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Structural Change and the Trajectory of the Kurdish Ethno-nationalism in Turkey: 1999-2015

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Structural Change and the Trajectory of the Kurdish Ethno-nationalism in Turkey: 1999-2015

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Sciences

School of Government & International Affairs

Durham University

2019

Abstract

By adopting a modernist understanding of nationalism, this study explores the impact of Turkey's democratisation and decentralisation process on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey from 1999 to 2015. Through analysing the changes in the input and output sides of the Turkish political opportunity structure (POS), this study reveals the different effects these two sides of the POS had on the course of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Moreover, by locating this two-sided POS conceptualisation in a macro-centred Social Movement Theory (SMT) framework, this study analyses the details of the interaction between the macro-level structural changes and organisational and cultural factors and reports the impact of this interaction on the trajectory of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey during the specified time period.

The central argument of this thesis is that the level and nature of the policy outputs of Turkey's democratisation and decentralisation process fell short of meeting the demands of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Because these reforms resulted in an initial satisfaction among Turkey's Kurds and led to diminishing interest in Kurdish ethno-nationalism, the PKK and legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist political parties perceived this democratisation process as a threat to its own survival. However, this process also provided new opportunities for Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation on the input side of the POS. Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors also identified this opportunity structure and took advantage of it to further ethno-nationalist mobilisation. After an initial satisfaction with the democratisation process, the openness in the input side of the POS began to outweigh the level of the policy outputs in the latter half of the 2000s. The expansion of the Turkish POS and its use by the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors thus paved the way for the spread of ethno-nationalism among the Kurdish-origin population in Turkey.

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LIST OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

Key terms

MM	Metropolitan Municipality
POS	Political Opportunity Structure
PSA	Province Special Administration
SMT	Social Movement Theory
TATL	Turkish Anti-Terror Law
RC	Rational Choice Theory
RM	Resource Mobilisation

Acronyms

AK Party	*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*	Justice and Development Party
ANAP	*Anavatan Partisi*	Motherland Party
AP	*Adalet Partisi*	Justice Party
BDP	*Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi*	Peace and Democracy Party
CHP	*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*	Republican People's Party
DBP	*Demokratik Bölgeler Partisi*	Democratic Regions Party
DDKO	*Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları*	Revolutionary Cultural Hearths of the East
DISK	*Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları*	Revolutionary Workers' Union
DP	*Demokrat Parti*	Democrat Party
DSP	*Demokratik Sol Parti*	Democratic Left Party
DTP	*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*	Democratic Society Party
DYP	*Doğru Yol Partisi*	True Path Party
FP	*Fazilet Partisi*	Virtue Party
GNAT		Grand National Assembly of Turkey
HADEP	*Halkın Demokrasi Partisi*	People's Democracy Party
HAK-PAR	*Hak ve Özgürlükler Partisi*	Rights and Freedoms Party

HDP	*Halkların Demokratik Partisi*	Peoples' Democratic Party
HEP	*Halkın Emek Partisi*	People's Labour Party
HPG	*Hezen Parastin Gel*	People's Defence Forces
HUDA-PAR	*Hür Dava Partisi*	Free Struggle Party/Free Cause Party
IHD	*İnsan Hakları Derneği*	Turkey Human Rights Association
KCK	*Koma Civaken Kurdistan*	Kurdistan Communities Union
KDP		Kurdistan Democrat Party
Kongra-Gel		People's Assembly of Kurdistan
KSPT		Kurdistan Socialist Party of Turkey
MHP	*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*	Nationalist Movement Party
MNP	*Milli Nizam Partisi*	National Order Party
MSP	*Milli Selamet Partisi*	National Salvation Party
NUFP	*Milli Birlik ve Kardeşliik Projesi*	National Unity and Fraternity Project
PKK	*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan*	Kurdistan Workers' Party
PYD	*Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat*	Democratic Union Party
SHP	*Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti*	Social Democrat Populist Party
TAK	*Teyrêbazên Azadiya Kurdistan*	Kurdistan Freedom Hawks
THKP-C	*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi*	People`s Liberation Party Front of Turkey
TIP	*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*	Workers Party of Turkey
YDG-H	*Yurtsever Devrimci Gençlik- Hareketi*	Patriotic Revolutionary Youth-Movement
YPG	*Yekîneyên Parastina Gel*	People's Defence Forces
YSK	*Yüksek Seçim Kurulu*	Supreme Electoral Council

Declaration

No material for this thesis has been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other university.

The work is solely that of the author, Savaş Ünlü.

Statement of Copyright

Acknowledgement

This thesis is the culmination of a long and exhausting five-and-a-half years of effort, which had different but always challenging phases. I spent the last two years away from Durham and a university setting as I had to resume my professional duties, and a serious health problem had already kept me from regular study for six months when I was at Durham in winter 2015/2016. Moreover, after returning to Turkey I was appointed to new positions three times, each instance requiring a time-consuming relocation to a new city and prohibiting me from properly focusing on the thesis. Under such circumstances, this project could not have been completed without the exceptional support and encouragement of many people.

First and foremost, I would like to extend my utmost gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Clive Jones. I could not have completed this thesis without his extraordinary support, as well as his excellent supervision and guidance. I am deeply appreciative of everything Clive has done for me over these past five years.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my friends at the Durham University School of Government and International Affairs: Raphaela, Mustafa Onur, Ahmet Abdullah, Al-khattab and Monther, as well as others that I cannot name here. Thank you for both your friendship and your intellectual contributions, bestowed through endless discussions and brainstorming sessions that I will always remember fondly.

My mother and sister also deserve a big thank you for their endless financial and moral support through the rigours of years of study that led me to Durham and the opportunity to complete this PhD.

Lastly, but most importantly, I owe an enormous amount of gratitude to my wife, Gülseren, who undertook all family responsibilities and skilfully looked after our two children, Göksu and Mehmet, while I was away from home – an unfortunately common occurrence over these past five years. I could not have completed this PhD without her and her unwavering support and assistance. To my wife and children, I dedicate this study to you.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1.   Introduction

After the collapse of the fragile peace process between the Turkish government and the

PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement in late July 2015,[1] the level of violence in

Turkey's south-eastern provinces rose significantly. As PKK attacks on Turkish security

forces increased, the government's response also deepened. Thanks to burgeoning defence

capabilities, and improved surveillance technology in particular, Ankara's counter

operations against the PKK rose to levels not seen since the 1990s. In addition, following

the collapse of the 'resolution process',[2] institutional political channels also narrowed for

Kurdish ethno-nationalist electoral politics. Many MPs from PKK-affiliated mainstream

Kurdish ethno-nationalist political parties[3] were detained, jailed and dismissed from the

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[1] PKK stands for *Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan* (Kurdistan Workers' Party), a militant, separatist organisation, listed as a terrorist group by many states and international organisations, including Turkey, the EU and the USA. Despite the existence of various movements and organisations in Turkey that can be categorised as Kurdish ethno-nationalist, ranging from Islamist Kurdish movements and groups such as the Azadi movement and the Free Struggle Party (*Hür Dava Partisi*) to socialist parties such as the veteran politician Kemal Burkay's Rights and Freedoms Party (*Hak ve Özgürlükler Partisi*), Kurdish ethno-nationalism has been undisputedly dominated and led by the PKK and PKK-affiliated legal political parties in Turkey since the mid-1980s. Therefore, when using the term Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and/or Kurdish nationalist movement, this thesis refers to PKK-led mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalism.
[2] The 'resolution process' was the name of the above-stated peace process that was widely used by both Turkish and Kurdish actors.
[3] In recent years there has been a gradual increase in the number of political parties in Turkey that can be regarded as Kurdish ethno-nationalist. At the time of writing, the author identified eight such parties among the formal, official political parties listed on the webpage of the Turkish Supreme Court, the legal authority responsible for keeping a record of active political parties. Kurdish nationalist electoral politics, however, are dominated by two parties: the Peoples' Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi,* HDP) and the Democratic Regions Party (*Demokratik Bölgeler Partisi*, DBP). Both of these parties are closely linked to each other. While the former is involved in politics throughout Turkey, the latter is only active in eastern Turkey. Moreover, despite denying this allegation, both parties are regarded as the legal affiliates of the PKK by mainstream Turkish political elites, Turkish public opinion as well as by many close observers of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. Due to their hegemonic position among Kurdish nationalist parties, this study refers to them as the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties, and as the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist party when referring any of them, depending on the context.

Turkish parliament for claims considered in support of PKK separatism and terrorism.[4]

Moreover, due to a change in the Municipality Law authorised by a governmental decree under a state of emergency, a number of mayors from the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist party were also similarly suspended from their posts and some of them were also jailed.[5]

Interestingly, the closing opportunity structure and increased pressure on Kurdish ethno-nationalism and the PKK by the Turkish government followed an unprecedented open opportunity structure for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. After decades of a political opportunity structure (POS) closed to anti-systemic movements and groups, and following some catalysing events in the late 1990s and early 2000s,[6] the Turkish political system began to democratise and became more open to the peaceful articulation of different and dissident ideas.

As a consequence of this change, Turkey's Kurdish policy also began to evolve and a process of democratisation increased civil, cultural and political liberties for Turkey's citizens of Kurdish origin. This democratisation process also paved the way for both a relative decentralisation of the administrative system and an opening up of the institutional political space for Kurdish nationalist parties in Turkey. Consequently, mainstream

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[4] As the various open sources corroborate, while initially 13 MPs were detained, four of them were later released and there were nine MPs in prison at the time of writing.

[5] '9 Vekil, 68 Belediye Başkanı Tutuklu; 'HDP' Operasyonu Nasıl Başladı, Bugüne Dek Neler Yaşandı? [9 Deputies, 68 Mayor Detainees; How Did the 'HDP' Operation Begin? What Happened until Today,' t24.com.tr, accessed January 2, 2018, http://t24.com.tr/haber/9-vekil-68-belediye-baskani-tutuklu-hdp-operasyonu-nasil-basladi-bugune-dek-neler-yasandi,510710; *Yeni Şafak,* '10 ili etkiledi: Meclis'te bir ilk [10 provinces affected: a first in the Assembly],' Yeni Şafak, February 7, 2018, https://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/10-ili-etkiledi-mecliste-bir-ilk-3099807; Ismail Citak, 'HDP Sözcüsü Ayhan Bilgen: Yedek adayımız yok [HDP Speaker Ayhan Bilgen: We do not have a substitute candidate],' euronews, April 30, 2018, http://tr.euronews.com/2018/04/30/hdp-sozcusu-ayhan-bilgen-yedek-aday-m-z-yok.

[6] These catalysing events include the capture of the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, by the Turkish state in February 1999 and the consequent decline in PKK terrorism and the devastating earthquake in August 1999. The most significant events, however, are the acceptance of Turkey as a candidate country for full EU membership during the Helsinki Summit in December 1999 and the AK Party's coming to power in 2002.

Kurdish ethno-nationalist political parties have consistently won seats in the Turkish parliament since 2007. Moreover, Kurdish people gained more control over their local affairs. The DBP, established in south-eastern and eastern Turkey as the main political representative of the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, came to power in the 2014 local elections in more than 100 local municipalities, including three metropolitan municipalities.[7] Furthermore, the executive power and fiscal resources of the DBP significantly increased following the introduction of a local administrations law in 2005 and a change in the Metropolitan Municipality Law in 2012. Additionally, in other issues such as autonomy or the de-ethnicisation of the Turkish constitution, an open, democratic debate where all pro-Kurdish actors could express their opinions freely began to emerge in the 2000s.

These democratisation and decentralisation processes also led to several peaceful solution initiatives. In 2009, the Turkish government began the 'National Unity and Fraternity Project',[8] an attempt aimed at accommodating Kurdish ethno-nationalist demands in Turkey through peaceful means. Although this first effort did not last long, towards the end of 2012 a new development called the 'resolution process' began to mount. Officially launched in early 2013, it lasted until late July 2015. In summary, compared with the prior era, a reduction in the coercive restraints placed on the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement by the Turkish government at the beginning of the new millennium coincided with expanded civil and political opportunities for those pursuing Kurdish ethno-nationalist interests.

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[7] One of these three metropolitan municipalities is Mardin. In Mardin, Ahmet Türk, a former leader of previous (and now closed) Kurdish nationalist parties and a senior member of the legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, was elected as an independent candidate because of a prior ban temporarily preventing him from joining a political party. Nevertheless, Mardin is also regarded as under the control of the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist party in this thesis.

[8] *The Silent Revolution: Turkey`s Democratic Change and Transformation Inventory 2002-2013*, 4th ed. (Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Undersecretariat of Public Order and Security, 2014), 47.

This thesis is an endeavour to analyse how three main domestic structural changes in the Turkish POS from 1999 to 2015 impacted the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. These changes are democratisation and the expansion of civil and cultural liberties, the decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system and opening up of institutional political channels to Kurdish ethno-nationalist electoral politics, and in parallel but in an inverse relationship with these developments, a declining level and softening nature of Ankara's coercive control on Kurdish ethno-nationalism. This thesis, however, does not aim to give a descriptive account of the impact of these structural changes on the trajectory of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey during the specified era. On the contrary, it attempts to scrutinise the interplay between changes in the domestic political structure and the responses of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement to this changing structure. Furthermore, it seeks to analyse how this dynamic interaction influenced the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey.

This analysis covers a period which begins with the capture of the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in February 1999 and ends with the collapse of the 'resolution process' between the Turkish government and the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement in late July 2015. Following this period, the parameters shaping the Turkish POS after the breakdown of the resolution process were fundamentally different. Considering this, as well as the fact that the bulk of primary field data examined in this thesis was collected in summer 2015, developments which emerged after July 2015 were excluded from the scope of analysis.

1.2.   Existing scholarship on Kurdish ethno-nationalism

This academic quest did not emerge in a vacuum. On the contrary, it adopts and applies a constructivist understanding of the development of ethno-nationalism to address a gap in existing research on the subject. Firstly, in line with the influential modernist-constructivist approaches in the field of nationalism studies as will be elaborated upon in the following chapter, this study contends that neither ethnic nor national identities are given and fixed but are rather relational and constructed. The interaction of various factors, ranging from macro-level socio-political developments to micro-level individual contingencies, impacts both the formation of ethnic and national identities and as well as the spread of nationalism among a people or ethnic group. Secondly, despite the proliferation of the studies on Kurdish ethno-nationalism in the Middle East and Turkey during recent decades, the relation between democratisation, decentralisation and the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey is an understudied one. This constructivist persuasion and the existing gap in the literature then necessitate adding constructive analyses of the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey in the wake of the above-stated structural changes.

This section provides a brief review of the existing studies on Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. The review is limited and does not include all of the findings, key themes, theoretical perspectives, strengths, weaknesses and other relevant facets of the previous studies. Instead, using a constructivist understanding of nationalism, this section first reviews how previous studies analysed Kurdish identity and territorial claims. Secondly, through analysing the main contentions of previous studies in explaining the emergence and trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism, this review demonstrates why focusing on political parameters such as democratisation, decentralisation and state repression is critical to understanding the evolution of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Lastly, this section briefly discusses the perspectives of recent studies on Turkey's

democratisation and decentralisation processes and on the expansion of civil-political liberties for citizens of Kurdish origin. Thus, this section serves to both locate this research within the broader literature on the Kurds and Kurdish ethno-nationalism and reveals the academic necessity and importance of this research.[9]

1.2.1. On Kurdish identity and territorial arguments

Answering the question 'Who is a Kurd?' and defining Kurdish identity is highly crucial for an appropriate understanding of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. It is a highly controversial issue, and as Paul White argues, there is no consensus among scholars on how to define the Kurds.[10] Many scholars either explicitly or implicitly note the relational nature of Kurdish identity or analyse its development in relation to various social, economic and political developments. Such factors include tribalism, immigration, changes in modes of production, nation-state formation and assimilation, changing policies of states and the roles and activities of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist organisations.[11]

Kirisci and Winrow, in a study analysing the emergence and evolution of the Kurdish question in relation to different factors, argue that as a result of elements such as assimilation, migration and modernisation, the boundary of Kurdish ethnicity is not clear; there are many different views even among the Kurdish community in Turkey and multiple

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[9] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Fourth edition (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2013), 27.

[10] Paul J. White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey* (London ; New York: Zed Books, 2000), 14.

[11] Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey: A Political Dilemma* (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press Inc, 1990); Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London ; Atlantic Highlands, N.J: Zed Books Ltd, 1992); Kemal Kirisci and Gareth M. Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-State Ethnic Conflict* (London ; Portland, Or: Frank Cass, 1997); David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 3rd edition (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014); David McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1992); Denise Natali, *The Kurds and the State: Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran* (Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press, 2006); White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers*; David Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Opportunity, Mobilization and Identity*, 1st edition (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

identities are possible.[12] Martin van Bruinessen, one of the most preeminent scholars on the Kurds, sums up the result of his fieldwork in Kurdish-populated areas as follows: 'Ethnicity is a fluid thing and, to some extent at least, voluntaristic. It is not nature-given, one does not necessarily belong unambiguously to a specific ethnic group. Everyone has a number of partially overlapping identities, and it depends on the situation on which ones he or she will emphasize or de-emphasize.'[13]

Nonetheless, a great deal of the previous studies tend to overlook the fluid and relational nature of identity formation and assume a given and perennial Kurdish national identity.[14] Rather than analysing the dynamics of the emergence and development of Kurdish nationalism and related (or consequent) political claims through an interactive-constructivist perspective, as the titles of some of these works suggest, most of these studies focus only on the sufferings of the Kurdish people through pro-Kurdish lenses and highlight the 'mal-practices' of nation-states vis-à-vis the Kurds. Besides the assumption of a given perennial Kurdish national identity, these studies also posit the existence a perennial and undisputed 'Kurdistan' as the 'sacred homeland of the perennial Kurdish nation'.

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[12] Kemal Kirisci and Gareth M. Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-State Ethnic Conflict* (London ; Portland, Or: Frank Cass, 1997), 24–25.

[13] Martin Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Society, Ethnicity, Nationalism and Refugee Problems,' in *The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview*, ed. Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Stefan Sperl, 1st edition (London New York, NY: Routledge, 1991), 47.

[14] Gerard Chaliand, *The Kurdish Tragedy* (London ; Atlantic Highlands, N.J: Zed Books, 1994); Edgar O'Ballance, *The Kurdish Struggle, 1920-94*, 1996 edition (Houndmills, Basingstoke England : New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995); Charles G. Macdonald and Carole A. O'Leary, eds., *Kurdish Identity: Human Rights and Political Status*, 1st edition (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007); Kendal Nezan, 'The Kurds: Current Position and Historical Background,' in *Kurdish Culture and Identity*, by Philip Kreyenbroek and Christine Allison (London; New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd, 1996); Stan Newens, *The Kurds: A People's Struggle for Peace and Justice, London* (London: Liberation, 1994); Izady, *The Kurds*; F.D. Andrews, *The Lost Peoples of the Middle East: Documents of the Struggle for Survival and Independence of the Kurds, Assyrians, and Other Minority Races in the Middle East* (Salisbury, N.C., U.S.A: Documentary Publications, 1982); Gerard Chaliand, ed., *A People without a Country: The Kurds and Kurdistan*, American edition (New York: Interlink Books, 1993). Charles G. Macdonald, 'Kurdish Identity: An Introduction,' in *Kurdish Identity: Human Rights and Political Status*, ed. Charles G. Macdonald and Carole A. O'Leary, 1st edition (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007), 3–14.

In addition to these studies adopting a perennial Kurdish identity, most other scholarly works that analyse the evolution of Kurdish ethno-nationalism through relatively dynamic lenses also fall in the trap of primordial language and refer to the term 'Kurd' as a homogenous group of people that all have the same political demands and share Kurdish nationalism as a political identity. Common examples of this primordial language surface in the usage of the phrases such as 'demands of the Kurds',[15] 'Kurds of Turkey would be demanding',[16] 'Kurds' political demands',[17] and 'the expectations of the Kurds'.[18] The following excerpt is from a journal article by Mehmet Gurses, who analyses the contention between Kurdish ethno-nationalism and the Turkish state through the lens of civil war. He presents the discursive changes of PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism as the evolving demands of the Kurds: '[I]n the last decade, Kurdish demands have evolved from the goal of a completely separate state into more viable goals such as institutionally protected autonomy…. The Kurdish people, as is reflected by their elected representatives, begin with the simple acknowledgement of the Kurdish identity.'[19] Employing this type of generalised language when analysing certain dimensions of Kurdish ethno-nationalism overlooks existing differences in identity perception and divergent demands and opinions among the Kurds. The assumption of such a static and homogenous identity also implies that investigation of the pervasion (or decline) of ethno-nationalist demands among Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin is meaningless in relation to various structural,

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[15] Umut Ozkirimli, 'Multiculturalism, Recognition and the 'Kurdish Question' in Turkey: The Outline of a Normative Framework,' *Democratization* 21, no. 6 (September 19, 2014): 1060; Robert Olson, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movements in Turkey 1980 To 2011: Oppression, Resistance, War, Education in the Mother Tongue and Relations With the Kurdistan Regional Government* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda, 2011), XV.
[16] Olson, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movements in Turkey 1980 To 2011: Oppression, Resistance, War, Education in the Mother Tongue and Relations With the Kurdistan Regional Government*, XIV.
[17] Olson, XVII.
[18] Welat Zeydanlioglu, 'Repression or Reform? An Analysis of the AKP's Kurdish Language Policy,' in *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation, and Reconciliation*, ed. Cengiz Gunes and Welat Zeydanlioglu (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014), 170.
[19] Mehmet Gurses, 'Partition, Democracy, and Turkey's Kurdish Minority,' *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 16, no. 3–4 (December 16, 2010): 341.

organisational and ideological developments. Such an approach fails to capture the dynamic and evolving nature of ethno-nationalist demands, including both their horizontal expansion among larger segments of the population as well as iterations of these demands that have the ability to moderate or radicalise their adherents. This oversight constitutes one of the most serious flaws of these studies.

As another static, primordial assumption, studies that examine the development, transformation and reconstruction of Kurdish nationalism through dynamic, constructive lenses tend to not analyse the territorial aspect of the Kurdish nationalist claims through a similar dynamic perspective. They use the name 'Kurdistan' as a constant, given and undisputed territorial reality as if it could be easily and undisputedly demarcated. Nevertheless, exceptions to this primordial 'Kurdistan' assumption exist in the literature. One of them is a hitherto unpublished doctoral thesis by Zeynep Kaya.[20] Kaya's 'Maps into Nations: Kurdistan, Kurdish Nationalism and International Society' argues that 'the emergence of the concept of Kurdistan as a national homeland can best be understood by reference to material, political and ideational processes, rather than through an essentialist historical view that sees Kurdistan as a consistent and given feature of Kurdish national identity'.[21] Her study shows how the Kurdish nationalists effectively framed their ethnically defined territorial claims through reference to self-determination and human rights. Kaya also demonstrates how their effective usage of the map of 'greater Kurdistan' and the increasing connection and activities of the diaspora of Kurdish nationalists with international society led to the perception of the existence of a historical notion of Kurdistan.

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[20] Zeynep N. Kaya, 'Maps into Nations: Kurdistan, Kurdish Nationalism and International Society,' (The London School of Economics and Political Science, 2012).
[21] Kaya, 183.

In another study named *Imagining Kurdistan: Identity, Culture and Society*, Ozlem Belcim Galip examines the geographical perception of a Kurdish homeland in novels produced by Kurds from Turkey, both by those living in Turkey and by the diaspora abroad.[22] Although Galip's work reveals the existence of a Kurdish-homeland perception in Kurdish novels, this idea of 'Kurdistan' as the homeland of the Kurds varies depending on the ideological orientation of the author, whether the author was based in Turkey or abroad and the period and socio-political context in which the novel was produced.[23] Thus, Galip argues that despite the existence of a 'core area', '[L]ike "identity", "territory" itself is subjected to changes and new formations through the years, so the perception of the Kurds regarding the territory of the Kurdistan changes as their social-political and cultural context alters over time.'[24]

In a similar way, Maria T. O'Shea, in her study entitled *Trapped between the Map and Reality: Geography and Perceptions of Kurdistan,* where she investigates perceptions of 'Kurdistan and Kurdish identity' in relation to 'the historical, political, and cartographic realities', argues that 'perceptions of Kurdistan and Kurdish identity have changed over time and space',[25] in line with the historical, cultural and political developments. Her work displays the constructed nature of the territorial identity, persuasively showing how Kurdish ethno-nationalist academics and intellectuals managed to link Kurdish identity to the notion of a primordial territorial history[26] and how maps produced by Kurdish nationalist groups played a highly crucial role in spreading the perception of a 'Kurdistan'

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[22] Özlem Belçim Galip, *Imagining Kurdistan: Identity, Culture and Society* (London ; New York: I.B.Tauris, 2015).
[23] Galip, 6.
[24] Galip, 11.
[25] Maria Theresa O'Shea, *Trapped Between the Map and Reality: Geography and Perceptions of Kurdistan*, 1st edition (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1.
[26] O'Shea, *Trapped Between the Map and Reality* See Chapter 6.

as the historical homeland of the Kurds.[27] Relatedly, David McDowall, one of the most well-known scholars on the Kurds, takes a neutral position on the arguments for a 'Kurdistan'. Although he includes a map of a so-called 'Kurdistan' in his book, he cautions that the map does not refer to any political claims but instead merely indicates where Kurds and other ethnic groups live in the region.[28]

Despite these several exceptions, most other studies[29] do not analyse the territorial aspect of the issue with reference to the dynamics of the creation and pervasion of a homeland perception among Kurdish people. Thus, these studies presuppose the existence of a 'Kurdistan' as a primordial 'God-given' reality vis-à-vis 'the artificiality of the Turkish state'.[30]

This *a priori* 'Kurdistan' assumption by the existing studies, however, strongly contradicts the mainstream understanding in related academic fields such as nationalism studies and political geography. While the approach that perceives human territoriality as a given, natural phenomenon has been largely rejected in the literature, an increasing number of academics show that the social spaces can be reproduced and redefined through various

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[27] O'Shea, See Chapter 12.

[28] David McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1992), 5–6.

[29] As stated earlier, pro-Kurdish studies already frame the existence of a perennial Kurdish nation and with it a historical homeland. Thus, here 'other studies' refers to those that have a claim to analyse the emergence and development of the Kurdish nationalism through a modernist-constructivist perspective.

[30] As the assumption of a given, undisputed Kurdish homeland is highly common in the existing literature, the following list is a non-exhaustive survey of studies on the subject: Nader Entessar, *Kurdish Ethnonationalism* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 1992); Martin van Bruinessen, *Kurdistan Uzerine Yazilar [Writings on Kurdistan]*, trans. Nevzat Kirac et al., 8th Edition (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2013); Martin Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (London ; Atlantic Highlands, N.J: Zed Books Ltd, 1992); Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Society, Ethnicity, Nationalism and Refugee Problems'; Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism versus Nation-Building States: Collected Articles* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000); Mehrdad Izady, *The Kurds: A Concise History And Fact Book*, First Edition (Washington: Taylor & Francis, 1992); David Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Opportunity, Mobilization and Identity*, 1st edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Cengiz Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey: From Protest to Resistance* (New York: Routledge, 2011); David Romano and Mehmet Gürses, eds., *Conflict, Democratization, and the Kurds in the Middle East: Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Cengiz Gunes and Welat Zeydanlioglu, eds., *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation and Reconciliation* (London: Routledge, 2013).

means such as discourse, narration, and performative politics.[31] The geographer Robert Sack defines territoriality as 'the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence or control people, phenomena and relationships by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area.'[32]

In fact, the rise of the arguments on the existence of 'Rojava', a term referring to the so-called 'western Kurdistan' in Syria amidst the Syrian civil war provides one of the best examples of this dynamic nature of territoriality. Following their achievements in Syria, the PYD-led Kurdish nationalists in Syria began to frame the PYD-controlled areas as a part of the historical homeland of the Kurds and devised a map showing these areas as 'Rojava', a word used by the Kurdish nationalists to refer to claimed territories in Syria. Despite this, formal interviews with 50 people and informal talks with hundreds of people revealed that awareness of the term 'Rojava' was non-existent before the Syrian civil war. Similarly, maps of the claimed territory reviewed by previous studies, including by those adopting a rather ethnocentric Kurdish understanding, do not include such a large swath of land in Syria. Instead, they mostly cover a smaller part of north-eastern Syria where the borders of Syria, Turkey and Iraq converge, as well as two small, disconnected enclaves alongside the Turkish-Syrian border.[33] A document analysis of the PKK's main publication

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[31] Jan Penrose, 'Nations, States and Homelands: Territory and Territoriality in Nationalist Thought,' *Nations and Nationalism* 8, no. 3 (July 1, 2002): 277–97; Michael R. Glass, ed., *Performativity, Politics, and the Production of Social Space*, 1st edition (New York: Routledge, 2015); David Newman and Anssi Paasi, 'Fences and Neighbours in the Postmodern World: Boundary Narratives in Political Geography,' *Progress in Human Geography* 22, no. 2 (1998): 186–207; Homi K. Bhabha, *Nation and Narration* (Psychology Press, 1990)

[32] Robert David Sack, *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 19.

[33] van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 12; O'Ballance, *The Kurdish Struggle, 1920-94*, 235; Jordi Tejel, *Syria's Kurds: History, Politics and Society*, 1st edition (London: Routledge, 2008), XIII, XIV; Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, XII.

has similarly revealed that there had been no reference to 'Rojava' before the Syrian civil war, and this territory used to be referred to as 'Little South'.[34]

Consequently, usage of the term 'Kurdistan' in the sense of an undisputed, given territory with clear-cut borders prevents us from analysing the dynamic reproduction of the Kurdish nationalist territorial claims made in recent history. The accompanying narrative and spread of these claims among both targeted ethnic groups as well as third parties, such as international organisations, neighbouring states and influential politicians and academics, constitutes one of the most important drawbacks of the existing studies in the literature.

Thus, this study contends that these claims cannot be academically considered as given but are part of a dynamic contention and are bound to be defined, demarcated and re-demarcated in the process. People come to raise territorial claims with the politicisation of their identity and, by definition, this is a dynamic and relational process which necessitates an appropriate constructive perspective to analyse it.

1.2.2. On the emergence and development of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey

Despite the previously stated primordial assumptions and shortcomings, the existing literature still provides highly valuable insight into the emergence and development of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey from various perspectives. Making a clear-cut categorisation is rather difficult and most studies refer to many different facets of the issue to varying degrees. Yet, it is possible to discern that while several studies explain the emergence and development of Kurdish ethno-nationalism through agency-centric

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[34] Duran Kalkan, 'Yeni Newroz Yılı Büyük Mücadele Yılı Olacaktır [The New Newroz Year will be the Year of the Great Struggle]', *Serxwebun*, March 2004, 4.

analyses, other studies explain the same subject matter over the macro-socio-economic developments. Still others refer to deprivation theories to explain the root causes of Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

Among the agency-based studies, Cengiz Gunes' *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey: from Protest to Resistance*[35] and Ali Kemal Ozcan's *Turkey's Kurds: A theoretical analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Ocalan*[36] can be named. By adopting a Neo-Marxist discourse theory, the author analyses the evolution of Kurdish ethno-nationalism and Kurdish identity in Turkey through a discourse analysis of Kurdish ethno-nationalist groups in the former. The latter study, however, particularly focuses on the birth and evolution of the PKK, and sheds light on the development of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey through a detailed textual analysis of the PKK's main organisational publications as well as Ocalan's works and various interviews conducted with him.

Apart from these agency-based analyses, other studies have explained the emergence and development of Kurdish ethno-nationalism through macro socio-economic lenses. Although not specifically focused on Kurdish ethno-nationalism and Turkey's Kurds, one of the most famous studies on this aspect is van Bruinessen`s *Agha, Shaikh and State*.[37] van Bruinessen's study focuses on the historical evolution of tribal, religious and societal structures and organisations, as well as on their relationship with the state. He highlights the importance of the transformation of tribal and local identities to the Kurdish national identity through macro-sociological analysis. Another study that analyses Kurdish ethno-nationalism through largely macro-level socio-economic lenses is Paul White`s *Primitive*

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[35] Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 2011.
[36] Ali Kemal Özcan, *Turkey's Kurds: A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Ocalan* (London: Routledge, 2005).
[37] Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*.

Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers?[38] White sees the roots of ethno-nationalism in the relationship between the emergence of modern nation-states and the rise of capitalism.[39] He analyses the emergence of Kurdish ethno-nationalism using a theoretical underpinning elaborated by Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm on how acts of social banditry or primitive rebellious movements transform into full-fledged revolutionary movements.

In addition to these macro-sociological explanations, some studies refer to deprivation theories when explaining the emergence of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Icduygu, Romano and Sirkeci conceptualise the political and economic problems that Kurds encounter in Turkey in the idea of 'environment of insecurity', which consists of material insecurity and non-material insecurity.[40] Material insecurity relates to 'income, possessions, education, health, state services and life itself', while non-material insecurity consists of 'language, culture (identity) and belonging (the opposite of alienation)'.[41] They argue that the situation of Kurds in terms of attaining material security is much worse than that of Turks, and at the same time they also suffer seriously from non-material insecurity.[42] In another study focusing on 'the roots and dynamics of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey', Sarigil and Fazlioglu argue the existence of a relation between ethno-nationalist orientation and deprivation.[43] However, they criticise Icduygu et al.'s study for adopting a static deprivation understanding and state that not the objective deprivation but its perception that is crucial in ethno-mobilisation.[44] Some other studies, which mainly analyse the issue as a political matter, also note the differences in the level

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[38] White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers?*.
[39] White, 4.
[40] A. İçduygu, David Romano, and İbrahim Sirkeci, 'The Ethnic Question in an Environment of Insecurity: The Kurds in Turkey,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 6 (November 1999): 991–1010.
[41] İçduygu, Romano, and Sirkeci, 992.
[42] İçduygu, Romano, and Sirkeci, 1006.
[43] Zeki Sarıgıl and Omer Fazlıoglu, 'Exploring the Roots and Dynamics of Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism in Turkey,' *Nations and Nationalism* 20, no. 3 (2014): 436–58.
[44] Sarıgıl and Fazlıoglu, 440–41.

of economic development between western, eastern and south-eastern Turkey. They argue that despite the main reason being political, economic deprivation has also played an important role in the rise of Kurdish nationalism and the PKK.[45]

Aside from these macro-sociological and economic explanations, the vast majority of studies on the Kurds in Turkey focus on the role of the political factors and explain the emergence and trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism through domestic, regional and international political developments, the policies of Ankara vis-à-vis its Kurdish-origin citizens and the role of Kurdish ethno-nationalist agencies.[46] Most of these studies generally include a political history of the problem which covers a variety developments: the *Tanzimat* reforms of 19th century and the erosion of the Kurdish emirates' autonomy, the emergence of Turkish and Kurdish ethno-nationalisms, the policy of the modern Turkish Republic towards the Kurds, early Kurdish revolts, the rebirth of Kurdish ethno-nationalism within leftist movements after the 1960s, the emergence of the PKK, terror, violence, Turkey`s counter policies, the 1980 military coup, socio-economic aspects of the problem and trans-border and international dimensions.

The emphasis of these sub-categories in explaining the emergence and development of Kurdish ethno-nationalism changes from one study to another. Nevertheless, they share a few common points which also directly relate to the main quest of this study. As a first

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[45] Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 122–26; McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied*, 53–54; Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey*, 31–32; Demet Yalcin Mousseau, 'An Inquiry into the Linkage among Nationalizing Policies, Democratization, and Ethno-Nationalist Conflict: The Kurdish Case in Turkey,' *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 40, no. 1 (January 2012): 55–57
[46] Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey*; Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1997); Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997; Robert Olson, ed., *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s: Its Impact on Turkey and the Middle East* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996); McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied*; Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998); Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*; Denise Natali, *The Kurds and the State: Evolving National Identity in Iraq, Turkey, and Iran* (Syracuse, N.Y: Syracuse University Press, 2006); M. Hakan Yavuz, 'Five Stages of the Construction of Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey,' *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 7, no. 3 (September 1, 2001): 1–24.

point, the vast majority of these studies consider the monolithic founding philosophy of the

Turkish Republic, which was based on Turkish ethnicity and language, as a premier reason

for the expansion of nationalist ideas among ethnic Kurds in Turkey. They argue that the

Islamic discourse used by Ataturk and Turkish elites during the early years of the Turkish

War of Independence, prior to the establishment of the Republic, gradually evolved into a

Turkish nationalistic discourse. The abolition of the Caliphate, modernisation and

centralisation of the state, and monolithic policies in order to create a homogenous

western-style nation-state are argued as a cause for resentment among many Kurds that

paved the way for an increase in reactive ethno-nationalist ideas in the community.[47] For

instance, Yavuz argues that '[T]he collapse of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire and the

formation of ethnically-based nationalist regimes are the root-causes of the politicisation

and radicalisation of the Kurdish identity.'[48] The existing literature also argues that

following the death of Ataturk, this monolithic understanding of the Turkish state even

strengthened and the Turkish state became even more static and authoritarian.[49]

These studies also express that although the liberal atmosphere and relative political

pluralism created by the 1961 Constitution enabled the rebirth of Kurdish ethno-

nationalism, which had entered into a silent period following its suppression by Ankara in

the late 1930s,[50] this atmosphere did not lead to the formal recognition of a Kurdish

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[47] Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 91–105; Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey*, 12; Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, 1997, 3–7; Chaliand, *A People without a Country: The Kurds and Kurdistan*, 29–30; McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied*, 35–37; Yavuz, 'Five Stages of the Construction of Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey,' 2–3, 21; Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 32; Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, 'Turkey's Kurdish Question: Critical Turning Points and Missed Opportunities,' *Middle East Journal* 51, no. 1 (1997): 62–64.; Demet Yalcin Mousseau, 'An Inquiry into the Linkage among Nationalizing Policies, Democratization, and Ethno-Nationalist Conflict: The Kurdish Case in Turkey,' *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 40, no. 1 (January 2012): 49–51.
[48] Yavuz, 'Five Stages of the Construction of Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey,' 21.
[49] Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, 1997, 7; Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 1998, 13.
[50] Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 107–8; Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 1998, 15; Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey*, 15–19; Hamit Bozarslan, 'Political Aspects of the Kurdish Problem in Contemporary Turkey,' in *The Kurds: A Contemorary Overview*, by Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Stefan Sperl (London ; New York: Routledge, 1992), 75; Kendal Nezan, 'The Kurds: Current Position and

identity and it was soon constrained by the 1971 military memorandum.[51] The 1980

military coup, which was followed by widespread state repression and the total closure of

political system to Kurdish ethno-nationalist and cultural demands, has been pointed to in

the literature as another critical structural factor in the radicalisation of Kurdish ethno-

nationalism and its expansion among the larger segments of the Kurdish population in

Turkey.[52]

The following excerpt from one of the works of Turkish scholar Ozkirimli provides a

good example of the arguments of the existing studies on this account. As he argues, 'We

cannot comprehend the often violent nature of Kurdish demands for recognition without

acknowledging the equally, if not more, violent tactics used by the Turkish state in its war

against the PKK, or by overlooking the exclusionary, assimilationist tendencies of various

forms of Turkish nationalism which leave little room for the democratic and peaceful

expression of Kurdish demands.'[53] Thus, although these studies do not deny the role of the

agency in politicising the identity of Turkey's citizens of Kurdish origin, the monolithic

and closed nature of the Turkish system is considered to be a crucial structural factor in the

emergence and development of Kurdish ethno-nationalism as well as the violent nature and

methods of terror it assumed. As a natural consequence of the established correlation

between the settings of the Turkish state and Kurdish ethno-nationalism, and to varying

extents according to the nature of the study, these studies also discuss various perspectives

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Historical Backgorund,' in *Kurdish Culture and Identity*, by Philip Kreyenbroek and Christine Allison (London; New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd, 1996), 62.
[51] Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey*, 16–17; Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 43–45.
[52] Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey*, 43–47; McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied*, 44–47; Aram Nigogosian, 'Turkey`s Kurdish Problem In The 1990s: Recent Trends,' in *Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990's: Its' Impact on Turkey and the Middle East*, ed. Robert Olson (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 42; Hamit Bozarslan, 'The Political Crisis and the Kurdish Issue in Turkey,' in *Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990's: Its' Impact on Turkey and the Middle East*, ed. Robert Olson (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 147; White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers*, 176–77; Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 51–52, 78–83.
[53] Ozkirimli, 'Multiculturalism, Recognition and the 'Kurdish Question' in Turkey,' 1056.

for dealing with Kurdish ethno-nationalist demands. These proposed 'solutions' range from forced assimilation to secession and suggest some changes in the Turkish political and administrative structure.

1.2.3. On the necessity of structural change

Despite the existence of different opinions in the literature for the accommodation of the demands of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movements in Turkey, there are some converging patterns. Firstly, solution proposals offered by many scholars do not include strong references to secession. On the contrary, scholars like Kirisici & Winrow and Barkey & Fuller argue that secession is not a viable option and it might destabilise the region.[54] With regard to federalism, many scholars argue that given the reality that the majority of Kurds now live in the western parts of Turkey, and taking into consideration other examples where a binational ethnic federation fuelled the separation, a federation does not appear to be a viable alternative for Turkey, either.[55] Consequently, in order to avoid such a risk, Barkey & Fuller argue that if federalism were to be pursued, more than two sub-federal regions would have to be established, similar to the USA.[56] Kirisci & Winrow raise similar arguments for autonomy and contend that if autonomy is granted to Kurds, it should be a mixture of both cultural and territorial forms considering the wide dispersion of Kurds in Turkey.[57] Gunter also argues that instead of federalism, 'the

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[54] Kemal Kirisci and Gareth M. Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-State Ethnic Conflict* (London ; Portland, Or: Routledge, 1997), 187–88; Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 1998, 204–5. Barkey & Fuller nonetheless conclude that the separation of Kurds from other states in the region can also affect the situation in Turkey, and the possibility of a pan-Kurdish state in the long term in not certain.
[55] Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 196; Barkey and Fuller, 'Turkey's Kurdish Question,' 1997, 203–4; Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, 1997, 134–35.
[56] Barkey and Fuller, 'Turkey's Kurdish Question,' 1997, 204.
[57] Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 193.

devolution of more real powers to the provincial and local governments might be another option'.[58]

Most scholars in the field appear highly optimistic about the accommodation of Kurdish ethno-nationalism through more or less 'moderate' structural reforms. Gunter, in his 1990 book on the Kurds in Turkey, argues that '[I]f the [Turkish] authorities now could bring themselves no longer to see expressions of Kurdish cultural awareness as mortal threat to the continuing existence of the territorial integrity of Turkey, it is likely that the disaffected Kurdish elements in that state could learn to accept their role as loyal Turkish citizens.'[59]

In a later study published in 1997, Gunter suggests amending the Turkish constitution so as to refer to Turkey as 'the common homeland of the Turks and Kurds' as well as guaranteeing educational, linguistic, and publishing rights in Kurdish.[60] He claims that such reforms would likely satisfy the demands of moderate Kurds.[61] As recently as 2012, in another study where Gunter discusses possible solutions to accommodate Kurdish nationalist demands in Iraq and Turkey, he argues that given the dispersion of the Kurds within Turkey and their level of integration into the larger Turkish society, any decentralisation which is incompatible with the Turkish state`s administrative background might not be necessary. According to Gunter, what is necessary is for the state to begin to negotiate the real representatives of 'its disaffected Kurdish minority', which he claims is the PKK.[62] Moreover, he proposes that the 10 percent electoral threshold to enter parliament should be reduced to European standards, that Kurdish-language education and

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[58] Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, 1997, 135.
[59] Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey*, 126.
[60] Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, 1997, 132–33.
[61] Gunter, 143.
[62] Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds Ascending: The Evolving Solution to the Kurdish Problem in Iraq and Turkey* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 187.

usage of Kurdish in the courts should be allowed, and that cases should be dropped against Kurds who are being prosecuted in KCK trials. He also argues that the Turkish military should respond to the 'PKK ceasefire' by stopping its military operations.[63]

In a similar fashion to Gunter's optimism, Barkey and Fuller chiefly argue that if Turkey were to introduce cultural reforms regarding linguistic, media and publishing issues, improve the economic situation of Kurdish citizens, diminish its military presence in mainly Kurdish-populated regions, and allow Kurdish parties to operate freely, support for the PKK in Turkey would diminish.[64] Kirisci and Winrow similarly argue that some cultural concessions on Kurdish education, television and radio can create trust between Turkish governments and Kurdish [nationalist] politicians. They propose the creation of a multi-cultural society and the establishment of real civic nationalism where full citizenship rights are not embedded in any ethnic identity, and argue that 'once in place, an ideology of multiculturalism would transcend any ethnic nationalist ideology'.[65]

Most vocal scholars of Kurdish origin also seem to believe that initiatives of this sort would accommodate the aspirations of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Cengiz Gunes, in his study 'Political reconciliation in Turkey' argues that 'questions of pluralism and the constitutional recognition of the Kurdish identity are central to the peaceful resolution of the conflict.'[66] Gunes also argues that a non-territorial model of autonomy is highly suitable for a fair solution to the Kurdish problem in Turkey given that most of the country's Kurds live in mainly Turkish-populated regions.[67] Cuma Cicek argues that security-centric methods will not be able to solve the Kurdish problem, and that a

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[63] Gunter, 183.
[64] Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 1998, 185–95.
[65] Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 203.
[66] Cengiz Gunes, 'Political Reconciliation in Turkey: Challenges and Prospects,' in *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation, and Reconciliation*, ed. Cengiz Gunes and Welat Zeydanlioglu (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014), 260.
[67] Gunes, 267.

resolution is only possible through a system in which Kurds preserve their ethnic identity. Moreover, he argues that 'enlarging the political arena for Kurds is indispensable to stopping the Kurdish conflict'.[68]

Conversely, Aydinli and Ozcan argue that neither mere political reforms and conflict resolution approaches (negotiating a political solution) nor counter-terror methods alone are sufficient to solve the Kurdish problem. They claim that Turkey, through pursuing democratic reforms with special emphases on individual rights and continuing the EU accession process and integrating with the West, can satisfy most Kurdish citizens.[69] Secondly, they contend, Turkey should decrease the impact of the PKK on legal Kurdish parties and movements and enlarge the political space for PKK-free legal, Kurdish politics, while at the same time introducing an amnesty and rehabilitation programme for the PKK militants supported by 'economic and political incentives'. For those militants who will not accept the offer of amnesty, Aydinli and Ozcan advocate effective counter-terrorism methods to diminish the PKK threat and bring to an end the PKK's usage of northern Iraq as a 'safe haven'.[70] According to them, 'maintaining arms and strength just across the border helps them to have social, political, and economic control over the broader Kurdish population in Turkey'.[71]

1.2.4. On the democratisation process from 1999 to 2015

Although it is not possible to argue that all the proposals summarised here were realised in the context of the expansion of the Turkish POS for the Kurdish ethnic-cultural and

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[68] Cuma Cicek, 'Elimination or Integration of pro-Kurdish Politics: Limits of the AKP's Democratic Initiative,' in *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation, and Reconciliation*, ed. Cengiz Gunes and Welat Zeydanlioglu (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014), 254–55.
[69] Ersel Aydinli and Nihat Ali Özcan, 'The Conflict Resolution and Counterterrorism Dilemma: Turkey Faces Its Kurdish Question,' *Terrorism and Political Violence* 23, no. 3 (2011): 439–440, 448.
[70] Aydinli and Özcan, 449–51.
[71] Aydinli and Özcan, 451.

nationalist demands from 1999 to 2015, the expansion of the Turkish POS indeed incorporated many of these ideas to a significant extent. As Chapter 4 will reveal in detail, the Turkish POS significantly developed in terms of civil and cultural liberties for Kurdish-origin citizens, and the institutional political system opened up for Kurdish ethno-nationalist electoral politics. Moreover, as part of the broader democratisation process, the Turkish administrative system meaningfully decentralised as the fiscal and infrastructural capacities of local municipalities significantly increased. Thus, in the light of above arguments put forth by previous studies on the possible consequences of structural reforms on the trajectory of Kurdish nationalism in Turkey, it is highly plausible to assume that these developments impacted the development of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. Yet, as the below section will demonstrate, the existing literature does not sufficiently address this aspect through empirical analysis.

Recent studies that focused on the expansion of Turkey's democratisation process and extension of civil, cultural and political liberties for the Kurdish-origin citizens and Kurdish nationalist movements analyse the structural changes and reforms in comparison to the 'expectations of Kurdish people' in Turkey. A majority of these studies claim that the realised reforms addressing Kurdish rights fell short of meeting 'Kurdish demands'. In his study focusing on linguistic reforms introduced during the past decade in Turkey, Zeydanlioglu opines that the introduced linguistic reforms did not live up to 'the expectations of the Kurds especially taking into account the existence of Kurdish as the official language in the Kurdistan region in Iraq'.[72] In another study, which is also a chapter on the 'Kurdish question' in Turkey in a study that analyses Turkey's democratisation process during the 2000s, Kurban acknowledges the rapid process of

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[72] Zeydanlioglu, 'Repression or Reform? An Analysis of the AKP's Kurdish Language Policy,' 170.

reforms after 2002 but nonetheless argues that the reforms and 'democratic opening' fell short of the 'Kurdish expectation' for rights, such as education in their mother tongue and the redefining of citizenship.[73] Olson also discusses how the linguistic reforms and other cultural rights concessions did not meet the 'widespread Kurdish demands'.[74] Demet Yalcin Mousseau raises similar arguments in a journal article that examines the impact of Turkish state-formation, the democratisation of electoral politics after the 1950s, as well as socio-economic disparities between the western and eastern regions in Turkey on the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-mobilisation in Turkey. She argues that although the EU-induced reforms and the expansion of the cultural and linguistic rights are positive steps in the direction of consolidating democracy, the nationalising nature of the Turkish constitution is still the same, and 'Turkey still lacks the minimal conditions of democracy necessary for tolerating freedoms and liberties for different groups and views.'[75]

The opinions summarised here have analytic deficiencies worth addressing. Beginning with Mousseau's study, the author correctly points out that the Turkish constitution does not refer to other domestic ethnic groups and regards every Turkish citizen as a Turk. Nonetheless, criticising Turkey's democratisation process as lacking the 'minimal conditions' without having a normative benchmark is highly subjective and it is unclear how the author reached this judgement. Additionally, arguments made by several studies that the democratisation process 'did not live up to' or 'fell short of meeting' 'the expectations of the Kurds', rely on generalisations that do not reflect the diversity in

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[73] Dilek Kurban, 'The Kurdish Question: Law, Politics and the Limits of Recognition,' in *Turkey`s Democratization Process*, ed. Carmen Rodriguez et al. (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014), 346.
[74] Olson, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movements in Turkey 1980 To 2011: Oppression, Resistance, War, Education in the Mother Tongue and Relations With the Kurdistan Regional Government*, 27–34.
[75] Mousseau, 'An Inquiry into the Linkage among Nationalizing Policies, Democratization, and Ethno-Nationalist Conflict: The Kurdish Case in Turkey,' 60.

opinions, identity and demands among Turkey's Kurds. Rather, they misleadingly project the Kurds as a homogenous community with a standard and fixed list of demands.

As will be noted in the analysis to follow in later chapters, this study also contends that towards the late 2000s, the pace of reforms began to fall behind the level of open debate in the country, and new democratisation steps began to fail to satisfy Turkey's Kurdish-origin citizens as they had in the earlier part of the decade. Nonetheless, this cannot lead us to accept the so-called 'the demands of the Kurds' as given and fixed. This research asserts that this situation was not pre-existing, but rather the expansion of the Turkish POS for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movements and its effective utilisation by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist agents played a crucial role in this process. Therefore, the notion of a static and organic 'Kurdish demand list', always existing and consensually shared by all Kurds, overlooks a highly dynamic and interactive process. It requires explanation through empirical research on how both the Kurdish cultural, political, and ethno-nationalist demands evolved over time and began to increasingly resonate among the larger Kurdish population, as well as how these 'Kurdish demands' scaled up in relation to the interaction of the changing structure and Kurdish ethno-nationalist agency. Thus, the existing studies criticise the reforms and democratisation steps of Turkey as insufficient to satisfy the so-called fixed 'Kurdish demands' but do not analyse the interaction of Kurdish ethno-nationalist forces with these structural changes and the resulting evolution of these demands, both horizontally in the wider Kurdish audiences and also vertically from more moderate to more radical demands.

As an exception to these studies in the literature, Gunes Murat Tezcur's work 'When democratization radicalizes: The Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey'[76] partly

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[76] Güneş Murat Tezcür, 'When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey,' *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 6 (2010): 775–89.

explains the relation between Turkey's democratisation process and its impact on the PKK and the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement in Turkey. In this study, Tezcur primarily argues that although democratisation did not satisfy the organisational needs of the PKK, the satisfaction it created on the part of the Kurdish masses began to threaten the outlawed organisation. In contrast to expectations for moderation, the PKK relaunched its attacks and even radicalised after the mid-2000s. The findings of this research corroborate Tezcur's basic argument and this study also refers to Tezcur's work on numerous occasions when explaining this dimension of the subject matter. Yet, as a journal article, this study does not analyse how the radicalisation of the PKK impacted the overall progression of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Similarly, how decentralisation and an expansion of civil and cultural liberties impacted the course of Kurdish ethno-nationalism is outside the scope of Tezcur's work.

As to the impact of legal political channels and municipal administrations on Kurdish ethno-nationalism, the only study to touch upon these aspects in the existing literature is Watt's 'Activist in Office',[77] where Watt analyses how Kurdish ethno-nationalist political parties used legal political channels and resources and municipal power to further the Kurdish ethno-nationalist agenda from 1990 to 2008. In this study, Watt argues that despite being highly constrained, even during the 1990s, Kurdish ethno-nationalist political parties tried to use the systemic resources and limited legal channels to promote the Kurdish ethno-nationalist cause. She further states that after 1999, when the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement started to be more active in local elections and came to power in some municipalities, municipal control provided many political, legal and economic resources and helped promote Kurdish ethno-nationalism. In this sense, Watt's

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[77] Nicole F. Watts, *Activists in Office: Kurdish Politics and Protest in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011).

study partly overlaps with this research. However, the empirical part of Watt's study largely covers developments in the 1990s and in the early 2000s. Consequently, due to the study's time span, her study does not empirically analyse the impact of the decentralising legislations in 2004, 2005 and 2012. Moreover, as the parliamentary representation of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party emerged after the July 2007 election, the impact of the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties in the legislature on Kurdish ethno-nationalism is not covered in this study either.

Apart from Watt's study, the mentioned studies that analyse and criticise Turkey's democratisation steps as 'insufficient' do not cover decentralisation reforms during the 2000s, and limit their focus largely to rights and liberties directly affecting Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin. Several studies written during the last decade discuss the importance of the decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system for the peaceful accommodation of the Kurdish nationalism. However, similar to aforementioned prescriptive arguments of some studies, they only comment on the necessity of further decentralisation and neither make any argument on the impact of the changing municipal legislation on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism nor refer to already-realised decentralising steps in any way.[78] Thus, the review of the recent literature on Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey suggests that these studies do not consider the decentralisation reforms realised in the mid-2000s as a subject that can or should be analysed in the context of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. In addition to these gaps in the literature on the impact of the decentralisation and opening up of institutional political channels, no study exists that

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[78] Kerim Yıldız, 'Turkey's Kurdish Conflict: Pathways to Progress,' *Insight Turkey* 14, no. 4 (Fall 2012): 151–74; Aydin Selcen, 'Decentralization for Peace in Turkey, Iraq & Syria,' *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 14, no. 4 (Winter 2016), http://turkishpolicy.com/issue/57/turkeys-kurdish-conundrum.

analyses how the expansion of civil and cultural liberties in Turkey during the 2000s affected the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

1.3. Identifying the gaps, aims and scope of the study and the research questions

As put forth in the previous section, there is not yet a comprehensive empirical study that explains the impact of the structural changes in the Turkish POS from 1999 to mid-2015 on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. Considering especially the arguments of earlier research on the link between the structural characteristics of the Turkish state and the evolution of Kurdish ethno-nationalism, this situation constitutes one of the most important gaps in the existing literature. Thus, the aim of this research is to fill this important research lacuna and analytically explain this process through a detailed empirical case study. In this context, the main question this research seeks to answer is:

> How did Turkey's democratisation and decentralisation processes from 1999 to 2015 and the concomitant decline of the Turkish state's coercion on the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement impact the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey during the same period?

In the above question, the term democratisation refers to the opening up of institutional political channels for Kurdish ethno-nationalist electoral politics on both the national and local levels and also the expansion of civil, cultural and political liberties for Kurdish-origin citizens of Turkey. Moreover, regarding the 'trajectory' of Kurdish ethno-nationalism, this thesis firstly refers to the scope or pervasiveness of ethno-nationalism among Turkey's citizens of Kurdish ethnic background, and secondly, refers to the nature of it, particularly whether it is violent or non-violent. In this context, the central query might be divided into two sub-questions:

1.   How did the above-stated structural changes affect the expansion of

Kurdish ethno-nationalism among Turkey's Kurdish-origin citizens?

and similarly,

2.   How did these changes impact the violent nature of mainstream Kurdish

ethno-nationalism? Did they lead to a decline in the PKK's militant actions

and terrorist activities and to a moderation of the actions of the PKK-led

Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement? Why and how?

Although these questions might initially be seen as reflecting a structuralist

perspective, this configuration of the main and sub-research questions only stems from the

fact that structural change constitutes the starting point of this research quest. As the

following theoretical chapter will reveal, this thesis contends that the impact of the

structure on the trajectory of the contention cannot be analysed as a one-sided linear

process from the structural change directly to the final output irrespective of the reaction

and role of the agency. On the contrary, there is a dynamic multi-level interaction between

the structural (macro), organisational (meso), and ideological and psychological (micro)

level factors and the analysis of the impact of the structural change in the Turkish POS on

Kurdish ethno-nationalism also requires investigation of the reactions and policies of the

Kurdish ethno-nationalist agency in the wake of this changing structure.

In order to answer the above-stated main and sub-research questions, this research

will identify the key characteristics of the changes in the Turkish POS and will analyse

how this changing political structure facilitated or constrained Kurdish ethno-nationalism

in Turkey as well as how the PKK and PKK-led mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist

movement framed and acted upon these structural changes. Nevertheless, these

investigations into the nature of the structural change and the reaction of the agency to it

relate to what Creswell calls 'procedural questions'.[79] Rather than being separate research ends themselves, in line with the adopted theoretical and methodological framework, they serve to develop a coherent and valid answer to the main and sub-research questions stated above.

It should be noted that this study, rather than tackling Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey as a phenomenon, focuses on the PKK-led mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalism as a case study. 'A case is a phenomenon, or an event, chosen, conceptualized and analysed empirically as a manifestation of a broader class of phenomena or events.'[80] Case study research investigates an aspect of a process, an event, a movement, an organisation, or a spatial setting of a broader notion in a bounded way, over a defined period and through detailed empirical data collection and research methods. It serves mainly to develop an understanding of the broader notion.[81] In line with this definition, this research explains the impact of the structural changes on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism during the stated period through the case of the PKK and PKK-affiliated mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. Thus, one might consider this situation as a significant limitation of this study. However, although there are several other Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties and movements in Turkey,[82] the PKK and PKK-affiliated legal actors, or with a broader definition PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, has a clear hegemonic position in Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey and the explanation of its

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[79] John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 2nd edition (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2006), 109–13.

[80] Pascal Vennesson, 'Case Studies and Process Tracing: Theories and Practices,' in *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*, ed. Donatella Della Porta (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 226.

[81] Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 73; David A. Snow and Danny Trom, 'The Case Study and the Study of Social Movements,' in *Methods Of Social Movement*, ed. Bert Klandermans and Suzanne Staggenborg (Minneapolis, Minn.: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2002), 146–50; Charles C. Ragin, *Fuzzy-Set Social Science*, 2nd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 64–87; Vennesson, 'Case Studies and Process Tracing: Theories and Practices,' 226–27.

[82] See footnotes 1 and 3.

trajectory as a case study explains very much of the course of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Thus, focusing on the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism as a case has sound logic and meaningfully serves to understand the path of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey.

Moreover, this study neither tries to identify all the relevant factors that impinge on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey during the focused time span nor tries to give a full account of the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. It only focuses on how the above-stated structural developments impacted its progression. By no means have the analysed structural changes been the only factors impacting the course of Kurdish ethno-nationalism during the focused period. International and particularly regional developments, the Syrian civil war, the trans-state nature of the Kurdish nationalism in the Middle East might have all had an impact on the identities of Turkey's Kurdish-origin citizens. As the research questions have already revealed, these issues are not a part of the inquiry of this research, and this research focuses on how the domestic structural changes affected the course and nature of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey.

1.4.   The contribution of the study to the field and the main argument of the thesis

Analysing the effect of the changed Turkish POS on the trajectory of mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalism constitutes a significant and original contribution in two ways: primarily to the existing scholarship on Kurdish ethno-nationalism, and also to some extent to the understanding of SMT.

As seen earlier, existing studies that focus on recent structural changes in Turkey assume the existence of a static and homogenous Kurdish nationalist identity. Moreover, by overlooking the divergent demands and opinions among Turkey's Kurds, most of these studies crudely generalise the previously stated opening up of the Turkish POS and

Turkey's decentralisation processes as failing to meet 'the expectations of Kurds'. Consequently, the existing literature does not explain how the above-mentioned structural changes and the interaction of the PKK and PKK-affiliated legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors with these changes impacted the course of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey, both in its horizontal expansion among larger segments of Turkey's Kurds and also in the changes in the Kurdish ethno-nationalist demands and actions from more moderate to more radical or vice-versa.

However, the level of structural changes and the interaction of PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism with these changes provide invaluable empirical data for analysis. Moreover, such an analysis is particularly valuable considering that most of the previous works of the 1990s sought to understand the root causes of Kurdish ethno-nationalism and its violent nature in the context of the monolithic and closed nature of the Turkish state.

As its primary original contribution, this research reveals the relationship between the aforementioned structural changes and the trajectory of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism, which is an aspect of the Kurdish nationalism not commonly discussed in the existing literature. This research relies on several primary original data sources including qualitative field interviews, extensive text analysis of both primary governmental and organisational documents, and speeches made by leading figures from all sides. Through these empirically rich original data and analyses, this study reveals why and how expanding cultural and political rights initially satisfied Turkey's citizens of Kurdish origin and resulted in an initial decline in the appeal of the ethno-nationalism. Additionally, the findings demonstrate why and how this situation began to reverse itself during the later stages of the reform process and the changing structural parameters began to trigger further Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation among the country's Kurdish-origin people.

This thesis' contribution to the existing body of literature on the Kurdish ethno-nationalism derives from several original analyses. First, the study gives a detailed original account of the crucial role municipal power and resources played on the growth of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism with the primary data obtained through extensive fieldwork. Secondly, this study touches upon another understudied point in the existing literature as it reveals the relationship between 1) the expansion of political freedoms and attainment of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party's representation in parliament from 2007 onward, and 2) the rising tone of Kurdish ethno-nationalist claims and the impact of this interaction on the Kurdish-origin citizens' political orientation as well as on the trajectory of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

Additionally, through the primary qualitative data, as well as some supportive quantitative data, this thesis provides an original explanation about the relationship between the expansion of the political, associational and cultural freedoms and the expanding networking capacity of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and the impact of this situation on the diffusion of ethno-nationalism among the large segments of the Kurdish origin citizens of Turkey. Moreover, this study is the first to examine the causal relationship between the changing level of Turkish state's coercive control of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism during the 2000s (but particularly during the period of the 'resolution process'), and the changes in the action repertoire of the PKK and PKK-affiliated legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors, as well as the impact of this interaction on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

Moreover, this thesis does not simply give a descriptive account of these developments, but instead locates and analyses original primary data in relation to an analytically rigorous theoretical framework. As the Chapter 2 will elaborate in detail, this

study contends that the impact of the POS on the challenging groups and movements' trajectory can be best understood through analysing the input and out dimensions of the POS. These dimensions operate differently and produce different consequences, and movement trajectory is related to the changing levels of openness in the input and outputs sides of the POS.

In this content, this thesis shows that in terms of the policy outputs, the opening up of the formal political system, decentralising reforms, the expansion of civil and cultural liberties, and the decline of governmental coercion during 2000s, did not meet the demands of Kurdish ethno-nationalist groups and were not sufficient to contain them. On the contrary, the PKK and PKK-affiliated legal political parties perceived the expansion of the POS as a threat to their own organisational survival; these policy outputs initially satisfied most Kurdish origin-citizens of country and significantly contributed to a decline in the appeal of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism during the early and mid-2000s. This thesis contends that this initial effect of the changing POS was the consequence of the fact that although these initial phases of Turkey's reform process expanded the outputs of the POS, they did not provide sufficient channels for the mobilisation of inputs that the Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors could exploit.

After the mid-2000s, with the further opening up of the Turkish POS, the level of the expansion in the input side of the POS began to outweigh the level of expansion in the output side. With this changing balance between the input and output sides of the POS, the Turkish POS began to enable, not contain, the broader trajectory of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism and the political space available to it. In so doing, it provided new opportunities for further ethno-nationalist mobilisation. Alongside the attribution of threat, the PKK and legal Kurdish nationalist parties also saw this opportunity structure and

exploited it for further ethno-nationalist mobilisation. Consequently, the expansion of civil, cultural and political liberties, the opening up of formal political channels and the decentralisation resulted in the expansion of ethno-nationalism among Turkey's Kurdish-origin citizens during this period.

As the Chapter 2 illustrates, despite the existence of diverging arguments in the SMT literature on the relationship between a POS and movement trajectory, many of the previous studies indicate that mixed systems result in the mobilisation of larger numbers of bystanders. This is understood to come from the fact that mixed systems do not totally repress but also do not fully respond to the demands of challenging groups and movements. The findings of this research also corroborate arguments from previous studies which detailed the relationship between mixed-systems and increasing movement mobilisation. Additionally, in relation to the two-tiered POS conceptualisation explained in the above two paragraphs, the empirical findings of this research suggest that the growth of the challenging groups and movements among the hitherto bystanders is not directly a consequence of the policy outputs addressing rights and status of these people. Instead, the mobilisation of the hitherto bystanders for a movement's cause is related to the political space, inputs and resources that the expanding POS produces for challenging groups and movements as a natural consequence of the expansion of the POS. This thesis's findings suggest that if the openness of the input dimension a POS enables challengers to a greater degree than what is available to actors on the output side, all while keeping the state from fending off a challenging movement, such a mixed POS results in more movement activity as well as greater levels of mobilisation and growth of the challenging groups and movements.

As a single case study, the capacity for generalising this research's findings might have its limits. Nonetheless, due to the methodological and data triangulation, as well as effective use of existing theoretical writings on POS and Social Movement Theory (SMT) to underpin the primary empirical findings of this research, this research's conceptualisation of POS theory as input and output aspects, and its application to the empirical case study as briefly explained above, is also believed to bring a fresh perspective to the understanding of the relationship between different sides of the POS, how they interact with the meso and micro-level parameters, and how these interactions impact the course of the challenging movements. In doing so, this research will also make a contribution to the academic literature on SMT.

1.5. Structure of the thesis

Including this introduction, this study comprises nine chapters. This introductory chapter has set out the main foci of the research and revealed the necessity and importance of it in relation to the existing literature on the issue. The second chapter follows with an explanation of the SMT based theoretical framework that this research employs to answer its central research questions and will explain the application of this framework to the case. It will also expound upon the pluralistic research method that this research uses.

The third chapter will give a brief account of the Kurds and explain the emergence and development of Kurdish ethno-nationalism from the late Ottoman period until 1999 when the empirical analysis of this research begins. This chapter will provide both a historical background, as well as an analytical context for the empirical analysis to follow in the ensuing chapters, in accordance with the adopted theoretical framework.

After these first three chapters set the scene for this research, the main analysis follows in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth chapters. Here the impact of the changing Turkish POS on Kurdish ethno-nationalism from 1999 to 2015 will be explained.

Specifically, Chapter 4 will analyse structural changes in civil and cultural dimensions as part of the democratisation process. An examination of the opening up of institutional political channels for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist electoral politics from 1999 to mid-2015 and decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system during the same period are also the other central concerns of this chapter. This investigation of the structural change will provide a context for the following analysis of the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in the wake of these changes. Despite some descriptive aspects, this is an original chapter written based on primary data and field research.

The fifth chapter will analyse the changing Turkish POS in terms of policy outputs in comparison to the organisational and ideological demands of the PKK and PKK-led mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. This comparative analysis reveals why the structural change did not fully meet the demands of Kurdish ethno-nationalism and why, despite the immediate opportunities offered by the reforms, Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors and organisations perceived these policy outputs as an existential threat.

Chapter 6 will investigate the interaction between decentralisation and the opening up of institutional political channels on both national and local levels and the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. The analysis in this chapter will both include an investigation of how structural changes in these areas provided new inputs for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and also how Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors took advantage of these expanding political inputs to spread ethno-nationalism among Turkey's Kurdish community. This chapter will thus provide an integrated SMT-based explanation for the

interaction in the focused fields by drawing on POS, Resource Mobilisation (RM) and Rational Choice (RC) theories.

Following this, Chapter 7 will focus on the impact of the inputs the expansion of civil and cultural liberties provided and the utilisation of this civil space by Kurdish ethno-nationalist agency to expand ethno-nationalism. It investigates how this interaction impacted the course of Kurdish ethno-nationalism during the stated period. This chapter will reveal the relationship between the growth of civil society in parallel to the changing structure and the expanding networking capacity of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, as well as the diffusion of ethno-nationalism through these growing, mobilising networks. Moreover, this chapter will explain the relationship between expanding civil, cultural and political liberties and the shifting scale of Kurdish ethno-nationalism, including the increasing resonance of Kurdish ethno-nationalist frames. Additionally, it will also describe the relationship between these expanded civil liberties and the emotional dimension of ethno-nationalism.

Next, Chapter 8 will investigate how the change in the repression level of the Turkish state on the PKK and the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement from 1999 to 2015 impacted the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. As a methodological difference from the previous four chapters where the context of the structural change is explained in a separate chapter (Chapter 4) and dynamic interaction of Kurdish ethno-nationalism with these changes in the following three chapters (Chapters 5, 6 and 7), Chapter 8 first gives a context for the changing repression level of the Turkish state in the early sections. Based on this context, it analyses the interaction of the PKK and Kurdish ethno-nationalism with this change and explores the impact of this interaction on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey in the following sections.

Finally, Chapter 9 concludes the study by reviewing the main empirical findings and providing guidance for future research on the subject.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

2.1.   Introduction

Having already presented in the opening chapter the main foci of this research, its scholarly importance and contributions, and its admitted limitations, this second chapter draws on the existing theories of nationalism and develops a largely SMT-based theoretical framework that will guide the empirical case study. Moreover, this chapter discusses both how this theoretical framework is applied to the case and how it guides the research. This chapter also discusses the details of the mixed-method research strategy used in this study.

After this brief introduction, the following section focuses on defining key concepts and explaining the logic used in naming this study. The third section demonstrates the limitations of studying ethno-nationalist movements using the framework provided by the most prevalent nationalism theories and argues the necessity of finding a more dynamic and interactive conceptual framework. Next, the fourth part of this chapter analyses the relevancy of an SMT framework for studying the interaction between the aforementioned structural changes in the Turkish POS and the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. Following this, the fifth section gives an overview of the mainstream approaches common within SMT literature. The sixth section then discusses how this thesis will apply a macro-centred SMT framework to a single case study. Later, an explanation of the research methods used in this thesis is given in the seventh and penultimate part of the chapter, which precedes a concluding section.

2.2.   Clarifying definitions of key terms and naming the study

The field of ethnicity and nationalism studies is dominated by ambiguous definitions.[1] A lack of consensus exists among scholars even with respect to key terms such as ethnic group, nation, and nationalism. Therefore, to make sure that the arguments of this research can be clearly and easily understood, fundamental terms and concepts must be clarified from the outset.

According to Max Weber, an ethnic group is a human group that has 'a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonisation and migration.... It does not matter whether or not an objective blood relationship exists.'[2] Hutchinson and Smith equate ethnic group to the term 'ethnie' and define it as '[a] named human population with the myths of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more elements of common culture, a link with homeland and sense of solidarity among at least some of its members'.[3] These definitions of ethnic groups reveal that although a biological root may not be real, a belief in the existence of common ancestry constitutes an important component of ethnic groups. Moreover, an ethnic group might be both a subgroup of people within a larger society,[4] as well as the majority community in a nation-state, such as in the case of the French and English, or in more than one state, as in the case of the Arabs.[5]

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[1] Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1994), 90–113; John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds., *Nationalism* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford Paperbacks, 1994), 15.
[2] Max Weber, *Economy and Society*. Ed. Guanter Roth and Claus Wittich (New York, 1968), 1: 389, printed in John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds., *Ethnicity (Reader)* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, U.S.A., 1996), 35.
[3] John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds., *Ethnicity* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, U.S.A., 1996), 6.
[4] Hutchinson and Smith, 5; Connor, *Ethnonationalism*, 101
[5] Connor, 101.

As to the definition of a nation, some political leaders, like Stalin, used a mix of objective and subjective criteria in their definition, such as common language, common culture, common territory and history.[6] Renan, on the other hand, only emphasises the importance of subjective criteria such as the common will to live together. According to Renan, the essence of being a nation stems from 'having common glories in the past and a will to continue them in the present; having made great things together and wishing to make them again'.[7] Renan further argues that '[A] nation's existence is....a daily plebiscite, just as an individual's existence is a perpetual affirmation of life…The vow of nations is the sole legitimate criterion and that to which it is necessary to constantly return.'[8] Both Stalin's and Renan's definitions show that a nation does not have to rely on a single ethnic group; different ethnic groups might be part of the same nation as long as there is a common history, common culture and will to live together in the future.

Distinguishing an ethnic group from a nation is also a controversial topic. Connor argues that in order to be described as a nation, members of an ethnic group must not only distinguish between themselves and outsiders but also must feel an affinity for their fellow members. He, therefore, argues that whereas an ethnic group may be externally defined, a nation must be self-defined.[9] Unlike Connor, Giddens considers that an ethnic group must have political power in order to qualify as a nation. Specifically, he asserts that is not possible to speak of the existence of a nation unless there is a state with 'a unified administrative reach over the territory over which its sovereignty is claimed'.[10]

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[6] Joseph Stalin, *The Nation, in Marxism and The Natural Questions, from The Essential Stalin: Major Theoretical Writings 1905-1952*, ed. Bruce Franklin (Croom Helm: London, 1972), 57–61 printed in Hutchinson and Smith, *Nationalism*, 18–21.
[7] Ernest Renan, 'What Is a Nation?',(Paris, 1882),trans. Ethan Rundell 10, accessed October 10, 2015, http://ucparis.fr/files/9313/6549/9943/What_is_a_Nation.pdf.
[8] Renan, 10.
[9] Connor, *Ethnonationalism*, 102–103.
[10] Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (University of California Press, 1985), 119.

Nationalism as an ideology emphasises that the boundaries of a political unit (state) and a cultural unit (nation) must be congruent.[11] While many ethnic movements do not demand statehood and satisfy themselves with various types of pluralist rights, the distinguishing trait of a nationalist movement is its claim of sovereignty over a territorial area,[12] and thus its relationship to a state. As Eriksen points out, '[W]hen the political leaders of an ethnic movement make demands to this effect, the ethnic movement therefore by definition becomes a nationalist movement.'[13]

Nevertheless, questions of whether a minority group residing within a nation-state is a nation, a people or an ethnic group are not directly related to the main foci of this research. The more salient distinction concerns the definition of a nationalistic movement. If some members of an ethnic group within a 'nation-state' argue that they are a unique people and demand a certain level of sovereignty for the territory they perceive as their homeland, this by definition turns into a nationalist movement.

Moreover, as several scholars argue, nationalism might also be nurtured from other sources, such as religion.[14] Besides, as Renan's definition of 'nation' has suggested, a person from an ethnicity other than those constituting the majority ethnic group of the nation-state may be also involved in state-building nationalisms.[15] This study therefore uses ethno-nationalism in order to differentiate ethnically driven secessionist-nationalist movements in 'nation-states' from others.

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[11] Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Wiley-Blackwell, 1983), 1.

[12] Susan Olzak, 'Ethnic and Nationalist Social Movements,' in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi, 1 edition (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 667.

[13] Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London ; Boulder, Colorado: Pluto Press, 1993), 5.

[14] Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (University of California Press, 1993); Rogers Brubaker, 'Religion and Nationalism: Four Approaches,' *Nations and Nationalism* 18, no. 1 (2012): 2–20.

[15] Michael Hechter, *Containing Nationalism* (OUP Oxford, 2000), Chapter 5.

As a result of these interpretations, this study addresses the mainstream Kurdish nationalist movement in Turkey as an ethno-nationalist movement.[16] As previously stated, the term 'ethno' emphasises that this nationalist movement is based on an ethnic consciousness, occurs within a 'nation-state' and competes with state-building nationalism. Apart from this, the term 'ethno' implies nothing about whether it constitutes a civic or ethnic type of nationalism.

2.3.   The shortcomings of traditional nationalism theories

Looking at the title and the arguments on the foci of this research, one might expect this study to utilise a theoretical framework derived from nationalism or ethnicity studies. Yet, as the following discussion shows, current theories on nationalism do not provide an adequate conceptual framework for analysing the trajectory of ethno-nationalism within a 'nation-state' that can be easily applied to this case study.

Although various classifications of nationalism theories exist,[17] theories of both ethnicity and nationalism can be broadly divided into two main approaches: primordialist and modernist (the latter of which is also referred to as instrumentalism or circumstantialism in the study of ethnicity). Primordialists tend to either reject or minimise the impact of external factors such as industrialisation, modernisation or changes in the mode of production on the formation of the nation. Generally, they see nations and ethnic

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[16] This argument by all means is not only the result of the terminological discussions but is the result of an academic analysis on the nature of the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism. It is supported by various text and document analyses on the ideology of the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement throughout the thesis.

[17] A.D. Smith proposes his conceptualisation of ethno-sybmolism as theoretical lenses distinct from both primordialism and modernism. See: Anthony D. Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach*, 1st edition (London ; New York: Routledge, 2009); For another study offering a two-way categorisation of the nationalism theories as 'essentialist' and 'constructivist', see: Umut Ozkirimli, *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction*, 2nd edition (Basingstoke, Hampshire England ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

groups as one and the same and argue nationalism results from an emotionally driven

process. Several prominent scholars have articulated key aspects of the primordialist

position. Van Den Berghe, for example, stated that ethnic sentiment should be seen 'as an

extended and attenuated form of kin selection'.[18] According to Geertz, although primordial

attachments such as blood relationships, race, language and customs are not given, people

often perceive them as given and see them as 'ineffable'.[19] Connor similarly argues that the

deep, emotional attachment people feel for their national identity cannot be explained

rationally, and that the essence of a nation should be sought in the mass sentiments to

which elites appeal.[20] Adding to the debate, Smith does not dismiss the role and impact of

modern factors on the formation of nations and nationalism. Nevertheless, he contends that

'core ethnies' constitute the basis of most nations with their different myths, symbols,

language, customs, etc.[21]

This research argues these primordial accounts fall far short of explaining the

emergence and development of nationalist movements. If ethnic and national attachments

in a group exist prior to and are not the result of interaction with their environment, then

how can we explain why such nationalist emotions do not affect every potential member of

an ethnic group or nation in the same way? Moreover, there are thousands of different

ethnic groups in the world. Why do some mobilise based on ethnic lines while others do

not?

Therefore, as Eller and Coughlan argue, although people may not always act based

on material interest, and emotions might be important, this should not lead us to mystify

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[18] Pierre L. Van Den Berghe, 'Race and Ethnicity: A Sociobiological Perspective,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 1, no. 4 (1978): 402–10.
[19] Clifford Geertz, *Old Societies and New States* (Free Press, 1963), 110.
[20] Connor, *Ethnonationalism*, 203–6.
[21] Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Reprint edition (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991).

and de-socialise them. Contrary to primordialist claims, ethnic and nationalist emotions have a 'clear and analysable sociogenesis'.[22] Moreover, many scholars agree upon that 'ethnicity and social identities in general are relative and to some extent situational',[23] and ethnic boundaries are not fixed but open to change.[24]

In sharp contrast to primordialism, modernist approaches claim that nationalism is the product of modern factors such as industrialisation, the advent of print capitalism, urbanisation and the centralisation of states. Gellner argues that nationalism is the result of modern necessities that came with the Industrial Revolution, which made it compulsory to communicate with a single high code. According to Gellner, growth-oriented industrialisation resulted in nation-states imposing a single high culture over their constituencies through standardised mass-education and other policies.[25] For Gellner, elites of the subordinated culture or 'wild culture' have a clear interest in pursuing an ethno-nationalist agenda as they will occupy crucial positions if they can transform their own culture into high culture.[26]

According to Anderson, the decline of religious values and the advent of print capitalism, both of which led to a standardisation of local vernaculars and thus enabled interaction among people on a much higher level than local network communities, played a crucial role in the emergence of nationalism.[27] According to Anderson, the French and

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[22] Jack David Eller and Reed M. Coughlan, 'The Poverty of Primordialism: The Demystification of Ethnic Attachments,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 16, no. 2 (1993): 200.
[23] Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 30.
[24] Frederik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundries* (Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Pr Inc, 1998), 22–26.
[25] Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 19–38; Ernest Gellner, *Nationalism*, New edition (London: Phoenix, 1998), 25–30.
[26] Gellner, *Nationalism*, 35.
[27] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised edition (London ; New York: Verso Books, 2006).

American revolutions became a model and the 'nation' emerged as an invention which began to be adapted to many different parts of the world by various hands.[28]

While these 'grand theories' of nationalism successfully explain how major cultural or social developments led the way for the advent of nationalist ideology and nations, their top-down accounts generally suffer from a lack of emphasis on the role of nationalist organisations, especially ethno-nationalist movements within nation-states. For instance, although he proposes some criteria which are important in the emergence of nationalist movements,[29] Gellner does not elaborate on how people mobilise, how ethno-nationalist movements emerge and develop, and what role government policies have on the trajectory of these movements.

Similarly, although Anderson explains the role of the publication and print activities in the emergence and development of nationalism, he does not provide a framework to explain how these facilities are utilised by nationalist organisations or by the protagonists of nationalist ideology. He foresees a role for individuals, but only as passive readers of newspapers and novels and passive imaginers of a nation. His explanation of the role of Creole pioneers in the emergence of nationalisms in Latin America unfortunately does not result in a general theoretical framework, which would be useful to explain the role of nationalist groups or organisations in spreading their ideology.[30]

Another well-known scholar, Hroch, analyses the social-political preconditions for the revival of ethno-nationalist movements in nation-states and mentions the existence of three distinct phases between the emergence of a nationalist movement and its successful

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[28] Anderson, 67.

[29] Gellner, *Nationalism*, 60–62. Those are (1) socioeconomic conditions, (2) cultural/ organisational traditions and (3) ideological factors

[30] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 47–65

completion.[31] Although Hroch`s study appears on its face to relate to the goals of this research, his structuralist analysis mainly focuses on socio-cultural preconditions for the emergence and development of nationalism and neither elaborates on the impact of changing political variables in this process nor on the role of agency and organisation.

Brass, on the other hand, argues that competition between the elites of dominant and subordinate groups is the main stimulus behind ethno-nationalist movements.[32] Furthermore, the success of an ethno-nationalist movement depends on several factors, including: the existence of a nationalist organisation and its policies, the response and reaction of governments to the demands of an ethnic or nationalist movement, as well as the general political context.[33] These criteria seem quite relevant to explain the trajectory of nationalist movements. However, when he mentions the role of government policies on ethno-nationalism,[34] he mainly focuses on the impact of various power-sharing systems, such autonomy and federal arrangements, and does not discuss the impact of the lower-level structural changes in the political structure such as administrative decentralisation and the opening or closure of formal political channels to ethno-nationalists. Moreover, due to the fact that these criteria proposed by Brass have not been sufficiently enriched by succeeding research within the field of nationalism studies, Brass` approach cannot provide a conceptual framework that might be applied in this research.

Hechter argues that uneven diffusion of industrialisation among core and periphery groups results in a clash of interests between members of core and periphery groups.[35] According to Hechter, ethno-nationalism is the result of the rational calculations of

[31] Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups Among the Smaller European Nations* (CUP Archive, 1985).
[32] Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison* (SAGE Publications, 1991), 13.
[33] Brass, 48–62.
[34] Brass, 50–55.
[35] Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development: Celtic Fringe in British National Development*, 2nd Revised edition (New Brunswick, N.J: Transaction Pub., 1999), 39–43.

(potential) group members, who believe that they would be better off once they established their own state.[36] While rational calculations may play a role in pursuing an ethno-nationalist agenda, a total disregard for the emotional dimension of the nationalist appeal and a lack of analysis of how this is cultivated by ethno-nationalists through various strategies seems to be the biggest shortcoming of Hechter`s model.

These approaches significantly contribute to our understanding of the economic, political and social factors in the emergence of nationalism and they will be utilised and referred to throughout the thesis on many occasions. However, these studies do not give a detailed interactive account of the process how political environments in nation-states impact the emergence and development of ethno-nationalism and how nationalist organisations spread their ideologies, politicise existing ethnic identities or create them.

2.4. Social Movement Theory and the study of ethno-nationalism

An SMT framework can provide the necessary and relevant conceptual tools to analyse the interaction between the earlier stated changing structural dynamics and Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. In fact, in the edited volume, *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* by David Snow et al., ethic and nationalist movements are one of the six major types of social movements analysed.[37]

According to Snow, Soule and Kriesi, despite the changing emphasis on some variables in different definitions, most definitions of social movements include a majority of the following components: 'collective or joint action; change oriented goals or claims;

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[36] Hechter, *Containing Nationalism*, 30.
[37] Olzak, 'Ethnic and Nationalist Social Movements.'

some extra- or non-institutional collective action; some degree of organisation; and some degree of temporal continuity'.[38]

Based on these variables, the applicability of SMT framework to the study of ethno-nationalism can be regarded as problematic considering that ethno-nationalist movements directly try to seize state power or establish a state for their own 'imagined communities'. While 'nationalism is a political movement by definition',[39] most social movements also try to attain some degree of power within governmental institutions or want to influence the governmental decision-making process. In fact, although they are not a part of the state apparatus or a product of it, social movements are also political and even comprise one of the basic components of politics in democratic societies.[40]

As Brass argues, nationalist movements require organisation, leadership, joint action and resources, enabling them to compete both with other movements and also with the state`s counter policies.[41] Smith also argues that '[A]s a sociopolitical movement, nationalism does not differ, in principle, from others in terms of its organizations, activities and techniques, except in one element: its emphasis upon cultural gestation and representation.'[42] In this sense, ethno-nationalist movements in nation-states are a form of collective action and the emergence and development or decline of ethno-nationalism is not an occurrence but a process,[43] which is bound to similar mechanisms and factors with other social movements. When one looks at the factors Brass proposes as necessary for

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[38] Steven M. Buechler, 'The Stange Career of Strain and Breakdown Theories of Collective Action,' in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi, 1st edition (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 6.
[39] Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 48.
[40] Jeroen Gunning and Ilan Zvi Baron, *Why Occupy a Square?: People, Protests and Movements in the Egyptian Revolution* (London: C Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, 2013), 9, 10; Jack A. Goldstone, *States, Parties, and Social Movements* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.
[41] Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 48.
[42] Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism* (Polity, 2010), 6.
[43] Connor, *Ethnonationalism*, 223.

nationalist movements to achieve success and compares them with the three sets of

categories proposed by a synthesised SMT framework, as will be seen in the ensuing

section, the similarities are striking.

Nevertheless, historically there has not been significant cross-fertilisation between

SMT and nationalism studies. This is not surprising, however, when considering that even

ethnicity and nationalism as phenomena have been interpreted and studied separately in

modern scholarship until recently.[44] Therefore, the applicability of SMT framework to the

study of ethno-nationalist movements' emergence and trajectory is not problematic per se.

Moreover, the loosely structured nature of the SMT framework makes its application to

various forms of contentious politics in many empirical studies possible, even together

with different theoretical traditions.[45] The task, then, is to elaborate on how it will be

utilised as a critical analytical tool in a single case study. Before embarking on that

discussion, however, it is useful to briefly discuss some major approaches within the SMT

field, particularly those that constitute the basis of the synthesised SMT framework that

this thesis utilises.

2.5.   A brief review of major SMT models

Modern SMT scholarship emerged from the critiques of earlier research traditions on

collective behaviour,[46] which tended to see mass behaviour as irrational, destructive and

barbaric.[47] During the 1960s, psychologically derived theories dominated American

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[44] Olzak, 'Ethnic and Nationalist Social Movements,' 666; Connor, *Ethnonationalism*.

[45] Jeroen Gunning and Ilan Baron`s recent work of 'Why Occupy a Square?' also uses an SMT framework by drawing simultaneously on revolution studies, despite acknowledgment of the scholars that the events they analyse is not a social movement in traditional sense.

[46] McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, 15.

[47] Anthony Oberschall, *Social Movements: Ideologies, Interests, and Identities: Ideologies, Interest, and Identities* (New Brunswick (U.S.A.): Transaction Publishers, 1996), 4-5.

scholarship on collective action.[48] Collective behaviour was largely seen as a reaction to large-scale structural changes such as industrialisation, modernisation, and rapid urbanisation. Smelser holds the opinion that '[P]eople under strain mobilize to reconstitute the social order in the name of a generalized belief.'[49] According to Gurr`s seminal study entitled 'Why Men Rebel?', which admittedly included some rational elements, collective violent behaviour is a non-rational reaction to frustration.[50]

Resource mobilisation theory (RM or RMT hereafter) arose as the first organised critique of these social-psychology based approaches. It emphasises the importance of rational calculations in micro mobilisation, the role of networks and effective organisation and the necessity of resource accumulation for mobilisation.[51] Hence, RMT tries to answer 'how' social movements emerge and develop, rather than 'why' they emerge. RM theorists assume the existence of sufficient discontent in every society to provide grassroots support for a movement.[52] Movement emergence, in this model, is contingent upon the effective organisation and aggregation of necessary resources such as money, labour, facilities and legitimacy. RMT admits that governmental policies of social control and broader socio-economic developments such as economic crises have an impact on the mobilisation process. They do not elaborate on these aspects, however, and consider them as something for the movement's organisations to overcome for successful resource aggregation and mobilisation.[53]

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[48] Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 2nd Edition (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 7.

[49] Neil J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (Quid Pro Books, 2011), 385.

[50] Ted Robert Gurr, 'Why Men Rebel Redux: How Valid Are Its Arguments 40 Years On?,' *E-International Relations* (blog), accessed December 8, 2015, http://www.e-ir.info/2011/11/17/why-men-rebel-redux-how-valid-are-its-arguments-40-years-on/.

[51] John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, 'Resource Mobilisation and Social Movements: A Partial Theory,' in *Social and Political Movements*, ed. Cyrus Ernesto Zirakzadeh, Four-Volume Set edition, vol. 2 (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011), 27–54.

[52] McCarthy and Zald, 29.

[53] McCarthy and Zald, 30–36.

Furthermore, the arguments of RMT scholars on the role of rational calculus in mobilisation are heavily influenced by the basic assumption of rational choice theory (RCT). RCT, a theory which originated in the field of economics, argues that individuals are self-centred, rational actors who try to ensure utility maximisation based on rational cost-benefit calculations.[54] Moreover, RCT postulates that reward and punishment shape human behaviour, and individuals, as rational actors, 'do those things that lead to rewards and they avoid whatever they are punished for'.[55] Mancur Olson applies such rational choice arguments to the collective action problem. He argues that individuals do not participate in collective action but prefer free-riding on their gains unless there is coercion or extra individual incentives apart from the common goods that collective action is supposed to produce. This is because they benefit from the collective goods in case of the success of collective action without bearing the cost of involvement.[56] RMT scholars recognise this free-riding problem in the collective action proposed by Mancur Olson and highlight the importance of incentives and coercion.[57]

Political Opportunity Structure (POS) theory[58] emerged during the 1970s in American scholarship on collective action as another rational-based theoretical approach to explain collective action and social movements and this model later evolved into the influential Political Process Model (PPM).[59] This theoretical model emphasises the role

[54] Lina Eriksson, *Rational Choice Theory: Potential and Limits* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 3–6, 16–24; John Scott, 'Rational Choice Theory,' in *Understanding Contemporary Society: Theories of the Present*, ed. Gary Browning, Abigail Halcli, and Frank Webster (London: SAGE, 2000), 126–38.
[55] Scott, 'Rational Choice Theory,' 128.
[56] Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, Revised edition (Harvard University Press, 2009).
[57] Mayer N. Zald and Roberta Ash, 'Social Movement Organizations: Growth, Decay and Change,' *Social Forces* 44, no. 3 (March 1, 1966): 327–41.
[58] Peter K. Eisinger, 'The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities,' *American Political Science Review* 67, no. 1 (March 1, 1973): 11–28; Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Mass: Longman Higher Education, 1978).
[59] Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982).

and impact of political environments and regime types on the emergence and development of movements. In the first conceptualisation of the POS approach, Eisinger argued that protest is more likely to occur in a newly opening mixed political system rather than a fully open or fully closed system.[60] Kitshelt further elaborated POS theory by conceptualising opportunity structures as having inputs and outputs and discussed the impact of changes in these two sides of the POS on the emergence and trajectory of movements through international comparisons.[61]

POS conceptualisation later evolved into the Political Process Model (PPM) with McAdam's study of 'Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency'.[62] According to McAdam, a social movement is first a political phenomenon which requires understanding the dynamics of the institutional political process.[63] PPM argues that social movements emerge and develop as a result of the interplay of political structure, state policies, attitudes of elites towards the movement, the organisational strength of a movement and ideational factors.[64] It argues that while challengers are generally in a weaker position than established polity members and are excluded from the formal decision-making process, some broader socio-economic developments, such as industrialisation, modernisation, and prolonged unemployment, can create pressure on the political system which may change power relationships.[65] If challengers can take advantage of this opportunity for mobilisation, they have even more leverage on the political system and suppressing them becomes harder for the government.[66] Thus, the indigenous strength of the organisation and maintenance of this strength is also another

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[60] Eisinger, 'The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities,' 15.
[61] Herbert P. Kitschelt, 'Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies,' *British Journal of Political Science* 16, no. 1 (January 1986): 57–85.
[62] McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 1982.
[63] McAdam, 36.
[64] McAdam, 40–51.
[65] McAdam, 40–43.
[66] McAdam, 43.

important factor. Moreover, the PPM model asserts the existence of a subjective interpretation process of opportunity structure, which would mediate between the situation of opportunity structure and organisational strength, and informs the necessity and possibility of success of collective action. This subjective interpretation process is called 'cognitive liberation' and is seen as the third main component of the PPM.[67]

This inclusion of subjective interpretation in the mobilisation process in McAdam's study was a reflection of an increasing trend during the 1980s which resulted in the emergence of 'Framing Theory' as the third main theoretical model of social movement study in American scholarship. Framing theory emphasises the importance of subjective interpretation in the micro-mobilisation process. According to Snow et al., grievances and discontent are not objective realities, but rather are subject to differential interpretation. Therefore, 'variations in their interpretation across individuals, social movement organisations, and time can affect whether and how they are acted upon'.[68] According to Benford and Snow, frame is 'an interpretive schema that simplifies and condenses the "world out there" by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one's present or past environment'.[69] Moreover, framing is not a static interpretation of the so-called 'world out there', but a dynamic, evolving process.[70] Benford and Snow identify three groups of frames based on their objectives: diagnostic, which relates to the definition of the problem, prognostic, which relates to the solution of the problem, and motivational, which relates to the

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[67] McAdam, 48–51.
[68] David A. Snow et al., 'Frame Alignment Process, Micromobilisation, and Movement Participation,' in *Social and Political Movements*, ed. Cyrus Ernesto Zirakzadeh, Four-Volume Set edition, vol. 2 (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011), 57.
[69] Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, 'Master Frames and Cycle of Protest,' in *Frontiers in Social Movement Theory*, ed. Aldon D. Morris (Yale University Press, 1992), 133–55.
[70] Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, 'Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,' *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 614, 628.

necessity of mobilisation.[71] For Snow et al., movement organisations link their own interpretive frameworks with the orientation of (targeted) individuals through the frame alignment process, which includes frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension and frame transformation.[72] Framing theorists point out that POS, cultural opportunities and constraints and targeted audiences have an impact on the framing process and on frame resonance.[73] However, POS and cultural context are, in this approach, objects of the framing process and are also bound to be framed by movement actors.[74]

While social movement studies have developed along these three main axes in American scholarship, social transformation following the Second World War caused a shift from class-based conflicts toward more flexible, less hierarchical, heterogeneous and more identity-based movements in Europe.[75] This led the way for the emergence of a new tradition in European scholarship of social movements called New Social Movements (NSM), which centred on the belief that these movements were different from the class-based movements of the pre-1960 period.[76] NSM theorists argue that, in contrast to class-based movements, the main motivation of actors in NSM is not a material advantage,[77] but rather they struggle for 'decentralised and participatory organisational structures' and

[71] Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, 'Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization,' *International Social Movement Research* 1, no. 1 (1988): 197–212.

[72] Snow et al., 'Frame Alignment Process, Micromobilisation, and Movement Participation,' 60–75.

[73] Benford and Snow, 'Framing Processes and Social Movements,' 628–30; Mario Diani, 'Linking Mobilization Frames and Political Opportunities: Insights from Regional Populism in Italy,' *American Sociological Review* 61, no. 6 (December 1996): 1053–69.

[74] William A. Gamson and David S. Meyer, 'Framing Political Opportunity,' in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, 1st edition (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 275–90; Benford and Snow, 'Framing Processes and Social Movements,' 631–33.

[75] Donatella Della Porta and Mario Diani, *Social Movements: An Introduction*, 2nd Edition (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 6.

[76] Alberto Melucci, 'The New Social Movements: A Theoretical Approach,' *Social Science Information* 19, no. 2 (1980): 199–226; Claus Offe, 'New Social Movements: Challenging the Boundaries of Institutional Politics,' *Social Research* 52, no. 4 (January 1, 1985).

[77] Melucci, 'The New Social Movements: A Theoretical Approach,' 219.

'autonomous spaces',[78] as well as for 'diversity' and 'ethnic and moral pluralism'.[79] This theoretical orientation paved the way for the revival of long-neglected emotional and cultural dimensions in the scholarship of social movements. Culture, emotion and identity-based explanations become one of the main pillars of social movement studies in explaining mobilisation, protest and contention.[80]

Based on these four mainstream approaches in SMT literature, scholars, including the originators of the aforementioned approaches, have continued to enrich social movement literature through various studies and the cross-fertilisation between these approaches has resulted in what has become more or less a consensus on the integrated SMT approach. Integrated SMT, which is fundamentally a revised and enriched version of McAdam's PPM, argues that the emergence, course and decline of movements are the results of interaction on three parameters: macro (political opportunities that constrain or facilitate a movement), meso (organisational factors), and micro (the framing process and collective process of interpretation, culture, emotion and identity).[81] Beginning in the 1990s, an increasing number of studies started to analyse social movements through this tri-level, integrated theoretical model.[82]

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[78] Porta and Diani, *Social Movements*, 2005, 9.

[79] Alain Touraine, 'An Introduction to the Study of Social Movements,' *Social Research* 52, no. 4 (1985): 777.

[80] Hank Johnston and Bert Klandermans, *Social Movements and Culture*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995); James M. Jasper, 'The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and around Social Movements,' *Sociological Forum* 13, no. 3 (September 1998): 397–424; Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, eds., *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, 1st edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Ron Aminzade and Doug McAdam, 'Emotions And Contentious Politics,' *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 7, no. 2 (June 2002): 107–9; Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, eds., *Rethinking Social Movements: Structure, Meaning, and Emotion* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003); James M. Jasper, *The Emotions of Protest*, 1st edition (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

[81] Doug McAdam, 'Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Directions,' in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, First Edition (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 2.

[82] Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, First Edition (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and

Like the other social movement theories, integrated SMT also cannot be considered as a single, holistic theoretical model. On the contrary, despite a general consensus on the role of the three sets of factors on macro, meso and micro levels, different approaches emerged regarding the details of each level of analysis and the mainstream integrated SMT model was seriously criticised by particularly culturalist-oriented scholars. This situation was especially evident in the formulation of the POS which suffered from a lack of agreement on the variables the theory was to include as well as what should be understood from the most basic terms of the theory, such as 'political opportunity structures', 'political opportunities', 'opportunity structure', and simply 'opportunities'.[83]

Some leading scholars of the PMM and synthesised SMT models[84] argue the necessity of exclusively focusing on political elements in macro-level analysis in order to ensure analytical distinctiveness[85] and the explanatory power of the POS theory, especially in cross-country comparisons.[86] However, other scholars criticise this 'narrow' formulation of the POS and discuss the necessity of including all environmental factors beyond the immediate control of the movement as part of the POS, such as the cultural and social environment in which the movement operates.[87] In this context, Rucht argues that social

Charles Tilly, 'Toward an Integrated Perspective on Social Movements and Revolution,' in *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, ed. Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 142–73; David S. Meyer, Nancy Whittier, and Belinda Robnett, eds., *Social Movements: Identity, Culture, and the State*, 1st edition (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi, eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007); Donatella della Porta and Mario Diani, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements*, Reprint edition (Oxford University Press, 2018).

[83] Ruud Koopmans, 'Political. Opportunity. Structure. Some Splitting to Balance the Lumping,' *Sociological Forum* 14, no. 1 (March 1999): 95; Dieter Rucht, 'The Impact of National Contexts on Social Movement Structures: A Cross-Movement and Cross-National Comparison,' in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, 1st edition (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 188–89.

[84] McAdam, 'Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Directions'; Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3rd edition (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Porta and Diani, *Social Movements*, 2005.

[85] McAdam, 'Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Directions,' 23.

[86] Porta and Diani, *Social Movements*, 2005, 17.

[87] Rucht, 'The Impact of National Contexts on Social Movement Structures: A Cross-Movement and Cross-National Comparison'; Gamson and Meyer, 'Framing Political Opportunity.'

and cultural factors and the national context of a given country can also constrain or facilitate a movement.[88] Gamson and Mayor also similarly argue that by excluding culture from the opportunity structure, we miss an important component of it.[89] Additionally, some other scholars underscore the impossibility of setting invariant variables for the POS and discuss the contingent character of the structure.[90]

These culture-oriented arguments also criticise the mainstream POS approach that limits structural variables with political ones for adopting a static opportunity structure understanding. While Kriesi and Koopmans argue that what is called political opportunity structure consists of both structural as well as interactive and processual elements,[91] Goodwin and Jasper more eagerly reject the existence of an objective opportunity structure and claim that 'cultural and strategic processes define and create the factors usually presented as "structural"'.[92]

These criticisms influenced the foremost theorists of the synthesised SMT approach in the process. McAdam, Tilly and Tarrow not only acknowledged these criticisms in their studies but also came up with a new agenda called Contentious Politics (CP).[93] Rather than identifying relevant variables affecting social movements, the CP conceptualisation aims to explain causal 'explanatory mechanisms and processes' in various type of contentious

[88] Rucht, 'The Impact of National Contexts on Social Movement Structures: A Cross-Movement and Cross-National Comparison,' 188–189.
[89] Gamson and Meyer, 'Framing Political Opportunity,' 279.
[90] Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, 'Caught in a Winding, Snarling Vine: The Structural Bias of Political Process Theory,' *Sociological Forum* 14, no. 1 (1999): 27–54.
[91] Hanspeter Kriesi, 'Political Context and Opportunity,' in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi, 1st edition (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 67–90; Koopmans, 'Political. Opportunity. Structure. Some Splitting to Balance the Lumping.'
[92] Goodwin and Jasper, 'Caught in a Winding, Snarling Vine,' 42–52.
[93] Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, 'Comparative Perspectives On Contentious Politics,' In *Comparative Politics Rationality, Culture, And Structure*, ed. Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman, Second Edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 260–90; Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 2nd edition (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015).

politics ranging from civil wars to revolution in a much more dynamic, relational fashion.[94] Thus, CP does not simply bring a new theoretical approach to analysing the emergence, development and outcomes of the social movements. Instead, it broadens the unit of analysis from social movements as a specific type of collective action so as to include many other types of contentious political activities. As a consequence of this broad scope of applicability to various fields, however, the depth of inquiry in a single case is much more limited compared to the integrated SMT framework.

Hence, the CP model did not mean the disappearance of the classical SMT model as a theoretical framework in explaining the collective action process, but integrated SMT might still provide a more robust framework compared to the CP model depending on the case selection. On this account Ludger Mees argues that '[T]he new approach [CP] is likely to be productive when the analytical focus is broad, more general and strongly comparative; whereas the "classic agenda" [synthesised SMT model] still seems to work quite well in cases in which our purpose is not to compare a large number of different episodes, but to analyse a certain example of contentious politics in the light of theory, e.g., a nationalist movement or other social movement.'[95]

Moreover, as Kriesi argues, dynamic and relational analysis of the contentious political activity is not exclusively a peculiarity of the CP model, but the synthesised SMT model is 'sufficiently open to accommodate such a perspective'.[96] In a similar logic to this argument of Kriesi, as the following section will elaborate, the analyses of macro, meso and micro-level variables in the integrated SMT approach and causal explanatory mechanisms and processes in the CP approach are not necessarily mutually exclusive. On

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[94] McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, 18, 32.
[95] Ludger Mees, 'Politics, Economy, or Culture? The Rise and Development of Basque Nationalism in the Light of Social Movement Theory,' *Theory and Society* 33, no. 3/4 (2004): 314–315.
[96] Kriesi, 'Political Context and Opportunity,' 77–78.

the contrary, this thesis contends that the change in the structural variables and the interaction of the meso and micro-level parameters with these structural changes impact the trajectory of the contention through the causal mechanisms they lead to or trigger. Furthermore, it is possible to locate and present the analysis of the relevant causal mechanisms within the SMT framework in relation to the parameters of each level of analysis as well.

In the light of these arguments, synthesised SMT-derived framework provides the backbone of the theoretical framework needed for an in-depth analysis of the impact of the earlier-stated changing structural developments on the path of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. The following section will both elaborate specific aspects of the SMT and POS theory due to their relevance to the case study and will also reveal how this research will use the theoretical framework to underpin the case study.

2.6. Applying the synthesised SMT framework to the case

As stated in Chapter 1, this research attempts to analyse how the changing structural dynamics in Turkish political and administrative settings from 1999 to mid-2015 impacted the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. These structural changes include the following developments: the opening up of previously closed legal political channels to Kurdish ethno-nationalist electoral politics on both local and national levels; a decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system and consequent empowerment of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement's local executive power; democratisation and increasing civil and cultural liberties for Kurdish-origin Turkish citizens; and the decline of the Turkish state's coercive pressure on the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. This thesis does not test any specific theory; instead, it addresses research questions that stem

from a scholarly gap and attempts to answer these questions through empirical research. Consequently, macro-centred, SMT-derived theory serves as a general conceptual framework that guides the research questions and process.[97]

As seen in the previous two sections, the impact of structural parameters on the trajectory of movements is primarily conceptualised as POS theory. Excluding arguments about socio-cultural parameters, the most common parameters formulated within POS theory are (1) the nature of institutional political structure,[98] (2) the configuration of actors pertaining to contention (or the nature of elite alignments and the presence or absence of elite allies)[99] and (3) a state's capacity and will to repress challengers.[100] As can be easily discerned, the first and third variables in common POS formulations are particularly pertinent to the central research questions in this thesis.

Social movement scholars have largely conceptualised the nature of a formal political system in a polity as 'open' or 'closed' since Eisinger's seminal article in 1973.[101] The openness or closure of a polity refers to whether formal political institutions enable the accession of challengers to the political system through legal channels or not. While centralised, unitary states provide fewer access points, decentralised polities, or places where there are multiple power centres,[102] offer higher-level access. Moreover, the functional separation of power within a polity between legislative, executive and judicial

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[97] Creswell, *Research Design*, 69.

[98] Rucht, 'The Impact of National Contexts on Social Movement Structures: A Cross-Movement and Cross-National Comparison,' 190; McAdam, 'Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Directions,' 27; Kriesi, 'Political Context and Opportunity,' 70; Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 164–65.

[99] Kriesi, 'Political Context and Opportunity,' 73–77; McAdam, 'Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Directions,' 27; Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 165.

[100] McAdam, 'Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Directions,' 27; Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 165.

[101] Kriesi, 'Political Context and Opportunity,' 69.

[102] The multiplicity of independent power centres within a polity is seen as a distinct parameter by McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly in one of their last collective works. See: McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, 'Comparative Perspectives on Contentious Politics,' 263.

powers also influences the openness of a system. While a polity with a higher level of

separation of power is more open for challengers, polities with centralised power tend to be

more closed.[103]

With regard to the impact of government repression on the course of movements, and

with the caveat mentioned by McAdam that notes the nature of repression might be

unpredictably affected by 'complex social processes',[104] there is a general correlation

between the openness of a POS and the nature and level of repression the state exerts on

challenging groups.[105] Consequently, some other scholars have considered repressive

policies as a barometer for a POS and thus focus on this variable instead of including the

previously stated variables of a POS in analysing structural factors.[106]

As to how the nature of a POS impacts the trajectory of a movement, different

arguments and empirical findings exist in the SMT literature. Regarding the relationship

between the nature of a POS and a movement's ability to mobilise, some scholars argue

that mobilisation increases as a POS expands.[107] Others have noted that particularly violent

movements can take place in the absence of legal political channels and in the presence of

indiscriminate repressive measures.[108] Still, other scholars have contended that a

curvilinear relationship between a POS and a movement's mobilisation exists by pointing

out that movements often flourish in mixed systems which neither totally repress nor

[103] Kriesi, 'Political Context and Opportunity,' 70.

[104] McAdam, 'Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Directions,' 28.

[105] Charles D. Brockett, *Political Movements and Violence in Central America*, 1st edition (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression And Resistance In The Islamic World* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Pub, 2003).

[106] Donatella della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, New edition (Cambridge England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[107] Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*; Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (University of Chicago Press, 1982); Tarrow, *Power in Movement*.

[108] Charles D. Brockett, 'A Protest-Cycle Resolution of the Repression/Popular-Protest Paradox Charles D. Brockett,' *Social Science History* 17, no. 3 (1993): 429–55; Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel*.

accommodate the demands of the movements.[109] According to a fourth opinion, it is not possible to posit an invariant relationship between the nature of the POS and movement trajectory as different intervening variables might produce different results depending on the presence or absence of another component of the POS.[110]

Regarding the relationship between the POS and the nature (violent or peaceful) of challenging movements, Hafez argues that selective repression curbs extremist elements of a movement inherent in an open political system and pushes moderate challengers towards legal, political channels.[111] In a similar fashion, Goodwin and Skocpol refer to the ballot box as 'the coffin of revolutionary movements'.[112] Brockett, on the other hand, argues that decreasing levels of repression accompanied by opening in other areas paves the way for the expansion of challenging movements and the level of this expansion also depends on the mobilisation level that the group had previously achieved.[113] Gurr also argues that in newly opening autocratic systems 'democratisation is likely to facilitate both protest and communal rebellion' as these states generally do not have enough resources or institutional capacity to accommodate ethnic strife as advanced, democratic states do.[114]

The diverging arguments of these studies, rather than disproving each other, corroborate the main argument of the integrated SMT model that structural changes may not unconditionally lead to identical results in every context, and the interaction of the structure with organisational, cultural, and other possible context-specific factors should be

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[109] Eisinger, 'The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities'; Kitschelt, 'Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest.'
[110] Koopmans, 'Political. Opportunity. Structure. Some Splitting to Balance the Lumping,' 105; Doowon Suh, 'How Do Political Opportunities Matter for Social Movements?: Political Opportunity, Misframing, Pseudosuccess, and Pseudofailure,' *The Sociological Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (2001): 441.
[111] Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel*.
[112] Jeff Goodwin and Theda Skocpol, 'Explaining Revolutions in the Contemporary Third World,' *Politics & Society* 17, no. 4 (December 1, 1989): 495.
[113] Brockett, *Political Movements and Violence in Central America*.
[114] Ted Robert Gurr, *Minorities at Risk: A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts* (Washington, D.C: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1993), 187–138.

incorporated into the analysis. Therefore, although structural change constitutes the starting point of this research, it is not a structuralist but a macro-centred integrated SMT framework that enables the analysis of the meso and micro-level developments of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in relation to structural change and provides the most suitable analytic tool for this research.

As proposed by Kitschelt[115] and adopted by Kriesi,[116] analysing structural change alongside a two-pronged POS conceptualisation as input and output dimensions, and locating this two-tiered POS framework within the broader, integrated SMT framework, provides a sound overarching framework to analyse the impact of the changing structure on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. In this two-tiered POS conceptualisation, the input aspect mainly refers to the availability of meaningful access points to the state system and legal decision-making channels, as well as open articulation of different demands through the formal political structure.[117] Although Kriesi's conceptualisation of the output side of the POS includes some technical elements about the policy-making and implementation process, it mainly refers to the responsiveness of a polity to the demands of movements and the capacity of the government to convert these demands into public policy.[118] According to this conceptualisation, if a POS is both open on the input side and also equally converts the articulated demands into public policy, it leads to assimilative movement strategies. On the other hand, if both input and output sides are closed, it paves the way for confrontational movement strategies. Rather than simply a

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[115] Kitschelt, 'Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest.'
[116] Hanspeter Kriesi, 'The Political Opportunity Structure of New Social Movements: Its Impact on Their Mobilization,' in *The Politics Of Social Protest: Comparative Perspectives On States And Social Movements*, ed. Craig Jenkins, Reprint edition (London: UCL, 2005), 83–98.
[117] Kitschelt, 'Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest,' 64.
[118] Kitschelt, 62–63.

limited number of possible outcomes, many combinations of the respective sides of a POS exist that affect the trajectory of the contention in different ways.[119]

Incorporating of the logic of Eisinger's arguments on the curvilinear relationship between the POS and a movement's trajectory with Kitshelt's input-output conceptualisation leads to the following argument. When the level of openness on the output side of the POS does not meet the demands of challengers, challengers logically are not pleased. Yet, although this dissatisfaction may provide some rationale for elevating the level of activity in a movement, it does not automatically lead to increasing mobilisation. If the openness of the input dimension provides new avenues and resources to the challengers on a higher level than what is enjoyed on the output side while simultaneously preventing the polity from exerting restrictive pressure on the challenging movement, such a mixed POS results not only in increased movement activity but also in increased mobilisation and growth of the challenging groups and movements.

As Kriesi points out, input and output features of the POS are closely connected to each other and it might be not always possible to draw a clear line between them.[120] Nonetheless, as an analytical distinction, this separation of the POS and location of it within the integrated SMT model as an overarching framework proves highly useful. It successfully enables the analysis of the relationship between the macro, meso and micro-level analyses as well as causal mechanisms on which the CP agenda focuses. As Chapter 5 will reveal, the analysis of the output aspect of the Turkish POS from 1999 to 2015 meaningfully links the structural change to the meso-level analysis and shows why

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[119] Kitschelt, 64–66.
[120] Kriesi, 'Political Context and Opportunity,' 70.

separatist Kurdish ethno-nationalist organisations, particularly the PKK, felt threatened by the expansion of cultural rights for Kurdish-origin citizens in Turkey.

An analysis of the structural changes from an input perspective similarly provides valuable conceptual lenses to examine the relationship between key factors: the opening up of formal political channels, the decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system on a macro-level and the increasing resource mobilisation of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement on a meso-level. Additionally, it helps to explain the relationship between the structural change and Kurdish ethno-nationalist micro-mobilisation through rational calculus. Moreover, this macro-centred integrated SMT framework enables both an explanation of the causation between increasing civil liberties in Turkey after 1999 and the expansion of Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilising structures on a meso-level as well as the relationship between the expansion of Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilising structures and the diffusion of Kurdish ethno-nationalist frames and increasing frame-resonance on a micro-level. Furthermore, the macro-centred, synthesised SMT framework also enables an analysis of the relationship between the expansion of the input aspect of the POS and the increasing capacity of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement to construct a Kurdish identity through the use of cultural traditions, thereby triggering the emotional aspect of ethno-nationalism.

Moreover, as expressed by numerous studies on social movements and political violence, violence and terror cannot be analysed as isolated from the broader structural parameters. There is a linkage between these factors and political violence, terror and non-violent protest activity.[121] As a crucial contribution of the SMT-derived framework, these

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[121] Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State*; Jeroen Gunning, 'Social Movement Theory and the Study of Terrorism,' in *Critical Terrorism Studies: A New Research Agenda*, ed. Richard Jackson, Marie Breen Smyth, and Jeroen Gunning (London: Routledge, 2009), 156–77; Gurr, *Peoples versus States*, 94.

studies on social movements, terrorism and political violence inform the analysis of PKK terror and violence within the broader Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and their interaction with each other, with society, and with the political system in general.

Lastly, the synthesised SMT model not only provides a reasonably holistic overarching framework as each level fills a gap in the other approaches, but also this loose, overarching framework makes possible the inclusion of literature on nationalism studies that relates to the level of analysis. For example, when analysing the role of emotion and cultural values and myths, this thesis draws on nationalism literature in addition to SMT scholarship on the role of emotion, myths and cultural values in the process of spreading nationalist sentiment.

2.7.   Research methods

This research neither aims to test any particular theory nor focus on any specific methods in a deductive manner. Instead, it addresses questions that stem from a scholarly gap. Consequently, this study, based on a pragmatic research view, adopts a mixed-method research strategy and uses both qualitative and quantitative data sources to explain the subject matter.[122] As Creswell argues, qualitative and quantitative and mixed-method research does not refer to three totally distinct categories but rather constitutes part of a research continuum where the qualitative and quantitative methods are positioned on the ends and mixed methods in the middle. Thus, a virtual research method might not be fully

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[122] Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie and Nancy L. Leech, 'On Becoming a Pragmatic Researcher: The Importance of Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methodologies,' *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 8, no. 5 (December 1, 2005): 375–87; David L. Morgan, 'Paradigms Lost and Pragmatism Regained: Methodological Implications of Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods,' *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 1, no. 1 (January 2007): 48–76; Kai M. Thaler, 'Mixed Methods Research in the Study of Political and Social Violence and Conflict,' *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 11, no. 1 (January 1, 2017): 59–76; Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 22–23; Creswell, *Research Design*, 10–11.

qualitative and a mixed method that draws equally on both approaches but might be anywhere on this continuum.[123]

This research explains the impact of the changes in the Turkish POS on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism mainly through qualitative analysis of several primary data sources. Quantitative data, on the other hand, is mainly used in this thesis in order to supplement the qualitative explanation for confirmation purposes.[124] This supplementation of the qualitative findings with quantitative data is particularly important considering the argumentative and ideological nature of the subject matter. Furthermore, it makes visible whether the more extensive quantitative data corroborates the qualitative findings and whether the qualitative analysis, based on a limited sample, represents larger segments of the population.[125] Moreover, such a methodological triangulation enhances the explanatory power of the thesis, bolstering its validity, trustworthiness and generalisability,[126] while significantly decreasing the concern for the 'selective plausibility'[127] and 'confirmation bias'[128] of the qualitative findings.

The qualitative part of the research consisted of three different data-collection phases that included both deductive and inductive elements. The first part was the

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[123] Creswell, *Research Design*, 3–4.

[124] Such a mixed-method strategy largely falls within the approach Creswell calls the 'exploratory sequential mixed method'. Creswell, 225–26; Although it does not categorise the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods with clear cut labels like Creswell does, another, and to some extent similar, explanation of how qualitative and quantitative methods can be used together can be seen in Uwe Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 4th edition (Los Angeles, Calif.: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2009), 25–31; Ashatu Hussein, 'The Use of Triangulation in Social Sciences Research : Can Qualitative and Quantitative Methods Be Combined?,' *Journal of Comparative Social Work* 4, no. 1 (March 24, 2015): 5–6.

[125] Creswell, *Research Design*, 225; Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 30; Alan Bryman, 'Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Research: How Is It Done?,' *Qualitative Research* 6, no. 1 (2006): 105.

[126] Alan Bryman, 'Quantitative and Qualitative Research: Further Reflections on Their Integration,' in *Mixing Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Research*, ed. Julia Brannen, 1st edition (Aldershot: Avebury, 1992), 57–80; N. Golafshani, 'Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research,' *The Qualitative Report* 8, no. 4 (2003): 597–606; Creswell, *Research Design*, 225; Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 29–32.

[127] Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 384–85.

[128] Vennesson, 'Case Studies and Process Tracing: Theories and Practices,' 237–38.

collection and analysis of the vast literature on the nationalism, ethno-nationalist movements, SMT and existing empirical studies on the Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. Document analysis of the relevant official publications of the Turkish Republic on the issue and speeches of presidents, prime ministers and other governmental elites, and publications of the PKK and KCK, as well as legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist political parties, and the speeches by leaders of these organisations also constituted a key component of this first phase.

The second phase of the qualitative research comprised semi-structured, qualitative interviews — a method widely seen by many scholars as a highly effective in exploring individual and collective beliefs, perceptions, motivations, social processes and relationships.[129] Rubin and Rubin argue that by immersing in diverse constructions of events through interviews, researchers 'learn to see the world from perspectives other than their own…create portraits of complicated processes' and induce 'more thoughtful and nuanced conclusions'.[130] Mason argues that although qualitative researchers do not refer to causality very often, qualitative research provides highly suitable tools to explain causality precisely as it pays 'attention to detail, complexity and contextuality' instead of trying to establish a straightforward cause and effect relationship.[131] Thus, as this research aims to explore social processes and relationships, not by merely identifying a rough cause-effect relationship but through a detailed explanation of primary information gathered from subjects in the field who experienced this process, in-depth qualitative interviews are the most suitable data collection method for this aim.

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[129] Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (SAGE, 2011), 3–5; Rosalind Edwards and Janet Holland, *What Is Qualitative Interviewing?*, Annotated edition (London : New Delhi: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 89–91; Irving Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2013), 9–11.
[130] Rubin and Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing*, 3–4.
[131] Jennifer Mason, *Qualitative Researching* (SAGE, 2017), 222.

Semi-structured interviewees were carried out with 50 people in five cities in Turkey: Adana, Ankara, Diyarbakir, Istanbul and Mardin. Two of these cities, Diyarbakir and Mardin, are located in the south-eastern part of Turkey. The others – Adana, Istanbul and Ankara, the capital – are three of the five largest cities in Turkey. All of these sites were purposefully selected. Diyarbakir and Mardin are in the very heart of south-eastern Turkey and represent two highly suitable and important sites for analysis of the subject matter. Adana is the fifth-largest city in Turkey with a population of over 2 million people, is very close to the Mediterranean coast and hosts a sizeable Kurdish-origin population which largely migrated to the city during the 1990s. Among this community the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement has a developed network and fairly strong social ties. Thus, Adana also provides good opportunities to analyse the subject matter, particularly among the more recently immigrated Kurds. Lastly, Ankara and Istanbul were important both because the experts and political elites that were purposively targeted for interviews live in these cities as well as the fact that these cities also host sizeable Kurdish populations of migrants who moved from various cities in eastern and south-eastern Turkey at different times.

In the interviews, multi-staged sampling methods – cluster sampling, purposeful sampling and snowballing – were used. There are several reasons for this choice. As Kurdish ethno-nationalism, related violence and terror are phenomena that have been experienced daily by everyone in the region – regardless of educational, economic or social conditions – all residents are aware of the issue and have already formed viewpoints on the matter. Therefore, interviewees had to be selected so as to reflect the views of as many different groups as possible. One of the logical ways of ensuring engagement from all walks of life was to cluster them in subgroups and conduct interviews with a certain number of people from each cluster. The researcher grouped prospective interviewees into three main clusters:

1. Interviewees sympathising with or clearly supporting Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

2. Interviewees with a clear pro-state or pro-AK Party worldview.

3. Interviewees with no clear alignment with either the Turkish state or Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

The researcher initially planned to carry out interviewees with 15 people from each of these groups. Clustering did not mean that all the interviewees were purposively selected and coded before the fieldwork according to these three groups. While some elite interviewees were purposively selected and categorised alongside these three groupings prior to the fieldwork, the vast majority of the ordinary interviewees were not. The cluster divisions only reflected the intention of the researcher to interview a balanced number of locals from each point of view. The researcher's five years of experience living in south-eastern Turkey long before this research, as well as two years in another field site, Adana, resulted in many personal contacts and relationships that facilitated the establishment of contact with many people from each cluster. Consequently, through this referral-based strategy, the researcher managed to conduct the interviewing process according to this clustering method. Additionally, the researcher set out to conduct interviews with 12 Turkish national security officials and academics and other experts working on the PKK and Kurdish nationalism in Turkey through purposive sampling. Thus, the initial plan was to conduct interviewees with 57 people. However, roughly one month after the start of the fieldwork when the researcher had recently completed the interviews in Adana and Mardin, the so-called 'resolution process' collapsed while the researcher was in the field. After the clashes restarted, it became more difficult to find new interviewees from the Kurdish ethno-nationalist cluster. Consequently, it was only possible to interview 11 people from this group. Nevertheless, this did not create any problem as the data collected from interviewees had already begun to saturate after seven or eight interviews. This was possibly due to a high

level of ideological awareness by the interviewees in this group; most of the comments and framings of these interviewees reflected the framing of the PKK and legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors.

In addition to these three worldview-based stratifications, the researcher performed interviewees with political, economic, traditional and bureaucratic elites from each of the above clusters. Elite is defined as 'a group of individuals, who hold, or have held, a privileged position in society and ... are likely to have had more influence on political outcomes than general members of the public'.[132] Similarly, the decision to classify some of the interviewees under the elite banner in this study stems first from their ability to influence perceptions and opinions of those around them, and second from their supposed wider perspectives on the issue due to their social status, as well as broader social, economic, and political relations.

The researcher carried out interviews with numerous economic, political, and traditional elites as well as many non-elites from each cluster. Interviews with both elites and non-elites often naturally led to introductions and further interviews with others from the same cluster, a technique known as snowballing. Yet, after numerous interviewees were reached through snowballing, the tone of responses began to saturate around like perspectives. When this occurred, a new contact from another worldview was found and snowballing then started anew for the new cluster. In multiple cities this pattern repeated itself and enabled the researcher to talk a wide array of people from diverse backgrounds.

Furthermore, during interviews in Mardin and Diyarbakir, the researcher also tried and carry out interviews with members of non-Kurdish ethnic minorities. In all, interviews

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[132] David Richards, 'Elite Interviewing: Approaches and Pitfalls:,' *Politics* 16, no. 3 (September 1, 1996): 199.

with six ethnic Arabs, one Assyrian, and one Chaldean were conducted in Mardin; four interviews with people of a Zaza background were also performed, three in Diyarbakir and the other in Ankara with a migrant from Tunceli. Following the collapse of the 'resolution process', however, it did not become possible to talk to 57 interviewees as originally intended and the final number of the interviewees totalled 50. Nevertheless, this number includes sufficient numbers of interviewees from all clusters and few new perspectives emerged after about 40 people had been interviewed.

Expert interviews were largely carried out in Ankara and Istanbul. In this context, the researcher carried out interviews with a total of 12 experts. Unlike with as the elites, the term expert is used to define people who have a 'specific contextual knowledge of a given research field or … internal knowledge of the structures, procedures and events in a given organization'.[133] Experts were purposively selected; the researcher carried out extensive interviews with seven well-known academics working on the PKK, terrorism or Turkey's Kurds in general, as well as one general director of a well-known public research and consultation company. The remaining four expert interviewees were security bureaucrats who are believed to have deep knowledge of the issue. Discussions with the experts, particularly the academics, which took place after the much of the fieldwork had been carried out, provided a kind of peer review for the initial findings of this research and helped validate the information gathered from other interviewees. This opportunity came from the researcher having the chance to ask detailed follow-up questions to the initial open-ended questions that were based on insight provided by earlier interviewees and document analysis. Thus, talking to scholars with deep expertise in the field was akin to orally receiving an academic paper specifically designed for the needs of this research.

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[133] B. Littig, 'Interviewing the Elite – Interviewing Experts: Is There a Difference?,' in *Interviewing Experts*, ed. A. Bogner, B. Littig, and W. Menz (Basingstoke, Hampshire England ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 100.

Finally, it should be noted that among the expert academics, the researcher tried to choose several academics from each political orientation in line with the general clustered sampling strategy mentioned previously.

All interviews included six open-ended questions that aimed to elicit information from the interviewee without restricting or channelling the interviewee to answer in any specific way. Nevertheless, some follow up questions included references to opinions of earlier interviewees, publicly known opinions of political elites, or general public discussions in Turkey on specific dimensions of the issue. This enabled the interviewees to challenge other perspectives. The open-ended interview questions were prepared by the researcher so as each of them reflected an aspect of the research questions. The interview questions were then reviewed by the thesis supervisor and included in the fieldwork proposal which was approved by the department's Ethics and Risk Committee before the fieldwork.

Knowledge gathered through the interviews then obliged the third phase of qualitative data collection. Once many interviewees noted the relationship between the changing POS and its utilisation by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement for promoting ethno-nationalism through cultural rituals, arts and ethno-symbols in meetings, weddings, funerals and festivals, the researcher felt it was necessary to analyse the content of many video recordings of these events and activities available on YouTube. This provided an excellent within-method triangulation of the information in this account obtained in the interviews.[134]

After completing the qualitative analysis, its findings were compared with relevant quantitative data such as election results and statistical data on civil and cultural liberties,

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[134] Flick, *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 448–49.

on coercive pressure by the Turkish state and on violent incidents and terrorist attacks in Turkey during the focused time span. This methodological triangulation not only confirmed and validated the qualitative analysis, but it also enriched the analytic quality of this study. Some of the quantitative data was collected by the researcher through a detailed investigation of raw statistics delivered by the Turkish state as well as what could be found on open sources. The quantitative data were incorporated into the analysis through simple calculations without the aid of a specialised software programme. Still, they proved highly helpful and meaningfully complemented the qualitative analysis.

Lastly, in the early stages of the research, the researcher spent considerable time examining the relevant ethical codes and guidelines of several institutions, and in all steps of this research, including fieldwork and in conducting the interviewees as well as other data collection process, the researcher meticulously followed all the generally accepted ethical procedures of Western academia. During the fieldwork, all interviewees were explained the purpose and content of the research and their consent to the interview and recording was received beforehand. Moreover, they were given the right to receive a copy of the interview text or recording and remain anonymous. All of the interviewees opted to exercise their right to remain anonymous and were consequently cited in this research as such.

2.8. Conclusion

This chapter has displayed the basics of the theoretical framework that guides the research, its application to the case study and also the mixed research methods this research adopts. This chapter has acknowledged the significant contribution of nationalism theories to understanding of the roots and development process of nationalism. It has nonetheless

argued that in terms of providing a holistic framework that enables the analysis of the interaction between the changes in focused political structural variables and trajectory of ethno-nationalism in a nation-state, existing studies within the discipline of nationalism and ethnicity studies fail to provide a satisfactory framework. This chapter has also shown how SMT is relevant to the study of ethno-nationalist movements in nation-states. Moreover, after giving brief explanations of the mainstream SMT models, this chapter has argued that a macro-centred, integrated SMT provides a satisfactorily robust theoretical framework for the analysis of this study's main foci.

The chapter has also restated that this research does not test any theory nor has any methodological biases. Instead, it addresses the research questions through a pragmatic research paradigm that aims to bring an analytically sound and scholarly credible explanation to these questions. In this context, this chapter has also discussed the basics of the qualitatively centred multi-method research strategy that this research adopts, where qualitative analysis provides the main source of explanation and quantitative data is used to not only confirm but also increase the validity of the findings of the qualitative analysis.

CHAPTER 3

THE EVOLUTION OF KURDISH ETHNO-NATIONALISM

IN TURKEY UNTIL 1999

3.1.   Introduction

With the aim of providing historical context for the ensuing empirical part of the research, this chapter overviews the evolution of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey from its emergence during the Ottoman period until 1999. The chapter largely relies on data derived from the existing literature. Nevertheless, it is not merely a descriptive overview but, in accordance with the adopted integrated SMT framework, analyses the emergence and development of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in relation to the interaction of the macro, meso and micro-level developments.

This chapter consists of six sections. Following the introduction, the second section examines the background of the Kurds and extent of their population. The third section analyses the emergence of Kurdish ethno-nationalism and its development until the 1960s. The fourth section focuses on the course of Kurdish ethno-nationalism between the military coups of 1960 and 1980. The subsequent section scrutinises the interaction of Kurdish ethno-nationalism with the changing POS in Turkey after the 1980 military coup and analyses its development until 1999. The sixth section concludes the chapter.

3.2.   The Kurds

Various myths[1] and hypotheses[2] surround discussions on the origin of the Kurds. However, as Meho argues, scholars widely accept that the Kurds are descendants of the Meds who were a mixture of Indio-European immigrants called Aryans and a group of local inhabitants known as Gutis.[3] Kurds are not a linguistically homogenous group but are comprised of a variety of subgroups that speak languages which are not mutually intelligible or are only partially intelligible.[4] As McDowall argues, these linguistic variations also strengthen the argument that the Kurds likely have several origins rather than a single, coherent ancestry.[5]

Today's Kurds can be grouped into two main sub-categories: Kurmanji speakers and Sorani speakers. As McDowall explains, these two languages differ from each other in grammar as much as German and English and as much as Dutch and German in vocabulary.[6] There are also three less-widely spoken dialects or languages that generally considered by the existing studies as part of the Kurdish language. The first of them is Kermanshahi, also known as Laki, and the other two are Gurani and Zazaki.[7] Only Kurmanji and Zazaki are spoken in Turkey, and speakers of the other varieties reside in the Kurdish-populated parts of neighbouring countries.[8]

The case of the Zazas is particularly notable when analysing Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. The Zazas live in the eastern and south-eastern regions of Turkey.

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[1] David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 3rd edition (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 4.
[2] White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers*, 14.
[3] Lokman I. Meho, 'The Kurds and Kurdistan: A Selective and Annotated Bibliography' (Westport, Connecticut, London: Greenwood, 1997), 7.
[4] Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey*, 5–6.
[5] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 8–9.
[6] McDowall, 9–10.
[7] Metin Heper, *The State and Kurds in Turkey: The Question of Assimilation* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 35; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 10; Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 22; Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Society, Ethnicity, Nationalism and Refugee Problems,' 27.
[8] Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 21.

Reliable statistics on the size their population are hard to come by and various sources report estimations ranging from one million to six million.[9] While linguists tend to consider their language, Zazaki, to be a distinct language and not a simply a dialect of Kurdish (it lacks mutual intelligibility with Kurmanji and Sorani),[10] most studies on Kurdish ethno-nationalism contain few references to these issues and either depict the Zazas as a subgroup of the Kurds[11] or analyse Kurdish identity and the Kurdish nationalism without addressing case of the Zazas.[12]

Empirical research on the Zazas also yields contradicting results. On the one hand, many Zazas, including politicians, academicians and intellectuals, argue that 'Zazaki is not Kurdish and the Zazas are not Kurds'.[13] On the other hand, there are many leading Zaza figures in both the PKK/KCK as well as Kurdish ethno-nationalist political parties such as the former HDP leader Selahattin Demirtas, and the co-head of the KCK, Bese Hozat. These individuals contend that both they themselves and the Zaza people in general are

[9] Rasim Bozbuga, 'Türkiye'nin Bir Rengi: Zazalar [A Colour of Turkey: Zazas],' *Turkiye Gunlugu [Dairy of Turkey]*, no. 113 (Winter 2013): 57.

[10] Joyce Blau, 'Kurdish Written Literature,' in *Kurdish Culture and Identity*, ed. Philip Kreyenbroek and Christine Allison (London ; Atlantic Highlands, N.J: Zed Books, 1996), 20; Mesut Keskin, 'Zazaca Üzerine Notlar [Notes on Zazaki],' in *Herkesin Bildiği Sır: Dersim [The Secret Everyone Knows: Dersim]*, ed. Sukru Aslan (Istanbul: Iletisim Yayinlari, 2011); Paul Ludwig, 'The Position of Zazaki among West Iranian Languages,' in *Old and Middle Iranian Studies Part I*, ed. Sims Williams (3rd European Conference of Iranian Studies, Wiesbaden, 1995), 163–76.

[11] Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*; Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Society, Ethnicity, Nationalism and Refugee Problems'; Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kurdish Ethno-Nationalism versus Nation-Building States: Collected Articles* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2000); Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey*; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*.

[12] Welat Zeydanlioglu, 'Repression or Reform? An Analysis of the AKP's Kurdish Language Policy,' in *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation, and Reconciliation*, ed. Cengiz Gunes and Welat Zeydanlioglu (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014), 180; O. E. Aksoy, 'Music and Reconciliation in Turkey,' in *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation and Reconciliation*, ed. Cengiz Gunes and Welat Zeydanlioglu (London ; New York: Routledge, 2013), 230; Robert Olson, ed., *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990s: Its Impact on Turkey and the Middle East* (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996); Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 1997); Michael M. Gunter, 'The Kurdish Spring,' *Third World Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (2013): 441–57; Cengiz Gunes and Welat Zeydanlioglu, eds., *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation and Reconciliation* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2013).

[13] 'Zazaca Kürtçe Değil, Zazalar Kürt Değil [Zazaki is not Kurdish and the Zazas are not Kurds],' *Dersim Zaza Platformu* (blog), accessed May 20, 2015, https://dersimzaza.wordpress.com/2010/06/09/zazaca-kurtce-degil-zazalar-kurt-degil/; Inan Gedik, 'Meclis'e Sıçrayan Polemik [The Polemic in the Assembly],' HaberTurk, May 30, 2013, http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/848731-meclise-sicrayan-polemik.

Kurds. Yet, as some scholars and many of those interviewed for this study note, Zaza

consciousness is growing and the percentage of the Zaza community in Turkey which

believes that Zazas are a unique people with a distinct language is increasing.[14]

Another point worth considering concerns sectarian and religious differences. The

vast majority of Turkey`s Kurds belong to the Shafi`i creed within the Sunni school of

Islam. A small portion of the population which are Sunni Hanafi followers also exists, in

addition to smaller numbers of Alawi Kurds and Yazidi Kurds.[15] Moreover, in regards to

the Zazas, while some Zazas are Shafi'i like their Kurmanj Kurd neighbours, an important

community of Zazas, particularly those in Tunceli, belong to the Alawi tradition. Except

for a small minority of Kurmanj Alawis, Alawi Zazas constitute the population that studies

generally refer to as the 'Alawi Kurdish population'.[16]

The size of Turkey's Kurdish population is another source of debate. Most studies

argue that pro-Kurdish groups and publications overstate the size of the Kurdish

population while pro-Turkish figures tend to do the opposite.[17] One comprehensive

academic study by Sevet Mutlu reported the number of Kurdish-origin Turkish citizens as

slightly more than seven million in 1990, or 12.6 percent of Turkey's general population at

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[14] Martin van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Path to Nation,' in *The Kurds: Nationalism and Politics*, ed. Faleh A. Jabar and Hosham Dawood, Annotated edition (London: Saqi Books, 2007), 28; Anonymous Respondent 6, Personal Communication, July 5, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 31, Personal Communication, August 10, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 32, Personal Communication, August 11, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication, August 22, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 47, Personal Communication, August 30, 2015.
[15] Thomas Bois, *The Kurds*, trans. M.V.M. Welland (Beirut: Khayats, 1966), 88–98; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 10–12; Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Society, Ethnicity, Nationalism and Refugee Problems,' 28–30.
[16] Van Bruinessen, 'Kurdish Society, Ethnicity, Nationalism and Refugee Problems,' 28–30; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 10–12; Heper, *The State and Kurds in Turkey: The Question of Assimilation*, 112; Martin Van Bruinessen, 'The Kurds and Islam,' Working Paper, Islamic Area Studies Project (Tokyo, 1999).
[17] Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey*, 6–7; Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 1998, 62–63; McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied*, 12; White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers*, 17; Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 119–,120.

the time.[18] Notably, this figure includes the Zazas as among the Kurds. A recent study carried out by one of the most established public research firms in Turkey, KONDA, surveyed more than 50,000 people and corroborates Mutlu's study, estimating the number of Kurds in Turkey to be between 13 million and 14.2 million in 2013. [19] This amounts to more than 17 percent of the country's officially reported 76.6 million inhabitants at the end of 2013.[20] This study also categorised self-identified Zazas as Kurds and estimated them to represent 10 percent of the total Kurdish population. The owner of KONDA, Tarhan Erdem, is a former leftist politician and columnist known for his opposition to Turkey's traditional Kurdish policy. The findings of this study also attracted criticism from some Turkish politicians and intellectuals for exaggerating the size of the Kurdish population and categorising people with mixed Turkish-Kurdish ancestry as Kurdish.[21]

Although defining and identifying Kurdishness can prove controversial, language remains the clearest way to draw a distinction between Turks and Kurds in Turkey. The languages Kurds speak are derived from Iranian languages belonging to the Indio-European language family,[22] while Turkish is a Turkic language. Despite its importance, however, language is by no means the sole determinant of national or even ethnic identity. As seen in the previous chapters, a sense of belonging to a people or nation might be the result of many different factors. Thus, what leads to the emergence of Kurdish ethno-nationalism is not the ethnic difference per se but the transformation of this ethnic source to a political claim which is defined as ethno-nationalism in this context as seen in the

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[18] Servet Mutlu, 'Ethnic Kurds in Turkey: A Demographic Study,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28, no. 4 (November 1996): 533.

[19] Tarhan Erdem, 'Türkiye'de Kürtler Ne Kadardır? (2) [What Is the Population of the Kurds in Turkey? (2)],' *Radikal*, April 25, 2013.

[20] 'Adrese Dayalı Nüfus Kayıt Sistemi Sonuçları [The Population Census Results], 2013' (Turkish Statistic Agency, TUIK), January 29, 2014, http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=15974.

[21] Hasan Celal Guzel, 'Türkiye'de Kürt nüfusu nedir? (1) [What is the Population of the Kurds in Turkey? (1)],' *Sabah*, April 21, 2013.

[22] Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 21; Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey*, 5.

previous chapter. The following sections will investigate the emergence and development of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey from its beginning until 1999, after which is covered by the empirical research in this study.

3.3. An overview of Kurdish ethno-nationalism from its emergence until the 1960s

Nationalist ideas began to influence Muslim intellectuals in the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century. Educated Kurdish elites, especially those schooled in major cities in the region (largely in Istanbul but to some extent also in Cairo and Baghdad), were the first among their ethnic groups to encounter nationalism as an ideology. During the first two decades of the 20th century, educated Kurds in Istanbul published materials in Kurdish and formed civil and political organisations aimed at promoting Kurdish identity and culture. Nevertheless, the political rhetoric in most of these publications did not clearly advocate separation from the Ottoman state.[23] Some members of this educated class also played roles in the 'Kurdish revolts' of Sheikh Said in 1925 and Agri in 1930 following the establishment of the modern Turkish Republic.[24] However, these educated Kurds were both geographically distant from Kurdish-populated areas and lacked expanded networks in those regions. Consequently, their efforts did not make a significant, direct impact on the Kurdish masses.[25]

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[23] Hakan Ozoglu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 80–81.
[24] Naci Kutlay, *Kürt Kimliğinin Oluşum Süreci [The Formation Process of Kurdish Identity]* (Ankara: Dipnot, 2012), 225–26, 259.
[25] Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 225–26; Ozoglu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, 122–23.

In fact, the first 'Kurdish revolts', such as those led by Badr Khan Beg[26] of Botan and Mir[27] Muhammed of Ruwanduz had already emerged in the first half of the 19th century, much earlier than the aforementioned publishing activities the Kurdish intelligentsia. However, these were not nationalist movements but a reaction to the centralising policies of the Ottoman Empire which was eroding the semi-autonomy Kurdish emirates had previously enjoyed and had replaced Kurdish *mirs* with the centrally appointed Ottoman *pashas*.[28] During the same period, many Turkoman *begs* who had similarly lost their autonomy were also involved in rebellions against the Ottomans.[29]

After nationalism emerged as a political ideology among Muslim subjects in the Ottoman territory, a total of 25 Kurdish rebellions occurred from 1880 to 1937 on different scales.[30] Four of the large-scale revolts occurred after the formation of the new Turkish state: Kochgiri (1921), Sheikh Said (1924), Agri (1930) and Dersim (1937-38). [31] Although the Kurdish nationalist organisations Azadi and Khoybun helped instigate the Sheikh Said and Agri revolts, respectively, and the leaders of the Kochgiri revolt were also influenced by nationalist ideas, these rebellions were not purely based on nationalist fervour.[32] The main motivations behind the mass movements were possibly either religious resentment

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[26] *Beg* (spelled *bey* in modern Turkish) is a title of respect that is still widely used in modern Turkish. This word has also been historically used for the leading figure of the semi-autonomous Turkoman principalities in the Ottoman Empire. The *beg* was not an Ottoman appointee, but was the leader of a historically influential and powerful family or a local dynasty in the territorial area of the principalities.

[27] *Mir* is a title equivalent to the Turkoman *beg* and was used in Kurdish principalities which were known as *emirates*.

[28] Djene Rhys Bajalan, 'Early Kurdish 'Nationalists' and the Emergence of Modern Kurdish Identity Politics: 1851 to 1908,' in *Understanding Turkey's Kurdish Question*, ed. Fevzi Bilgin and Ali Sarihan (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2013), 5; McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied*, 27–29.

[29] Mustafa Akyol, *Kürt Sorununu Yeniden Düşünmek [Rethinking the Kurdish Question]* (Istanbul: Dogan Kitap, 2006), 39.

[30] Hüseyin Yayman, *Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafizasi [Turkey's Memory of the Kurdish Problem]* (İstanbul: Dogan Kitap, 2011), 29.

[31] The first of these revolts was the Kocghiri revolt of 1920, which was before the formal foundation of the Republic of Turkey but after the Grand National Assembly and a new government in Ankara had already been established.

[32] Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 278–99.

due to the abolishment of the Caliphate or feudal obedience felt for the leading figures,[33] or both.

These early revolts failed to mobilise the Kurds in large numbers for reasons including a lack of proper leadership and organisational experience, fear on the part of Kurdish elites of an establishment of an Armenian state in the region, and successful leadership of Turkish elites of the time. Lastly, and most importantly, nationalism was still a foreign ideology for ordinary Kurds, for whom tribal identity at the local level and Islamic identity at a higher level had traditionally been more important than national identity.[34]

The importance of sectarian and ethnic heterogeneity, as well as tribal character, is evident in the results of all four large-scale 'Kurdish insurrections'. When the Alawi Zazas rebelled in the Kochgiri revolt of 1921 and the Dersim revolt of 1937-38, they could not get any significant assistance from Sunni Kurds and Sunni Zazas.[35] Similarly, the Sheikh Said revolt of 1924 was led by Sunni Zazas, and support for the uprising among Kurmanj Kurds was highly limited and non-existent among the Alawi Zazas.[36] Later, the Agri revolt of 1930, led by Sunni Kurmanj Kurds, failed to win significant support from Zazas. Moreover, many Kurdish and Zaza tribes often did not even support rebels from within their own ethnic groups, instead choosing to cooperate with Ankara and helping government forces to suppress the revolts.[37]

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[33] Van Bruinessen, 294.
[34] Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey*, 6; McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied*, 32; Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 1998, 6.
[35] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 184–86; Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 278.
[36] Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 293–95.
[37] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 204–7; Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 295.

In traditional Kurdish society, if a tribe tries to extend its control over a larger territory or if any Kurdish *agha*[38] rebels against the central authority, other Kurdish tribal chiefs help state forces suppress the rebellion instead of allying with the rebels to advance Kurdish nationalist goals. This strategy considers that a successful revolt of one tribe might empower them relative to other tribal groupings.[39] This tribal character of Kurdish society results from socio-economic and cultural peculiarities associated with an agrarian society.[40]

Before Ankara consolidated power over the region, tribal culture and law was a way of organising the daily life for the Kurds as well as settling conflicts between members, engaging with outside powers and with other tribes, and protecting the tribe from external threats.[41] Van Bruinessen argues that apart from these security and conflict-based cases and during times of migration by nomadic tribes, tribes are not as influential as a unit of analysis as it is assumed. Therefore, assertive tribal leaders need the emergence of conflict and outside threat as a way of conserving power.[42]

Moreover, the authority of individual tribal leaders is not always guaranteed; other prominent clan leaders in the same tribe or relatives of the existing chieftains are eager to exploit the social and political environment to replace them.[43] A tribal chieftain must maintain this delicate balance to protect his own position as well as the unity and strength of his tribe. Thus, in this system, while the commoners need their tribes and chieftains for protection and mediation both within the tribes and from the outside world, chieftains need

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[38] *Agha* is both a title for some civilian and military officers in Ottoman Empire as well as the title of tribal chieftains in Turkish and Kurdish tribes.
[39] McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied*, 17–22; Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 74.
[40] For the negative relationship between the agrarian society and nationalism, see: Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* Chapter 2.
[41] Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 59.
[42] Van Bruinessen, 79.
[43] Van Bruinessen, 75, 79.

an external source of power that recognises and supports their position as a local authority and mediator. Considering this, it is not surprising that, as Van Bruinessen also argues, the tribal chieftains largely turned to the Turkish state. Ankara, not the Kurdish ethno-nationalists, would be able to delegate them the power they needed while ordinary people had no other option but to follow their chieftains.[44]

Consequently, despite the relatively suitable 'objective' POS, cultural values did not enable Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation during this period. While the Turkish state managed to suppress revolts, it also further intensified its nation-building activities after each of these rebellions and exiled and resettled many local Kurdish nationalist *sheikhs*,[45] tribal leaders and *aghas* to the western parts of Turkey.[46] Following the suppression of the Dersim rebellion of 1938, the Turkish government managed to strengthen its rule over the whole of the country as Kurdish ethno-nationalism entered into a silent period until the 1970s.[47]

However, socio-economic and political developments in this silent era proved important for the rebirth and growth of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in the following periods. In the context of the Marshall Plan, a part of the USA's post-war Truman Doctrine to rehabilitate Europe and resist the spread of communism, Turkish agriculture experienced rapid mechanisation during the early 1950s. While there were only 1,750 tractors in Turkey in 1948, this number rose to 10,000 in 1951, 30,000 in 1953, and 40,000 in 1954.[48] Agricultural mechanisation led to the unemployment of many former farmhands and

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[44] Van Bruinessen, 279, 294.
[45] *Sheikh* is a 'holy man, object of popular devotion, and that of leader-instructor in mystical brotherhoods'. Van Bruinessen, 210.
[46] Van Bruinessen, 191.
[47] Ozoglu, *Kurdish Notables and the Ottoman State: Evolving Identities, Competing Loyalties, and Shifting Boundaries*, 127; Sadi Bilgic, *Dünden Bugüne Kürt Sorunu ve PKK [From Past to Today- the Kurdish Question and the PKK]* (Istanbul: BILGESAM, 2014), 14.
[48] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 401.

initiated a process of both permanent and seasonal urban migration to seek new job opportunities.[49] Many small landholders also sold their property to large landholders with mechanical equipment and began to work for them.[50] This began a slow transformation in which the tribal ties gradually weakened and led to the emergence of a new Kurdish proletarian class in the big cities of both western and eastern parts of Turkey.[51] For several reasons, however, this process did not significantly mobilise Kurdish ethno-nationalists during the 1950s.

First, although the single-party era had already come to an end after the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti,* DP) came to power in 1950, the Turkish POS was still closed and did still not enable the development any type of significant Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation. Second, rather than a rapid socio-economic transformation, socio-economic changes associated with the agricultural mechanisation that began in the early 1950s were slow and gradual. Furthermore, not every land-owning *agha* used the new mechanised methods extensively. Many continued to employ large numbers of their followers as sharecroppers or in other businesses they owned. Also, the advent of the multi-party system and ensuing competition for votes resulted in the rise of traditional Kurdish elites as important power brokers in Turkish politics and facilitated the continuation of existing social relationships among Kurds.[52]

After the DP was founded in 1946 and began to gain support among the Turkish electorate, the ruling CHP eased some of the earlier restrictions on Kurdish *aghas* and allowed some 2,000 of them to return to their lands from exile in 1947.[53] This evolution in

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[49] Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 16, 253; White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers*, 98, 121; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 403.
[50] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 401.
[51] White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers*.
[52] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 401.
[53] McDowall, 399.

Turkish state policy on tribal leaders further softened after the DP came to power in 1950. In contrast to the strictly secular policies of the single-party elites, the DP not only adopted a more positive discourse on Islam and addressed existing religious resentment among Kurds, it also materially and morally supported the activity of Kurdish *sheikhs*.[54] After feeling seriously ignored by the policies of the CHP, many local Kurdish *aghas* and *sheikhs* both supported the DP and actively participated in DP politics at the national level.[55] With the transition to multi-party politics, other political parties, especially the CHP, also began to court the traditional Kurdish elites. If an influential tribe supported or sided with the DP in a particular city or district, rival or the other influential tribes or families in the same area tended to side with the CHP and became involved in the CHP political scene.[56] Thus, as traditional Kurdish elites became important players in Turkish political life, cooperation by Kurdish and Turkish elites also helped protect traditional Kurdish society and impeded the development of ethno-nationalism during this period.

Another development in the quiet period of Kurdish ethno-nationalism proved to be important for the later development of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey that occurred after the 1960s. As part of the Republic's modernisation efforts, children from low- and middle-class families were given the opportunity to study in big cities.[57] During the 1940s, two student dormitories were established in Istanbul and Ankara to accommodate such children from eastern and south-eastern Turkey.[58] While some of these Kurdish students

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[54] McDowall, 399.

[55] Ted Robert Gurr and Barbara Harff, *Ethnic Conflict In World Politics* (Boulder: Routledge, 1994), 38.

[56] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 401–2.

[57] Ahmet Alis, 'Üç Devrin Tanığı: Modern Kürt Siyasi Tarihinin İçinden Musa Anter'i Okumak [The Witness of Three Eras: Reading Musa Anter in the Context of Modern Kurdish History],' *Birikim Journal*, September 28, 2010, http://www.birikimdergisi.com/guncel-yazilar/882/uc-devrin-tanigi-modern-kurt-siyasi-tarihinin-icinden-musa-anter-i-okumak#.W2nGnSgzY2w.

[58] Kutlay, *Kürt Kimliğinin Oluşum Süreci [The Formation Process of Kurdish Identity]*, 28; Cengiz Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey: From Protest to Resistance* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 50; Mehmet Orhan, *Political Violence and Kurds in Turkey: Fragmentations, Mobilizations, Participations & Repertoires* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2015), 57.

adopted a Turkish identity and undertook important positions in Turkish political, civic and economic life, others were influenced by ideas such as Kurdish ethno-nationalism and socialism[59] and began to promote Kurdish language and culture through publishing activities. Although the impact of these educated Kurds remained highly limited in terms of Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation during the 1950s, they played important roles in promoting the public debate on the Kurdish rights and in Kurdish nationalist mobilisations after the 1960s as the following section will reveal. Thus, while the 1950s was a time when traditional Kurdish elites co-opted to the Turkish political system and cooperated, not competed, with Ankara, this quiet period of the 1940s and 1950s can also be considered an incubation period for the young, educated, middle-class Kurdish nationalists that would later emerge.

3.4.   The dynamics of early mobilisations of Kurds from 1960-1980

The DP government was toppled by a coup d'état on 27 May 1960 and the Turkish military seized power. The leaders of the military junta were initially highly sensitive to Kurdish ethno-nationalism, and while the junta exiled some Kurdish *aghas* and *sheikhs* to the western parts of Turkey, the new president and former army general Cemal Gursel declared that the Kurds were not, in fact, a distinct people but an ethnic brother of the Turks.[60] Nevertheless, the 1961 constitution, which was more liberal than past and future iterations, brought important freedoms to Turkey.[61] For the first time, all civil and political rights were constitutionally guaranteed, including the right to form labour and trade

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[59] Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 42.
[60] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 406.
[61] Ilter Turan, 'Two Steps Forward One Step Back: Turkey`s Democratic Transformation,' in *Turkey`s Democratization Process*, ed. Carmen Rodriguez et al. (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014), 50.

unions, political parties and civil society organisations and associations.[62] The political

system was indeed still closed to ethnicity-based parties, and in terms of policy outputs,

there were no direct policies created addressing Kurdish cultural or linguistic rights. Still,

the liberal atmosphere and concomitant political pluralism in the input side of the POS

enabled a revival of Kurdish ethno-nationalism and its first organised form came to fruition

under these political conditions.[63]

The Workers' Party of Turkey (*Türkiye İşçi Partisi*, TIP), which was established as

a formal political party in February 1961 by labour unionists, played an important role in

advocating the Kurdish nationalist cause during the 1960s. Kurdish nationalist members

formed one of the three main groups that dominated the party.[64] Many of these Kurdish

members were once students who studied in major cities in the 1940s and stayed in the

aforementioned dormitories.[65] With the increasing influence of this Kurdish nationalist

group within the TIP in the second half of the 1960s, the TIP more clearly began to address

the situation of the Kurdish people in Turkey and brought the Kurdish issue into the

Turkish political arena.[66]

Many other leftist organisations also began to proliferate in the 1960s. The

Revolutionary Workers' Union (*Devrimci Işçi Sendikaları*, DISK) in 1967 and Federation

of Idea Clubs in 1965 were established as legal organisations and many Kurds became

active in both of these.[67] In the relatively liberal atmosphere, Kurdish groups, most of

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[62] Turan, 50; Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 107; Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 1998, 15; Paul J. Magnarella, 'The Legal, Political and Cultural Structures of Human Rights Protections and Abuses in Turkey,' *Journal of International Law and Practice* 3 (1994): 444
[63] Bozarslan, 'Political Aspects of the Kurdish Problem in Contemporary Turkey,' 96.
[64] Kutlay, *Kürt Kimliğinin Oluşum Süreci [The Formation Process of Kurdish Identity]*, 33–34.
[65] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 409.
[66] McDowall, 409; Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 43; Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 2011, 59–61.
[67] Heper, *The State and Kurds in Turkey: The Question of Assimilation*, 156; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 410.

which began as student groups in the 1940s, increased their publishing activities. *Dicle-Firat,* published between 1962-63, *Deng* (1963), *Roja Newe* (1963), *Yeni Akis* (1966), *Dicle Kaynagi and Riya Newe* are some notable examples. Although restricted by the political environment in which they operated, these publications managed to promote the situation of the Kurds in Turkish public discourse.[68]

Educated Kurds working within the TIP, DISK and other leftist organisations, together with other student unions, organised mass protests known as 'eastern meetings' in several eastern cities in 1967. An estimated 10,000 people in Silvan and 25,000 people in Diyarbakir attended these demonstrations and demanded recognition of 'democratic rights' for Kurds.[69] As McDowall argues, these developments also shifted mobilising power from traditional Kurdish elites to educated, young, urban-based groups.[70] Most of the demands of these Kurdish groups did not contain clear territorial and nationalist arguments during the 1960s [71] but instead included references to the socio-economic and cultural underdevelopment of the eastern and south-eastern parts of Turkey. However, this socio-economic underdevelopment in the east was framed in relation to the cultural underdevelopment of the region and in relation to the denial of the Kurdish identity and basic rights. Thus, Kurdish figures active in politics in the TIP, publishing activities and labour unions articulated Kurdish interests from these points of view during the 1960s.[72]

Thus, the openness in the input side of the POS, alongside many other political ideologies and demands, enabled the emergence and promotion of some relatively 'moderate' Kurdish cultural demands. However, the same openness did not exist to convert

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[68] Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 2011, 53; Michael Gunter, 'The Kurdish Problem in Turkey,' *Middle East Journal* 42, no. 3 (Summer 1988): 392.
[69] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 410; Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 61–63
[70] McDowall, 410; Yavuz, 'Five Stages of the Construction of Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey,' 9.
[71] Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 2011, 50.
[72] Gunes, 50–56; Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 32–33.

these articulated demands of various ideologies and movements into public policy.

Towards the late 1960s, labour unions, universities and student associations began

politicise and polarise alongside ideological lines and deadly clashes ensued between the

rival groups at many universities and later pervaded the labour unions.[73] During this

period, some Kurds, most of them also active in the TIP, established Revolutionary

Cultural Hearths of the East (*Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları,* DDKO) as a legal

association in 1969 – the first legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist organisation.[74] While the

initial aim of this organisation seemed to be the recognition of Kurdish linguistic and

cultural rights, in time it adopted a more radical and secessionist discourse.[75] In 1970,

numerous leading figures of the DDKO were arrested and put on trial in Ankara and

Istanbul and the DDKO was closed down.[76]

Amidst increasing turmoil and erosion of public disorder, the Turkish military

issued a memorandum forcing the government to resign on 12 March 1971. The new

National Unity government established under the tutelage of the military changed many

articles of the 1961 constitution which were considered 'too liberal' for Turkey, and some

political parties such as the pro-Islamic National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi*, MNP)

and Marxist TIP were banned and thousands of activists and militants were jailed on both

sides.[77] These efforts, however, did not prove sufficient to restore public order. Particularly

after a new, civil coalition government came into power in 1973, and following a general

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[73] Turan, 'Two Steps Forward One Step Back: Turkey`s Democratic Transformation,' 51.
[74] Entessar, *Kurdish Ethnonationalism*, 90. Yavuz, 'Five Stages of the Construction of Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey,' 10; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 411; Gunter, 'The Kurdish Problem in Turkey,' 393.
[75] Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 109.
[76] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 411–12.
[77] Paul J. Magnarella, "The Legal, Political and Cultural Structures of Human Rights Protections and Abuses in Turkey," *Journal of International Law and Practice* 3 (1994): 444.

amnesty in 1974, both leftist and rightist groups further radicalised. These groups began to act covertly and polarisation, clashes, anarchy and violence increased and intensified.[78]

Alongside the radicalisation of both Turkish and Kurdish socialist groups, the post-1971 period also witnessed ideological divergences between Turkish socialists and Kurdish members of these organisations. Turkish leftists and socialists argued Turks and Kurds had a common plight, and as a supposed socialist revolution in Turkey would anyway lead to the solution of the Kurdish issue, they encouraged Turks and Kurds to focus on their desired revolution.[79] Kurdish-origin members of the TIP, however, were primarily interested in pursuing a Kurdish ethno-nationalist path in the context of the Marxist distinction of 'oppressed and oppressing nations'.[80] Thus, while the demands of the Kurdish groups in the 1960s were mainly limited to economic progress and basic rights, the 1970s saw Kurdish groups within the TIP began to state the existence of the Kurds as a nation. Moreover, they claimed the homeland of this nation had been colonised by Turkey and incorporated within its borders.[81] Before the emergence of the PKK as the leading organisation of separatist, Kurdish ethno-nationalism, Kemal Burkay led this ideological shift. Burkay, previously a TIP member, formed the Kurdistan Socialist Party of Turkey (KSPT) in 1974 as a clandestine organisation.[82]

Moreover, the ideological radicalisation of the Turkish extreme left in the early 1970s also led to internal justification of violence and terrorism. Initially this came from left-wing extremist organisations such as the People`s Liberation Party-Front of Turkey (*Türkiye Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi,* THKP-C) and later influenced many succeeding

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[78] Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 45; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 411–15; Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 32–33;
[79] Gunter, 'The Kurdish Problem in Turkey,' 393–94; Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 46–47.
[80] Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 110. Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 61
[81] Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 2011, 71–72.
[82] Gunes, 71–72; Gunter, 'The Kurdish Problem in Turkey,' 394.

Turkish left and Kurdish nationalist organisations, including the PKK.[83] Thus, violence became the basis of strategies employed by many Kurdish nationalist groups after the mid-1970s.[84] These structural and ideological developments affected other groups and led the way for the emergence of many violent and non-violent Kurdish ethno-nationalist groups, especially after the 1974 amnesty.[85] As Imset has noted, 13 Kurdish separatist organisations which would later be outlawed, including the PKK, emerged in Turkey during this period.[86]

Weary of both radical Turkish leftist and Kurdish ethno-nationalist organisations, Ankara began dispatching commando units to eastern to Turkey to execute extensive searches in the second half of the 1970s.[87] However, during this period, polarisation also penetrated the Turkish bureaucracy, police, judiciary and university administrations.[88] While this schism paralysed the state apparatus, all governments that came to power failed to ensure public order between 1974 and 1980.[89] Consequently, despite harsh practices and a suppressive POS, the Turkish state could not exert consistent pressure on Kurdish ethno-nationalist organisations. As Van Bruinessen argues, the period between 1975 and 1978 ended up being 'the most liberal period of Turkey`s history and left the Kurdish organisations considerable freedom for organising and propaganda. Down to the smallest towns, branches were opened, political tracts read and discussed.'[90] After martial law was

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[83] Ismet G. Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)* (Istanbul: Turkish Daily News Yayinlari, 1993), 45–46.
[84] Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 49.
[85] Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 2011, 74.
[86] Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)*.
[87] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 411; Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 33.
[88] Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey*, 26.
[89] Turan, 'Two Steps Forward One Step Back: Turkey`s Democratic Transformation,' 52.
[90] Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 33.

declared in 1978, the activities of legal entities diminished while underground activities continued.[91]

During the period between the military coups of 1960 and 1980, Kurdish ethno-nationalism re-emerged and, as Van Bruinessen also argues, particularly during the 1970s, increased considerably among Turkey's Kurdish citizens as the result of all the aforementioned developments.[92] However, existing studies also argue that an important level of cooperation between traditional Kurdish elites and Turkish political elites from all parties also continued. While urban Kurds supported the CHP, rural and more pious Kurds sided with Suleyman Demirel's centre-right Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*, AP) or the pro-Islamic National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi*, MSP).[93] Consequently, defining the pre-1980 period as one of mass mobilisation for Kurdish ethno-nationalism proves difficult. As McDowall also states, Kurdish ethno-nationalism rose to become a mass phenomenon during the decade and a half following the 1980 military coup,[94] a period on which the next section will focus.

3.5. The 1980 military coup, the emergence of the PKK and the course of Kurdish ethno-nationalism

The Turkish Armed Forces carried out another coup d'état on 12 September 1980. The ensuing military regime and redrawn constitution, prepared under the auspices of the military in 1982, brought significant changes to the political structure in Turkey. All political parties were shuttered and all activities of trade unions were suspended.[95]

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[91] Van Bruinessen, 33.
[92] Van Bruinessen, 33.
[93] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 412; Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 46.
[94] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds,* Chapter 20.
[95] Entessar, *Kurdish Ethnonationalism*, 95.

Moreover, the military regime much more strictly, and often harshly, exercised martial law, which had already been established in 1978. Severe repression came upon Kurdish ethno-nationalist organisations, as well as many other legal and illegal Turkish groups.[96] From the time of the coup to March 1983, approximately 20,000 people were arrested and tried. About 3,000 of those arrested were prosecuted for Kurdish separatist activities.[97]

Moreover, the new constitution significantly diminished the scope of civil liberties in Turkey. Politically active segments of society, such as universities, labour unions, associations, activists, intellectuals and even artists, 'were all placed under severe restrictions so as to prevent them from any activity that could be construed as being political'.[98] Additionally, under the 1982 constitution, parliamentary checks on the military significantly diminished and the influence of the military in security-related decision making significantly expanded and was institutionalised through the increased power the new constitution provided the National Security Council.[99]

The 1982 constitution also made illegal any expressions which might be considered as recognition of a separate Kurdish ethnicity.[100] Articles 26, 28 and 89 of the new constitution introduced a prohibition on the dissemination of any written materials, video and audio tapes, and other forms of media in a language banned by law, which included Kurdish. They also banned the use of any other language apart from Turkish in party advertisements and activities.[101] Although new political parties were formed and civil administration restored in 1983, due to the already narrowed political system and institutionalised role of the military in security-related affairs, the Turkish political system

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[96] Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey*, 43–47; McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied*, 44; Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 78.
[97] Entessar, *Kurdish Ethnonationalism*, 95.
[98] Turan, 'Two Steps Forward One Step Back: Turkey`s Democratic Transformation,' 55–56.
[99] Turan, 56–57.
[100] Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 111.
[101] Entessar, *Kurdish Ethnonationalism*, 96.

in the 1980s became more closed to Kurdish demands – nationalist, civil, cultural or otherwise – than ever before.[102]

Nonetheless, the military coup, in contrast to its aim of eradicating all types of militant organisations and anti-systemic movements, facilitated the development one of them: the PKK and PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism. The origin of the PKK goes back to the early 1970s, a period when Turkish and Kurdish left-wing organisations radicalised and Kurdish groups began to split from the Turkish extreme left. A small group of people, led by Abdullah Ocalan and organised around legal associations in university circles during the early and mid-1970s in Ankara, moved to Turkey's southeast later in the decade and soon established the PKK as an extra-legal organisation in 1978 in Diyarbakir.[103] The PKK managed to expand its social bases and the appeal of Kurdish ethno-nationalism among larger segments of the Kurdish population under these structural conditions during the latter half of the 1980s and early 1990s.

In line with the previously sketched ideological orientation of Kurdish groups during the 1970s, the PKK's ideology was a mixed version of Marxism-Leninism and Kurdish ethno-nationalism and argued the existence of the Kurds as a separate nation and a 'Kurdistan' as their given homeland which was framed as 'colonised' and 'divided' into four pieces by regional states with the support of imperial powers.[104] As a 'remedy' for this diagnostic framing, the PKK's founding manifesto states the establishment of an independent, socialist Kurdish state as the only solution.[105] Moreover, the same document states that the organisation would adopt the method of a 'protracted people's war'. It also

[102] Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 51–52, 59.
[103] Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)*, 16, 32; Mehmet Ali Birand, *Apo ve PKK* (Istanbul: Milliyet Yayinlari, 1992), 84.
[104] Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 2011, 81. Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 129; Abdullah Ocalan, 'Kurdistan Devriminin Yolu/Manifesto [The Path to Kurdistan's Revolution/ Manifesto]' (Weşanên Serxwebun, Fifth Edition 1993), 75–88.
[105] Ocalan, 'Kurdistan Devriminin Yolu/Manifesto,' 128.

defends violence and terrorism by arguing that 'colonialism' has been established by 'external and reactive force', and therefore it should be attacked by 'revolutionary force'.[106]

Alongside the inter-organisational struggle with rival Kurdish and Turkish groups, the PKK mainly focused on recruitment and on propaganda activities before the 1980 coup. This included efforts to increase class awareness among the peasants against their *aghas*, a class that the PKK considers as 'collaborators' in Turkish 'colonialism'[107] that makes the continuation of the existing 'exploitative' rule possible.[108] Following the arrest of one of his close associates, Ocalan and other leading PKK figures began to fear capture and fled to Syria and Lebanon before the 1980 military coup.[109] Ocalan's exile proved highly crucial for the future of the PKK as Ocalan was able to foster relations with these countries and local groups and received support, sanctuary and training opportunities for the newly forming cadres.[110] Moreover, the PKK and Barzani`s Kurdistan Democrat Party (KDP) signed a cooperation agreement in July 1983 which enabled the PKK to establish camps in northern Iraq and use them as bases from which to infiltrate Turkey.[111]

Apart from the PKK, many other Kurdish nationalist militant groups were active in eastern and south-eastern Turkey before the 1980 coup.[112] While almost all of them were wiped out between 1980 and 1983 by the Turkish military before it handed over power to the elected government,[113] the PKK found a chance to organise and train its cadres. By

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[106] Ocalan, 124.
[107] Ocalan, 121–23.
[108] Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 2011, 81.
[109] Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 1998, 22; Aliza Marcus, *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence* (New York: NYU Press, 2009), 48.
[110] Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)*, 89; Marcus, *Blood and Belief*, 54–61.
[111] Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey*, 73–74; Marcus, *Blood and Belief*, 68–71.
[112] For the names and details of these organisations, see: Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)*.
[113] Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 49.

having already rooted itself to some extent in a few key south-eastern cities before the coup,[114] it was positioned to fill the void created by the disappearance of other organisations. The PKK started militant activities and acts of terrorism inside Turkey in earnest on 15 July 1984. During the following decade its armed attacks and acts of terrorism, as well as the Turkish state's counter operations, intensified significantly. This process led to substantial Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation during the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s.

The PKK's armed campaign against Turkey was not limited to Turkish military facilities and personnel. The PKK also targeted economic infrastructure such as central power stations and communication lines. Furthermore, it deliberately attacked some of Turkey`s most popular tourist destinations, killing and kidnapping tourists.[115] Additionally, teachers and other civilian public employees in south-eastern Turkey were targeted as they were viewed to be agents of the Turkish state.[116] Moreover, after 1987, the PKK organised numerous terrorist attacks on village guard units (*köy korucuları*) that had been set up by the government in 1985 as local armed militia groups to counter the growing PKK threat. PKK attacks targeted both militia members and their families and killed many women, children, and babies.[117] According to Imset, the PKK killed 78 village guards from 1987 to 1992 and killed 640 elderly people, women and children in its attacks on the village guard system during the same period.[118] Moreover, the PKK used violence and terrorism against fellow Kurds who refused to help the militant organisation logistically, thereby coercing

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[114] Chaliand, *The Kurdish Tragedy*, 48.
[115] Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 127.
[116] Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 123; Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)*, 132–33, 267.
[117] Barkey and Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question*, 1998, 28.
[118] Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)*, 129–30.

the assistance of many villagers.[119] Such violent and terrorist activities significantly increased during the second half of the 1980s and early 1990s.

Attacks on civilians, village guards, and *aghas* were intentional tactics to dissuade them siding with Ankara. A village guard or *agha* could avoid the PKK's wrath by cooperating with it, while the so-called 'collaborators' were targeted.[120] From the perspective of ordinary Kurds, the PKK's attack on *aghas* and their support for the peasants were also important incentives, as PKK attacks weakened the influence of this class in the region and strengthened the position of the peasants against them.[121] As some observers note, the PKK's attacks on feudal landlords and its encouragement and violent support of peasants against them enabled the PKK to increase the size of its supporters and ranks.[122]

Through violence and terrorism, the PKK primarily aimed to show that it was strong, dangerous and deserving of more fear than state forces. Secondly, its attacks showed that the Turkish state was unable to protect all of its supporters from PKK terrorism.[123] As a third goal, the PKK incited the Turkish state to resort to violence in order to portray itself as the legitimate defender of Kurdish people.[124] Overall, with these attacks, the PKK aimed to disrupt the Turkish state system in eastern Turkey, disconnect the people

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[119] Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 46; Ramazan Aras, 'State Sovereignty and the Politics of Fear: Ethnography of Political Violence and the Kurdish Struggle in Turkey,' in *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation and Reconciliation*, ed. Cengiz Gunes and Welat Zeydanlioglu (London ; New York: Routledge, 2013), 96, 98, 101 Although Aras' work analyses the fear and violence created by security forces and village guards, according to the narratives of villagers, there are many cases of the PKK's violence towards and oppression of people.
[120] Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 74.
[121] Romano, 73–76; Marcus, *Blood and Belief*, 44–46.
[122] Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 76–77; Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)*, 45–46.
[123] Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 77.
[124] Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)*, 130–31; Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 87.

from the state, and destroy the state's societal legitimacy while building a reputation for itself as a formidable and reliable source of power among Kurdish society.[125]

In addition to using terror and violence to advance its political agenda, the PKK also tried to use social networking activities, as well as print and broadcast media, to spread its ethno-nationalist ideology among the larger segments of the Kurdish population. Although the aforementioned incentives and disincentives introduced by the PKK through the use of violence were important in attaining the support of the ordinary middle-aged Kurdish peasants, the nationalist propaganda it put out was more influential in mobilising the young.[126]

In this context, the PKK tried to identify and depict a past, heroic 'golden age' for the Kurds and drew parallels between their struggle of Kurdish forefathers in this 'golden age' and the PKK's actions against the Turkish state.[127] Moreover, the PKK redefined and reframed the myth surrounding Nowruz, a holiday also celebrated by Persians and Turkic peoples marking the beginning of spring, as a myth about Kurdishness and Kurdish ethno-nationalism.[128] Since the early 1990s, Nowruz events on 21 March each year have served as the most popular context for the PKK to organise people for the 'long desired' *serhildan* (upheaval) demonstrations.[129]

Moreover, having noticed the negative reaction that Marxist-Leninist discourse caused among many Kurdish people, as well as having understood how the Turkish government was using the PKK's anti-religious character as a source of propaganda among

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[125] Marcus, *Blood and Belief*, 80–81; Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)*, 130–33

[126] Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)*, 63.

[127] For the role of golden ages and myths in nation-building, See: Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1991), 66.

[128] Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 2011, 95, 96.

[129] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 436, 439, 444, 458.

locals, the PKK started to use Islamic motifs in its own propaganda and discourse after

1989. In doing so, it tried to reach pious Kurdish Muslims who tended to support the

Turkish state.[130] The front wing of the PKK,[131] the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan

(*Eniya Rizgariya Netewa Kurdistan*, ERNK) played a particularly crucial role in expanding

the ethno-nationalist ideology among the larger Kurdish masses, both in Turkey and in the

diaspora in Europe through the establishment of various legal and illegal mobilising

structures such as a women's union, workers' union, peasants' union, youth union,

intellectual union, and even a religious scholars' union.[132]

The PKK was also extensively involved in both illegal as well as legal publishing

activities,[133] the latter coming after a relative liberalisation of publishing laws during the

presidency of Turgut Ozal in the 1990s.[134] Moreover, expanded satellite technology and

the creation of the (mainly) Kurdish-language television channel MED-TV in 1994,[135]

albeit with ever-changing names and broadcasting centres due to pressure from Turkey on

the countries from where the channel had been broadcast, meant that the PKK always had

a channel that could regularly and continuously disseminate PKK ideology and frames.

Romano argues that 'MED-TV, probably more than any other factor, served to promote

ethnic consciousness amongst Kurds today.'[136]

The Turkish state responded to these increasing PKK activities with heavy-handed

measures. First, although martial law, which had been partially in force since 1978 but

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[130] McDowall, 435; Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)*, 181–83.
[131] The PKK was initially organised around three core pillars: 1) party, the main body of the PKK, 2) armed wing, and 3) front.
[132] Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)*, 167–68. McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 426.
[133] Izady, *The Kurds*, 217.
[134] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 431.
[135] Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 155.
[136] Romano, 154.

expanded all over Turkey after the coup, began to be gradually lifted after 1984 in some

provinces, it was replaced with emergency rule in many south-eastern provinces.

Moreover, in 1987 the Emergency Rule Regional Governorate was established and

bestowed with substantial legal powers such as the ability to evacuate villages and appoint

civil servants to the outer zones of the emergency rule provinces. As it was established for

the coordination and supervision of emergency rule in south-eastern Turkey, emergency

rule gained an institutional status in this region.[137]

As another important countermeasure against the PKK, the Turkish state

established the previously mentioned village guard system in 1985. With this policy, local

people were armed against the PKK. Most of the influential Kurdish *agha* families and

tribes, concerned with the rise of and also targeted by the PKK, joined the village guard

system in large numbers. Attacks of the PKK on the village guards also meant the

continuation of the fight between influential tribes, such as the Bucak and Jirki tribes, and

the PKK. The village guard system helped improve the economic situation in south-eastern

Turkey by injecting money[138] into the local economy and was an important source of jobs

for a region suffering from economic problems and unemployment.[139] Moreover, as Imset

argues, the Turkish state also provided many tender requests and similar material

incentives to large, pro-state tribes and families in this process.[140] Consequently, despite

the aforementioned terrorist attacks of the PKK on village guards and their families, the

numbers of village guards rose from roughly 18,000 in 1990 to 63,000 in August 1994.[141]

Despite the village guard system being a positive incentive to ensure the support of local

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[137] Senem Aydın-Düzgit, 'Human Rights in Turkey,' in *Turkey`s Democratization Process*, ed. Carmen Rodriguez et al. (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014), 312; Kurban, 'The Kurdish Question: Law, Politics and the Limits of Recognition,' 347; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 427.

[138] Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 129.

[139] Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*.

[140] Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)*, 153–54.

[141] Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 130.

Kurds, many scholars also argue that some village guards abused their positions for personal or tribal reasons or treated people harshly, causing some Kurdish citizens to feel sympathy for the PKK or even join its ranks.[142]

Regarding the impact of the Turkish state's counter policies on the increasing PKK threat, many scholars argue that Ankara's policy on Kurds who did not align with the government repressed many ordinary Kurdish citizens.[143] In this context, the repression by the Turkish government was not totally indiscriminate and it was possible for local Kurds to avoid it by clearly supporting the state, particularly villagers who agreed to become village guards. However, as both Imset's study reveals with many examples and also as some of those interviewed for this study argue, the Turkish government did not sufficiently distinguish mere bystanders from active PKK supporters. A Kurdish-origin businessman originally from Sirnak but interviewed in Adana provides a good example of a sentiment repeated by many interviewees in the field: 'Soldiers came and beat the villagers for giving food to the PKK members. What should I have done? Should I have said no to the militants and been killed or beaten? Where were you [the state] when they came to my village? Why did not you come and protect me? Maybe I would not have given [aid to the PKK militants] if you would have come and protected me. After that, you declared me a PKK supporter. In this way, the state pushed many Kurds to the PKK.'[144]

Other previous studies have similarly alleged that this relatively indiscriminative repression resulted in an increase of Kurdish ethno-nationalism and support for the PKK during the second half of the 1980s and early 1990s.[145] Romano argues that the PKK even

[142] Kirisci and Winrow, 129; Gunter, *The Kurds in Turkey*, 81; Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 46.
[143] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 45–47; Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 79–82; Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 46.
[144] Anonymous Respondent 10, Personal Communication, July 11, 2015.
[145] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 427; Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)*, 140.

took advantage of the Turkish government's lack of selectiveness in asserting its repressive policies. He states that 'In some cases, the PKK has even been suspected of extending itself logistically and conducting operations in areas around neutral villages, in order to provoke government repression there and induce such villages into choosing the insurgents' side.'[146] Romano thus claims that state repression of ordinary Kurdish citizens caused them to think 'if they were going to face repression in any case, they might as well support the one remaining movement that had a chance of displacing a state that had already labelled them as enemies'.[147]

Many scholars also argue that the poor economic situation in south-eastern Turkey facilitated the expansion of Kurdish ethno-nationalism during this period.[148] McDowall especially notes the relationship between economic inequality and the impact of state repression and argues that 'for the civilian population, living in economically distressed circumstances, subservient to autocratic landlords, and without prospects for the future, it was inevitable that troop brutality would create a constant stream of unemployed young recruits into the PKK.'[149]

The existing literature also argues that excluding legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties from parliament and the frequent closure of these parties by the Turkish constitution court also helped incite more Kurds to radicalise and support the PKK during the 1990s.[150] Towards the end of the 1980s, Kurdish ethno-nationalist politicians began to engage in legal politics and Turkey's first legal Kurdish nationalist political party, the People's Labour Party (*Halkın Emek Partisi*, HEP), was established in 1990 and entered

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[146] Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 87.
[147] Romano, 85.
[148] Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 122–26. McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied*, 53–54
[149] McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied*, 47.
[150] White, *Primitive Rebels or Revolutionary Modernizers*, 176–77; Nigogosian, 'Turkey`s Kurdish Problem In The 1990s: Recent Trends,' 42; Bozarslan, 'The Political Crisis and the Kurdish Issue in Turkey,' 147.

into the Turkish parliament after the 1991 parliamentary election via an electoral alliance with centre-left Social Democrat Populist Party (*Sosyaldemokrat Halkçı Parti*, SHP). However, it was closed by the Turkish constitutional court in 1993, and in 1994, four of its MPs were arrested and charged with being members of the PKK and being involved in separatist activities. They were sentenced to 15 years imprisonment and released after more than nine years. A familiar cycle of Kurdish ethno-nationalists opening political parties that would eventually be banned by the Turkish constitutional court followed this first case. Kurdish ethno-nationalists were able to reform their party under a new name in each instance and mainly continued to use the same party buildings and staff. Often they were even led by the same political figures such as Ahmet Turk.[151] In this sense, the Turkish POS cannot be regarded as totally closed during the 1990s as it had been in the 1980s. Nonetheless, in the 1990s Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties could not advocate their causes effectively through legal channels.

Some dissident, liberal voices, however, began in the late 1980s to express the need to recognise basic Kurdish rights and tried to push Turkish governments towards democratic reforms.[152] A cultural opening came when the ban on the public use of Kurdish was lifted in 1991. Kurdish publications and musical works became legal, and also the censorship on them softened.[153] Moreover, the existence of a Kurdish minority in the county as a separate ethnic community began to be publicly stated by Turkish publications as well as by political leaders.[154] Nonetheless, these could not change the mainstream understanding of the Turkish state given the influential role of the Turkish military and

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[151] Watts, *Activists in Office*, 80–81.
[152] Heper, *The State and Kurds in Turkey: The Question of Assimilation*, 165, 175; Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 136–51.
[153] Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 45.
[154] Heper, *The State and Kurds in Turkey: The Question of Assimilation*, 164–65.

National Security Council in the decision-making process.[155] The traditional, security-focused approach by Turkey largely continued to be applied until 1999,[156] and these openings remained rather limited.

Meanwhile, international and regional developments also facilitated the rise of Kurdish ethnic awareness and the growth of the PKK during this period. One of these developments was the massacre of approximately 5,000 Kurdish people in Iraq by Saddam Hussein's regime through a chemical attack on the city of Halabja in 1988 and the resulting migration of a large number of Kurdish refugees to the Turkish border.[157] Other developments included the rise of the issue of minorities on the agenda following violent ethnic conflicts in Balkans, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and in the aftermath, Turkey`s changing role from being a strategic bulwark against a Soviet threat, which was important enough that it was relatively immune to western criticism on its internal affairs, to becoming a free target for it.[158]

As another crucial development, the Kurdish diaspora in Europe also significantly expanded during this period and contributed to the development of the Kurdish 'imagined community' through various cultural, networking and publication activities,[159] and significantly assisted the development of Kurdish identity and culture.[160] Amidst this expansion by the Kurdish diaspora, the PKK also managed to establish a strong network in

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[155] Heper, 175–76.
[156] Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey*, 1997, 80; Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 139; Bozarslan, 'The Political Crisis and the Kurdish Issue in Turkey,' 143–44; Gulistan Gurbey, 'The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey since 1980s,' in *Kurdish Nationalist Movement in the 1990's: Its' Impact on Turkey and the Middle East*, ed. Robert Olson (Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 19–21.
[157] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 428.
[158] Ismail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, 2nd Revised edition (Mersin: Rustem, 2001).
[159] Ilhan Kaya and Omer Ugurlu, 'Ulus Otesi Milliyetcilik Baglaminda Avrupa Kurt Diasporasi [The European Kurdish Diaspora in the Context of Trans-Border Nationalism],' *Dicle Universitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitusu Dergisi [Journal of Dicle University Social Sciences Institute]*, no. 2014–1 (2014): 204–5; Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 151.
[160] Kaya and Ugurlu, 'Ulus Otesi Milliyetcilik Baglaminda Avrupa Kurt Diasporasi [The European Kurdish Diaspora in the Context of Trans-Border Nationalism],' 203.

during the 1980s and 1990s, and the Kurdish diaspora in Europe acted as a source of power in terms of intellectual, international and economic support for the PKK and PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey.[161]

Many scholars, as well as observers, argue that as a consequence of these developments and while the Kurdish ethno-nationalist sentiments meaningfully expanded among Turkey`s Kurds during the late 1980s and early 1990s, the PKK also significantly grew and PKK-led, separatist Kurdish ethno-nationalism became a serious challenge to the Turkish state. Imset argues that by 1991 the militant organisation was highly influential, particularly in border cities in south-eastern Turkey, and 'people who would call the PKK members as students and would only mention the PKK in whispers in 1987, began to talk explicitly about party, front, army and guerrilla and these were the proofs of the changing dynamics'.[162] Nonetheless, the PKK was unable to turn its insurgency into a large-scale, mass uprising.[163] Despite the unintentional and counter-productive effects governmental repression had on the growth of the PKK and the expansion of the ethno-nationalism in the 1980s and early 1990s, the Turkish state managed to control this upward trend after the early 1990s.

Scholars explain the changing trend by pointing to several key factors. First, some contend that the Turkish government emptied villages that did not agree to serve as village guards and this led to a migration of these villagers to neighbouring cities and on many occasions to the major cities in western Turkey.[164] Successive Turkish governments

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[161] Alynna J. Lyon and Emek M. Uçarer, 'Mobilizing Ethnic Conflict: Kurdish Separatism in Germany and the PKK,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24, no. 6 (2001): 925–48.

[162] Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)*, 287.

[163] Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 2011, 124; Bozarslan, 'Political Aspects of the Kurdish Problem in Contemporary Turkey,' 82.

[164] McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 440; McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied*, 45–47; Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 79–82.

argued, however, that those villages were abandoned by villagers on their own free will based on security concerns. Some scholars also note that, in addition to forced evictions, some Kurdish villagers who were stuck in the middle of the fight between the state and the PKK chose to leave their villages for cities both in eastern and western Turkey.[165] Thus, it is not possible to clearly determine the share of Kurds who left their villages voluntarily and share who were forced to do so. Nevertheless, this process critically impacted the trajectory of the conflict in the region. As most of the remaining villages in south-eastern Turkey were those willing to be village guards, this process resulted in a significant decline in logistical support for the PKK and considerably limited the ability of the PKK to freely operate in the territory.[166]

Secondly, the Turkish army restructured in the 1990s to adapt to the needs of unconventional warfare. New special commando units were established, attack helicopters,[167] thermal cameras and many other kinds of critical military technology were acquired, and the capabilities of Turkish security forces significantly increased in the 1990s.[168] The Turkish army also organised large-scale military operations against PKK camps in northern Iraq in 1992, 1995 and 1997. Meanwhile, earlier supportive regional conditions began to change as the relationship between the PKK and KDP started to

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[165] Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 1997, 131; Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State*, 46.

[166] Marcus, *Blood and Belief*, 186.

[167] Onay Yilmaz, 'Apo'nun Son Röportajı: Bizi Helikopterler Yaktı [The Last Interview of Ocalan: It Was the Attack Helicopters That Destroyed Us],' *Milliyet*, February 24, 1999.

[168] The following source is a book written by the one of the most prominent figures in the PKK/KCK after Ocalan. This book provides many examples on the relationship between the increasing capacity of the Turkish security forces during the 1990s and their impact on the PKK. Murat Karayılan, *Bir Savaşın Anatomisi & Kürdistan'da Askeri Çizgi [The Anatomy of a War & Military Style in Kurdistan]* (Istanbul: Aram Yayınları, 2014).

deteriorate towards the end of the 1980s and remained tense during the 1990s. In 1995 and

1997 the KDP supported Turkey in cross-border military operations against the PKK.[169]

Due to these domestic and regional developments, as Figure 3.1 reveals, PKK

losses sharply increased from the early 1990s until mid-1990s. Moreover, as Figure 3.2

shows, the instances and effectiveness of PKK attacks also began to decline in the mid-

1990s. Conversely, as many interviewees confirmed, the Turkish state's authority,

effectiveness and provision of public services began to normalise at this time in eastern

and south-eastern Turkey.[170] Moreover, besides the declining effectiveness of its militant

activities, the PKK's ability to expand its social networks and disseminate its message

remained highly limited. These developments led to a change in the discourse of the PKK

and Abdullah Ocalan started to consider the possibility of a political and federal solution

through negotiations with Ankara that began in the early 1990s.[171]

However, the mounting losses of the PKK and moderation of its discourse meant

neither the end of PKK militancy and act of terrorism nor its ethno-nationalist ambitions.

The PKK continued its efforts to lead its insurgency to reach a critical mass[172] and, albeit

not as effective as it once was, continued its attacks throughout the 1990s until 1

September 1999, when Ocalan declared from his prison cell in Turkey that the PKK would

stop all militant activities permanently and ordered the PKK militants to withdraw from

Turkey to their bases in Iraq.[173] As many expert, elite and ordinary locals interviewed for

[169] Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement*, 57; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 389, 436–42.

[170] Anonymous Respondent 11, Personal Communication, July 20, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication, August 2, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 35, Personal Communication, August 16, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication.

[171] See the interview by Imset with Abdullah Ocalan, attached to the end of his book, Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili [The PKK: The Twenty Years of Separatist Violence] (1973-1992)*, 359–388.

[172] Gunes, *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey*, 2011, 126.

[173] 'Ocalan Bugune Kadar 7 Kez Ateskes ve Cekilme Ilan Etti... [Ocalan Has Declared Ceasefires and Withdrawal 7 Times so Far...],' *Milli Gazete*, accessed March 5, 2015,

this study agreed, through its determined counter-struggle Ankara showed that it was not possible for the PKK to win against the Turkish state militarily. After the mid-1990s, the initial momentum of the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism in the previous decade significantly subsided.

Figure 3.1: PKK losses (1984 - 2000)[174]
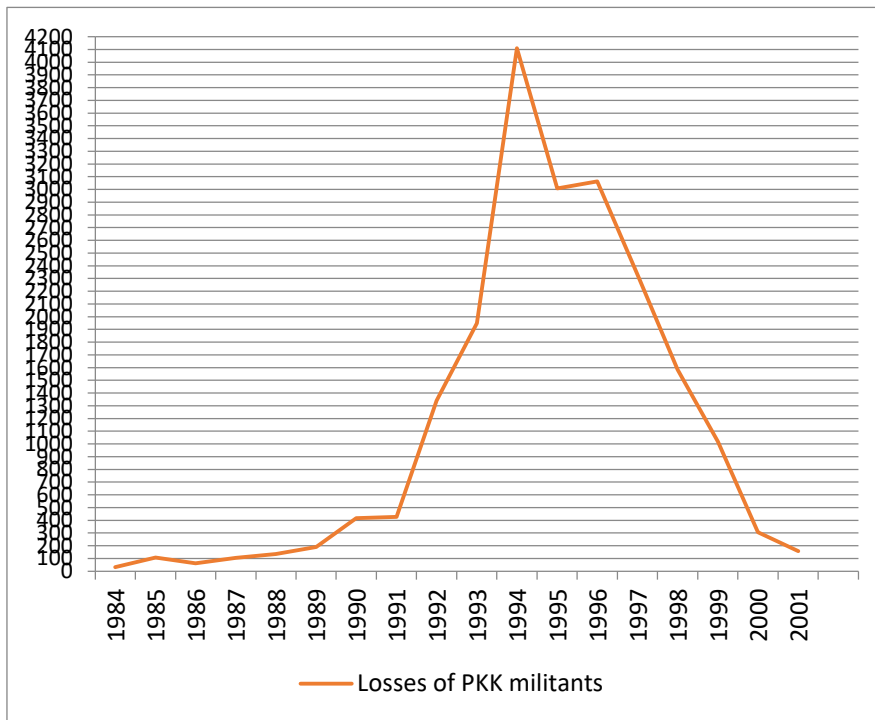
Losses of PKK militants

http://www.milligazete.com.tr/haber/Ocalan_bugune_kadar_7_kez_ateskes_ve_cekilme_ilan_etti/276891#.VUZzqfl_NBc.

[174] The numbers of PKK losses in Figure 3.1 were taken from the following report of the Turkish parliament: 'Terör Ve Şiddet Olaylari Kapsaminda Yaşam Hakki İhlallerini İnceleme Raporu [Report on the Violations of Right to Live in the Context of Terror and Violence Events]' (Ankara: Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi İnsan Haklarını İnceleme Komisyonu [GNAT Human Rights Comission], February 13, 2013), 62.

Figure 3.2: Number of PKK attacks on various targets (1984 - 1999)[175]
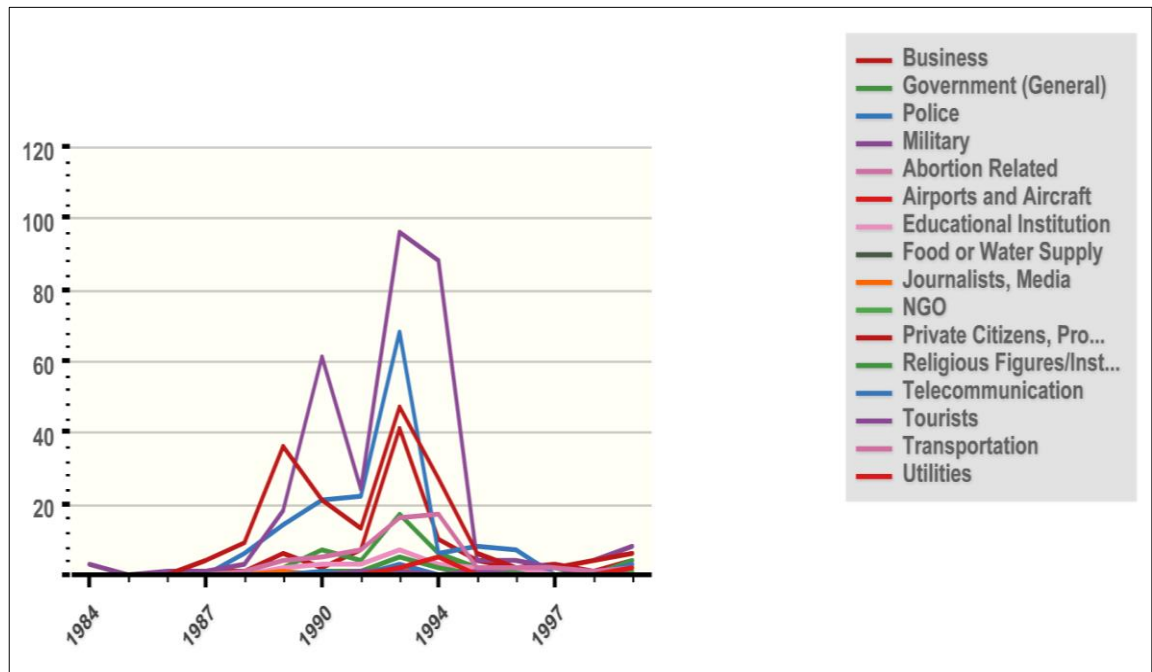
3.6. Conclusion

This chapter has argued that, as with other nationalisms, the emergence and development of Kurdish ethno-nationalism was not given but a modern process largely shaped by structural, organisational and cultural factors. Kurdish ethno-nationalism initially emerged among educated Kurdish intellectuals based in Istanbul and other major cities. Although these intellectuals were involved in publishing and cultural activities during the first decades of the 20th century, their impact on the expansion of ethno-nationalism among Kurds remained limited at that time. Moreover, although the aftermath of World War I provided a suitable opportunity structure, socio-cultural and other factors relating to the Kurds impeded the expansion of ethno-nationalism among the wider Kurdish community. Consequently, the Turkish state managed to suppress several Kurdish revolts and

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[175] The source for Figure 3.2 is 'Global Terrorism Database,' University of Maryland, accessed May 16, 2018, https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?search=pkk&sa.x=47&sa.y=12&sa=Search.

strengthen its rule during the 1920s and 1930s, quieting Kurdish ethno-nationalist movements.

Kurdish ethno-nationalism revived in the wake of the installation of the 1961 constitution, which brought important liberties. Although the Turkish POS enabled the emergence of Kurdish ethno-nationalism, it was not sufficiently open to accommodate mounting Kurdish ethno-nationalist demands, just as it was also incapable of heeding the demands of many other right and left-wing groups within the legal political system. Followed by a semi-coup in 1971, this process led to the polarisation and radicalisation of Turkish and Kurdish movements and organisations. Despite a closing legal structure, the widening schism between state officials alongside ideological lines meant that Turkish governments could not effectively control the development of increasingly radicalised groups and organisations during the 1970s. Amidst this relatively free environment Kurdish ethno-nationalism was able to develop.

Nevertheless, the most meaningful expansion of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey followed the 1980 coup. After the country's new military leadership suppressed many left-wing and right-wing organisations, in addition to Kurdish ethno-nationalist groups, the door was closed to even the cultural appearance of Kurdish in the public sphere. However, a prescient escape abroad by its leadership before the coming coup d'état and support from regional allies ensured the survival of the PKK. Moreover, this favourable regional structure and support for the PKK as well as growing resentment among the Kurdish people by the relatively indiscriminate and repressive practices of Turkish state paved the way for both the growth of the PKK as an outlawed militant organisation and also the expansion of the ethno-nationalism among Kurdish-origin citizens during the 1980s and early 1990s.

Nonetheless, because of improved technology, increased capabilities and the determination of Turkish security forces, the Turkish state significantly minimised the PKK's capacity to orchestrate large-scale attacks and disrupt the normal functioning of the Turkish state. From the mid-1990s onwards, as Ankara's authority and effectiveness in governing the region improved, the impact of the PKK and the power of Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement began to weaken. This increased crackdown of the Turkish state on the PKK and PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism eventually resulted in the capture of Abdullah Ocalan in February 1999. Later that year, under the direction of the imprisoned former PKK leader, the group declared that it would cease all militant attacks and withdraw to its bases in Iraq.

CHAPTER 4

CHANGES IN THE TURKISH POLITICAL OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURE

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter analysed the dynamics of the evolution of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey, from its emergence in the late 19th century until the end of the 1990s. In this context, it identified the most important social, political, organisational, and ideational parameters that shaped the emergence and development of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. The previous chapter has also revealed that since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 until 1999, the Turkish POS was not open to Kurdish ethno-nationalism. The liberal atmosphere brought about by the 1961 constitution paved the way for the rebirth of Kurdish ethno-nationalism after its repression in the 1930s.[1] However, this relative openness of the Turkish POS from 1961 to 1980 was rather related to the input dimension of the POS, and the demands of Kurdish ethno-nationalism did not find their way into the Turkish policy-making process until the 2000s.

Triggered by some catalysing events in the late 1990s and early 2000s,[2] Turkey's Kurdish policy started to change. While the Turkish political system democratised, decentralised and became much more open to the peaceful articulation of dissident ideas; civil, cultural and political liberties for Kurdish origin citizens also significantly increased. Moreover, legal political channels, which had been largely closed to Kurdish electoral

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[1] Hamit Bozarslan, 'Political Aspects of the Kurdish Problem in Contemporary Turkey,' in *The Kurds: A Contemporary Overview*, ed. Philip G. Kreyenbroek and Stefan Sperl (London: Routledge, 1992), 96–97.
[2] These catalysing events are the capture of the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, by the Turkish state in February 1999 and the consequent decline in PKK militancy, the devastating earthquake in August 1999, and most importantly the acceptance of Turkey as a candidate country for full EU membership during the Helsinki Summit in December 1999 and AK Party's ascension to power in 2002.

politics until the late 1990s, began to be gradually opened after 1999 both on the national and local levels.

This chapter analyses these changes in the Turkish POS after 1999. As discussed in the second chapter, in the structural analysis within the SMT scholarship, one of the most important discussions in the existing literature is whether the POS should be analysed as an objective reality independent from its interpretations by agents or whether the impact of the POS on movements is only realised through its collective attribution process, thus rather than objective opportunities, analysis of the POS should be focused on the collective interpretation of it. While previous studies mainly analyse the POS as an objective external structure that the movements operate in,[3] recent studies rather focus on the challengers' collective attribution of threat and opportunity to this structure.[4]

Each approach carries advantages and disadvantages and must be chosen according to the analytical focus of the research. As McAdam states in a slightly different context, the crucial point here is to be explicit about what one is supposed to analyse and what conceptualisation of the POS is pertinent to that analysis.[5] As stated in the introductory chapter, this research aims to answer some empirical questions about the impact of the changing POS in Turkey on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Thus, in light of

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[3] Peter K. Eisinger, 'The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities,' *American Political Science Review* 67, no. 1 (March 1, 1973): 11–28; Herbert P. Kitschelt, 'Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies,' *British Journal of Political Science* 16, no. 1 (January 1986): 57–85; Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Doug McAdam, 'Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Directions,' in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, First Edition (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 23–40.
[4] William A. Gamson and David S. Meyer, 'Framing Political Opportunity,' in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, First Edition (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 275–90; Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 2nd edition (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015).
[5] McAdam, 'Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Directions,' 31.

the methodological discussion, this chapter will limit itself to the 'objective structural changes', and the framing of these changes by Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors will be analysed separately in the following chapters.

This methodological separation of the 'objective structural changes' from their initial framing by the agent is both useful and necessary because the attribution of opportunity does not produce the same result in every structural condition. As Tarrow points out, there are pseudo-opportunities in which movement hints at opportunity, although the existing structure does not provide any opportunity in reality.[6] Thus, while the attribution of threat and opportunity can explain the reaction of the challengers to the structure,[7] it cannot explain the overall impact of the structure on the trajectory of the contention.[8] The impact of the structural factors on the trajectory of the contention is not merely realised through the filters of the movement's frames, attributions, and even actions. Therefore, in order to fully investigate how structure impacts contention, separating objective structure from its framing by agents is important.[9]

This will help us assess the level and importance of structural changes, independent from framing by Kurdish ethno-nationalist groups. However, whether there exists an objective reality is also a matter of concern and all the analysis of the objective structure is inevitably bound to the biases of the researcher to some extent. Given the controversial nature of the subject matter, different arguments and perceptions of these changes will be presented based on the data collected in the field to address prospective opposition. However, this should be differentiated from the attribution of threat and opportunity of the

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[6] Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3rd edition (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 164.
[7] Jon Elster, *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 20.
[8] For a similar discussion see, Charles D. Brockett, *Political Movements and Violence in Central America*, First Edition (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 18.
[9] McAdam, 'Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Directions,' 25–26.

Kurdish ethno-nationalist organisations. Thus, this chapter primarily aims to investigate structural changes from 1999 to 2015 in order to lay out a structural context for the following analytical chapters pertaining to the dynamic interaction of Kurdish ethno-nationalism with these changes.

This chapter is organised into six sections. These introductory remarks, which have also served as a brief review of the conceptual framework used in this chapter, are followed by the second section which investigates the broader socio-economic developments that paved the way for change in the Turkish POS in the 2000s. The third section focuses on the democratisation of Turkish POS and the expansion of civil and cultural liberties. The fourth section goes on to examine structural changes that resulted in the opening up of institutional channels for legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist politics on both the national and local level. Next, the fifth section scrutinises the decentralisation process of the Turkish administrative system that was realised during the first decade of the 21st century. The sixth and final section concludes the chapter by recapitulating the main findings.

4.2. The road to change: socio-economic and political catalysts

Political structure and existing power relations are not static peculiarities of a polity and are liable to change. Some broader socio-economic processes, such as urbanisation, industrialisation, war, prolonged unemployment, large-scale demographic movements, and international developments can create new political opportunities which instigate mass protest and insurgency.[10] Rather than promoting the collective action in a direct and

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[10] McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 1982, 41–42.

mechanistic causal relationship,[11] these macro-level socio-economic developments alter the power relations in a polity, thus paving the way for changes in the POS.[12]

Similar to these above-stated arguments in the existing SMT literature, the enlargement of the POS in Turkey after 1999 was neither the result of a sudden decision by Turkish political elites of the time nor merely a result of the capture of Abdullah Ocalan and the acceptance of Turkey as a candidate for EU membership. There were also broader socio-economic and political developments behind the change in POS which only surfaced in the aftermath of these catalysing events.

As a consequence of the neo-liberal economic policies adopted after 1980, the role of the private sector in the Turkish economy expanded considerably and although an unfair distribution of income constituted a major problem, the overall wealth of the Turkish society increased.[13] This process also led to the emergence of a new wealthy class in Anatolian cities that mainly adhered to religious values.[14] Despite all the constraints imposed by the constitution of 1982, civil society flourished during the 1990s;[15] urbanisation increased and, despite concerns regarding the quality of education, general education levels rose in the country.[16] Moreover, as a result of the expansion of

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[11] Steven M. Buechler, 'The Strange Career of Strain and Breakdown Theories of Collective Action,' in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi, (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 51.

[12] McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970*, 41–42.

[13] *The Silent Revolution: Turkey`s Democratic Change and Transformation Inventory 2002-2013*, 4th edition (Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Undersecretariat of Public Order and Security, 2014), 36; Tanel Demirel, '2000'li Yıllarda Asker ve Siyaset: Kontrollü Değişim İle Statüko Arasında Türk Ordusu [Military and Politics during 2000s: Turkish Army between Controlled Change and Status Qua],' *Seta Analiz* 18 (February 2010): 7.

[14] Angel Rabasa and F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2008), 38, accessed January 27, 2015, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG726.pdf; Demirel, '2000'li Yıllarda Asker ve Siyaset [Military and Politics during 2000s],' 7.

[15] Gülgün Erdoğan-Tosun, 'Civil Society and Democratic Consolidation in Turkey,' in *Democratic Consolidation in Turkey: State, Political Parties, Civil Society, Civil-Military Relations, Socio-Economic Development, EU, Rise of Political Islam and Separatist Kurdish Nationalism*, ed. Muge Aknur (Boca Raton, Fla: Universal Publishers, 2012), 179–202.179–202.

[16] Demirel, '2000'li Yıllarda Asker ve Siyaset [Military and Politics during the 2000s],' 7.

communication technologies and the impact of globalisation, people became increasingly aware of global developments and began to compare their own circumstances with others', particularly in the western world.[17]

The main challenges came from identity-based politics – interests such as Kurdish ethno-nationalist and Islamist groups. Besides, various other segments of the Turkish society, liberals, social democrats, business circles, and civil society organisations also became increasingly critical of the different aspects of the Turkish state, such as the quality of democracy, the strict implementation of the principle of laicism, the monolithic understanding of the nation-state, excessive centralisation, and a slow working bureaucracy.[18] All these socio-economic developments led to ever-increasing pressure on the Turkish state during the 1990s.

Nonetheless, these domestic socio-economic developments and the growing pressure could not produce any meaningful change, and the basic tenets of the Turkish political structure remained largely intact until the early 2000s. Several important events in 1999 acted as catalysts in triggering the process of change. The first was the capture and imprisonment of Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the PKK, who soon after his imprisonment called on the PKK to stop its attacks on Turkey. Consequently, the PKK militants retreated to bases in Iraq after September 1999. As militant activities considerably declined, discussions on the PKK violence and terrorism also retreated from the Turkish political agenda. A thorough scan of the newspapers and magazines of the period clearly displays that all these developments as well as Ocalan's conciliatory and repentant remarks during

[17] Demirel, 7; *The Silent Revolution: Turkey`s Democratic Change and Transformation Inventory 2002-2013*, 36.

[18] Erdoğan-Tosun, 'Civil Society and Democratic Consolidation in Turkey,' 192–95; E. Fuat Keyman and Tuba Kanci, 'Democratic Consolidation and Civil Society in Turkey, ' in *Turkey`s Democratization Process*, ed. Carmen Rodriguez et al. (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014), 143–45; Süleyman Sözen, 'New Public Administration in Turkey,' in *Turkey`s Democratization Process*, ed. Carmen Rodriguez et al. (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014), 225–27.

his trials[19] created optimism in Turkish political elites and public opinion and reduced the political cost of compliance.[20] It also weakened opposition from traditional state elites and strengthened arguments about the necessity of political reforms in order to protect the national unity of the country.[21]

Moreover, the devastating earthquake of 17 August 1999, which hit the most developed and industrialised part of the country, and the delayed response of the state to the disaster, brought the state-centric, top-down approach into question once again. It also stood in sharp contrast to civil society's successful efforts in the recovery process.[22] The earthquake also aggravated the already fragile state of the Turkish economy. The Turkish economy shrank by 6.1 percent in 1999,[23] accelerating the ongoing bailout negotiations with the IMF that resulted in a bailout agreement later that year. However, after a temporary recovery in 2000, the Turkish economy experienced an even more serious 9.5 percent contraction in 2001[24] that led to a renewal of the bailout agreement.[25]

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[19] 'Öcalan Faces Turkish Justice, ' BBC.com, May 31, 1999, sec. Europe, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/356962.stm; 'Ocalan Pleads for a Chance to Make Peace with Turkey', CNN.com, May 31, 1999,' http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/meast/9905/31/ocalan.03/; 'Ocalan Starts the Trial with an Apology...,' *Hurriyet Daily News*, accessed March 30, 2016, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/ocalan-starts-the-trial-with-an-apology.aspx?pageID=438&n=ocalan-starts-the-trial-with-an-apology...-1999-06-01.

[20] A thorough scan of the newspapers and magazines of the period clearly displays the optimism of the Turkish elites and public opinion that the capture of Öcalan would lead to the elimination of the PKK threat. The following are exemplary sources: Ramazan Yavuz, 'PKK'da Tükenişin Fotoğrafı [The Picture of the PKK's Collapse],' *Milliyet*, February 16, 2000; 'Başbuğ'dan Özeleştiri: Terör Bitti Sandık, Oysa Dağdaydı![We thought that the terror was over. However, they were in the mountains!],' t24.com.tr, accessed October 30, 2016, http://t24.com.tr/haber/basbugdan-ozelestiri-teror-bitti-sandik-oysa-dagdaydi/82314.

[21] Aydın-Düzgit, "Human Rights in Turkey," 315.Senem Aydın-Düzgit, 'Human Rights in Turkey,' in *Turkey`s Democratization Process*, ed. Carmen Rodriguez et al. (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014), 315.

[22] Erdoğan-Tosun, 'Civil Society and Democratic Consolidation in Turkey, ' 193–94; '1999 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession' (European Commission, October 13, 1999), 9.

[23] '2002: Yıllık Ekonomik Rapor [2002 Annual Economic Report]' (Ankara: Finance Ministry of Republic of Turkey, January 2003), 6.

[24] 'Yıllık Ekonomik Rapor 2002 [2002 Annual Economic Report],' 6.

[25] Alkan Soyak and Nadir Eroğlu, 'The Role of IMF-World Bank Structural Adjustment Policies in The Transformation of Turkey's Development Perception' (Symposium Presentation, Globalisation, Democratisation and Turkey, Antalya, March 27, 2008), accessed October 30, 2016 https://core.ac.uk/download/files/153/7299804.pdf.

All these developments increased debate in Turkey regarding the necessity of structural reforms. As shown thorough review of speeches and statements by political and state elites from the period, which have been collected through extensive analysis of newspapers and documents, among the majority of Turkish political elites, there was more or less a consensus on the necessity of structural reforms even though they dissented on the details.[26] Nonetheless, influential opposition to these demands for change also existed within the Turkish political and civil-military bureaucratic elites, particularly regarding minority rights. The conditions of the bailout agreements acted to some extent as an external catalyser for the reform process as they reflected a neo-liberal worldview and emphasised the declining role of the government's involvement in regulating the market.[27] However, these were primarily related to economic regulations. The designation of Turkey as a candidate country for full EU membership in December 1999 provided the real positive external dynamic for domestic political reforms.[28] A wide debate on necessary political reforms[29] started and academics, intellectuals, several civil society organisations,

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[26] Their acknowledgement of the necessity of political reforms is clear in the statements of the successive Turkish presidents – Süleyman Demirel and Ahmet Necdet Sezer – as well as the other top political figures of the time from different political parties and ideologies such as Bülent Ecevit, the leader of the centre-left Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti*, DSP) and prime minister of the late 1990s and early 2000s, the leader of the Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi,* ANAP) Mesut Yılmaz, Abdullah Gül, who later became Turkey's prime minister in the first AK Party government and was also the president of the country from 2007 to 2014. The following sources provide some examples of their opinions on the need for structural reforms: Serpil Çevikcan, 'AB Icin Hedef Bes Yil [The Target for the EU (Membership) Is Five Years],' *Milliyet*, December 23, 1999, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/1999/12/23/t/siyaset/siy01.html; 'Sezer'den 'polis Devleti' Uyarısı [The Warning from Sezer on 'Police State'],' NTV, August 6, 2000, http://arsiv.ntv.com.tr/news/5755.asp; Hasan Cemal, 'ANAP Lideri Yılmaz'a Göre 18 Nisan Sonrası... [The Opinions of ANAP Leader Yılmaz for Post 18 April],' *Milliyet*, February 3, 1999, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/1999/03/02/yazar/cemal.html; Ahmet Tulgar, 'Gül: FP Ilkesiz ve Kaypak [Gül: VP Is Unprincipled and Unreliable],' *Milliyet*, March 5, 2000; 'Hükümetin Devamı Bizi AB'ye Götürür [The Continuity of the Government Will Take Us to the EU],' *Sabah*, June 6, 2000, http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2000/06/06/p01.html.
[27] Soyak and Eroğlu, 'The Role of IMF-World Bank Structural Adjustment Policies in The Transformation of Turkey's Development Perception.'
[28] Ismail Cem, *Turkey in the New Century*, 2nd Revised edition (Mersin: Rustem, 2001), 214.
[29] '2000 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession' (European Commission, August 11, 2000), 11.

business circles etc. started raising their already existing demands for the expansion of democratic rights and administrative reforms much more vociferously.

As 'modernisation through westernisation' was one of the most important legacies of Ataturk, the Turkish military, which considers itself and is also regarded as the vanguard of Turkish modernisation, did not object but declared its support to the efforts to achieve a European Union membership, despite its concerns regarding the conditions attached to the process.[30] Thus, from 2000 onwards, despite its ebbs and flows, a gradual reform process commenced in Turkey in order to adopt the EU's *acquis communautaire*. This process of change accelerated after the AK Party came to power in November 2002. This was because the political current that the AK Party originated from had seriously suffered from a strictly secularist, monolithic understanding of the Turkish state. The Islamist Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*, RP) from which the AK Party splintered had been forced to leave the government in 1997 by the Turkish military and later was dissolved in January 1998 due to allegations of being the focal point of anti-secular activities. The continuity of the existing power relations in which civil, judicial and military bureaucracy had a privileged position was also a source of concern for the AK Party, and being well aware of the delicate nature of the internal political dynamics of the country, the AK Party embraced the EU process much more enthusiastically than the previous Turkish governments, and the already initiated democratisation process further accelerated after 2002.[31]

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[30] Mehmet Bardakçı, 'TSK ve AB Reformlarını Yeniden Gözden Geçirmek [Revisiting the Turkish Armed Forces and the EU Process]: 1999-2005,' *Lectio Socialis* 2, no. 1 (January 18, 2018): 11–13; Ersel Aydinli, Nihat Ali Özcan, and Dogan Akyaz, 'The Turkish Military's March toward Europe,' *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 1 (2006): 83–88.

[31] Aydın-Düzgit, ' Human Rights in Turkey,' 314; 'Sorumluluğumuz Dünden Daha Fazla [Our responsibility is now more than what it was],' Official Web Page of AK Party, accessed November 1, 2016, https://www.akparti.org.tr/mobil/haberler/sorumlulugumuz-dunden-daha-fazla/72965; 'Başbakan Yıldırım: Anayasa Değişikliğiyle Vesayet Odaklarına Son Darbeyi Vuracağız [Prime Minister Yıldırım: We will deliver the final blow in the sources of tutelage with the constitutional amendment],' *Sabah*, November 1,

In the context of the reform process, three constitutional amendment packages were legislated respectively in 2001, 2004, and in 2010, altering more than one-third of the Turkish constitution.[32] Moreover, eight 'harmonisation packages'[33] were accepted by the Turkish parliament, the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT), from 2002 to 2004 as well as other major legislation such as the new Civil Law in 2001, the Associations Law in 2004, the new Criminal Code and Criminal Procedures Code in 2004,[34] the new Metropolitan Municipalities Law in 2004, and the new Municipal Law in 2005. These fairly substantive legal changes expanded civil, cultural, and political liberties and consequently the quality of the Turkish democracy improved during the 2000s. As part of this general democratisation process, important rights and liberties were also introduced for Kurdish-origin citizens in Turkey that partially corresponded to the demands of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement.

Each of the following three sections investigates one aspect of this democratisation and decentralisation process respectively, the expansion of civil and cultural liberties, the opening up of formal political channels on national and local levels, and lastly the decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system.

2016, http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2016/11/01/basbakan-yildirim-anayasa-degisikligiyle-vesayet-odaklarina-son-darbeyi-vuracagiz.

[32] 'Political Reforms in Turkey' (Ankara: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secretariat General for EU Affairs, 2007), 5.

[33] 'Harmonisation Package' is a generic term that is used to refer to a draft law consisting of a collection of amendments to different laws, aimed at amending several articles of more than one code or law in a single voting session in parliament. The term 'harmonisation' refers to the aim of these packages to align Turkish domestic law with the EU's acquis.

[34] Ergun Özbudun and Ömer Faruk Gençkaya, *Democratization and the Politics of Constitution-Making in Turkey* (Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2009), 73.

4.3. The expansion of civil and cultural freedoms

A securitised, state-centric understanding was the prevailing strategy of the Turkish elites since the late Ottoman period[35] until the 2000s.[36] This securitised state-centric approach was further aggravated and entrenched after the 1980 military coup. Entering the 2000s, most of the legal structure that regulates civil, cultural, and political liberties was used to reflect this understanding of civil society and civil liberties. While according to the Turkish Code of Association of 1983 forming associations on ethnic, racial, religious, and sectarian bases was clearly banned; cooperating with international associations, opening branches for Turkish associations abroad and similarly opening branches in Turkey for foreign NGOs was also principally forbidden and was only possible under extraordinary situations with the permission of the council of ministers.[37]

As another reflection of the same understanding, due to the regulation that was enacted in 1986, all films, music records, live theatre and musical performances were required to obtain permission from relevant governmental authorities prior to their dissemination or performance.[38] As seen in the previous chapter, although the Turkish state's policies on some basic cultural rights of minorities began to soften during the 1990s and the bans on the Kurdish language and publications were removed, given the high level of violence and terrorism, the above-stated state-centric understanding continued to dominate the strategies of Turkish elites during the 1990s and civil liberties continued to be largely restricted.

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[35] Michael M. Gunter, *The Kurds and the Future of Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 3–4.

[36] For the role of 'the informal procedures and prevailing strategies of political elites in dealing with challengers' see, Ruud Koopmans and Hanspeter Kriesi, 'Institutional Structures and Prevailing Strategies,' in *New Social Movements in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis*, ed. Hanspeter Kriesi et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 26.

[37] '(Mülga) Dernekler Kanunu [(Abolished) Associations Law],' Pub. L. No. 2908, 66 697 (1983) Articles 5, 7, 11, 12.

[38] 'Sinema,Video ve Müzik Eserlerinin Denetlenmesi Hakkında Yönetmelik [Regulation on the Inspection of Cinema, Video and Musical Works], ' Pub. L. No. 86/10901 (1986).

Following the start of the democratisation and EU harmonisation processes after 1999, the new Turkish Civil Law of 2001, and particularly the new Association Law of 2004 eased the formation of associations and also softened their governmental supervision. The formation of associations based on ethnicity became legal even though the new Associations Law still forbids associations from pursuing goals that are clearly banned by the Turkish constitution and laws.[39] Increased cooperation between national and foreign associations and foundations as well as between associations and political parties, syndicates, and vocational unions became possible. This cooperation included the opening of branches abroad, receiving aid from foreign nationals and organisations and aiding other associations, syndicates, and unions.[40] Furthermore, the task of registration and inspection of the deeds of associations was transferred from the Turkish police to a newly established civil department within the Turkish Ministry of Interior in the centre and in a newly established civilian section within the offices of the governorates and the peripheral district governorates.[41]

Besides, as a part of a broader New Public Management-inspired administrative reform process, the active participation of civil and vocational organisations in decision-making and consultative boards of the public institutions such as regional development agencies,[42] and human rights supervisory boards[43] have expanded. In addition to this legal involvement of civil society and vocational organisations in various governmental

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[39] 'Dernekler Kanunu [Associations Law],' Pub. L. No. 5253, 44 5 9075 (2004), Article 30.
[40] 'Dernekler Kanunu [Associations Law],' Articles 5, 10, 21, 91, 92.
[41] ' Çeşitli Kanunlarda Değişiklik Yapılmasına Dair Kanun [Law on the Amendment of Various Laws], ' Pub. L. No. 4771, 7 8337 (2002), 8337, Article 3.
[42] 'Kalkınma Ajanslarının Kuruluşu, Koordinasyonu ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun [Law on the establishment, coordination and duties of the development agencies],' Pub. L. No. 5449, 45 5 9685 (2006), Articles 8, 9, 10, 11.
[43] 'İl ve İlçe İnsan Hakları Kurullarının Kuruluş, Görev ve Çalışma Esasları Hakkında Yönetmelik [Regulation on the formation, duty and working procedures of province and district human rights commissions] ' (2003), Articles 5 and 6, accessed April 21, 2016, http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2003/11/20031123.htm#1.

decision-making boards, ad hoc consultations of government and local agents to civil society organisations increased as well.[44]

Furthermore, freedoms of expression, assembly, and protest gradually increased as a part of this process and the possibility to voice different demands through these types of legal and more peaceful means was significantly amplified.[45] The notorious article eight of the Turkish Anti-Terror Law (TATL), which provided the legal pretext for suppressing any type of anti-systemic activity during the 1990s, including any type of Kurdish appearance, was completely abolished in 2003 with the sixth harmonisation package.[46] Similarly, amendments to article 7 of TATL (propaganda encouraging resorting to terrorism) and articles 159 (insulting the Turkish state and state institutions), 169 (aiding illegal organisations), and 312 (causing enmity and hatred among people by referring to their class, sectarian, regional, racial differences) of the Turkish Criminal Code removed some important barriers to the exercise of the freedom of expression.[47] Moreover, the governmental control and inspection of films, videos, and musical works before their dissemination or live performances were lifted in 2005.[48] With the constitutional amendment of 2004 and new Press Law of 2004, prison sentences for publishing and press-related activities were largely replaced by fines; sanctions such as the closure of publications, halting distribution, and confiscating printing machines were removed; and

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[44] 'Turkey 2008 Progress Report, 'Commission Staff Working Document (Brussels: European Commission, May 11, 2008), 18; 'Turkey 2014 Progress Report, ' 700 (Brussels: European Commission, August 10, 2014), 11.

[45] 'Turkey 2007 Progress Report,' Commission Staff Working Document (Brussels: European Commission, June 11, 2007), 15–17.

[46] *Avrupa Birliği Uyum Yasa Paketleri [European Union Harmonisation Packages]* (Ankara: Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry General Secretariat of European Union, 2007), 37.

[47] Aydın-Düzgit, 'Human Rights in Turkey,' 317.

[48] 'Sinema, Video ve Müzik Eserlerinin Denetlenmesi Hakkında Yönetmeliğin Yürürlükten Kaldırılmasına İlişkin Yönetmelik [Regulation on the abolishment of the regulation on the inspection of cinema, video and musical works], ' Pub. L. No. 2005/8786 (2005).

the grounds for confiscating printed materials, such as books and periodicals, were limited.[49]

In addition to these legal changes, civil-military relations also changed during the 2000s and the impact of traditional state elites on policy-making and implementation processes was reduced. As discussed in the previous chapter, Turkey has a long history of conducting open and fair elections. However, the control exercised by the elected government on the military and also on some fundamental security and foreign policy issues of the country have been limited compared to its Western counterparts. During the 2000s, as a part of the democratisation process, the structure of the National Security Council changed and the role of civilian politicians in it increased and the jurisdiction of the military courts was significantly reduced,[50] and consequently, the civilian control of the Turkish military increased. Moreover, the State Security Courts with special judicial powers were abolished, and capital punishment banned.[51] These changes might seem rather pertinent to the political sphere rather than to the expansion of civil and cultural liberties. However, as Tilly argues, democratisation generally 'involves and depends in part on subordination of previously autonomous military specialists to civilian rule.'[52] In line with this diagnosis by Tilly, as part of the same broader transformation process, this civilianisation of Turkey meaningfully facilitated the expansion of civil and cultural liberties during this period.

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[49] 'Constitution of the Republic of Turkey,' Official Web Page, Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 15, accessed June 14, 2016, https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf ;'Turkey 2005 Progress Report' (Brussels: European Commission, September 11, 2005), 38.
[50] Yaprak Gürsoy, 'From Tutelary Powers and Interventions to Civilian Control: An Overview of Turkish Civil-Military Relations since the 1920s,' in *Turkey`s Democratization Process*, ed. Carmen Rodriguez et al. (London: Routledge, 2014), 264–67.
[51] Ergun Özbudun, 'Democratization Reforms in Turkey 1993-2004,' *Turkish Studies* 8, no. 2 (June 2007): 186.
[52] Charles Tilly, *Regimes and Repertoires* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 212.

Besides these general democratisation processes and the expansion of the civil sphere, the Turkish state's traditional Kurdish policy began to change, and some legal changes expanded the civil and cultural rights of the Kurdish origin citizens of the country. The Third Harmonisation Package in 2002[53] and the subsequent complementary legislation[54] made the establishment of private Kurdish language courses legal, and the first Kurdish language course was opened in 2003.[55] Similarly, in 2003, the legal structure was changed so as to ensure broadcasting in minority languages, including Kurdish, and the Turkish state television, TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), started to broadcast in Kurdish and Zazaki for certain durations after 2003. This initial broadcasting for a limited time period later paved the way for the establishment of TRT Kurdish which has been broadcasting in the Kurdish and Zazaki languages around the clock since 2009.[56] Moreover, local and national private TV and radio stations started to broadcast in Kurdish and in other languages after 2006 and according to a statement by the head of the Turkish Radio and Television Supreme Board, by 2013 more than 20 TV and radio channels were allocated frequencies for all-day Kurdish broadcasting.[57] This was followed by the inclusion of Kurdish and other languages as an optional module in secondary and high schools in 2012,[58] and now in any public school if ten or more students demand to be registered for Kurdish, Zazaki, Arabic or any other minority language module, they will be provided with this opportunity.[59] Moreover, from 2010 onwards, Turkish universities commenced academic programmes at both undergraduate and graduate levels in Kurdish,

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[53] 'Çeşitli Kanunlarda Değişiklik Yapılmasına Dair Kanun [Law on the Amendment of Various Laws],' vol. 7, 2002, Article 11.

[54] 'Çeşitli Kanunlarda Değişiklik Yapılmasına İlişkin Kanun [Law on the Amendment of Different Laws],' Pub. L. No. 4963 (2003), Article 23.

[55] *The Silent Revolution: Turkey`s Democratic Change and Transformation Inventory 2002–2013*, 117.

[56] *The Silent Revolution: Turkey`s Democratic Change and Transformation Inventory 2002-2013*, 117.

[57] '20 Kanala Kürtçe Izni [Permission granted to 20 channels for broadcasting in Kurdish],' Timeturk, accessed July 25, 2016, http://www.timeturk.com/tr/2013/02/14/20-kanala-kurtce-izni.html.

[58] *The Silent Revolution: Turkey`s Democratic Change and Transformation Inventory 2002-2013*, 127–128.

[59] The enrolment of a minimum of ten students is a necessity not for only Kurdish or optional language modules but for all other optional modules.

Zazaki, Assyrian, Armenian, Roma, and in some other minority languages, and it is now possible to study for a bachelor's or master's degree in Kurdish language and literature at several Turkish universities.[60] The legal milieus where Kurdish can be used also expanded and the usage of Kurdish in courts, in political parties' propaganda activities and during prison visits became legal and possible.[61]

However, some scholars either explicitly argued or implied that despite the changing legal structure, the prevailing state-centric understanding of the Turkish state elites did not change, and it was not possible to mention the existence of a real democratisation process but only some superficial changes that had been made.[62] Numerous EU progress reports on Turkey also stated that restrictive interpretations and uneven implementation of the legal changes had prevented people from enjoying these rights to their full extent on some occasions.[63] It is likely that the long-embedded, prevailing state-centric understanding might have caused these restrictive interpretations on some occasions as a time gap is supposed to exist between the alignments of non-material culture and the change in material conditions, which Ougburn conceptualises as a

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[60] *The Silent Revolution: Turkey`s Democratic Change and Transformation Inventory 2002-2013*, 120–121.
[61] Hugh Pope, "Turkey and the Democratic Opening for the Kurds," in *Understanding Turkey's Kurdish Question*, ed. Fevzi Bilgin and Ali Sarihan (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2013), 127–28; Kurban, "The Kurdish Question: Law, Politics and the Limits of Recognition," 350; "Kürtçe Propaganda Serbest [Propaganda in Kurdish Is Legal]," NTV, February 16, 2011, http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/kurtce-propaganda-serbest,4tOZgP8DaUCzi36g8pIpXQ; "İlk Kürtçe Savunma Yapıldı [The First Defense in Kurdish Was Made]," NTV, January 25, 2013, http://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/ilk-kurtce-savunma-yapildi,_5hOKYPqkk2W5pGQZpeHeg; Haber7, "Kürtçe'nin önündeki engeller bir bir kaldırılıyor [The barriers in front of Kurdish are being removed one by one]," Haber7, accessed August 19, 2018, http://www.haber7.com/guncel/haber/1130318-kurtcenin-onundeki-engeller-bir-bir-kaldiriliyor.
[62] Welat Zeydanlioglu, 'Repression or Reform? An Analysis of the AKP's Kurdish Language Policy'; Cengiz Gunes, 'Political Reconciliation in Turkey: Challenges and Prospects,' in *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation, and Reconciliation*, ed. Cengiz Gunes and Welat Zeydanlioglu (London ; New York: Routledge, 2014); Kurban, "The Kurdish Question: Law, Politics and the Limits of Recognition"; Mousseau, "An Inquiry into the Linkage among Nationalizing Policies, Democratization, and Ethno-Nationalist Conflict: The Kurdish Case in Turkey."
[63] '2004 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession' (Brussels: European Commission, June 10, 2004), 49, 53; 'Turkey 2007 Progress Report,' 15; 'Turkey 2011 Progress Report, ' Commission Staff Working Paper (Brussels: European Commission, December 10, 2011), 24–25.

'cultural lag'.[64] Nonetheless, as several EU progress reports also state, the Turkish government made strenuous efforts to ensure the consistent implementation of the changing legal structure.[65] Moreover, field findings of this research strongly suggest that legal changes were accompanied by a gradual transformation from a traditional state-centric understanding of the Turkish state towards a more citizen-oriented, participatory understanding alongside a changed response to the Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

With the exception of several Kurdish ethno-nationalist interviewees, all other respondents from different walks of life said that they observed a change in state elites and government employees' understanding of both state-citizen relations as well as their reactions to the public appearance of Kurdish language and culture. The following two excerpts particularly give a relevant insight into the changing understanding of civil society, citizen and state relations from both state agents' and also from a civil society perspective. A Turkish official who carried out research on the impact of the administrative reforms process on the roles and responsibilities of governors and district governors in Turkey made the following remarks based on the findings of his own research:

I have interviewed more than 60 governors/district governors and conducted surveys with roughly 300 of them, almost all of them, particularly those who have been in the office since the 1990s or earlier, argued that both they and other state officials used to think that they knew better than citizens, and the majority of the citizens also believed this. Thus, no one would question their decisions. Moreover, they argued that they would believe that the state was sacred. Thus, their first priority was not to protect the rights of the citizens but

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[64] William Fielding Ogburn, *Social Change: With Respect to Culture and Original Nature* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1923).
[65] '2004 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession, ' 34; 'Turkey 2005 Progress Report,' 29; 'Turkey 2009 Progress Report,' Commission Staff Working Document (Brussels: European Commission, October 14, 2009), 15, 16–17, 19.

protect the state. However, they all argue that during the 2000s this was replaced by a citizen-oriented approach and it was not possible to run their provinces and districts with the previous top-down, state-centric understanding. Citizens are also more organised and eager for transparency, participation, and also more vocal in questioning the deeds of the state officials. As a district governor, my own judgement is also in line with the general findings of my research.[66]

The following excerpt from an interview with the head of a vocational organisation in the Mardin province in Turkey's south-eastern region both complements the above excerpts and also reflects the general characteristics of the arguments raised by several other interviewees as well:

> Until the 2000s, a paternal state understanding was dominant. A father both beats his child and also loves him/her. A father knows everything and whatever he does, and a child has no right to question it. As in the famous statement attributed to a former state official, even if communism is necessary for the country, the state would bring it about, and the people should not be involved. Consequently or perhaps as an extension of this approach, state officials considered civil society organisations as useless and unnecessary, and in fact as a source of trouble for their own administrative authorities. However, this situation is changing today and the ever-increasing number of citizens organise around various civil and vocational organisations. These organisations articulate the demands of their members and citizens on official milieus much more eagerly and successfully.[67]

This changing legal structure and understanding, as well as political civilianisation, paved the way for the significant increase in civil and cultural freedoms and the expansion of the civil sphere during the 2000s. According to the official numbers shared by the

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[66] Anonymous Respondent 38, Personal Communication, August 30, 2015.
[67] Anonymous Respondent 20, Personal Communication, July 27, 2015.

Turkish Ministry of Interior, the number of active associations increased from roughly 70,000 in 2005 to roughly 107,000 in 2015 while the number of people who are members of an association also almost doubled during the same period.[68] In addition to this quantitative increase, their activities both proliferated and diversified, and the civil society organisations in the country became increasingly lively and more vocal.[69] Their capacity to influence the course of state policies and their roles in Turkey's democratic consolidation and transformation process also increased.[70]

As briefly stated above and will be elaborated in Chapter 8, there were examples of governmental repression and the restrictive implementation by the governmental officials. In this sense, one might plausibly argue that the democratisation process also had its limits. Yet, as Chapter 7 will reveal and elaborate, these increasing civil and cultural liberties and the expansion of the civil space proved highly crucial for the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. They did not only enable the expansion of cultural, linguistic, artisan, and civil representation of Kurdishness but also provided invaluable opportunities in the input side that has been effectively utilised by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement to promote their cause and significantly facilitated the expansion of ethno-nationalism among the Kurdish-origin citizens of Turkey.

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[68] The numbers of the active associations and the numbers of the members in an association are respectively given as online in the following two URL addresses belongs to the Associations Departments of Turkish Ministry of Interior. Official Web Page, *Dernekler Dairesi Başkanliği [Presidency of Associations Department]*, Official Web Page, accessed July 4, 2016, https://www.dernekler.gov.tr/tr/AnasayfaLinkler/yillara-gore-faal-dernek.aspx; fhttps://www.dernekler.gov.tr/tr/AnasayfaLinkler/derneklerin-yillara-gore-uye.aspx.
[69] '2006 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress towards Accession,' 16.
[70] Keyman and Kanci, 'Democratic Consolidation and Civil Society in Turkey,' 149–50.

4.4. The opening up of institutional political channels

In addition to the expansion of civil and cultural freedoms and the rise of the civil sphere, the democratisation process also led to the opening up of institutional political channels to Kurdish ethno-nationalist electoral politics which had largely remained closed during the 1990s. In this context, some legal changes introduced the options of partial or total deprivation of political parties from state financial support instead of total dissolution of the scope and severity of the alleged actions which were not considered serious enough to dissolve the party.[71] Moreover, the necessary ratio of votes in the constitutional court's party dissolution decision was increased from a plain majority to a qualified majority (three out of five of all votes) with the fourth harmonisation package in 2003.[72] However, articles 68 and 69 of the Turkish Constitution, which respectively forbid political parties from pursuing certain activities such as those affecting the unity and indivisibility of the state and argues that political parties that are involved in these type of activities can be dissolved, have not been amended.[73] The relevant article of the Turkish Political Parties Law also still bans the formation of political parties based on a racial, religious, and sectarian basis, and also prohibits the promotion of the rights of ethnic groups in order to create minority cleavages within the Turkish nation and the promotion of regionalism.[74]

Consequently, these legal changes, which have made party dissolution more difficult, neither saved the Kurdish ethno-nationalist People's Democracy Party nor its successor the Democratic Society Party from dissolution by the Turkish Constitutional Court respectively in 2003 and in 2009. In fact, during the 1990s and 2000s party closures

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[71] *Avrupa Birliği Uyum Yasa Paketleri [European Union Harmonisation Packages]*, 14.
[72] *Avrupa Birliği Uyum Yasa Paketleri [European Union Harmonisation Packages]*, 28.
[73] 'Constitution of the Republic of Turkey,' accessed June 14, 2016, https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf.
[74] 'Siyasi Partiler Kanunu [Political Parties Law],' Pub. L. No. 2820, 22 5 5703 (1983), Articles 79, 89, 81, and 82.

were not limited to Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties. Although the AK Party came to power for a second term in 2007 with 46.6 percent of the total votes, and thus was the party in government, it avoided being closed by the Turkish Constitutional Court in 2008 by only one vote,[75] and was deprived of half of its allotted state financial support for the year 2008.[76]

However, despite the similarities between the programmes and policies and discourse of the succeeding Kurdish ethno-nationalist political parties, none of these parties have been closed since the closure of the Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi,* DTP) in 2009. As remarks suggest from numerous interviewees, including several expert interviewees, one reason for this change was the expansion of the freedom of speech and political liberties in general which resulted in the expansion of the scope of legal activities and the shrinkage of the scope of political activities that are targeted by state law enforcement agents.[77]

Second, and possibly more importantly, this virtual expansion of formal political channels was the result of the changing of the prevailing strategy of the Turkish state and political elites with regard to Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Koopman and Kriesi consider the prevailing strategies of a polity in dealing with the challengers as an important component of the POS.[78] According to them, these prevailing strategies refer to an institutionalised,

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[75] Based on allegations of being a centre of activities against secularism, 6 out of 11 members of the Turkish constitutional court voted for the closure of the AK Party. If only one more member of the court had voted for the closure of the party, the AK Party would have been closed as the required qualified majority would have been met.

[76] 'Turkey 2008 Progress Report, ' 6; Vincent Boland, 'Turkey's AKP Survives Court Fight,' *Financial Times*, July 30, 2008, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/24ffa904-5e41-11dd-b354-000077b07658.html#axzz4HVSNbA7M; 'AKP Survives as High Court Splits,' *Hurriyet Daily News*, July 31, 2008, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/akp-survives-as-high-court-splits.aspx?pageID=438&n=akp-survives-as-high-court-splits-2008-07-31.

[77] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication, July 21, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 20, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication, August 19, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 43, Personal Communication, August 24, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 50, Personal Communication, September 4, 2015.

[78] Koopmans and Kriesi, 'Institutional Structures and Prevailing Strategies,' 26.

established culture in a polity about how to deal with challengers and they are the result of long historical traditions. These prevailing strategies might be exclusive (repressive, confrontational, and polarising) or integrative (facilitative, cooperative, and assimilative).[79]

As also briefly touched upon in the previous section, the Turkish state's prevailing strategy regarding Kurdish ethno-nationalism experienced a gradual transformation from total denial towards the acceptance of cultural, linguistic, and civil representation of Kurdishness. Moreover, many interviewees, including politicians, former officials, and academics as well as some Kurdish ethno-nationalist respondents, point out that the AK Party was also coming from a political tradition formerly alienated by the monolithic, strictly secular traits of the Turkish state and suffered a lot from party dissolution and had always been against party dissolution and tried to promote this understanding in Turkish political structure.[80]

However, some Kurdish-origin interviewees tended to disagree with these interpretations and argued that the Turkish elites' approach towards Kurdish ethno-nationalist demands and the virtual opening up of formal political channels was, rather than a real change in the prevailing understanding, a mandatory and natural result of Turkey's EU process as well as the changing world.[81] While the interpretation of whether these virtual changes reflected a real change in understanding in Ankara or were merely a tactical approach might inevitably be subjective. Regardless, no Kurdish ethno-nationalist

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[79] Koopmans and Kriesi, 26..

[80] Anonymous Respondent 5, Personal Communication, July 4, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 11, Personal Communication, July 20, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 23, Personal Communication, July 30, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication, August 22, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 42, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication.

[81] Anonymous Respondent 8, Personal Communication, July 9, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 9, Personal Communication, July 10, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 10, Personal Communication, July 11, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 14, Personal Communication, July 22, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 15, Personal Communication, July 23, 2015.

party experienced closure after the dissolution of the DTP by the Turkish constitutional court in 2009.[82]

Regarding the 10 percent nationwide electoral threshold to enter parliament,[83] which was another major barrier for Kurdish electoral politics on the national level during the 1990s, there has been no change. Due to this ten percent threshold, the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist party did not get the chance to be represented in the Turkish Parliament in 2002 even though they amassed almost two million votes, which was slightly more than 6 percent of all votes in Turkey. In 2007 and in 2011, the representatives of the Kurdish nationalist party ran as independent candidates in order to circumvent the ten percent threshold. Through this formula, 20 deputies from the Kurdish nationalist DTP were elected in 2007[84] and 35 deputies were elected in 2011[85] from the newly formed BDP as independent MPs and later retrieved their party membership once in office. Thus, the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party's representation in the Turkish parliament grew after 2007. In the general election held on 7 June 2015, the latest mainstream Kurdish nationalist party, the HDP, collected 13.1 percent of all votes and won 80 seats in parliament.[86]

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[82] After the collapse of the 'resolution process' in mid-2015, the Turkish state's repression of the Kurdish ethno-nationalists significantly increased and numerous members of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties were jailed on grounds of separatism and terrorism-related activities. However, there has been no party closure even after mid-2015.

[83] This ten percent national threshold is not only valid for Kurdish nationalist political parties but also for all the other political parties.

[84] While the official result of the election can be found in the following URL address that belongs to Turkish Supreme Electoral Council, the following two sources provide information on the same in English. 'YSK Web Portal,' Official Web Page of the Turkish Supreme Electoral Council, YSK Web Portal, accessed June 19, 2018, http://www.ysk.gov.tr/tr/22-temmuz-2007-xxiii-donem-milletvekili-genel-secimi/5001; 'Turkey - 2007 Election Results,' Globalsecurity.org, accessed June 19, 2018, https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/tu-politics-2007.htm; 'Turkey 2007 Progress Report,' 6.

[85] 'YSK Web Portal,' Official Web Page of Turkish Supreme Electoral Council, accessed June 20, 2018 http://www.ysk.gov.tr/tr/12-haziran-2011-xxiv-donem-milletvekili-genel-secimi/4929; 'Turkey 2011 Progress Report,' 7–8.

[86] 'Turkey 2015 Progress Report, ' Commission Staff Working Document (Brussels: European Commission, October 11, 2015), 7–8.

Moreover, even before the start of their parliamentary representation in 2007, Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties began to enjoy gradually increasing freedom in their political activities beginning in the 2000s. With the parliamentary representation in 2007, the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist party gained crucial access to parliamentary commissions, parliamentary inspection schemes of governmental agencies, and rights to obtain information from governmental agencies through parliamentary questions.[87] Moreover, as to the issue of parliamentary immunity, in contrast to the repressive understanding of the 1990s, deputies from the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party also enjoyed the same parliamentary immunity as was enjoyed by other MPs and there was no attempt to revoke any MP's immunity from 2007 until the mid-2015. In contrast, as Watts observes, while the trend was from parliament to prison for Kurdish ethno-nationalist MPs during the 1990s, with the opening up of formal political channels, this process reversed, and several nominees of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party were elected while they were in prison and made their way to the Turkish parliament following their election.[88]

There were some cases in which public prosecutors prepared indictments against the Kurdish ethno-nationalist MPs as well as other province and district representatives and members faced prosecutions and trials. Thus, as Chapter 8 will elaborate, the Turkish state's governmental coercion continued to be applied over the deeds of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors.[89] Nonetheless, the level of the openness of formal channels enabled the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement to meaningfully articulate its causes through these

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[87] Nicole F. Watts, *Activists in Office: Kurdish Politics and Protest in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011), Chapter 3.
[88] Watts, 81–82.
[89] '2004 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession,' 49–50; 'Turkey 2005 Progress Report,' 38; 'Turkey 2006 Progress Report,' Commission Staff Working Document (Brussels: European Commission, August 11, 2008), 20; 'Turkey 2011 Progress Report,' 40–41.

formal political milieus during the focused time span. As Chapter 6 will discuss, this had

significant implications for the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey.

Moreover, the opening up of institutional political channels was not limited to the

national level, and with the commencement of the democratisation process in 1999, local

level political channels also began to open up and provided highly valuable opportunities

and access points to the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. The 1994 general municipal

election was the first general local election after the establishment of the first Kurdish

nationalist party in 1990 and the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party of the time – the

Democracy Party (*Demokrasi Partisi*, DEP) – withdrew from the election due to extremely

high tensions in the region and to protest the arrest of some of its party members and

bombings of its headquarters and local branches.[90] Thus, as was the case in national level

politics, Kurdish nationalist electoral politics did not offer a chance for local representation

throughout the 1990s either. This situation began to change after 1999 and institutional

political channels began to open up for Kurdish ethno-nationalist electoral politics at the

local level. The next local election was held just two months after the capture of Ocalan in

1999. Despite the request of the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Supreme Court to ban the

Kurdish ethno-nationalist party from participating in the local election, the Turkish

Constitutional Court rejected this application.[91] The Kurdish ethno-nationalist party ran for

municipalities for the first time in 1999 and won 38 municipalities, including the

Diyarbakir Metropolitan Municipality.[92] This debut of Kurdish ethno-nationalists in local

electoral politics was followed in the 2004 elections where they won 64 municipalities,[93]

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[90] David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 3rd edition (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 441.
[91] 'HADEP'e Sandık Izni [Ballot box permission to HADEP],' *Milliyet*, September 3, 1999,
http://www.milliyet.com.tr/1999/03/09/siyaset/siy01.html.
[92] 'Seçim Sonuçları (Election Results),' accessed May 12, 2016,
http://www.yerelnet.org.tr/basvuru_kaynaklari/secim_sonuclari/index.php?yil=1999.
[93] '2004 Yerel Seçim Sonuçları [The Results of 2004 general elections on the local administrations],' Official
Web Page of the Centre for Local Administrations, *Yerelnet.org*, accessed September 12, 2016,
http://www.yerelnet.org.tr/basvuru_kaynaklari/secim_sonuclari/index.php?yil=2004.

the 2009 elections with the attainment of 98 municipalities,[94] and the 2014 elections where the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party won 102 municipalities,[95] including three metropolitan municipalities in Diyarbakir, Van and Mardin provinces.[96]

Thus, from 1999, the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement consistently accessed legal channels at the local level and controlled many municipalities. There were cases of Kurdish ethno-nationalist mayors and members of municipality councils being suspended from their posts with the administrative decision of the Ministry of Interior due to the ongoing prosecution or with the arrest of mayors by court decisions. As such, from April 1999 until the end of July 2002, six of the 38 mayors from Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties were removed from their posts.[97] Between 2009 and 2012, which is known among the Turkish public as the time of KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union, *Koma Civaken Kurdistan*) operations,[98] state repression was harshest on the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. While the Kurdish ethno-nationalist DTP won 98 municipalities in 2009, 21 of them were suspended from their positions from March 2009 to March 2013.[99]

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[94] '2009 Yerel Seçim Sonuçları [The Results of 2009 general elections on the local administrations],' Official Web Page of the Centre for Local Administrations, *Yerelnet.org*, accessed September 12, 2016, http://www.yerelnet.org.tr/basvuru_kaynaklari/secim_sonuclari/index.php?yil=2009.

[95] '2014 Yerel Seçim Sonuçları [The Results of 2014 general elections on the local administrations],' Official Web Page of the Centre for Local Administrations, *Yerelnet.org*, accessed September 12, 2016, http://www.yerelnet.org.tr/basvuru_kaynaklari/secim_sonuclari/index.php?yil=2014.

[96] See footnote 7 in Chapter 1.

[97] '50 Belediye Başkanı Görevden Alındı [50 Mayors have been removed from their posts]', *Hurriyet,* accessed May 12, 2016, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/50-belediye-baskani-gorevden-alindi-84598. According to the statement of the Turkish Minister of Interior of the time, during the same period 10 mayors from the centre-right ANAP, 10 mayors from another centre-right True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi*, DYP), six members from the (Turkish) Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, MHP), five mayors from the Islamist Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*, FP), three Mayors from the centre-left DSP, and one mayor from the newly established AK Party were also removed from their posts by the Ministry of Interior for various reasons.

[98] 'KCK operations' is a phrase used by the Turkish media and public opinion for the prosecution and imprisonment of some Kurdish politicians and mayors with the claim of them being members of the KCK, a new umbrella organisation established by the PKK in 2005.

[99] '2009'dan Bu Yana 35 Belediye Başkanı Görevden Alındı [35 Mayors Have Been Suspended from their posts since 2009],' Haberler.com, July 26, 2013, 2015, http://www.haberler.com/35-belediye-baskani-gorevden-alindi-4872091-haberi/?utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=tavsiye_et&utm_medium=detay.

According to the former Turkish Municipal Law which was in force until 2005,[100] the Ministry of Interior could appoint the governor or district governor of the municipal area as acting mayor upon the suspension of the existing elected mayor from the post. The new Municipal Law in 2005 changed this and from this point onwards, except during a few extreme situations such as the total dissolution of the municipality council,[101] in the case of the suspension of the mayor from the post, the acting mayor would be elected by the municipality council among its own elected members.[102] Thus, as the suspended or jailed mayor's party already holds the majority in the municipality council, the acting mayor is also naturally elected from the members of the same party. Consequently, although the removal of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist mayors might seem to be a clear example of state repression, in practice it was not as effective as it appears and did not prevent the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement benefiting from the resources and facilities stemming from being in power in municipalities, as the acting mayors were also members of their party. Therefore, despite some governmental (both executive and judicial) interventions, it is possible to argue that institutional political channels on the local level remained largely open to Kurdish ethno-nationalist electoral politics after 1999 and as Chapter 6 will elaborate, the Kurdish nationalist political parties were able to use legal local channels, exercise legal power over the local people and utilise the resources of municipalities that they controlled.[103]

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[100] '(Mülga) Belediye Kanunu [(Abolished) Municipal Law],' Pub. L. No. 1580, 11 3 80 (1930), Article 94.

[101] This only happened once from 2005 until 2015. In the 2007 Municipality Council of the Sur District Municipality, the members, including the Mayor, were suspended from their post due to ongoing prosecution.

[102] 'Belediye Kanunu [Municipal Law],' Pub. L. No. 5393, 44 5 9469 (2005), Article 45 and 46. It should be noted here that this implementation has partly changed with a new phrase added to the Article 45 of the Municipal Law which now says that if the mayor, deputy mayor or member of municipal council is jailed or suspended from post due to terrorism-related allegations, the Ministry of Interior for MMs and provincial municipalities and province governors for district municipalities can appoint an acting mayor among people who meet the legal requirements to be elected as a mayor.

[103] Watts, *Activists in Office*, 75–93.

4.5. Decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system

In addition to the opening up of institutional political channels, the Turkish administrative system, which had always been highly centralised since the *Tanzimat* reforms of the 19th century,[104] began to decentralise and the legal duties and authority, as well as the financial resources of the municipalities considerably increased. In terms of its impact on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey, these decentralisation steps further increased the importance of the local access points.

According to the Turkish constitution, the country is divided into administrative units called provinces.[105] Today there are 81 provinces across Turkey with each province containing a territorial administrative unit consisting of a variable number of districts, towns, and villages around a core city – the province centre. Prior to the decentralisation reforms during the mid-2000s, the central government would provide the majority of the key public services such as health, education, finance, agriculture, population registration, ensuring public safety and homeland security, traffic, environmental protection, youth and sport services almost exclusively through the provincial and district administrations of each ministry. These administrations were and are the responsibility of the governors and sub-governors who are appointed by the central government as its representatives in provinces and districts.

There were also municipal administrations in these provinces and districts before the decentralisation reforms of the mid-2000s as well. However, the duties and legal authority of the municipalities were limited to providing basic local services such as the sewage system, water supply, garbage collection, urban planning, and construction of city centre

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[104] Levent Köker, 'Local Politics and Democracy in Turkey: An Appraisal,' *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 540 (1995), 54– 55.
[105] 'Constitution of the Republic of Turkey,' Article 126.

roads, and public transportation within the provincial and district centres.[106] Furthermore, before the decentralisation reforms of the mid-2000s, governors and district governors had an extensive administrative trusteeship over the resolutions of the municipality councils such as approval of some important council decisions, suspension of implementation of certain other decisions, and even the power to make changes to other decisions before approval.[107]

Moreover, in terms of the local administration, the province centre was also a district and the authority of the province municipality was limited to the city centre of the central district. Thus, the borders of the municipalities for both central province municipalities and district municipalities did not include the surrounding villages. Basic local services to these surrounding areas were provided through another local unit called the Province Special Administration (PSA). PSAs are also regarded as technically autonomous local administrations with their own elected provincial councils and executive boards. However, unlike municipalities, they did not have an elected representative but appointed governors who also headed the provincial council and permanent executive board of the PSAs.[108] In addition, special administration directorates and staff were under the management of the governors and district governors as with the other provinces and district units of the ministries.

Apart from ordinary province municipalities, metropolitan municipalities (MM or MMs hereafter) were established in 1984 in the three largest cities of Turkey, namely Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. As a result of the ongoing urbanisation process, new MMs continued to be established during the following period in some other big cities, and the

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[106] '(Mülga) Belediye Kanunu [(Abolished) Municipal Law],' Article 15.
[107] '(Mülga) Belediye Kanunu [(Abolished) Municipal Law],' Articles 70, 71, 73 and 123.
[108] Yüksel Kaştan, 'Restructuring of Public Administration Provincial Administration Provinces With Interim Act 1913 In The Ottoman Empire,' *Journal of Ottoman Civilization Studies* 2, no. 2 (January 2016): 88.

number of provinces with a metropolitan municipality gradually rose from just three in 1984 to 16 by 2000. Although compared to the strictly centralist municipality law that had been in force since 1930, the MM legislation was the result of a more liberal, minimalist state understanding,[109] various resolutions of the metropolitan council were still bound to the approval of the governor, Ministry of the Interior, and Council of Ministers depending on the nature of the resolution.[110] Moreover, except for the Istanbul and Izmit MMs, the jurisdiction of the metropolitan municipalities was still limited to several central districts of the province and the PSAs still being in charge of providing infrastructure and other local services to the villages and rural areas.

As part of general democratisation trend, from 1999 onwards, a number of key pieces of legislation on municipal administrations brought important changes to the local administrations, including MMs, municipalities, and PSAs. A new Municipality Law in 2005 replaced the former Municipality Law which had been in force since 1930. The new law abolished the administrative trusteeship of the governors and district governors and made the municipality council no longer liable to approval from the governors and district governors.[111] In addition, the duties and capacities of the municipalities have greatly expanded and as long as these services are of a local and common nature, municipalities can now provide many services: emergency aid, rescue and ambulance services; traffic control; culture, art, youth, sport and social aid and services; vocational and skills training; shelters for women and children; day-care services; healthcare services of all sorts;

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[109] Köker, 'Local Politics and Democracy in Turkey,' 60.
[110] 'Büyükşehir Belediyelerinin Yönetimi Hakkında 3030 sayılı Kanunun Uygulanması ile ilgili Yönetmelik, [Regulation on the Implementation of the Law No: 3030 on the Management of Metropolitan Municipalities],' Article 39.
[111] 'Belediye Kanunu [Municipal Law], ' Article 23.

supporting students, amateur sports clubs, and organising any type of amateur sports games.[112]

A new Metropolitan Municipality Law, which was passed in July 2004, similarly abolished the administrative tutelage of governors and the Ministry of Interior on the resolutions of metropolitan municipalities and expanded the capabilities and duties of the MMs.[113] While in the former laws of both ordinary municipalities and MMs, the duties were clearly stated through the counting method, the new municipality and metropolitan municipality laws differ significantly from these since in them, the duty and responsibilities of the local administrations are expressed in general themes that the municipalities and MMs can carry out and operate.[114] This new approach has given a crucial flexibility and opportunity to the municipalities in order to expand their services, and even in the cases of some services that are provided by the central government, MMs and other municipalities have been endowed with the right to provide some of these services such as health, social aid and, youth and sport, women's services, nurseries simultaneously[115] and their financial allocations have been also increased accordingly.[116]

Another extremely crucial legal change occurred with the introduction of a new law in November 2012. This new law has brought important changes to the Turkish administrative system in the peripheral areas. It upgraded the municipalities of 14

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[112] 'Belediye Kanunu [Municipal Law], ' Article 14.
[113] 'Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kanunu [Metropolitan Municipality Law], ' Pub. L. No. 5216, 43 5 8901 (2004).
[114] Ozan Zengin, 'Büyükşehir Belediyesi Sisteminin Dönüşümü: Son On Yılın Değerlendirilmesi [The transformation of the metropolitan municipality system: An analysis of the last ten years],' *Ankara Barosu Dergisi [The Journal of Ankara Bar]* 72, no. 2 (2014): 91–116.
[115] 'Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kanunu [Metropolitan municipality law], ' Article 7; 'Belediye Kanunu [Municipal Law],' Article 14.
[116] Zengin, 'Büyükşehir Belediyesi Sisteminin Dönüşümü: Son On Yılın Değerlendirilmesi [The transformation of the metropolitan municipality system: The analysis of the last ten years],' 104; Ahmet Gökmen and Ekrem Yeşil, 'Genel Bütçe Vergi Gelirlerinden Büyükşehir Belediyelerine Pay Verilmesine İlişkin Yasal Düzenlemelere Eleştirisel Bir Bakış [A critical look at the legal regulations on the allocation of the grand budget tax revenues to the metropolitan municipalities],' *Denetişim Journal*, December 31, 2014, 89.

provinces to metropolitan municipality status. Moreover, PSAs that provide local public services to the rural areas and villages were closed down in all metropolitan provinces and the administrative borders of the metropolitan municipalities were equated with the province borders.[117] Thus, except the essential public services provided by the central government's local units such as public safety, education, health, and agriculture, most other public services have begun to be provided by MMs – not only in central parts but in all corners of the provinces as well.

As a result of these decentralisation reforms, the scope and diversity of the public services provided by the municipalities and MMs as well as their administrative autonomy and fiscal resources and, subsequently, the say of the local people in their own affairs have increased. Similarly, the self-administrative capacity of the Kurdish people in the areas where they constitute the majority has increased. The decentralisation process significantly expanded the legal access points of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement as the public resources and legal public authority they exercise over local people significantly increased. As Chapter 5 will discuss, as policy output, the level of decentralisation fell short of meeting the ideological and organisational demands of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. However, as Chapter 6 will analyse, the impact, decentralisation, and increasing legal administrative and fiscal capacity of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement through municipalities proved instrumental for the trajectory of ethno-rationalism among Turkey's citizens of Kurdish origin.

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[117] 'On Dört İlde Büyükşehir Belediyesi ve Yirmi Yedi İlçe Kurulması Ile Bazı Kanun ve Kanun Hükmünde Kararnamelerde Değişiklik Yapılmasına Dair Kanun [Law on the establishment of metropolitan municipalities and twenty-seven districts in fourteen provinces and on amending some laws and statutory decreees],' Pub. L. No. 6360, 53 5 11741 (2012).

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter investigated the changes in the Turkish POS from 1999 to June 2015. It mainly focused on three key parameters – the expansion of civil and cultural liberties, the opening up of local channels in both national and local level politics, and lastly the decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system. Rather than analysing the causal relationship between the changing POS and the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey, this chapter has aimed to provide a structural basis for the ensuing analytical chapters on the relationship between the changing structure and trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism from 1999 to 2015.

This investigation has made it evident that civil, cultural, and political freedoms significantly expanded in Turkey during the 2000s, and the civil society grew both in size and effectiveness. The decline of the military's role on security-related matters and the political civilianisation of the Turkish state system, as well as a gradual change of the prevailing understanding among Turkish state elites, also accompanied these expansions of democratic freedoms. This democratisation process also led to the considerable expansion of the linguistic, cultural, and civil rights that are enjoyed by citizens of Kurdish origin.

Beyond the individual civil and cultural liberties that that Kurds in Turkey possess today, the formal political channels, which had earlier been largely closed to Kurdish nationalist electoral politics, also opened up after 1999. Although this expansion of Turkish POS did not mean the end of governmental coercion on Kurdish ethno-nationalism, the level of expansion of civil and cultural liberties and the opening up of formal political channels and particularly decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system nonetheless provided highly crucial new legal avenues and access points as well as valuable fiscal and legal resources that the Kurdish nationalist movement was able to use.

CHAPTER 5

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CHANGE IN THE OUTPUT SIDE OF THE TURKISH POS VIS-À-VIS KURDISH ETHNO-NATIONALIST DEMANDS

5.1. Introduction

As stated several times before, this research aims to analyse how changes in the Turkish POS from 1999 to 2015 influenced the trajectory of mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. As part of this academic inquiry, the previous chapter examined some key structural changes in the Turkish POS from 1999 to 2015. This fifth chapter will, in relation to the two-pronged POS framework, analyse the direct policy outputs addressing the rights and statuses of Kurdish-origin citizens in Turkey in comparison with the ideological and organisational demands of the PKK and PKK-affiliated legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist organisations and actors. In this context, the analysis in this chapter will put into motion these static structural changes, and will reveal the interaction between the output dimension of the POS and the trajectory of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

As also touched upon in the second chapter, despite some divergent findings, empirical studies have largely shown that mixed or hybrid systems that neither fully repress the anti-systemic groups nor produce the policy results these groups seek to attain, but provide some resources and channels for further mobilisation due to the partly open nature of the POS, facilitate both violent and non-violent forms of anti-systemic

mobilisation.[1] Chapter 2 has furthermore shown that a two-pronged POS

conceptualisation, proposed by Kitschelt,[2] based on analytic input and output separation

provides a more robust framework than other 'one-sided' POS approaches for the

explanation of the impact of the structural change on the trajectory of the challenging

movements.

The second chapter also located the arguments stated above on the relationship

between this mixed type of POS and the trajectory of the movements within this two-

pronged POS conceptualisation and argued the existence of a relationship between the

openness level of each dimension and nature and trajectory of the challenging movements.

It argued that while the level of openness on the output side does not satisfy the demands

of the challengers, if the openness on the input dimension provides new avenues and

resources to them on a higher level than the openness on the output side, as such a political

opportunity structure neither produces sufficient policy outputs to accommodate the

demands of the challengers nor exerts enough pressure to constrain them, it facilitates the

movement mobilisation.

As a natural result of this conceptual persuasion, methodologically it is then

necessary to analyse the level of the openness in the output and input sides of the POS in

order to understand how these two levels operate and impact the trajectory of the

movements. Moreover, the analysis of the level of the expansion of the output side should

be a comparative analysis vis-à-vis the demands and objectives of the challenging groups.

Alongside the two-tiered POS conceptualisation on macro level, such an analysis also

necessities to draw on the academic literature of organisational dynamics and analyses on

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[1] Eisinger, 'The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities;' Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics* Chapter 4; Gurr, *Minorities At Risk*, 137–38.
[2] Kitschelt, 'Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest.'

meso level. As Tezcur also argues, this organisation theory is particularly relevant when analysing the reaction of the PKK and PKK-affiliated legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors on a meso level in the wake of the changing POS.[3]

The natural system approach within the field of organisational studies argues that 'there is often a disconnect between the official goals of an organization and the latent social goals governing its behaviour.'[4] Although they may have various different ideologies and declared goals, 'organizations are governed by the overriding goal of survival'.[5] Empirical studies on militant organisations have also shown that even the attainment of the declared goals may not lead to an end of the desire for organisational survival and subsequently, the end of terrorism. Conversely, by setting new goals and framing that are difficult to realise, these organisations try to rationalise their own continuing existence to their actual and potential constituencies.[6]

In line with these theoretical and methodological lenses, this chapter will analyse the expansion of the output side of the Turkish POS in comparison with the organisational and ideational objectives of the PKK and PKK-affiliated legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist organisations. Through the primary data, including the text analysis of the primary governmental and organisational documents as well as the speeches of the leading figures of both the Turkish government and also the PKK and its legal affiliates as well as qualitative field interviews, this chapter will reveal why the expansion of the output side of the Turkish POS, despite the emerging satisfaction among the larger segments of the Kurdish citizens of Turkey, could not satisfy the PKK and legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist

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[3] Tezcür, 'When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey,' 777.
[4] Max Abrahms, 'What Terrorists Really Want: Terrorist Motives and Counterterrorism Strategy, ' *International Security* 32, no. 4 (2008): 95.
[5] W. Richard Scott, *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*, Subsequent edition (Upper Saddle River, N.J: Prentice Hall, 1997), 345. Apart from the source of direct quotation, for more general information on the needs of organisational survival, see Chapter 3.
[6] Abrahms, 'What Terrorists Really Want. '

organisations, but instead triggered their organisational concerns. Thus, through a comparative analysis, this chapter will establish a causal linkage between the structural developments on the output side and the meso-level organisational parameters as well as micro-levels of ideological orientation.

This chapter consists of five sections. The introductory section is followed by the second section, which analyses the relationship between the expansion of the output dimension of Turkey's POS and the organisational concerns of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and particularly the PKK. The third section deliberates upon the consecutive peaceful resolution attempts that lasted from 2009 to 2015 and investigates how Kurdish ethno-nationalists perceived these processes, and why these processes, as another step that can be considered as a policy output overlapping with the earlier demands of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, also failed to accommodate the demands of the Kurdish ethno-nationalists. The fourth section explores the ideological orientation of the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement in Turkey and compares it with the expansion of the output aspect of Turkey's POS and reveals why the democratisation and decentralisation of Turkey during the 2000s could not meet the demands of the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism. The fifth section concludes the chapter by recapitulating the main findings and arguments posed in this chapter.

5.2. Expanding rights for Kurdish people and increasing threats for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist organisations

The most comprehensive document of the Turkish government on the country's reform and democratisation process during the 2000s states that '[T]he provisions introduced under this [democratisation] process aimed to eliminate the barriers between the people

and the state, ultimately aiming to reduce the impact of the state, expand the arena of civil society and highlight the individual.'[7] Thus, it can be argued that Turkey's reform and democratisation process aimed to satisfy neither the PKK nor legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors but to win the hearts and minds of Kurdish origin citizens of the country, by bridging 'the previously existing distance between the state and its citizens' and by distinguishing 'terrorist actions from legitimate demands'.[8] In this context, the majority of the direct policy outputs such as the Kurdish TV stations, language courses and optional Kurdish modules, right to use Kurdish in courts, right to establish ethnicity based associations, and undergraduate and graduate programmes on Kurdish language and culture brought some important individual and organisational civil and cultural rights and liberties for the Kurdish origin citizens of the country.

This expansion of Turkey's POS also produced policy outputs that partly overlapped with the earlier demands of PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Roughly two months after the capture of Ocalan by Turkey, the PKK-affiliated Kurdish ethno-nationalist party contested in the local election in April 1999 for the first time and came to power in many municipalities. Thus, the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement gained access to legal power and acquired important organisational resources through municipalities. Moreover, this legal authority and resources further expanded and proliferated in the 2000s with the increasing democratisation and decentralisation processes. The legal-political space for the nationwide activities of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties also began to expand with the 2000s and, post-2007, they started being regularly represented in the Turkish parliament. Furthermore, as a culmination of this democratisation process, the Turkish government initiated several peaceful resolution attempts from 2009 onwards which included some

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[7] *The Silent Revolution: Turkey`s Democratic Change and Transformation Inventory 2002-2013*, 23.
[8] *The Silent Revolution: Turkey`s Democratic Change and Transformation Inventory 2002–2013*, 24.

indirect negotiations with the PKK and intermittently lasted until the collapse of the last 'resolution process' in July 2015. This opening up of the institutional political channels and resolution endeavours also partly overlapped with some of the earlier demands made by the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. Through these political as well as the initially stated associational and cultural liberties, the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement found more legal space to both peacefully articulate their demands and also to organise through legal milieus.

However, the demands of the PKK and PKK-affiliated legal political parties were beyond the realised legal changes, and they did not meet the organisational and ideological demands of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. The findings of this research show that the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and particularly the PKK contrarily perceived these developments as a threat to their own social mobilisation capacity and organisational survival and, despite their initial support to Turkey's reform and EU process in the early 2000s, began attributing threat to some sections of the expansion of the output aspect of POS after the successive election successes of the AK Party in 2004 and in 2007.

As the previous chapter mentioned, after the capture of Ocalan, the PKK declared that it would stop its 'armed struggle' and adopt 'political struggle' as its main strategy.[9] In this process, despite arguing that the Copenhagen Criteria would not be enough to solve the Kurdish issue, alongside the legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist political actors,[10] the PKK and Ocalan also initially stated their support for Turkey's EU membership and democratisation process. Soon after the Helsinki Summit of 1999, the main publication of

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[9] 'Ortadoğu Halklarının Tek Seceneği Demokratik Konfederalizmdir [The only choice for Middle Eastern citizens is democratic confederalism],' *Serxwebun*, March 2005, 8–12.
[10] Tezcür, 'When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey,' 779.

the PKK, Serxwebun[11]wrote the following: '[W]e support the Copenhagen Criteria. These [criteria] are not prescriptions for the solution of the Kurdish problem in Turkey, though. Nonetheless, they lead to a significant progress and relaxation.'[12] Similarly, Ocalan defined in the initial legislation that the establishment of private language courses in Kurdish and allowing broadcasting in Kurdish on Turkey's state-owned TRT (Turkish Radio Television) as 'historical steps' as early as 2002 and made the following comment on this first phase of reform process: 'I regard them [reforms] as highly significant, and I congratulate. Turks should also see the Kurds as a sister community, but the most important task falls on the Kurds. They should not underestimate these steps. They fulfil their own obligations and try to underpin this process, they pursue their education, they work in peace and brotherhood…These laws are not EU harmonisation laws, but harmonisation and coexistence laws of the Kurds and Turks.'[13]

However, as the democratisation process evolved, it became evident that the opening of formal civil and political channels guaranteed the success of neither the Kurdish nationalist political parties nor the Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation. Contrarily, the democratisation process began to initially increase the popularity of the ruling AK Party among Turkey's Kurds and paved the way for a decline in support for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist political party.[14] As many scholars state, Islam had always been important for the Kurdish population in Turkey and the centre-right and conservative parties had always achieved meaningful support from them by appealing to their religious sensibilities even

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[11] Serxwebun is the main organisational publication of the PKK. Without any interval, it has been monthly published since January 1982 in Germany.
[12] 'Ortadoğu Halklarının Tek Seceneği Demokratik Konfederalizmdir [The only choice for Middle Eastern citizens is democratic confederalism],' 9.
[13] İhsan Dörtkardeş, 'Kürtler, AB Için Atılan Adımları Küçümsemesin [Kurds Should Not Underestimate the Steps Carried out for the EU Process],' *Hürriyet*, August 12, 2002.
[14] Zeki Sarıgıl and Omer Fazlıoglu, 'Religion and Ethno-Nationalism: Turkey's Kurdish Issue, ' *Nations and Nationalism* 19, no. 3 (2013): 559.

before the 2000s.[15] Moreover, the popular Turkish centre-right parties of the 1990s such as the True Path Party, Motherland Party as well as the Islamist Virtue Party could not enter the Turkish parliament in the 2002 national election and lost their popularity. Thus, after first holding office in 2002, the AK Party rose as the leading political force of the centre-right and conservative segments of Turkish society. In line with this countrywide trend, the appeal of the party, which is both conservative and the most liberal Turkish party on Kurdish rights, increased among Kurdish-origin citizens. With a significant increase in its votes, the AK Party outperformed the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist party of the time, the Democratic Society Party (*Demokratik Toplum Partisi*, DTP), in both the 2004 local and 2007 national elections.[16]

As Tezcur also argues, the electoral successes of the AK Party posed an extremely serious challenge to PKK's basic argument regarding its role as the defender and 'true representative' of Turkey's citizens of Kurdish origin.[17] Consequently, perceiving the rise of the AK Party and the declining interest of Kurdish people in Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties as a threat to themselves, Ocalan and other leading figures of PKK-led secessionist Kurdish ethno-nationalism stopped praising the EU process and became critical.[18]

The response of Umit Firat[19] to a question in a newspaper interview on why the PKK opposes the EU accession process gives relevant insight into the relationship between the

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[15] David McDowall, *The Kurds: A Nation Denied* (London: Minority Rights Group, 1992), 17; Martin Van Bruinessen, *Mullas, Sufis, and Heretics: The Role of Religion in Kurdish Society: Collected Articles*, Reprint edition (Gorgias Pr Llc, 2011); Sarıgıl and Fazlıoglu, 'Religion and Ethno-Nationalism: Turkey's Kurdish Issue.'

[16] Sarıgıl and Fazlıoglu, 'Religion and Ethno-Nationalism: Turkey's Kurdish Issue,' 560; Tezcür, 'When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey,' 776.

[17] Tezcür, 'When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey,' 776.

[18] Tezcür, 782.

[19] Umit Firat was a Kurdish-origin member of the TIP and DDKO in the 1970s. He was later imprisoned for four years for pro-Kurdish left-wing political activism after the 1980 coup. He went on to become one of the foremost figures in the foundation of the Helsinki Citizenship Assembly in Turkey. He was also involved in the foundation of the liberal New Democracy Movement Party during the 1990s. He frequently appears as a commentator and also writes comments on different newspapers on the Turkish politics with a particular emphasis on the Kurdish issue in Turkey.

PKK's changing approach to Turkey's EU application and subsequently the democratisation process and its organisational concerns: 'This is because the PKK would not survive in a member country of the EU. In a country where fundamental rights and freedoms are available by law, the reason for the presence of the PKK does not make sense. The PKK says, "I am a mountain lover because I want freedom." If the Kurds would be free as in Europe, then how would the PKK respond? As the issue of rights and freedoms is resolved, other political alternatives emerge. Will the PKK experience a transformation in itself?'[20]

A thorough analysis of the PKK's framing of these reforms in various volumes of its main publication also corroborates the above-stated arguments posited by some secondary sources. The following excerpt from the Serxwebun clearly reveals how the organisational considerations of the PKK played a crucial role in its assessment of these reforms:

> None of the laws they [Turkish government] have issued in the process of harmonisation with the EU actually contain the solution of the Kurdish question ... although some practical concessions have been made. Kurdish broadcasts have been started on television, Kurdish cassettes have been released, and several Kurdish language courses have been allowed to function, none of which have legal safeguards…. So, it does not solve the problem since it does not introduce any rights. It [Turkey] is using it as a special method for struggle. They wanted to use these as a means to weaken the movement for freedom and to alienate people from the movement.[21]

The PKK's framing of the expansion of Turkey's POS suggests that regardless of the level and scope of the expansion of the output dimension of the Turkish POS for the

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[20] Neşe Düzel, 'PKK Asıl AKP'ye Savaş Ilan Etti [The PKK in fact declared war on the AKP],' *Radikal*, October 4, 2006.
[21] 'Ortadoğu Halklarının Tek Seceneği Demokratik Konfederalizmdir [The only choice for Middle Eastern citizens is democratic confederalism],' 3.

Kurdish rights, the PKK sees all these democratic reforms as an existential threat unless they respond to its organisational necessities and unless the outlawed militant organisation is included as an actor in the process. The following quotation from Serxwebun strongly underpins this argument:

> Saying no to Apo and PKK but yes to the Kurdish question is a game; it is not a line or a state of accepting the Kurdish question. If the Turkish government says, 'I completely reject the Kurdish question. I deny the Kurd,' then the policy of denial will be already deciphered…Total denial does not bring success... Then you have to divide. American officials used to suggest, 'It is the policy of demolishing the PKK, the policy of dividing it into parts and demolishing it piece by piece.' They want to do this. Saying no to the PKK and Apo means saying no to the Kurds and the Kurdish question. This is the essence of the issue.[22]

Furthermore, the PKK's framing of the AK Party's success in the 2007 national election shows that it saw Turkey's changing Kurdish policy and the consequent satisfaction of Kurdish-origin citizens as a much more dangerous development for itself than the previous traditional Kurdish policy of the Turkish state. Upon the increasing support among Kurdish-origin people in the 2007 election for the AK Party, the main publication of the PKK, Serxwebun argued '[T]he most important aspect of this [election] process is the defeat of the official state line in this election. The *neo-ittihatist*[23] understanding which had developed a solid denial and destruction mentality, and which

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[22] 'PKK ve Apo'ya Hayır Kürt'e ve Kürt Sorununa da Hayır Demektir [Saying No to the PKK and Apo Means Saying No to the Kurds and Kurdish Question],' *Serxwebun*, September 2005, 5.
[23] Neo-ittihatist is used in the original text as *neo-ittihatçı* to refer to the traditional Kurdish policy of Turkish state before the 2000s. *İttihat* means union in Ottoman Turkish and it refers to Union and Progress Party (*İttihatve Terakki Partisi*) which was formed during the late 19th century and was the leading political organisation of the newly emerging Turkish nationalism.

had foreseen to solve everything with violence and oppression, has lost in this election. But the winning AKP line presents a greater danger for the Kurdish people.'[24]

The qualitative data collected in the field also supports the above text's analysis of the PKK documents. Many interviewees from different ages, ideological backgrounds, and professions argued that the PKK was highly concerned with the increasing rapprochement between the Turkish government and its citizens of Kurdish origin and saw this changing approach to Turkish policy as much more dangerous for itself.[25] A former mayor of a district in a south-eastern province, who is also the leader of an influential family, concisely explained this development as follows: 'Particularly around the mid-2000s, the rising popularity of the AK Party, with the thrust of democratisation and EU process and economic infrastructure investments in south-eastern Anatolia changed the settings of the Kurdish nationalists and made them extremely panicked.'[26]

A Kurdish-origin university graduate and businessperson, who described himself as an AK Party supporter, elaborated the logic of the PKK's attribution of threat as follows:

> During the 1990s, the PKK used to mainly influence people over the state's repressive policies. It used to say 'Look! Soldiers are attacking you because you are Kurds' or 'they [the Turkish state] do not even let us speak in our mother tongue' and some other accusations like these. In fact, the PKK still says that the Turkish government tries to deceive the Kurds. However, objective realities exist. There are many Kurdish TVs and

[24] 'Kürt Halkı Direnecek [Kurdish People Will Resist],' *Serxwebun*, September 2005.

[25] Anonymous Respondent 6, Personal Communication, July 5, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 7, Personal Communication, July 6, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 11, Personal Communication, July 20, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication, July 23, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 17, Personal Communication, July 24, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 19, Personal Communication, July 26, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 26, Personal Communication, August 3, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 35, Personal Communication, August 16, 2015.

[26] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication.

radios as well as many Kurdish departments at universities ... All these democratisation steps seriously disturbed the PKK as it lost its most important source of agitation.[27]

Moreover, the democratisation process and the opening up of formal political channels paved the way for the emergence of some other legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist political parties and movements different than those of the PKK-affiliated parties. The PKK severely criticised these parties and personalities and tried to frame the emergence of this development not as a natural democratic development but as a policy of the Turkish government to divide the Kurdish ethno-nationalist groups.[28] The PKK's framing of the issue suggests that it perceived these groups and movements as a threat to its hegemony over Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. As Serxwebun claims, 'National unity is a must for success; divisions and pursuing different paths will result in the failure of the national struggle and lead to the eradication [of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movements].'[29]

Numerous interviewees in the field also highlighted the same point and argued that the PKK also see other Kurdish nationalist parties and entities as a threat to itself.[30] A former politician, who is among opposition political figures that was abducted by the PKK, remarked the following on the PKK's reaction to other emerging Kurdish actors: '[Kemal] Burkay's[31] views are more radical. Nonetheless, he cannot indulge in political play in

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[27] Anonymous Respondent 19, Personal Communication.

[28] 'Aktif Meşru Savunma Ozgurluğun Demokrasinin Ve Barışın Guvencesidir [Active Legitimate Defence Is the Guarantee of Freedom, Democracy and Peace],' *Serxwebun*, June 2004, 3–5.

[29] 'Aktif Meşru Savunma Ozgurluğun Demokrasinin Ve Barışın Guvencesidir [Active Legitimate Defence Is the Guarantee of Freedom, Democracy and Peace],' 4.

[30] Anonymous Respondent 17, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 20, Personal Communication, July 27, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 22, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 23, Personal Communication, July 30, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication, August 2, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 32, Personal Communication, August 10, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 47, Personal Communication, August 30, 2015.

[31] Kemal Burkay is the most famous Kurdish ethno-nationalist figure in Turkey outside the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. After carrying out his work within the Turkish Workers' Party during the second half of the 1960s, he founded and led the outlawed Kurdistan Socialist Party in 1974. Burkay, who flew to Turkey before the 1980 coup, returned to Turkey in 2011 and in 2012 was elected as the president of the Rights and Freedoms Party, which is a legal political party that advocates federalism for the Kurdish-populated parts of Turkey. Although Burkay left this post in 2014, he is still among the most senior Kurdish nationalist political figures in Turkey.

Diyarbakir. The PKK does not permit him. Burkay lives in Istanbul today, and he participates in the politics there. They [the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement] do not let him perform in the politics in Diyarbakir. His views are much more radical, but Kurdish nationalism has even accused him of being an agent. Because he [Burkay] acts independently from the PKK. As a nationalist movement, the PKK sees every power outside itself as a threat.'[32]

The above analysis revealed that although the opening of legal political channels produced some policy outputs for the organisational demands of the legal wing of Kurdish ethno-nationalism, they did not meet the organisational demands of the PKK. Conversely, the PKK perceived the expansion of the output aspect of the POS in which it was not included as an actor as part of a strategy to eliminate the PKK. Perceiving the rise of the AK Party and the declining interest of Kurdish-origin citizens in the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement as a threat to its own survival, the PKK gradually became even more radicalised after 2004 and particularly after the 2007 election victory of the AK Party, and it began to increase its militant and terrorist activities.[33] This argument, which Tezcur also posits, will be elaborated upon in Chapter 8.

5.3. Resolution processes as the expansion of the output dimension of the POS

After unilaterally carrying out the democratisation and reform process which aimed to win the hearts and minds of the Kurdish-origin citizens and in which Kurdish ethno-nationalist organisations were not included, from 2009 onwards the Turkish government sought to accommodate Kurdish ethno-nationalism through dialogue and negotiations and launched

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[32] Anonymous Respondent 47, Personal Communication.
[33] For a more detailed analysis of the radicalisation of the PKK as a consequent of its organisational concerns, see, Tezcür, 'When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey.'

a National Unity and Fraternity Project (NUFP) initiative which later evolved after late 2012 into a more elaborate, peaceful solution initiative called the 'resolution process'. As seen in the third chapter, the PKK has tried to engage in negotiations with Turkish governments since the 1990s.[34] Moreover, following Turkey's designation as a candidate country for EU membership, Ocalan demanded that the EU countries urge Turkey to negotiate with the PKK.[35] Similarly, various volumes of the primary PKK document reveal that during the first half of the 2000s, the PKK always wanted to be involved in Turkey's democratisation and the EU process as an actor.[36] Therefore, from this perspective, these processes – starting with the NUFP and followed by the 'resolution process' – can be seen as the expansion of the output dimension of the Turkish POS. However, the analysis of primary PKK documents, as well as speeches of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party's leaders, show that consecutive peaceful resolution attempts after 2009 did not satisfy the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement in general and in particular the PKK. The PKK continued to perceive these initiatives as a threat to itself and framed them as further and more integrated steps of the Turkish government to eliminate the PKK and Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

Following the start of the Turkish government's National Unity and Fraternity Project, as stated by several interviewees, possibly as a result of clandestine talks between Turkish intelligence officers, the PKK sent a number of unarmed militants to Turkey from Iraq via the Habur border crossing as a sign of its 'willingness' to engage in negotiations with the Turkish government in the context of this peace initiative.[37] However, the volume

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[34] David Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Opportunity, Mobilization and Identity*, 1st edition (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 55–56; Aliza Marcus, *Blood and Belief: The PKK and the Kurdish Fight for Independence* (New York: NYU Press, 2009), 211.
[35] Tezcür, 'When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey,' 782.
[36] 'Kürt Halkı Direnecek [Kurdish people will resist]'; 'PKK Ve Apo'ya Hayır Kürt'e ve Kürt Sorununa Da Hayır Demektir [Saying no to the PKK and Apo means saying no to the Kurds and Kurdish Question].'
[37] 'PKK'lılar Habur'da [The PKK members are at Habur],'*Sabah*, October 19, 2009, http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2009/10/19/dagdan_inis_gununde_kaza; ' 34 PKK 'Lı Habur Sınır

Serxwebun published the same month as this event both argued that the PKK's 'struggle'

forced the Turkish government to launch this process and also simultaneously framed the

NUFP as a 'restoration project' that intends to mould public opinion (both domestic and

foreign) in its favour. Moreover, it framed this peace initiative as another (albeit more

complicated) step aimed at eliminating the PKK.[38] It remarked the following: 'The Turkish

government says that it would pursue a new policy in the Kurdish problem, and would

introduce a new opening … thus, it aims to bar the freedom struggle through applying

political methods in addition to military methods.'[39]

More or less during the same period as the start of the NUFP, Turkish courts

imprisoned many allegedly PKK-linked Kurdish politicians, journalist, authors and others

with the accusation of being members of the outlawed Kurdistan Communities Union

(*Koma Civaken Kurdistan*, KCK), a new umbrella organisation established by the PKK.

Thus, one might claim that the PKK had reasons to attribute threat to the process.

However, the resolution process that started in early 2013 was devoid of any such

cautionary actions from the Turkish government. Conversely, coercive control by the

Turkish government on Kurdish ethno-nationalism significantly declined during the period

of the resolution process. As demanded by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, the

Turkish parliament issued a new bill that legally authorised the government to negotiate

with the outlawed organisations.[40] Moreover, in alliance with civil society organisations,

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Kapısı'ndan Girip Teslim Oldu [34 PKK members entered (Turkey) through Habur border gate and surrendered], '*Milliyet*, accessed May 10, 2017, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/acilim-da-kritik-an-siyaset-1151953/.
[38] 'Kürt Halkı Inkar Politikasının Yeni Biçiminin Hakim Kılınmasına Izin Vermeyecektir [Kurdish People Will not Let the New Form of the Denial Policy],' *Serxwebun*, October 2009; 'Tasfiye Plan ve Çabaları Farklı Yöntemlerle Sürdürülmektedir [Elimination Plan and Efforts Are Continuing with Different Methods],' *Serxwebun*, October 2010.
[39] 'Kürt Halkı Inkar Politikasının Yeni Biçiminin Hakim Kılınmasına Izin Vermeyecektir [Kurdish people will not let the new form of the denial policy],' 3.
[40] 'Turkish Parliament Gives Legal Recognition to Kurdish Peace Talks,' Reuters, July 10, 2014, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-kurds-idUSKBN0FF1Z620140710; Hazal Ateş, 'Çözüm Sürecine Yasal Güvence [Legal assurance for the resolution process],'*Sabah Daily*, June 26, 2014.

academics, artists, and intellectuals, the Turkish government established seven wise men committees consisting of 63 wise men from various ideological backgrounds and professions in order to visit seven different regions of Turkey and provide public support for the process.[41] During this period, some demands of the Kurdish nationalists found their way as policy outputs, and some new legalisations continued to expand the output aspect of the POS as well.[42] Nonetheless, this process did not prove sufficient to satisfy the demands of the PKK.

According to their publicly-stated framing, the PKK and Kurdish ethno-nationalist circles were concerned with the Turkish government's inertia in taking the necessary legal steps in the context of the resolution process, while continuing with military constructions such as new military compounds, security dams and roads, and new measures on its eastern borders.[43] Conversely, a Turkish narrative also emerged and Turkish political elites would blame the PKK for failing to pull the rural squads from Turkey in accordance with the agreed road map. Thus, there were diverging narratives and mutual criticisms over the management as well as over the rationale of each side's involvement in the process, not out of sincerity but due to tactical considerations.

However, the findings of the research suggest that the most important reason for the failure of the process and also the most fundamental source of the dissatisfaction of the

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[41] 'Wise Men Committee Members Announced,' Anadolu Agency, accessed May 11, 2017, http://aa.com.tr/en/turkey/wise-men-committee-members-announced/258996.

[42] Mehmet Zahid Sobacı, 'Türkiye'nin Avrupa Yerel Yönetimler Özerklik Şartı'na Uyumu: Özerklik Miti [Turkey's Adaptation to the European Charter of Local Self-Government: Autonomy Myth],' *Seta Analiz*, no. 120 (April 2015).

[43] 'PKK 'Halts Withdrawal' from Turkey,' Al Jazeera English, accessed July 13, 2016, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2013/09/201399724433841.html. 'PKK'da Kalekol Rahatsızlığı [Discontent of the PKK with the fortified military stations],' *Yeni Akit*, April 30, 2014, accessed June 18, 2016, http://www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/pkkda-kalekol-rahatsizligi-16813.html; 'Demirtaş'tan Hükümete Eleştiri [Critisism from Demirtaş to the Government],' Haberler.com, July 17, 2013, June 18, 2016, https://www.haberler.com/demirtas-tan-hukumete-elestiri-2-4842309-haberi/?utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=tavsiye_et&utm_medium=detay.

PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement with the resolution process was related to the diverging ideological positions of the Turkish government and the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and their consequent diverging expectations from the process. The findings also suggest that being as closely related to these diverging solution perspectives as to the process, the PKK's organisational concerns as an outlawed militant organisation was another source for its dissatisfaction with the process.

Starting with the organisational concerns of the PKK, numerous interviewees argued that the resolution process began to disturb the power balance between the legal and outlawed Kurdish ethno-nationalist organisations. Almost all interviewees agreed that the PKK still has a clear hegemonic position within the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. However, many interviewees argued that as a consequence of the democratisation process and the peace initiatives in particular, the role of the legal Kurdish nationalist political party within the Kurdish nationalist movement both within Turkey and also in terms of international representation, began to increase, and the PKK saw this development as a threat to itself.[44] A Turkish IR professor who has published several articles on the PKK and Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey, opined on the subject as follows: 'We cannot say that the [HDP] has gotten rid of the hegemony of the PKK. Yet, compared to 1990s, the importance of the political wings began to increase. If the current process continues in this way, it will likely lead to a destination where the military methods and strength will not be very meaningful. This is one of the most important problems of Cemil Bayik.[45] Because he began to lose his importance. Because now

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[44] Anonymous Respondent 2, Personal Communication, July 2, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 3, Personal Communication, July 3, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 5, Personal Communication, July 4, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 14, Personal Communication, July 22, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 18, Personal Communication, July 25, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 20, Personal Communication, July 27, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 40, Personal Communication, August 20, 2015.
[45] Cemil Bayık is current 'co-chairman of the KCK Executive council.' He is one of the most influential persons among the PKK top cadres after Ocalan.

Demirtas[46] is on all TVs, in interviews, in European circles. The other has remained in the mountains in his militant clothes.'[47]

The general manager of one of the most established Turkish public research firms also made similar arguments, stating that '[T]he PKK obtains its power from its current position. However, the success of the process means the PKK has to give up this position and this power. Many spent thirty years of their life in this way. Thus, there might naturally be those who do not want to give it up.'[48] Possibly relying on some intelligence, a Turkish bureaucrat specialised in homeland security and also the author of a book on this issue more eloquently stated the logic of the organisational concern of the PKK as follows: 'The warlords of the PKK, who are fed from a large illegal economy and who never want to give up on this rent, do not offer any chance for the success of the resolution process even in their discourse. For this group, who live on the Mount Qandil,[49] the solution process is a threat which must be but aptly removed because they are well aware that the gaining importance of the political struggle means the decline of their importance and they understand that the establishment of peace will in particular make their existence irrelevant.'[50]

As is clearly evident, the underlying view in this quote represents a particular type of resolution perspective that includes the disarmament and dissolution of the PKK. According to this mainstream debate in Turkish political circles as well as according to public opinion, the steps following the withdrawal of the PKK militants from Turkey, as the first phase of the 'resolution process', would include some further decentralisation and

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[46] Selahattin Demirtaş is the previous co-chairman of the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist political party, HDP.
[47] Anonymous Respondent 11, Personal Communication, July 20, 2015.
[48] Anonymous Respondent 42, Personal Communication, August 23, 2015.
[49] Mount Qandil is the name of the mountainous areas in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq where the main PKK camps were established.
[50] Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication, August 27, 2015.

democratisation reforms. In this context, even before the start of these peaceful resolution attempts, there had already been an open public debate among Turkish political elites on the necessity of a new and a more inclusive constitution so as to reflect the existing diversity in the country. This debate further increased with the resolution process.[51] Further decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system was another common debate, and some statements of the Turkish political elites as well as the members of the Kurdish nationalist political party suggest that, albeit not with autonomy, the resolution process would further increase the self-governance capacities of the municipal administration if the process could continue.[52] Moreover, as several expert interviewees also agreed, the statements of the Turkish political elites suggested that different than the freedoms and rights that had been accorded with laws during the 2000s, some of these new steps would be enshrined in the new Turkish constitution.[53] 'Returning to home legislation', as well as some rehabilitation projects that ensure the reintegration of PKK militants to normal life would also come under the agenda after the PKK lay down arms.[54]

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[51] 'Gül'den Mesajlar [Messages from Gül],'*Hurriyet*, January 10, 2011, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gulden-mesajlar-18878365; 'Çiçek: Yeni Anasaya Gizli Değil [Çiçek: New Constitution Is Not a Secret],'*Hürriyet,* September 19, 2007, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/cicek-yeni-anasaya-gizli-degil-7260387; 'Bakan Bağış: Darbe Anayasası Ile AB'ye Giremeyiz [Minister Bağış: We Cannot Enter into the EU with the Constitution Inherited from the Coup],' *Hürriyet,* August 16, 2010, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/bakan-bagis-darbe-anayasasi-ile-abye-giremeyiz-15565971; 'Kazlıçeşme'de Yeni Anayasa Mesajı [The New Constitution Message in Kazlicesme (Square)],'*Hürriyet*, May 5, 2011, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/kazlicesmede-yeni-anayasa-mesaji-17962356.
[52] 'Arınç'tan Çok Kritik Çözüm Süreci ve Özerklik Açıklaması [A very crucial statement by Arınç on resolution process and autonomy],'Internet Haber.com, accessed April 27, 2017, http://www.internethaber.com/arinctan-cok-kritik-cozum-sureci-ve-ozerklik-aciklamasi-749903h.htm; Sobacı, 'Türkiye'nin Avrupa Yerel Yönetimler Özerklik Şartı'na Uyumu: Özerklik Miti [Turkey's adaptation of the European charter of local self-government: The autonomy myth].'
[53] Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication, August 19, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 40, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication; 'Çözüm Sürecinde ve Demokratik Kazanımlar Yeni Anayasa İle Güvence Altına Alınmalıdır [Democratic Steps Should Be Assured by the New Constitution in the Context of Resolution Process],' Youtube Video, 47:06, posted by TBMM AK Party Grup [GNAT AK Party Group], July 16, 2014, accessed 23 June 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MvJ6DWfNGss.
[54] 'PKK Silah Bırakırsa Af Gündeme Gelecek [Amnesty Will Come to the Agenda If the PKK Leaves the Arms],' Al Jazeera Turk, accessed May 9, 2016, http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/pkk-silah-birakirsa-af-gundeme-gelecek; 'Beşir Atalay'dan Genel Af Açıklaması [The Statement of Beşir Atalay) Deputy Prime

Nonetheless, despite the above-stated possible outcomes of the resolution process, the statements of Turkish political elites, including from President Erdogan, made it evident from the outset that the resolution process would include neither autonomy for the Kurds nor amnesty or house arrest for Ocalan.[55] Moreover, Turkish political leaders also emphasised that it is not a 'take and give process' and the resolution process does not imply a change in the Turkish government's 'single state, single homeland, single flag and single nation' philosophy.[56] Thus, from the Turkish perspective, the resolution process proceeded alongside these axes and demanded the disarmament of the PKK – or at least demanded a cessation of hostilities against Turkey – at the end of the process.

However, analysis of the PKK documents and statements of the leading members of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist political party reveals that they neither gave up the organisational self-sustainment objective of the PKK nor their ideological position on the necessity of the recognition of the Kurds as a separate nation and its right to self-rule. The PKK texts reveal that the militant organisation did not consider the process as leading to its disarmament. A volume of Serxwebun in 2013 states that even if they would continue with their militant activities as they had done during 2011 and 2012, it would not have been

Minister of the time) on General Amnesty],' Internet Haber.com, accessed June 23, 2016, http://www.internethaber.com/besir-atalaydan-genel-af-aciklamasi-607702h.htm.

[55] 'Turkey's Erdogan Rules out Amnesty for Kurdish Militants,' Reuters, January 6, 2013, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-kurds-idUSBRE90505N20130106; 'Af da Yok, Statü de [Neither amnesty nor status],' *Radikal*, March 14, 2013, http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/af_da_yok_statu_de-1125054/; 'Turkish PM Denies General Amnesty Claims,' *Hürriyet Daily News*, October 19, 2013, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-pm-denies-general-amnesty-claims.aspx?pageID=238&nid=58156&NewsCatID=338; ''Öcalan'a Ev Hapsi Yok' [There is no house arrest option for Öcalan],'Al Jazeera Turk, June 1, 2013, http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/haber/ocalana-ev-hapsi-yok.

[56] 'Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan Muhtarlara Seslendi: 'Büyük Devlet Olma Vizyonu Yerelden Başlar' [President Erdoğan has addressed the Muhtars: The vision of being a big state starts with the locals],' Official Web Page of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, January 21, 2015, http://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/410/2745/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-muhtarlara-seslendi-buyuk-devlet-olma-vizyonu-yerelden-baslar.html; 'Yıldırım: Tek Devlet, Tek Millet, Tek Bayrak ve Tek Vatandan Başka Pazarlık Yok [Yıldırım: There is no bargain on single state, single nation, single flag and single homeland],' Haberler.com, April 27, 2013, https://www.haberler.com/yildirim-tek-devlet-tek-millet-tek-bayrak-ve-tek-4569377-haberi/?utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=tavsiye_et&utm_medium=detay.

possible to reach a better point and it would have been highly costly. They argue that instead, Ocalan chose to win more with less cost. 'It can be seen as a tactical dimension, but it is an important dimension for us. It was just like the ceasefire of 13 August 2010. It was meant to create an opportunity, a place to change and renew ourselves so that we could fight again in the right way'[57]

The same volume of Serxwebun also argues that the regional developments played an instrumental role in Ocalan's and PKK's involvement in the process:

> There is a war in the region. The old balances are down, the fight is on, but the gradual creation of new balances is desired...The policy is important in the process of creating new balances. In such times, success is not possible to achieve with only war and fighting… Leadership [refering to Ocalan] has also made a political move in a process where everyone makes political moves. It has made a political move by providing an important initiative [refering to the call made by Ocalan to the PKK to engage in the resolution process]. He wants to influence the shaping of the region with its own political push...It is absolutely necessary to understand the intervention of the leadership in the process in this way. This cannot be analysed independently from developments in the region [58]

Speeches delivered by legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist politicians also reflect that from their perspective, the solution of the problem necessitates the freedom of Ocalan, recognition of the Kurds as a nation and establishment of a Kurdish political entity within Turkey in line with Ocalan's democratic autonomy ideology. Thus, despite some professed changes in its ideational orientation, the demands and statements of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement during the resolution process remained unchanged. The motto of the

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[57] '2014'de Daha İddiali Ve Kararli Giriyoruz [We Are Entering into 2014 More Assertive and Determined],' *Serxwebun*, December 2013, 5.
[58] '2014'de Daha İddiali Ve Kararli Giriyoruz [We Are Entering into 2014 More Assertive and Determined],' 4.

PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement during the process was 'freedom for Ocalan, and status for the Kurds and Kurdistan.'[59] Emine Ayna, then a deputy from the Kurdish nationalist party, stated at the beginning of the process that 'We want status for the Kurds, and freedom for Ocalan. For us the process means to make sure the acceptance of the Kurdish people as people. For us, the process means the liberation of Ocalan.'[60]

The following remark of Aysel Tugluk, one of the former co-chairpersons of the PKK-affiliated political party, similarly but more clearly reveals this perspective of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement during the resolution process: 'As we have sloganised, now is the time for "freedom to Ocalan, status to Kurdistan"….We are now in a period in which the status of Kurdistan should be realised by recognising the constitutional rights of the Kurdish people.…When we say peace, we are not talking about the fractional reforms Erdogan mentioned. We are talking about honourable peace. When we call for peace, we call for our leader's freedom, we call for status for Kurdistan.'[61]

Evidently, a highly significant distance existed between the resolution perspectives of the Turkish government and the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. As several observers and expert interviewees opined, these diverging agendas were the most important source of the failure of the resolution process, and disagreements over its management were in fact the implications and natural consequences of these diverging ideological backgrounds and solution perspectives rather than being the root causes.[62]

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[59] '2013 Önder Apo'ya Özgürlük Kürdistan'a Statü Yılı Olacak [2013 Will Be the Year of the Freedom of Leader Ocalan],' *Serxwebun*, February 2013.
[60] 'Kürtlere Statü, Öcalan'a Özgürlük [Status to the Kurds, Freedom to Öcalan],' Haberler.com, March 17, 2013, https://www.haberler.com/emine-ayna-kurtlere-statu-ocalan-a-ozgurluk-4435744-haberi/?utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=tavsiye_et&utm_medium=detay.
[61] 'Tuğluk; Öcalan'a Özgürlük, Kürdistan'a Statü [Tuğluk; Freedom to Öcalan, Status to Kurdistan],' Haberler.com, February 17, 2014, https://www.haberler.com/tugluk-ocalan-a-ozgurluk-kurdistan-a-statu-5678857-haberi/?utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=tavsiye_et&utm_medium=detay.
[62] Galip Dalay, 'What is next for Turkey's Kurdish Peace Process?,' Al Jazeera, accessed April 10, 2017, http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/07/turkey-kurdish-peace-process-150729074358423.html;

It is crucial to note here that although, ensuring organisational continuity has already outweighed its eventual political objectives, as several scholars argue about the PKK,[63] the PKK and PKK-affiliated legal political parties and organisations have a clear ethno-nationalist ideology. Moreover, ideological and organisational dimensions are not entirely separate but there exists a close relationship between them, and the satisfaction of the PKK and legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist political elites' interests are closely related to the realisation of their ethno-nationalist ideology. Thus, it is necessary to analyse the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement's ideology, and the role of this ideology in the political and organisational objectives of Kurdish ethno-nationalism, and comparatively analyse this ideology vis-à-vis the expansion of the output aspect of the POS in Turkey.

5.4. Analysing the expansion of the output aspect of the Turkish POS vis-à-vis the ideological orientation of Kurdish ethno-nationalism

As deliberated upon in the third chapter, since the 1970s, ethno-nationalism has dominated the ideological orientations of all Kurdish organisations, including the PKK and PKK-affiliated legal Kurdish actors. Although following the several structural developments both inside Turkey and globally such as the military losses of the PKK against the Turkish army and collapse of the Soviet Union the PKK downgraded its professed goal from an independent Kurdish state to a federation within Turkey during the 1990s, they continued

Anonymous Respondent 37, Personal Communication, August 17, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication, August 19, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 42, Personal Communication, Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 48, Personal Communication, September 2, 2015.
[63] Tezcür, 'When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey'; Marcus, *Blood and Belief*.

to argue the existence of the Kurds as a separate nation with its own homeland and to claim the right to some sort of sovereignty over this territory.

The professed ideology and objectives of the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement are believed to have changed once again following the capture of Ocalan. In his succeeding defences submitted to the European Court of Human Rights, Ocalan proposed the 'democratic modernity and democratic confederacy' theses[64] as an alternative to the dominant western-style modernity understanding.[65] This proposition defines the modern capitalist society, its state, economy, and cultural relations and values as 'capitalist modernity' and the classical nation-state model as the political administration model of this type of modernity.[66] It proposes the replacement of 'capitalist modernity' with 'democratic modernity'.[67] The concept of 'democratic modernity' covers almost all the dimensions of social and political life. However, the backbone of the 'democratic modernity' thesis, which is also the most relevant part for this academic inquiry, is the concept of 'democratic confederacy', which is presented as an alternative political administration form to the nation-state model of so-called 'capitalist modernity'.[68]

Ocalan claims the existence of a disproportionate relationship between the state and democracy and argues that a precondition for the development of a democracy is to free it from the state.[69]According to him, with the development of civil society the transformation of central states to the confederacy of loose, autonomous local communes, and active citizen participation in these local organisations, the state will shrink and democracy and

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[64] Çetin Gürer, *Demokratik Özerklik / Bir Yurttaşlık Heterotopyası [Democratic Autonomy/ A Citizenship Heteropia]* (Ankara: NotaBene Yayınları, 2015), 158–59.
[65] Gürer, 194.
[66] Abdullah Öcalan, *Kapitalist Uygarlık: Maskesiz Tanrılar ve Çıplak Krallar Çağı* [Capitalist civilisation*:* The era of gods without masks and naked kings] (Diyarbakir: Aram Yayınları, 2009).
[67] Abdullah Öcalan, *Özgürlük Sosyolojisi [*The sociology of freedom*] (Diyarbakir: Aram Yayınları, 2009).
[68] Öcalan, 273.
[69] Abdullah Öcalan, *Bir Halkı Savunmak [Defending a People]* (İstanbul: Çetin Yayınları, 2004), 122–24.

liberties will increase. Ocalan also argues that all ethnic, sectarian, and cultural beliefs and

gender groups should form their own local grassroots assemblies and should participate in

both local and supreme assemblies as part of these grassroots communalities, and these

loose confederacies of the autonomous local communes should replace the central states.[70]

Moreover, he claims that in such a system different people can cultivate their languages

and cultures, organise their communal affairs themselves, and can live in peace. Such a

political entity would also make the establishment of nation-states irrelevant.[71]After having

been accepted by the PKK cadres as a change in the organisation's manifest[72] and also

adopted by the PKK-affiliated legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist political actors, these ideas

constitute the ideological basis of the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement in

Turkey today.

These ideas may initially seem highly democratic, grassroots, pluralist, and anti-

nationalist, particularly should one analyse them per se. Based on these ideas, the PKK and

other organisations of the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement also argue that

they do not follow a separatist ethno-nationalist agenda any longer, but aim to create a

grassroots, pluralist, communal polity based on the 'democratic confederacy' model which

is framed as the 'antidote' of nationalism.[73] However, in contrast to this framing, as will be

seen below, the proposed model is extremely hierarchic and proposes a top-down

organisation model. Moreover, the details of both Ocalan's ideas and the ideas stated in

other PKK documents on the implementation of this 'democratic confederacy' thesis on

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[70] Öcalan, 122–27; 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' 2007, 6, accessed May 17, 2016,
http://www.2shared.com/document/tBKzgmub/KCK_Szlemesi.html.
[71] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' 7.
[72] Duran Kalkan, 'Ekonomik Çöküş ve Ötesi...[Economical Collapse and Beyond...],' *Serxwebun*, July 1999.
[73] 'Sırrı Süreyya Önder'den Cemil Bayık'a 'Marjinal' Yanıtı [Response from Sırrı Süreyya Önder to Cemil
Bayık on 'Marjinal'],' *Radikal Daily*, August 26, 2014; Cansu Çamlıbel, 'PKK Not a Separatist or
Nationalist Group: Senior Member,' *Hürriyet Daily News*, March 30, 2015.

the Kurdish case in Turkey, as well as in the Middle East, clearly display that the PKK still preserves its ethno-nationalist character and objectives.

For the accommodation of the Kurdish issue, Ocalan proposes the 'democratic nation resolution' which is an implementation of his above summarised democratic confederacy thesis to the Kurdish case in the Middle East.[74] According to this 'democratic nation resolution,' Kurds should possess a 'democratic autonomy' within Turkey as well as within the other states they inhabit.[75] Moreover, this democratic autonomous polity should have a congress, its own self-defence capabilities, and should be able to establish direct diplomatic relations not only with the targeted Kurdish autonomous administrations within the borders of other states in the region but also with all sovereign states.[76] These aspects of this targeted entity resemble some key traits of a state and suggest that beyond merely being a civil self-administration of people, 'democratic autonomy' thesis wants to establish a sovereign system of government over a piece of territory.

Furthermore, the KCK (*Koma Civaken Kurdistan*, Kurdistan Communities Union) contract, which after Ocalan's own writings is the most fundamental PKK document on the implementation of the democratic confederacy thesis on the Kurdish case, clearly reveals the ethno-nationalist character of the PKK and PKK-affiliated legal mainstream Kurdish nationalist movement. The PKK established the KCK during the second half of the 2000s as part of its politicisation effort. Many scholars regard the KCK as an umbrella organisation of the PKK-linked organisations operating in Turkey (PKK), Iran (Party of Free Life of Kurdistan, PJAK), Syria (Democratic Union Party, PYD) and Iraq (Kurdistan

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[74] Abdullah Öcalan, *Kürt Sorunu ve Demokratik Ulus Çözümü: Kültürel Soykırımın Kıskacında Kürtleri Savunmak [*The Kurdish question and the democratic nation solution*: Defending the Kurds in the clamp of cultural genocide]* (Neuss: Mezopotamya Yayınları, 2012).
[75] Öcalan, 364–66.
[76] Öcalan, 364–66, 382–86.

Democratic Solution Party, PCDK).[77] While this research also agrees with this diagnosis, it also contends that beyond being an umbrella organisation, the KCK is also an organisational project that aims to bring the basis of a 'Kurdish polity' into existence over a piece of territory claimed as 'Kurdistan'. Likewise, the ideological transformation of Ocalan and the PKK from the 'united socialist Kurdistan' to the 'democratic confederacy' thesis and the subsequent transformation of their professed ideology and objectives, the establishment of the KCK largely reflects the organisational adjustment initiatives undertaken by the PKK in the changing structural context.[78]

The KCK contract adopts a similar rationale to the constitutions of states and sketches the outline of the targeted polity. Its introduction, written by Ocalan, reiterates the above-explained ideas and in line with these ideas, claims that 'the KCK is a not a state organisation. It is a democratic organisation, where everyone and every societal group can participate in.'[79] The second article of the contract also defines the KCK as 'non-state, democratic, political and societal structure that are organised both horizontally and also pyramid-like'.[80] However, many of the articles of the contract strongly suggest that despite this emphasis on being a non-state grassroots democratic structure, territorial arguments and claims are still highly central in the contract. The KCK contract not only continuously refers to the existence of a given historical 'Kurdistan' as the perennial homeland of the

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[77] Serkan Kekevi, 'System of Group of Communities in Kurdistan (KCK): An Assessment of State, Federalism, KCK Practices and International Developments,' *Journal of Studies in Social Sciences* 10, no. 2 (2015): 112.

[78] The most important of these structural parameters are as follows: The increasing international and particularly western sensitivity towards militancy and terrorism in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in the USA forced the PKK to increase its efforts to get rid of the terrorist image it had been known for. The capture of Öcalan and, concerned for his life, his order to the PKK to stop militancy minimised the militant channels that the PKK could use during the first half of the 2000s. The counterterrorism operations of the Turkish security forces had already proved before the 2000s that it was impossible to reach the objective of the independent Kurdish state with merely militant means. In contrast to these constraints, the POS in Turkey gradually expanded during the 2000s and commenced to provide more civil and legal avenues for Kurdish ethno-nationalist political activism.

[79] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' 4.

[80] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' 8.

Kurds but also tries to form a system of territorial sovereignty over this territory through territorial assemblies and executive bodies ranging from the 'national' to 'communal' levels.

First, similar to traditional state structures, the KCK contract establishes an assembly, namely the 'People's Assembly of Kurdistan' (hereafter with its Kurdish shortcut *Kongra-Gel*) with the objective of holding legislative power over the parts of Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria that are claimed as 'Kurdistan'.[81] Moreover, it foresees a thirty-member executive council, which is supposed to have executive power over the same territory similar to governments in modern states.[82] The head of this executive council is supposed to perform similar roles and exercise authorities similar to those carried out by prime ministers in many states.[83] A fully organised judicial system sovereign over the same territory, which consists of a 'supreme court of justice', 'administrative justice court', 'supreme people's court', and a 'supreme election council', is also another state-like institutional system the KCK contract wants to establish.[84] The KCK contract also makes it clear that the existing armed unit of the PKK, the so-called People's Defence Forces (*Hezen Parastin Gel*, HPG), is also part of the KCK system. Although usage of the term 'army' is avoided in the text, relevant articles of the contract reveal that the KCK system will have its own 'armed units'.[85]

These above-sketched institutions are supposed to be in charge and reign throughout this claimed territory. Additionally, the contract also projects the establishment of legislative assemblies and executive councils for each piece of this claimed territory that

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[81] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' Article 12.
[82] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' Article 13.
[83] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' the provision 'c' of Article 13.
[84] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' Articles 27, 28, 29, 30.
[85] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' Article 43.

remains within Turkish, Iranian, Iraqi, or Syrian borders.[86] Moreover, it forms similar assemblies and executive institutions for the regions, provinces, cities, towns, and neighbourhoods within each piece, and 'people's court' at city and town level as local judicial authorities.[87] The smallest spatial units in the KCK system are the village communes in rural areas and street communes in cities and towns. These communes also have their own elected commune executions. In addition to these spatial communes, minorities and other ethnocultural sub-groups as well as women, youth etc. form their own segmental communes and participate in all territorial assemblies and institutions commensurate with their population.[88] Particularly this aspect of the contract enables the PKK to frame the KCK model as a grassroots democracy of people, where all ethnic, sectarian, cultural groups, labourers, women, and the youth organise themselves in the form of the communes. However, as seen above, the backbone of the system is clearly a spatial (territorial) structure ranging from the institutions that are sovereign all over the claimed national borders to the smallest villages and streets and the minority, cultural, and all other thematic communes are embedded in this territorially designed structure.

Moreover, this structure, rather than being a bottom-up democratic entity of grassroots communes, follows a highly hierarchic top-down structure. First, according to article 11 of the contract, Abdullah Ocalan is at the top of this structure as the founder and the leader of KCK. He holds veto power over the *Kongra-Gel* and the 'executive council' decisions, and there is no limitation in the KCK contract on Ocalan's veto power. Contrarily, article 11 of the KCK contract says that Ocalan has the last say on fundamental issues. Thus, in contrast to the framing of the top institutions as coordination, the top position of the KCK is not open to an election but occupied by an unchanging leader with

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[86] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' Articles 16, 17.
[87] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' Articles 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and the provision 'b' of Article 30.
[88] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' Articles 19 and 25.

the unrestricted power of being the final word. Moreover, according to the various articles of the contract, the decisions of the higher assemblies and executive councils are always binding for the lower assemblies and executive bodies. The decisions of the regional assemblies in each part cannot contradict the resolutions of the 'national assembly', namely *Kongra-Gel;* similarly, the decisions of 'city councils' in cities cannot go against either the resolutions of the *Kongra-Gel* or regional assemblies.[89] Moreover, executive bodies on the regional, provincial and communal levels not only perform executive tasks assigned to them by their own local assemblies and communes but also carry out the tasks assigned from the higher legislative and executive bodies over them, thus acting as the local executive arm of higher institutions in the pyramidal structure.[90] Therefore, despite being framed as a civil democratic self-administration of grassroots communes where the upper institutions carry out coordination, there is a clear top-down supremacy relationship between both legislative and executive institutions ranging from 'national' to 'regional', 'provincial' and 'communal' levels.

In addition to this state-like institutional structure, the so-called KCK contract establishes a citizenship system for the KCK,[91] gives some rights, and also imposes some must perform duties on these 'citizens' such as taxation and conscription,[92] and tries to ensure the implementation of these duties by establishing 'crime' and 'punishment'[93] and a thorough judicial system. Moreover, the contract makes it evident that the KCK polity is, as foreseen by Ocalan, supposed to have the right to sign agreements with states.[94] All these aspects of the contract show that what the KCK wants to establish is much more than

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[89] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' Articles 16 and 22.
[90] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' Articles 17, 21, 23, 25.
[91] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' Articles 5, 6.
[92] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' Articles 10.
[93] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' provision 'c' of Article 30.
[94] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' provision 'h' of the Articles 12.

classical regional autonomy; rather it seeks to establish internal and even to some extent external sovereign rule, and in this sense instituting a somewhat *sui generis* polity within the territories of Turkey and other related states.

Furthermore, although Ocalan and other leading figures of the PKK and the legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist party argue that they do not follow a separatist agenda but seek a solution within the existing boundaries, the KCK contract does not completely rule out the objective of a Kurdish state. As the following phrase from the contract clearly shows, they recognise the sovereignty of the nation-states only if nation states recognise the KCK structure as a legal polity: 'Hereafter three type of laws will be valid in Kurdistan: EU Law, unitary state law and democratic confederal law. So long as Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria, which are unitary states, recognise the confederal law of the Kurdish people, the Kurdish people will recognise their law and they will be able to reach a consensus on this basis.'[95]

Ocalan also states that one of the aspects of the 'democratic nation resolution' is the legal aspect, which refers to the recognition of the 'democratic autonomy' of the Kurds by the constitutional and legal system of the nation states.[96] Furthermore, according to article 4 of the contract, one of the key principles of the KCK is '…to use the right to decide on its independent future based on the choice of a free Kurdistan if all other means for a solution on this basis are blocked'.[97] Thus, from the PKK–KCK perspective, the accommodation of the Kurdish nationalist demands in Turkey (and in other states) depends

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[95] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' 3.
[96] Öcalan, *Kürt Sorunu ve Demokratik Ulus Çözümü: Kültürel Soykırımın Kıskacında Kürtleri Savunmak [The Kurdish Question and the Democratic Nation Solution: Defending the Kurds in the Clamp of Cultural Genocide]*, 377–78.
[97] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' Articles 4.

on either the acceptance of the KCK structure as a legal sovereign polity within the borders of Turkey or otherwise the realisation of an independent Kurdish state.

As seen above, even in the former option through the KCK project, the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement aims to establish a polity, which has all the essential characteristics of a sovereign state, namely a territory, defined based on an ethnic-ownership claim, a system of government which has its own legislative, executive, and judicial institutions, its own citizenship system, and which is supposed to establish direct diplomatic relations with states. Additionally, as a transformed version of the earlier 'great united Kurdistan' objective, the preface of the KCK contract clearly states that 'democratic confederalism' aims to ensure the 'democratic unity of the Kurds', and in this sense, the 'KCK system means the Kurdistan democratic administration'.[98] Thus, although the nature of the targeted KCK structure is claimed to be different from classical state structures, the KCK project aims to unite all the Kurds living as the citizens of Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq under the rule of a united Kurdish polity.

In this sense, the differences in the nature of this targeted Kurdish polity from the classical sovereign nation-state structure are rather pertinent to what the PKK/KCK ideologically attributes to the concept of state and sovereignty. The key point here is that, despite being framed as being highly different from the classical sovereignty understanding and as a non-state grassroots model, the KCK project nonetheless wants to draw an internal border within Turkey (as well as within the other related states) and create a sovereign polity over this demarcated territory. Therefore, it is a highly objective diagnosis to argue that the PKK is still an ethno-nationalist and separatist organisation.

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[98] 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' 3–4.

During the resolution process, both the PKK leaders as well as the leading members of the PKK-affiliated legal party argued that the PKK can abandon its arms if the Turkish state accepts a solution based on the above-analysed 'democratic autonomy' principle.[99] Thus, they frame that what is important for the PKK is not its organisational self-sustainment, but the recognition of the Kurds right to self-rule based on the democratic autonomy principle. However, this analysis of the ideology of the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement reveals the close connection between its ideological and organisational dimensions and suggests that the establishment of such a polity alongside the KCK contract also means the attainment of status within this targeted polity by the PKK and legal actors of the mainstream Kurdish nationalist movement. In line with this diagnosis, numerous expert interviewees also agreed that the KCK project is not only an ideational objective that seeks the establishment of a Kurdish polity but also includes a clear organisational dimension that would mean domination of the targeted Kurdish political entity by the PKK, which would thus transform from being an internationally designated terrorist organisation to a hegemonic sovereign power in this polity.[100]

It is evident that the above-analysed ideological position of Kurdish ethno-nationalism and the consequent political objective of a sovereign polity on this claimed territory were far beyond the earlier examined democratisation and decentralisation reforms carried out in Turkey. Although it would have paved the way for some more decentralisations and the constitutional recognition of some rights, as above section showed, the resolution process also made it evident that it would not produce outcomes

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[99] Mahmut Bozarslan, 'Silah Bırakmak için...[To Leave the Arms],'Al Jazeera Turk, October 7, 2014, http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/al-jazeera-ozel/silah-birakmak-icin; 'Sırrı Süreyya Önder'den Cemil Bayık'a 'Marjinal' Yanıtı [Response from Sırrı Süreyya Önder to Cemil Bayık on 'Marjinal'].'
[100] Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 42, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 47, Personal Communication.

that meet this ideological orientation. Consequently, this ideological orientation, which also addresses the organisational demands of the PKK and legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors, was another source of dissatisfaction for the PKK and secessionist Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement.

5.6.   Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter has revealed that although the expansion of the output dimension of the Turkish POS brought significant rights and liberties to the Kurdish-origin citizens as well as to the legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist electoral politics, the level and scope of the direct policy outputs did not meet the demands of the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism. In a similar fashion, several consecutive peaceful resolution attempts after 2009 could also not accommodate Kurdish ethno-nationalism due to the seriously diverging ideological positions and consequent diverging solution perspectives of the sides.

The failure of the expansion of the output side of the Turkish POS to satisfy and contain Kurdish ethno-nationalism was related to two main aspects. First, it related the demands of the PKK and PKK-affiliated legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist party for organisational survival. The democratisation process and the changing discourse of Turkish political elites began to initially satisfy the Kurdish-origin citizens of Turkey during the early and mid-2000s, and this situation concerned both the PKK and its legal affiliates. Moreover, the opening up of legal political channels and peace processes signalled a potential change in the balance of power within the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. It further indicated a rise in the role and importance of the legal political organisations within the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement.

Secondly, this chapter has revealed that although the PKK-lead mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement framed the 'democratic confederalism and democratic autonomy' theses, as a grassroots, bottom-up, communal administrative model, which is the 'anti-dote of nationalism', these 'democratic confederalism' and 'democratic autonomy' models have clear Kurdish ethno-nationalist objectives. Both the PKK and PKK-affiliated legal Kurdish actors still want to create a united Kurdish political entity over this claimed territory. It is evident that the political demands of this ideological persuasion are much beyond the decentralisation level of the Turkish administrative system during the 2000s as well as other direct policy outputs addressing the situation of the Kurdish citizens and expanding the political opportunities for Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

Moreover, this chapter has revealed that the realisation of these ethno-nationalist objectives and organisational demands of the PKK and mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist organisations are not separate but closely related to each other. In conclusion, despite some important legal steps, a significant gap remained between the level of the expansion on the output side of the Turkish POS and the ideological and organisational goals of the PKK and its legal associates.

CHAPTER 6

THE OPENING UP OF LEGAL POLITICAL CHANNELS,

THE ATTAINMENT OF MUNICIPAL POWER AND THE

TRAJECTORY OF KURDISH ETHNO-NATIONALISM

6.1. Introduction

One might think that if the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey were only

bound by the structural developments analysed in the previous chapter, regardless of how

the PKK and mainstream legal Kurdish ethno-nationalism perceived them, the social

mobilisation capacity of the PKK and Kurdish ethno-nationalist legal actors would have

significantly shrunk, and the Turkish state would have significantly contained Kurdish

ethno-nationalism. However, as Tilly and Tarrow argue, 'threats and opportunities co-

occur, and most people engaging in contentious politics combine response to threat with

seizing opportunities.'[1] Similar to this argument by Tilly and Tarrow, although the

expansion of Turkey's POS fell short of containing Kurdish ethno-nationalism in terms of

the policy outputs they produced, the input aspect of the same reform and democratisation

process provided invaluable resources and avenues for further ethno-nationalist

mobilisation. The PKK and its legal affiliates also saw these opportunities and successfully

utilised them to expand the Kurdish ethno-nationalist ideology among Kurdish-origin

citizens in Turkey.

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[1] Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow, Contentious Politics, 2nd edition (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 60.

This chapter will focus on the impact of the inputs provided by the opening up of institutional political channels for the Kurdish nationalist electoral politics on the local and national levels from 1999 to 2015 on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism during this period. In this regard, this chapter will show how the expanding Turkish POS began to provide significant inputs after mid-2000s through several pieces of legislation aimed at decentralisation as well as through the attainment of representation for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist political party in Turkish parliament after 2007 and how the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement perceived and utilised these political inputs to advance its causes. As an important theoretical and empirical contribution, this chapter will reveal the causation between the macro-structural changes and micro-level mobilisation and will show how decentralising and the attainment of the already increased municipal power and resources enabled the increasing Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation from both a rational choice perspective and also through the increasing networking capacity and interpersonal contact with larger Kurdish masses.

This chapter consists of four sections: this brief introductory section, the conclusion section at the end, and two main analytical sections. The second section investigates how the opening up of the institutional political system in Turkey for the legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist political parties in the 2000s and their parliamentary representation after 2007 impacted the course of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. The third section focuses the opening up of legal political channels at the local level and analyses the impact of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement's attainment of municipal power, as well as successive decentralisation reforms in Turkey during the 2000s, on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. This section is structured into three subsections. The first subsection examines

how the attainment of the municipal public service capacity, and particularly the increased authority of this service capacity as a consequence of decentralisation, resulted in a power shift from the central government to the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement on the local level. It also considers how this situation logically pushed more Kurdish-origin locals, hitherto unaffiliated bystanders, towards the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. The second subsection scrutinises the resources, economic and otherwise, that the Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties enjoyed through their municipal authority and analyses the effect of these resources on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. After these rational-based analyses in the first two subsections, the third subsection analyses how municipal services and networks increased contact between the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and larger segments of the Kurdish people and the impact of this situation on the diffusion of ethno-nationalism among them. The fourth and final section naturally concludes the chapter by summarising the main findings discussed.

6.2.   An opening of legal political channels

As discussed in Chapter 4, from the 1999 onwards Kurdish ethno-nationalist electoral parties began to enjoy a gradually increasing freedom in the legal political spheres on both the national and local levels. This growth of political freedom broadened the scope of the legal activities and also the capacity of the Kurdish electoral parties to expand their institutional legal networks as party branches in both eastern as well as western Turkey. Moreover, from 2007 until mid-2015 (the designated end of the period being researched), Kurdish ethno-nationalist electoral politics also had a chance to be continuously represented in the Turkish parliament. The findings of this research show that these

developments had some important impacts on the expansion of the ethno-nationalism among Kurdish-origin citizens in Turkey.

First, with the expansion of political liberties, the organisational capacity of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement significantly increased throughout Turkey. As will be seen in the following section, in the cities and towns where the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement ran the municipal governments, the political power provided an invaluable organisational strength that significantly facilitated ethno-nationalist mobilisation. However, in many other eastern cities where the municipalities were held by other parties as well as in some western cities where a large number of Kurds live such as Adana, Mersin, Izmir and Istanbul, the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement did not have such municipal power. Many interviewees either explicitly or implicitly noted that provincial and district branches of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties played important roles in reaching the Kurdish-origin people living in these places and influencing them with ethno-nationalism.

The following statement from a Kurdish-origin businessman living and interviewed in Istanbul exemplifies similar opinions shared by numerous interviewees on how the expanding political freedoms increased the organisational capacity of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and how this situation facilitated its interaction with Kurdish people:

…through these legal party platforms, they acquired the opportunity and capacity to organise many events and activities. For instance, when there is a funeral [where the body] should be sent to an eastern city from Istanbul, the party is involved in the process. To give a concrete example, there is a powerful metropolitan municipality in Diyarbakir but there is not in Istanbul. How does the movement organise mass Nowruz celebrations in Istanbul? The party organisations in each district and neighbourhood organise this process and enable the organised participation of people from various parts of Istanbul. The role of

party branches in some other festivals and important days is also similarly very important. All the deeds of some funerals of YPG members that came from Kobany last year to Istanbul were carried out by the party.[2]

The following remark of an Arab-origin tradesman, originally from the south-eastern Batman province in Turkey but now living and interviewed in Adana where his business brings him in close contact with the local Kurdish-origin population, sheds some light on the relationship between this increasing organisational capability and the course of Kurdish ethno-nationalism:

> Big cities have their own dynamics. Here [in Adana], there is every type of person from many different places…. Moreover, there are the own realities of life. You have to find a job, make money, look after your family etc. Consequently, in this or that way you come into contact with many different people and develop relations. This lifestyle reduces the differences [between] Kurds, Turks, and Arabs, and in this environment, you become like everyone in the society. Yet, Kurdism [*Kürtçülük* (Kurdish ethno-nationalism)] still has many supporters…In terms of armed members, the PKK does not have a strong presence here but HDP organisations and their own CSOs fill this space. Now, the PKK has the opportunity to do most of its activities under the umbrella of the political party. In every occasion, they are able to talk about Kurdish rights, Kurdish history, Kurdistan, and glorify these terms. These efforts keep 'Us versus Them' on the agenda and keep Kurdish identity alive.[3]

As another important consequence of the opening up of formal political channels, the mainstream Kurdish nationalist party began to be represented in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) in 2007. Through this way, the Kurdish ethno-nationalist

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[2] Anonymous Respondent 48, Personal Communication, September 2, 2015.
[3] Anonymous Respondent 7, Personal Communication, July 6, 2015.

movement gained inclusion in the legislation process, gained access to all parliamentary

commissions and parliamentary inspection schemes of governmental agencies, and

assumed the right to obtain information from governmental agencies through

parliamentary inquiries. Moreover, as with all other MPs, the deputies of the Kurdish

ethno-nationalist parties also enjoyed broad parliamentarian impunity.[4] The findings of this

research show that its deputies have used this legislative access and impunity very

effectively to promote their own ideologies with frequent references to terms such as

'Kurdistan and Mr Ocalan'. The following excerpt from a speech of a former Kurdish

ethno-nationalist MP, Hasip Kaplan, given at the GNAT provides a good example of this

effective usage: 'Whatever you do, you cannot delete the word of Kurdistan from the

records of this parliament, which had been said by *Gazi* Mustafa Kemal [Ataturk] at this

chair. You will know this. This is because there is Kurdistan. There are Kurds. There is a

Kurdish language and a Kurdish identity. You will accept this identity…Raise your head

from your orange chairs. There are Kurds in this country. You will accept this. The name

of the area they live in is Kurdistan. You will recognise this too. You have to accept this.'[5]

On some occasions, Kurdish ethno-nationalist MPs were even able to clearly

defend the PKK in parliamentary sessions. Sirri Sakik, another MP from the Kurdish

ethno-nationalist party, made the following remark in a GNAT session: 'We cannot go

with slanders and lies [he says this against the arguments of some other MPs on the

involvement of the PKK in the drug business]. Friends and foes all know how the PKK

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4 For another analysis on the importance of these legal gains, see Nicole F. Watts, Activists in Office:
Kurdish Politics and Protest in Turkey (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011) Chapter 3.
5 'Kürdistan var! Kürtler var! Kürt dili var! Kürt kimliği var! [There is Kurdistan! There are Kurds! There is
a Kurdish Language! There is a Kurdish identity!],' YouTube Video, 10:11, posted by Hasip Kaplan,
October 12, 2013, accessed May 25, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NV3BTJCxnbs.

fights against drugs in the international fora….You can think it is a terrorist [group] but the PKK is a political movement existing in this geography for 30 years.'[6]

The findings of this research show that this effective utilisation of legal platforms such as the GNAT chair to diffuse these frames has paved the way for both a relative legitimisation of these arguments and also for a top-down diffusion from MPs towards ordinary sympathisers.[7] In the following remark by a former MP from the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party, Sabahat Tuncel clearly reveals the relationship between the parliamentary representation and legitimisation of some ethno-nationalist arguments. As she says, 'Our presence in the parliament has had a significant impact on this process. While saying "Kurd, Kurdistan, Mr Ocalan" was a crime in this country, these things are now said every day even in the parliamentary chair. They have become part of everyday life now, everyone has gotten used to them…. The legitimisation of these statements to this extent showed that many other things that had been used to be directly rejected before would also be possible. People have begun to say "Yes, why not? These are possible."'[8]

The effective usage of Kurdish nationalist actors, parliamentary representation and expanding political freedoms also led to a top-down spillover of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist frames. While many interviewees[9] have also noted the same or similar points in

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[6] 'Sırrı Sakık Mecliste PKK'yı Övdü Oktay Vural Çileden Çıktı [Sırrı Sakık Praised the PKK in Parliament and Oktay Vural Got Furious],' Youtube Video, 1: 51, posted by Suhulettin Hıdır, May 5, 2013, accessed May 25, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8a2Wa40cjk.

[7] For more information on this type of hierarchical diffusion, see the following two sources: David Collier and Richard E. Messick, 'Prerequisites Versus Diffusion: Testing Alternative Explanations of Social Security Adoption,' *American Political Science Review* 69, no. 4 (December 1, 1975): 1306; Sarah A. Soule, 'Diffusion Processes within and across Movements,' in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 295.

[8] 'Sebahat Tuncel: Bu Davada Yargılanan Kürt Siyasal Hareketidir [Sabahat Tuncel: Kurdish Political Movement Is Being Put onto Trial in This Case],' Marksist.org, accessed July 8, 2016, http://arsiv.marksist.org/roportajlar/2148-sebahat-tuncel-bu-davada-yargilanan-kurt-siyasal-hareketidir.

[9] Anonymous Respondent 7, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 11, Personal Communication, July 20, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication, July 21, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 23, Personal Communication, July 30, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 48, Personal Communication.

the field, the following remark of a Kurdish-origin AK Party supporter seems the most eloquent one:

> After [being] elected to the parliament, the tone of their language became much bolder and they began to bluntly call this region as Kurdistan and began to ask for autonomy and self-rule. When [prominent HDP politicians] Demirtas or Baydemir use [the term] Kurdistan for the region, people saw that nothing happened to them. Then what did they do upon it? The following day, their mayors began to mention Kurdistan, the next day lower-ranking party representatives began to say the same thing. When it became evident that it is quite normal to openly voice these things, it expanded from MPs towards to the lowest level and eventually ordinary sympathisers began to bluntly say that this region is Kurdistan.[10]

When parliamentary representation and the consequent free-framing of ethno-nationalist demands combined with the general expansion of civil liberties and increasing freedom of speech in media, academia and in civil life, a shift began in the mainstream perspective on how the Kurdish ethno-nationalism was understood and defined. While the details of this shift will be discussed in the following chapter in relation to the expansion of the civil liberties and free debate in Turkey, it is suffice to say here that this has increased the desire of Kurdish-origin people for further legal rights, increased their expectation for further gains, and facilitated the Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation process.

6.3. Municipal power and the growth of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism

As seen in Chapter 4, beginning in 1999 the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement started to involve itself in local politics and came to power in an increasing number of municipalities in the succeeding local elections of 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014. Despite some examples of

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[10] Anonymous Respondent 6, Personal Communication, July 5, 2015.

the state repression, during this period succeeding Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties mainly enjoyed the legal authority and resources in the municipalities they controlled. Furthermore, the decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system both in the mid-2000s and also in 2012 with decentralising legislation resulted in the significant expansion of the legal capabilities and fiscal resources of municipalities in Turkey. As seen in Chapter 5, in terms of policy output, this level of decentralisation far from met the demands of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. Furthermore, some studies within the SMT tradition argue that, despite acknowledging that decentralisation increases the access points in a polity, local access points to formal politics in centralised nation-states are 'rather insignificant' in assessing the openness or closure of institutional political structure.[11] Yet, as the analysis below reveals, being in power in the municipalities proved highly critical for the trajectory of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey.

The findings of this research reveal that these municipal resources and capabilities impacted the course of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism through several different means. First, municipal power and having the capacity to provide public services at the local level enabled the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement to use the public service capacity as leverage to expand ethno-nationalism within the larger Kurdish population from a rational choice perspective. Secondly, in line with classical RMT, municipal power provided the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement highly valuable resources that could be used to introduce direct financial incentives and disincentives for supporters and sympathisers as well as opponents so as to expand ethno-nationalism among Kurdish-origin people. As a third impact, this research contends that the very nature of the municipal services significantly increased the contact of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement with the

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[11] Hanspeter Kriesi, 'Political Context and Opportunity,' in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi, 1st edition (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2007), 70.

larger Kurdish society. Moreover, municipal power meant an invaluable organisational capacity, and the responsibility of running social municipal institutions such as nursery schools, youth centres and women's centres enabled the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement to utilise these places as highly useful, legal, mobilising structures. This increased contact with larger segments of the Kurdish population greatly facilitated the diffusion of Kurdish ethno-nationalist ideology among previously unengaged Kurdish-origin citizens.

6.3.1. Municipal public services and rational choice

As seen in Chapter 4, as the result of these decentralisation reforms, the scope and diversity of the public services provided by municipal and metropolitan governments (MMs) as well as their administrative autonomy and fiscal resources have significantly increased at the expense of the central government's provincial and district administrations. In this context, while the importance and responsibility of centrally appointed governors and sub-governors (local representatives of the central government) has shrunk, the effectiveness and importance of elected mayors at the local level have increased.[12] Whereas this power shift meant the empowerment of the local administrations vis-à-vis central government in other municipalities, for the provinces and cities where the municipalities were run by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party, it meant the transition of power from Ankara to the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and gave Kurdish ethno-nationalism a highly instrumental, legal authority to exercise power over locals.

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[12] Ozan Balcı, 'The Changing Roles of Governors and District Governors in Turkey, 2000-2014' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Southampton, 2015).

The field research of this study reveals that, in line with the main argument of the rational choice theory (RCT) on the role of the rational cost-benefit calculation in human behaviour as discussed in Chapter 2, this municipal power and having the authority to provide key public services, such as issuing business licences and inspecting these business as well as having the capacity to distribute rent through the economic resources, significantly facilitated the expansion of ethno-nationalism among the hitherto ordinary Kurdish-origin citizens from a rational choice perspective. This was by no means the direct consequence of the structural change, but the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement deliberately used local power for this specific end. As will be seen below, the deliberate usage of municipal power helped the expansion of ethno-nationalism across different segments of the Kurdish population in varying ways. Yet, the rational choice logic was evident and the same in all of them.

The most common and the most important factor impacting the rational cost-benefit calculation of the large segments of the Kurdish population was related to the essential public service provision authority of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement through the municipalities and stemmed public concern of adequately receiving these public services. The importance of having the capacity and legal authority of providing services as a source of soft power was evident in the statements of many locals interviewed in this study. The following remark by a Kurdish origin villager in Mardin province, where the local administration was converted into the metropolitan municipality system and the responsibility for public service provision to villages transferred from PSAs to the MMs with the last phase of the decentralisation legislation in 2012, exemplifies many similar arguments on the impact of the 2012 MM legislation on the villagers' orientation towards the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement:

Before the MM law, when we had a problem regarding the public services, the *muhtar* [elected head of village] and I would gather with other guards and villagers and discuss our problem. The following day, I, sometimes with the *muhtar* and sometimes alone, would visit the sub-governor, I would tell him/her our problems over tea. When I came back to village, villagers would come to ask what the sub-governor said and I would tell villagers that the sub-governor promised to solve the problem and that problem would have been solved within a few days or weeks on many occasions. Now I still visit them, but sub-governor says that there is nothing he can do to solve my problem as all these things are now being carried out by MMs. What shall I do now? I have to have good relations with them.[13]

A comment reportedly told to a district administer of the ruling AK Party in a south-eastern province by a Kurdish-origin villager clearly reflects the same rational choice approach: '…The road of my village is now constructed by the municipality, my drinking water is provided by the municipality, my drainage system is being cleaned by the municipality, my garbage is collected by the municipality…almost everything that I need in my daily life is provided by the municipality. What can the government give me any more? There is only security that the state would provide me and it has not provided it either for the last few years [He refers to the period of the 'resolution process']…How can I side with the government under these conditions?'[14]

Another Kurdish-origin interviewee from the Kiziltepe district of Mardin province gave even more specific examples:

Now let`s imagine that your grandfather or one of your relatives has passed away in the middle of the night. Who do you call? You call the municipality.... For instance, you need

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[13] Anonymous Respondent 11, Personal Communication, July 20, 2015.
[14] Anonymous Respondent 17, Personal Communication, July 24, 2015.

a tent for the condolence ceremony, or you might have a tent but you need a few trucks of

stone chips and a grader to flatten the ground for a tent. You need the municipality for all

those…. We have been fighting with the PKK for many long years. We shed our blood and

gave martyrs. These things may not influence me and some people like me. However, the

situation of many people is not like this. With the increasing power of the party or the

organisation, whatsoever you call it people begin to be closer to them.[15]

In addition to these essential public services that were highly important for ordinary

households, both urban dwellers and rural peasants, municipal governance meant the local

government had crucial power over businesspersons, property developers, tradesmen and

craftsmen. Moreover, with the expansion of the duties, authorities and financial

capabilities, municipalities have become the most important distributor of the rent and

tender bids in the regional economy. They regularly issue tenders to outsource some public

services, procure goods needed by the municipality, and permit business activity on

municipal properties, such as carparks or recreational area cafes and refreshment stands.[16]

Moreover, the authority to issue licenses for activities such as construction and

entrepreneurial activity (for businesses ranging from simple restaurants to large industrial

plants), as well as the authority to perform commercial inspections, has meant that the

local government has the capacity to exert power over many different types of

businesspersons.

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[15] Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication, August 2, 2015.

[16] The following links only show two examples. 'Yemek Hizmeti Alinacaktir [Food service will be bought],' Official Web Page, Kayapınar Belediyesi [Kayapınar Municipality], accessed June 28, 2016, http://www.kayapinar.bel.tr/yemek-hizmeti-alinacaktir.html; 'Personel Hizmeti Alinacaktir [Personnel Service will be bought],' Official Web Page, Kayapınar Belediyesi [Kayapınar Municipality], accessed June 28, 2016, http://www.kayapinar.bel.tr/personel-hizmeti-alinacaktir.html. Kayapınar Municipality is a district municipality within Dîrbakır Province.

Many interviewees[17] argued that after the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement gained these powers and a local economy emerged around municipalities, many local business and tradesmen including those who had previously remained wary of supporting the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement now tried to develop good relations with its leadership. The following conversation with a retired public employee in Mardin province provides a good example of how having power in this realm affects popular attitudes:

> **Interviewee:** It was the mid-1990s, we were sitting in the office of a friend with some police officers from a special operations unit. My friend would do business here. When we were there, the officers received news over their radios that the PKK had blocked the Nusaybin[18] road. Officers immediately grabbed their rifles and stood up to leave. My friend said 'Wait! I am coming with you too', and he also went with them. He was so supportive of state at that time. Last year after Ahmet Turk[19] was elected as metropolitan mayor, he had a 22-karat golden worry bead made for Ahmet Turk and brought it to him as a congratulation present.
>
> **Researcher:** How should we construe this? What do you think about the logic of this change in your friend's behaviour?
>
> **Interviewee:** I think it is not difficult for any of us to interpret it. He did it because he knows that power is now enshrined in the municipality. It is the municipality's door that he should knock on for many business-related things.[20]

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[17] Anonymous Respondent 7, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 17, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 19, Personal Communication, July 26, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 23, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 26, Personal Communication, August 3, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication, August 6, 2015.

[18] Nusaybin is a district in Mardin province.

[19] Ahmet Türk is one of the most prominent members of and also the former leader of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party. After being an MP in parliament for many years, he was elected as Metropolitan Mayor of Mardin province in 2014.

[20] Anonymous Respondent 29, Personal Communication, August 7, 2015.

After these and similar remarks by the other interviewees, the researcher asked why the provision of these services and municipal legal power impacted the local population's relationship with the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. In response, the vast majority of the interviewees stated that the reason was that the provision of municipal public services and usage of the municipal power to the supporters and sympathisers of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement varied significantly from what was provided to those of opposing to Kurdish nationalist goals. A Kurdish-origin interviewee, a village guard from the Kiziltepe district of Mardin province, illustrates this point with the following comment:

> If you do not support them, when you call the municipality in such as situation [referring to the previously stated example of funeral services], they say they do not have a tent at the moment, or all of the tents are in use or as their graders are out of order. They find these kinds of excuses. A few months ago, they did not send sewage trucks to the houses of a few villagers in the lowland villages for discharging the cesspools as these families are known as pro-government [pro-Ankara]. People [from these families] had to rent a private one. However, for the people supporting them, there is no such thing as [a requested public service being] unavailable or out of order.[21]

A Zaza-origin interviewee from Diyarbakir, who was once a café-restaurant owner in central Diyarbakir, repeated a similar sentiment:

> This is because when you, as an AK Party supporter, go to the municipality to get a licence to open a shop, they create extra hurdles for you even if your all documents for the licence application are present. Municipal law enforcement officers (*zabıta*) control some places quite seldom and some places quite often if the latter is against them [the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement]. Who wants to face extra hurdles and extra controls? The situation is the same for property developers as well. It is highly difficult to get a construction

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[21] Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication.

permit from Diyarbakir MM for any property developers if one is not an HDP supporter or does not have credentials from the mountain [He refers to the PKK]. He has to visit the municipality many times and to make a lot of off-the-record donations.[22]

It should be also stated that several Kurdish ethno-nationalist interviewees rebutted this opinion, arguing that municipalities fairly provide public services to all residents, regardless of political orientation.[23] However, more commonly interviewees that expressed clear Kurdish ethno-nationalist opinions or expressed their support for the HDP during the interviews, including those that had even been jailed under the accusation of being KCK members, also corroborated the emergence of patrimonial lines of influence in the municipalities controlled by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement.[24] Yet, they argued that this not only occurs in the municipalities held by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement but is common in many other municipalities in Turkey and other political parties also follow similar practices. Thus, the findings of this research indicate that after coming to power in municipalities, the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement deliberately used the provision of municipal services as a means to incentivise and coerce accordance with its political objectives.

In fact, the central government still provides many highly critical services such as national education, health, highways, railways, aviation infrastructure, and public safety. However, the research findings indicate that the services provided by the central government fail to influence people`s understanding of power to the same extent services provided by municipalities do. Services rendered by Ankara are much purer public goods,

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[22] Anonymous Respondent 31, Personal Communication, August 10, 2015.
[23] Anonymous Respondent 8, Personal Communication, July 9, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 9, Personal Communication, July 10, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 10, Personal Communication, July 11, 2015.
[24] Anonymous Respondent 5, Personal Communication, July 4, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 14, Personal Communication, July 22, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 15, Personal Communication, July 23, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 29, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 33, Personal Communication.

and it is not possible to exclude people from these services. As a consequence of this, the central government's public services cannot be used from a rational choice perspective as much as is possible with local services. The following statement from a Kurdish-origin engineer originally from Sirnak province but speaking from Adana illuminates this issue: 'Yes, schools and hospitals are run by the state. However, there is no possibility to be excluded by the state from these services even if you are an HDP member or you have been recently released from prison for being a PKK member. You can get the same treatment at hospitals, or enrol your child at school. These services are provided in any case…local public services outweigh the national services in terms of affecting people's daily lives.'[25]

The following remark by a former district mayor from the ruling AK Party in a south-eastern province provides an eloquent summary of arguments stated above on the importance of the mayors and municipal services and the impact of the last phase of the decentralisation process in 2012, which significantly expanded the capabilities and authority of the metropolitan municipalities, and highlights the causal link between the municipal power shift and the expansion of Kurdish ethno-nationalism:

> Municipalities are local units that provide services, construct roads, deliver drinking water, provide social aid etc. Mayors are local administrators that can now touch every aspect of life and they are together with people on a daily basis. If you do not control local administrations, you cannot expect success anymore. This is because local administrations are the most important contact points with the public…. If [someone] constructs my road, provides my drinking water, electricity,[26] [and] if I was in the position of these people, I would have been affected by these, too. With the last MM Law, the state [central

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[25] Anonymous Respondent 35, Personal Communication, August 16, 2015.
[26] Electricity is not a service provided by municipalities. Nonetheless, as the interviewee used it, it has been included to protect the originality of the quotation.

government] has lost everything it has [in terms of service-providing capacity], thus it does not have any instruments that it can use anymore. Now, [the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement] has attained a capacity to be able to do many things itself and solve many local problems of people. When we look at the current situation, we see that the governor has a symbolic position with a brand new car in front of his office. The metropolitan mayor, however, has both the same car and also many others such as a grader, loaders, sewage trucks, dump trucks, water tanks, excavators etc.[27]

Chapter 4 described the opening of legal political channels for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement on the local level as well as the decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system as part of an analysis of the changes in the Turkish POS from 1999 to mid-2015. Chapter 5 showed that in terms of political outputs, the attainment of local power, as with other parts of the expansion of the Turkish POS (even after the decentralisation reforms), far from met the ideological and organisational demands of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Overall, the analysis in the previous two chapters and in this section clearly reveal that the political inputs, in the form of municipal soft power, significantly facilitated the expansion of ethno-nationalism among larger segments of the Kurdish people according to rational choice logic.

6.3.2. Consolidating support among sympathisers and utilising the opening POS

In addition to the impact of municipal service provision on popular attitudes towards Kurdish ethno-nationalism, winning municipal power gave the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement access to crucial financial resources. These resources strengthened the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, and also facilitated both the expansion of ethno-nationalism

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[27] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication.

and the consolidation of support among the existing sympathisers through various means. The findings of this research also show that the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement used these municipal resources to support the PKK's militant and civilian-targeted terror activities.

Firstly, with the attainment of municipal power, as Watts also argues, the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement accessed important public resources and, accordingly, began to control a key budget.[28] For example, while the Diyarbakir Metropolitan Municipality had roughly a USD 119 million[29] public budget (TRY 226.9 million)[30] in 2013, its budget for the year of 2016 was roughly USD 220 million (TRY 646.3 million)[31].[32] As these numbers show, the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement were in command of valuable public resources which have been significantly increased for MMs in particular after the legislative changes in 2012.[33]

The findings of this research show that these important financial resources gave the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement the chance to promote Kurdish nationalism by providing direct financial incentives to its sympathisers and families of PKK members. As many interviewees argued, these municipal incentives included welfare benefits from

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[28] Watts, *Activists in Office*, 79.

[29] While the original sources of the Diyarbakir MM's budget are denominated in Turkish lira, they have been converted into US dollars by the author by using the average annual currency values of those years given by İşBank and those conversions thus reflect approximate amounts.

[30] 'Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi 2013 Yılı Sayıştay Raporu [2013 Audit Report of Court of Accounts on Diyarbakir Metropolitan Municipality]' (Ankara: Turkish Court of Accounts, September 2014), http://www.sayistay.gov.tr/rapor/kid/2013/belediyeler/6-%202013--D%C4%B0YARBAKIR%20B%C3%9CY%C3%9CK%C5%9EEH%C4%B0R%20BELED%C4%B0YES%C4%B0_Say%C4%B1%C5%9Ftay%20Denetim%20Raporu04.09.2014_11.29.24.pdf.

[31] '2016 Bütçesi Oybirliğiyle Onaylandı [The 2016 budget has been approved],' Official Web Page, Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi, accessed May 13, 2016, http://www.diyarbakir.bel.tr/haberler/2277-meclis.html.

[32] The budgets of other district and borough municipalities within the Diyarbakir province are not included in these amounts.

[33] While the law amending the existing MM Law was legislated in 2012, it was implemented after the local election of 2014. Thus, the 2013 Diyarbakır MM budget gives the amount before this change in the MM Law and the 2016 budget values denotes the increase after the change. It is evident that the public resources that Diyarbakir MM controls almost doubled during that period.

municipal resources and employment opportunities in the municipalities, as well as letting

them run kiosks, cafes and similar small and medium-sized businesses on public spaces

controlled by municipalities.[34] The field findings of this study revealed that the Kurdish

ethno-nationalist movement referred to the families of the PKK militants as 'families of

dignity' or as ones who 'paid a price for the Kurdish struggle'. As these families earned

preferential benefits from municipal resources, others who were unconnected to the

Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement were crowded out from the municipal resource

allocation. It proved impossible to gain employment in municipalities if you were not part

of these Kurdish ethno-nationalist networks or receive welfare benefits and similar

financial support if you were known as clearly pro-state.[35]

Numerous Kurdish-origin interviewees, almost all of them stating clear Kurdish

nationalist opinions, argued otherwise and claimed that these municipalities serve everyone

in an impartial and just way.[36] Yet, other interviewees who also similarly largely reflected

Kurdish ethno-nationalist perspectives during the interviews, among them some who had

been previously jailed for PKK-related charges, acknowledged the use of municipal

resources in this manner. However, these interviewees also argued that these were quite

normal practices that were similarly exercised by other political parties in local

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[34] Anonymous Respondent 11, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 12, Personal
Communication, July 20, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 17, Personal Communication; Anonymous
Respondent 19, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication;
Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 32, Personal
Communication, August 11, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 35, Personal Communication.
[35] Anonymous Respondent 11, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal
Communication; Anonymous Respondent 17, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 23,
Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 24, Personal Communication, August 1, 2015;
Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 26, Personal
Communication; Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 41,
Personal Communication, August 22, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 48, Personal Communication.
[36] Anonymous Respondent 2, Personal Communication, July 2, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 8, Personal
Communication; Anonymous Respondent 9, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 10, Personal
Communication.

administrations.[37] While this research found these details in the summer of 2015, a

document published by the Turkish Ministry of Interior in 2017, following the removal of

some mayors from their posts and replacement with centrally appointed acting mayors by a

governmental decree, provides many clear examples of the use of municipal resources by

the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement as described above.[38]

Financial incentives and public employment opportunities for the families of the

PKK militants as well as sympathisers of PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism influenced

the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in several ways. First, as qualitative data

collected in the field strongly suggests, being a mere sympathiser or aligning with the

legal, Kurdish ethno-nationalist political party was sufficient for financial welfare support

from municipalities. This financial support facilitated an already positively shifting

orientation of these people and provided additional support for the growth of the Kurdish

ethno-nationalist movement from a rational choice perspective. As many interviewees

asserted, economic assistance, public sector employment opportunities and vocal support

for PKK-connected families by municipal leaders served to increase solidarity among

supporters of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and maintain or even consolidate the

perception of a Kurdish ethnic identity.[39]

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[37] Anonymous Respondent 1, Personal Communication, July 1, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 14, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 15, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 16, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 29, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 30, Personal Communication, August 8, 2015, Anonymous Respondent 36, Personal Communication, July 17, 2015.
[38] 'Appointments to Municipalities Due to Terror: PKK/KCK' (Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Turkey, March 2017).
[39] Anonymous Respondent 12, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 17, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 19, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 23, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 26, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 39, July 19, 2015; Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication, July 27, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 48.

A Kurdish-origin interviewee from the Kiziltepe district in Mardin argued the following on how the support of municipal administrations facilitated the spread of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism:

Well, of course it has an economic side. Yet, more importantly, it has a symbolic dimension. The organisation [the PKK] uses these actions very effectively. They say 'look we never betray our supporters. We always support people that walk with us.' A young person might be recruited by the PKK from other channels and the family might be distant from the organisation. When they employ the sibling of such a person from the PKK's rural squad, they also manage to ideologically influence other family members in the process. Through these facilities, this process becomes easier and their engagement level increases as well.[40]

A former mayor of a district from the ruling AK Party in a south-eastern province, who is also the leader of an influential family, argued that: 'When a soldier is martyred [dies in battle], the government puts his wife or parents on a salary or pension, and also employ a few of his relatives in a state institution. There is a law on this issue. It is a sad fact that with the municipalities, the organisation also became able to do the same thing through the public resources. These employment and social assistance benefits might look rather insignificant but they significantly supported the increasing perception of the shift of power in the region.'[41]

The following quote is an observation by the psychologist Nermin Serin on the PKK/KCK prisoners and convicts in a prison in Turkey where she works as a prison psychologist. She expressed these opinions in an investigation by the GNAT Human Rights Examination Committee which resulted in the 'Report on the Violations of Right to

[40] Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication.
[41] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication.

Live in the Context of Terror and Violence Events'. Her remarks also clearly reveal the role of the financial incentives in keeping the existing members and their families anchored to the PKK and the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement:

> Prisoners and convicts from the terrorist organisation state that they are between a rock and a hard place. If they know that the state can support them or a job opportunity or anything like this would be provided, they will get away from terrorist organisation, terrorism and this way thinking. But they cannot get away because the state, I tell you what they say, does not tackle the issue in such a way. So most of them are unemployed, long stuck in the mountains, and battered and worn out there. Their families are affected by this, and most of them have a hard time making ends meet…. If they cease to support the organisation and say that 'Ok, I am leaving these activities', there is no one that provides a job or any type of training for them. They cannot get away from it because, as long as they continue, as long as they maintain their ties with the organisation, they know in some way that their families are safe and their economic needs are somehow met.[42]

In addition to the importance of financial aid and employment opportunities, many interviewees argued that outsourcing tenders from these municipalities were always won by supporters of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. The finding of this research suggests that through commanding important financial resources, the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement was able to create a local economy and a local Kurdish nationalist business class which was nurtured through the municipalities outsourcing tenders. This business class also financially supported the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement with 'donations' in return for these business contracts they received from municipalities. Some interviewees even argued that a certain percentage of the tender payments were transferred

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[42] 'Terör Ve Şiddet Olaylari Kapsaminda Yaşam Hakki İhlallerini İnceleme Raporu [Report on the Violations of Right to Live in the Context of Terror and Violence Events]' (Ankara: Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi İnsan Haklarını İnceleme Komisyonu [GNAT Human Rights Commission], February 13, 2013), 52.

to the PKK.[43] An aforementioned publication by the Turkish government also noted these arguments with some concrete examples from the field.[44] Thus, municipal resources and economic power enabled the Kurdish nationalist movement to create a Kurdish nationalist economic sphere which increased the overall strength and self-sufficiency of Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

Furthermore, the findings of this research show that the municipal resources and facilities were also used to support the militant activities of the PKK/KCK. During the fieldwork carried out in the summer of 2015, numerous interviewees argued that the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement benefited from the significant decline of governmental coercion between 2013 and mid-2015 and construction equipment owned by the municipalities was used to dig trenches and tunnels and make barricades on streets, and so-called liberated zones were created within the city centres where the government security forces would not be able to exercise routine law enforcement activities.[45] The same report by the Turkish Ministry of Interior also repeats these points and provides many examples of the use of the municipal vehicles and resources in clear blatant militant activities, such as transporting weapons and arms for the PKK.[46] Consequently, following the collapse of the resolution process in the summer of 2015, the Turkish government launched counter operations in some of these areas– one province centre and 11 district

[43] Anonymous Respondent 12, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 17, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 19, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 23, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 29, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication.
[44] 'Appointments to Municipalities Due to Terror: PKK/KCK.'
[45] Anonymous Respondent 17, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 31, Personal Communication, August 10, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 35, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 49, Personal Communication, September 3, 2015.
[46] 'Appointments to Municipalities Due to Terror: PKK/KCK.'

centres.[47] In some places such as the Sur district of Diyarbakir or the Nusaybin district of Mardin, it took several months for the Turkish security forces to eliminate the PKK presence in these parts of the cities and fully regain control.

In addition to the growing ability to provide incentives for increased support from locals as well as logistical capabilities that were used to support the militancy and terrorism, municipal administrations, as Watts has also noted, provided many other important opportunities and resources for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. These included controlling large numbers of personnel who could be directed towards the movement's goals, and access to international forums through intergovernmental municipal platforms where they were able to promote their ethno-nationalist causes.[48]

Moreover, municipal resources played a particularly important role in the movement's ability to take advantage of the opening of the POS. As the following chapter will examine in great detail, the increasing civil and cultural liberties during the 2000s as part of the expansion of the Turkish POS enabled the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement to advance the 'Kurdish nation-building process', trigger the emotional aspect of the nationalist appeal and instil or strengthen a 'Kurdish national identity' in the local population. Yet, the utilisation of these civil and political liberties largely became possible with the presence of ample resources. Many interviewees[49] agreed that municipal capabilities, including both economic resources and institutional infrastructure, significantly facilitated the rapid expansion of festivals and cultural events throughout the

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[47] These 11 district centres were Silvan, Varto, Derik, Dargeçit, Bağlar, Sur, Cizre, Silopi, İdil, Yüksekova, and Nusaybin and the provincial centre was Şırnak.
[48] Watts, *Activists in Office*, 75–93.
[49] Anonymous Respondent 11, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 23, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 24, Personal Communication, August 1, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 33, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication, August 27, 2015.

Kurdish populated areas. These events ranged in form from painting exhibitions to popular culture festivals featuring musical performances and to grand-scale Nowruz celebrations attended by millions, including many foreign visitors.[50]

Thus, controlling the municipalities meant having crucial economic and logistical resources. These municipal resources significantly empowered the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, increased its capabilities, and helped it expand to hitherto unaffiliated or unengaged local Kurds, as well as maintained and consolidated a nationalist identity among its existing supporters.

6.3.3. From rationality to a relational dimension

While the RC and RM approaches analysed in the previous section may explain why hitherto unengaged Kurds were induced to develop good relations with the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, based on the discussion in the previous section, one might rightfully argue that this rational choice cost-benefit logic does not explain the expansion of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism. This is because seeming close to and/or supportive of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement is not the same as ideologically sharing Kurdish

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[50] The following sources provide some explanations for these proliferating cultural and artisan events. '2. Kürt Kültür ve Sanat Festivali Başlıyor [2. Kurdish Culture and Art Festival Is Starting],' *Haber[News] Diyarbakır*, accessed April 26, 2016, http://www.haberdiyarbakir.gen.tr/yerel/2-kurt-kultur-ve-sanat-festivali-basliyor.html; 'Aram Tigran Sanat Günleri Başlıyor [Aram Tigran Art Days Is Starting],' Official Web Page, Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi [Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality], accessed June 27, 2016, http://www.diyarbakir.bel.tr/haberler/961-aram-tigran-sanat-gunleri.html; 'Diyarbakır'da Festival Başlıyor [Festival Is Starting in Diyarbakir],' Official Web Page, (Diyarbakır) Yenisehir District Municipality, October 28, 2010, http://www.diyarbakiryenisehir.bel.tr/haber/188/Diyarbakir_da_Festival_Basliyor. 'Amed Kitap Fuarı Sona Erdi [Amed (Diyarbakır) Book Fair Ended],' Official Web Page, Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi [Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality*]*, accessed June 27, 2016, http://www.diyarbakir.bel.tr/haberler/746-fuar.html; '2. Amed Kitap Fuarı Açıldı [2. Amed (Diyarbakır) Book Fair Has Opened],' Official Web Page, Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi [Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality], accessed April 23, 2016, http://www.diyarbakir.bel.tr/haberler/3210-kultur.html; 'Diyarbakırda Büyük Nevruz [Big Nowruz in Diyarbakir],' BBC Turkish, accessed June 27, 2016, http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/europe/story/2005/03/050321_diyarbakir_newroz.shtml; 'Diyarbakır'da Nevruz Kutlamaları [Nowruz Celebrations in Diyarbakir],' Youtube Video, 4:36, posted by Cihan News Agency, March 21, 2015, accessed July 9, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DB9-pQi8Rek.

ethno-nationalist philosophies and objectives. The findings of this research show that the impact of the municipal public services on the larger Kurdish community was not limited to the previously analysed cost-benefit causation, however. Both the increasing interpersonal contact between the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and ordinary Kurdish-origin bystanders through the municipal services as well as a highly expanded networking capacity attained through the municipalities also significantly facilitated the expansion of ethno-nationalism among the hitherto unengaged Kurdish population.

Existing field research has already demonstrated that although ideas, action frames and tactics can be also diffused through non-personal means such as media, internet, and publications, they are largely 'transmitted through the interpersonal contacts, organizational linkages, or associational networks'.[51] Previous studies have also revealed that mobilisation in collective action is largely realised through various mobilising structures, ranging from structured movement organisations to informal neighbourhood and friendship networks.[52] These mobilising networks provide the social space for critical interpersonal contact that collective action necessitates by definition.[53] These interpersonal

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[51] Rebecca Kolins Givan, Kenneth M. Roberts, and Sarah A. Soule, 'Introduction: The Dimensions of Diffusion,' in *The Diffusion of Social Movements: Actors, Mechanisms, and Political Effects*, ed. Rebecca Kolins Givan, Kenneth M. Roberts, and Sarah A. Soule (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2–3.

[52] Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Mass: Longman Higher Education, 1978) Chapter 3; Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 44–45; Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, 1st Edition (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3–4; Mario Diani, 'Networks and Participation,' in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi, 1st edition (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 339–59. Donatella della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, New Ed edition (Cambridge England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 165–70; Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3 edition (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Chapter 6; John D. McCarthy, 'Constraints and Opportunities in Adopting, Adapting, and Inventing,' in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, First Edition (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 141.

[53] Diani, 'Networks and Participation'; McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, 44–45.

contacts and organisational linkages impact cognitive processes and play an important role in shaping people's perception of the external world.[54] Thus, the density of these networks increases the resonance of collective action frames and mobilisation.[55]

Based on findings from the field, this research contends that very nature of local public services run by the municipalities made it virtually compulsory for everyone living in these cities to have a certain level of contact with the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement in order to proceed in daily life. Moreover, municipal power and resources enabled the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement to establish and run many legal mobilising structures such as women's centres, nursery schools, and cultural centres. In addition to the already increasing contact between the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and bystanders due to the very nature of municipal services, the Kurdish nationalist movement was able to use these legal channels to further consolidate its direct contact with all segments of the Kurdish people through these legal milieus and penetrate Kurdish society much more efficiently.[56]

In this context, while the previously analysed public services played a crucial role in connecting the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement with the villagers and ordinary households, the legal duty and means to establish cultural centres, vocational and skills courses, sporting activities and summer camps enabled the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement to increase its impact and connection with the Kurdish youth much more

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[54] Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State*, 204. Although this diagnosis is explicitly stated only on the specified page, the impact of the social milieu of an individual on his/her perception of the external world is evident in many parts of this study.
[55] Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution*, particularly 3-45, in general Chapter 3.
[56] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 17, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 48, Personal Communication.

closely compared with previous decades and other legal platforms.[57] Social services such as nurseries and women's centres, in particular, created the most suitable networks for developing contact with families, women and children.[58]

The Diyarbakir, Mardin and Van MMs and other municipalities run by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement largely invested in services such as youth centres, cultural services, nursery schools and after-school centres.[59] While families that sympathised with the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement embraced these municipal facilities and widely attended the activities and events organised there, these services also attracted other Kurdish-origin families as all these were all legal facilities and activities and also meant important incentives for local low-and-middle income-earning families.[60] As analysed in Chapter 3, by the 2000s, the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement had already managed to expand ethno-nationalism among Kurdish-origin citizens in Turkey. However, this expansion was largely realised through militant and other illegal means. Thus, many interviewees agreed that there was a significant distance between segments of the Kurdish population who had not had a politicised Kurdish identity and those involved with the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement during this period. Consequently, many

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[57] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 19, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 24, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 32, Personal Communication.
[58] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 24, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 32, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 48, Personal Communication.
[59] 'Children and Nursery Begins New Era in Service,' accessed May 17, 2016, http://diyarbakir.habermonitor.com/en/haber/detay/children-and-nursery-begins-new-era-in-servic/460635/; 'Perperok Çocuk Kreşi [Perperok Nursery],' Official Web Page, Van Büyükşehir Belediyesi [Van Metropolitan Municipality], accessed May 17, 2016, http://www.van.bel.tr/icerik/perperok-cocuk-kresi; 'Mardin BüyükŞehir Belediyesi [Mardin Metropolitann Municipality],' Official Web Page, accessed May 17, 2016, http://www.mardin.bel.tr/sosyal_hizmetler_daire_baskanligi_sunulan_hizmetler-faaliyetlericerik-8233; 'Solin Çocuk Oyun Evi Öğrencilerinden Engelli Haftasi Etkinliği [The Diableds' Week Event from the students of Solin Children Playhouse', Pasurun Sesi.com,' accessed May 17, 2016, http://www.pasurunsesi.com/mobil/news.php?id=3588.
[60] Anonymous Respondent 19, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 23, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 24, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 26, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 32, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 48, Personal Communication.

ordinary Kurds used to see the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement as an illegal

movement and attempted to distance themselves from the movement. Thus, municipal

power and decentralisation also provided a kind of legitimacy for the separatist Kurdish

ethno-nationalist movement in the eyes of many Kurds who had been wary of the Kurdish

ethno-nationalism until then, helping bridge the gap between the Kurdish ethno-nationalist

movement and previously unreached Kurds.[61]

From a rational choice perspective, one can understand why previously unengaged

bystanders initially gravitated toward the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. After

municipalities connected to the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement gained control of

crucial public services and the authority to distribute local rents and issue tender bids, they

did not hesitate to use exert their newfound power over bystanders and opponents. As

many interviewees commented, 'power was now in their hands'.[62] Consequently,

municipal resources and increasing contact with ordinary Kurds enabled the Kurdish

ethno-nationalist movement to diffuse the Kurdish ethno-nationalist ideology and sway

ever-growing numbers of Kurds.[63]

As stated at the beginning of this section, diffusion of ideas and frames is a relational

process which mostly requires interpersonal contact and networks. As the following

chapter will analyse, the expansion of the civil liberties and the role of civil networks also

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[61] Anonymous Respondent 6, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 7, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 24, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication, August 19, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 47, Personal Communication, August 30, 2015.
[62] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 19, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 30, Personal Communication, August 8, 2015.
[63] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 19, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 23, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 26, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 32, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 48, Personal Communication.

played a role in increasing the frequency of contact between the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and the larger society. However, qualitative findings discussed below suggest that in the case of the municipal institutions and contact occurring through municipal services, this diffusion was not merely realised within legal spaces, but through the formal governmental spaces and backed by the municipal government through providing incentives and coercion. Thus, the impact of local governance on the people's conduct through rational choices and diffusion of ethno-nationalism among the newly reached segments of the Kurdish people were not totally separate processes but conversely were highly related and intertwined.

The following remark of a Zaza-origin interviewee involved in publishing activities in Diyarbakir province helps explain how this relational process works: 'Well, Diyarbakir MM has many centres – women centres, youth and art centres. There are different activities there for youth, women and children. However, if you think that the municipality provides these services, and people who want to participate do so, and those who do not then abstain, you are wrong. They actively promote these places to the people they contact through the essential municipal services. When this promotion combines with the basic municipal services, this creates a kind of pressure on people.'[64]

An observation from a Kurdish-origin village guard from Mardin province similarly states the phenomenon:

After a delegation from the party visits your condolence [funeral] tent and shares your sorrow or when the municipality provided the tent or chairs for your condolence ceremony, when they help you in any such way, in a following meeting, demonstration or any similar event they organised, they invite you saying, 'We are together hereafter. We are waiting for

[64] Anonymous Respondent 32, Personal Communication.

you as well.' They give that message. They say, 'It is us who will have the power to do these services in the future' as well. Or they say, 'There are very nice, helpful social activities in the municipality's cultural centre. Why do not you send your children to the cultural centre? They can learn many new things there.' Thus, when from one side they remind you of the kebab wrap (*dürüm*)[65] they can give, they also show the stick from the other side.[66]

The field findings of this research also show that once people came into contact with the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement through these centres, as also stated above, they also met the Kurdish ethno-nationalist ideas and philosophies of Ocalan on women rights, so-called ecology, radical democracy, self-rule etc. A Turkish academic, who has a book and several articles on the PKK, argued the following:

Several years ago in Van, I carried out an interview with a man whose wife would regularly attend the events and courses in a women's centre. He said his wife was an ordinary housewife and did not show any interest in Kurdish nationalist ideas and did not, in fact, know anything about these issues. After his wife started to go this centre, however, she changed a lot and became a highly politicised person and began to talk about women's rights, democratic autonomy [as foreseen by the KCK contract], and these kinds of things. The man was not happy with the situation in that his wife would leave home for this place several times a week. He told me that he could not interfere with her, however. Because she both refused and also from the party he got a warning not to discourage his wife from continuing to go to this centre. This is because they know if you win the heart of a woman, you also win the children she has. When you win the women and youth, they form the motor power [of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism] and make a crucial multiplier effect. The man said that his wife also criticises him for being ignorant and trying to influence him as well.[67]

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[65] The interviewee used this word as an analogy for a reward by referring to common kebab culture in the region. A common English-language analogy with a similar meaning is that of the carrot and stick.
[66] Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication.
[67] Anonymous Respondent 48, Personal Communication.

The excerpt below is from a speech given by the former co-mayor of Diyarbakir MM, Firat Anli, to children in a summer camp organised by the Diyarbakir MM near Lake Hazar in eastern Turkey where 1000 children attended during summer 2015. It gives valuable insight into the role these situations had in furthering Kurdish ethno-nationalism:

Today our hearts are together. The children of Amed, Lice and Ergani are here. I hope the children of the North (*Bakur*),[68] South (*Başur*), West (*Rojava*) and East (*Rojhilat*) would come together one day here in a festival. Our children continue to live under the heaviest conditions. However, there is hope for tomorrow…. There is grief in our people's heart. Both in Amed, Botan, Serhat and also in Xerzan. However, we know as the children of Mesopotamia have staked a claim in their future for 1000 years, 100 years and forty years, they will also do so in the future.[69]

A Turkish professor who claimed he had watched numerous recordings of the education lessons in these centres made the following statement: 'They give lessons in the centres of the municipalities as well as at the local branches of the party. I have watched some videos… and in these lessons, they both organise special education including on the Kurdish national identity and even beyond this, on separatism, and on the ideas of Abdullah Ocalan…. I have also investigated the details of these centres through my own contacts in the region where I have many. Thus, I can confidently tell you that they use these centres in this way.'[70]

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[68] North (*Bakur*) is used to refer to eastern and south-eastern part of Turkey which is claimed by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement as the northern part of Kurdistan. Similarly South, West and East are used to refer to northern Iraq, northern Syria and western Iran, respectively, as the other parts of the claimed Kurdistan.

[69] 'Eş Başkan Anlı, Çocuk Yaz Kampı'nı ziyaret etti [Co-mayor Anli visited Children's Summer Camp],' Diyarbakır Haber, August 10, 2015, http://www.haberdiyarbakir.gen.tr/yerel/es-baskan-anli-cocuk-yaz-kampini-ziyaret-etti.html.

[70] Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication.

An Arab-origin interviewee, a musician from Turkey's southeast, similarly stated the following about the teaching of Kurdish ethno-nationalist ideas:

> As far as I have seen, the art performances organised by these municipalities for children do not involve direct political rhetoric. Yet, it seemed to me that they aim to give an ethnic awareness and also mostly include some references to the oppression, resistance for rights etc., not directly in a political context but in different contexts such the struggle of a poor but determined peasant against a rich, powerful and cruel king or similar stories from the world of animals. I think these symbolic struggles are supposed to act as a baseline for the eventual national consciousness of these children.[71]

This section has revealed that in addition to effectively using the municipal public services to provide incentives or coerce Kurdish people towards the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement from an initially rational choice perspective, municipal power also enabled the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement to influence these hitherto unengaged Kurdish locals with Kurdish ethno-nationalism as an ideology and gave them a Kurdish nationalist identity. Nevertheless, these explanations seem to overlook the fact that a significant percentage of Kurdish people had been already influenced by ethno-nationalism and that was the reason why these municipalities were won by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, even though it is not possible to cite a specific ratio and it this would vary from province to province. However, as seen in the conceptual framework chapter, the emergence and development of nationalism is not an occurrence; it is a process.[72] Thus, the analysis in this chapter mainly explains the process of expansion of ethno-nationalism among Kurdish-origin citizens in Turkey who had not previously been influenced by this ideology. Moreover, as seen in the second chapter, neither ethnic nor

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[71] Anonymous Respondent 24, Personal Communication.
[72] Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1994).

political identities are fixed. As the remarks of numerous interviewees suggest, the increasing contact and expanding legal networks as well as the proliferation of cultural events also helped keep the politicised identities of its supporter base alive.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the relationship between the opening up of institutional political channels, the decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system and the trajectory of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement in Turkey. This analysis has revealed that the expansion of the legal branches of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist political parties gave the Kurdish nationalist movement a critical mobilising networking capacity in places where they were not in control of municipalities. Moreover, parliamentary representation also helped them gain legitimisation and spread ethno-nationalist ideas from a position of authority.

Although the opening up of political channels on the national level was important, the most crucial development for the trajectory of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey related to municipal politics and decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system. The power that came with being the provider of municipal services enabled the Kurdish nationalist movement to use these public services as specific types of incentives and disincentives to influence the conduct of the residents of the municipality and significantly impacted the orientation of the hitherto unengaged Kurdish population towards the Kurdish nationalist movement from an initially rational choice approach. Moreover, the utilisation of the expanding POS to the fullest extent by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement became only possible with the presence of ample resources afforded to the municipal leadership. Moreover, municipal power and responsibilities and the resulting increased rate

of contact between the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and larger segments of the Kurdish people made it possible to ideologically influence the Kurdish-origin locals who had been aloof to Kurdish ethno-nationalism until that time.

In conclusion, this chapter contends that in terms of the political space it opened, and the resources and legal power it provided, the relative decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system and the opening up of institutional political channels significantly facilitated the expansion of ethno-nationalism among Turkey's Kurdish-origin citizens.

CHAPTER 7

THE SPREAD OF KURDISH ETHNO-NATIONALISM

AMIDST EXPANDING CIVIL AND CULTURAL FREEDOM

7.1. Introduction

Having already analysed how institutional political channels impacted the trajectory of

Kurdish ethno-nationalism in the previous chapter, this seventh chapter focuses on another

aspect of the input side of the Turkish POS: the expansion civil and cultural liberties in

Turkey in the 2000s and its impact on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

As seen in Chapter 2, common approaches in POS scholarship tend to limit the

structural determinants of the contention that provides new inputs to the insurgents with

political variables.[1] However, other writings within the broader SMT scholarship argue

that civil liberties such as rights of association, freedom of assembly and freedom of

speech can affect the mobilisation process and trajectory of the contention.[2] In recent

decades, the concept of political sphere as the arena of the expression of social conflict has

been challenged by the emergence of new civil communicative spaces which also denotes

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[1] For a summary of differentiating POS conceptualisations from a host of scholars, see: Doug McAdam, 'Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Directions,' in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, 1st Edition (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 27.

[2] Charles Tilly, *Regimes and Repertoires* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 183–88; Mario Diani, 'Networks and Participation,' in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi, 1st edition (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 339–59

the emergence of an alternative form of politics known as 'politics below'.[3] Moreover, as a result of a shifted understanding of the role of government, from where states merely govern a territory and the people living in it to governance where citizens and civil society actively engage in the process of policy-making together with agents of state apparatus,[4] the traditional boundaries between the public and private spheres are not as distinct as they were in decades past. Thus, as other scholars have also argued, the boundaries between the institutional and non-institutional modes of politics are also not as sharp as had been generally assumed.[5] These arguments lead to the conclusion that the legal structure that allows for the relatively free articulation of opposing ideas, and of the availability of legal means for dissident groups to organise and diffuse their ideologies relatively freely through civil and cultural contexts, are also important determinants of the openness of a POS, particularly its input aspect when assuming a two-tiered framework.

In line with this theoretical persuasion, this chapter discusses how the expansion of civil and associational liberties facilitated the significant proliferation of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilising networks as well as enabled the utilisation of cultural traditions such as funerals, weddings and music in order to diffuse ethno-nationalist frames and trigger an emotional aspect of ethno-nationalism. In this context, this chapter will reveal the causal relationship between the above-mentioned structural changes on a macro level, increasing networking capacity of the Kurdish nationalist movement on a meso level, and through this increasing channels of interpersonal contact and cultural rituals, the growth of the ethno-nationalist mobilisation on a micro-level. Additionally, by introducing

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[3] Donatella Della Porta, 'Social Movements and Civil Society,' in *Conflict, Citizenship and Civil Society*, ed. Partick Baert et al. (London ; New York: Routledge, 2010), 51–68.
[4] Derrick Purdue, *Civil Societies and Social Movements: Potentials and Problems* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007), 4.
[5] Jack A. Goldstone, *States, Parties, and Social Movements* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2; Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow, and Charles Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 6–7.

a new concept called 'scale shift', this chapter analyses the relationship between the expansion of civil and cultural freedoms and the rise of the articulated demands of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and reveals how this interaction also scaled up the demands of the larger Kurdish people and significantly decreased satisfaction among Kurdish-origin people with the ongoing reform process.

The chapter is structured into five sections. After this introductory section, the second section investigates how democratisation and the expansion of civil liberties facilitated the formation of legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilising structures and how the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement took advantage of this opportunity to expand its social networks. Included in this section is an analysis of how this development impacted the growth of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. The third section studies how the democratisation process, expanding liberties and their effective utilisation by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist agency resulted in an upward scale shift in how Kurdish ethno-nationalism was defined and understood by Kurdish-origin people, as well as by the larger Turkish society, and how this scale shift impacted Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation. The fourth section explains the relationship between the extension of civil and cultural liberties and the increasing capacity of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement to employ cultural rituals, symbols, colours and myths that are associated with Kurdishness and the effect of these efforts on the course of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. The fifth and final section naturally concludes the chapter.

7.2. The expansion of civil liberties: increasing Kurdish ethno-nationalist networking and increasing Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation

Many empirical studies in SMT scholarship note the importance of interpersonal contact and formal or informal networks on a movement's mobilisation.[6] Consequently, the movement's entrepreneurs, by both creating the new mobilising structures and also by appropriating the already existing networks in the polity or society, try to take advantage of these settings for recruitment, securing other resources, and for the diffusion of their ideology, frames, and action tactics.[7] Thus, it is evident that there is a key agency aspect in the process of mobilisation through these sites. Yet, the capacity of the movement's entrepreneurs of creating new mobilising structures and appropriating the existing ones is not independent of the POS surrounding them, and the nature of the POS influences this process to a significant extent.[8]

As seen in Chapter 3, since the mid-1980s the PKK had always tried to develop a front organisation which could enable it to reach Kurdish people from all walks of life and

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[6] Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Mass: Longman Higher Education, 1978) Chapter 3; Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 44–45; Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, 1st Edition (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 3–4; Mario Diani, 'Networks and Participation,' in *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, ed. David A. Snow, Sarah A. Soule, and Hanspeter Kriesi, 1st edition (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 339–59. Donatella della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, New edition (Cambridge England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 165–70; Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3rd edition (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Chapter 6.

[7] John D. McCarthy and Mayer N. Zald, 'Resource Mobilisation and Social Movements: A Partial Theory,' in *Social and Political Movements*, ed. Cyrus Ernesto Zirakzadeh, Four-Volume Set edition, vol. 2 (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011), 27–54; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, 44–47; Sidney G. Tarrow, 'Dynamics of Diffusion: Mechanisms, Institutions, and Scale Shift,' in *The Diffusion of Social Movements: Actors, Mechanisms, and Political Effects*, ed. Rebecca Kolins Givan, Kenneth M. Roberts, and Sarah A. Soule (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 204–19.

[8] Mario Diani, 'The Structural Bases of Protest Events: Multiple Memberships and Civil Society Networks in the February 15, 2003 Anti-War Demonstrations,' *Acta Sociologica*, no. 52 (2009): 63–83. Nina Eggert, 'The Impact of Political Opportunities on Interorganizational Networks: A Comparison of Migrants' Organizational Fields,' *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 19, no. 4 (December 1, 2014): 369–86.

mobilise them for Kurdish ethno-nationalist causes. However, the PKK's efforts to develop an extensive network remained limited until the 2000s as the legal channels were highly limited and the cost of the involvement in illegal endeavours was high. By the mid- 2000s, the democratisation process and the expansion of civil and cultural liberties, particularly the new Turkish Association Law in 2004, had significantly facilitated the formation of legal networks. The findings of this research show that the PKK and legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors exploited these opportunities highly successfully. They both established many new associations and civil outlook cultural centres and also appropriated existing ones. Moreover, due to the decline of governmental control on the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, they also managed to establish de facto regional and district councils and similar bodies in neighbourhoods, villages, towns, and cities in line with the KCK contract's projection as seen in Chapter 5.

The following excerpt from a 2004 issue of PKK's main organisational publication shows that the organisation had been well aware of the critical role interpersonal contact could play in ethno-nationalist mobilisation. Serxwebun argues that '[I]t is an indisputable fact that the most effective and productive relationship style is the face-to-face relationship that creates interactive and common values. The individual that is equipped with the right knowledge, is a volunteer propagandist. This leads to the emergence of a constantly expanding environment… It is a marginal attitude to be satisfied with the existing level of the masses' support... no one should adopt this approach.'[9]

Regarding the effective utilisation of the civil liberties by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement in this context, one of the most important explanations comes from Selahattin Demirtas, the former co-chairman of the mainstream PKK-affiliated Kurdish

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[9] 'Belediyecilik Yeryüzünü Kurtarma Hareketidir [Municipalism Is a World Saving Movement],' *Serxwebun*, 2004, 30.

ethno-nationalist party. In a letter he wrote to Hasan Cemal, a liberal Turkish journalist known for his close relations with Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors, Demirtas argues that:

> In 2005-2006, an exciting civil organisation initiative was started among the Kurds in order to realise Ocalan's democratic society organisation model. Wherever the base is strong, neighbourhood and city councils have been established in the name of free citizens' assemblies…. The free citizens' assemblies have attained official association status in many places and continue their activities within the framework of laws…. Meanwhile, in 2008-2009, the organizations known as free citizens' assemblies have restructured themselves as city councils and neighbourhood councils and assemblies are established everywhere consisting of hundreds of people, including from DTP representatives to NGO representatives, women's organizations, businessmen's organizations, journalists, lawyers, engineers, mayors…. All of the city and neighbourhood assemblies supported the DTP in the 2009 local elections, and these assemblies in the election campaigns carried out house-to-house work themselves, and the DTP came out with a great victory in the election.[10]

In addition to these agency-centric remarks by Demirtas, many interviewees from different cities and backgrounds emphasised that while both the structural change in the civil sphere played an important role in this process, the Kurdish ethno-nationalist agency also equally and successfully seized these opportunities and Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilising structures significantly proliferated in Turkey during this period.

A Turkish professor highlighted the importance of the coordination between the associations, civil structures and spatial structures such as the street, neighbourhood and town assemblies referenced by Demirtas:

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[10] Hasan Cemal, 'KCK'dan 6300 Kişi Hapiste! [6300 People Are in Prison in the Context of KCK Case!],' *Milliyet*, February 17, 2012.

The PKK embarked upon the establishment of a front organisation after 1987. Since that time, it has tried to establish a front organisation both horizontally and also vertically. Vertically, you form hierarchic street, village, town and city organisations. Horizontally, you form various organisations for youth, women, peasants, teachers, workers. Later you locate them within each other and intertwine them. Due to the environmental constraints, they could not develop such a detailed front structure until the 2000s, however. With the expansion of associational liberties during the last decade, the PKK has managed to expand its networks largely in the form of legal associations as well as some structures like city and neighbourhood council foresaw by the KCK contract. Particularly, during the last years [this mainly refers to the years of resolution process] these networks expanded among the Kurds like a cobweb.[11]

According to the official numbers shared by the Turkish Ministry of Interior's Department of Associations on its web page, the number of active associations in all of Turkey increased from roughly 70,000 in 2005 to roughly 107,000 in 2015 while the number of people that are members of an association also almost doubled during the same period.[12] The details of the increase in the percentage of associations in the south-eastern and eastern provinces reveal striking results and meaningfully corroborates the qualitative arguments stated above on the effective utilisation of the expanding civil liberties by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. According to open statistics published by the Department of Associations in the Turkish Ministry of Interior, while the numbers of the associations formed in the 13 provinces in eastern and south-eastern part of Turkey grew approximately 177 percent from 2005 to 2015, the number of the associations in the

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[11] Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication, August 19, 2015.
[12] The numbers of the active associations and the numbers of the members in an association are respectively given online in the following two URL addresses belonging to the Department of Associations of the Turkish Ministry of Interior. *Dernekler Dairesi Başkanlığı [Department of Associations]*, Official Web Page, accessed July 4, 2016, https://www.dernekler.gov.tr/tr/AnasayfaLinkler/yillara-gore-faal-dernek.aspx; https://www.dernekler.gov.tr/tr/AnasayfaLinkler/derneklerin-yillara-gore-uye.aspx.

remaining 68 provinces increased by only 46 percent during the same period.[13] Similarly, the number of the people belonging to an association was also much higher in southern and south-eastern Turkey than in the rest of the country, increasing roughly 143 percent in these 13 provinces during the same period.[14] Although there is no concrete evidence that this increase was the result of the utilisation of these milieus by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, when the qualitative data is also taken into account, it is possible to say that the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement had an important role in this disproportionate growth of civil society organisations in the provinces heavily populated by Kurdish-origin residents.

In addition to establishing new legal association networks as well as de facto district councils, the qualitative primary data this research collected in the field show that the democratisation process and declining coercive pressure by the Turkish state also facilitated the appropriation of the existing legal networks ranging from fellow countrymen associations to vocational chambers, syndicates and bars. Many interviewees, including numerous expert interviewees, stated that the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement managed to become highly influential in some left-wing workers' and officials' syndicates, such as the legally registered Education-Syndicate (*Eğitim-Sen*) and Health Labourer's Syndicate during the 2000s.[15]

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[13] *Dernekler Dairesi Başkanliği [Department of Associations of the Turkish Ministry of Interior]*, Official Web Page, accessed July 4, 2016, https://www.dernekler.gov.tr/tr/AnasayfaLinkler/yillara-gore-faal-dernek.aspx.
[14] *Dernekler Dairesi Başkanliği [Department of Associations of the Turkish Ministry of Interior]*, Official Web Page, accessed July 4, 2016, https://www.dernekler.gov.tr/tr/AnasayfaLinkler/derneklerin-yillara-gore-uye.aspx.
[15] Anonymous Respondent 4, Personal Communication, July 3, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 24, Personal Communication, August 1, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 26, Personal Communication, August 3, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication, August 22, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 48, Personal Communication, September 2, 2015.

Figure 7.1: Increases in number of associations as a percentage [16]
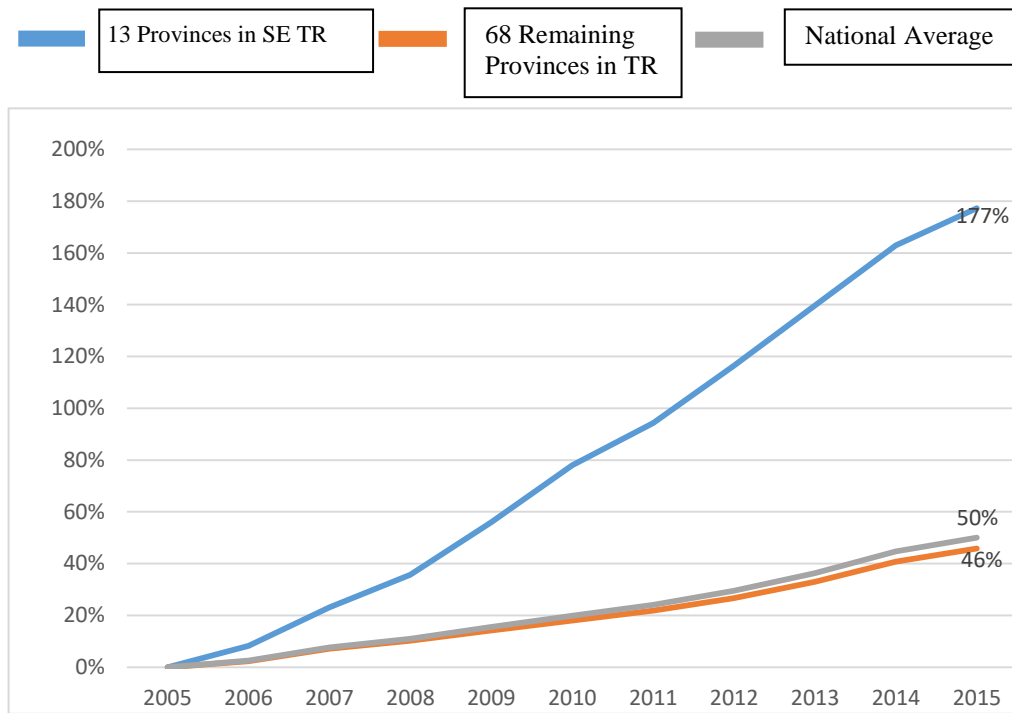
Thus, as a consequence of the expansion of the Turkish POS in terms of civil liberties and its effective utilisation, the networking capacity of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement significantly expanded in Turkey and it managed to organise in throughout the cities, towns and rural areas largely populated by the Kurdish people. This was done in the form of *de facto* spatial assemblies and councils as well as in all functional divisions of society through establishing thematic associations and through appropriating existing legal networks. The field findings of this research show that this paved the way for the overwhelming domination of civil and social life in the Kurdish-populated areas by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilising structures. These mobilising structures significantly increased the daily interaction of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement with all segments of the larger Kurdish society and triggered the spread of Kurdish ethno-

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[16] Developed by the researcher by compiling data from the following web page of Department of Associations of the Turkish Ministry of Interior, https://www.dernekler.gov.tr/tr/AnasayfaLinkler/yillara-gore-faal-dernek.aspx.

nationalist ideas in line with the arguments of the previous empirical studies, as discussed in the previous chapter regarding municipal power and extending social networks.

Field findings show that in contrast to the growing visibility of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement in daily life, the interaction level and the capacity of the Turkish state to influence its citizens of Kurdish origin living in the eastern part of the country began to gradually decrease after the mid-2000s, and minimised particularly after 2012, when both the last phase of the change in the local administration law came into effect, as well as when the resolution process began. As an outcome of this development, many Kurdish people who had not previously been influenced by Kurdish ethno-nationalism began to expose consistent, pervasive and unrivalled Kurdish ethno-nationalist frames in their daily lives. As the excerpts taken from fieldwork and provided below exemplify, this situation significantly increased the resonance of Kurdish ethno-nationalist framing and led to the expansion of ethno-nationalism among greater segments of the Kurdish population in Turkey.

A Kurdish-origin businessman originally from Sanliurfa but interviewed in Adana made the following statement on the impact of the increasing penetration of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement on Kurdish society:

> They are now everywhere. By everywhere I do not only mean the presence of the established committees in many neighbourhoods and villages, but during the recent years they have been in every occurrence and event related to people's lives in the region through these organisations. If there is a problem such as a small fight, financial debts etc. between the neighbours in a village or in a neighbourhood, these committees intervene and try to solve the issue before one of the sides resorts to formal state procedures. Then what happens? Their importance in people's lives has increased because they have begun to play

an important role in social life. This increasing dialogue with society has naturally impacted people's opinions and increasingly more people have begun to support them.[17]

A Turkish academic who has published numerous works on the PKK and Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey not only explained the impact of the increasing interaction between the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and Kurdish society at large but also noted the impact of the inverse relationship – the declining contact of the Turkish state with its own citizens:

> While the organisation [the PKK] increases its legitimacy among the people through these networks that expanded like a cobweb, as the state your contact with them decreases and you begin to be isolated from your citizens. You lose your capability to manage people's perceptions. Consequently while once you were the legal authority of the territory, people begin to see you as the African and Indian people saw their colonial power, and they begin to not care about what you say, and remarks, ideas, speeches by your political leaders begin to fall on deaf ears. This has begun to happen in the region over recent years.[18]

The previous chapter has already argued that contact between the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and the larger Kurdish population significantly expanded through the cultural centres, women's centres, nursery schools and other social public centres run by the municipalities, as well as general municipal services and resources provided and controlled by the Kurdish nationalist municipalities. In line with these arguments, numerous interviewees suggested that the domination of civil and social spaces by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and its impact on further ethno-nationalist mobilisation should be analysed in relation to the decentralisation and consequent shift of soft power from the Turkish state towards the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement after

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[17] Anonymous Respondent 1, Personal Communication, July 1, 2015.
[18] Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication.

the mid-2000s, as well as Ankara's weakened control of Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors after the start of the resolution process. Asked about the impact of the growing number of associations and committees established in the region, the following response by a former AK Party mayor of a district in a south-eastern province provides an eloquent example representative of similar comments raised by other interviewees:

> If we try to understand the impact of these sites *per se*, it is misleading. The crucial municipal power that touches upon the lives of people is already in their hands. They also have many municipal institutions like cultural centres and women's centres. With the resolution process, the security forces remained inactive but the PKK increased its impact on the countryside, as well. We have already talked about these. In addition to all these, [I can] now just add that they are also much better organised both in civil society and maybe more importantly in villages and in the neighbourhoods, and thus in social life. When Erdogan says something on TV about the resolution process or Kurdish rights, except for a few weak voices, there are not many people here who repeat the same thing and try to personally deliver his messages to people. People only listen to these ideas from him on media. But when Demirtas says something, many people repeat and advocate the same thing in cafes, in streets, in markets, and in neighbourhoods, from the cities to the smallest villages, and influence people with these ideas.[19]

In addition to these macro-level explanations about the relationship between the expanding ethno-nationalist mobilising networks and frame resonance, anecdotal evidence collected by this study regarding individual experiences also corroborates the arguments of the existing literature on the relational aspect of ideological diffusion. These stories reveal that people who did not previously have ethno-nationalist tendencies were influenced by Kurdish ethno-nationalism through social interactions within these contexts. It should be

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[19] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication, July 21, 2015.

noted that in speaking with Kurdish nationalist interviewees, some appeared hesitant to candidly share factual details such the role of these associations and the names of networks that played a part in ethno-nationalist mobilisation in Kurdish society due to the researcher's personal circumstances as a government official. Nevertheless, numerous other interviewees freely shared their own observations from witnessing cases of the mobilisation of hitherto bystanders through these milieus.

A Zaza-origin interviewee from Diyarbakir province shared his own observation on a few of his neighbours as follows:

> There was a son of one of our neighbours, who were ordinary, conservative people. Several years ago this boy started to go to a cultural centre called Tigris Euphrates Art Centre for a music course. Two of his friends from our street also joined him. After several months, I noticed this boy began to talk differently, and he began to express similar ideas to what was stated by the PKK and HDP. Furthermore, this boy influenced his family and they also began to support the HDP in the election. I have heard many similar stories from my friends in different parts of Diyarbakir about the impact of these types of places.[20]

Thus, all these findings show that the significant expansion of the legal Kurdish nationalist mobilising structures and consequent increasing domination of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in the social life of the Kurdish people triggered the relational dynamics of the diffusion, created a social impact on the hitherto bystanders, increased the ethno-nationalist frame resonance, and facilitated ethno-nationalist mobilisation among Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin. Yet, the relationship between the expansion of civil liberties, democratisation and trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey was not limited to

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[20] Anonymous Respondent 34, Personal Communication, August 14, 2015.

these factors alone. The following section will discuss the other dimensions of this relationship.

7.3. Shifting scale, increasing expectation and declining satisfaction

Like the expansion of civil liberties on the diffusion of the ethno-nationalist ideas, the expansion of freedom of expression and increasingly open environment for public discourse during the 2000s and its effective utilisation by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement also paved the way for an upward scale shift in how Kurdish ethno-nationalism was defined and understood by the Kurdish-origin citizens in Turkey, as well as by Turkish economic and political elites. The term of 'scale shift' in SMT scholarship refers to either upward or downward change in key dimensions of contention. These are the coordination of the contention either on a more localised or higher level, broadening or shrinking of the claims of the challengers, and involvement of a wider range of actors and institutions.[21] Thus, scale shift is different from the mere widening of the scope of contention from one site to another.[22] Moreover, the findings of this research show that despite the key role of the agency in the process of scale shift, structural factors meaningfully impact the prospects for scale shift as well.

As seen in Chapter 3, during the 1990s the prevailing discourse in Turkish society analysed problems through state-centric terrorism lenses, and the closed nature of the POS did not enable the discussion of Kurdish ethno-nationalism from other perspectives.

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[21] McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, 331–39; Tarrow, 'Dynamics of Diffusion: Mechanisms, Institutions, and Scale Shift,' 214–18; Rebecca Kolins Givan, Kenneth M. Roberts, and Sarah A. Soule, 'Introduction: The Dimensions of Diffusion,' in *The Diffusion of Social Movements: Actors, Mechanisms, and Political Effects*, ed. Rebecca Kolins Givan, Kenneth M. Roberts, and Sarah A. Soule (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 20.
[22] Tarrow, 'Dynamics of Diffusion: Mechanisms, Institutions, and Scale Shift,' 214–215.

Consequently, members of the legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties and other legal actors were not able to clearly express Kurdish ethno-nationalist ideas in legal settings during this period. Analysis of party programmes of the early Kurdish nationalist parties in the 1990s, such as by the People's Labour Party (*Halkın Emek Partisi*, HEP) in 1990 and the People's Democracy Party (*Halkın Demokrasi Partisi*, HADEP) in 1994, including speeches by leading members of these short-lived political parties, reveals that the political claims these parties articulated in the legal contexts during this period were either limited to cultural rights for Kurds and/or included vague references to general principals such as social equality, the need of an environment of free debate, and freedom of expression on the Kurdish issue in the context of general democratic liberties.[23]

The party programme of the first legal Kurdish nationalist party, the HEP, which operated from its establishment in 1990 until the Turkish Constitutional Court closed it in 1993, argues that ' [I]n order to solve the Kurdish Question, all legal, administrative and social barriers that prevent the free discussion of this problem should be removed'. Additionally, the most assertive part of this document regarding the party's stance on the situation of the Kurds in Turkey argues that the '[P]arty aims to resolve the Kurdish problem within Turkey's integrity by democratic and peaceful means in accordance with the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European Convention on Human Rights and the Helsinki Final Act.'[24]

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[23] 'Halkın Emek Partisi: Program [People's Labour Party: Program],' 1990, 18–19, accessed July 12, 2016, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/eyayin/gazeteler/web/kutuphanede%20bulunan%20dijital%20kaynaklar/kitaplar/si yasi%20parti%20yayinlari/199004408%20hep%20programi%201990/199004408%20hep%20programi%20 1990.pdf; 'Halkın Demokrasi Partisi: Program [People's Democracy Party: Program],' 1994, 8, accessed July 12, 2016, https://acikerisim.tbmm.gov.tr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11543/745/199600970.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y ; 'Çapraz Ateş Programı: Alparslan Türkeş, Orhan Doğan [Cross Fire Program: Alparslan Türkeş Orhan Doğan],' YouTube Video, 51:19, posted by Serdal Kirksekiz, March 30, 2015, accessed July 12, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKQHKMzoi1o.

[24] 'Halkın Emek Partisi: Program [People's Labour Party: Program],' 18–19.

Although the democratisation process brought important steps in terms of fundamental cultural rights for all ethnic groups in Turkey and increased the freedom of expression in the country, as shown in Chapter 6, the tone and content of the articulated Kurdish ethno-nationalist political claims also amplified. With the expansion of free debate in the 2000s, particularly after the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement gained parliamentary representation, not only the outlawed PKK but also the legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors – including MPs, mayors and other party members – began to be able to express their ethno-nationalist ideas in official settings. The following remark by a former Turkish official, who served for many years in south-eastern Turkey, eloquently exemplifies common opinions gathered in the field on this subject: 'When the Turkish state began to address the issue in the context of an international minority rights perspective and [adoption and implementation of] European Union acquis, they [Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors] used the liberties to transform the issue from the Kurdish problem, which could be solved within the framework of international minority rights, to a Kurdistan problem, which they presented as something that can be only solved through [recognising] the existence of two equal nations and sharing the sovereignty between these two nations.'[25]

Aside from articulating these frames on the macro-level in the political sphere, rising ethno-nationalist claims reached almost every segment of the Kurdish population in Turkey thanks to the expanding opportunity structures in formal political channels as well as associated milieus. As seen in the previous section, this came about through effective brokerage by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist agency to the diffuse these frames. Furthermore, as several interviewees also noted,[26] work on this issue by NGOs, academic

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[25] Anonymous Respondent 50, Personal Communication, September 4, 2015.
[26] Anonymous Respondent 11, Personal Communication, July 20, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 19, Personal Communication, July 26, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 26, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication;

and intellectual circles burgeoned during the first decade of the new millennium. These included activities such as symposiums, workshops, public research, and working papers on the country's fundamental problems, particularly on the accommodation of the Kurdish issue which had been previously considered taboo.[27] Moreover, as consecutive EU enlargement reports on Turkey also note, intense debates took place in the Turkish media on what is generally referred to as the 'Kurdish issue'. Politicians, intellectuals, academics, journalists from many different backgrounds and perspectives, as well as Kurdish ethno-nationalist politicians, were able to express their opinions and address the public through the media.[28] In this environment, not only Kurdish nationalists and other liberal and leftist opposition circles, but government members and even some traditional Turkish elites began to acknowledge the mistakes of past policies and practices by the Turkish government, such as the denial of the Kurds.[29] In 2005 Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish prime minister at the time who later became the country's president, also stated that there was a Kurdish problem in Turkey, a problem which he said affected all Turkish citizens, not just those of Kurdish origin.[30]

Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication, August 27, 2015.

[27] The following sources provides examples of these burgeoning activities: Orhan Miroğlu, 'Kürt Sorununa İslami Çözüm Çalıştayı [Islamic Solution Workshop on the Kurdish Problem],' *Star*, December 3, 2015; 'Hakkari'de Kürt sorunu konferansı [Kurdish problem conference in Hakkari],' Hakkari Haber TV, November 22, 2012, http://www.hakkarihabertv.com/hakkaride-kurt-sorunu-konferansi-11317h.htm; 'Kürt Sorunu: 'Demokratik Özerklik': Savaştan Çıkış İçin Bir Plan [Kurdish Problem: 'Democratic Autonomy': A Plan to End the War,' Bianet, December 20, 2010, http://www.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/126709-demokratik-ozerklik-savastan-cikis-icin-bir-plan.

[28] 'Turkey 2009 Progress Report,' Commission Staff Working Document (Brussels: European Commission, October 14, 2009), 18, 30; 'Turkey 2011 Progress Report,' Commission Staff Working Paper (Brussels: European Commission, December 10, 2011), 25; 'Turkey 2014 Progress Report,' 700 (Brussels: European Commission, August 10, 2014), 17, b.

[29] 'Kürtlerin Anayasal Haklarını Vereceğiz [We Will Legislate the Constitutional Rights of the Kurds],' *Milliyet*, accessed October 21, 2016, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/-kurtlerin-anayasal-haklarini-verecegiz--siyaset-1478816/; 'Diyarbakır'ın Nabzı Bu Toplantıda Attı [The Pulse of Diyarbakir Was on That Meeting],' *Milliyet*, accessed October 21, 2016, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/diyarbakir-in-nabzi-bu-toplantida-atti-gundem-1693531/; Haber7, 'Başbuğ: Yapılan yanlışlar PKK'yı güçlendirdi [Başbuğ: Mistakes we did strengthen the PKK],' Haber7, accessed October 21, 2016, http://www.haber7.com/guncel/haber/1271005-basbug-yapilan-yanlislar-pkkyi-guclendirdi.

[30] Ibrahim Kalin, 'The Kurdish Question: Erdogan's 2+1 Strategy,' Al Jazeera.com, accessed October 22, 2016, https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/04/20134712530554912.html.

By no means did the conversation and activities surrounding the issue have a solely Kurdish ethno-nationalist tone or goals; there was also an impetus to tackle the issue from a broader democracy and human rights perspective. Yet many interviewees, both expert and non-expert, agreed that towards the late 2000s, critical perspectives on how to define and address Kurdish ethno-nationalism in the Turkish media and intellectual circles began to outweigh both the traditional approach of Turkish elites to the Kurdish case and also the level of the realised reforms.[31] As a former Turkish official argued, 'with the change in the common approach to the issue, it became quite difficult to defend the classical Turkish approach day by day … [and] what had been seen earlier in the mainstream perspective as a mere matter of terrorism stemming from the economic backwardness in the region, began to be mainly seen as a political problem, which then primarily necessitates a political solution.'[32]

The qualitative findings of this research show that this shifting scale in how Kurdish ethno-nationalism is defined and understood resulted in a decline in the level of satisfaction of the Kurdish-origin citizens with the reform process and diminished the positive impact of the earlier reforms during the first half of the 2000s, while increasing their expectations further expansion of the output dimension of the POS. Despite having diverging vantage points, many interviewees from different ethnic groups and worldviews corroborated the realisation the scale shift, as well as its impact on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

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[31] Anonymous Respondent 11, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 17, Personal Communication, July 24, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 19, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 23, Personal Communication, July 30, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 26, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 31, Personal Communication, August 10, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication.
[32] Anonymous Respondent 50, Personal Communication.

A university graduate, businessman and AK Party supporter of Kurdish origin from Mardin province articulated the relationship between the expanding free debate environment and the scale shift and how this scale shift impacted the Kurds' perception of the ongoing reform process:

> The initial steps at the beginning of the 2000s came after a long repressive period [during the 1980s and 1990s]. Ocalan had just been captured and many people in the region, including those who were believed to support the PKK, seemed to admit their defeat…. When Kurdish language courses and TV broadcasting [in Kurdish] were legalised at this time, these created an unbelievable satisfaction among people here, and as I said earlier, these really made the AK Party very popular among the Kurds. However… the ongoing reforms towards the late 2000s began to not have the same positive impact as the initial steps did. The organisation skilfully used the opening space to increase the level of their claims and the level of public debate began to exceed the level of the carried-out legal changes. In this process, steps such as language courses and Kurdish TVs began to fall behind these discussions and people began to criticise these steps, [steps] that they could not have even imagined during the 1990s and saw as revolutionary during the early 2000s, as inadequate after these developments.[33]

The following quote is from the interview with a former Turkish official who served many years in south-eastern Turkey. It helps explain why the scale shift began to decrease the satisfaction level of Kurdish-origin citizens in the second half of the 2000s and triggered Kurdish ethno-nationalism rather than containing it:

> The Turkish political elites acknowledged the existence of the Kurdish problem in the country and introduced some legal changes to address the issue… However, they did not clearly define what the problem was and did not propose a well-defined roadmap for the

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[33] Anonymous Respondent 19, Personal Communication.

solution… [and] separatist Kurdish actors used this vagueness very well to advance their political demands in accordance with gradual liberalisation of the political environment. Despite the ongoing reforms, the existence of a Kurdish problem remained adamant both for the supporters PKK/HDP bloc and also for liberal and leftist Turkish circles. Today, when we look at the mainstream threshold for the accommodation of the problem in these circles, even if it is not the demand of the PKK and its affiliates for autonomy, there is at least an expectation for a new constitution that would bring serious changes to the notion of citizenship in Turkey, either through adding the Kurds to the constitution as the second main founding ethnic group of Turkey or strip the constitution from any ethnic definition…. It is then not surprising that an important portion of the Kurds does not get content with the level of the legal steps taken so far…. Moreover, taking the new steps in accordance with the currently articulated demands of the Kurdish movement does not guarantee that you will contain the problem. Because the answers to the questions of what the problem is and what solves it are not static.[34]

A university graduate and tribal leader who is a former mayor, and whose observations on the intertwined nature of the various aspects of the POS were cited earlier in this chapter, continued his remarks as follows:

When their propaganda diffused among the people through all these channels [municipal facilities, de facto councils, associational networks and rural squads of the PKK], the arguments such as those 'these areas are…Kurdistan, and Kurds are a big nation' became much more effective on people in the region and even those ordinary Kurds that would have previously supported the AK Party and praised Erdogan for his stance on the Kurdish problem as well as for the reforms began to say that these were not granted by the government but were natural rights of the Kurds and a consequence of the struggle.

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[34] Anonymous Respondent 50, Personal Communication.

Consequently, the numbers of people repeating similar opinions and thus supporting them began to increase.[35]

The following quote from a Kurdish-origin interviewee that seemed to have a clear Kurdish-nationalist political indentity corroborates the previous comment from a different perspective. Although the interviewee brings a rather agency-based explanation, his argument still indirectly sheds light on the relationship between the shifting scale of Kurdish ethno-nationalism and changing perceptions on what was considered as just and sufficient to accommodate it:

> **Interviewee**: These rights might have been seen as progressive and might have even solved the problem twenty years ago. However, today they cannot constitute a response to the demands of the Kurdish people taken into account the sociological level the Kurds have reached.
>
> **Researcher**: What do you exactly mean by the sociological level the Kurds have reached?
>
> **Interviewee**: It has different dimensions. But mainly, I mean the situations of the Kurds in Iraq and Syria, the organisational capacity they have, the resources they command, the international support such as from America [USA] and the general socio-political level the Kurds have attained today in the region as a nation. Today the problem is much beyond language courses or similar superficial openings. These were on the agenda 20 years ago and were important gains under the conditions of that time. However, Kurds have already passed that level. When we compare with these developments, steps taken so far remain inadequate.[36]

Towards the end of the resolution process in the spring of 2015, Turkish President Erdogan said that when he founded the AK Party in the early 2000s and began to pay visits

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[35] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication.
[36] Anonymous Respondent 21, Personal Communication, July 28, 2015.

to the south-eastern provinces of Turkey, people would ask him only to abolish the emergency rule that had been in force in the region since 1978. '[W]hen we asked them what they want, citizens were telling us, "Abolish the emergency rule, that will be enough." We abolished it. Did it become enough my brothers? What did we talk about after that? They said television. We started 24-hour broadcasting. [They said] propaganda in their mother tongue. We allowed it as well. Institutions were founded in universities…. What do they still want when everything is done?'[37]

Thus he meant that the AK Party government did much more than the initial demands of Kurdish-origin people but some were still arguing the existence of a 'Kurdish question' and waiting for more legal rights in this direction. Although their discourse in legal milieus remained limited until the mid-2000s, Kurdish ethno-nationalist demands were never limited to merely lifting the emergency rule. Thus, it is highly likely that people who would have said in the early 2000s that abolishing the emergency rule would be sufficient were largely ordinary Kurdish people, not the Kurdish ethno-nationalists. Yet, this quote still helps to illuminate the dynamic, evolving nature of the Kurdish nationalist political demands as well as their increasing resonance among the larger segments of the Kurdish people in relation to the changing POS and its effective utilisation by the Kurdish ethno- nationalist movement.

The upward shifting scale of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement was neither limited to the rise of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist political claims nor to the extent these demands were understood. Furthermore, the scale shift was not only the consequence of

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[37] 'Erdoğan: 'Beştepe'nin adresini bilmeyenlerle vakit geçirecek zamanımız yok' [Erdoğan: We do not have time to spend with those who do not know the road to Beştepe (Beştepe is the name of the neighbourhood where the new presidential palace is located)'],' *Hürriyet*, accessed October 27, 2016, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/erdogan-bestepe-nin-adresini-bilmeyenlerle-vakit-gecirecek-zamanimiz-yok-29851530.

the expansion of civil liberties that this chapter focuses on in particular. The changes in other parameters of the Turkish POS such as the opening up of legal political channels and decentralisation provided new legal actors and sites that could be used to coordinate the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement on a much higher level. Moreover, as many interviewees also agreed, regional developments that have been excluded from the foci of this research, such as the situation of Kurds in Syria and Iraq, highlighted the trans-border dimension of the Kurdish nationalism and helped further its internationalisation. Beyond mere horizontal enlargement, all these developments denoted the existence of an upward trend in all relevant facets of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. In this context, different facets of the domestic changes in the Turkish POS were highly intertwined, thus making it impossible to clearly delineate between their respective roles in the process of scale shift. Yet, as seen above, as a specific component of this process, the increasing freedom of expression and free debate environment, and its effective utilisation by Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors significantly scaled up how Kurdish ethno-nationalism was defined and understood. Moreover, it greatly influenced the means of accommodation that were proposed and accepted as just. Catalysed by the aforementioned changing parameters of the Turkish POS, this process influenced how previously neutral and unaffiliated Kurdish people perceived the evolving Kurdish nationalist political demands, decreased their level of satisfaction with the ongoing reforms and, overall, facilitated Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation rather than containing it.

7.4. The interplay between structure and culture

Another highly significant finding of this research regards the close relationship between the increasing civil and cultural liberties and the growing role of cultural myths, ethno-symbols, traditions and emotions in the expansion of the ethno-nationalism among

Turkey's citizens of Kurdish origin after the 2000s. As discussed in Chapter 2, with the revival of cultural approaches used in explaining collective action after the 1980s, the constructed nature of social reality and the strategic role of movement entrepreneurs in this process of construction has become an important dimension of social movement research.[38] Moreover, emotion, which had been associated with irrationality in the earlier studies, also rose to be considered an important dimension of cultural approaches on collective action.[39] These new studies discredited the previously supposed duality between emotion and rationality and revealed that 'feeling and thinking are parallel'[40] and 'feeling is one of many ways that humans gain knowledge and understanding… emotions are a component of all interpretative processes'.[41]

As to the literature on nationalism studies, alongside the strong emphasis of ethno-symbolist and primordialist scholars on the role of the emotional aspect of nationalism and of myths, symbols, and cultural values,[42] modernist scholars have also highlighted the importance of emotion in the process of spreading nationalism among society. Although

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[38] David A. Snow et al., 'Frame Alignment Process, Micromobilisation, and Movement Participation,' in *Social and Political Movements*, ed. Cyrus Ernesto Zirakzadeh, Four-Volume Set edition, vol. 2 (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011), 55–85; Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, 'Ideology, Frame Resonance, and Participant Mobilization,' *International Social Movement Research* 1, no. 1 (1988): 197–212; Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, 'Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,' *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 611–39; David Snow, Anna E. Tan, and Peter B. Owens, 'Social Movements, Framing Processes, and Cultural Revitalization and Fabrication,' *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 18 (September 1, 2013): 225–42.

[39] James M. Jasper, 'The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and around Social Movements,' *Sociological Forum* 13, no. 3 (September 1998): 397–424; Jeff Goodwin, James M. Jasper, and Francesca Polletta, eds., *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*, 1st edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Ron Aminzade and Doug McAdam, 'Emotions And Contentious Politics,' *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 7, no. 2 (June 2002): 107–9; Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, eds., *Rethinking Social Movements: Structure, Meaning, and Emotion* (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003); James M. Jasper, *The Emotions of Protest*, 1st edition (Chicago ; London: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

[40] James M. Jasper, 'Emotions and Social Movements: Twenty Years of Theory and Research,' *Annual Review of Sociology* 37, no. 1 (July 8, 2011): 286.

[41] Deborah B. Gould, 'Passionate Political Processes: Bringing Emotions Back into the Study of Social Movements,' in *Rethinking Social Movements: Structure, Meaning, and Emotion*, ed. Jeff Goodwin (Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 162.

[42] Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1991); Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 1999); Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1994).

they take a different approach than the primordialists, they elaborately assert that cultural and emotional dimensions are constructed, not given.[43]

In addition to such arguments in the existing literature on the role of emotion, culture and myths in the expansion of nationalism, the field findings of this research reveal the critical existence of a structural dimension. It was observed that the capacity of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement to appropriate existing cultural traditions and ethno-symbols and create new ones significantly increased with the opening of the Turkish POS in the 2000s, and particularly after the start of the resolution process in 2013. This relatively free usage of ethnic symbols, myths and cultural values in the public life triggered the emotional aspect of nationalism, facilitated the imagination of Kurdishness as a separate national identity, and contributed to the expansion of ethno-nationalism among Turkey's Kurdish-origin citizens.

In this context, several types of cultural traditions and events played a particularly key role in the appropriation of ethno-symbols and in triggering nationalist sentiment. The first of these regards the funeral and burial process. In the local tradition, the family of the deceased receives visits by relatives and friends wishing to express their condolences during a period ranging from three days to one week, according to the social position of the family. In eastern and south-eastern Turkey, not unlike the rest of the country, attending funerals of relatives, friends, and even acquaintances are of great social importance. Funerals are a social event in which sorrow is experienced most concretely, and attendance

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[43] Jack David Eller and Reed M. Coughlan, 'The Poverty of Primordialism: The Demystification of Ethnic Attachments,' *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 16, no. 2 (1993): 183–202; Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Wiley-Blackwell, 1983); Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

is considered as a social necessity and a strong behavioural symbol of solidarity.[44] Consequently, funerals and condolence houses receive large numbers of visitors.

Before the 2000s, due to the high level of governmental coercion, funerals and associated condolence rituals for PKK members who died in skirmishes with Turkish security forces used to be performed in a highly restricted way with the attendance limited to close family members and relatives. Emblems, colours and other symbols of the PKK and of those that associated with Kurdish ethno-nationalism could not be extensively used in these funerals.[45] After the mid-2000s this situation also changed, and Turkish officials gradually began to tolerate the use of pennants and colours associated with the PKK and Kurdish ethno-nationalism during funerals, protests and other social events. This shift in attitude by Turkish officials was not totally smooth. Some officials were still keen on banning these symbols and emblems.[46] Yet, in line with the aforementioned general change in the country, the tolerant approach won influential media and intellectual support and was able to expand.[47] In particular, the decline in coercion by the Turkish state during the resolution process from early 2013 until mid-2015 provided an unprecedented virtual opportunity for Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors to use of PKK militants' funerals for the diffusion of Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

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[44] Anonymous Respondent 21, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 24, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication, August 2, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication, August 6, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication.
[45] Anonymous Respondent 24, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication.
[46] 'Polis Müdürü, AB Valisine Uyamadı [Police Director could not align with the EU Governor [This definition of 'EU Governor' was used by the Turkish media for the governor of the time of south-eastern city of Diyarbakir who ordered police to tolerate these emblems, colours etc. that are associated with Kurdish ethno-nationalism]],' *Milliyet*, accessed November 3, 2016, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/polis-muduru--ab--valisine-uyamadi/guncel/haberdetayarsiv/25.11.2004/250607/default.htm.
[47] 'Efkan Ala için 2007'de ne yazılmıştı? [What was written about Efkan Ala in 2007?] [Efkan Ala served as the governor of Diyarbakir from 2004 to 2007, and due to this liberal stance on various issues, he was referred to as the EU governor by liberal and pro-government media at the time],' *Radikal*, December 26, 2013.

Although there were not many skirmishes between the Turkish security forces and the PKK militants during this resolution process, and few PKK militants died in Turkey during these years, hundreds of Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin died fighting in the ranks of the YPG, in the clashes with ISIS and other militant groups in northern Syria from 2011 to mid-2015, and their corpses were usually repatriated to Turkey and buried in their hometowns.[48] Primary qualitative information gathered in the field during this study suggests that the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement managed to use the virtual liberties stemming from the resolution process very successfully and organised highly coordinated funeral and condolence ceremonies for its (YPG) militants killed in battle. These funerals and condolence houses and tents became crucial social spaces where hitherto unengaged Kurdish-origin people began to feel sympathy for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement.

As an eloquent example of remarks echoed by many interviewees on this topic, the following quote by a Zaza-origin interviewee who is a tradesman in Diyarbakir, explains the role of the funeral procession and burial ceremony as follows:

> The coffin is covered with PKK pennants. There is a bunch of flowers at the front side of the coffin consisting of yellow, red and green flowers, and the picture of the dead PKK member in uniform. This coffin is taken to the cemetery mainly through a long walk where pictures of Ocalan, PKK flags and emblems are carried. Lots of pro-PKK, pro-Kurdistan and anti-AKP [the ruling AK Party] slogans accompany this walk. When the processional

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[48] There is no reliable source on the number of YPG militants with Turkish citizenship who died in Syria and were brought to Turkey to be buried. Some interviewees, including experts, approximated these numbers as between 500 and 700s. As the following first source quotes from the PYD's own press release, 359 Turkish citizens died in the YPG ranks from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2015. Based on a Turkish intelligence report [yet there is no official confirmation of such a report] both of the following sources give 173 as the number of Turkish citizen YPG members who died during battle between ISIS and the YPG in the battle for Kobany and were brought to Turkey for burial. Fevzi Kızılkoyun, 'Türkiye'den YPG'ye 8 bin 500 militan [8500 militants to YPG from Turkey],' *Hürriyet*, June 25, 2015; 'PYD-YPG 2013-2015 Arasında Ne Kadar Kayıp Verdi? [How Many Fighters Have the PYD-YPG Lost Between 2013-2015],' Timeturk.com, accessed January 6, 2018, https://www.timeturk.com/pyd-ypg-2013-2015-arasinda-ne-kadar-kayip-verdi/haber-155528.

arrives at the cemetery, after the corpse is buried and prayers are performed, like the national anthem in a martyred soldier's funeral, they play the organisation's anthem and sing it in a tribute position. Next, party representatives and the parents give speeches. Both of these speeches seem to me as very well-planned texts and include almost the same or highly similar remarks from the funerals of other PKK members.[49]

On the impact of the funeral procession and burial ritual, a Kurdish interviewee from Mardin, who largely expressed Kurdish ethno-nationalist opinions, said that after the burial, at the moment when the PKK march plays, 'you transform to another world. A world of full emotion. You want to sacrifice yourself as well.'[50]

Another Kurdish-origin interviewee, a businessman in Istanbul originally from a southeastern province, shared his experience of how these funerals not only affect the unaffiliated bystanders but also can increase the determination and commitment level of ordinary supporters. Based on his experience at a YPG militant's funeral that took place in Istanbul, he said, '[The funeral] is a highly emotional and intense time. You see the mother, father and sister crying. Then, you say this boy should not have died for no reason. You begin to think that your vote for the political party is nothing compared to the sacrifice by these people. You come to think that you should increase your contribution. Your determination also increases when you witness these moments.'[51]

In terms of the expansion of ethno-nationalism among Kurdish-origin citizens in Turkey, even a more important part of the funeral tradition is the condolence house visit, where people spend more time and find the opportunity to talk to each other rather than simply performing a ritual. Many relatives, friends, and neighbours of the family of the

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[49] Anonymous Respondent 31, Personal Communication.
[50] Anonymous Respondent 15, Personal Communication, July 23, 2015.
[51] Anonymous Respondent 44, Personal Communication. August 25, 2015.

dead person, including of those that could not or did not attend the procession and graveside ceremony, visit the condolence house, which is on many occasions a tent erected near the house of the deceased's family. Excluding the expert interviewees, the vast majority of Kurdish, Arabic and even Turkish-origin people from the south-eastern region interviewed for the fieldwork told the researcher they visited a condolence house of a PKK/YPG militant at least once, if not several times. Among these interviewees were chief village guards, who still advocate highly pro-state opinions, including conservative Arab-origin citizens and pious Kurdish interviewees that support the AK Party. Almost all of them said similar things about the role of this condolence house tradition.

A Kurdish-origin interviewee who is a village guard explained his reasoning for going to some condolence houses for YPG/PKK members as follows: 'We have a custom here that is real…. No matter who he is, if I have a condolence house, they will come to mine and I will go to theirs. This is our culture. Nobody can deny the importance of this. Although I am a village guard, a man of the state, I have been to many of them. Why? His father knows my father. His grandfather knows my grandfather. We are actually going there because of our respect for each other's family and because of our respect our culture.'[52]

A Kurdish-origin interviewee from the Kiziltepe district of Mardin explained the rituals taking place inside the tent in great detail:

> Well, when a funeral comes from Syria, or Sinjar, not the family but the people from the party deal with everything about the funeral process. Condolence tents, tables and chairs all come from the municipality. At the entrance of the tent they put a picture of the organisation member in uniform. They have their own clerics (*melle*). Not the official state

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[52] Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication.

imam but their own *melle* is present inside the tent. *Melles* use religion to influence people. They talk about who should be regarded as a martyr. They blame the government. They say the government oppress the Kurds, and this is against Islam. So if someone like that deceased PKK member fights against this oppression, this a war in the name of Allah, and people who died for this goal are considered martyrs. I heard two months ago with my own ears that in a condolence tent a *melle* said whoever does not support this struggle against oppression should not think himself as Muslim.[53]

The aforementioned Kurdish-origin village guard who said that he had been to the condolences of some PKK members due to his respect for their families also said similar things about the atmosphere inside the condolence tent: 'When the *melle* reads *Fatiha,* he does it for the all the martyrs of Kurdistan. He says all the PKK members, YPG members who died in action are the martyrs in the name of Allah. Every Muslim should support this organisation. The *melle* always discredits the government and Erdogan but praises the PKK and does it through religious discourse.'[54]

Another Kurdish-origin AK Party supporter interviewee, who is a young engineer originally from a south-eastern province but interviewed in Adana, noted another very important cultural value about death and condolence rituals:

You know, in our belief in Islam, we do not say bad things about a departed person and always try to remember him by his good traits. I noticed in the condolence tents that this tradition helps the organisation. When the people talk about a PKK member that passed away, they say he was such a good person. He would not even harm a fly. He was like an angel. He was so respectful to his parents. He would not even say *offf* [a common expression of frustration] to his mother. From this point, they connect the issue to the

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[53] Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication.
[54] Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication.

government and say that the government's oppression, denial of the Kurds forced him to this way. This result is the government's fault etc. Thus, they create an anti-government air in the tent.[55]

A Kurdish-origin interviewee, who had left Turkey before the 1980 coup for Europe and only returned after 20 years, also said similar things. 'It is not only the PKK sympathisers who visit the condolence house of the PKK members', he explained. 'This is a cultural tradition. But when people go there, there is a pro-PKK and anti-state air inside the tent. Conversations are in this direction. When merging with the emotional dimension of death, this impacts the other people as well.'[56]

At the same time the fieldwork for this research was conducted in south-eastern Turkey in the summer of 2015, a two-and-a-half-year-old 'resolution process' collapsed. With rising PKK terrorism, the Turkish state's coercion level on Kurdish ethno-nationalism also significantly increased. Several interviewees stated in the field that the Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors were not able to organise funerals and condolence rituals for the PKK/YPG militants after the collapse of the 'resolution process' at the same level of coordination and with the free usage of the PKK associated symbols due to the change in Ankara's approach.[57] This development also demonstrates how instrumentalisation of existing cultural values for ethno-nationalist mobilisation can only be possible under suitable structural conditions.

Another important cultural factor that played a key role in the trajectory of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation in the 2000s related the burgeoning cultural festivals, music concerts and larger and more-organised Nowruz celebrations. The

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[55] Anonymous Respondent 6, Personal Communication, July 5, 2015.
[56] Anonymous Respondent 21, Personal Communication.
[57] Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 29, Personal Communication, August 7, 2015.

expansion of civil and cultural liberties in the 2000s, and economic and legal resources that the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement commanded due to its municipal power resulted in a significant increase in the number of Kurdish cultural festivals and music concerts. During the 2000s and 2010s, nearly all of the municipalities that were governed by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party began to organise cultural festivals. While these festivals would include various artisan activities such as painting and photography exhibitions, music concerts were the events the most widely attended by locals and the most crucial events for the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism.[58]

In a similar fashion, this environment of expanding liberties also enabled the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement to organise Nowruz celebrations not only in a highly organised way but also much more effectively for the ethno-nationalist goals. As seen in Chapter 3, although the PKK managed to redefine this springtime holiday as the most important myth of the Kurdish nation-building process, due to the closed nature of the POS, celebrations were restricted during the 1990s. In the 2000s, thanks to the resources and organisational capacity of the municipalities in eastern Turkey and organisational capacity of the legal party branches in the western metropolises, the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement became able to celebrate Nowruz in a much more organised fashion.

As many interviewees[59] argued and numerous recordings published on YouTube also demonstrate, with the expansion of liberties in the latter half of the 2000s and particularly

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[58] The following festival and art events are only some examples for these culture and art festivals organised by the Kurdish nationalist-held municipalities: Munzur Festival of Tunceli Municipality, Hasankeyf Culture and Art Festival, Aram Tigran Art Days of Diyarbakir Metropolitan Municipality, Cilo Culture Festival of Hakkari Municipality, Van-Catak Festival.

[59] Anonymous Respondent 7, Personal Communication, July 6, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 11, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 23, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 24, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 29, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 32, Personal Communication, August 11, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 33, Personal Communication, August 12, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication.

during the resolution process period from 2013 to 2015, the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement began to dominate all these cultural events and Nowruz celebrations with PKK symbols, flags, emblems, colours, posters of Ocalan, Kurdish ethno-nationalist songs, pro-PKK marches, and slogans that clearly call on Kurdish-origin citizens to support active, armed insurgency against the Turkish government.[60] The following song lyric exemplifies some of these Kurdish nationalist songs that have been widely performed at these events during the past decade. It belongs to Siwan Perver, a famous Kurdish singer, who has been living in Europe for many years. Entitled 'Who am I?' (*Kin em),* this song has also been sung by many Kurdish singers during the last decade in Turkey at festivals, concerts and wedding ceremonies.[61]

> We are that people!
>
> Yes, we are the dragon!...
>
> You stand like a lion
>
> And raise your head…
>
> We are not bloodsuckers, but peaceful!
>
> We are always great commanders and brave!
>
> Not war

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[60] 'Kemale Amed Bitlis Tatvan Newroz 2008(Kinem) Yeni,' Youtube Video, 5:22, posted by ofkee06, April 3, 2008, accessed August 12, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtdBVWmxhzY; 'Amed Newrozu - Çerxa Şoreşê 2015 [Diyarbakır Nowruz- Cerxa Sorese (The PKK's March) 2015],' YouTube Video, 2:15, posted by Diyar Tube, March 28, 2015, accessed August 12, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rh1AsrsLVDs; 'Can Tv Diyarbakir - Amed Newroz (21.03.2015)', YouTube Video, 4:00:11, posted by Can TV, March 25, 2015, accessed August 12, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2A5pbB3bGqY; 'Diyarbakir Newroz 2014', YouTube Video, 3:43:16, posted by Mire Botan, March 21, 2014, accessed August 12, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUyxmHxGiLc; 'Yüksekova'da Festival Çoşkusu [Festival Thrill in Yuksova],' YouTube Video, 21:29, posted by Yuksekova Haber Portalı, September 9, 2012, accessed March 4, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rlFNQIWH7w; 'Van Çatak Alabalık Festivali [Van Çatak Trout Festival] 25 Mayıs 2015 (Van Ses) Part 2,' YouTube Video, 1:46, posted by Alper Korkut, 30 January 2018, accessed March 3, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FECrcYGfTvA.
[61] 'Kemale Amed Bitlis Tatvan Newroz 2008 (Kinem) Yeni,' Youtube Video, 5:22, posted by ofkee06, April 3, 2008, accessed August 12, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RtdBVWmxhzY; Kemale Amed Kinem, Youtube Video, 2:49, posted by davewacki, March 28, 2008, accessed March 5, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jscjKgm6IA.

We want equality,

We are not running from it…

We call for negotiations, and call brotherhood

But enemy does not want these…

Hey my dad what to do next?

They do not want humanity

Attack and capture them,

Break their bones,

Of that shit,

And get rid of them…

Long live Kurdistan, down with slavery![62]

Since the establishment of MED TV by the PKK in the 1990s, the same or similar ethno-nationalist symbols and pro-PKK anthems had been reaching a significant share of Kurdish people in their homes.[63] Yet, this was not the case in public life until the 2000s. With the opening of the Turkish POS and increasing resources of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, particularly with the municipalities, much beyond the impact of these far-reaching broadcasts, these songs and symbols began to dominate the cultural life of the Kurdish people in Turkey. Many interviewees argued that the domination of cultural events with Kurdish nationalist symbols and songs facilitated the expansion of ethno-nationalist ideas among the ordinary Kurdish people.[64]

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[62] The English translation of this song was acquired from the following URL and slightly edited for language and clarity. 'Kîne Em ?Lyrics and English Translation,' accessed May 1, 2018, https://lyricstranslate.com/en/k%C3%AEne-em-who-are-we.html.

[63] David Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Opportunity, Mobilization and Identity*, 1st edition (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 153–59.

[64] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 23, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 24, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 32, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 33, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 47, Personal Communication, August 30, 2015.

The following remark by a Kurdish-origin, religiously conservative engineer who was interviewed in Adana shows how many ordinary Kurds would turn up to these social events and be influenced by ethno-nationalism:

> There are not many socialising opportunities there. So when a concert or social event takes place, even people who did not vote for them [the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party] go to these events. Because they do have many [other] opportunities to choose from. These are not illegal places; overall what you go to is just a concert. When you go there, in a highly romanticised ambience, you hear songs about the struggle and about Kurdistan. The square is full of balloons with Kurdish colours and also flags. You see that many others accompany the songs. This atmosphere touches your soul, makes you feel that you have an identity and you are part of a nation.[65]

An Arabic-origin musician noted that not only Kurdish nationalist songs but the combination of music and dance also play a central role bolstering the message of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement:

> In addition to the songs, a traditional dance called *halay* that is danced by males and females hand in hand and/or shoulder to shoulder both shows and also increases the feeling of solidarity. Halay is widely performed in the region in all joyful events including festivals, concerts and wedding ceremonies. Performing halay is not a new issue but has a long historical past. However, during the last decade Kurdish nationalist songs, ululations, victory signs that are all considered part of Kurdish identity, also began to be part of these rituals here. When people would dance *halay* with an instrumental song during the 1980s, now they perform halay in the company of let's say a very emotional song that mentions the story of a Kurdish boy that remained between his lover in his village and his love for

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[65] Anonymous Respondent 6, Personal Communication.

freedom, for his country. When I say country with their eyes I mean the Kurdistan of course, and these influence people.[66]

Moreover, in accordance with the theoretical arguments on the close connection between rationality and emotionality, several interviewees[67] argued that the impact of these cultural traditions and ethno-symbols on the expansion of the ethno-nationalism among the hitherto unengaged Kurds did not occur in a vacuum but should be assessed in conjunction with the rational-based developments analysed in the previous chapter.

A former mayor of a district in a south-eastern province, who is also an influential tribal leader, argued: 'I have already explained to you the impact of the municipalities and how it was logical for ordinary people to walk together with the organisation and the HDP in this environment. For many people, the interest was the initial reason to support them [the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement]. However, the exploitation of the emotionality of the death in funerals and similarly the joy of the songs gave a sense of belonging, an emotionally supported Kurdish identity to these people.'[68]

One could argue that rather than people being won over by these songs, ethno-symbols, and Kurdish ethno-nationalist frames as they attended these festivals and concerts, they must have been already influenced by Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Although possibly an important ratio of them might have been already influenced by Kurdish ethno-nationalism, the research collected in the field concludes that regardless of their ideology or political affiliation, all relatives, friends, tribal members and neighbours are culturally obligated to attend to the funerals and most of them do so. Moreover, regarding the

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[66] Anonymous Respondent 24, Personal Communication.
[67] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 23, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication.
[68] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication.

festivals, concerts and other cultural events, as these were legally permitted events and there was neither a risk for the attendees nor many alternative cultural events, many non-nationalist Kurds likely turned up to these events as well. Therefore, as many interviewees agree, not everyone in attendance at these events would be considered to be supporters of the PKK or Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, thus meaning that many bystanders were primarily exposed to Kurdish ethno-nationalist frames and symbols at these times. Moreover, as also stated in the previous chapter, those who support the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, do not have always have the same commitment level, and although precisely measuring the impact of these cultural and emotional dimensions of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist appeal is not easy, the field findings strongly suggest that these cultural settings helped to both trigger the nationalist emotion in the hitherto bystanders and also increase the commitment level and already-emerged nationalist identities of those who had previously been influenced by these ideas.

7.5. Conclusion

This chapter has analysed how the expansion of civil and cultural liberties as the input side of the POS impacted the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey during the focused time period. This analysis has firstly revealed that the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement successfully exploited the increasing civil liberties in order to expand ethno-nationalist mobilising structures in the form of legal civil society organisations as well as de facto city and neighbourhood councils. They also appropriated some of the existing civil society organisations. As a consequence of these developments, their level of penetration and networking capacity within the larger Kurdish society in Turkey grew significantly. This led to a clear domination of the civil space in the Kurdish-populated

parts of Turkey by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist networks, particularly towards the late 2000s. In the absence of any effective rival network system, the ubiquitous Kurdish nationalist mobilising structures triggered the relational dynamics of the diffusion, increased the ethno-nationalist frame success, and helped to expand ethno-nationalist mobilisation among the Kurdish-origin citizens in Turkey.

In addition to these effects, the expansion of civil liberties, broader democratisation processes and their effective utilisation by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist agency resulted in a scale shift in the mainstream perspective in Turkey and also among the country's Kurdish citizens on how to understand and consequently tackle the issues surrounding Kurdish ethno-nationalism. This scale shift decreased the satisfaction level with the realised reform process, increased the expectations for further gains and helped further the Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation, rather than containing it.

As a final important impact, the findings of this research suggest that the expansion of civil and cultural liberties both provided a suitable opportunity structure that enabled the appropriation of existing cultural traditions such as funerals for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation as well as led to the proliferation of Kurdish cultural events, festivals and concerts. Particularly after the second half of the 2000s, the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement managed to dominate these cultural milieus with PKK symbols, emblems, colours, posters of Ocalan, Kurdish ethno-nationalist songs, pro-PKK marches, and slogans that significantly triggered the emotional dimension of the nationalist appeal, further helping the expansion of ethno-nationalism among the Kurdish people.

CHAPTER 8

KURDISH ETHNO-NATIONALISM UNDER CHANGING LEVELS OF STATE COERCION

8.1. Introduction

The previous chapters have revealed that although in terms of policy outputs they did not meet the ideological and organisational demands of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism, the opening up of formal political channels and the expansion of civil and cultural liberties, as well as the decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system, provided highly suitable POS inputs for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. The Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement recognised these opportunities and effectively utilised them. In this context, while the legal power and resources they controlled significantly increased, lawful Kurdish ethno-nationalist activities also meaningfully proliferated, and they proved highly crucial in the expansion of Kurdish ethno-nationalism during this period.

Conversely, as the POS expanded, Ankara's restricting pressure on Kurdish ethno-nationalism commenced to gradually lighten and became more constitutional and selective after 1999. Moreover, beyond the decline of governmental coercion on civil, cultural and legal political activities in the context of general democratisation, due to both regional developments and also as a consequence of peaceful resolution attempts after late 2012, the Turkish state's countermeasures against PKK militancy and terrorism also evolved.

In light of these points, this chapter attempts to explain two important points. First, it seeks to explain how the opening up of legal avenues and the expansion of civil and cultural liberties impacted the violent nature of the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Second, this chapter investigates the relationship between the changing level of repression by the Turkish government on the PKK from 1999 to 2015 and its relationship to the expansion of Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

This chapter consists of five sections. This introductory section, as the first section of the chapter, is followed by the second section which gives a descriptive account of the changing nature of the Turkish state's coercive pressure on Kurdish ethno-nationalism from 1999 to mid-2015. The third section extends this descriptive explanation further and analyses the PKK's reaction to and utilisation of this less repressive environment and scrutinises the impact of this response. The fourth section focuses on the period of the 'resolution process' and analyses the causation between this process and the level and nature of the governmental coercion in this period and the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. The fifth and final section naturally concludes the chapter.

8.2. Lineaments of the Turkish government's coercive policy towards the PKK and Kurdish ethno-nationalism from 1999 to mid-2015

As seen in the second chapter, many scholars consider the state's capacity and will to repress challengers as an important variable of a POS that critically influences the

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trajectory of movements.[1] While some scholars[2] argue that decreasing state repression increases mobilisation and vice-versa, others[3] elaborate on the concept further by arguing that not only the level of state coercion but also other parameters such as timing (preventive or reactive), scope (selective or indiscriminate), and type (lawful or 'dirty') affect a movement's trajectory. Moreover, some studies contend that the impact of state repression on a movement cannot be assessed per se, but should be analysed in conjunction with the other elements of the POS, particularly the level of openness or closure of the formal political system, in order to reach to more meaningful judgment on its role in a movement's trajectory. For example, the effect of low-level repression or high-level indiscriminate repression will be different in a closed, formal political system than in an open, formal political system.[4]

This section examines the fluctuating level and nature of the Turkish government's repression on Kurdish ethno-nationalism from 1999 to mid-2015. Although during this period there were some upward and downward trends in the Turkish government's coercion on Kurdish ethno-nationalism, it can be broadly analysed in two historical periods. Consequently, this section is divided into two subsections. The first subsection examines the general characteristics of the Turkish government's coercion on the PKK and

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[1] Doug McAdam, 'Conceptual Origins, Current Problems, Future Directions,' in *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, ed. Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, 1st Edition (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 23–40; Mohammed M. Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel: Repression And Resistance In The Islamic World* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Pub, 2003); Charles D. Brockett, *Political Movements and Violence in Central America*, 1st Edition (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
[2] Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China* (Cambridge University Press, 1979); Doug McAdam, 'Political Process Model,' in *Social and Political Movements*, ed. Cyrus Ernesto Zirakzadeh, Four-Volume Set edition, vol. 2 (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2011), 89–113.
[3] Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel*; Donatella della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence, and the State: A Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany*, New edition (Cambridge England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Brockett, *Political Movements and Violence in Central America*.
[4] Although the following works do not specifically propose such an argument, this correlation is evident in both Hafez's analyses of selective and indiscriminate state repression in conjunction with the openness or closure of the POS and also in Brockett's first, second and ninth propositions. Hafez, *Why Muslims Rebel*; Brockett, *Political Movements and Violence in Central America*, 270–71.

PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism from 1999 to 2013. The following subsection focuses on the period of 'resolution process', which lasted from 2013 to mid-2015 and analyses the changes in the Turkish government's coercive policies during the 'resolution process' period.

8.2.1. Ankara's policies on the PKK and Kurdish ethno-nationalism: 1999 to 2013

As seen in Chapter 3, the Turkish state's general policy on Kurdish ethno-nationalism was highly securitised. Not only PKK militancy and acts of terrorism, but also any appearances of Kurdish ethno-nationalist ideology faced strict repression during the 1980s and to some extent the 1990s. Moreover, measures taken by Ankara regarding Kurdish ethno-nationalism during this period were mainly seen as indiscriminate and including extra-legal practices. The literature on these issues generally suggests that these policies radicalised many ordinary Kurds and resulted in the expansion of ethno-nationalism among Turkey's Kurdish-origin citizens during this period.[5] As part of the democratisation and EU accession processes after 1999, some important changes occurred in the nature of the coercive measures of the Turkish government towards Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

One of the most important changes in this respect was the decline in use of extra-legal methods by law-enforcement officers. After the AK Party came to power in November 2002, it did not renew the state of emergency that had been in force in some eastern and south-eastern provinces since 1978. Emergency rule finished by the end of

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[5] David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 3rd edition (London: I. B. Tauris, 2014), 427; Ismet G. Imset, *PKK: Ayrilikci Siddetin 20 Yili (1973-1992)* (Istanbul: Turkish Daily News Yayinlari, 1993), 140; David Romano, *The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Opportunity, Mobilization and Identity*, 1st edition (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 85.

November 2002[6] and security measures began to normalise in the eastern and south-eastern regions of Turkey.[7] Moreover, the AK Party government launched a new 'zero tolerance to torture' programme and made several legislative changes which facilitated the prosecution of officials for torture and mistreatment-related allegations and also increased the prospective punishments for these types of activities.[8] Consequently, as consecutive EU progression reports on Turkey pointed out and the qualitative findings of this research also corroborate, extra-legal repressive tactics began to decline during the 2000s.[9]

In addition, as a natural consequence of the legally backed coercion, the repressive measures of the Turkish government began to largely target the more radical and violent activities of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Some Kurdish-origin interviewees claimed the opposite, however, and argued that there was not a significant change and Ankara continued to suppress every cultural manifestation of Kurdish nationalism.[10] Similarly, despite their acknowledgement of the expansion of Turkish POS, several EU progression reports in the context of Turkey's EU candidacy also argued that there continued to be cases of restrictive implementation in the field of freedom of speech and other non-violent

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[6] For more detailed information on the history of martial law and emergency rule, see the following sources: Official Gazette of the Republic of Turkey, 26 November 1978, No: 16501 (Follow Up Edition); 'Olağanüstü Hal Bölge Valiliği İhdasi Hakkinda Kanun Hükmünde Kararname [Govermental Decree on the Establishment of Emergency Rule Regional Governorate],' Pub. L. No. 285, 27 347 (1987), http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/4.5.285.pdf; '15 Yıllık 'olağanüstü Hal'in Tarihçesi [A History of the 15-Year State of Emergency],' NTV, accessed July 6, 2016, http://arsiv.ntv.com.tr/news/155660.asp.

[7] '2003 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession' (European Commission, August 11, 2003), 39–40.

[8] *Türk Ceza Kanunu [Turkish Criminal Law]*, *5*, vol. 43, Articles 94, 95, and 96; 'Political Reforms in Turkey' (Ankara: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs Secretariat General For EU Affairs, 2007), 10.

[9] '2003 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession,' 15; '2004 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession' (Brussels: European Commission, June 10, 2004), 34–35; 'Turkey 2005 Progress Report' (Brussels: European Commission, September 11, 2005), 22–23; 'Turkey 2007 Progress Report,' Commission Staff Working Document (Brussels: European Commission, June 11, 2007), 13.

[10] Anonymous Respondent 8, Personal Communication, July 9, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 9, Personal Communication, July 10, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 10, Personal Communication, July 11, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 14, Personal Communication, July 22, 2015.

activities.[11] Moreover, following the increase in PKK militant and terrorist activities during the mid-2000s, the state's coercion tightened and new amendments to the anti-terror law in 2006 restricted some of the freedoms that had been introduced through earlier legal changes.[12]

Yet, as seen in the previous two chapters, non-violent Kurdish ethno-nationalist political actors found significant space to organise around civil milieus and cultivate, promote and disseminate Kurdish culture, language and history through various civil, academic, educational and artisan activities. The quantitative data provided below on some key barometers of state repression was collected from the records of the Turkish Human Rights Association (*İnsan Hakları Derneği*, IHD), a body that is strongly opposed to the Turkish government and even criticised by its founders for aligning with the PKK rather than serving as an independent human rights organisation.[13] Nevertheless, it corroborates the fact that despite some minor fluctuations, there has been a sharp decline in the level of the Turkish state's coercive methods, particularly after the AK Party came to power in late 2002.

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[11] '2003 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession,' 30, 43; '2004 Regular Report from the Commission on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession,' 35, 53; 'Turkey 2005 Progress Report,' 26–28; 'Turkey 2007 Progress Report,' 13–14.

[12] 'Terörle Mücadele Kanununda Değişiklik Yapilmasina Dair Kanun [Law on the Amendments of Some Provisions of the Counter-Terrorism Law],' Pub. L. No. 5532 (2006).

[13] Famous Turkish novelist and human rights activist Adalet Ağaoğlu, who was one of the founders of the IHD, resigned from the organisation in 2005 with the argument that the IHD had become a pro-PKK body. 'IHD is pro-PKK, claims Adalet Agaoglu,' *Hurriyet*, July 30, 2005, accessed 16 December, 2017, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/ihd-is-pro-pkk-claims-adalet-agaoglu-338672.

Figure 8.1: Human rights statistics for Turkey (1999 - 2013)[14]
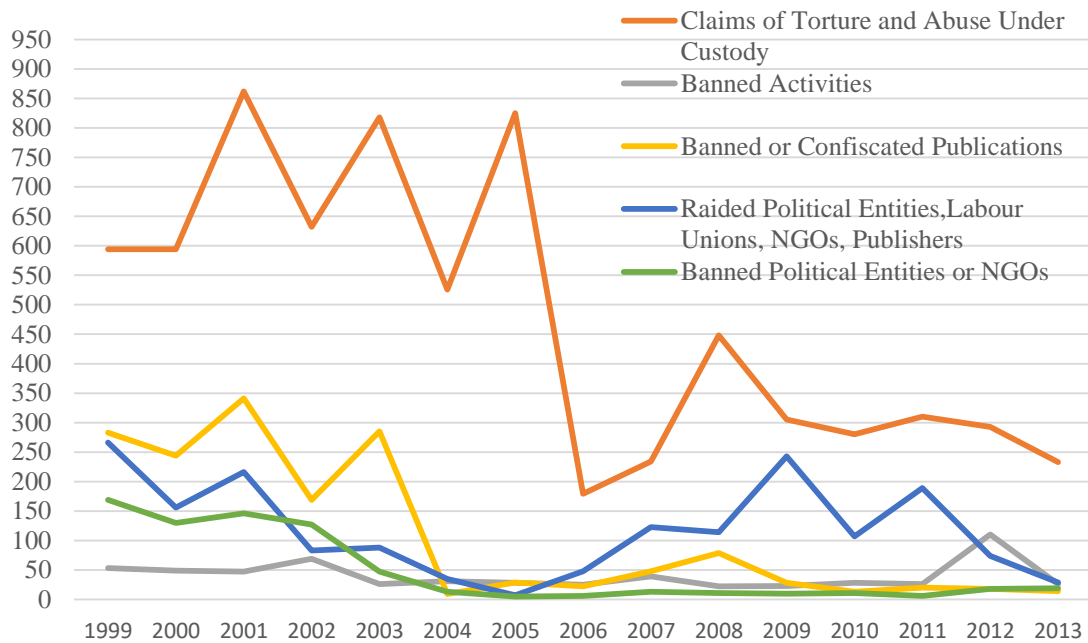
Following the relaunch of the PKK militancy in the mid-2000s, as will be discussed

in the following section, the Turkish state's coercive measures on the Kurdish ethno-

nationalist movement also began to increase. Particularly after April 2009, many Kurdish

nationalist politicians, writers, NGO representatives and other such figures were detained

and jailed in the context of counter-KCK operations under the accusation of being

members of the civil wings of the PKK.[15] Nonetheless, as exemplified by the following

remark of a former Turkish official, which also echoes similar opinions of numerous

expert interviewees on the issue, 'the [counter] KCK operations were not part of a holistic

repression policy. It was in contradiction to other aspects of the Turkish government's

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[14] This graph was created by the researcher using the data from annual human rights reports openly published by the Human Rights Association on its webpage. 'İnsan Hakları Derneği,' accessed December 16, 2017, https://www.ihd.org.tr/. For a highly similar graph that was created by Tezcür's for the period from 1994 to 2008 using the same sources and significantly inspired the above graph, see: Güneş Murat Tezcür, 'When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey,' *Journal of Peace Research* 47, no. 6 (2010): 780.
[15] 'KCK Operations,' Bianet, March 5, 2017, https://www.bianet.org/english/politics/186079-kck-operations; 'KCK'da 2000 tutuklu [2000 are imprisoned in the KCK (operations],' *Radikal*, January 7, 2010, http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/kckda_2000_tutuklu-1092791/.

Kurdish policy such as the democratic opening and rather gave mixed signals.'[16]

Moreover, during the counter-KCK campaign, some civil and cultural rights for citizens of Kurdish origin even continued to expand, such as in the implementation of full-time Kurdish broadcasting and in higher education, where bachelor's and master's degree programmes began to be offered with Kurdish as the medium of instruction. Moreover, as was seen in Chapter 6, despite the suspension and imprisonment of some Kurdish nationalist mayors, during this period the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement continued to enjoy the openness of the formal political channels on both the local and national levels and were able to utilise municipal resources and power as well.

Furthermore, policing tactics employed during the time were largely lawful and not 'dirty' as they had been in previous eras. Four Kurdish ethno-nationalist interviewees – who were of ages ranging from 27 to 55, from different cities and were detained and jailed as part of the aforementioned counter-KCK operations around the 2010 – testified that they did not face torture or similar inhuman treatment while in police custody or incarcerated, although all of them still argued that the decision on their imprisonment was groundless.[17] Two of these people,[18] who were rather older than the other two, had been previously jailed for PKK-related activities during the 1980s and 1990s several times. Both agreed that there was a big improvement in the level of humane treatment they received in their later stays in jail.

The Turkish state's counterterrorism policies towards the PKK also showed some changes during this period. Following the capture of Ocalan in February 1999, the PKK

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[16] Anonymous Respondent 50, Personal Communication, September 4, 2015.
[17] Anonymous Respondent 8, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 9, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 14, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 15, Personal Communication, July 23, 2015.
[18] Anonymous Respondent 9, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 15, Personal Communication.

withdrew large numbers of its militants from Turkey and retreated to the Mount Qandil

area in Iraq. They declared that they had stopped their militant activities in Turkey and

subsequently did not organise any major attacks on Turkish forces until summer 2004.

Murat Karayilan, one of the leading members of the PKK, has argued that the first few

years following the capture of Ocalan were the hardest period in the history of the PKK

because the organisation was demoralised, disorganised and several internal factions

emerged competing for control of the organisation.[19] Many interviewees, including some

who are retired security personnel, argued that the imprisonment of Ocalan relieved

Turkish elites and led to a spirit of optimism that they might eradicate the social base of the

PKK with democratic reforms. Consequently, from 1999 until the early part of the next

decade, Turkey refrained from pursuing aggressive, destructive military strategies such as

large-scale, cross-border operations. Instead, Turkish security forces were mainly involved

in routine counter-terrorism activities such as land searches in south-eastern Turkey, where

only small numbers of PKK groups existed and who deliberately avoided confronting

Turkish security forces.[20] Thus, the PKK found an opportunity to overcome the shock of

the imprisonment of its leader, reorganise and rejuvenate its armed cadres, and then later

use violence and terrorism as an instrument for expanding Kurdish nationalism after

2004.[21]

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[19] Murat Karayılan, *Bir Savaşın Anatomisi & Kürdistan'da Askeri Çizgi [The Anatomy of a War & Military Style in Kurdistan]* (Istanbul: Aram Yayınları, 2014), 345–68.

[20] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 23, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 50, Personal Communication; The most important corroboration of this finding in the research comes from the former Turkish Chief of Staff İlker Başbuğ, who also acknowledges the same argument in one of his statements as can be found in the following source. 'Başbuğ'dan Özeleştiri: Terör Bitti Sandık, Oysa Dağdaydı! [We thought that the terror was over. However, they were in the mountains!],' t24.com.tr, accessed October 30, 2016, http://t24.com.tr/haber/basbugdan-ozelestiri-teror-bitti-sandik-oysa-dagdaydi/82314.

[21] Statistics Tezcür collected from PKK sources on PKK militants who died in the skirmishes between 2003-2008 show that the majority were recruited by the PKK between 1999 and 2003. Tezcür, 'When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey,' 781.

The US-led international invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the Turkish Parliament's rejection on 1 March 2003 of a bill which would have allowed the US military to use Turkish territory during the invasion led to tense relations between Washington and Ankara. Consequently, it became virtually impossible for Turkey to organise military operations against PKK camps in Iraq after 2003. Turkish military capabilities in Iraq increased with the rapprochement between Turkey and the USA in 2007,[22] and the Turkish army even organised an eight-day operation against a PKK base in Iraq in 2008.[23] Nonetheless, as stated by several expert interviewees, Turkey could not destroy the PKK's bases, infrastructure and logistics in Iraq on the same level as it did during the 1990s.[24] Consequently, the PKK enjoyed a relatively safe haven on the other side of the Turkish-Iraqi border, managed to establish important infrastructure, and used these bases for its attacks in Turkey. Yet, this new arrangement did not halt military operations by Turkish security forces against the PKK within the borders of Turkey. On the contrary, Ankara responded to the increasing PKK militancy after 2004 by also ramping up its military operations. In terms of militarily confronting the PKK, there was no decline in the Turkish state's hard power and in contrast there was a significant rise in the technological capacity of the Turkish security forces.

Thus, although regional developments circumscribed their capabilities, Turkish security forces continued to exercise hard power on the PKK during this period. However, with the exception of the 'KCK operations' in 2009, the Turkish government's coercion of non-violent Kurdish ethno-nationalist political activism significantly declined and became

[22] William M. Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy Since 1774* (Routledge, 2013), 169; Sebnem Arsu, 'U.S. Sharing Intelligence with Turkey,' *The New York Times*, November 15, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/15/world/europe/15turkey.html.
[23] Fred Attewill and agencies, 'Turkish Forces Enter Northern Iraq,' *The Guardian*, February 22, 2008, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/feb/22/iraq.turkey.
[24] Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication, August 19, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication, August 22, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 49, Personal Communication, September 3, 2015.

much more lawful compared to the previous two decades. An important development in the level and nature of the Turkish state's coercive policies towards the PKK and PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism came with the start of the 'resolution process' in 2013. The next sub-section will examine the nature of these policies during this period.

8.2.2. The resolution process and the change in Turkey's coercion level

Towards the end of 2012, the possibility of negotiations between the Turkish government and the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement began to be publically discussed.[25] Following initial talks between Turkish intelligence officials and Ocalan,[26] delegations consisting of MPs from the mainstream Kurdish nationalist party also paid several visits to Ocalan on Imrali Island where he has been imprisoned since 1999,[27] as well as to Mount Qandil where the PKK leaders were based.[28] These efforts paved the way for the start of a new process referred to as the 'resolution process' (*çözüm süreci*). Ocalan, in a letter which was read during Nowruz celebrations on 21 March 2013 in Diyarbakir, asked the PKK to stop armed attacks on Turkey and withdraw its militants from Turkey to its bases in Iraq.[29] The PKK declared it would obey Ocalan's call,[30] and despite some ebbs and flows, this

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[25] Thomas Seibert, 'Erdogan Calls for Unity between Turks and Kurds,' *The National*, October 24, 2012, http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/europe/erdogan-calls-for-unity-between-turks-and-kurds; 'Turkey's Erdogan Says State Can Talk to Jailed PKK Leader Abdullah Ocalan to Solve Kurd Issue,' Ekurd.net, accessed July 13, 2016, http://ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2012/11/turkey4330.htm.

[26] 'Turkey and PKK's Ocalan in Talks 'on Disarmament,'' BBC.com, accessed July 13, 2016, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-20880944.

[27] 'Government Authorized the İmralı Meeting: Justice Minister,' *Hurriyet Daily News*, accessed July 13, 2016, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/government-authorized-the-imrali-meeting-justice-minister.aspx?pageID=517&nID=38322&NewsCatID=338.

[28] 'Çözüm Süreci Kronolojisi, 28 Aralık 2012-22 Eylül 2013 [The Chronology of the Resolution Process],' BILGESAM, accessed April 29, 2016, http://www.bilgesam.org/incele/1201/-cozum-sureci-kronolojisi--28-aralik-2012-22-eylul-2013/#.WuW2kohuY2w.

[29] Alex Spillius and Agencies, 'PKK Leader Ocalan Declares Ceasefire with Turkey,' *The Telegraph*, March 21, 2013, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/turkey/9945897/PKK-leader-Ocalan-declares-ceasefire-with-Turkey.html; 'Turkey Kurds: PKK Chief Ocalan Calls for Ceasefire,' BBC.com, accessed July 13, 2016, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-21874427.

[30] 'Turkey's Kurdish Conflict: An Assessment of the Current Process' (London: Democratic Progress Institute, November 2013), 31–35.

'resolution process' lasted from the beginning of preliminary talks in late 2012 until July 2015.

The resolution process was not the first attempt by the Turkish government for the peaceful accommodation of Kurdish ethno-nationalist demands. In 2009, only days after the aforementioned counter-KCK operations, the AK Party government announced a new political reconciliation initiate, formally called the 'National Unity and Fraternity Project' (hereafter NUFP), also commonly known as the 'Democratic Opening'. The NUFP was not only about direct bilateral negotiations between the Turkish government and the PKK but was a more comprehensive democratic opening initiative which, alongside several other major issues in the country such as the Alevi issue, aimed at solving the Kurdish issue in Turkey peacefully.[31] As part of the NUFP, 34 PKK militants and supporters came to Turkey from Iraq as a sign of the PKK's 'willingness' to achieve a peaceful solution in October 2009.[32] This was supposed to be followed by the return of another group of PKK members from Europe. However, the arrival of the PKK militants on 19 October 2009 was presented as a victory for the PKK over the Turkish state by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party and actors.[33] Opposition parties subsequently used this incident as leverage to undermine the AK Party, and the incident also created a reaction in Turkish society.[34] Consequently, this initiative did not last long. Nevertheless, it provided a pretext for a new set of attempts at peaceful accommodation of Kurdish ethno-nationalist demands and given the level of open debate in the country, the political negotiation process and peaceful

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[31] 'Demokratik Açılım Süreci: Milli Birlik ve Kardeşlik Projesi [Democratic Opening Process: National Unity and Fraternity Project]' (AK Parti Tanıtım ve Medya Başkanlığı [AK Party Publicity and Media Department], January 2010), 11.
[32] 'Turkey's Kurdish Conflict: An Assessment of the Current Process,' 26–27.
[33] Ramazan Yavuz, Cem Emir, and Muharrem Kontaz, 'Habur'dan Diyarbakır'a Gövde Gösterisi [The Show of Strength from Habur to Diyarbakir],' *Milliyet*, October 21, 2009.
[34] 'Şehit Aileleri Ofkeli [Families of Martyries Are Furious],' *Milliyet*, 21.10.2009, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Yasam/SonDakika.aspx?aType=SonDakika&KategoriID=15&ArticleID=1152950&Date=21.10.2009&b=Sehit aileleri ofkeli.

solution option became one of the most important topics of public debate in Turkey after 2009. This process culminated in the 'resolution process' that began in late 2012. As seen in the previous section, the NUFP initiative did not result in the decline of the Turkish government's coercive pressure on Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Instead, there was an increase in pressure at this time. However, in terms of the level of repression on Kurdish ethno-nationalism and countering the militant activities of the PKK, the 'resolution process' proved different than the previous democratic opening initiative.

Although the PKK had declared a withdrawal from Turkey, it halted the process after roughly only 20 percent of its militants had retreated to Iraq based on the claim that the Turkish state had not carried out necessary reforms and was building military facilities and infrastructure in the region.[35] As several Turkish expert interviewees argued, while it is true that Turkey continued to develop its military infrastructure, such as by constructing new high-security military compounds, new security roads and new measures on borders in the eastern regions, these were not a precondition of the PKK's withdrawal. The first step of the process only included the full withdrawal of the PKK militants from Turkey.[36] Earlier when Murat Karayilan, the acting leader of the KCK at the start of the withdrawal, stated in a press conference that the PKK might halt the withdrawal under some conditions, neither military construction nor the failure to implement promised reforms were among them.[37] Nonetheless, the PKK stopped the withdrawal, and according to a Turkish

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[35] Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication.
'PKK 'Halts Withdrawal' from Turkey'; BBC Türkçe, 'PKK 'Çekilmeyi Durdurdu'[the PKK Halted the Withdrawal],' BBC Türkçe, accessed July 13, 2016, http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/09/130909_pkk_update.
[36] Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 48, Personal Communication, September 2, 2015.
[37] 'PKK 8 Mayısta Çekiliyor [The PKK will withdraw on 8 May], Youtube Video, 53:17, posted by Michael Riggs, 11 July 2017, accessed July 23, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C5E5zL-dY98.

intelligence estimation, 80 percent of PKK militants remained in Turkey.[38] However, the refusal of the PKK to fully retreat to its bases in Iraq did not hasten the end of the resolution process.

During the period of the resolution process, with the exception of several Kurdish ethno-nationalist interviewees,[39] all subjects interviewed in this study, including all officials, academics and other expert interviewees, confirmed that during the process Turkish security forces mainly remained within their compounds and did not organise military operations in the countryside. This was despite the presence of large numbers of PKK militants remaining on Turkish soil. Moreover, the vast majority of people who were jailed during the counter-KCK operations between 2009 and 2012 were released after the start of the negotiation process.[40]

Such restraint by the Turkish security forces might have not been imaginable during the 1990s. However, as was analysed in Chapter 4, several changes in the legal structure resulted in the end of the Turkish military's long-lasting dominance over the country's security policies. As counterterrorism was a matter of homeland security, legal changes were carried out and it became solely enshrined within the authority of the governors. This meant that army forces could only engage in counterterrorism operations

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[38] BBC Türkçe, 'PKK 'Çekilmeyi Durdurdu'[the PKK Halted the Withdrawal].'

[39] Even some Kurdish ethno-nationalist interviewees also accepted that Turkish state's military activities remained minimal during this period.

[40] Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 48, Personal Communication.
'Şirnak KCK Davasi Tutuklulari Tahliye Edildi [The Prisoners of the KCK Case in Sirnak Have Been Relesed],' *Milliyet*, accessed November 1, 2016, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/sirnak-kck-davasi-tutuklulari-tahliye-sirnak-yerelhaber-295377/; 'KCK Basın ve KCK Ana Davasından 45 Kişi Tahliye Edildi [45 People Have Been Released in the Context of the KCK Main Trial and Press Trial],' CNN Türk, accessed November 1, 2016, http://www.cnnturk.com/haber/turkiye/kck-basin-ve-kck-ana-davasindan-45-kisi-tahliye-edildi; 'KCK Mersin'de Tüm Tutuklular Tahliye Edildi [All the Prisoners Have Been Released in the KCK Mersin Trials],' Bianet, accessed November 1, 2016, http://www.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/146130-kck-mersin-de-tum-tutuklular-tahliye-edildi.

with the invitation or approval of the regional governors.[41] According to a Turkish academic working on national security and terrorism, getting permission from a governor became a legal obligation and there was no other alternative for the Turkish army given the existing legal structure. He explained this situation, albeit exaggeratingly, as follows: 'Imagine you are the commander of a brigade in Siirt. You have noticed a hundred terrorists outside of your military compound. What shall you do? [Under the new legal structure] you should call 155 [the emergency number for the Turkish Police]. If you interfere on your own initiative without any invitation, you will spend your pension on lawyers.'[42]

Consequently, the coercion level of the Turkish government on both the PKK and the broader, PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism disproportionately declined during this period. Although democratisation initiatives and the decline of the Turkish government's repression level examined in the previous section also had significant effects, the 'resolution process' and the change in the level of Turkish state repression more consequentially impacted the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

8.3. Did expanding liberties and declining coercion lead to the decline of the PKK terrorism?

The decline in governmental control on civil, cultural and political activities was a natural consequence of the democratisation process, and interaction between the expansion of civil and political liberties and the Kurdish nationalist movement has been established in the previous two chapters. Thus, this section focuses on how the changing nature of the

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[41] Zübeyde Yalçın, 'Sınır dışına çıkış için 'protokol' formülü ['Protocol' formul for the withdrawal],' *Sabah*, April 18, 2013.
[42] Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication.

Turkish state's coercive control, as well as the expansion of the Turkish POS, impacted the violent nature of Kurdish ethno-nationalism and the PKK terrorism.

What the PKK declared following the capture of Ocalan, and at his signal, was not one of its so-called ceasefires but that they were relinquishing the 'armed struggle' and would follow a non-violent political path to achieving its objectives.[43] As seen in the chapters 6 and 7, in the 2000s the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement highly effectively used these legal channels for its cause. Moreover, the level of open debate in Turkey was expanding and began to provide a suitable political environment for the peaceful articulation of different accommodation options through legal avenues. Yet, these developments did not meet the ideological and organisational demands of the PKK and PKK-affiliated legal entities. On the contrary, the satisfaction of the Kurdish people with these reforms posed a significant threat to their social mobilisation capacity. Moreover, the increasing role and importance of the legal political party and actors within Kurdish ethno-nationalism was also a serious source of concern for the PKK and a threat to its own organisational survival. In this environment, claiming the ongoing operation of Turkish security forces and the supposed deterioration of Ocalan's health and prison conditions, the PKK restarted its militant and terror activities.[44] As Tezcur also makes it evident with sound arguments, both of these reasons were groundless and the real reason was the organisational anxiety of the PKK.[45]

Thus, towards the end of 2004, during a period in which political as well as civil and cultural liberties were expanding, the PKK resumed the use of militancy and terrorism

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[43] Tezcür, 'When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey,' 779; Ali Kemal Özcan, *Turkey's Kurds: A Theoretical Analysis of the PKK and Abdullah Ocalan* (London: Routledge, 2005), 124–36.
[44] Tezcür, 'When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey,' 779.
[45] Tezcür, 'When Democratization Radicalizes: The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey.'

after a multi-year hiatus. Figure 8.2, retrieved from the Global Terrorism Database's webpage, shows the level of the PKK militancy and number of acts of terrorism significantly increased by the beginning of the 2010s, even continuing after the start of the 'resolution process 'in 2013. These findings as well as qualitative field findings stated below clearly reveal that the opening up of the legal avenues did not necessarily lead to a de-radicalisation of the PKK and a disappearance of armed methods from the action repertoire of PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism. On the contrary, the range of methods used by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement expanded so as to include various forms of non-violent political actions in addition to militancy and acts of terrorism.

Figure 8.2: Number of PKK attacks by target (1 January 2000 - 21 July 2015)[46]
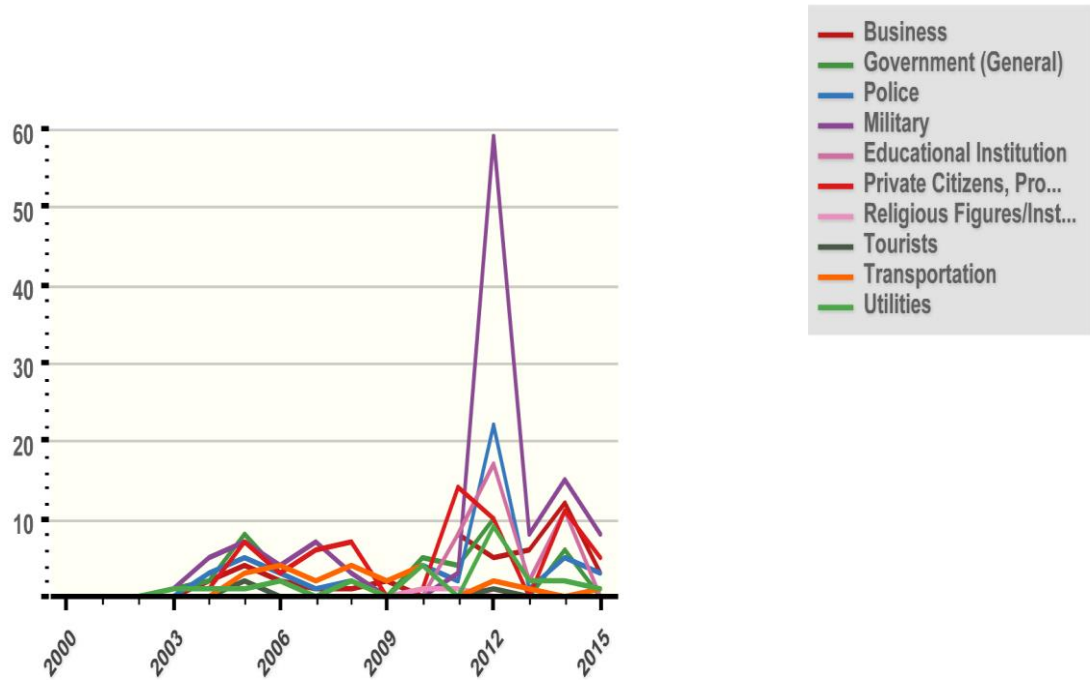

As revealed by Figure 8.3, which shows the number of the PKK attacks from the

1980s until mid-2015, during the 2000s the level of the violent incidents did not rise to the

level experienced in the early 1990s. Indeed the rate of PKK violence had already declined

during the second half of the 1990s while repression by the state was increasing. Thus, it is

not clear whether the level of the militant attacks and acts of terrorism did not reach as

high as it was during the early 1990s due to the high level of governmental capacity or due

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[46] The graph was taken from the following webpage of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2018). Global Terrorism Database, accessed November 25, 2018, https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd

the openness in the legal avenues. Yet, as a matter of fact, PKK attacks restarted during a period that the POS was opening and optimism for the future of Turkish democracy was possibly at its highest level, and these attacks even continued during the period of the so-called 'resolution process' after 2013.

Figure 8.3: Number of PKK attacks by target (1984 - mid-2015)[47]
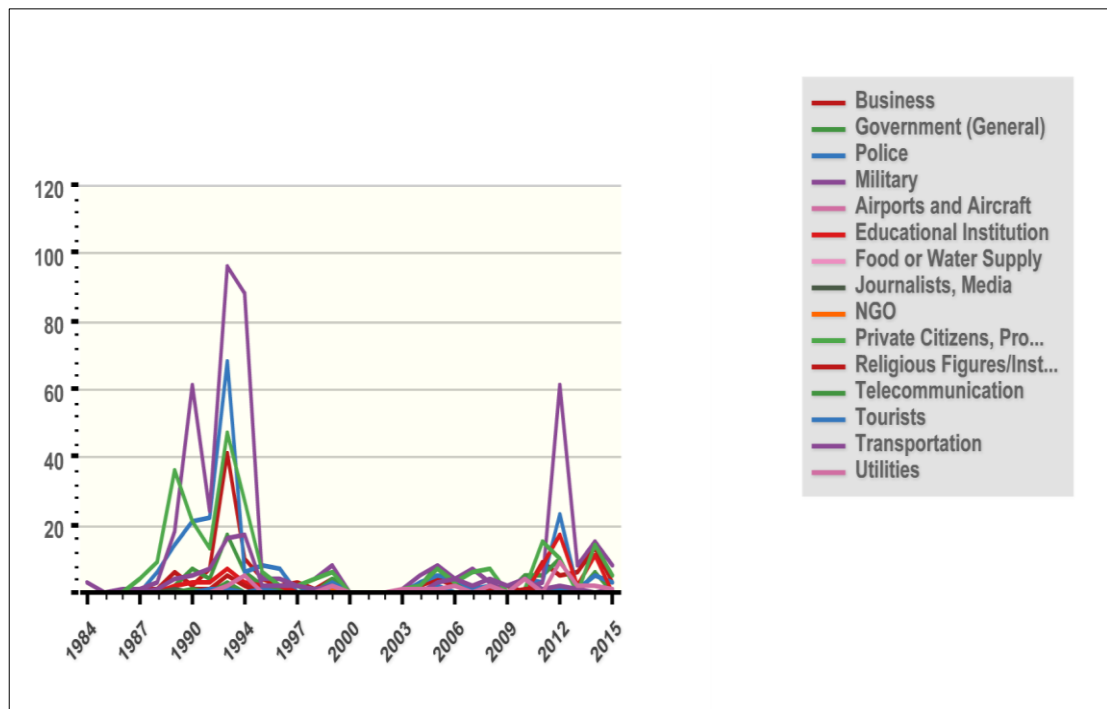

During the early 1990s, the PKK could not launch a large-scale rural warfare campaign and could not effectively control any territory, which it referred to as 'liberated zones' and was its most fundamental tactical goal. Yet, as numerous interviewees explained and as Figure 8.4 also shows, it engaged in various types of armed attacks and started to extensively place improvised explosive devices (IEDs) at road corners and underneath bridges, detonating them when military vehicles passed by.[48] Moreover, as was

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[47] The graph was taken from the following webpage of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2018). Global Terrorism Database, accessed November 25, 2018, https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd

[48] Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication, August 6, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication.

the case during the 1990s and as both figures show, that the PKK continued to organise

attacks on soft targets such as educational institutions, businesses and even civilians.

Figure 8.4: Number of PKK attacks by type (2000 - mid-2015)[49]
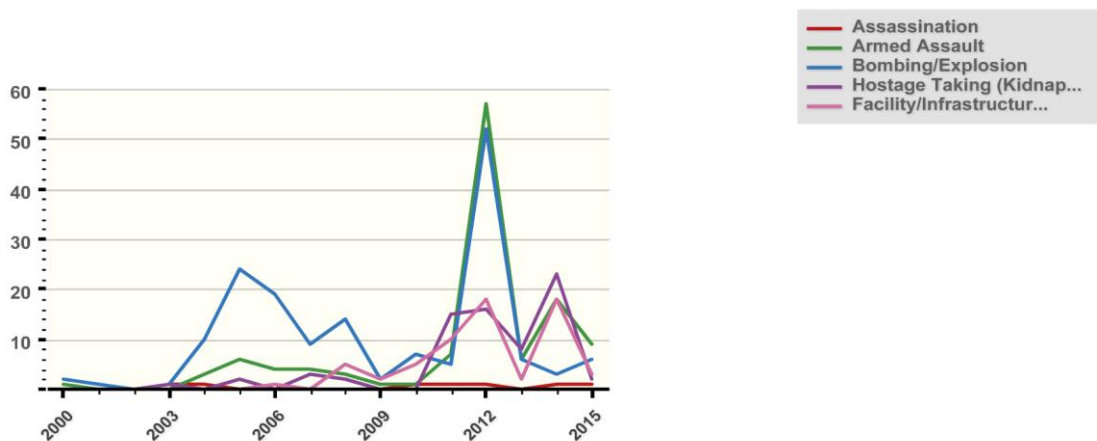
During the 2000s and 2010s, the PKK also gave birth to two new, violent extremist

organisations that mainly engaged in terrorism targeting civilians. The first of them is the

Kurdistan Freedom Hawks (*Teyrêbazên Azadiya Kurdistan*, TAK). TAK claimed to have

split from the PKK in 2004 due to the 'soft methods' the PKK pursues.[50] It carried out

many acts of terrorism targeting the civilians, including foreign tourists, which resulted in

large numbers of civilian casualties, particularly in western Turkey.[51] Leading members of

the PKK consistently deny any relationship between the two organisations.[52] However,

many experts working on the PKK and Turkey's Kurds argue that even if TAK might have

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[49] The graph was taken from the following webpage of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START). (2018). Global Terrorism Database, accessed November 25, 2018, https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd

[50] Metin Gürcan, 'The Kurdistan Freedom Falcons: A Profile of the Arm's-Length Proxy of the Kurdistan Workers' Party,' *CTCSENTINEL* 9, no. 7 (July 2016): 24–27.

[51] For the full list of the TAK attacks, see the appendix of the following source. Gürcan, 27.

[52] Ian Pannell, 'Kurdish PKK Warns Turkey of Long Fight,' April 25, 2016, BBC.com https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36081204.

a semi-autonomous structure, it is closely related to the PKK and gets its personnel as well as logistical, training, and ideological support from the PKK. According to Gurcan, TAK serves the interests of the PKK without harming 'the PKK's international image which has been improved with the participation of the YPG (the Syrian branch of the PKK) in fighting the Islamic State.'[53] Similarly another close observer of the PKK, Aliza Marcus, author of 'Blood and Belief', one of the most well-known works on the PKK, was quoted expressing doubts about the claimed independence of TAK from the PKK: 'It would be the first time in the history of the PKK that they allow the existence of any other group representing the Kurds than themselves. In the 1990s, the PKK fought with rival Kurdish groups in Europe, it has killed dissidents within its own ranks. I see no reason why they would allow another group on the stage now'.[54]

Some Turkish experts interviewed for this study more eagerly argued that TAK is just a shadow organisation that the PKK established as a vehicle to assume responsibility for attacks on civilian targets or when its attacks produce civilian causalities, as in both cases these types of attacks harm the image that the PKK tries to create for itself in the West. A Turkish official who has deep expertise on Turkish national security and who authored a book and various studies on this topic explained the rationale behind having two supposedly separate groups:

> The PKK has been trying to present itself as the defender of an egalitarian, pluralist
> ideology and tries to rationalise its terrorism as self-defence. In order to get rid of the
> international label of being a terrorist organisation, it should stay away from civilian
> targets. Yet it wants to create fear in Turkish public opinion. Most importantly, it wants

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[53] Gürcan, 'The Kurdistan Freedom Falcons: A Profile of the Arm's-Length Proxy of the Kurdistan Workers' Party,' 24.
[54] Frederike Geerdink, 'Ankara Bombing: PKK, TAK Ties Come under Scrutiny Again,' *Middle East Eye*, April 3, 2016, https://www.middleeasteye.net/columns/after-ankara-bomning-questions-over-pkk-tak-ties-resurface-1097219220.

Turkish public opinion to believe that compared to more radical groups such as TAK, the demands of the PKK are reasonable and negotiable. It is a situation like 'showing the death [TAK] and causing people to consent to malaria [the PKK].[55] To be concise, this is the main logic behind the TAK's presence.[56]

A Turkish academic who studies the PKK noted some apparent contradictions in TAK's statement about being a separate organisation:

TAK claims that they split from the PKK because they found the tactical methods of the PKK are soft and insufficient. Yet, they argue that they are still loyal to Ocalan. If you notice, you see that each time TAK largely obeyed the PKK's ceasefire calls in 2009 and during the resolution process even in a much more disciplined way than the cadres of the PKK. Thus, on one hand in its discourse TAK rejects the methods of the PKK as soft, but it also follows all the ceasefires and the resolution process. If you are so loyal to Ocalan that you even follow his demands on ceasefires, the overall transformation of the PKK that the TAK finds 'soft' is also Ocalan's will and order. There is then a big contradiction that should be explained.[57]

Thus, regardless of the exact organisational linkages between the PKK and TAK, the findings show that it is highly logical to consider TAK as part of the same PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism as they admit their loyalty to Ocalan and their terrorism in a way serves the goals of the PKK and PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

Although some sources say that it was formed in 2006, a second organisation, called YDG-H (Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement, *Yurtsever Devrimci Gençlik-*

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[55] For a concise review of the effects of 'radical flanks' on larger movements, see Doug McAdam, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald, eds., *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*, First Edition (Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 14.
[56] Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication.
[57] Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication.

Hareketi) first surfaced after 2013 during the resolution process.[58] Despite admitting the ideological loyalty of YDG-H members to Ocalan, PKK leaders claimed that the YDG-H was not a sub-organisation of the PKK, but instead a grassroots initiative of local Kurdish youth.[59] Many expert interviewees argued, however, that the PKK would have never allowed such an organisation if it were the outside the control of the PKK. Many observers believed that the PKK established the YDG-H to organise Kurdish locals for a civilian upheaval and also to extend the terrorism to the urban centres.[60] With the decline in the Turkish state's coercive measures during the resolution process, the YDG-H also operated state-like local law-enforcement units in south-eastern Turkey. In select cities such as Diyarbakir, Cizre and Nusaybin, road checks, inspections of cafes looking for illegal activities like gambling, and similar operations by this group began to appear on both Turkish newscasts as well as on social media.[61] Moreover, YDG-H members were able to dig many trenches in neighbourhoods of municipalities held by the Kurdish nationalist parties in several south-eastern cities with the aim of creating 'liberated neighbourhoods'.[62]

In addition to these activities by related organisations, the PKK also continued to actively resort to terror methods to dissuade and pacify opponents in the south-east, and to

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[58] Anonymous Respondent 49, Personal Communication.

[59] Mahmut Hamsici, 'Bayık: Artık tek taraflı ateşkes olmayacak [There wont be unileteral ceasefire any longer],' BBC Türkçe, accessed January 9, 2018,
https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2015/11/151130_bayik_mulakat_1.

[60] Anonymous Respondent 39, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 40, Personal Communication, August 20, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication.

[61] Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication; 'Ydg-H Amed Kumar Uyuşturucu Ve Fuhuş Baskını [YDG-H Amed Gambling, Drugs and Prostitution Operation],' YouTube Video, 7:33, posted by Ydgh şehitlik, January 25, 2015, accessed November 2, 2016,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KkbIRvleb6o; 'YDG-H Amed Suriçi Uyuşturucu Operasyonu [YDG-H Amed Drug Operation],' YouTube Video, 2:44, posted by Mahir Che, August 17, 2014, accessed November 2, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0a3zKN8R5sQ.

[62] Anonymous Respondent 7, Personal Communication, July 6, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 11, Personal Communication, July 20, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 17, Personal Communication, July 24, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication, August 2, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication; 'The Kurdish Teenagers Fighting - and Dying - in Urban Clashes with Turkish Security Forces,' *The Independent*, January 18, 2016, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/turkey-in-crisis-the-kurdish-teenagers-fighting-and-dying-in-urban-clashes-with-security-forces-a6820201.html.

some extent the other parts of eastern Turkey as well, by initially calling them to meet at its bases in mountains, or on some occasions abducting the invited person if they did not turn up. These types of attacks particularly increased following the decline of the Turkish state's repressive measures with the start of the resolution process. Furthermore, after 2010 the PKK began killing more and more pro-state Kurdish figures as well as off-duty Turkish security forces in the region. In this context, as numerous expert and pro-state interviewees stated and open sources also corroborated, the PKK killed 14 village guards and numerous Turkish officers during the resolution process period from late 2012 to mid-2015.[63] These killings were mostly individual assassinations carried out in civilian settings when the village guards and officers were off-duty.

In many of these cases, PKK assassins brazenly carried out their attacks in broad daylight. In Diyarbakir, a Turkish sergeant was shopping in the market on his off day with his pregnant wife when several masked men approached from behind and shot him in the back of the head.[64] In another attack, PKK militants killed a well-known, Kurdish-origin village guard from Mardin's Dargecit district who also worked as the driver of the village's school bus while he was parked inside the schoolyard waiting to collect students.[65] In another case, the PKK killed a *muhtar* (elected head of the village) in south-

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[63] 'Korucolardan Kritik Açıklama![Important statement from the (village) guards!],' *Milliyet*, accessed January 10, 2019, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/korucolardan-kritik-aciklama--gundem-2100734/.
[64] Hakan Çelikbaş-Yaprak Koçer- Canan Altintaş / Samsun- Diyarbakir, (DHA) -, 'Şehit astsubay aşeren eşine meyve alırken vuruldu [Martry Sergeant was killed when buying fruit for his pregnant wife],' *Hürriyet*, October 30, 2014, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/sehit-astsubay-aseren-esine-meyve-alirken-vuruldu-27486963.
[65] 'Ölümüne Fedakârlık [Sacrifice until death]', *Sabah*, accessed April 23, 2018, https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2014/05/31/olumune-fedakarlik; 'Korucubaşı, öğrencilerin gözleri önünde infaz edildi![Chief village guard was killed in front of students' eyes],' www.haberturk.com, accessed April 23, 2018, http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/952521-korucubasi-ogrencilerin-gozleri-onunde-infaz-edildi.

western Siirt province the day after he welcomed the governor of the province and a brigade commander to his house.[66]

Moreover, with the decline of Turkish state's hard power in the context of the resolution process, the PKK became able to more effectively use its hard power as a means to keep Kurdish people in line with Kurdish ethno-nationalist goals. In addition to the above-stated YDG-H that acted as a kind of local law enforcement, the PKK also managed to establish 'public courts' in some cities in south-eastern Turkey in line with the KCK charter [67] and began to force locals to use these courts.[68] As a final important action by the PKK, many interviewees from various ethnic and political backgrounds contended that the PKK used the opening that came with the resolution process and started to disperse firearms to its urban militias in order to prepare for a future 'popular revolt'.[69]

8.4. Increasing PKK activities and increasing ethno-nationalist mobilisation

The interaction between the change in the nature and level of the state's repression and other relevant variables of the Turkish POS and the PKK's active re-engagement in militancy and terrorism significantly influenced the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

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[66] 'Valiyi Ağırlayan Muhtarı PKK İnfaz Etti [The PKK executed the Muhtar Who Hosted the Governor],' *Star*, accessed April 29, 2016, http://www.star.com.tr/guncel/valiyi-agirlayan-muhtari-pkk-infaz-etti-haber-1025380/.

[67] Öcalan, *Bir Halkı Savunmak [Defending a People]*, 122–27; 'KCK Sözleşmesi [The KCK Contract],' 6.

[68] Anonymous Respondent 8, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 31, Personal Communication, August 10, 2015.

[69] Anonymous Respondent 23, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 31, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 49, Personal Communication.

As Figure 8.1 shows, Ankara's coercive policies on civil, cultural and non-violent Kurdish political activities began to largely conform with Turkish law and grew increasingly selective after 2003. Figure 8.2 demonstrates that PKK attacks also restarted more or less during the same period. Many interviewees argued that following the capture of Ocalan and the PKK's declaration that it would cease armed attacks, people began to think that the PKK was militarily defeated and the Turkish state had won the contention.[70] The qualitative findings show that the resumption of PKK attacks showed ordinary Kurds in the region that the PKK still had strength, and in contrast to misperception of the early 2000s, the 'struggle' was not over. This provided a critical source of confidence and increased the motivation of its supporters.[71]

However, these developments did not result in an immediate expansion of ethno-nationalism among ordinary Kurds. The field findings suggest that several factors helped account for this scenario. First, many interviewees argued that although it had become relatively lawful and selective, the state's coercive power still provided important disincentives. As the following remark of a Kurdish-origin university graduate and businessman in Mardin province exemplifies, 'the softening of the state's stance followed a long repressive period. Memories from this period were still fresh for many Kurds, and it took some time for people to get rid of the psychology the previous repression had created for them.'[72]

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[70] Anonymous Respondent 11, Personal Communication, Anonymous Respondent 17, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 30, Personal Communication, August 8, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 31, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 35, Personal Communication, August 16, 2015.
[71] Anonymous Respondent 11, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 17, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 30, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 31, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 35, Personal Communication.
[72] Anonymous Respondent 19, Personal Communication, July 26, 2015.

Qualitative data collected in the field also suggest that the impact of the changing level and nature of the state repression were closely related to the other variables of the POS. In this context, the input aspect of the POS was only slowly opening and did not provide sufficient political space for ethno-nationalist mobilisation until the second half of the 2000s. Moreover, during the first half of the 2000s, the structural changes produced some meaningful policy outputs which, in the aftermath of a long repressive period and in the absence of sufficient legal space for mobilisation, rather than triggering ethno-nationalism, led to the satisfaction of Kurdish-origin citizens as was seen in chapters 4 and 5.

The previous two chapters have shown that after the second half of the 2000s, the input aspect of the POS began to grow through the expansion of civil and political liberties and through decentralisation and national political representation. In this context, Kurdish ethno-nationalism began to gain new momentum and expand. The remarks of many interviewees suggest that during this time repressive tactics by Ankara started to fail to deter this process of mobilisation. These findings are highly in line with the argument of Brockett whose research on violent contention in Guatemala and El Salvador shows that once a mobilisation process is underway, it is highly difficult to suppress this process by gradually escalating repression.[73]

The following comments by a Kurdish-origin village guard originally from a south-eastern province but interviewed in Ankara explain the process of the diminishing impact of state coercion on the expansion of Kurdish ethno-nationalism after the mid-2000s:

> Following the lifting of the emergency rule and the acceleration of the EU process, core supporting cadres of the organisation began to lift their heads up. Yet, they were still

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[73] Brockett, *Political Movements and Violence in Central America*, 271.

acting in a precautious way. In the same way, when PKK members began to show themselves in the countryside after a break of several years, many Kurds – including even some of those returning to the previously evacuated villages due to their support for the PKK – were in fact highly hesitant to openly support them. In this period, the practices of the state were lightening, but the fear of the state was still high. This situation began to change in the following years, however… [In this part, the interviewee stated things similar to what was explained in chapters 6 and 7]. Consequently, the dissuasive impact of the state's policies which had previously worked very well began to decrease.[74]

The field findings also suggest that the openness of other variables in the POS such as municipal power and resources and dissemination of economic incentives through these resources acted as a kind of balancing mechanism and decreased the perceived cost of Kurdish ethno-nationalist activism. On this account, the following remark by a Turkish official who served in south-eastern Turkey for many years gives insight into this relationship: 'During the 1990s, the repression of the state was much harsher, and also in terms of its implementation, consistent. Moreover, there were no other resources and means at their disposal such as municipalities. When the state enacted harsh policies against them, they did not have any chance to get fresh air to breathe.'[75]

Another Kurdish-origin, pro-state interviewee from Mardin similarly argued that: 'It is true that the state still punishes separatist acts. However, when a man from the KCK is jailed, the organisation soon provides a job for his brother or father in the municipality or supports his wife and children with the municipality's social funds. It might sound absurd to you, but many young boys in Kiziltepe were recruited by the organisation with

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[74] Anonymous Respondent 35, Personal Communication, August 16, 2015.
[75] Anonymous Respondent 46, Personal Communication.

these types of promises of support for their families. This is by no means the only reason, but these resources make the state's counteractions more bearable for the supporters.'[76]

As seen in the second section of this chapter, after April 2009 the Turkish state's repression of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement increased significantly and many Kurdish ethno-nationalist figures that were supposed to be operating legally were imprisoned under PKK/KCK-related charges. Yet, during this period the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party continued to enjoy parliamentary representation and municipal resources, and as the testimonies above suggest, the ongoing openness of the POS decreased the impact of the state's repression.

Moreover, as the Figure 8.1 illustrates, the process of increasing state coercion that started in 2009 with what is commonly known in Turkey as the 'KCK operation' experienced a gradual decline in the following years. Nonetheless, until the start of the negotiation process in early 2013, the Turkish state continued to exercise a certain level of coercion on the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, albeit more lawfully and selectively than before. The phrase commonly used by interviewees to express the local impression of the changing the nature and level of government coercive policies was 'the [hard] power of the state was still being felt by the people'.[77]

In terms of the impact of the Turkish state's coercive control of Kurdish ethno-nationalism on the latter's trajectory, the start of the resolution process meant the beginning of a new period in which the coercive control of the Turkish state minimised to previously unseen levels. As Figure 8.2 shows, PKK attacks directly targeting Turkish

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[76] Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication, August 2, 2015.
[77] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 17, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 31, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 41, Personal Communication.

security forces also significantly declined during this period. However, the same figure also shows that PKK attacks on private citizens and businesses did not decline as much as the attacks on military targets.[78] This quantitative data strongly corroborates the qualitative field findings of this research as many interviewees argued that the PKK utilised the opportunity structure stemming from the inertia of the Turkish security forces highly effectively.

First, the PKK militants became able to move more freely than they had ever been able to do before, and this mobility in the countryside further increased the already expanded relations of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement with the larger segments of the Kurdish people. As an example of similar remarks stated by numerous interviewees, a Turkish officer who had just retired from a position in an eastern province when the interview was conducted, claimed that 'The PKK terrorists would enter into the villages and would make propaganda in the past as well. However, since its establishment in 1978, the PKK had never had such a chance to move around the countryside and develop relations with people as freely as this period. This [resolution] process provided an unprecedented opportunity for them and they did not only make propaganda by freely talking people, but they spent days and nights with people. They ate, drank and even breathed with them.'[79]

A Kurdish-origin village guard who is well known in his community noted similar activities:

> With this resolution process, the organisation started to move freely in the
>
> countryside. When the security forces stopped the operation, the field remained theirs.

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[78] The data in Figure 8.4 also corroborates this argument as the armed attacks and bombings by the PKK, which often targeted Turkish security forces, became significantly less frequent after 2013. Kidnapping and facility/infrastructures attacks, which largely targeted private citizens and businesses, did not follow the same pattern, however.
[79] Anonymous Respondent 49, Personal Communication.

They used it very well. How did this influence people? As I have just said, when PKK members freely walk in the mountains, they meet a shepherd, or someone else, but for sure they meet and get in touch with people. Then they enter into the village; they eat, they chat, they lie down in the villages. Thereby, both they disseminate the propaganda of the organisation both easily and safely, and also recruit new members from the village…. If I am a member of the organisation, if I come to your house every day, I get something from you irrespective of whether you love me or not. When the PKK members visit the houses of sympathisers in the villages, other houses cannot say and could not say 'do not come', and the organisation then contacted every family in these villages. The villagers are afraid of them and cannot inform the state. If the villagers are sure that state could protect them, they would inform. However, when the state did not do it in the process, the villagers surrendered to the organisation.[80]

As seen in the previous two chapters, both through the municipalities and through appropriating the expanding civil and associational liberties, the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement had already increased its penetration level among Kurdish people after the mid-2000s. This increasing contact triggered the relational diffusion of Kurdish ethno-nationalist ideas. After the dramatic decline of the Turkish state's virtual coercion level, the increasing direct contact of the armed PKK militants with the Kurdish people also constituted another key component of these ever-expanding relations between the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and the larger Kurdish society.

Beyond this relational impact of the increasing contact, the field findings of this study also reveal that during the period of the resolution process the PKK's ongoing militancy and acts of terrorism on rival civilians through hostage-taking, attacks businesses and assassinations, as well as the YDG-H's so-called local law-enforcement activities

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[80] Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication.

significantly increased the image of the PKK as a source of hard power. These types of attacks by the PKK were not new but were the methods the PKK used to resort to both before and during the 2000s. However, due to the diminished use of Ankara's hard power on both PKK militants and sympathisers, the impact of these activities by the PKK proved much more influential with the local population and led to a shift of perception and felt hard power from the Turkish state to the PKK. This common belief that the hard power was now enshrined not in the Turkish security forces but in the PKK was another key facilitator of the expansion of ethno-nationalism among the hitherto unaffiliated Kurdish-origin citizens in Turkey.

The following excerpts, which are only a few examples of many similar remarks by interviewees from different cities, ethnicities and age groups, clearly reveals the relationship between the minimisation of the Turkish state's repression level during the resolution process, the PKK's actions and framing in response to this process, and the impact this interaction had on the expansion of Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

An Arab-origin university graduate and former mayor from the ruling AK Party, who is also the leader of an influential family, noted in this interplay of influencing factors in this account:

Yes, there was terror during 1990s, but there was also state power. The state never ever hesitated to use its power, and there was also fear of the state. As we have talked about, the state's approach towards its citizens showed a significant change during the 2000s. Yet until the last few years [referring to the beginning of the resolution process] the state's power still used to be felt. Now, there is not such a thing, however. This has given an unbelievable opportunity to [the Kurdish ethno-nationalists]. What did the KCK do then? It established 'people's courts', appointed its representative to each village, organised recruitment affairs and began to bring the youth the mountain. In sum, the KCK

began to be seen as a legitimate authority in the eyes of people…. One of the most important reasons for the rise of Kurdish nationalism in the region is that there is not any type of force to exert pressure on them. They gain psychologic power, a kind of self-confidence continuously as long as they continue to these deeds. As a result of all these developments, they began to feel like they were a state and made others feel it too.[81]

The following long excerpt from an interview with a former politician, who is among opposition political figures that was abducted by the PKK, further helps to illuminate the impact of the power shift on the predisposition of bystanders towards Kurdish ethno-nationalism in great detail:

After the state stopped using military methods, the organisation managed to spread the impression that 'we have the authority in this area. These areas are under our control after that.' Moreover, it managed to support that impression with its actions… The attainment of municipal and armed power resurfaced the repressive tendency which was in fact always at the core of the Kurdish national movement. Everywhere that they were strong, there were cases of political bans against other parties, attacks on the freedom of expression and obstruction of propaganda activities. In Diyarbakir, for example, it is very difficult for politicians outside of the HDP to be involved in politics. It is the same in Dersim [Tunceli] as well. Even my abduction, as an open-minded politician for the Kurdish question, proves how they suppress all the tendencies outside themselves, and if necessary, use physical violence. In periods when the state repression is strong, the organisation does not have a chance to do so at this level as it is trying to survive under the [state's] pressure. However, at the moment ... 'Even the state cannot cope with us! Who are you? How can you dare to challenge us?' This is what they say even to an independent intellectual [referring to himself]. This is the essence of their propaganda, and people

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[81] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication.

usually submit to it…. In the region where I lived, they exerted tremendous pressure on the people that do not support them, and it was very effective. Because human beings cannot survive under continuous pressure, [they] submit to it…. They began to send letters to people by courier and invite people to their camps in mountains… on some occasions they just called people to the mountain as a warning because of their political positions. If a person does not obey the call, bombs go off in front of his shop, office or house…. When they call a businessman or an intellectual to the mountain for a talk, this creates a perception that in terms of power, they are strong…. This also creates fear. So when they call someone to the mountain and even if they talk softly, there is a group of gunmen talking to you…even if it is just talk, being called to the mountain is itself a threat…. This process intensified the idea that the PKK and Kurdish nationalism is a power hub…. The PKK now has psychological superiority in the region. People began to believe that 'they are so powerful that the state cannot even cope with them. So, I should not get into trouble with them.' Consequently, other people outside of the organisation also want to at least establish contact with them. This is because people want to side with the strong…. People are quite rational.[82]

Another highly crucial development that should be touched upon when analysing the shift in people's perception of hard power are the Kobany (Ayn-al Arab) incidents of 6-8 October 2014 in Turkey. When the so-called Islamic State attacked the Syrian city of Ayn-al Arab to capture it from the PKK-linked Syrian YPG, upon the call of HDP leadership thousands of Kurdish origin citizens in Turkey took part in large demonstrations in more than 30 south-eastern cities as well as in some neighbourhoods of western cities such as Istanbul. These demonstrations lasted three days and ended with the death of more than 30 citizens and millions of Turkish liras worth of damages to both government and

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[82] Anonymous Respondent 47, Personal Communication.

private buildings to vehicles and public infrastructure.[83] Turkish security forces could only control the violent demonstration on the third day after heavy armoured vehicles were deployed in the streets of some south-eastern cities alongside a significant number of security personnel. The mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist party, the HDP, framed the protests as a natural reaction of the Kurdish people against Turkey's hesitancy to support the Syrian Kurds against the so-called Islamic State. Many others, including pro-state circles, argued that the incidents were a trial for a mass upheaval. While the proof of these diverging arguments is not directly relevant to the main foci of this study, the findings of this research show that the three days of violent demonstrations significantly impacted the popular perception in south-eastern Turkey on the above-explained shift of hard power from the Turkish state to the PKK and the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement.

In field research conducted during the summer of 2015, just one month before the collapse of the 'resolution process', many interviewees in south-eastern Turkey argued that the PKK framed the Kobany protests and Ankara's reaction as a sign of the Turkish state's weakness and lack of power and energy to cope with the momentum Kurdish ethno-nationalism had gained. The remarks of many interviewees suggest that both Ankara's reaction and the PKK's framing of it significantly contributed to the process McAdam refers to as 'cognitive liberation'.[84] Moreover, these events appear to have strengthened the beliefs of both sympathisers of Kurdish ethno-nationalism and also ordinary Kurds in the eventual success of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement.

The following remarks of several interviewees illuminate the background behind this expectation. An Arab-origin interviewee from Mardin stated that 'There was no state in

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[83] ''6-7 Ekim Olayları'nın Bilançosu [The Balance Sheet of 6-7 October Incidents],' TRT NEWS, July 10, 2015, http://www.trthaber.com/haber/turkiye/6-7-ekim-olaylarinin-bilancosu-207667.html.
[84] Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 48–51.

Mardin during the incidents. The city [Mardin] and all of us [possibly refers to Arab-origin city residents and Kurdish bystanders] surrendered to them.'[85] Another interviewee from the same city, a Syriac Orthodox Christian, noted a similar impression. 'I saw the state highly weak in these incidents' he said. 'Police did not interfere. The demonstrators did whatever they wanted. Nonetheless, I believe the state's position was correct and helped to de-escalate the tension. If the state would have used a high level of force to suppress the riots, the result might have been much bloodier. However, it is a fact that many people consider it as the weakness of the state.'[86]

A Zaza-origin interviewee who witnessed the incidents in Diyarbakir also mentioned similar things:

The state forces did not control the incidents themselves. Some demonstrators began to loot people's properties; other people could not bring their patients to the hospitals. Bakeries were closed, and for other similar reasons, life was about to come to an end, and people began to react to the organisation [PKK] and party members. The state forces did not do anything during the first two days. The Kobany incidents were a breaking point in the psychological power balance in the region. After the Kobany demonstrations, the number of people who believed that the state could regain the upper hand over the PKK significantly declined.[87]

According to many interviewees, the final element which further facilitated the power shift related to the fact that with the declining governmental coercion, the PKK started to stockpile weapons in cities in order to use them in a popular upheaval in the future. This process particularly accelerated after the Kobany incidents. Moreover, as

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[85] Anonymous Respondent 24, Personal Communication, August 1, 2015.
[86] Anonymous Respondent 18, Personal Communication, July 25, 2015.
[87] Anonymous Respondent 31, Personal Communication, August 10, 2015.

stated in the second section of this chapter, as well as in Chapter 6, the PKK militias began to create 'liberated zones' in some south-eastern cities by building barricades and digging trenches. Numerous interviewees argued that taking into account the experiences of people during the Kobany incidents, the PKK's stockpiling of arms and building of barricades and trenches further increased the people's perception of power shift.[88]

As a consequence of the decline of the Turkish government's repression level and the effective utilisation and framing of this situation by the PKK and legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors, the perceived and felt hard power of the PKK began to outweigh that of the Turkish security forces during the period of the resolution process. In this environment, pro-state residents were not even able to defend their political positions in public settings due to the increasing pressure and fear of reprisal. The following remark of a Zaza-origin interviewee from Diyarbakir, sentiments which were echoed by numerous other interviewees, clearly indicates the changing balance of power in the region:

> In Diyarbakir, there was no way you could advocate for the PKK in a café during the 1990s. The power of the state was so overwhelmingly felt in the field then. However, now it is exactly the opposite. You cannot publicly advocate or praise the government in a café in Diyarbakir. Similarly, those voting for the Kurdish party used to keep it a secret and would not tell others [about their vote] openly. Now in the last election [the 7 June 2015 general election] many people tried to cast their ballots in favour of the HDP openly in villages in order to get rid of the accusation that they did not vote for the Kurdish party.[89]

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[88] Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 17, Personal Communication, July 24, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 19, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 31, Personal Communication.
[89] Anonymous Respondent 31, Personal Communication.

Of course, this swing in hard power was not solely the result of structural factors. The Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors' successful utilisation of the POS, both in terms of action and in terms of developing appropriate action frames, also played an equally crucial role. However, as Benford and Snow argue, 'empirical credibility of the collective action frame' is one of the three key factors affecting the resonance of collective action frames.[90] The PKK framed that the state's determination to defeat the PKK had diminished and success for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement was an eventual certainty. It is highly likely that if the PKK would have promoted this narrative when the Turkish state's coercion level was as high as it was during the 1990s, such framing would not have resonated so extensively. Instead, it would have likely fallen on deaf ears. Indeed, many interviewees in south-eastern Turkey argued that due to the lack of state control, the PKK's framing was so effective from 2012 to 2015 because it corresponded to 'an objective reality' in the eyes of ordinary people. This led to the expansion of Kurdish ethno-nationalist sentiment among the Kurdish-origin citizens that had been not previously been influenced by the ethno-nationalist movement and ethno-nationalist ideas.[91]

8.5. Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the relationship between the expansion of the POS and the violent nature of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in the context of changes in the repression level of Turkish state from 1999 to mid-2015, the response of the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-

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[90] Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, 'Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,' *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 611–39. The other two are consistency of frames and credibility of the frame articulators or claims makers.
[91] Anonymous Respondent 11, Personal Communication, July 20, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 13, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 19, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 22, Personal Communication, July 29, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 23, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 25, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 26, Personal Communication, August 3, 2015; Anonymous Respondent 28, Personal Communication; Anonymous Respondent 31, Personal Communication.

nationalist movement to these changes, and the impact of these interactions on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism.

The analysis in this chapter has revealed that the opening up of formal political channels and other legal means to accommodate Kurdish nationalist demands did not lead to the departure of the PKK militancy and or halt its terror campaign. On the contrary, concerned with its own organisational survival, the PKK, which had declared it would lay down its arms in 1999, relaunched its militancy during the same period that civil and political liberties were expanding and the Turkish state's repression level was declining. Consequently, the action repertoire of the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalism expanded so as to cover both militant and non-militant activities.

The expansion of the POS did not mean the Turkish state abandoned its law enforcement duties, however. Although the openness of the other aspects of the POS, especially municipal resources, decreased the felt cost of state coercion, Ankara continued to apply pressure on both the PKK and the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement until the start of the resolution process in early 2013. After the start of the resolution process, despite the ongoing PKK presence in Turkey, Turkish security forces stopped organising military operations against the PKK and policing of non-violent Kurdish nationalist activism declined.

This newfound inertia in the Turkish security forces provided an unprecedented opportunity that the PKK seized through actions and framing to further the political goals of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Consequently, as the influence of the PKK in daily life increased, its image as a source of hard power began to outweigh that of the Turkish state and psychological superiority transferred from the state to the PKK in the local society.

The swing in the balance of power facilitated the expansion of Kurdish ethno-nationalism among the hitherto unaffiliated, Kurdish-origin Turkish citizens during this period.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

9.1. Introduction

This study has investigated a research question that has been not only necessitated by a scholarly gap in the existing literature but also by the arguments of previous studies in the field. Many scholars consider the Turkish state's monolithic founding philosophy and consequent security-centric policies as one of the leading reasons behind the emergence and growth of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Moreover, most of the studies on the topic argue that the closed nature of legal political channels for Kurdish nationalist electoral politics and the absence of a voice option – peaceful channels that can be used to advance ethnic demands – radicalised many Kurds and pushed Kurdish ethno-nationalist organisations to violence and militancy. Additionally, most scholars have contended that if the Turkish state were to introduce reforms such as expanding linguistics rights and political decentralisation away from Ankara, the appeal of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey would seriously diminish and a path would open for the resolution of the decades-long issue. In the light of these arguments and by adopting a modernist-constructivist understanding of nationalism, this study has analysed how both democratisation and decentralisation in Turkey from 1999 to 2015 and the decline of the Turkish state's coercion level on the Kurdish ethno-nationalism during the same period impacted the trajectory of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey.

Having adopted a pragmatic research paradigm, this study has addressed the research questions and attempted to explain them through mixed methods that rely most

heavily on qualitative findings. In this approach, the qualitative findings revealed the main answers to the research questions while relevant quantitative data was used to confirm the validity of the qualitative analyses and enhance its generalisability. As the basis of the qualitative data, semi-structured interviewees were conducted with 50 interviewees from diverse backgrounds, providing illuminating insight into the subject matter. These findings were complemented by analyses of primary documents from the Turkish government, the PKK and legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist political parties, as well as of relevant statements by key figures from all sides.

This study has applied an SMT-based theoretical framework to analyse the research problem. Nevertheless, it has not tested any particular approach in the SMT but rather used the SMT framework and literature as a guide for the empirical case study. Using this theoretical framework to analyse the above-stated structural changes in the Turkish POS from 1999 to the mid-2015, this study adopts a two-pronged POS model that analyses the structural change through inputs and outputs. However, this study does not believe structure to be the sole determinant of the trajectory of the contention. Instead, it recognises that accounting for the interaction of structure and agency is key to understanding the subject. Hence, by adopting a macro-focused, integrated SMT approach centred around a two-pronged POS conceptualisation, this study has also incorporated meso and micro-level factors into the analysis and revealed how macro-level changes and meso and micro-level factors interacted with each other and how this interaction impacted the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey during the specified time span.

Following this brief review of the main foci and methodology of the thesis in this introduction section, this concluding chapter will recapitulate the main findings of this research in the second section. The third section synthesises the findings of this research in

relation to the theoretical framework adopted in the thesis and more clearly locates these findings within the focused time period. In light of the main findings, the fourth section will conclude the thesis by putting forward suggestions for future research on the subject matter.

9.2. Main findings of the research

This study has analysed the relationship between changes in the Turkish POS from 1999 to mid-2015 and the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey during the same period. This analysis has revealed key findings that inform this relationship. The previous analytic chapters have discussed these findings in great details. In line with the theoretical framework and chapter divisions adopted in the thesis, this section will recapitulate these main findings of the thesis.

9.2.1. The expansion of the Turkish POS and decentralisation vis-à-vis the demands of Kurdish ethno-nationalism

This research has shown that beginning in 1999 and catalysed by several key developments discussed in Chapter 4, a reform process started in Turkey and this process further intensified after the AK Party came to power in 2002. This democratisation process increased the quality of Turkish democracy during the 2000s, and civil, cultural and political liberties significantly expanded in the country at this time.

As part of this process, legal changes in the country expanded the civil and cultural rights of Kurdish-origin Turkish citizens alongside those of other ethnic backgrounds. These included the establishment of private Kurdish language courses; broadcasting in

Kurdish and other minority languages, which were initially broadcast in limited time slots by state-owned channel TRT in 2003 but later evolving into around-the-clock programming by private TV and radio stations as well as TRT; the inclusion of Kurdish and other minority languages as optional modules in secondary and high schools; and academic programmes at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in Kurdish, Zazaki, Assyrian, Armenian, Roma, and in some other minority languages. Moreover, more and more venues began to permit the use of Kurdish; using Kurdish in court, in political propaganda and during prison visits became legal and possible.

In addition to the expansion of civil liberties, institutional political channels which had been largely closed to Kurdish nationalist electoral politics before the turn of the millennium began to gradually open. Starting with the 1999 municipal election, successive mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties began to enjoy legal political channels and have been continuously represented in the Turkish parliament since 2007. Moreover, decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system accompanied this process in the form of the 2004 Metropolitan Municipalities Law, a new Municipal Law in 2005 and further changes to the MML in 2012 that considerably strengthened the legal authority and fiscal resources of the municipalities.

The findings of this research have shown that although these structural changes resulted in the significant expansion of the POS in Turkey for the Kurdish-origin citizens in the country as well as for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, they could not fully accommodate Kurdish ethno-nationalist demands. Analysis of PKK/KCK documents as well as of statements of leading legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist political actors has revealed that the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement was arguing the existence of the Kurds as a nation with a territorial homeland and demanded the recognition of this

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situation and a sort of sovereignty over this claimed territory. However, democratisation and the expansion of civil and cultural freedoms mainly limited to cultural, educational and individual rights. Moreover, although decentralisation reforms significantly increased the capacity, legal authority and financial resources of municipalities, it did not introduce any type of autonomy as demanded by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. Thus the level of both democratisation and decentralisation fell short of meeting the demands of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement.

In contrast, the qualitative findings of this research have shown that the expansion of the Turkish POS created initial satisfaction among Turkey's Kurds and triggered existential organisational concerns for Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors, particularly the PKK. Following the rapid reform process in the first half of the 2000s, support for the ruling AK Party increased among Kurds and the AK Party performed better than the mainstream ethno-nationalist party of the time, the DTP, in the 2004 local and 2007 general elections. These developments demonstrated that the democratisation process had the potential to weaken the appeal of ethno-nationalism among Kurds in Turkey and to minimise the standing of the PKK and other legal organisations among their potential constituencies. Consequently, perceiving the rise of the AK Party and the declining interest of Kurdish people in Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties as a threat to their own survival, Ocalan and other leading figures of the PKK-led Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement reversed course and started to criticise the democratisation reforms.

Analysis of PKK publications and qualitative field findings both show that the PKK saw Turkey's evolving Kurdish policy and appeasement of its Kurdish-origin citizens with new policies as a much more threatening development than Ankara's earlier policies towards the Kurds. Furthermore, the PKK's framing of the expansion of Turkey's POS

suggests that regardless of the level and scope of the expansion of the output dimension of the Turkish POS for Kurdish rights, the PKK saw democratic reforms that failed to accommodate the PKK and include it as an actor in the process as a threat to the militant organisation itself. Although Turkey's democratisation process also produced several peaceful resolution attempts after 2009, and the Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors were also included in these processes, the two sides could not agree on the terms of a solution and thus these processes did not result in the accommodation of Kurdish ethno-nationalism, either.

The above explanations constituted only one side of the impact of the POS on the trajectory of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey, however. Changes in the Turkish POS also provided significant inputs for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and opened up meaningful political space for further ethno-nationalist mobilisation. Alongside the threat posed by these structural changes, the PKK and legal Kurdish nationalist actors also perceived the opportunity in this new structure and utilised it accordingly. The following sub-sections will review the findings of this research in this aspect.

9.2.2. The opening up of institutional political channels and decentralisation as the input side of the POS

This study has revealed that the opening up of the legal political channels in the 2000s provided the Kurdish nationalist movement with a highly important, legal organisational capacity. Particularly in the western urban centres as well as in some eastern cities and towns where the municipalities were governed by political parties outside the influence of Kurdish ethno-nationalism, these local party branches acted as important mobilising structures and played a crucial role in reaching and influencing the Kurdish people with

ethno-nationalism. Moreover, parliamentary representation after 2007 enabled the relatively free articulation of ethno-nationalist demands and framing and paved the way for a top-down diffusion of these ideas from leading Kurdish nationalist figures to ordinary sympathisers. Consequently, these frames were normalised and legitimised in political and public life in Turkey.

The opening up of formal political channels on the municipal level and particularly decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system with several legislations after the mid-2000s played an even more crucial role in the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. With the attainment of legal authority in many eastern municipalities, the Kurdish nationalist movement had the opportunity to use public services as incentives and disincentives to influence the political orientation of locals. Public concern for receiving municipal public services adequately and preferentially had a significant effect on the political inclination of the hitherto Kurdish bystanders towards the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement. Although this inclination of the unaffiliated Kurdish population initially stemmed from a rational choice perspective, the very nature of the municipal services also significantly increased the level of contact between the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement and larger segments of the Kurdish people, making it possible for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement to spread its ideology to ordinary Kurds.

Furthermore, by controlling municipalities the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement acquired valuable fiscal resources. While these resources increased the self-sufficiency of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement, they also facilitated the expansion of ethno-nationalism among the hitherto bystanders and the consolidation of support among the existing sympathisers through various means. Moreover, these fiscal resources also enabled the effective utilisation of various other aspects of the expanding POS by Kurdish

ethno-nationalism. The findings of this research have thus shown that despite failing to satisfy Kurdish ethno-nationalist demands, in terms of the political space it opened and the resources and legal power they provided, the relative decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system and the widening of institutional political channels significantly facilitated the expansion of ethno-nationalism among Turkey's Kurdish-origin citizens in the second half of the 2000s.

9.2.3. The impact of expanding civil and cultural rights on Kurdish ethno-nationalism

This study finds that in addition to the opening up of formal political channels and decentralisation, the expansion of civil, associational and cultural liberties also provided a highly suitable set of POS inputs after mid-2005, significantly facilitating the expansion of ethno-nationalism among Turkey's Kurds. An amended associational law both enabled the establishment of the ethnic associations and also eased governmental control on such associations. This research's qualitative findings have revealed that the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement successfully exploited the civil field to expand ethno-nationalist mobilising structures in the form of legally permitted civil society organisations as well as de facto city and neighbourhood councils. These developments enabled the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement to significantly increase its penetration and networking capacity within the larger Kurdish society in Turkey. Towards the late 2000s, the civil space in the mainly Kurdish-populated parts of Turkey began to be particularly dominated by Kurdish ethno-nationalist networks. This domination of civil life by Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilising networks triggered the relational dynamics of the diffusion, increased the resonance of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist frames and facilitated increased ethno-nationalist mobilisation among Kurdish-origin citizens in Turkey.

Another important finding from this study shows that the expansion of free debate on the input side of the POS far exceeded the level of policy outputs and enabled the free articulation and diffusion of Kurdish ethno-nationalist demands. Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors also effectively took advantage of this free debate environment to advance the level of their claims, and this development resulted in a scale shift in how to understand and thus address Kurdish ethno-nationalism. With the shifting scale of Kurdish ethno-nationalism, initial satisfaction with the reform process began to wane, and expectations of Kurds for further reforms increased. In the end, this process helped further Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation rather than containing it.

As a final important effect, the expansion of civil and cultural liberties also allowed for the utilisation of existing cultural traditions such as funerals for Kurdish ethno-nationalist mobilisation and resulted in the proliferation of cultural events, festivals and concerts organised by Kurdish nationalist civil society organisations and municipalities. Beginning in the second half of the 2000s, but particularly during the 'resolution process', these events were dominated by PKK symbols, emblems, colours, Kurdish ethno-nationalist songs and even posters of Ocalan. The proliferation of these symbols proved to be more than simply symbolic as this increased visibility was found to have led to the expansion of ethno-nationalism among the Kurdish people.

9.2.4. Democratisation, opening up of legal channels, declining state coercion and trajectory of ethno-nationalist violence and Kurdish ethno-nationalism

This thesis has contended that as a natural consequence of the expansion of civil and cultural liberties and the opening of institutional political channels, the coercive pressure that the Turkish government applied on non-violent Kurdish ethno-nationalist activism

meaningfully lessened and became more lawful and selective. This was not a smooth and linear process, however, and there were some cases of restrictive implementations of the expanding liberties by the Turkish authorities. Nonetheless, the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement found significant space to advance their claims through legal channels. Moreover, the decentralisation of the Turkish administrative system further increased the legal power and resources at the disposal of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism movement. The findings of this research have shown, nonetheless, these openings did not serve to moderate the PKK nor bring an end to its violent tactics and acts of terrorism.

On the contrary, the PKK perceived Turkey's Kurds' satisfaction with the reforms in the early and mid-2000s, the emergence of new, democratic, rival organisations outside of its own control and the rising power of legal actors within mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalism as threats to its own organisational survival. Consequently, the PKK, which had in 1999 agreed to abandon its militant campaign, restarted its attacks in 2004, a time that coincided with an opening political opportunity structure and relaxed policies and less coercive measures by the Turkish government.

The declining level and changing nature of the Turkish government's coercion on non-violent Kurdish nationalist political activism did not mean the end of government coercion, however. Moreover, there was no change in the Turkish government's counter-PKK operations until the start of the 'resolution process' in 2013. Thus, although it was rather lawful and selective, state pressure continued on both the violent and non-violent forms of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism during this period. Still, in an important example of the relationship between the openness of the other aspects of the POS and state repression, the findings of this research have revealed that municipal power and resources at the disposal of the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement played a key balancing role vis-

à-vis the coercive measures of the Turkish government and subsequently lessened the dissuasive impact of state coercion.

The most important change in the Turkish government coercive control of Kurdish ethno-nationalism and the PKK occurred with the start of the 'resolution process' in 2013. While Turkish security forces halted counter-PKK operations, the PKK militants continued to stay in Turkey and engage in active armed propaganda throughout the countryside and urban areas. The state's coercion against non-violent Kurdish nationalist activism also weakened to levels never before seen. This situation created an invaluable opportunity for the PKK and legal Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors who were able to expand their profile among the larger Kurdish population through increased interactions in everyday life, just as the Turkish state's role in the daily lives of its citizens declined. In addition to the discussed shift in soft power from the Turkish state to the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement through local governments and expanding civil networks, as well as through the inertia of Turkish security forces and ongoing active presence and appropriate framing of the PKK, the balance of perceived hard power also shifted from the Turkish state to the PKK. This development also significantly facilitated the expansion of ethno-nationalism among Turkey's hitherto ordinary or pro-state Kurdish-origin citizens.

9.3. Synthesising the findings in relation to the theoretical framework and locating them within the focused period

The main focus of this research has been the impact of the changes in the Turkish POS from 1999 to the mid-2015 on the trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey. Although the expansion of civil and cultural liberties and direct policy outputs addressing the rights of Kurdish-origin people initially satisfied ordinary Kurds in Turkey in the early

and mid-2000s, this trend began to change towards the latter half of the 2000s. Despite the initial decline in the support for the Kurdish ethno-nationalist movement among the country's Kurds as a result of the early reforms, subsequent steps not only failed to have the intended result but backfired to spur growth in Kurdish ethno-nationalist sentiment.

This research contends that this result stemmed from more than just structural factors, but instead the Kurdish ethno-nationalist agency's effective seizure of this opportunity structure played an equally crucial role in this process. Yet, from a structure-centric perspective, this outcome was related to the diverging sides of the expanding POS. In this context, the initial steps of the democratisation process in the early 2000s produced important policy outputs for the Kurdish people and following a long period of repression, the Kurdish people embraced these reforms. As the appeal of ethno-nationalism declined among the Kurds, support for the in-government AK Party increased. Importantly, the initial reforms in the first half of the 2000s did not provide sufficient room on the input side of the POS, which was only gradually expanding and continued to be outweighed by the output side.

Key pieces of legislation such as a law on associations, amendments to a municipality law and a law on metropolitan municipalities that significantly expanded the input side of the POS were passed in late 2004 and 2005. However, it took several years until these legal changes produced meaningful political inputs that facilitated ethno-nationalist mobilisation. Other developments regarding issues including parliamentary representation and further decentralisation were realised in 2007 and 2012, respectively. All the available findings suggest that the expansion of POS inputs began to outweigh the slowing-but-ongoing reforms occurring on the output side of the POS after 2007. Moreover, the significant decline of the Turkish state's coercion as a result of the

'resolution process' also expanded the input side of the POS and further upset the balance between the input and outputs sides to the advantage of the former.

The findings of this research suggest that this emerging gap between the input and output aspects of the POS in the second half of the 2000s led to a meaningful expansion of Kurdish ethno-nationalism among the Kurdish-origin citizens in Turkey. As the graph below shows, support for the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist party in the successive parliamentary elections from 2002 to 2015 trended in a way that also corroborates the qualitative findings.

Figure 9.1: Percentage of the vote by province won by the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist parties in general elections (2002 - 7 June 2015)[1]
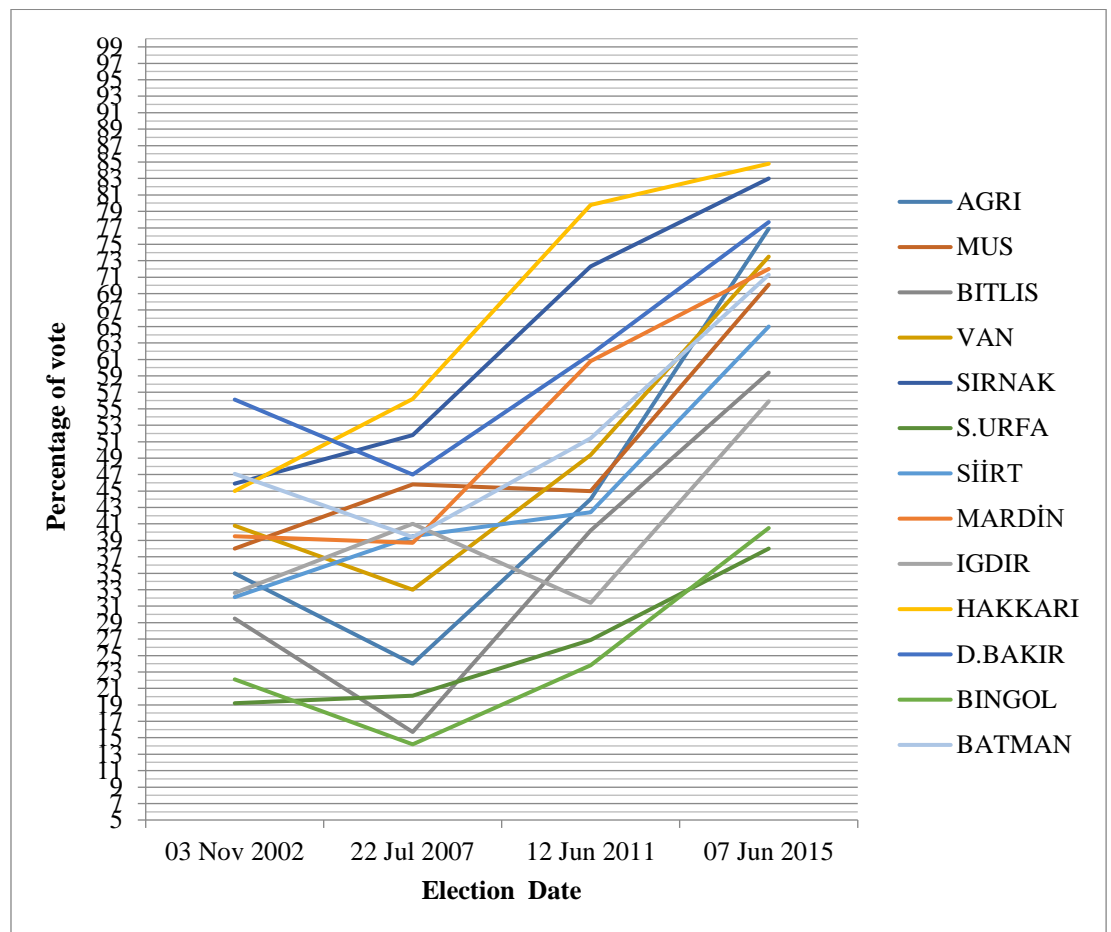
As discussed in Chapter 2, although diverging arguments exist in the SMT as well as broader conflict literature on the relationship between a POS and movement trajectory, the empirical findings of many previous studies demonstrate that mixed systems which neither totally repress nor fully accommodate the demands of movements yield increasing movement mobilisation. This study has analysed a single case, thus limiting the potential for generalisation. Nevertheless, the findings of this research support the curvilinear relationship between a POS and movement trajectory explored in other studies.

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[1] The data source of these election results was gathered by the researher from the official web page of the Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey (*Yüksek Seçim Kurulu*, YSK). 'YSK Web Portal,' accessed December 7, 2018, http://www.ysk.gov.tr/tr/milletvekili-genel-secim-arsivi/2644.

Furthermore, as a result of the methodological triangulation adopted in the research as well as rich empirical data nurtured from various sources, this study also concludes that the increasing movement mobilisation relates the changing levels of openness in the input and outputs sides of the POS.

The findings of this research suggest that what leads to the mobilisation of larger segments of the targeted constituencies is not the direct policy outputs addressing individual rights and status. Instead, it is the inputs that the expanding POS produces for the challenging groups and movements as a natural consequence of the democratisation that brings about large-scale mobilisation. If the openness of the input dimension a POS enables challengers to a greater degree than what is available to actors on the output side, all while preventing the state from keeping a challenging movement at bay, such a mixed POS yields increased movement activity as well as increased mobilisation and growth of the challenging groups and movements.

9.4. Suggestions for future research

This study on the impact of the expanding Turkish POS on the trajectory of the Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey has uncovered important discoveries that inform this relationship. Moreover, both its findings as well as other research gaps encountered during the research process call for future research on both the main subject of the study and also on the fields of SMT and nationalism studies.

As stated at the very outset of this thesis, the period after the collapse of the 'resolution process' has brought a different and significantly more closed POS in Turkey for Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Following the collapse of the 'resolution process', the level and intensity of PKK attacks in the country rose significantly as the Turkish state's

countermeasures against the PKK's armed attacks as also intensified. Moreover, the developing defence industry in Turkey, which has built up a particular competence in developing surveillance technologies, has greatly empowered Turkish forces in their fight against the PKK. Furthermore, institutional political channels have also narrowed for Kurdish ethno-nationalist electoral politics since the collapse of the 'resolution process' in 2015. In addition to the imprisonment of numerous MPs and mayors from the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist political parties under terror and separatism-related charges, a change in the Municipality Law authorised by a governmental decree under a state of emergency has meant centrally appointed deputy and district governors in the area have been able to replace the vast majority of the mayors of the municipalities controlled by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party.

The coercion of the Turkish state on the Kurdish ethno-nationalism started to increase just after the collapse of the resolution process in late July 2015. It intensified in fall 2016 after the declaration of a state of emergency, and this when the replacement of the mayors of the municipalities controlled by the Kurdish ethno-nationalist party occurred. As a continuation of Figure 9.1, Figure 9.2 below displays the results of the next two general elections that took place on 1 November 2015 and 24 June 2018 after the collapse of the resolution process and after the focused time period of this research. The results of these elections that occurred during a POS relatively closed for the Kurdish ethno-nationalism show a gradual decline in the support of the mainstream Kurdish ethno-nationalist party in the 13 eastern and south-eastern provinces in Turkey that are populated by large numbers of Kurds. From a reverse perspective analysed in this research, these figures corroborate the close relationship between the nature of a POS and movement mobilisation. It also requires an empirical investigation of the relationship between the lack

of municipal authority and resources, as well as closing formal political channels, and the

trajectory of Kurdish ethno-nationalism after 2015.

Figure 9.2: Percentage of the vote by province won by the mainstream Kurdish

ethno-nationalist parties in general elections (2002 - 2018)[2]
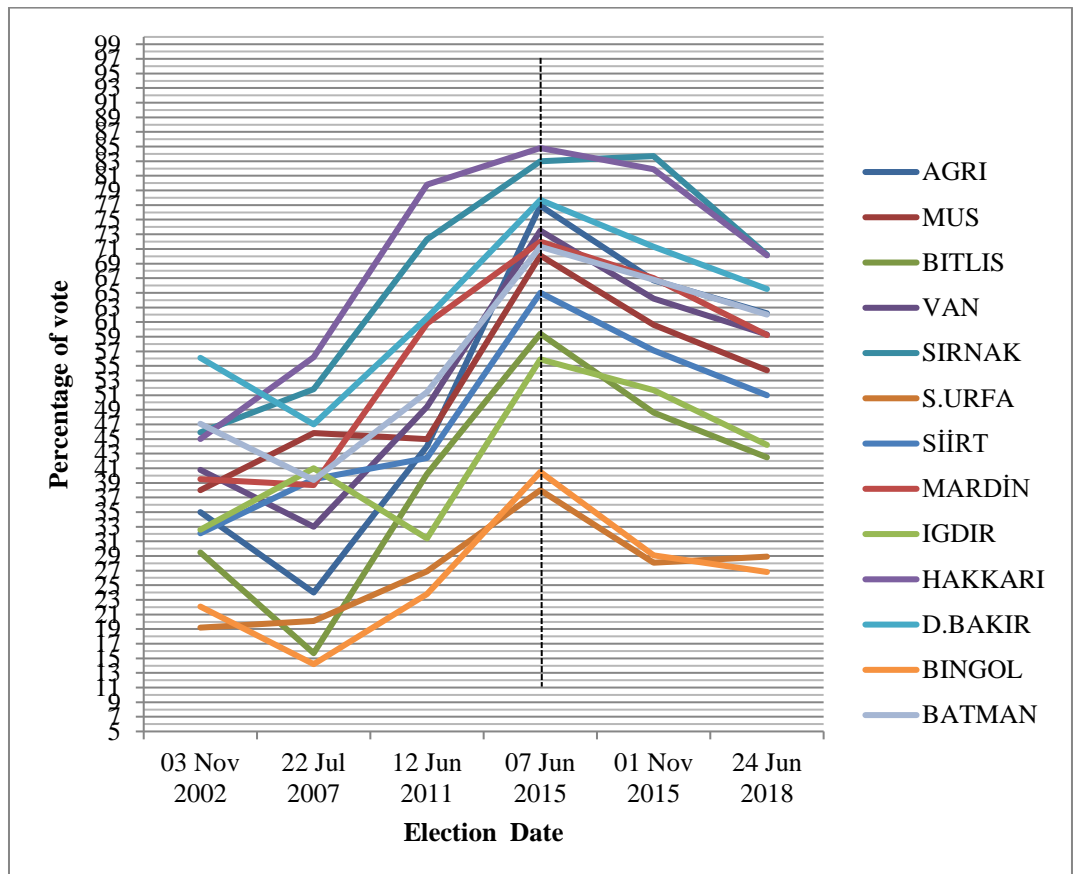
This study's macro-focused theoretical framework has argued that the level of the

expansion of the policy outputs fell short of meeting the demands of the PKK and Kurdish

ethno-nationalist actors. This was not only a structural diagnosis, but this research has

analytically proposed a relationship between structural change and the desire of the

Kurdish ethno-nationalist actors, particularly the PKK as an outlawed militant organisation

fighting for organisational survival. In different settings, future studies may further explore

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[2] The data source of this election results is gathered by the researher from the official web page of the Supreme Electrol Council of Turkey (Yüksek Seçim Kurulu, YSK). 'YSK Web Portal.'

the interaction between macro-level changes and meso-level organisational legacies and the desire for organisational survival. Likewise, future studies might also wish to comparatively analyse the impact of similar structural changes on the trajectory of ethno-nationalist movements in other countries and under different organisational structures, such as those led by rooted and established, outlawed militant organisations, as well as relatively weak and newly emerging organisations. Such studies would serve to meaningfully increase our understanding of the interaction between the macro and meso levels and also may discover the general parameters for the nature of a POS that are most conducive to ending violence.

Finally, this study has also shown how the nature of a POS significantly affects the capacity of the use of cultural values. Moreover, it has argued that under suitable structural conditions, existing cultural values such as funeral and condolence traditions, weddings and music and dance rituals have played important roles in the expansion of Kurdish ethno-nationalism. Further studies, and particularly ethnographic research where researchers spend considerable time in these milieus, might more closely reveal how these cultural values and rituals influence identity and impact the course of the ethno-nationalism. This research has endeavoured to develop analytically rigorous and valid answers to its research questions. Nevertheless, the field still offers many new and interesting research areas and subjects to analyse. We look forward to future studies publicising these areas and contributing to our knowledge of both the dynamics of ethno-nationalism and other forms of contentious politics.

1	Anonymous Respondent	Businessman	Adana	01/07/2015
2	Anonymous Respondent	Tradesman	Adana	02/07/2015
3	Anonymous Respondent	Businessman	Adana	03/07/2015
4	Anonymous Respondent	Teacher	Adana	03/07/2015
5	Anonymous Respondent	Farmer	Adana	04/07/2015
6	Anonymous Respondent	Engineer	Adana	05/07/2015
7	Anonymous Respondent	Tradesman	Adana	06/07/2015
8	Anonymous Respondent	Labour	Adana	09/07/2015
9	Anonymous Respondent	Cafe owner	Adana	10/07/2015
10	Anonymous Respondent	Businessman	Adana	11/07/2015
11	Anonymous Respondent	Village Guard	Mardin	20/07/2015
12	Anonymous Respondent	Tradesman	Mardin	20/07/2015
13	Anonymous Respondent	Tribal Leader/Former district mayor	Mardin	21/07/2015
14	Anonymous Respondent	Unemployed	Mardin	22/07/2015
15	Anonymous Respondent	Butcher	Mardin	23/07/2015
16	Anonymous Respondent	Muhtar / Head of Village	Mardin	23/07/2015
17	Anonymous Respondent	Head of AK Party District Organization/ Businessman	Mardin	24/07/2015
18	Anonymous Respondent	Head of a Foundation	Mardin	25/07/2015
19	Anonymous Respondent	Businessman	Mardin	26/07/2015
20	Anonymous Respondent	Head of a Vocational Chamber	Mardin	27/07/2015

21	Anonymous Respondent	Businessman	Mardin	28/07/2015
22	Anonymous Respondent	Engineer	Mardin	29/07/2015
23	Anonymous Respondent	Businessman	Mardin	30/07/2015
24	Anonymous Respondent	Head of a Think Thank	Mardin	01/08/2015
25	Anonymous Respondent	Village Guard	Mardin	02/08/2015
26	Anonymous Respondent	Teacher	Mardin	03/08/2015
27	Anonymous Respondent	Engineer	Mardin	05/08/2015
28	Anonymous Respondent	Head of a Civil Society	Mardin	06/08/2015
29	Anonymous Respondent	Retired Civil Servant	Mardin	07/08/2015
30	Anonymous Respondent	Businessman	Mardin	08/08/2015
31	Anonymous Respondent	Tradesman	Diyarbakır	10/08/2015
32	Anonymous Respondent	Head of a Association	Diyarbakır	11/08/2015
33	Anonymous Respondent	Labour	Diyarbakır	12/08/2015
34	Anonymous Respondent	High School Graduate	Diyarbakır	14/08/2015
35	Anonymous Respondent	Village Guard	Ankara	16/08/2018
36	Anonymous Respondent	Businessman/ Tribal Leader	Ankara	17/08/2018
37	Anonymous Respondent	Academician	Ankara	17/08/2018
38	Anonymous Respondent	District Governor	Ankara	18/08/2018
39	Anonymous Respondent	Academic / Veteran Officer	Ankara	19/08/2015
40	Anonymous Respondent	Academic	Ankara	20/08/2018
41	Anonymous Respondent	Academic	Istanbul	22/08/2018
42	Anonymous Respondent	General Manager of a Public Research Company	Istanbul	23/08/2018

43	Anonymous Respondent	Academic	Istanbul	24/08/2018
44	Anonymous Respondent	Businessman	Istanbul	25/08/2018
45	Anonymous Respondent	Politician	Istanbul	26/08/2018
46	Anonymous Respondent	District Governor	Istanbul	27/08/2018
47	Anonymous Respondent	Former Politician	Ankara	30/08/2018
48	Anonymous Respondent	Academic	Ankara	02/09/2018
49	Anonymous Respondent	Veteran Officer	Ankara	03/09/2018
50	Anonymous Respondent	Resigned District Governor	Ankara	04/09/2018

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