finally validated the candidacy of seven members for running for the BDP in the legislatives.\(^{41}\)

These examples show that uprisings may correspond to the context of electoral mobilizations radicalized by a political crisis. I shall later return to this interdependent relationship between crisis, fluidity and insurgencies.

In summary, these are here two phenomena, though relatively independent from each other, which incited the uprisings: the arrest of Öcalan and the electoral process. In these contexts, serhildan seems not to be an extension of the armed struggle, but instead provoked itself a process of armed violence and a cycle of conflict. More precisely, the fact that political crises taking place in the legal field impact uprisings shows us the institutionalization of serhildan in the Kurdish space. This observation demands a study of the diffusion of violence within civilian society as well.

**DIFFUSION OF THE USE OF VIOLENCE FROM ONE SECTOR TO ANOTHER**

Second, the change in scale implies a mechanism of diffusion of violence among sectors and radicalization of these sectors. It is perhaps worth further detailing what the diffusion of political violence from one sector to another means. Indeed, insurgencies promote transference of the use of violence. The social base of the Kurdish organization finds an opportunity to deploy political violence. Insurgencies not only allow armed and illegal militants to resort to violence, but also legal militants or activists. In addition to armed activities of the guerrilla movement in rural or urban space, the street becomes a place of conflict. Furthermore, serhildan encourages different members of the social base to rebellion, including even children and women. Kurdish children played a considerable role especially in the riots of the 2000s. During these uprisings, one observes that several children confronted the police while throwing stones. Between 2006 and 2010, some 6,000 children were questioned, as the Turkish anti-terrorist law indicates.\(^{42}\) The number suffices to prove the participation of children to political violence. An analysis of radicalization of children would be perhaps relevant; yet because of the limits of this work, I shall stop here by making a commentary regarding the thesis over the institutionalization of uprisings. More social categories who participate in insurgencies are diverse, more uprisings become institutionalized in time and space.

**DIFFUSION OF VIOLENCE FROM ONE REGION TO ANOTHER**

The change in scale deals with the mechanism of diffusion of violence from one region to others in the uprisings. One may identify two characteristics of Kurdish
Once they arise, they begin to extend from one region to another. Second, they go beyond the Kurdish region and extend to Turkish metropolises such as Mersin, Adana and Istanbul.

It was noted that the Kurdish riots quickly diffused among villages and towns like Batman, Kerboran, Siirt, Şırnak, İdil, Hakkâri, Yüksekova, Şemdinli in the 1990s. This phenomenon seems to have been maintained in the 2000s, as suggested by the quick diffusion of serhildan in Diyarbakır, Batman, Mardin, Cizre, Hakkâri, in 2006, 2007 and 2008. The uprisings touched the Turkish metropolises. They also became places of conflict, certainly because Kurdish immigration contributed to the extension of the social base in the Turkish metropolises.

The diffusion of uprisings from one region to another can be explained by two principal dynamics: the dynamic of wave and the dynamic of emulation.

**Dynamic of wave.** I refer to the metaphor of the wave to study the diffusion of insurgencies. This may help to explain the succession of events during a series of uprisings. It is a metaphor drawn from nature, and by using it I would like to emphasize the fact that succession of the events may be “natural”, namely an uprising may extend without either real preparation or conscious imitation. Indeed, I rarely observed that an insurgency is limited to its place of origin, whether this latter would be a village or a town. Insurgency diffuses usually and at least among the villages which are in close proximity to one another in the Kurdish region. To speak empirically, an uprising which arises in Batman, may quickly extend to Nusaybin. In fact, this is not only related to propagation of the insurgent event but also its theme and representation of conflict. The death of a Kurdish insurgent in a serhildan in Batman may become a theme of conflict, a source of legitimacy for another serhildan which is likely to take place in Nusaybin. At the same time, the effects of wave should be considered in the context of fluidities of insurgencies which I shall discuss in the following pages.

**Dynamic of emulation.** The spread of uprisings from one region to another operates by the dynamic of emulation. Different from the wave effect, emulation signifies “conscious imitation of a representation already observed elsewhere”. According to Tilly and Tarrow, “most of the conflict episodes begin in local level. If there had not been some processes to expand to another higher level, there would have never been a wave of national or international conflict.” Emulation is certainly not the unique factor of the spread of an uprising from one region to other or to another level. Nevertheless, regarding the diffusion of serhildan, it seems most appropriate to share the thesis by Tilly and Tarrow. Indeed, to use their definition already cited, “the change in scale is a complex process [...] whereby newly bodies of coordination are formed at a higher level than in the beginning”. These bodies of coordination may be the organizations as well as “specialists” militants who establish the linkages between disconnected regions in the Kurdish conflict. This is simply politics of intermediation which shapes an important part of the politics of violence. I did not have an opportunity to talk with rioters about the means they implement to coordinate different regions. Even so, it seems very likely that politics of coordination exist and constitute a factor of diffusion of Kurdish insurgencies.
The fluidity: a characteristics of uprisings

As above explained, institutionalization of uprisings extends from 1989 to the 2000s. I divided this process into three cycles. Because of the durability of uprisings over a long time one may think of serhildan in terms of a political culture and a form of militant habitus in the Kurdish political field. After reminding this, it is now relevant to question one of the characteristics of Kurdish uprisings, namely, fluidity. I must however make a parenthesis before proceeding to this question: it would be simplistic to analyze a period of serhildan extending over two decades while reducing it only to a mechanism of fluidity. Any enduring collective action cannot be limited to it. The fact that fluidity exists does not mean that there is not any institutionalization of uprisings. Kurdish riots have a form of institution, especially when we use the term institution in a flexible sense, which is characterized at the same time by unfixedness. I may assume that fluid configurations contributed to produce serhildan and participate to its progressive institutionalization.50

One notes two observations regarding the relationship between uprisings and fluidity. First, the Kurdish uprisings seem to be manifestations of political crises. In other terms, they are brought about by political crises. But what is a political crisis and what is its relation with the emergence of violent insurgencies? A political crisis corresponds usually to fluid contexts in the sense of Michel Dobry.51 In the Kurdish riots, crises refer to different events such unknown murders, massacres, pogroms, armed conflicts, arrests and electoral process. In these situations, it may happen that popular mobilizations broke out spontaneously.52 The insurgencies may be centered on the ongoing crisis for example as it was in the case of the killing of a militant and refusal of a Kurdish candidate to the elections. Similarly, several forms of violence may spontaneously arise.

Second, fluid contexts present some features such as imbrication of several categories and repertoires, overlap of events, de-sectorization, and the like.53 These aspects are found in empirical examples. To give some examples, “unknown” murders constitute a category of violence which is interweaved/ embedded with Kurdish uprisings in Batman and Cizre during the 1990s. Indeed, it is not possible to handle serhildan as an isolated category of political violence, especially in the 1990s because multiple repertoires of action coexisted. The suicide action of Zekiye Alkan in 1990 was accompanied by Kurdish riots in the province of Diyarbakir. Such a radical repertoire possibly exercises an effect of wave on the outbreak of violence. Similarly, as previously noted, the demonstrations of newroz as well as funerals of militants constituted a base for political violence. This is why it may be claimed that civilian militants become actors or victims of violence in these configurations. One observes a slippage or even erasing of borders among several categories, borders and actors of violence.
Self-sacrificial violence

As we first saw in the Introduction, contrary to collective uprisings, self-sacrificial violence constitutes an individualized repertoire which sometimes takes on a collective mode. Though this repertoire of political violence was researched by scholars on violence, several points still remain unexplored. Suicide attacks by Palestinian organizations in the 1990s, al-Qaeda and the Taliban in the 2000s led to a debate among researchers. Even if the Arab world was later marked by a new form of action towards the end of 2010 and in 2011, namely revolution, the interest on that issue did not decrease. Mohammad Bouazizi’s self-immolation constituted an inciting event to revolutionary contestations in Tunisia. Furthermore, suicide attacks still form a mode of political action in the Middle East. Why do individuals commit suicide for a political cause? In which respect does violence against self form a sacrificial violence? What are the types of this violence? To what extent is it sacrificial and political?

The PKK militants used for the first time the repertoire of self-sacrificial violence in 1981–1982. Hamit Bozarslan already elaborated a series of hypotheses which enlightens the topic. For the author, it is necessary to first study regimes of subjectivity to explore the phenomenon. The analysis by Bozarslan aims at taking into account historical and sociological ruptures which change the regimes of subjectivities and provoke new types of action, including the suppression of oneself. The author in this perspective attempts to historicize the Kurdish conflict in the Middle East: the time of hope following the rebellion of Mustafa Barzani in Iraqi Kurdistan while mobilizing the Kurdish youth resulted in the failure. Afterwards, the rebellious time of the Kurdish organizations which marked the decade of 1970 led to a repressive military coup d’État in Turkey. So the Kurdish movement of Turkey was subscribed to a regime of subjectivity that is constitutive of self-sacrificial violence because it implies a certain loss of landmarks in the eyes of Kurdish political subjects. Bozarslan addresses again a new desperate regime of subjectivity appearing at the end of the 1990s. The arrest of Abdullah Öcalan provoked an utter crisis of sense among the militants of the PKK, which resulted in self-sacrificial actions. The thesis by Hamit Bozarslan, inscribing in a quite macro level, enables exploration of whether self-sacrifice is shaped by a transhistorical and transregional dimension. I shall later return to this argument. The issue of self-sacrificial violence deserves elaboration of other possible explanations which do not exclude the latter.

In the first step, I will make a historical narrative of self-sacrificial violence within the Kurdish movement. Second, I will attempt to define three ideal types of this repertoire which are death by fasting, self-immolation, suicide attack. Third, I will elaborate some hypotheses to explain the phenomenon. I suppose that prison constitutes one of the frames or contexts in which violence against self, especially in the form of self-immolation and fasting to death, emerges. I shall thus focus on some forms of relations between prisoners and the penitentiary authority in order to explain self-sacrifice in the prison of Diyarbakır in the
1980s. Prison should be paid attention particularly because practices of self-sacrifice arose in the prison in 1982 and 1984 in the Kurdish movement, and prison still constitutes a place of exercise of violence against oneself. Nonetheless, because self-sacrificial violence cannot be reduced only to prison, I shall have to develop the analysis in the light of other hypotheses. It seems that the charisma of Abdullah Öcalan, militant habitus and politics of violence by the PKK also explain the emergence of self-sacrificial violence.

**The PKK and self-sacrificial violence**

In the Kurdish conflict, first manifestations of self-sacrificial violence appeared in the military prison of Diyarbakır. In the previous pages I classified the militants of the PKK into three categories following the time of coup d'état: the militants who went outside Turkey, especially in Syria, guerrillas who were staying in the mountain and the militant prisoners in Diyarbakır. Self-sacrificial practices relate to the third category.

Indeed, a number of PKK militants were arrested between 1979 and 1980. The prison of Diyarbakır hosted the majority. In January 1981, Kurdish detainees went on hunger strike for about ten days to protest “unjust executions” according to their expressions. Given the interviews and readings on primary sources, this strike was the first collective action in the prison. During one of my fieldworks it was reported that this action was not so efficient and that there was weak participation. The actions of prisoners became radicalized in spring 1981. In March, about 100 Kurdish prisoners began death by fasting under the initiative of Kemal Pir and Hayri Durmuş, two cadres and founders of the PKK. The action lasted about forty days. Ali Erek, a PKK militant, died in this action. After forty-three days, the political prisoners ended their collective action on condition that they would have the right to free defense (serbest savunma) in the process of military tribunals.

However, the penitentiary authority did not provide the prisoners with the necessary conditions for free defense in the tribunals. On the contrary, in the same year, namely 1981, torture began to be exercised in the prison. In March 1982, Mazlum Doğan, one of the founders of the PKK, hanged himself in his prison cell to protest the practices of torture in the prison. The suicide of Mazlum Doğan was followed by self-immolation of four PKK militants in May 1982. Ferhat Kurtay, Eşref Anyık, Mahmut Zengin and Necmi Öner set themselves on fire to protest the conditions of detention in the military prison. The last self-sacrificial action of 1982 started on July 14, with the death-fasting of M. Hayri Durmuş, Kemal Pir, Ali Çiçek and Akif Yılmaz. The four militants of the PKK died in September 1982 after a death-fasting of roughly two months.

As a result of these three actions, during the first half of 1983, conditions of incarceration improved. But, in September 1983, the prisoners again resorted to death-fasting. In January 1984, the penitentiary authority began again to practice torture on the detainees. Necmettin Büyükkaya, a cadre and militant of DDKD, was tortured to die. The prisoners therefore once again resorted to death-fasting in January 1984.
The casualty toll of the prison in Diyarbakır was serious: former prisoners reported that torture was systematically exercised between 1981 and 1984. Given the reports of the Turkish General Staff (Genelkurmay Baskanlığı), at least fifty-three prisoners died in the prison of Diyarbakır between 1980 and 1984. It is furthermore estimated some hundreds of detainees were paralyzed.

The practices of self-sacrificial violence began to expand outside prison in 1988 with self-immolation of three mothers of the Kurdish detainees, who protested the conditions of imprisonment of their sons. Afterwards, Zekiye Alkan engaged in a suicide action in 1990. I had previously suggested that this action went on to spur the uprisings in the province of Diyarbakır. Similarly, two years later, Rahşan Demirel set herself on fire in Izmir.

Self-sacrificial violence extended to the Kurdish movement in Europe towards the mid-1990s. In 1994, some months after the interdiction of the PKK in Germany, about ten people attempted to immolate themselves: two Kurdish women died. In 1996, a new form of self-sacrificial violence entered in the repertoire of the PKK, i.e. suicide attack. Zeynep Kınacı, called Zîlan in PKK sources, organized the first suicide operation in Dersim in 1996, killing about ten Turkish soldiers. The PKK has organized different suicide attacks since 1996.

Finally, the arrest of Abdullah Öcalan provoked a new wave of self-sacrificial violence within the Kurdish movement in 1990. At the end of the 1990s, some sixty-four Kurds, aged between seventeen and sixty-three years old, attempted to immolate themselves in Turkey and Europe and some twenty died. This was indeed the largest wave of self-sacrificial violence in the history of the PKK. Although it is difficult to establish the exact figures, it is known that self-immolations as well as death by fasting remained in the Kurdish space during the 2000s.

Three types of self-sacrificial violence: fasting to death, self-immolation and suicide attack

The above short historical narrative regarding with the repertoire of self-sacrificial violence within the PKK enables identification of three principal representations of self-sacrificial violence, which are fasting to death, self-immolation and suicide attack. I will later elaborate some explanations with regard to repertoires of violence against oneself in the Kurdish conflict. But it is first worth proceeding to a quick examination of these three ideal types while realizing both their common characteristics and specific differences. In fact, the definition of self-sacrificial violence, as was provided in the Introduction, would be incomplete without this enterprise. We cannot place the three forms of suicide completely in the same category or handle them in the same way. Even though the analysis deals with three types of self-sacrificial violence on the whole, one must particularize that they constitute neither a common nor a unique representation.
Fasting to death

It is noteworthy to explain why fasting to death forms a type of self-sacrificial violence.

I will handle death-fasting as a form of self-sacrificial violence because of the causal relationship between the action of hunger strike and death. Emile Durkheim long ago admitted that one dies by refusing nurture or destroying himself/herself through the use of iron or fire.75 And the author was extending the argument by adding that it is even not necessary that the act adopted by the individual would be an immediate antecedent of the death so that it should be viewed as an effect.76 The action of fasting to death can be included in that category of suicide defined by Emile Durkheim because refusal of nutrition is the principal cause of dying of the suicidal person. At this point, it is indispensable to distinguish the hunger strike (açlık grevi) and the death-fasting (ölüm orucu). Hunger strike is not inscribed in the category of self-sacrificial violence. As Michael Biggs suggests, any hunger strike does not aim at dying.77 My observations on the militants having participated in a hunger strike prove this thesis. I did not observe any motivation to die in the case of hunger strike among the militants. It was furthermore noticed that the actors do not stop nutrition which enables them to keep alive during hunger strikes.78

On the other hand, the question of voluntary death matters in the actions of death by fasting. Indeed, not only is action prolonged but also the actors refuse any nutrition or drink because the goal is death. In most of the cases of death by fasting that I observed, death seems to be a condition to obtain demands and actors would use death by fasting when demands are not satisfied. So it can be said that the actors are ready to go to the end in that situation. The willingness to “go to the end” is a fundamental feature which distinguishes death-fasting from the hunger strike. It may happen that the hunger strike transforms into a death by fasting. It depends on the radicalization of the conditions and the action. If the hunger strike shifts into death by fasting, it means that the action changes the level. But a hunger strike is not a priori an act of sacrifice, as its denomination clearly indicates; it is a “strike”. To the contrary, fasting to death includes an idea and intention to go to the end.

Self-immolation by fire

This is an act of self-sacrifice. It is similar to death-fasting since it is a way of dying without killing.79 Self-immolation differs nevertheless from fasting to death especially due to its “method” because it is destruction of one’s own body by fire. Accordingly, the method is much more painful while leading at the same time to death more quickly. The risk of dying also is higher. If one uses the expression by Michael Biggs, the actor of self-immolation plays poker with death.80

It is remarkable that self-immolation became a usual form of protestation among the Kurds in Turkey and Europe.81 The scope of this suicide act is much more extended than that of a suicide operation. It is to be considered within the
category of contestation. Indeed, *self-immolation as well as death-fasting are repertoires of protestation whereas suicide attack is a category which corresponds to armed conflict and war.* This thesis which I shall continue to explore helps to explain why self-immolation exists among the Kurds in Europe and not suicide attacks (as well as other forms of political violence). Europe is a space of “protestation”, “mobilization” and not “war” for the Kurdish militants. I shall revisit this category of protestation in the analysis of self-immolation.

**Suicide attack**

One speaks about a suicide operation in a case when a person kills him/herself by exploding a bomb, for instance, which kills or injures other persons at the same time. A suicide operation is thus a method that aims at killing oneself by causing material (against banks, public buildings, etc.), economic and human (against soldiers, police and civilians) damage. We must clearly distinguish suicide attack from self-immolation and fasting to death for these reasons. First of all, suicide attacks differ with regard to the question of destruction since they are a form of self-sacrificial violence more “destructive” than “demonstrative”. The reason is linked with the fact that suicide operations are by definition in the service of “war” and “terror”. There is no question of peace in these kind of attacks because soldiers or civilians are killed. On the contrary, the actor of self-immolation or fasting to death *can* be peaceful.

Second, the relationship between self-sacrificial action and death is direct in the case of suicide attacks. The notion of risk is almost eliminated since it is destroyed by and with the suicidal actor him/herself. On the other hand, the relationship between the action and death is more indirect and death is less immediate in the case of self-immolations and particularly in fasting to death.

Third, suicide attacks differ from self-immolation and death-fasting in terms of organization. The three types of self-sacrificial violence are individualized forms of violence. However, suicide attack has an organizational dimension for two reasons. The kamikazes require a technique of learning such as making and using a bomb, etc., whereas the actors do not need to master any technical crafts to begin death-fasting or immolate him/herself. So suicide operations seem to be more professional affairs. Moreover, and in general, they are approved by the political organization prior to accomplishing the action even though it may sometimes happen that suicide attack is organized by the will of only one person. This is why a suicide operation is theoretically more organizational than the other two forms of self-sacrificial violence.

**Some explanatory principles about the emergence of self-sacrificial violence**

The last step of my analysis about self-sacrificial violence consists of elaborating some hypotheses to study the phenomenon. The first one deals with the characteristics of the prison institution.
The prison institution as a frame of self-sacrificial violence

An analysis of prisons enables understanding, at least in part, of the emergence of two types of self-sacrificial violence: death by fasting and self-immolation. As already suggested, self-sacrificial violence within the PKK appeared for the first time in the prison of Diyarbakır at the beginning of the 1980s. And an important part of self-sacrificial violence still appears in the prison universe.87

The prison is a coercive institution in the sense of Michel Foucault88 and a total institution in the sense of Erving Goffman.89 Goffman’s approach to self-sacrificial violence is preferred to that of Foucault in this analysis. The approach by Foucault is indeed about rather general aspects of the phenomenon of confinement, which is not exclusively specific to the prison world, but also corresponds to various spaces of confinement and discipline. It seems, thus, to be too large to apply this approach in this study. On the contrary, the Goffmanian approach is relevant for two reasons. On the one hand, it applies to micro situations, on the other hand, the spaces, namely, total institution, is situated in the center of the analysis as a generating force of some social practices.90

According to Goffman, a total institution is defined as a place of authority which is exercised on multiple details of human life.91 The practices of recluses are submitted to a critical examination by all the bodies of the institution.92 Given the approach by Goffman, there are several types of total institution.93 I am here interested in the milieu of incarceration to study political violence. Indeed, the prison as a total institution seems to play a fundamental role in the emergence of suicidal actions whether under the form of the death-fasting or self-immolation.94

It must be pointed out that most of the evidence that I collected deals with the military prison in Diyarbakır where most of the suicides happened between 1981 and 1984, the years which correspond to a time of absolute torture.95 As earlier described, reports of the Turkish General Staff indicate the death of at least fifty-three people detained between 1981 and 1984, about twenty of which resulted from suicidal violence.96 The interviews suggest that there were still suicides, but less frequently, after this period. It is then relevant to pose the following question: to what extent does the total institution impact on the emergence of self-sacrificial violence? (I herein study the prison of Diyarbakır in the 1980s. It has a specific place in Turkish and Kurdish history. The current prison may be no longer a total institution in the sense of Goffman.)

MORTIFICATION OF THE SELF

In the first step, the emergence of suicide violence requires an analysis of the structure of the self of the political prisoners, and more precisely mortification of the self. In Erving Goffman, mortification of the self signifies that prisoners go through degrading and humiliating treatments destined to eliminate all traces of personal identity.97 Interviews as well as readings about testimonies of the militants suggest that some mutilation techniques of the personality could have
contributed to violence.\textsuperscript{98} Isolation (tecrîd), degradation of the image of the self and contamination seem to be more relevant factors.\textsuperscript{99}

\textit{Isolation} (tecrîd). The prison becomes fatal to political personalities and identities when it transforms in a veritable total institution. I observed that one of the destruction techniques consists of the method of isolation of Kurdish detainees in Diyarbakır prison. Former prisoners focused particularly on these methods which drove them to use self-sacrificial violence. Some written sources about the prison of Diyarbakır show why the conditions of incarceration can be explained by the isolation: “There was a total isolation which was separating us from the world, our families and our principles. The dormitories and cells also were separate with each other.”\textsuperscript{100} Another former prisoner signals very little communication between detainees when he mentions his memories preceding the suicide of his friend in the prison of Diyarbakır:

\begin{quote}
Before [his] suicide, we did not have a chance to talk. I remember only one thing. We were reading a poem together. We were reciting it during our back and forth to the tribunals. In fact, talking with each other was strictly forbidden. We were holding the hands. We had to look at each other during back and forth to the tribunals. We could even not touch our own head … The militants of the PKK asked to engage the actions to change this.\textsuperscript{101}
\end{quote}

The method of isolation is a principle of domination and governance in the prison. But why does isolation lead individuals to use violence against oneself? The technique of isolation is related to two principles. On the one hand, isolating political detainees from the outside world, namely social base and families: on the other hand, isolating the militants from each other. The punishment, as Foucault underlined, is not only individual, but also individualizing.\textsuperscript{102} In such a context, suicide action would be organized to break the isolation of prisoners. Furthermore, total isolation contributes to form a homogeneous, depersonalized and decultured crowd.\textsuperscript{103} The prisoners are drawn to break down with their symbolic and political universe. This creates an existential crisis among the militants who destroy the self, body and time. If the first hypothesis of self-sacrifice corresponds to the idea of “protestation”, the second one is associated with the “interdiction of the subject”. I shall below continue to develop these arguments.

\textit{Degradation of the image of the self}. The second technique of mortification of the self consists of degradation of the image of the self, which is a source of self-sacrificial violence in the prison. It seems that different forms of punishment and torture contributed to degrade the image of the self and mutilate the personality of the detainees. It is perhaps for this reason that the improvement of conditions of incarceration and establishment of a decent life in prison are the key motivations of the strikers or rebels. Although some militant sources tend to explain the emergence of self-sacrificial violence through merely political factors, this thesis appears to be insufficient. As already suggested, political violence is never completely or purely political. The concept of “to be a human”
appears sometimes to be as important as “to be political” in the explanations of some forms of political violence, including suicide violence.

There was a negation of political identity and human values. Even the life of humans was at stake, it was being utilized as a trump card against the humans. It is in the prison of Diyarbakır that the necessity to die emerged. This was to put end to this barbarity.\textsuperscript{104}

It can be said that the subject here is forbidden to be not only political but also to be a human. He/she is treated as a non-person. This is furthermore symbolic violence seemingly attached to the exercise of physical violence. Individual memories of former prisoners signal both physical and symbolic aspects of torture practices in the prison of Diyarbakır:\textsuperscript{105} “They were torturing us […] they were asking if we were Turkish or Kurdish. They were obliging us to recite the national anthem. If the comrades did not accept, they would begin to torture them.”\textsuperscript{106}

Contempt is a form of degradation of the image of the self. If some techniques of mortification may be justified in the name of the principle of discipline, dres-sage and hygiene, they seem at the same time to correspond to a logic of contempt. Wearing a uniform was in this respect one of the devices of the penitentiary authority to which the prisoners radically opposed. The obligation to wear the uniform was in many cases one of the inciting factors of death-fasting in the prison of Diyarbakır.\textsuperscript{107} Besides, it was becoming an essential stake and motif of the conflict between the penitentiary authority and political detainees:

The authority of the prison launched several offensives after the resistance of the September [1983], for many reasons. But one of the most important reasons was the refusal to wear a uniform. […] During the resistance, the colonel visited the dormitories and threatened the detainees: “we shall make you carry these wears, even if we have to kill you for that”.\textsuperscript{108}

The demands of the prisoners aimed also at obtaining the right of satisfaction of their fundamental needs as well as elimination of forms of symbolic violence. The detainees for instance witnessed that they had to struggle to have the right to take a shower. Similarly, they engaged in collective action against the constraint to repent.

In summary, an important part of the demands by the prisoners including suicidal ones concerns the improvement of conditions of incarceration deemed to be “inhuman” and “humiliating”, “discreditable” and “immoral” according to their expressions.\textsuperscript{109} Most of the regulations, orders and tasks to accomplish in the prison of Diyarbakır contributed to give a degrading image of themselves to political detainees.\textsuperscript{110} But one may step further. Is it possible to apply the thesis of recognition in this situation, the one I began to deploy in the previous chapter? Indeed, I remark once again that the negation of identity becomes a dynamic of political violence. Authoritarianism, ignorance and isolation are the barriers of
production of the self as a subject. The militant is more or less aware when the attacks threaten his/her autonomy and capacity to be perceived as a politically and socially integral person, so he/she would struggle in order to be recognized as such. Its denial seems to lead to self-sacrifice.

Another interpretation is still possible. Mortification of the self and isolation seemingly refers to the thesis of “cruelty” (cruauté) in the sense of Wieviorka, which I already mentioned in the Introduction. The prisoners are conscious that “cruelty” comes from the order of a superior political authority, namely the military regime of the coup d’état. One may defend this argument even if I do not have any proof to justify it. As Foucault admitted, the approach by torture was replaced by confinement and isolation. But in our case, torture seems to be replaced neither by confinement nor isolation. And when political subjects are already confined, why it is still required to torture, degrade and humiliate them during the months and years of incarceration? This question is logical in that there exists always less extreme forms of destruction of the political subject. As Alain Touraine explains, when actors are excluded from humanity because they are identified with a nation, or religion or a terrorist organization, such cruelty is not necessary to destroy them as adversaries or even enemies. Cruelty occurs to dehumanize the human being, to crush his/her image and reduce him/her to a puppet with nothing human left in him/her. This is why the idea of cruelty may apply to Diyarbakır prison (especially between 1982 and 1984) because violence sometimes seems to go beyond political signification although there is consensus that confinement relates to a political system and social order.

Contamination. Another form of mortification was observed in the prison. I borrow the concept of contamination from Goffman, according to which:

actors [in daily life] may preserve some intimate domains – their bodies, actions, thoughts, some of their goods – that are susceptible to contamination. In the total institutions, these domains are violated. The border maintained by the man/woman between his/her being and what surrounds him/her is abolished and sectors of personal life are desecrated. So the individual experiences a violation of his/her intimate self.

According to interviews, political prisoners were exposed to three types of contamination: physical, sexual and ideological contamination. Physical contamination corresponds to the conditions of promiscuity in which the prisoners should sleep and live in dirty rooms, insalubrious toilets and eat rotten food. One should at the same time be reminded that physical contamination is common to total institutions and cannot be viewed in itself as a cause of violence, troubles and rebellion. Rape, sexual harassment and practices of undressing in general can refer to sexual contamination. In Diyarbakır prison, the practice of undressing was a particular degrading tactic that the prisoners legitimized self-sacrificial violence as a means to end it.

The observations, however, suggest that it is especially ideological and moral contamination may have led to rebellions and self-sacrificial violence in the
prison. In this regard, I am interested in the phenomena of “betrayal” (ihânet) and confession (îtiraf). Indeed, some political prisoners are, for instance, submitted to the ideology of the official authority in the prison of Diyarbakır, a behavior which the PKK militants always qualified as a “betrayal” to the cause. It is this phenomenon of “betrayal” which seems to explain in part suicidal actions (by this term, I do not mean “suicide attacks”) among the PKK militants, in particular in 1982. Indeed, most of the sources point out the “conversion” or “betrayal” by Şahin Dönmez and Yıldırım Merkit, the PKK militants, as promoting factors to suicidal actions in 1982. To these “betrayals”, one should add that the “confession” (îtiraf) impacted the suicides as the following quotation explains: “In early 1982, there was only one option: between betrayal or confession, and resistance and death in the prison. They took out us all other means.”

To what extent, did the phenomena of “betrayal” and “confession” give rise to self-sacrificial violence? “Betrayal” is supposed to have provoked a state of anomie among the militants. Indeed, anomie can manifest when one, two or more political prisoners do not share a common secrecy to a radical group. It may also occur when some members of the political organization adopt the ideology of the authority to which the others resist. The “betrayal” by Yıldırım Merkit and Şahin Dönmez seems to produce the effects of anomie among the PKK detainees. Suicidal action could then have aimed at balancing the state of anomie by violence. Furthermore, the “betrayal” as well as confession could have been constitutive of unhappy subjectivities. As a matter of fact, “betrayal to the cause” of “comrade militants” seems to generate the loss of benchmarks among the militants. The subjects in this configuration find themselves unable to give a sense to their militancy because they feel strongly betrayed by the close persons to them. In the chapter about mobilizations, I already mentioned the role of betrayal on the formation of militant habitus in the PKK. One must thus once again point out that “betrayal” structures the use of political violence.

One may criticize the argument about mortification of the self and its relationship with self-sacrificial violence because self-sacrificial violence rarely appears even though techniques of mortification, such as isolation, degradation of the image of the self, contamination, are general characteristics of the total institutions. However, mortification is not the sole factor of emergence of violence, and for this reason, other factors can be taken into account. Besides, one must specify the context of the emergence of violence rather than to establish a direct link between the mutilation of the personality and self-sacrifice. The relation between mutilation of the self and self-sacrifice is not systemic as one may observe similar processes which do not lead to violence. A final interpretation is to strengthen my hypothesis: mortification may bring about self-sacrificial violence especially when the space of action corresponds to a universe of rarity and privation, as it was in the case of Diyarbakır prison.
Privation seems to be a relevant dynamic in the emergence of self-sacrificial violence in prison. As Charles Tilly noted, a repertoire supposes a universe of rarity of the means. The prison milieu constitutes in this regard a significant empirical example to illustrate this thesis. The life of the detainees in Diyarbakır prison was continuously submitted to coercive intervention of superior authorities, what signifies the unequal relations of force between the prison authority and the militants. One may accordingly suppose that resources of action were much limited for the prisoners. Political violence would be then a product of loneliness, isolation of actors in this configuration. Indeed, violence, in particular self-sacrificial violence, may be situated sometimes in a universe of rarity and linked with the lack of available resources.

Finally, a last aspect should be clarified. Until now I have emphasized the conditions of incarceration which aim at mortifying the political subject to explain self-sacrifice because one cannot ignore a variable or “cause” that is always manifest in the interviews. However, this still does not mean that the sense of violence is not political because conditions are usually associated with a political stake and subject. Even if the conflict is at the same time uploaded with several senses that do not exclude each other, the actors think that violence goes beyond the simple conditions of confinement. The prison and its conditions are established on the basis of a “political system” and “political regime of the coup d’état”, according to their expressions. In the eyes of the prisoners, confinement is closely linked with the dominant ideology of the state. It constitutes one of the brutal forms of exercise of power and repression, and this is accordingly put into question by self-sacrifice.

Charisma of the leader of the Kurdish organization and self-sacrificial violence

The charisma of Abdullah Öcalan constitutes a second dynamic of the emergence of self-sacrificial violence in the Kurdish organization. As previously underlined, the affair of Abdullah Öcalan incited a wave of self-sacrificial violence in 1998 and 1999 within the form of self-immolation, suicide attacks and fasting to death. I focus on the effects of charisma especially because the actors admit themselves to have used violence against oneself in the name of the leader of the Kurdish organization.

The first suicide action brought up by the affair of Öcalan occurred in October 1998. Following the obligation of Öcalan to leave Syria for Russia under pressure from the Turkish government, a PKK militant, Mehmet Halit Oral, immolated himself in the prison of Maraş. The suicide of Halit Oral impacted on other PKK militants. Five PKK militants also set themselves on fire in different prisons to protest the repression on Abdullah Öcalan, in October 1998. The suicides extended outside Turkey towards the end of the month. Hasan Isa Hasan, in Syria, and Berzan Öztürk, in Germany immolated themselves at the beginning of November.

In November 1998, Abdullah Öcalan left Moscow for Rome. Thousands of Kurds belonging to the social base of the PKK mobilized in Europe. During
November and December 1998, a number of militants immolated themselves in the name of the cause of Öcalan and to protest against his forced departure, for instance in November three Kurdish militant prisoners in Turkey and two in Russia. Cemil Özalp engaged in the same action at the end of the November in Diyarbakır, whereas Mirza Çubukçu died in the prison of Batman due to fasting to death. In November and December 1988, four other militants immolated themselves in Turkey, Russia and Germany. In December 1998, the affair of Öcalan gave rise to another form of self-sacrificial violence. Hamdiye Kaplan (Berwar Amed) organized a suicide attack in Van on 24 December. Following the arrest of Öcalan on 15 February 1999, the PKK organized a series of suicide operations in Turkey at least three of which were perpetrated between February and May 1999. In the 2000s, the case of Öcalan continued to provoke self-sacrificial actions. It is estimated that around 100 people – at least one-third of them died – decided to commit suicide for the cause of Öcalan between 1998 and 2008. Below is the list of suicides in the case of mobilization in favor of Öcalan:

1. Mehmet Halit ORAL, 9 October 1998, prison of Maraş
2. Mehmet GÜL, 19 October 1998, prison of Amasya
5. Hasan Isa HASAN, 22 October 1998, Qamışlo, Syria
7. Aynur ARTAN, 23 October 1998, prison of Midyat
8. Mirza SEVİMLİ, 26 October 1998, Erzurum
9. Barzan ÖZTÜRK, 1 November 1998, Germany
10. Mehmet AYDIN, 13 November 1998, prison of Çanakkale
11. Erdal ÇEKEN, 13 November 1998, prison of Mardin
12. Kadri İLHAN, 16 November 1998, prison of Siirt
13. Ahmet YILDIRIM, 17 November 1998, Moscow
15. Emrullah Damlayıcı, 18 November 1998, Qamışlo, Syria
17. Mirza ÇUBUKÇU, 27 November 1998 prison of Batman
18. Yavuz GÜZEL, 30 November 1999, prison of Bartın
20. Taylan Özgür KAHRAMAN, 21 December 1998, Germany
22. Hükmüye SEYHAN, December 1999, Russia
23. Baki TATLI, 1999, Bingöl
24. Felat KADİR, 25 February 1999
25. Tacettin ŞAHİN, 20 March 1999, Başkale
26. Meral MAMYAK, 27 March 1999, place of Taksim, İstanbul
27. Nezahat BARACI, 1999, place?
28. Mahmut YENER, 8 July, place?
I studied about twenty letters written by the militants to Abdullah Öcalan before they engaged in self-sacrificial actions. Given the letters, his charisma appears to be a force which impacts on the militants and their move to violence:

**Mehmet Halit Oral:**
My action will not no doubt change the attitude of Turkey. But it will be seen that our people will destroy the world if you [Abdullah Öcalan] are caused any harm. Because if people speak nowadays on the Kurds, [...] it is entirely thanks to you. Whatever we do for you, we will not pay the debt to you. My Dear President, I am very attached to you, to the martyrs and to my people. I ask only one thing from my party, my people, and my comrades: it is the security of our president. Because as far as you exist, the people of Kurdistan will win.

**Ali Aydın:**
Serok Apo, the PKK is a sea and I am inside the sea. I feel very proud and honorable. I would like to sacrifice myself against those who want to dry up this sea. My president, I would like to see you much. But there are the obstacles which make that I cannot see you. So I will destruct these obstacles. As did Sema, Fikri, Murat Kaya, M. Halit Oral and Mehmet Gül, I will sacrifice myself.

Charisma seems to serve an incentive to act in favor of Abdullah Öcalan and the organization. It is indeed quite functional in the break out of violence: with the capture and imprisonment of Öcalan, militants’ feelings of attachment and loyalty seem to materialize in self-sacrifice.

**Bülent Bayram:**
I am so attached and believe [in the cause] that I will engage in such an action. Resistance fighters of the 14 July [1982] and our comrades Zilan, Sema, Fikri and Halit Oral command this action. I want by this action to be their successor and cry my attachment to them. They joined the “Direction” [önderlik] by surmounting the walls of the prison. I will respond to the threats of destruction by the enemy. My answer is both to colonialism and betrayal. By this action, I react to betrayal.
Aynur Artan:
It is possible to protect the Direction by becoming flames. It is possible to protect him by making from the hearts a shield against the imperialism. It is possible to protect the Direction by becoming a free and human party. [...] The Direction is the people, the society and humanity.\textsuperscript{131}

The militants considered themselves to be soldiers of Öcalan;\textsuperscript{132} this refers to “submission to an authority”\textsuperscript{133} which is charismatic. Nevertheless, it must be underlined that the charismatic personality is here a source of self-sacrificial action, but not necessarily a source of legitimization. In fact, according to PKK sources, Öcalan was not favorable to these actions, especially to self-immolations. It is observed in these letters that there exists a kind of feeling of obligation to act in favor of Öcalan (which can be considered to be an effect of charisma). The militants seem to rarely compare the costs and benefits of their actions. As Pierre Favre mentioned about the militant manifestations, the militants react to profound determinations in these type of contexts.\textsuperscript{134} Political commitment, loyalty to the organization and Öcalan, personal will to self-sacrifice, subjective sentiment that the world is unjust and feeling of urgency to act immediately seem to matter in this case.

Mirza Sevimli:
I am thinking of immolating myself by fire to defend the comrades who set themselves on fire. My president, I would wish to write you a longer letter; but I am not capable of expressing myself on the political questions. My president, you defend the martyrs and protect them. You liberate the men. My president, we are in debt to you. [...] My president, I finally express my attachment to you. As far as you exist, the Kurdish people will not be beaten.\textsuperscript{135}

Tacettin Şahin:
I want to accomplish this action as a proof of my loyalty to you and a necessity. I want to liberate myself, as Zilan did. [...] I will show that one will not be able to set off our sun [Abdullah Öcalan]. [...] I am excited to approach the sun through this action.\textsuperscript{136}

In addition to these examples taken from the written sources which prove the effects of charisma on sacrificial action, an example drawn from the field research may be able to enrich the empirical evidence. One of the former militants who attempted to immolate herself expressed:

When I left my village, I really had difficulty because I adored it. During that period, I was reading War and Peace by Tolstoy. The novel affected me so much. At the same time, I was following the press of the party. I could not support the cries of children. [...] I was psychologically upset. Our leader was arrested. This still upset me more because our attachment to
Öcalan as women was really unprecedented. To tell the truth, it was him who founded us [she means the Kurdish women]. He wrote about us. I was imagining that he was immortal and that the system [for her, the system is world order] can never arrest him nor touch him. I was not able to accept his arrest. This is why, I decided to immolate myself. I was reading the magazines of the party. The women were immolating themselves for him every day. I thought well and wrote my “report of suicide” in order to send it to the party. But I received the news that our leader was asking not to self-immolate. This is why I gave up … I, myself, could not imagine a life without him. I feel it still. We are emotionally engaged towards him. The men are rather ideological. The women are both ideological and emotional … I wrote a report because I wanted to underline that, through the suicide, I was protesting against the arrest of Öcalan and that I could not live without him. […] We see the freedom of Öcalan as our own emancipation. There is a nation to liberate, these are the Kurds; a sex to liberate, this is the woman; a leader to liberate, this is Öcalan. We shall thus struggle.

Abdullah Öcalan is a personality of cult within the PKK. Utilizing violence against oneself in the name of Öcalan or for the political cause seem to be synonymous given the letters written by the militants before they moved to action. One may make an interpretation about this issue, which goes beyond empirical sources. The structure of the authority within the PKK appears to be individualized. When this individual charismatic structure having at the same time mystical, idealized and rationalized features is taken into consideration, it is not so surprising to observe the emergence of self-sacrificial violence for a party leader who became a cult. Indeed, one may suppose that there exists a weak individuation compared to a strong charismatic power and authoritarian organization.

As a final remark, it can be said that the letters of the militants indicate once again the role of “betrayal” to study self-sacrifice. But this time, “betrayal” appears in the international level in the eyes of the actors, on the contrary to intra-organizational betrayal as previously remarked in the case of Şahin Dönmez and Yıldırım Merkit in the prison of Diyarbakır. The expulsion of Abdullah Öcalan from Syria, Russia, Italy and afterwards his capture in the Embassy of Greece in Kenya in 1999 is perceived to be “an international plot” by the PKK. The expulsion and arrest of the party leader gave the impression to the members of the organization that they were confronted not only by the Turkish government but also from the whole world. They also favored the image of the “party in danger” from which resulted the following subjective idea: “the organization already experienced injustice, betrayal and misfortune in its struggle against the state and interior enemies, but still it is threatened by the hostile global forces”; this process no doubt provoked a veritable crisis of sense which led to violence against oneself.
Militant habitus and self-sacrificial violence

Self-sacrificial actions following the capture of Öcalan produced structuring effects. They partly contributed to the formation of “martyrology”, an ideal militant model of the organization.\footnote{142} It seems accordingly relevant to discuss the relation between militant habitus and the emergence of self-sacrificial actions. One may suppose that a radical habitus drives the militants to use one of the three forms of self-sacrificial violence – death-fasting, self-immolation and suicide attack – according to the circumstances.\footnote{143}

The effects of militant habitus on self-sacrificial violence are empirically observable in the letters written by the suicide volunteers, who often refer to the ancient “martyrs”. One finds for instance a precise reference to the militant “martyrs” on July 14, 1982 in the letter by Bülent Bayram (which I already cited). Furthermore, the reference to actions by Zîlan (Zeynep Kinacı) and Sema Yüce are quite common:

**Şahin Hüseyin:**
By this action, I will try to pay my dept to the Direction [önderlik]. And I repeat that I will always stay in debt to you. Apo will not be able to be arrested. One Apo goes, thousands of Apo arrive! Humanity is born under the name of Apo. […] We will react by becoming Zîlan, Ağît, Apo. By renewing my attachment, I present my respect and greetings to you.\footnote{144}

Another example is the letter written by Leyla Wali Hasan:

You can criticize me because I will have organized such an action [suicide]. Rêber Apo, maybe, would not favor this action. But, so far as I know, the struggle for liberation of Kurdistan did not develop without paying the price. It will never be without cost. It is the same method of the Apoist movement and liberation of the women. As a militant and woman, I want to perpetuate this method. […] I want to strike the state as did the actions of Zîlan and Sema.\footnote{145}

One must remember that Zîlan (Zeynep Kinacı) organized a suicide attack in 1996 and Sema Yüce self-immolated in the prison in 1998. The motivations of Şahin Hüseyin, of Leyla Wali Hasan and other militants once again show that “a repertoire is a whole of conflict representations which are, in a given time, usable – namely known and available – by political actors” in the sense of Tilly.\footnote{146} It was previously mentioned that the PKK used the repertoire of self-sacrificial violence in the Diyarbakır prison in the early 1980s; before then, this repertoire was neither known nor available for the organization. During the 1990s, political suicides of Zekîye Alkan (1990), Rahşan Demirel (1992) and Gülnaz Karataş (1992) opened a new dimension to self-sacrificial “martyrs”.\footnote{147} These militants are frequently cited in the sources of the organization and in the letters of suicidal militants at the end of the 1990s and early 2000s, which suggests that
self-sacrificial commitment disseminated among the generations. It is accordingly worth providing some comments on militant habitus and self-sacrificial violence.

As Johanna Siméant suggests, a repertoire becomes appropriate due to knowledge and know-how depending on the actors using it. Self-sacrificial violence as a repertoire of action supposes a universe of sense and a regime of subjectivity more or less shared by the militants and sympathizers (not necessarily by the entire social base) of the organization. This knowledge, universe of sense and regime of subjectivity are prior to violent action. It must be furthermore admitted that there is a dilemma about this issue within the organization. Although most of the interviewed former militants do not appreciate suicide actions, they adopt at the same time suicidal militants as emblematic. This is to say that their ideas and feelings are ambivalent. At any rate, it can be stated that the PKK is an organization which is predisposed to provide an ascertained quota for voluntary dying.

Politics of self-sacrificial violence

THE POLITICS OF FASTING TO DEATH AND SELF-IMMOLATION BY FIRE

Before proceeding to study the politics of violence, it is worth remembering a point previously made. Violence against oneself corresponds in most of the times to a fluid context and crisis. The penitentiary context in Diyarbakır, the diffusion of self-sacrificial repertoire to outside the prison space at the end of the 1980s and in the beginning of the 1990s as well as the affair of Abdullah Öcalan were indeed fluid processes of crises. It means that the horizon of visibility by the actors sometimes tends to be too short. However this does not signify that their expectations and demands disappear completely. The calculation of effects of an action and the strategy of an action are two different notions. Even though it happens that the actors judge poorly the outcomes of their actions, they attempt at the same time to build politics of violence.

Two dimensions of the politics of violence appear to be salient in the analysis of fasting to death and self-immolation. On the one hand, violence seems to be a means of protestation; on the other hand, it includes a strategy of bargaining. Instrumental violence and self-sacrificial violence may coexist or be connected in some configurations. Self-sacrificial violence, in that condition, will have a “purpose”.

First, death-fasting and self-immolation in the Kurdish movement can be considered in terms of protestation. Self-sacrificial violence is an act of protestation against the mortification of the personality. It means that, in the most dramatic situations, subjects may sacrifice themselves with a consciousness to protest. I will return to the case of Diyarbakır to defend this hypothesis, but the prison of Diyarbakır is not a unique example. Different prisons offer cases of the move to self-sacrificial violence to study as a repertoire of contestation. Below is an example drawn from fieldwork:
The case of self-immolation of the group “thieves of fire” in prison. Three militants belonging to a group called “thieves of fire” resorted to immolate themselves in a prison in Istanbul in 1996. The information was collected through the non-guided interviews with one of the former militants, Binnaz (pseudonym), belonging to that group. She was born in 1974 in a Kurdish village in the region of Elbistan, a district in the province of Maraş. Her parents were farmers. She studied in a primary school in Elbistan. At the end of her primary studies, her family immigrated to Istanbul. Binnaz contacted the Kurdish organization during school holidays which she passed in her birth village in Elbistan. She thus met young Kurdish students in that region and decided to participate in the Kurdish guerrilla movement at the beginning of the 1990s. Because one of her friends denounced her before the police, she was arrested just a short while after her engagement. She first went thorough violent torture during twenty-nine days before she was sent to prison. She remained in prison for years in difficult conditions. In 1996, she attempted to commit suicide by immolating herself with her fiancé (with whom she was decided to marry before their capture) and another close militant. This suicide, which one may call collective, as the group itself called “thieves of fire”, was a planned project. Binnaz and her fiancé agreed on how they would commit suicide, and the day and the hour of the action although they were not in the same cell. Once the news of the suicide of Binnaz and her fiancé reached their friend in less one hour, he immediately committed suicide. After this attempt of collective self-immolation, Binnaz was hospitalized and her life was saved in spite of serious injuries. She was the only one to be alive, her fiancé and friend died.152

The case of “thieves of fire” is not completely different from self-sacrificial violence which occurred in the prison of Diyarbakır. Betrayal by her friend was a turning point for Binnaz. Despair in the case is not only linked with the arrest but the denouncement by a close friend to the police. She furthermore was tortured. Devoid of alternative means of action, she sometimes went on hunger strike to protest the applications of penitentiary authority and finally set herself on fire with two other militants. Given her expressions, the objective of the action was to protest the conditions of incarceration. But in what sense may one suggest that suicidal persons are protestors? One may support two arguments with regard to protest:

The first one relates to the thesis by Michael Biggs, namely, suffering caused by the destruction of the body is beneficial because it signifies the repression of the individual and enables denouncement of an “unjust” situation.153 The interpretation by Biggs nevertheless seems to be a little functionalist. For Biggs, suffering appears to be usually deliberately chosen by the individual; but it is in general a complex process of suffering which leads the individual to use violence against oneself. Besides, inflicting suffering as it is in the case of self-immolation may signal a serious situation because of its outcomes. When the suffering expresses through violence, it provokes physical pain and makes the
situation more visible. Suffering may form a category of protest action and consequently be beneficial since “it delivers a message, evokes information and emotion”. The person evidently suffers, but suffering is not necessarily sought by him/her.

The second argument refers to the thesis by Johanna Siméant according to which, in self-sacrificial violence, a political technique of the body is at issue. My observations indicate that the body forms a place of conflict both for inmates and the prison authority (this is particularly happening in closed milieux). The inmates’ hair cuts, the obligation to wear uniforms, rape and various types of torture are different manifestations. In all these practices, the body seemingly becomes a space of action. And, in this context, violence against oneself corresponds to the question of monopoly of legitimate or illegitimate violence in the sense of Max Weber, namely, it puts at stake “the monopoly of legitimate violence on the body, while allowing or not the right to dispose of one’s own body”. I defend such a hypothesis as death-fasting and self-immolation aim at breaking the satisfaction of detention by the prison authority. In such a configuration, the causes of suicide are not instrumental, but moral and subjective. They also may correspond to honor codes. Indeed, many suicidal militants define their conditions of detention as unacceptable from the moral point of view. They hence prefer to die in such conditions since voluntary suppression of the self and the body are the unique means to end the relations of domination.

Returning to my hypothesis, I suggest that self-sacrificial violence – in the form of fasting to death and self-immolation – is set in the context of protest because it relates a politics of denunciation of “unjust” situations as well as contestation of violence used on one’s own body. On the other hand, self-sacrificial violence appears as a form of bargaining which is sometimes articulated to concrete demands. Violence against self is not merely an act of despair but also a means of a political demand in bargain situations. For instance, some actions of fasting to death had an objective to ameliorate conditions of detention in the prison of Diyarbakır. One of the actions included the list of following demands:

The programme and objective of the action of fasting to death

• An end to relations of order and commandment and establish normal relations of detention and administration.
• Nobody should be forced to repent and confess and torture must be suppressed.
• To end dishonoring and insulting practices.
• To abolish the repression against defense and provide the means of defense [in the juridical sense].
• The back and forth to the tribunals must be organized in accordance with human principles; to acquire the right to talk freely during the back and forth to the tribunals.
• To provide all cultural and social needs (nutrition, newspapers, books and magazines, etc.).
• To possess the right to see visitors and lawyers.
• To provide the means to take showers and to authorize circulation in the prison.
• Treatment of the prisoners [...].

This is a list of demands addressed to the administration of the prison by the detainees during the death-fasting action in September 1983. On the basis of this list, one may suppose the demands relate especially to the amelioration of conditions of detention. The fasting to death seems to have aimed at changing the relations of force between the prisoners and penitentiary authorities. One must however underline that fasting to death may also include demands which are not about the conditions of incarceration.

Additionally, it may happen that some do not include any demand. For instance, given the empirical evidence based on non-guided interviews with former prisoners, during the fasting to death of the PKK organized by Hayri Durmuş in 1982, the strikers did not address any demands to the administration of the prison. To the contrary, they refused any demand of amelioration of condition of detention and medical treatment during their actions. The interviewed people explained the absence of demand in this way: the militants having lost all confidence in the administration, they rejected any demand of negotiation. They indeed added that the penitentiary administration did not keep the given promises to the strikers in 1981. The latter observation drives us to refer to the thesis by Hamit Bozarslan that suicidal subjects do not imagine any horizon of victory either in the short or long-term. The loss of benchmarks and horizon of victory would not be only associated with the degrading and humiliating situation in the prison, but it is also set in the temporality of the Kurdish conflict as the author indicates.

Furthermore, one finds different motives of self-sacrificial violence in the 1990s. As I already noticed, the Öcalan affair gave rise to a wave of death-fasting and self-immolations including demands such as amelioration of the conditions of his detention and/or liberation. One may suppose, in this configuration, the militant person threatens to suppress oneself to constrain the Turkish government to act in favor of the amelioration of detention of Abdullah Öcalan. The efficiency of such action is evidently questionable. The motivations to carry out the action and its outcomes are different questions. The above examples are sufficient to note that political demands are in general present in fasting to death and self-immolations by fire.

**Politics of Suicide Attacks**

From the view of politics of violence, it is relevant to handle suicide attacks separately from fasting to death and self-immolations. Indeed, as already suggested, suicide operations are “offensive” and more “destructive” than the other two forms of self-sacrificial violence. Suicide attacks correspond always to a “spirit of war” because the victim is not only a perpetrator of action; whereas fasting to death and self-immolations may in some contexts correspond to a “spirit of
peace”. Hence it is not pertinent to treat the politics of suicide attack in the same way as that of fasting to death and self-immolation.

The PKK organized suicide operations in different periods. I could identify the names of perpetrators and the date of only twelve attacks as the following list indicates:

1. Zeynep Kınacı, woman, Dersim, 1996
2. Leyla Kaplan, woman, Adana, 1996
4. Fatma Özen, woman, Hakkâri, 1997
5. Hüsnüye Oruç, woman, Diyarbakır, 1998
7. Tacettin Sahin, man, Van, 1999
8. Maral Kaymak, woman, Istanbul, 1999
9. Canan Akgün, woman, Dersim, 1999
10. Şengül Akkurt, woman, place ?, 2003
12. Vedat Acar, man, Istanbul, 2010.\(^{163}\)

This is a non-exhaustive list. One may still derive from the above list that suicide attack is a rarely used repertoire of action until now. Most of the suicide attacks were organized between 1996 and 1999, and it seems that the affair of Öcalan was a key factor in the engagement to suicide attacks in 1998 and 1999. The PKK, on the other hand, seems to be selective with regard to victims in kamikaze actions because the suicide attacks in general targeted the military and the police. In total, the suicide attacks could have killed at least thirty people. For the PKK, “the suicide attack seems to be a strategy of the coercion”\(^{164}\) against the government. Nevertheless, it seems to be quite difficult to consider that the suicide attacks of the PKK have coherent politics. These type of attacks perpetrated by the PKK constitute almost a black box for the following reasons:

First, individual and organizational motivations for the attacks may diverge or converge given each individual case. This problem is less evident in the cases of fasting to death and self-immolation which are considered to be individual or collective actions rather than organizational ones. But the suicide attack is an action which has a more organizational dimension (although the PKK does not have coherent politics for suicide attacks). Second, there is no reliable and detailed information about the biographies of the actors and histories of the suicide attacks. Compared to the cases of fasting to death and self-immolations, the sources of the PKK seem to be vague and quite manipulative on suicide attacks. The organization possesses the monopoly on diffusing information about suicide attacks;\(^{165}\) interviewed former militants do not know much about these attacks. Empirical evidence obtained in the media was not completely confirmed in the interviews with former militants. Hence I do not have enough accounts to develop a better analysis of the politics of suicide attacks.
Notes

1 One may also translate it as insurrection or uprising. The term is polysemous and used as a generic category of insurgency in Kurdish.

2 The term “ölüüm orucu” in Turkish should be translated as “fasting to death”, “death-fasting” or “hunger strike to death” in English. The translation of the term “hunger strike” in English, or grève de faim in French (açlık grevi in Turkish) is an error.

3 The HEP was dissolved by the Turkish Constitutional Court (Anayasa Mahkemesi) in 1993. The DEP (Democracy Party) was founded in 1993. The Court shut down the DEP in 1994.

4 Yeni Ülke was a daily paper.

5 Özgür Halk is a weekly newspaper.


8 Ibid., p. 7.


11 He was killed in the province of Diyarbakır on 22 October 1993. For more information, see Milliyet, 25 October 1993, p. 9; 23 October 1994, p. 8; 2 February 1994, p. 27.


17 Milliyet, 23 October 1993, p. 15.


19 Fieldwork in Batman, 2005.

20 Ibid.


22 Repression is likely to incite political violence when mobilization is popular. For this hypothesis on Latin America, see Brockett, Charles D., Political movements and violence in Central America, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005; and in the Arab world, Hafez, Mohammed M., Why Muslims rebel: repression and resistance in the Islamic world, London, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003.


24 I refer to Tilly and Tarrow on the question of repertoire. Tilly and Tarrow, Politiques du conflit, op. cit. p. 93.

25 The term “demonstrator” is rather weak in this context, but I will use it in order to distinguish between the militants of serhildan and the militants of the armed struggle.


There are other repertoires of action like wedding ceremonies. However, these repertoires are not violent. This work focuses on violent repertoires of action.


For the concept of social appropriation, see Tilly and Tarrow, *Politiques du conflit*, op. cit., pp. 68 and 197.

“Apo” is the nickname of Abdullah Öcalan.

Fieldwork in Batman in 2005.


It is a process of legitimization and protection which Charles Tilly calls the “umbrella effect”. Cf. Dobry, “Calcul, concurrence et gestion du sens”, op. cit., p. 364. Please note that the document I consulted was in French and I translated “effet de parapluie” in French as “umbrella effect” in English.

Tilly and Tarrow, *Politiques du conflit*, op. cit., p. 163.


The HADEP was founded by Murat Bozlak and other ex-deputies of the DEP in 1994. The HADEP ran in the legislative elections in 1995 and became the first party in some Kurdish provinces, and obtained a score of 4.3 percent at the national level. The party won thirty-seven municipalities in local elections in 1999.


Ajansa Nûçeyan a Firatê, 23 April 2011.


For definition of the term, see Tilly and Tarrow, *Politiques du conflit*, op. cit., especially appendices of the volume.

Ibid., p. 163.

I use the term to designate the militant capable of providing coordination between different Kurdish areas during the riots.

One must not underestimate the role of organic ties in the emergence of riots and their institutionalization.

As Olivier Filleule and Danielle Tartakowsky suggest, the history of political action cannot be disassociated from contexts which produce it and contribute to its progressive

51 Cf. Dobry, Michel, *Sociologie des crises politiques*, Paris, Presses de la FNSP, 1992. One may also consider a political crisis a structural crisis. The Kurdish question is a permanent political crisis because non-violent means were not found within the country’s democratic system for a long time. The crisis thus corresponds to a long term conflict. One need not go into detail about this argument. I focus herein on the conjunctural aspect of the crisis rather than its structural dimension.

52 This situation is comparable to spontaneous mobilization of the “disadvantageous”, which was studied by Piven and Cloward. Cf. Piven, Frances Fox and Cloward, Richard A., *Poor People’s Movements: How They Succeed and Why They Fail*, New York, Vintage, 1977.


56 Its official name is “no. 5 military prison of Diyarbakır”. It is herein known as “Diyarbakır prison” in short.

57 Field study, Germany, January 2009.


60 For the biography of Mazlum Doğan, see the second chapter. For the writings of Mazlum Doğan, see Doğan, Mazlum, *Toplu yazilar*, Cologne, Weşanên Serxwebûn, 1982.


63 Field studies in Germany and Turkey in 2009.


66 Ibid., p. 123.


69 For a more detailed analysis on the self-immolations within the PKK in Europe, see Grojean, Olivier, “Investissement militant et violence contre soi”, op. cit., pp. 101–112.

70 Cf. the second chapter on the biography of Zeynep Kmaci.


72 Most of the perpetrators of these actions were women.
Repertoires of political violence

74 Grojean, “Investissement militant et violence contre soi”, op. cit., p. 118.
75 Durkheim, Emile, Le suicide, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1960, particularly chapter IV.
76 Ibid.
78 The former militants reported that they drank especially sweetened water during the hunger strikes.
80 Ibid.
81 Bozarslan, “Le nationalisme kurde, de la violence politique au suicide sacrificiel”, op. cit., p. 95.
82 On the destructive and demonstrative aspect of suicide attacks, see Pape, “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism”, op. cit.
85 Please note that the causal link between action and death can be more indirect in death-fasting than in self-immolation. Nonetheless, death by fasting is similar to self-immolation from the point of view of its link with death.
87 The study by Olivier Grojean on self-immolation confirms this hypothesis. According to him, 53 percent of self-immolation by PKK militants and sympathizers occurred in prison. Grojean, “Investissement militant et violence contre soi”, op. cit., p. 18. On the other hand, even if I don’t have any statistical source, it must be remembered that hunger strikes to death are much more frequent than self-immolations.
90 What is relevant here is to study why prison contributes to the formation of self-sacrificial violence and not to provide an overall study of prison.
91 Goffman, Asiles, op. cit., p. 85.
92 Ibid., p. 85.
93 In the sense of Goffman, asylums, barracks, psychiatric hospitals, etc. are types of total institutions.
94 Self-immolation by fire and especially death by fasting are specific to prison, but not reduced to it. On the other hand, suicide attack, the third form of self-sacrificial violence is a repertoire which is produced outside prison. I never noticed a suicide attack occurring inside prison.
95 I use the expression by Wolfang Sofsky. Indeed, the torture chamber seems to be no more a place of inquiry and interrogation, but the theater of absolute violence in the prison of Diyarbakır during that period. One may qualify the kind of torture to be “violence for violence” in the sense of Michel Wieviorka. Cf. Sosfky, Wolfang, Traité de la violence, Paris, Gallimard, 1998 [1996], p. 79.
97 See Goffman, Asiles, op. cit.
98 Most of the testimonies deal with the military prison of Diyarbakır.
99 It must be remembered that these forms of mortification are different elements of torture.
100 Yüce, Diyarbakır Zindan Direnişi, op. cit., p. 85.
Repertoires of political violence

101 Field study in Istanbul in 2007.
102 Foucault, *Surveiller et punir*, op. cit., p. 274.
105 Torture is not only a physical phenomenon, but also a psychological and subjective one. Cf. Sofsky, *Traité de la violence*, op. cit., p. 85.
107 One may suppose that the clothing is not merely a habit but also an identity.
109 I will discuss some of these demands in the section dealing with the politics of self-sacrificial violence.
110 There were indeed postures, activities and events (such as undressing, cut hair, imposing prison regulations, changing the cells). They were destined to mortify the personality (or even the personhood) of the prisoners.
112 For this comment, see ibid., p. 272.
113 Ibid., p. 254.
114 Ibid.
116 Another form of ideological contamination concerns the obligation of the political prisoners to practice official cults and recite the national hymn. This obligation constitutes symbolic and moral violence for those refusing to practice them.
118 Ibid.
119 Ibid., p. 117.
120 Here I address the state of anomie which possibly generates suicidal behavior, but the notion is different from the one of Durkheim since it signifies the dissolution of solidarity among militant prisoners. On the contrary, self-immolation and death by fasting can restore solidarity among them as we shall see later.
121 I herein insist upon the notion of “privation” rather than “opportunity” to explain the emergence of a repertoire of action.
123 As Erving Goffman suggested, this is one of the aspects of the total institution. Cf. Goffman, *Asiles*, op. cit., p. 82.
124 About the role of Abdullah Öcalan’s charisma in the PKK, see White, Paul, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers? The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, London, Zed Press, 2000. It must be added that this study does not focus on the effects of Öcalan’s charisma over the entire Kurdish organization, but in particular on its effects on self-sacrificial violence.
125 About the affair of Öcalan, see Grojean, “Investissement militant et violence contre soi”, op. cit.
128 Ibid., p. 18.
129 Abdullah Öcalan is usually known as önderlik (in Turkish) and serok (in Kurdish) in the PKK milieu. The first one designates “direction” or “leadership”. It signifies the action to direct and command, but is used to denote the “one who directs” in this context. The second one means “president” in Kurdish. I sometimes translated these terms as “leader” and “chief”.
Repertoires of political violence

130 Serxwebûn, *Feday Şehitler Albümü*, op. cit., p. 28.
131 Ibid., p. 35.
135 Serxwebûn, *Feday Şehitler Albümü*, op. cit., p. 45.
137 According to PKK sources, militants write reports before committing suicide.
138 The militant was born in 1978. It should be noted that she was twenty-one years old and imprisoned when Öcalan was captured.
139 Hamit Bozarslan states that “the leader of the PKK was a part-mystical, part-rational, part-materialistic, part-ideal figure. It could slip at any time from a romantic and religious discourse to an almost rationalistic argumentation.” Bozarslan, “Le nationalisme kurde, de la violence politique au suicide sacrificial”, op. cit., p. 111.
140 One finds a similar image of group or “community in danger” in the study by Elise Féron in the conflict of Northern Ireland. See Féron, Elise, *La harpe et la couronne*, op. cit., p. 212.
141 Ibid.
142 Olivier Grojean mentions the making of martyrs and diffusion of an ideal model of commitment which permit the use of violence against oneself. I defend the same hypothesis in that the making of martyrs and diffusion of an ideal type for radical engagement are the components of militant habitus of the PKK. Cf. Grojean, “Investissement militant et violence contre soi”, op. cit.
143 It must nevertheless be underlined that each self-sacrificial act ought to be considered in a web of circumstances and configurations in which it appears. Militant habitus of the PKK not only comprises a unique form of violence but multiple ones at the same time.
144 Serxwebûn, *Feday Şehitler Albümü*, op. cit., p. 93.
146 Tilly and Tarrow, *Politiques du conflit*, op. cit., p. 93.
147 One should recall that Zekiye Alkan and Rahşan Demirel set themselves on fire in Diyarbakır and İzmir and that Gülnaz Karatas killed herself in order not to be captured by Kurdish peshmergas in Iraq.
149 Similarly, in the PKK’s text, self-immolation is presented as an honorable way to die and become a “martyr”.
150 Here I have a similar conception with Durkheim’s view on suicidal behavior. For Durkheim, each society is predisposed to provide a determinate contingency of voluntary deaths. Durkheim, *Le suicide*, op. cit., p. 25.
152 Information drawn from the interviews with Binnaz in 2006 in France.
154 Ibid., p. 18.
156 The argument by Wolfgang Sofsky about the body is justified in this case. “The body is not just a part of a human being, but his/her constitutive center.” The conflict is organized around the body of the human being. Sofsky, *Traité de la violence*, Paris, Gallimard, 1988 [1996], p. 60.
Siméant, “La violence d’un répertoire”, op. cit., p. 327. It must be remembered that Siméant applies this hypothesis to the cases of hunger strikes.

Ibid., p. 327.


Indeed, the Turkish government generally did not respond to the demands of the militants during that period.


The list was elaborated through different sources. Cf. *Milliyet*, 6 April 1999, and *Aksiyon*, 20 March 2006. I did not take into account the actions which the PKK did not claim the responsibility for or made contradictory declarations about.

Pape, “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism”, op. cit.

The information diffused by the PKK press does not sufficiently enable knowledge of the internal function of suicide attacks.
Conclusion

I studied the Kurdish conflict, movement and society from the angle of political violence. But the study enabled formulation above all of a thesis on political violence while departing from the Kurdish conflict and movement.

In the first chapter, the Kurdish political field and internal violence were studied. I observed that the Kurdish political field is formed and becomes relatively autonomous through three historical times, which are Eastism, emergence of radical organizations, and construction of a symbolic and imaginary space. The observation led to the conclusion that the field is characterized by intra-ethnic violence, which is explained by fragmentation and segmentation. I tried to show that fragmentation and segmentation are two configurations of internal violence, in which political violence is mixed with private and social conflicts.

The second chapter focused on the mobilization of the PKK which monopolized this political field in the 1980s and 1990s. I distinguished three factors of mobilization resulting in political violence: the use of political violence, militant habitus and relations of the guerilla movement with society. In this regard, the impact of the armed struggle on mobilization was taken into account. The armed struggle was at the same time viewed through structural and organizational violence.

In the third chapter, I analyzed how individuals advance to armed struggle. Hence, I attempted to show that social networks, polarization and ‘asabiyya play considerable roles in the use of political violence. In addition, it was seen that symbolic dynamics like symbolic violence and the search for recognition, contribute to this process. The hypotheses of contingency helped understanding the complexity of this process. Indeed, whether one or more of these dynamics impact on the use of violence depends mostly on the path depending process, i.e. local configurations of violence and repression and proximity.

In the final chapter, I studied two repertoires of political violence: self-sacrificial violence and Kurdish serhildan. I defined serhildan as local popular Kurdish mobilizations which succeeded or preceded the armed struggle in the 1990s. These uprisings constituted a pattern of the move to violence by civilians. Despite the fact that they emerged in relation with the guerilla movement, they become quite autonomous by producing their own dynamics in the 2000s. I furthermore distinguished three types of self-sacrificial violence: fasting to death,
self-immolation and suicide attack. Subjective and symbolic forces such as denial, mortification of the self and the charisma of the leader of the Kurdish organization promoted the emergence of this repertoire in various historical configurations. I also added two observations. Repertoire of self-sacrificial actions does not completely escape from structural constraints, namely militant habitus. Similarly, the action appears with the politics of violence led by actors in the prison or a guerilla type battle.

It seems relevant to mention the empirical, epistemological and theoretical contributions of this study. This is above all a work destined to enrich empirical knowledge about the Kurdish conflict and political violence. The thesis is founded on fieldwork which enables amelioration and deepening of information about the Kurdish political organizations as well as Kurdish society and regions such as Batman, Bingöl, Siverek and Maraş. The research also provides a rich empirical account on the move to violence by individuals, and violent actions like fasting to death, self-immolation and popular uprisings.

At epistemological and theoretical levels, I constructed the analytical tools, scales, concepts, problems and hypotheses to explore political violence. It was noteworthy to formulate new questions and definitions with regard to violence. In my opinion, the goal of this study is not perhaps just to understand how individuals and organizations move to violence, but also to define what political violence is, or what internal violence, an uprising or self-sacrificial violence signify. The definitions provide clarification of the topic of analysis and qualify them; otherwise the analyses would be ambiguous.

I elaborated the concepts such as fragmentation, segmentation and proximity, because, as previously explained, violence or armed struggle are “marginal” facts to be rarely understandable given the existing approaches in social sciences. There is no point returning to these concepts in the conclusion. It is however noteworthy that I attempted to make a new idea of political violence through these notions. To give an example among others, proximity is not exclusively a form of reciprocal relationship that we may observe in each society as Simmel noticed, but at the same time it is physical meeting between the guerilla movement and the social base, a form of psychological, imaginary and subjective rapprochement which transforms into political domination, mobilization or hegemony. It constitutes a space of recruitment and the move to armed struggle.

I used the approach of the symbolic and the subjective in some sections. Political violence has strong subjective, symbolic, imaginary and ideological dimensions even if it cannot be reduced exclusively to them. Because political violence is based on a conflict which is not only real but also imaginary and it is constructed through an ideology/political project, it relates to subjectivity. When violence is founded on a request of recognition, denial of recognition, on the basis of stigmatization, exclusion and consequently on the unsettling of identity benchmarks, it is necessarily symbolic. Nevertheless, one ought to admit that subjectivity and the symbolic are not easily accessible to empirical investigation. Theoretical contributions of Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Wieviorka and Philippe
Braud are fundamental in this domain since they enable development of the understanding of the political universe and the conflict. On the other hand, they don’t enable sufficient exploration of why subjective and symbolic motivations drive actors to act; the hypotheses elaborated between the subjective, the symbolic and the politics remain in macro level, they are situated between psychology, sociology, but rarely at the micro sociological level. Empirical studies founded on the interviews with the “real” actors are quite rare to consult. Despite this difficulty, I did not give up the empiricism as far as I attempted to show how the symbolic and the subjective are materialized in the use of arms.\footnote{1}

The problem of scale was essential in the evolution of this study, about which some conclusions should be drawn. Political violence is not understandable without making any reference to several processes and agents which operate at different levels. This observation was crucial in the constitution of the thesis statement in this research. Indeed, one cannot conceive the use of violence by individuals, movements, organizations, tribes and villages in the same way. Even in each level, there are multiple scales. As an example, I remarked that habitus as structural violence constitutes a quite different pattern from the use of violence as a tool for mobilization. Similarly, the emergence of repertoires of violence require a different analysis from the move to violence: the act of suicide operation is not explained in the same way as the commitment of individuals to armed struggle. Nonetheless, one must once again point out that these different explanations are combined rather than opposed to each other in order to understand violence. As Michel Wieviorka indicates, in practice, behaviors of actors are never pure forms; they are more or less complex combinations.\footnote{2} The distinction between levels is not clearly observed in reality, where modalities and configurations of violence interweave in a confused manner. The same principle applies to the actors. The PKK cannot be studied without focusing on its members who use guns. It is an “organization of individuals” to use the expression by Elias who defines the society as a “society of individuals”.\footnote{3} But, the distinctions constitute analytically precious tools.

On the other hand, there are certainly limits and problems in this study of which one ought to signal the most important ones. The first one comes from the difficulty of the fieldwork. Even though I defend that this is an empirical work, the analysis sometimes lacks empirical information. The descriptions of actors and places are sometimes incomplete. For instance, in the first chapter, I could not provide the biographies of the founding members of the Kurdish organizations. One does not exactly grasp the places of socialization and personal experiences of individual agents in that chapter. Furthermore, I could not go further in describing Bingöl, Maraş and Batman, and events which took place in these places. Similarly, it was not possible to multiply fieldwork accounts concerning organizational dynamics of the Kurdish guerilla movement in the second chapter. Finally, I could not better present actors of self-sacrificial violence, their dates of birth, places of socialization and dates of engagement.

One ought to admit another problem. I did not analyze all the relationships implicated in the issues that I was trying to understand. But I have at the same
time the impression that this is a limit of a thesis rather than being a serious problem since it is impossible to include all things in the analysis.

Hence, the role of tiers, namely, the state, was not sufficiently studied in the analysis of intra-ethnic violence. Even if it is very difficult to access the information on this issue, it is estimated that the state is a major agent which does not stop using politics of *divide et impera*. One may have focused on a configuration in which the tiers provoke fight and conflict. I must at the same time underline that this role should not be exaggerated because the intra-ethnic conflict cannot be reduced to a simple politics of tiers.

Furthermore, some dynamics of participation in armed struggle – the topic of the third chapter – were not sufficiently studied, especially dynamics of gender and the generational gap. The question of gender seems to be central to explain the use of violence by female militants; it is possible to problematize the commitment of women to violence within a struggle against patriarchy in that society. Although I have made some comments on this issue, the gender aspect of political violence needs to be more elaborated in a separate section or chapter. Likewise, each generation seems to have its own motivations and practices, and places of socializations and senses. A person who moves to violence in the 1970s should have been better distinguished from another person committed to violence in the 1990s.

One may notice another point that is not grasped in my analysis: is it relevant to study the move to violence by a founder member in the same manner as a simple member of these organizations? There are also some limits in the analysis of habitus: some aspects of the militant habitus constitutes a black box if we take it exactly in the sense of Bourdieu and Elias. Many questions can be posed at that point: What are exactly psychological mechanisms of selective militant experiences? How does militant thinking and memory operate? Are there mechanisms of resistance to internalization of militant dispositions?

The chapters could have been better articulated with each other. It is important to note that this is not only a problem of plan of this work, but it comes from the difficulty of showing the interdependency between the dynamics: fragmentations, mobilizations, participations and repertoires. This difficulty of connection is observed at the same time when it is a question of interaction between different processes to produce each of these factors. If for instance the armed struggle/habitus/proximity interact to result in mobilization, how can one better study the interdependency between these mechanisms? How can one better analyze the interdependence between the move to violence at the regional and individual levels, as well as the relations between individual behaviors and institutional and structural constraints?

It is nevertheless worth noting that these questions constitute universal problems of social sciences. Here I allow myself to make some comments on this problem. The tensions between micro, local and regional, between individual and social, between subjectivism and objectivism are not completely solved despite the development of approaches and tools to go beyond this difficulty. A second interpretation is more optimistic. It seems that the problem of
interdependence is not sometimes a problem. Indeed, even if we admit the connection between different social forces, one must keep in mind that all of the criteria do not function always together. For instance, a person integrated to the social networks may use violence without being motivated by recognition of the Kurds. It means that social network may alone suffice to explain his/her commitment. Another example: the use of violence is not always a condition for mobilization of a guerilla movement. Also, it is important to underline that every characteristic of a concept is not always present as we, the researchers, hope to show: fragmentation, for example, may occur only due to competition among Kurdish organizations; there is not always a need to search for an absolute link between all the different dynamics.

Notes

1 The symbolic and subjective approaches are furthermore useful because the analysis of violence is supposed not to be limited to only direct, conscious and explicit levels of action. This sort of approach helps to avoid falling into substantialism and essentialism. For a discussion about the utility of this kind of approaches, see Féron, Elise and Hastings, Michel, *L’imaginaire des conflits communautaires*, Paris, L’Harmattan, 2002, p. 18.


Appendix 1
Chronology

Chronology of Turkey

1876–1909 The reign of sultan Abdülhamid II.
1889 The opposition of the Young Turks emerges in Europe.
1894–1896 Armenian pogroms and massacres in Eastern Anatolia.
1908 The Young Turks seize power. The second constitutional monarchy.
1912–1913 The Ottoman Empire loses its European territories in the Balkan wars.
1914–1918 The Ottoman Empire enters the war on the German side. Armenian massacres and deportations. The Ottoman defeat at the end of the war.

30 October 1918 Armistice of Mondoros.
10 August 1920 The treaty of Sèvres provides the break up of the Ottoman Empire.
1919–1922 War of liberation led by Mustafa Kemal: Turkish and Kurdish resistance in Anatolia.
24 July 1923 Signature of the treaty of Lausanne.
29 October 1923 Proclamation of the Turkish Republic.

1922–1928 Era of Westernization reforms.
24 February 1922 Abolition of the sultanate.
29 March 1924 Abolition of the Caliphate.
30 April 1924 New constitution.
1925 Laws on headgear and wearing.
1928 Adoption of the Latin alphabet.
1932 Turkey joins the League of Nations.
1933 Foundation of universities.
1934 Voting right for women.
1938 Death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. He is replaced as President by İsmet İnönü.
1939–1945 Turkey remains neutral during the Second World War.
The multi-party system. The Democratic Party governs from 1950 to 1960.

The Truman doctrine ensures the protection of Turkey against the Soviet Bloc.

The Marshall plan supports Turkey.

Celal Bayar is elected President. Adnan Menderes is Prime Minister.

Tensions in Cyprus. Anti-Greek pogrom occurs in Istanbul.

Turkey enters the NATO.

Turkey joins the Baghdad Pact and gets US protection.

First military coup d’état by General Cemal Gürsel. Dissolution of the National Assembly. Execution of Menderes.

New liberal constitution is adopted. Foundation of two new political parties: the Justice Party (Adalet Partisi) and the New Turkey Party (Yeni Türkiye Partisi).

Cemal Gürsel becomes President. The Justice Party wins a majority of seats in the elections.

Government of Süleyman Demirel.

Signing of the partnership agreement between Turkey and the European Economic Community.

Government of Süleyman Demirel.

Presidency of Cevdet Sunay.

Radical student protests appear.

Military intervention. Resignation of the government of Demirel.

Establishment of the government led by Nihat Erim.

Executions of three Turkish militants of the radical left, Deniz Gezmiş, Hüseyin İnan and Yusuf Aslan.

Government of coalition of Ferit Melen.

The rise of radical movements of the left and right, and political violence. The conflicts between communist and nationalist parties intensify. Fahri S. Korutürk is President during this period.

Government of coalition of Bülent Ecevit. Turkey occupies Northern Cyprus following a Greek military coup on the island.

Massacre of 1 May in Istanbul: at least thirty-four people are killed.

The third military coup d’état.

Military regime amasses a large number of human rights violations. Kenan Evren becomes President in 1982.

1987  Turkey formally applies to the European Economic Community.


20 October 1991  Süleyman Demirel becomes again Prime Minister.

1993  Turkey signs a customs union treaty with the European Union.

24 January 1993  Murder of Uğur Mumcu (Republican and Kemalist journalist).

16 May 1993  Süleyman Demirel is elected President by parliament.

13 June 1993  Tansu Çiller is appointed Prime Minister.

2 July 1993  Sivas massacre kills thirty-seven intellectuals most of whom are Alevi.

March 1994  The Welfare Party (Refah Partisi) wins multiple municipalities, including Istanbul and Ankara. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan becomes mayor of Istanbul.


January 1996  Several mutinies, accompanied by hunger strikes and fasting to death break out in prisons to demand better conditions of detention. Massacre of peasants in Gülçiçekonak (Şırnak).

1996  Entry into force of the customs union between the EU and Turkey. Necmettin Erbakan forms a coalition government with the True Path Party of Tansu Çiller.

1996  The Susurluk accident gives rise to a debate on “deep state” corruption.

February 1997  The National Security Council (MGK), dominated by the military, communicates twenty proposals to Erbakan government, and forces him to resign.

18 April 1997  Bültent Ecevit becomes Prime Minister.


1999  Capture of Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK’s chief, in Kenya.

5 May 2000  Ahmet Necdet Sezer becomes the tenth President of Turkey.

2001  Protests in Turkish prisons against the entry into force of a new law that insulates prison inmates.

2000  Suspension of the armed struggle by the PKK.

November 2002 Legislative elections take place. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) gets 34.22 percent of the votes and an absolute majority of seats in the Assembly (363 of 550).

December 2002 The European Council of Copenhagen confirms Turkey’s candidacy.

March 2003 Turkey refuses to allow US troops to cross its territory to invade Iraq from the North.

November 2003 Al-Qaeda attacks in Istanbul: at least sixty-two dead.

January 2004 Abolition of the death penalty.

2004 The PKK resumes guerilla warfare.

19 January 2007 Murder of Hrant Dink (Armenian journalist) in Istanbul.

22 July 2007 Legislative elections take place. The AKP wins by taking 46.6 percent of ballots cast. The party obtains an absolute majority of seats in the Assembly.

Chronology of the Kurdish space

1514 Battle of Çaldıran occurs. The Ottoman Empire takes control of Eastern Anatolia. Kurdish emirs combine with the Ottoman sultan Selim I against Persia.

1597 Şeref Xan writes Şerefnâme.

1695 Ehmedi Xanî writes his epic Mem ü Zîn in Kurdish.

1830 Beginning of the revolt of Mîr Mehmed Paşa of Revanduz.

1840 Beginning of the revolt of Bedirxan Bey of Cizre.

1880–1881 Revolt of Sheikh Ubeydullah.

1891 Establishment of cavalry regiments of Hamidiye (Hamidiye Alayları).

1892 Foundation of the School for Tribes in Istanbul.

1898 Mikdat Midhat Bedirxan publishes in exile, the Kurdistan newspaper.

1900 Foundation of Kürd Azm-i Kavi Cemiyeti, first Kurdish committee.

1908 Foundation of the Committee for Kurdish Progress and Development (Kürd Teavûn ve Terakki Cemiyeti) and the Committee of Union and Ottoman Kurdish Development (Osmanlı Kürd İttihâd ve Terakki Cemiyeti).

1909 Kurdish riots against Meşrutiyet (constitutional monarchy).

1910 Foundation of the Kurdish Committee for the Dissemination of Instruction (Kürd Nêşr-i Maarif Cemiyeti).

1912 Committee of Lovers of Kurdistan (Kûrdistan Muhibleri Cemiyeti) and Society of Kurdish Students-Hope (Ciwata Talebeyi Kurdistan-Hêvi).

1914 Revolts of Bidlis, Barzan and Baban.

1918 The Society for the Rise of Kurdistan (Kûrdistan Teali Cemiyeti) is founded.
1919
Occupation of Maraş, Urfa and Antep by French troops. Revolt of Simkö in Iran and Mahmud Berzenci in Iraq.

1919
The Kurds participate massively in the Anatolian war of independence.

1919–1921
Revolt of Koçgiri.

10 August 1920
Treaty of Sèvres.

1925
Revolt of Sheikh Said.

1926–1930
Revolt of Ağrı.

1927
Foundation of Khoybun.

1930–1939
Massacres of Dersim.

1932
Revolt of Ahmed Barzani in Iraq.

July 1937
Saadabad pact between Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan, which provides coordination of the fight against Kurdish movements.

1942
Foundation of Dicle Talebe Yurdu in Istanbul.

1943
Revolt of Barzani in Iraq.

1946
Establishment of Autonomous Republic of Mahabad in Iran which Iranian forces end in the same year. Foundation of Iraqi KDP. Mustafa Barzani is exiled in the USSR.

1947
Qazi Muhammed, President of Mahabad Republic, is executed in Iran.

1948
Foundation of Firat Talebe Yurdu in Istanbul.

1949
Barzani returns to Iraq from exile.

1959
Arrest of the 49 (49’lar) in Turkey.

1961
Revolt of Mustafa Barzani breaks out in Iraq.

1965
Foundation of the PDKT in Turkey.

1966
Murder of Faik Bucak, the secretary general of the PDKT.

1967–1969
Organization of Eastern meetings (Doğu Mitingleri).

July 1968
The Baath seizes power in Iraq.

1969–1971
Foundation of Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları in Turkey.

1971
Said Elçi and Dr Şiwan are killed.

1974
Mustafa Barzani resumes rebellion in Iraq. Amnesty for Kurdish militants imprisoned after military intervention in 1971 in Turkey. The PUK, Partiya Sosyalista Kurdistan, is founded. The group of Rizgarî is formed in Turkey.

1975
The Algiers Agreement between Baghdad and Tehran terminates their border disputes and causes halt to Iranian support for the Kurdish rebellion and enables the collapse of the rebellion. The PUK is founded in Iraq. The group of Rizgarî is formed in Turkey.

1976
Organization of Kawa is founded in Turkey.

1977
Devrimci Demokratik Kültür Derneği is founded in Diyarbakır. The KUK is formed. Haki Karer, a leading cadre of Apocus is killed in Antep.
Foundation of the PKK and Têkoşîn. Ferit Uzun, a leading cadre of Kawa is assassinated in Siverek. Armed conflicts break out between the PKK and the Bucak tribe in Siverek. Hamit Fendoğlu (alias Hamido), mayor of Malatya, is killed. In December, massacre of Maraş causes the death of more than 105 people.

Departure of Abdullah Öcalan in Syria. Assassination of ülkücü mayor of Bingöl, Hikmet Tekin. Edip Solmaz, Kurdist mayor of Batman is killed.

There is a massive repression against Kurdish militants and society after the military coup d’état in Turkey. The war between Iran and Iraq breaks out.

Kurdish prisoners begin fasting to death (ölüm orucu) in Diyarbakır.


Kurdish Institute of Paris is founded.

The Turkish army organizes four operations against the PKK in Iraq.

Attacks of the PKK in Eruh and Şemdinli. Necmettin Büyükkaya, cadre and militant of the DDKD, is tortured to death Diyarbakır prison.

Massacre of thirty people in Pınarcık (Mardin) most of whom are women and children.

Massacre of Halabda in Iraq. The Anfal campaign kills tens of thousands of people in Iraq. Sixteen people are killed in the village of Dereler (Şırnak). The PKK attacks increase in Turkey.

Assassination of Abdurrahman Ghassemlou, leader of Iranian PDK. An international Kurdish conference is organized by the Kurdish Institute in Paris. Expulsion of some Kurdish members from the SHP, a social democratic party. Twenty-nine people are killed in İkikaya (Yüksekova).

The beginning of serhildan in Kurdish villages and towns in Turkey.

Zekiye Alkan, a PKK militant, sets herself on fire in Diyarbakır. Insurrections take place in March in Cizre, İdil, Silopi and Midyat. HEP, a legal Kurdish party, is founded in Turkey. Massacre of children and women in Güçlükonak (Şırnak).

The Kurdish insurgency in Iraq is crushed, giving rise to the flight of two million refugees to Turkey and Iran.
Resolution 688 of the UN Security Council provides a zone of protection for the Kurds in Iraq, North of the 36th parallel. The Turkish operations resume following the transborder attacks of the PKK. Vedat Aydin, the Diyarbakır branch chairman of the HEP is killed. The clashes between the PKK and Hizbullah continue.

1992

Armed conflicts between the PKK and Kurdish peshmergas in Iraq. Massacres in the demonstrations of newroz in Şırnak and Mardin. Musa Anter, Kurdish journalist, is killed in Diyarbakır. Massacre of thirty people in Cevizdali (Bitlis).

19 May 1992

The PDK takes control over the Northern region of Iraqi Kurdistan until the Turkish border, and the YNK takes control over the South of Iraqi Kurdistan until the Iranian border.

17 September 1992

Four cadres of Iranian PDK are killed in Berlin.

1993

Announcement and the end of the unilateral truce by the PKK. Foundation of the DEP. Radicalization of the conflicts between the PKK and Hizbullah in Batman, Bingöl and Silvan. Mehmet Sincar, Kurdish deputy of Mardin, is killed in Batman. Massacre of Turkish soldiers in Bingöl, intellectuals in Sivas, peasants in Başbağlar (Erzincan).

1994

Parlimantery immunity of the arrested DEP deputies are lifted. Foundation of HADEP.

1994–1996

Violence between the PDK and the YNK in Iraqi Kurdistan.

1995

Turkish army launches a transborder operation entitled “Steel” in Iraqi Kurdistan.

24 December 1995

HADEP gets 4.5 percent of the votes in legislative elections in Turkey.

1996

Zeynep Kınacı (pseudonym Zilan) organizes the first suicide attack of the PKK in Dersim.

1997

Turkey undertakes two big military operations entitled “Mass” and “Hammer” in Iraq.

1998

The PDK and the YNK agree for the formation of a government and interim parliament in Iraqi Kurdistan.

1999


2003

The PYD (Partiya Yekîtîya Demokrat, Democratic Union Party) is formed. The toppling of Saddam Hussein’s regime in the second Gulf war.

2004

DEHAP enters the local elections with five socialist parties in a coalition that gains about sixty-nine municipalities. Liberation of Leyla Zana and three other Kurdish deputies imprisoned since 1994.
2005 Mesud Barzani is elected to be President of Iraqi Kurdistan.

2007 About twenty deputies of the DTP (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi* – Party of Democratic Society) are elected to the National Assembly in July.
### Appendix 2

Abbreviations and acronyms used in the book

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ala Rizgarî</em></td>
<td>Flag of Liberation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANAP</td>
<td><em>Anavatan Partisi</em>, Motherland Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td><em>Adalet Partisi</em>, Justice Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Apocu</em></td>
<td>The followers of Abdullah Öcalan. In this book, I use the term in some sections to refer to the PKK before its foundation in 1978. The movement did not have a common and established name before this date. <em>Apocu</em> is one of the terms used – among others – by people during that period, even though the term became more established in the 1980s. I use the term in order to distinguish the circle formed around Abdullah Öcalan and his friends from other Kurdish movements. Please note that I use this term in three forms in the text: <em>Apocu</em> as an adjective, the <em>Apocu</em> as a nominalized adjective or <em>Apocus</em> to signify followers of Apo.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARGK</td>
<td><em>Arteşa Rizgariya Gele Kurdistan</em>, Popular Army of Liberation of Kurdistan (PKK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASKD</td>
<td><em>Anti Sömürgeci Kültür Dernekleri</em>, Anti Colonialist Culture Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AYÖD</td>
<td><em>Ankara Yüksek Öğrenim Derneği</em>, Association of Higher Education of Ankara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHP</td>
<td><em>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</em>, Republican People’s Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Ciwata Talebeyi Kurdistan-Hêvi</em></td>
<td>Society of Kurdish Students-Hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDKAD</td>
<td><em>Devrimci Demokrat Kadınlar Derneği</em>, Association of democratic and revolutionary women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDKD</td>
<td><em>Devrimci Demokratik Kültür Derneği</em>, Association of Democratic and Revolutionary Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDKO</td>
<td><em>Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları</em>, Revolutionary Eastern Cultural Hearths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDÖ</td>
<td><em>Devrimci Demokrat Öğretmenler</em>, Revolutionary Democratic Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEHAP</td>
<td><em>Demokratik Halk Partisi</em>, Democratic People’s Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Dengê Kawa</em></td>
<td>Voice of Kawa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DEP  Demokrasi Partisi, Democracy Party
Dev-Genç  Türkiye Devrimci Gençlik Federasyonu, Revolutionary Youth Federation of Turkey (or Revolutionary Youth)
Dev-Sol  Devrimci Sol, Revolutionary Left
Dev-Yol  Devrimci Yol, Revolutionary Way
DHKD  Devrimci Halk Kültürlü Dernekleri, Revolutionary, Popular and Cultural Associations
DKD  Doğu Kültürlü Dernekleri, Cultural Associations of the East
DP  Demokrat Parti, Democrat Party (directed by Menderes)
ERNK  Eniya Rizgariya Netewa Kurdistan, National Liberation Front of Kurdistan (PKK)
FKF  Fikir Küllüpleri Federasyonu, Federation of Intellectual Clubs
HADeP  Halkın Demokrasi Partisi, People’s Democracy Party
HK  Halkın Kurtuluşu, Liberation of People
HY  Halkın Yolu, People’s Way
İttihâd ve Terakki Cemiyeti  Committee of Union and Progress
İttihâd-ı Osmanî Cemiyeti  Committee of Ottoman Union
İTİTEM  Jandarma Istihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele, Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counterterrorism
Kawa  Kurdish organization founded in 1976. Name of a hero character in Şahnâme written by poet Firdewsî. A mythical figure of Kurdish nationalism
KIP  Kürdistan İşçi Partisi, Kurdistan Workers’ Party
Komkar  Federasyona Komelên Karkerên Kurdistan li Elmanya Federal, Federation of Associations of Kurdistan Workers in Federal Germany
KUK  Kürdistan Ulusal Kurtuluşçuları, National Liberators of Kurdistan
Kürd Neşr-i Maarîf Cemiyeti  Kurdish Committee for the Dissemination of Instruction
Kürd Teaviün ve Terakki Cemiyeti  Committee for Kurdish Progress and Development
Kürdistan Devrimcileri  Revolutionaries of Kurdistan (PKK)
Kürdistan Muhibleri Cemiyeti  Committee of Lovers of Kurdistan
Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti  Society for the Rise of Kurdistan
Kurtuluş  Liberation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Name in English</th>
<th>Name in Turkish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MDD</td>
<td>Milli Demokratik Devrim, National Democratic Revolution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGK</td>
<td>Milli Güvenlik Kurulu, National Security Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MHP</td>
<td>Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, Nationalist Movement Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSP</td>
<td>Milli Selamet Partisi, National Salvation Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTTB</td>
<td>Milli Türk Talebe Birliği, National Union of Turkish Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDK</td>
<td>Partiya Demokrata Kurdistanê, Kurdistan Democratic Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDK-T</td>
<td>Partiya Demokrata Kurdistanana Türkiyê, Democratic Party of Kurdistan in Turkey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDKI</td>
<td>Kurdistan Democratic Party – Iran</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDKT</td>
<td>Partiya Demokrata Kurdistanana Türkiyê, Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKK</td>
<td>Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, Kurdistan Workers’ Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSK</td>
<td>Partiya Sosyalîsta Kurdistan, Socialist Party of Kurdistan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUK</td>
<td>Yeketî Niştîmanî Kurdistan, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riya Azadî</td>
<td>Özgürlik Yolu, Way to Freedom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rizgarî</td>
<td>Liberation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Sosyalist Devrim, Socialist Revolution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHP</td>
<td>Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti, Social Democratic Populist Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stêrka Sor</td>
<td>Red Star</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBMM</td>
<td>Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, Grand National Assembly of Turkey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Têkoşin</td>
<td>Struggle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THKO</td>
<td>Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Ordusu, People’s Liberation Army of Turkey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THKP-C</td>
<td>Türk Halk Kurtuluş Partisi – Cephesi, Turkish People’s Liberation Party-Front</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TİKKO</td>
<td>Türkiye İşçi Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu, Army of Liberation of Peasant Workers of Turkey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TİP</td>
<td>Türkiye İşçi Partisi, Turkish Workers’ Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TKP</td>
<td>Türkiye Komünist Partisi, Turkish Communist Party</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Töb-Der</td>
<td>Tüm Öğretmenler Birleşme ve Dayanışma Derneği, All Teachers’ Association for Unification and Solidarity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSİP</td>
<td>Türkiye Sosyalist İşçi Partisi, Socialist Workers’ Party of Turkey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TTF</td>
<td>Türk Talebe Federasyonu, Federation of Turkish Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sources

Primary sources

Ala Rızgari, n°1, June, 1979 [Istanbul].
Ala Rızgari, n°2, April, 1980.
A. Dicle, “Mazlum Yoldaşın anısı yolumuzu aydınlatan sürekli bir meşaledir” [Memory of comrade Mazlum is a torch which enlightens always our way], 5 April 1982, Unknown place.
ARMANC, “Diyarbakır Zindanlarındaki Direnişe Omuz verelim!” [Stand in solidarity with the resistance in prisons of Diyarbakır], 12 September 1983.
Ayaklanma Taktiği Üzerine Tezler ve Görevlerimiz [Theses over insurgency tactics and our responsibilities], Bultena PKK’ê, Mardin, 1979 (document of the PKK).
Berxwedan [a publication belonging to the PKK] (1983–2010).
BIRKOM, “Diyarbakır Zindanlarında Katliam” [Massacre in Diyarbakır prisons], Communiqué, unknown date.
Demokrasi [Ağrı], 1977 (It is a magazine).
Demokrasi Partisi (DEP)-Tüzük [Regulation of the DEP], 1993.
Dengê Kawa (review of Dengê Kawa), n°1, February, 1979.
[Devrimci Birlik, Özgürlük Yolu – IGD], “İşçiler, Köylüler, Yurtsevere Halkımız, Tüm İlileriçiler” [Workers, peasants, patriotic people and revolutionaries], Unknown date and place.
Devrimci Demokratik Gençlik, n°1, February, 1978.
Devrimci Doğu Kültüır Ocaklari Haber Bültenî, n°1, 1970.
Devrimci Demokratik Gençlik, n°1, February, 1978.
Devrimci Demokratik Gençlik, n°7–8, August–September, 1978.
Devrimci Demokratik Gençlik, n°9, October, 1978.
Direnmek Yaşamaktır [Resisting is to live], Cologne, Weşanên Serxwebûn, 1984 [1981], Unknown author.
“Diyarbakır cezaevinde onlarca mahkum katledildi” [Dozens of prisoners were killed in Diyarbakır prison], Mücadele, n°2, May, 1982.
“Diyarbakır Cezaevinde Katliam” [Massacre in Diyarbakır prison], Emeğin Sesi, n°24, 26 April 1982.
ERNK, “Halk Kurtuluş Ordumuz ARKG’yi Donatma ve Güçlendirme Kampanyasına Katıl!” [Participate in the campaign to strengthen and equip Army of popular liberation!], 1990.
ERNK, Yaşasın Bağımsızlık ve Özgürlük Mücadelemiz! [Long live the battle of our independence and freedom], Unknown date (Communiqué of the ERNK).
ERNK, “Halkın Demokrasi Partisi, HADEP, Tüzüğü [Regulation of HADEP], 1994, Unknown place.
ERNK, “Türkiye ve Karadağ” [Turkey and Montenegro], Cologne, Weşanen Serxwebûn, 1984 (?), Unknown author.
ERNK, “Türk Ordusu Güney (Irak) Kürdistan’ı işgal etti!” [Turkish army invaded Iraqi Kurdistan!], Unknown place, 1983?
ERNK, “Cejna Newroz Pirozbe” [Happy Newroz], Unknown place and date (Communiqué of Kawa).

Sources

Heval, 3 November 1975 (illegal publication of THKO).
Hewar, n°1, 19 August 1980.
Hewar, n°2, 26 August 1980.
Hevra Devrimci Türkiye Kürtleri Örgütü, “Maraş Katliamı Faşist Güçlerin Soykırım Politikasının Kanlı Bir Halkasıdır” [Massacre of Maraş is a bloody component of genocide politics by Fascist forces], Unknown date and place.
İdeoloji ve Politika Nedir? Nasıl Ortaya Çıkmıştır? [What are ideology and politics? How did they emerge?], Brochure of the PKK.
Jina Nû, n°1, October, 1979 [Van].
Jina Nû, n°5, April, 1980.
Kava, 1978 (İstanbul).
Kava, n°1, December, 1978
Kava, n°2, December, 1979.
Kava, n°5, February–March, 1981.
Kava, n°6, April, 1985.
Kava, n°7, September, 1985.
Kava, n°8, April, 1986.
Kawa, “Türk Orduusu Güney (Irak) Kürdistan’i işgal etti!” [Turkish army invaded Iraqi Kurdistan!], Unknown place, 1983?
Kawa, “Cejna Newroz Pirozbe” [Happy Newroz], Unknown place and date (Communiqué of Kawa).
Sources

KDP-KUK Bildirisi [Communiqué of KDP-KUK], Mardin, 1978.
[KUK], “Devrimci Demokrat Kamuoyuna” [To democratic revolutionary public], 1986 (Communiqué of the KUK).
KUK Bildirisi [Communiqué of the KUK], 21 March 1979, Unknown place.
Kürdistan Devrimcileri, Biji Serxwebûn [Long live independence], Unknown date and place (Communiqué of the PKK).
Kürdistan Ulusal Kurtuluşçuları 1. Konferansı siyasi raporu [Political report of the first conference of National Liberators of Kurdistan], Unknown date and place.
Nasnameya Şehîdan [Identity of Martyrs], Weşanên Niştîman, Kista [Sweden], Unknown date and author.
ÖZGÜRÜLK YOLO DERSİ [The numbers from 1975 to 1979 were consulted].
ÖZGÜRÜLK, n°1, June, 1979.
Pêşeng Bo Şoreş, n°1, June, 1977 (illegal publication of the Partî Karkerî Kurdistan).
Pêşeng Bo Şoreş, n°9, 1980.
Pêşeng Bo Şoreş, n°10, 1980.
Pêşeng Bo Şoreş, n°11, February, 1980.
Pêşeng Bo Şoreş, n°“, February, 1982.
Pêşeng, Karkeren Hemû Welatan Yekbun, n°13, December 1983.
Partiya Karkarên Kurdistan, Kûrdistan Devriminin Yolu [PKK, The way of revolution of Kurdistan, Manifesto], October 1978.
Partiya Karkarên Kurdistan, PKK (Kûrdistan Işçi Partisi) Kuruluş Bildirisi [Communiqué of the foundation of the PKK].
Pêşmerge, 1988 (The review belongs to ARGK/PKK).
[PKK] Serxwebûn, 1979 [Antep].
[PKK] Urfa Yöresinde Devrimci Mücadele Yükseliyor [Revolutionary struggle grows in Urfa region], 1978.
[PKK] Yurtsever işçiler, köylüler, gençler! [Patriotic workers, peasants and youth!], Unknown date and place.
[PKK] Devrimciler, Demokratlar, Yurtseverler! Kûrdistan’î Yiğit emekçiler, [Revolutionary, democratic and patriotic people! Courageous proletarians from Kurdistan] (Communiqué of the PKK), Unknown date and place.
Sources 243

Unknown author, date and place.

[PKK] Proloter ve Enternasyonalist Devrimci Haki Karer Anısına [To the memory of
Haki Karer who is proletarian, revolutionary and internationalist], May, 1978,
Unknown place.

[PKK] “Yiğit Kürdistan Halkına” [To brave people of Kurdistan], Unknown date and
place.

PKK Dersim Temsilciliği, “Yurtsever Dersim Halkı” [Patriotic people of Dersim],
Unknown date.

[PKK], Devrimci ve Yurtseverler! [The revolutionaries and the patriots] (brochure of the
PKK).

PKK’yi iyi tanıyalım [Let’s know well the PKK], Unknown date and place.

[PKK] Kürdistan’da Ulusalcı silahlı Mücadele ve Devrimci Tavr [National armed
struggle and revolutionary attitude in Kurdistan], Unknown date and place.

[PKK] Haki Karer ve Halil Çavgun’un anısı ölümsüzdür [Memory of Haki Karer and
Halil Çavgun is immortal], Serxwebûn, special issue 1.

[PKK] Maraş katliamı Üzerine bir değerlendirme [A comment on the massacre of Maraş],
Serxwebûn, special issue 2.

[PKK] Seviyorsan savaş [If you love, make war], Sweden, Medya yayınları, 1998.

[PKK, Serxwebûn], “Yaşasın 1 Mayıs” [Long live May Day], Unknown date and place.

[PKK], “PKK, Kürdistan Proleteryası ve Halkı adına tüm devrimcileri, demokratları ve
yurtseverleri sömürgeci faşist cunta karşı aktif mücadelede çağırıyoruz!” [In the name
of proletariat and people of Kurdistan, the PKK calls all the revolutionaries, the demo-
crats and the patriots to struggle against the fascist junta!], 18 September, 1980.
Unknown place.

[PKK/Dersim], “Orta-Kuzey Batı Kürdistan’ın PKK-Dersim Bölge Temsilciliği
Tarafindan Yayınlanan bu Bildirici ilerici, yurtsever, devrimci kamuoyuna sunuyoruz”
[We present to the revolutionary, patriotic and progressive public this communiqué,
published by the representative of Dersim-PKK in North-western Kurdistan], Unknown
date.

Rizgariya Kurdistan, July/August, 1980.
Rizgari, n°1, March, 1976.
Rizgari, n°2, April, 1976.
Rizgari, n°6, June, 1978.
Rizgari, n°8, December, 1979.
Roja Welat, n°1, 1977, [Ankara].
Savaş ve ordu klavuzu, Weşanen Serxwebûn, 1996, Unknown author.
Sesleniş, 10 March 1979 [Siirt].
Semir Çetin Güngör, PKK Eleştirisi [Critique of the PKK], 18 March 1984 (Document
written by Semir Çetin Güngör, but not published).
Serxwebûn, 1982–2011 (About 359 issues of this review were consulted including the
special issues that are listed below.)
Serxwebûn, special issue 1, May, 1982.
Sources

Serxwebûn, special issue 2, December, 1982.
Serxwebûn, special issue 3, July, 1983.
Serxwebûn, special issue 4, September, 1983.
Serxwebûn, special issue 5, May, 1984.
Serxwebûn, special issue 6, June, 1984.
Serxwebûn, special issue 8, August, 1985.
Serxwebûn, special issue 9, May, 1986.
Serxwebûn, special issue 10, August, 1986.
Serxwebûn, special issue 12, August, 1987.
Serxwebûn, special issue 14, August, 1989.
Serxwebûn, special issue 15, August, 1989.
Serxwebûn, special issue 20, November, 1992.
Serxwebûn, Fedai Şehitler Albümü [Album of sacrificial martyrs], special issue 26, 2001.
Serxwebûn, Şehit Milisler Albümü [Album of militia martyrs], special issue 29, 2005.
Serxwebûn, 2004 Şehitler Albümü [Album of martyrs of 2004], special issue 31, Unknown date.
Serxwebûn, 2005 Şehitler Albümü [Album of martyrs of 2005], special issue 32, Unknown date.
“Şaxên DDKDê” [Branches of the DDKD]. Unknown author, date and place.
Têkoşin [publication of Têkoşin], n°1, 1978 [Antep].
Têkoşin, n°4, September, 1979.
Têkoşin n°5, July, 1980.
Têkoşin, n°6, March, 1983.
Têkoşin, n°7, October, 1984.
Têkoşin, n°8, April, 1986.
Tirêj, n°1, 1979 [İzmir].
Tirêj, n°3, 1980.
Xebat (PDKT), n°1, March,1976.
Xebat, n°2, April, 1976.
Xebat Ji Bo Rizgariya Kurdistan (PDKT), n°1, 1978.
Xebat Ji Bo Rizgariya Kurdistan (PDKT), n°5, 1979.
Yekbûn [Diyarbakır, 1979] (The review belongs to the organization of Dengê Kawa).
Yeni İnkılâp, 16 November 1967 [İsparta].
Yeni İnkılâp, 21 November 1967 [İsparta].
Yeni İnkılâp, 22 November 1967 [İsparta].
The bibliography includes the references of the documents which were cited, as well as the consulted ones which enlighten the topic. To make the consultation of documents easier, the bibliography does not make a thematic classification.


Anonymous author, “Ho Şi Minh’in kısa hayat öyküsü” [Short biography of Ho Chi Minh], * Özgürlük Yolu*, n°1, 1975, pp. 43–46.


Anonymous author, “Birecik’te PKK güçlenmeye devam ediyor” [The PKK continues to grow stronger in Birecik], *Hewar*, n°2, 1980, p. 3.

Anonymous author, “Bucak Çortenek’te Hezimete Uğradı” [The Bucak were defeated in Çortenek], *Hewar*, n°1, 1980, pp. 1 and 3.


Anonymous author, “30 Temmuz coşkuyla anıldı” [30 July was enthusiastically celebrated], *Yurttan Haberler*, 5 August 1980, p. 12.
Anonymous author, “Ajanlar Başı Bekçî Hüseyno öldürüldü!” [Bekçî Hüseyno, spy, was killed], Hewar, n° 2, August 1980, pp. 1 and 3.
Anonymous author, “Sıtkı Paydaş öldürüldü” [Sıtkı Paydaş was killed], Hewar, n° 2, August 1980, p. 2.
Anonymous author, “Eylemin anlamı ve önemi” [Importance and meaning of action], Hewar, n° 2, August 1980, p. 3.
Anonymous author, “Hilvan’da oynanan oyunlar” [The games which are played in Hilvan], Hewar, n° 3, September 1980, pp. 1 and 3.
Anonymous author, Kürdistan’da kişilik sorunu, devrimci militanın özellikleri ve parti yaşamı [The question of personality, features of revolutionary militant and the life of party], Cologne, Weşanên Serxwebûn, 1993.
Anonymous author, Silahlı Mücadele Tarihimiz ve Komuta Sorunlarımız [History of our armed struggle and problems of command], No date, no place.
Ansart, Pierre, La gestion des passions politiques, Lausanne, Age d’homme, 1983.
Anter, Musa, Anılarım [My memoirs], Istanbul, Doz, 1990.
Aydogdu, Ergun, Mobilizing the Kurds in Turkey: Newroz as a Myth, MA Dissertation, Ankara, Middle East Technical University, 2005.
Aydın, Delal, Mobilizing the Kurds in Turkey: Newroz as a Myth, MA Dissertation, Ankara, Middle East Technical University, 2005.
Baechler, Jean, Qu’est ce que l’idéologie?, Paris, Gallimard, 1976.
Baksi, Mahmut, Türkiye’deki Kürt Sorunu [The Kurdish question in Turkey], Sweden, Brusk Yayınları, 1971.


Buldan, Pervin, *Simsucakta Elleri: Faili Meçhuller ve Kayıplar Albümü* [Their hands were very hot: Album of unknown murders and missings], Istanbul, Yakayder, 2003.

Burkay, Kemal, “Faşistler Alevis-Sünni çatışması yaratıyorlar” [The Fascists create the conflict beween Sunnis and Alevis], *Özgürlük Yolu*, n°1, 1975, pp. 34–42.


Coleman, James, Community Conflict, New York, Free Press, 1957.


Crettiez, Xavier, “‘High risk activism’: essai sur le processus de radicalisation violente (première partie)”, Pôle Sud, 1/2011, n°34, pp. 45–60.


Çayan, Mahir, Teorik Yazılar [Theoretical writings], Istanbul, Gökkuşağı Yayınları, 1996.

Çayan, Mahir, Kesintisiz Devrim [Revolution without interruption], Ankara (?), Kurtuluş Yayınları, 1974 [1971].


Dahrendorf, Ralf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1959 [1957].


252 Bibliography


Doğan, Mazlum, Toplu yazılar [Complete writings], Cologne, Weşanên Serxwebûn, 1982.


Dorronsoro, Gilles, La mouvance Hizbullah, IEP Rennes/CNRS, June 2003.


Epözdemir, Şakir, “Yakın Tarihimizde Doktor Şıvan ve Said Elçi Olayı” [The event of Doctor Şıvan and Said Elçi in the recent history], Unknown date and place.


Fırat, Mehmet Şerif, *Doğu İlleri ve Varto Tarihi* [History of Varto and Eastern provinces], Istanbul, Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü, 1983.


Bibliography

Gamson, William, Fireman, Bruce and Rytina, Steven, Encounters with Unjust Authority, Chicago, IL, Dorsey Press, 1982.


Bibliography


Gündoğan, Cemil, “From Traditionalism to Modernism: The Transformation of the Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey In the Case of Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan”, BA Dissertation, Stockholm University, Department of Social Anthropology, 2002.


Hobsbawm, Eric J., “Qu’est ce qu’un conflit ethnique?”, Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales, n°100, 1993, pp. 51–57.


258 Bibliography

Kutlay, Naci M., “Devrimci Doğu Kültür Oacakları ve Öncesi” [The DDKO and before], *Bîr* [special issue on DDKO-I], n°5, 2006.


Bibliography

McAdam, Doug, McCarthy, John D. and Zald, Mayer N., Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.


Matur, Bejan, *Dağın ardına bakmak* [Looking behind the mountain], Istanbul, Timas Yayinlari, 2011.


Bibliography


[Öcalan, Abdullah], *Kürdistan’da zorun rolü* [The role of force in Kurdistan], Cologne, Weşanên Serxwebûn, 1993 [1983].


Öcalan, Abdullah (reportage with Ertuğrul Kürkçü and Ragıp Duran), *Diriliş tamamlandı: Sıra kurtuluşta* [Resurrection took place: It is now time for liberation], Istanbul, Güneş Ülkesi Yayıncılık, 1995.
Öcalan, Abdullah, *Devrimin dili ve eylemi* [The language and action of the revolution], Cologne, Weşanên Serxwebûn, 1996.


Özdag, Ümit, *Türkiye Kuzey Irak ve PKK* [Turkey, Northern Iraq and the PKK], Ankara, ASAM, 1999.


Shapiro, Ian, and Bedi, Sonu (eds), Political contingency: studying the unexpected, the accidental, and the unforeseen, New York, New York University Press, 2007.


Silopi, Zinnar, Doza Kürdîstan [The cause of Kurdistan], Beirut, Stewr, 1969.


Şafak, Mahsum, *PKK değişim stratejisi* [The strategy of change in the PKK], Istanbul, Mem Yayınları, 1992.


Tanboğa, Mehmet, and Yetkin, Fevzi, *Dörtlerin gecesi* [The night of the four], Istanbul, Yurt Yayınları, 1993.


Bibliography


Xorto, O bir dağ çiçeğiidi [He was a flower of the mountain], Spanga, Stockholm, Apec-Tryck, 1990.

**Turkish-Kurdish reviews, newspapers and websites**

Ajansa Nûçeyan a Fıratê
Aksiyon
Akşam
Aktüel
Aydınlık
Azadiya Welat (1996)
Batman Çağdaş
Batman Doğuş
Batman Gazetesi
Batman Postası
Bingöl Gazetesi
Bingöl’ün Sesi
CNN Türk
Cumhuriyet
Devrimci Yurtsever Gençlik (PKK)
Genç Bakiş (PKK)
Halk Gerçekliği (1990)
İkibine Doğru
Nasname
Newroz Ateşi (1992, PKK)
Özgür Bakiş (1998)
Özgür Gündem (1992)
Özgür Ülke (1995)
Özgür Halk (1990, PKK)
Özgür Kadının Sesi (PKK)
Medya Güneşi (1988)
Nokta Dergisi
NTV
Radikal
Revşen (1992, PKK)
Rizgarî
Rojname (1991)
Sabah
Serbesti
Siverek Hedef Gazetesi
Siverek Kültür
Tempo
Tercüman
Türk Solu
Ülkede Gündem (1998)
Yeni Halk Gerçekliği (1990)
Yeni Politika (1995)
Yeni Ülke
Welat (1992)
Zaman
Index

Page numbers in **bold** denote figures.

*Adalalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP)* see *Justice and Development Party*
*Adalet Partisi* see *Justice Party*

aggrieved community 3

*ağhas* (tribal chiefs) 44, 80, 82, 90

Aksoy, İhsan 54

al-Qaeda 196

*Ala Rızgari (Flag of Liberation)* 55, 70, 72–3, 76

Alevi Kurds 81, 85, 86, 102, 103, 114

Algiers agreement between Iraq and Iran 53

Alkan, Zekiye 134, 182–3, 195, 198, 211

Altsoy, Isa 118

*Ankara Yüksek Öğrenim Derneği (AYÖD)* see *Association of Higher Education of Ankara*

Anst, Pierre 107

Antep, case of 104

Anter, Musa 47, 59, 185

Anti Colonialist Culture Association 55

*Anti Sömürgeci Kültür Dernekleri* see *Anti Colonialist Culture Associations*

anti-colonialism 58–9, 67, 101, 107

anti-Kurdish declarations 46

*A pocu talebe* 148

*A pocus* (followers of Abdullah Öcalan) 57–8, 74, 81, 84–5, 87, 110

Aras, Faruk 54

armed groups: organization of 124; relation with social base 128–9

Army of Liberation of Peasant Workers of Turkey 62

Army of Popular Liberation of Kurdistan 119

Artan, Aynur 209

*Artêşa Rızgariya Gelê Kurdistan see Army of Popular Liberation of Kurdistan ‘asabiyya* 32, 169, 224; and participation in political violence 158–61

assassinations: of Cihad Elçi, 105; of Hikmet Tekin 105; mayor of Bingöl 105; of Said Elçi 64; of Said Kırmızıtoprak 64; of Vedat Aydın 184

Association of Higher Education of Ankara 57, 110

Association of Socialist Culture 52

authoritarianism, notion of 115

Aydın, Ali 208

Aydın, Vedat 184

Bagilli, Kemal 59

Baechler, Jean 107

*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi (BDP)* see *Party of Peace and Democracy*

Barzani, Molla Mustafa 42, 47, 69, 119; clashes with Talabani forces 55; rebellion in Iraq (1961–1975) 49, 53

Basque Homeland and Freedom, Spain 10, 32

Batman, insurgency in 83–4

Bawer, story of 150–1, 170

Bayram, Bülent 208, 211

Becker, Howard 16, 18, 23, 26, 143

Bedi, Sonu 170

*Beş Parçacilar see Partisans of Liberation of Five Parties*

Biggs, Michael 199, 213

Bilgin, İbrahim 145, 147–8, 151

Bingöl, violence in 80–1, 105–6

Bouazizi, Mohammad 196

Bourdieu, Pierre 30, 33, 43, 50, 52, 58, 109, 117, 225
bourgeois nationalism 69
Bozarslan, Hamit 28, 52, 124, 196, 215
Bozarslan, Mehdedin 59
Braud, Philippe 33, 70, 76, 225
Brusk, story of 155
Bucak, Faik 64, 66, 68
Bucak, Mehmet Celal 111
Burkay, Kemal 48, 50, 54
BüyükKayası, Neçmettin 51, 197
Cahide, story of 149–50, 171
Çavgun, Halil 110–11, 117, 126
Cengiz, Seyfi 74
class struggles, notion of 8
“collaborators” (işbirlikçi) 157
Collins, R. 9
colonialism, concept of 60
community conflict, in Belgium 9
conflict, theory of 6–10
conflict of generation, meaning of 63–70
contamination, concept of 204–5
contempt, principle of 203
Coser, Lewis 7–9
Crenshaw, Martha 107, 144
cruelty, idea of 204
cultural capital 83, 127
Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP, Republican People’s Party) 44–7, 53, 83, 88, 90n7
Cyprus crisis (1974) 53
death-fasting see fasting to death
Dehrendorf, Ralf 7
Demiré, Rahşan 46, 198, 211
Demiré, Suleyman 53
Democratic Association of Higher Education of Ankara (ADYÖD) 110
Democratic Party of Iraqi Kurdistan (PDKI) 47, 64–5, 69, 73
Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan 13, 45, 48, 105; emergence of 80
Dengê Kawa 55, 60, 70–1, 73
dersim massacres 42, 65
Devrimci Demokratik Kültür Derneği (DDKD) see Revolutionary Democratic Culture Association (DDKD)
Devrimci Halk Kültür Derneği see Revolutionary, Popular and Cultural Association
Dev-Yol (Revolutionary Way) 57, 61, 69
Dicle Talebe Yurdu 47, 68
Dinler, Mehmet Ali 46, 67–9
divide et impera, politics of 227
Diyarbakir prison 201; betrayal and
confession, phenomena of 205; casualty toll of 198; factors of death-fasting in
203; life of the detainees in 206; method of isolation of Kurdish detainees in 202;
militants of 112–13, 196; undressing, practice of 204
Dobry, Michel 190, 195
Doğan, Mazlum 112–13, 119, 121, 122, 126, 197
Dönmez, Şahin 118, 205, 210
Doronisoro, Gilles 28, 158
Durkheim, Emile 7–8, 11, 29, 78, 199
Durmuş, M. Hayri 112–13, 119, 126, 147, 197, 215
Eastern Anatolia (map) 42, 80
Edelman, Murray 104
Elçi, Said 64–7, 80
electricity, issue of 130
Elias, Norbert 108–9, 133, 226–7
Eniya Rizgari Netawa Kurdistan (ERNK) see Front of National Liberation of Kurdistan
Erek, Ali 197
Eren, Asum 47
Erim, Nihat 53
esprit de corps 32, 142, 158–60, 171
ethnic conflict 9
ethnic identity 25, 33, 129, 156, 162
ethnic mobilization, use of political violence for 99–108; Antep, case of 104; Bingöl, case of 105–6; empirical observations on the role of 102–6; Maraş, case of 102–4; PKK and politics of violence 99–102; subjective dimension of 106–8
Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) see Basque Homeland and Freedom, Spain
events of Qimil 46–7
Fanon, Frantz 10, 101
Farsi Empire 145
fasting to death 34, 197, 199, 206; politics of 212; in prison of Diyarbakır 203; programme and objective of 214–15; versus suicide attacks 200
Favre, Pierre 209
Index

Hizbullah 1, 10, 15, 118, 157–8, 171, 183; clashes with PKK 183
human values 203
hunger strike 146, 197, 199, 213
Hüseyin, Şahin 211–12
IBDA-C (Great Eastern Islamic Raiders’ Front) 1
Ibn Khalidun 158
Ilteri Yurt (journal) 47
imagined community 107
Imam Hatip (religious school) 82
inmams 73
immigration, phenomenon of 156
Institute of Education of Urfa 111, 126
insurgencies (serhildan) see serhildans
(insurgencies)
internal violence, intra-Kurdish: analyses at micro and regional levels 77–8;
Batman, case of 83–4; Bingöl, case of 80–1; conflict of generations 63–70; due
to political fragmentation 62–78; due to segmentation 78–90; dynamics of 75–7;
and emergence of Kurdish society 88–90; KUK, case of 66–70; Maraş-
Pazarcık, case of 81–2; for monopoly of physical violence 75; PDKT and PDK-
T, case of 64–6; pre-existing conflicts in the Kurdish community 84–6;
qualitative case studies 79–84; radical movements and local politics in the
Kurdish space 86–8; Siverek, case of 82–3
intra-communitarian violence 88
intra-ethnic conflicts 29, 43, 60, 118, 157, 227
intra-Kurdish violence, analysis of 4
Iranian revolution 1
Iraqi Kurdish political field 43
Iraqi Kurdistan 45, 47, 55–6, 62, 64–6, 69,
114, 147–8, 183, 196
Irish Republican Army 10
Islamic caliph, abolishment of 15
Islamist movement 1, 12, 82, 157
isolation, principle of 202
Justice and Development Party 15
Justice Party 45, 48, 111
Kalyvás, Stathis 31, 84, 88, 153
Kándal, Salih 110–11, 117, 120–1
Kaplan, Aladdin 58, 74
Karasungur, Mehmet 145, 147, 149, 151
Karatas, Gülnaz 113–15, 117–18, 122, 211
Karataş, Gülnaz 117
Gambetta, Diego 75
Girard, René 89, 102
Goffman, Erving 24, 154, 201, 204
Gouldner, A. 9
Griaule, Marcel 20–1
“group of the East” 49, 52
guerilla movement 124–5; mobilization of 128; relations of the Zero family with 129
guerilla warfare, militants of 113–14, 116
Güll, Aydn 110
Gümüş, Edip 118
Gunde Xelîlê 159–60
Gurr, Ted 133
HADEP 123, 154, 158, 192, 218n40
Hakkâri events 55
Halabja, massacre of 183
Halit Oral, Mehmet 206, 208
Halkin Demokrasi Partisi (HADEP) see Party of Democracy of People; HADEP
Halkin Kurtuluşu see Liberation of People
Halkin Yolu 146
Hamas 10, 12
Hêzên Paraştina Gel see Forces of Defence of People
Hêzên Rîzgariya Kurdistan (HRK) see Forces of Liberation of Kurdistan
Hirsch, Eric L. 153
Fear and admiration, feelings of 130–2
Federations of Turkey’s Revolutionary Youth 52
Federations of Turkish Students 52
feqîs (religious juriconsultants) 73
feudalism, concept of 51, 60, 68
Fikir Kulüpleri Federasyonu (FKF) see Federation of Turkey’s Revolutionary Youth
Fırat Talebe Yurdu 47
Fisli, Mustafa 56, 67–9
fluidity, mechanism of 195
Forces of Defence of People 119
Forces of Liberation of Kurdistan 114, 119
“Forty-Niners” movement 46–8, 64; sociological analysis of 47–8
Foucault, Michel 201–2, 204
fragmentation and segmentation, concept of 27–9
French Revolution 11
Front of National Liberation of Kurdistan 119
Gambetta, Diego 75
gender 168, 227
Girard, René 89, 102
Goffman, Erving 24, 154, 201, 204
Gouldner, A. 9
Griaule, Marcel 20–1
“group of the East” 49, 52
guerilla movement 124–5; mobilization of 128; relations of the Zero family with 129
guerilla warfare, militants of 113–14, 116
Güll, Aydn 110
Gümüş, Edip 118
Gunde Xelîlê 159–60
Gurr, Ted 133
HADEP 123, 154, 158, 192, 218n40
Hakkâri events 55
Halabja, massacre of 183
Halit Oral, Mehmet 206, 208
Halkin Demokrasi Partisi (HADEP) see Party of Democracy of People; HADEP
Halkin Kurtuluşu see Liberation of People
Halkin Yolu 146
Hamas 10, 12
Hêzên Paraştina Gel see Forces of Defence of People
Hêzên Rîzgariya Kurdistan (HRK) see Forces of Liberation of Kurdistan
Hirsch, Eric L. 153
Karak, Haki 57–8, 74, 110–11, 113, 115–16, 118, 120, 126
kasaba (village) 45, 183
kasabalar 188
Kâsim, Abdüllkerim, General 47
Kawa (Kurdistao group) 53, 55, 62, 70–1, 78, 83, 112
Kınc, Zeynep 114, 121, 198
Kirkou, events of 46
Kirwar tribe 82, 84
Klandermans, Bert 30
Koşar, Ali Rıza 57, 74
Korkmaz, Mahsum 113–14, 122
korucu (village guards) 128, 161, 168, 186
KUK see National Liberators of Kurdistan (KUK)
Kurdish community: as imagined community 107; pre-existing conflicts in 84–6
Kurdish guerilla movement 153, 155, 159–60, 213, 226; conflict in the Middle East 196; strategy of insurrection 188
Kurdish Hizbullah see Hizbullah
Kurdish identity 145, 163, 183
Kurdish Institute of Paris 183
Kurdish insurgencies see serhildans (insurgencies)
Kurdish Islamist movement 157
Kurdish language 46, 59, 64, 164–7, 183
Kurdish Mahabad Republic 42
Kurdish nationalism 49, 53, 59, 66–7, 69, 80, 82, 89
Kurdish nationalist movements 1–2, 17–18, 30; armed struggle 31; autonomization of 51–2, 54; Barzani, Molla Mustafa 42, 47; emergence of 43; influenced by Marxism-Leninism 81; mobilization of 170; notion of 4; radicalization of 115; repertoires of political violence in see repertoires of political violence; sheikh and tribal rebellions 4; as a social movement 4; Turkish radical left and 61–2
Kurdish nationalist organizations: in 1970s in Turkey (map) 77; charisma of the leader of 206–10; conflict of generation 63–70; cultural resources of 120; DDKO 59; ideological divisions and interpersonal tensions 70–2; mobilization of 74, 125; monographic studies on 21; PKK 19, 30; political competition 75–7; political fragmentation among 62–78; radicalization of 115; segmentation of 78–9; struggle for monopoly 73–7; symbolic domination, struggle for 75–7; violence in 62–90
Kurdish newspapers and magazines 60–1
Kurdish peshmergas 18, 114; of Barzani 118
Kurdish political field (1960–1980): “Eastism”, emergence of 44–52; emergence and autonomization of 42–62; making of a symbolic space 58–61; radical Kurdish groups, emergence of 52–8; Turkish radical left and the Kurdist movements 61–2
Kurdish society, emergence of 88–90
Kurdish space: chronology of 232–6; construction of see Kurdish symbolic space, construction of; radical movements and local politics in 86–8; in Turkey 42
Kurdish symbolic space, construction of: Kurdish newspapers and magazines 60–1; Marxist-Leninist nationalism, anti-colonialism and anti-feudalism 59–60; symbolic struggle for recognition 58–9
Kurdistan, idea of 60, 68
Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) 54, 56–7, 157; Alkan, Zekiye 182–3; Antep, case of 104; Bawer, story of 150–1; Bilgin, Ibrahim 148; Bingöl, case of 105–6; Cahide, story of 149–50; cases of political violence 73–4; Çavgun, Halil 111; clashes with Kurdish Hizbullah 183; conflict with Turkish security forces 113–14, 116, 122, 184–5, 190; Diyarbakır prison, militants of (1980–1984) 112–13; Doğan, Mazlum 112; Durmu, M. Hayri 112–13; first “martyred” militants of 110–11; formation of 110, 112; guerilla warfare, militants of 113–14; Gül, Aydn 110; Hêzên Rizgariya Kurdistan (Forces of Liberation of Kurdistan) 119; intra-organizational conflict 118; Kandal, Salih 111; Karasunur, Mehmet 147; Karataş, Gülnaz 114; Karer, Haki 110–11; Kınaci, Zeynep 114; Korkmaz, Mahsum 113–14; Maraş, case of 102–4; Mihriban, story of 149; militant habitus 108, 119; militant history and “martyrs” of 109–14; militants and their places of origin (map) 152; military institutions and organizations 119; military training camps in Syria and Iraq 119;
Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) continued
mobility for violence 143; as
National Liberators 127; Pir, Kemal
110, 113; politics of violence 99–102;
rebellion of 159; review of Serxwebûn
146; Revolutionaries of Kurdistan 127;
Roza, story of 146; self-sacrificial
violence by 196, 197–8; Şevîn, story of
150; Şixo, story of 145–6; suicide attack
114; Tak, Cuma 111; Union of Armed
Propaganda of 111
Kurmanç community 128–9
Kurtuluş movement 74

Leninism 71, 87, 107
Liberation of People 57, 70, 87, 110, 146
linguistic habitus 123

Maoism 71, 107
Marş massacre (1978) 102–4, 112, 171
Marş-Pazarçık, case of 81–2
martial law 53, 112
Marx, Karl 7
Marxism 12, 59, 81, 87, 107
Marxist Leninist movement 28
Massicard, Elise 92n43
medreses 80
list of the places and meetings 48;
organization of 48; and political
confrontations between socialist Turks
and Kurds 49; principal participants of
48
meles 73
Merkit, Yıldırım 205, 210
Middle East 1, 25, 44–5, 56, 64–5, 69, 85,
112, 159, 196
Mihriban, story of 149, 170
Milan, story of 158
militant biographies 117, 134, 157
militant capital: diffusion of 120–2;
homogenization of 120
militant habitus, in Kurdish movement:
armed conflicts, impact of 117;
characteristics of 120–4; concept of 108;
and diffusion of militant capital 120–2;
factors of the formation of 115–20; first
“martyred” militants 110–11; fluid
habitus 123–4; formation of 98, 115–20;
of Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK)
108; legitimization of violent action
122–3; militant history and “martyrs” of
the PKK 109–14; militant institutions
and elaboration of 118–20; militants of
militants of guerilla warfare 113–14;
mobilization for violence and 98–9,
108–24; by phenomenon of proximity
132–4; repression, conflicts and
confrontations 115–17; and schismatic
structure 117–18; and self-sacrificial
violence 211; socializations and
transmission of 132–4
militant identity 120
militant “martyrs” 109–14, 118, 120, 122,
191; history of 122
militants and their places of origin (map)
152
militarization of civilian society 118
military institutions and organizations
118–20
military tribunals 197
Millî Demokratik Devrim see National
Democratic Revolution
Millî Türk Talebe Birliği see Union of
Turkish National Students
Millîyetçî Hareket Partisi (MHP) see
Nationalist Movement Party (MHP)
mobilization, for political violence 30–1;
for armed struggle 98–9; guerilla force’s
99; militant habitus 98–9, 108–24;
organizational dynamics of 98–9; of
PKK 98; use of political violence as a
force of 99–108
muşṭak language 59

nakṣibendi sheikhs 42, 80
Nasserist insurgency, in Iraq 47
National Democratic Revolution 52
National Liberators of Kurdistan (KUK) 13,
15, 18, 20, 23, 28, 53, 55, 56, 81, 112,
127; cases of political violence 73–4;
domination of 74; emergence of 90
nationalism: of oppressed peoples 60; of
oppressor peoples 60
Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) 15;
Turkish ideology of 104
newroz, celebration of 183–5, 190–1, 195
Newroz, Mazlum 155–6
Oberschall, Anthony 4, 7–8, 27–8, 73
Öcalan, Abdullah 19, 75, 110–11, 117–19,
126, 186–7, 196–8, 206–8, 210, 215
Oegema, Dirk 30
Ökmen, Idris 148
oppressor peoples, nationalism of 60
organizational dynamics, of violence 99;
armed groups and social base 128–9;
army armed struggle, social base and proximity 124–5; emotional dimension of proximity 130–2; proximity, forms of 129–30; socializations and transmission of militant habits 132–4; talebe, phenomenon of 125–7; youth and Kurdish society 125–7
Ottoman Empire 42, 103, 145
Özal, Turgut 183
Özalp, Cemil 207
Özgür Halk (Free People) 183
Özkan, Kamer 74

participation in violence, concept of 31–3
Partisans of Liberation of Five Parties 57
Parti Demokrata Kurdistan Tîrkiyê (PDKT) see Democratic Party of Turkish Kurdistan
Partiya Karkarên Kurdistan (PKK) see Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK)
Partiya Sosyalista Kurdistan (PSK) see Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan
Party of Democracy of People 123–4
Party of Peace and Democracy 124, 192
path dependence 170, 172n1
People’s Labour Party (HEP) 183
physical contamination 204
Pir, Kemal 57, 110, 112–13, 119, 121, 126, 197
pity, feelings of 130–2
polarization of society: effects of repression on 155; “friends–enemies” 153; and intra-Kurdish violence 153; between Kurdish actors and the state 153–7; linked with intra-Kurdish violence 157–8; process of 153; theory of 153–8
political capital 48, 61, 127
political competition 75–7
political fragmentation, among Kurdish organizations 62–78
political identity 152, 203
political murders (siyasi cinayetler) 6, 73, 105–8, 181
political opportunities, structure of 3
political pluriversum 27
political prisoners 119, 201, 205
political process, models of 3
political socialization 132–3, 148; case analysis 145–51; in networks and Kurdî milieus 143–52; social networks and political movements 144–5
political violence 226; ‘asabiyya and participation in 158–61; cases of 73–4; categories of 2–13; change in scale of 191–4; concepts of 26; contingency and 169–72; diffusion from one region to another 193–4; diffusion from one sector to another 193; fragmentation and segmentation of 27–9; logic of production of 188–9; mobilization for see mobilization, for political violence; participation in 31–3; as principal strategy of political struggle 106; privatization of 28, 75–7; provocation and agitation 188; repertoires of see repertoires of political violence; struggle for monopoly over 73–7; subjective dimension of 106–8; symbolic dynamics of the move to 161–9
polysegmentary society, significance of 29, 78
proximity: of armed conflicts 191; phenomenon of 171
Qimil event see events of Qimil qowm 158–9
radical Kurdish groups, emergence of 52–4; Kawa 55; National Liberators of Kurdistan 56; Partiya Karkarên Kurdistan 56–7; Revolutionary Democratic Culture Association 55–6;
Rîzgarî 54–5; Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan 54; Stêrka Sor 57–8; Têkoşîn 57
radical leftist movement 1, 14
Radical Turkish 1, 61–3, 102
radicalization, process of 153–5
Raman tribe 83–5
rape 33, 82, 168, 204, 214
Red Brigade, Italy 10
Red Kawa 71
Red Star 54, 57–8, 70, 73, 75, 104, 110, 115; cases of political violence 73–4
Refah Partisi see Welfare Party
repertoires of political violence 181; hypothesis of 33–5; self-sacrificial violence 196–216; serhîldan 181, 182–95
resource mobilization, theory of 3
Revolutionaries of Kurdistan 57, 127, 145
Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) 10
Revolutionary Democratic Culture Association (DDKD) 18, 53, 55–6, 66, 72–3, 76–8, 82–3, 90, 112, 125
Revolutionary, Popular and Cultural Association 54
right to free defense see serbest savunma
Riya Azadi 13, 21, 54, 70, 73, 76–7, 81, 87–9, 112
Rıza, Seyyid 119
Rızgari (Liberation) 13, 53, 54–5, 61, 70, 72, 76–8, 82, 112
Rızgari magazine 54, 61
Roza, story of 146–7
Sabriye, story of 156–7
Şahin, Tacettin 209–11
Said, Sheikh 119
Salami, Ghassan 159
Saving Private Ryan (Hollywood film) 19
Schmitt, Carl 27, 31, 89, 153
Şerefhanoğlu, Ziya 67
segmentation, phenomenon of 78–90, 84
self-determination of nations, Leninist principle of 59–60
self-immolation 34, 196–8, 199–200, 206, 215, 225; politics of 212; “thieves of fire” 213; versus suicide attacks 200
self-sacrifice, hypothesis of 202, 204
self-sacrificial militias 123
self-sacrificial violence 34, 117, 123, 181, 196–216, 224; charisma of leader of the Kurdish organization and 206–10; contamination, concept of 204–5; and degradation of the image of the self 202–4; effects of militant habitus on 211; emergence of 197, 200–16; Goffman’s approach to 201; isolation 202; in Kurdish movement in Europe 198; mortification of the self and 201–5; by PKK militants 196, 197–8; politics of 212–15; practices of 198; principles about the emergence of 200–16; prison institution as a frame of 201–10; privation and the universe of rarity 205–6; types of 198–200
Sémelin, Jacques 153
serbest savunma 197
serhildans (insurgencies) 34, 134, 181, 182–6, 224; cycles of 187, 189; during 1998–1999 187; dynamic of emulation 194; dynamic of wave 194; elements of 187; as extension of the battle field 186–7; impact of coercion on 187–8; institutionalization of 189–95; meaning of 186–9; as product of politics of violence of the rebels 188–9; rituals and traditional practices 189–91; zone of (map) 182
Seurat, Michel 159
Sevimli, Mirza 209
Şevin, story of 150, 171
sexual contamination 204
sexual harassment 204
Shapiro, Ian 170
Sheikh Said rebellion (1925) 15, 42, 80
Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso) 126
Simčant, Johanna 212, 214
Simmel, Georg 7–8, 20, 31, 99, 225
Siverek, violence in 82–3
Six Day War 1
Şixo, story of 145–6, 170
smuggling, cross-border (kaçakçılık) 42
social antagonism 7
social banditry (eskiyäcätilk) 42
social capital 50, 83, 127
Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP) 183
social habitus, concept of 109
social inequalities 53
social integration 7
social movement, idea of 2–6
social networks 32, 124, 143, 145–6, 152;
and political movements in social sciences 144–5
Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan 53, 54
Socialist Revolution 52, 86
Sorel, Georges 9, 107, 108
Sosyalist Devrim see Socialist Revolution
Sosyalist Kültürl Derneği see Association of Socialist Culture
Stërka Sor see Red Star
Student Committee of the Academy of Economic and Commercial Sciences of Ankara 51
suicide attacks 34, 107, 114, 118, 198, 200, 201, 205–6, 225; by al-Qaeda 196; by Palestinian organizations 196; politics of 215–16; by Taliban 196; versus self-immolation and death-fasting 200
summary executions 157
Sunni Kurds 65, 81, 85–7, 102, 104
Swedenburg, Ted 84
Tak, Cuma 110–11, 117, 120–1
talebes (Kurdish students) 73, 125–7
Taliban 12, 196
Tamil Tigers 10
Tarde, Gabriel 132
Tarrow, Sidney 4, 125, 189, 191, 194
Tekin, Hikmet 15, 81, 87, 105
Têkoşin (Struggle) 54, 57, 104, 112; cases of political violence 73–4
Temelli, Cebrail 161
“Theory of Third Worlds, The” 55
“thieves of fire” group 213
Tilly, Charles 3–4, 8, 33–4, 84, 125, 157, 189, 191, 194, 206, 211
Touraine, Alain 4, 204
“traitors” (hain) 60, 89, 118, 157
tribal segmentation 79
Türk and Ternelli tribes, case of 160–1
Türk Talebe Federasyonu see Federation of Turkish Students
Turkey, chronology of 229–32
Turkish leftist movement 57, 60
Turkish National Assembly 64, 183
Turkish nationalism 45, 80, 82, 87, 89, 91n19, 164
Turkish Workers’ Party 45, 48
Türkiye İşçi Köylü Kurtuluş Ordusu see Army of Liberation of Peasant Workers of Turkey
Türkiye İşçi Partisi see Turkish Workers’ Party
Union of Armed Propaganda of the PKK 111
Union of Turkish National Students 52
unknown murders, phenomenon of 184
uprisings: characteristics of 195; collective 196; diversification and autonomization of 192–3; institutionalization of 195; see also self-sacrificial violence; serhildans (insurgencies)
van Bruinessen, Martin 28–9, 78, 159
Velioglu, Huseyin 83, 118
village guards (korucu) 85, 118, 161, 168, 186
violence and terror: concept of 10–13; intra-ethnic conflicts 118, 227; polarization, issue of 153–8; political see political violence; self-sacrificial 34, 117, 123, 181, 196–216, 224; social mechanisms of the move to 143–58
Watts, Nicole F. 48, 124
Weber, Max 147, 214
Welat, story of 147, 214
Welfare Party 15
Whyte, William 20, 26
Wieviorka, Michel 9, 19, 30, 84, 107, 126, 133, 151, 158, 204, 225–6
Wood, Elisabeth 161, 169–70, 172n1
Yeni Ülke (New Country) 183, 184
Zana, Leyla 183
Zana, Mehdi 50
Zindê, village of 128–30, 132