

Struggle for a Livable Life

Everyday Resistance among the Kurdish Population in Turkey

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of Humanities

2014

Ulrike Flader

School of Social Science

Contents

Contents	2
List of Figures.....	5
List of Abbreviations.....	7
Abstract	8
Declaration	9
Copyright Statement	9
Acknowledgements.....	10
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	11
1.1 The Kurdish Movement in Turkey and Everyday Resistance	12
1.2 Overview of Chapters.....	16
CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODS	20
2.1 Research Objects: Practices, not Actors.....	21
2.2 Grasping Complexity and Entanglement.....	22
2.3 Details of a Multi-Site Ethnography	23
2.3.1 Choosing Research Locations: Diyarbakir, Kızıltepe, Izmir and Bursa	23
2.3.2 Formal and Informal Interviews	26
2.3.3 The Interviewees	27
2.3.4 Observations and Other Data Sources	29
2.3.5 Gaining Access and Trust	30
2.4 Research in a Highly Politicized Atmosphere	31
2.4.1 Ensuring Anonymity	32
2.4.2 “Are You a Spy?” and the Impossibility of a “Neutral” Image	33
2.4.3 Ethical Issues of Knowledge Production	35
CHAPTER 3: THE TECHNIQUES OF ASSIMILATION AND THE PRODUCTION OF TURKISH SUBJECTIVITY	36
3.1 Discursive Forclosure: The Non-Word “Kurd”	39
3.2 Elimination of Language	42
3.3 Learnt Inferiority and Crisis of Subjectivity	45
3.4 Shaping the Modern Body.....	50
3.5 Criminalizing Kurdishness.....	53
3.5.1 Torture as Turkification Techniques.....	54
3.5.2 Anti-Terrorism Act: The Production of a Loyal Citizen	55
3.5.3 Detaining Kurdistan: Control and Surveillance	56
3.6 Neoliberal Governmentality: Racism and Multiculturalism	58
3.6.1 The Absolute Other: Traitors, Terrorists and Pseudo-Citizens.....	58
3.6.2 The AKP Government’s Multicultural Project: Production of Kurdish Brothers	59

CHAPTER 4: THEORIZING EVERYDAY RESISTANCE	63
4.1 Scott and The Rise of the Everyday for Resistance	64
4.2 Foucault on Resistance: Destabilizing Techniques of Power from Within	66
4.2.1 Battles of Truth	67
4.2.2 Bodies and Pleasures: Challenging Biopower	70
4.2.3 Shifting Subjectivities: Counter-Conduct	72
4.2.4 Aesthetics of the Self: Creativity in Conduct	74
4.2.5 Common Creative Action and Political Spirituality	76
4.3 Social Movements Studies and the Everyday	79
CHAPTER 5: KURDISHNESS: IDENTITY AS A SITE OF STRUGGLE	82
5.1 Impossibility of “Full” Kurdishness	82
5.2 Becoming Kurdish	85
5.3 Claiming Ethnic Difference	89
5.4 Awareness of Assimilation	94
5.5 Distrusting the State	96
5.6 Shared Experience of Pain	98
5.7 At Feud with the State: Defending the PKK and Voting for the Kurdish Party	100
5.8 Reclaiming the Village and the Mountains	103
CHAPTER 6: POLITICIZATION OF EXISTENCE	107
6.1 Visualizing Kurdishness	108
6.1.1 Flagging the Body	108
6.1.2 Reclaiming the Rural	111
6.1.3 Embodying Opposition	114
6.1.4 Passing Strategies and Masquerade	115
6.1.5 Moralizing Visualization	117
6.2 Speaking Back and Staying Silent: Language	121
6.2.1 Refusing to Speak: Dropping Out of School and Turning Ones Back on Turkish ...	121
6.2.2 Relearning Kurdish	127
6.2.3 Reclaiming Names	131
6.3 Subjugated Narratives of Tradition, Pain and the Struggle	136
6.3.1 Narrating Oneself into Tradition	139
6.3.2 The Family as Carrier and Audience of the Hidden Knowledge	140
6.3.3 Experiencing the Narrative of Pain	143
6.3.4 The Struggle as Family Relation	146
6.4 Forbidden Practices	148
6.4.1 Countering “Cultural Genocide”: Narrating Kurdishness through Cultural Practices	149
6.4.2 Cultural Weapons and Dangerous Objects	153
6.4.3 Practices of Concealment	156

6.4.4 Forbidden “Own” Culture	157
CHAPTER 7: INSURRECTIONS OF CONDUCT	162
7.1 Breaking Performative Turkishness.....	162
7.1.1 Refusing Injurious Interpellation.....	164
7.1.2 Parodic Repetitions	167
7.1.4 Silent Non-Compliance.....	169
7.1.5 Collective Refusal in an Atmosphere of Strength	170
7.1.6 Refusing the Emotional Bind	172
7.2 In the Face of the State: Overt and Covert Iconoclasm	175
7.2.1 Covert Iconoclasm: Rejecting Authority and Countering Self-Assimilation.....	178
7.2.2 Desecration: Breaking the Glorification	180
7.2.3 The Unbearable Carved in Stone: Torture and the Bust.....	184
7.2.4 Public De-Facement: Exposing the Truth?	186
7.3 Decolonising Landscapes of Power	190
7.3.1 Shifting Script: Re-Inscriptions by the State.....	194
7.3.2 Rewriting Proper Names	196
7.3.3 Clandestine Semanticization: Enabling a Habitable Space	198
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION	205
8.1 Entanglement of Power and Resistance.....	206
8.2 Disturbing Binaries	206
8.3 Intersections with the Organized Movement	207
8.4 Everyday Resistance as a Distinct Form of Politics.....	208
Appendix 1.....	210
Appendix 2.....	214
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	217

Word count: 88,716

List of Figures

Figure 1: The stand of a street vendor selling bracelets and armbands items in green-red-yellow in Diyarbakir, Suriçi.	109
Figure 2: A shop in the bazaar in Suriçi, Diyarbakir. A shawl like those in the middle was tied to the military vehicle carrying the bodies of guerrilla fighters in Beytüşşebap, September 2012.	109
Figure 3: A shop selling football scarves showing the name for Diyarbakir used within the Kurdish movement, Amed, and the number 21, number-plate registration number for Diyarbakir.	109
Figure 4: A woman wearing a headscarf with hand-crocheted PKK emblems around the edges. (Newroz, Diyarbakir, 2012)	110
Figure 5: An elderly couple on their way back from the Newroz celebrations 2012.	112
Figure 6: Selahattin Demirtaş, co-president of the Kurdish party BDP at the time, speaking at the Newroz celebrations in 2011 (Özgür Gündem, 2011).	112
Figure 7: Two young women on their way to the celebration grounds, Newroz 2012.	112
Figure 8: A young woman wearing khaki coloured baggy trousers and waistcoat at the Newroz celebrations 2012.	113
Figure 9: Female and male guerrilla fighters in their usual clothing (Rojhelat.info, 2013).	113
Figure 10: A shop displaying football T-shirts of the National Team of Kurdistan (KRG) and the Turkish League Team Galatasaray.	114
Figure 11: Primary school children lining up in front of the bust of Atatürk reciting the vow (Nethaber, 2010)	163
Figure 12: The statue of Atatürk in military uniform at the square of the Governor (Vilayet, September 2011).	176
Figure 13: The statue of the “Head-teacher” Atatürk with two children (September 2011).	176
Figure 14: The historical walls of Diyarbakir decorated with the portrait of Atatürk in civil formal clothing and the national flag (September 2011).	176

Figure 15: The statue of Atatürk at Dağ Kapı Square, Diyarbakir, after having been set fire (Radikal, 2011a).	187
Figure 16: Screenshot taken from a video titled “Bu ne cüret!” [What a nerve!] showing the same statue manipulated (IHA, 2011).	187
Figure 17: “Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene” inscription in Van (September 2011)	191
Figure 18: Inscription “Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene”, Vilayet, Diyarbakir (September 2011)	195
Figure 19: Same inscription in Diyarbakir being removed (Radikal, 2013)	195
Figure 20: Graffiti on facades of homes. “Long live the Revolution” (translation from Turkish), Bağlar, Diyarbakir (September 2012)	199
Figure 21: Erased and repainted “PKK”, Bağlar, Diyarbakir (September 2012)	199
Figure 22: “Long live our leader Apo” followed by a different writing: “my love”, Bağlar, Diyarbakir (September 2012)	199
Figure 23: “Long live the resistance of Kurdistan” (translation from Kurdish), “Apo Youth Group”, “PKK”, “ESP” (Socialist Party of the Oppressed), Bağlar, Diyarbakir (September 2012)	199
Figure 24: Wall graffiti “Katil Kerdoğan”, Suriçi, Diyarbakir (September 2012)	202
Figure 25: Graffiti “Kurdistan”, Bağlar, Diyarbakir (September 2012)	204

List of Abbreviations

AKP	Turkish: <i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i> , [Justice and Development Party]
BDP	Turkish: <i>Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi</i> [Peace and Democracy Party], the name of the Kurdish party during my fieldwork. It was dissolved itself into the HDP in 2011?
CHP	Turkish: <i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</i> [Republican People's Party]
DBP	Turkish: <i>Demokratik Bölgeler Partisi</i> [Democratic Regions Party]
DTK	Turkish: <i>Demokratik Toplum Kongresi</i> [Democratic Society Congress]
ERNK	Kurdish: <i>Eniya Rizgariya Neteweyî ya Kurdistanê</i> [National Liberation Front of Kurdistan]
HDP	Turkish: <i>Halkların Demokratik Partisi</i> [Peoples' Democratic Party]
HPG	Kurdish: <i>Hêzên Parastina Gel</i> [Defence Force of the People], current name of the armed forces of the PKK
KCK	Kurdish: <i>Koma Civakên Kurdistan</i> [varying translations have been used. I have chosen to use: Union of Communities of Kurdistan]
KRG	<i>Kurdistan Regional Government of Iraq</i>
LM	<i>Lifestyle Movements</i>
MKM	Turkish: <i>Mezopotamya Kültür Merkezi</i> ; also known by its Kurdish abbreviation: NÇM, Navenda Çanda Mezopotamya.
NSM	<i>New Social Movements</i>
PKK	Kurdish: <i>Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan</i> [Kurdistan Workers' Party]

Abstract

Struggle for a Livable Life. Everyday Resistance among the Kurdish Population in Turkey

**Ulrike Flader, The University of Manchester, 30 December 2014
PhD Sociology**

Drawing on a Foucauldian understanding of power and resistance, this thesis explores different practices of everyday resistance, which the Kurdish population has developed against the policies of assimilation of the Turkish state. It grasps assimilation policies as a shifting network of laws, administrative regulations and practices, scientific and non-scientific discourses which aims at defining the *normal* citizen and thereby producing a national subject. Consequently, this thesis grasps everyday practices of resistance against assimilation as ways of challenging these forms of governing how people identify, lead their lives, and perceive themselves: as counter-conduct.

Drawing on multi-site ethnographic fieldwork conducted in four cities in Turkey, two in the Kurdish region and two in the West of Turkey, this thesis uses interview material, observations and photographs to examine how everyday resistance shifts, dodges, undermines and subverts the specific techniques of assimilation. Instead of focusing on the actors and their intentions, the object of this research are the *practices* in themselves, which do not necessarily form a coherent unity, but are traversed by the effects of the techniques of power. These practices derive from *within* the relations of power and work *on* specific techniques of assimilation.

Engaging with authors such as James C. Scott, Judith Butler, Michel De Certeau, Michael Taussig, and Tim Cresswell this thesis offers a reading of everyday resistance which does not reduce it to an alternative to organized politics in the absence of open contestation. Instead, this thesis draws out the different ways in which everyday resistance and organized forms of politics intersect and foster each other. Similarly, this thesis illustrates how everyday resistance complicates the distinctions between covert and overt, intentional and unintentional, public and private. It demonstrates how achieving visibility has to be reinterpreted in the context of everyday resistance, not as a way of claiming recognition, but rather in terms of subverting conduct. Instead of making *demands* for a change in governmental politics, these practices of everyday resistance aim at achieving *de facto* interventions into the effects of power. In their different ways, they destabilize the norms, discourses and practices which produce the *normal* citizen. They shift the practices of self-conduct and thereby subvert subjectivity in practice. In this sense, this thesis suggests understanding forms of everyday resistance as struggles for a “livable life”. Focussing on these mundane, non-heroic micro-practices of resistance, this thesis contributes both to the literature on social movements and the Kurdish Movement.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning

Copyright Statement

i. The author of this thesis (including any appendices and/or schedules to this thesis) owns certain copyright or related rights in it (the “Copyright”) and s/he has given The University of Manchester certain rights to use such Copyright, including for administrative purposes.

ii. Copies of this thesis, either in full or in extracts and whether in hard or electronic copy, may be made **only** in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended) and regulations issued under it or, where appropriate, in accordance with licensing agreements which the University has from time to time. This page must form part of any such copies made.

iii. The ownership of certain Copyright, patents, designs, trade marks and other intellectual property (the “Intellectual Property”) and any reproductions of copyright works in the thesis, for example graphs and tables (“Reproductions”), which may be described in this thesis, may not be owned by the author and may be owned by third parties. Such Intellectual Property and Reproductions cannot and must not be made available for use without the prior written permission of the owner(s) of the relevant Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions.

iv. Further information on the conditions under which disclosure, publication and commercialisation of this thesis, the Copyright and any Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions described in it may take place is available in the University IP Policy (see <http://www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/policies/intellectual-property.pdf>), in any relevant Thesis restriction declarations deposited in the University Library, The University Library’s regulations (see <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/library/aboutus/regulations>) and in The University’s policy on presentation of Theses

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude and thanks to my first supervisor, Nicholas Thoburn, who supported me in an exceptional way throughout writing this thesis and guided me with both his comments and his silences. Similarly, I would like to thank my second supervisor Nick Crossley for the helpful comments at different stages of the thesis. I also want to thank Kevin Gillian, Gemma Edwards, Luke Yates of Movements@Manchester and Thom Tyerman of the Foucault Reading Group for the enjoyable and insightful academic exchange.

Every thesis has its challenges. One of them, for me, was the nearly nomadic life of the past four years. With four different fieldwork locations and commuting between Ankara and Manchester, I had to rely much more than I would have liked on the incredible help of so many friends. Therefore, I would like to thank all these wonderful people who made these many places feel like home.

No words are enough to thank my dear friends Devrim, Necla and our little community in Manchester, including Suna, Ronja, Dara and Baran, Lorin and Diyar, for their friendship and support in uncountable ways. I wish to also thank Övgü, Chris and Iona, and my friends and co-phd students from the Manchester University, especially Bethan and Vallu, Elisa, Isabelle and Carlos, Adi and Medina, Kirsty, Laura, Sebastian, Feng and Jamie.

I would also like to extend many thanks to Emel and Elif and their family, Önder and Nimet abla, Ferhat, Dilek and Zübeyde, İlke, Derya and her sister, Yusuf and family, who opened their homes for me in Diyarbakir, Kızıltepe, Izmir and Bursa; my colleagues in the two associations I worked for, my Kurdish teachers, Jihat and Mirad, and the co-students in my Kurdish classes in Diyarbakir; as well as my dear friends Volkan, Güneş, Gamze and Tuba, Alix and Eren, İlhan and Funda, Hasan, Veysel, Serhat and Evin, Şükran, Yasemin, Altun, Chrissi, Veronica, who I shared the fieldwork-time with in Diyarbakir, and Irmak, who brought Manchester back to Ankara and was an refreshing source of support throughout the last year.

Above all, however, I wish to thank my mother and father who both in their different ways stirred the interest for what this thesis is about and never became tired of discussing these questions with me; my sister who is always there for me however far away we are from each other, the two wonderful spirits, Joe and Dylan, and most importantly Çetin without whom none of the following words would ever have been written ...

This thesis is dedicated to the participants of this study.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Since the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, PKK) took up its armed struggle 30 years ago, the Kurdish Movement¹ has turned into a significant mass movement which mobilizes millions of people in protests, demonstrations and political celebrations in the Kurdistan region² in Turkey and across the world. Although the struggle has broken the state discourses of denial of the existence of the Kurds which prevailed throughout previous decades, and so brought about their limited acknowledgement, Kurds still lack fundamental political recognition and suffer from discrimination and racism in everyday life.

These discourses of denial were part of a network of shifting legal and administrative regulations, disciplinary practices, institutions, and discourses which has developed since the founding of the Turkish republic in 1923 with the aim to assimilate the Kurds. These policies of assimilation have led to various bans on language use in publications and everyday life, forbidden certain clothing, and punished self-identification as Kurdish and Kurdish political expression. Additionally, they have forced the Turkish language onto the Kurds, required self-identification as Turkish, and practiced forced resettlement, torture, and state violence. In this way, they have aimed at eliminating Kurdish life through the *production* of a certain norm: the Turkish citizen. Such policies not only define who counts as a citizen, but also develop the techniques that shape individuals accordingly.

Understanding the policies of the Turkish nation-state in this way, we can argue that in fighting against these policies of assimilation in its violent and subtle forms, the Kurdish movement is more than a “national” struggle. It is more than a struggle for recognition and rights or independence; more than identity politics. It is about shifting the definitions of who can count as a citizen, challenging what is accepted as a normal citizen, and subverting

¹ As I explain in the Terminology (Appendix 1), I use the term *Kurdish Movement* (short: the Movement) when referring to the legal Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) and its predecessors, political/cultural institutions ideologically related to the PKK, as well as the PKK, itself. In contrast, I use the term *Kurdish National Movement* in broader terms to include Kurdish political actors who do not follow the same politics as the PKK, such as the Rights and Freedoms Party (HAK-PAR).

² See Appendix 1 for an explanation on my use of the term “Kurdistan region in Turkey”.

the techniques by which this intelligible subject is produced. No doubt, demanding the expansion of political and cultural rights in the name of an ontological identity, exerting pressure on the government to change its policies, and claiming self-determination as organized identity politics do, are also key in this struggle. However, tackling this form of power, which shapes the lives of the citizens, requires a form of resistance that takes place on an everyday level of the conduct of life itself. Countering the ways in which subjects are produced demands a form of resistance which works in a similarly productive way by subverting subjectivity in practice, shifting the practices of the self in everyday, reversing the conduct of one's life and the discourses, norms and practices which determine it. Thus, while party politics and armed struggle contest the state and its policies through legal and military means, everyday resistance tackles the state policies in their most *immediate* manifestation: the production of subjectivity.

1.1 THE KURDISH MOVEMENT IN TURKEY AND EVERYDAY RESISTANCE

For the Kurdish Freedom Movement, popular resistance - understood as the resistance of people who are not officially members of the legal parties or the PKK itself - has been of upmost importance. However, this has mainly been understood in terms of organised forms of protest rather than unorganised dissident practices in the everyday.

In the Maoist strategy of the early years of the PKK the concept of the "people's war" was central. Understood as the third stage in the war against the state, the people's war was envisaged as the mobilization of the whole Kurdish population, though in a purely militaristic sense (Akkaya & Jongerden, 2012: 94). According to this strategy, it was assumed that popular rebellion would lead to a revolution and consequently to the liberation of Kurdistan (Gunes, 2012: 92). Historically more important, however, turned out to be mass-uprisings, captured by the Kurdish term "serhildan" [uprising], which has come to signify what the term "intifada" does for the conflict in Palestine. Serhildan, in the literal sense, has meant boycotting normal life, by closing shops, not attending school, and instead taking to the streets; usually beginning as demonstrations which end up in street fighting with police and military forces (Gunes, 2012: 104). Although serhildans are mass uprisings of a broad part of the population, they usually follow a call by the PKK (or today the Union of Communities of Kurdistan, KCK³). Located more in the everyday are the recent strategies of civil disobedience, which have gained importance since the shift in PKK

³ The KCK (Kurdish: Koma Civakên Kurdistan) was founded in the mid-2000s out of an initiative of the PKK as part of the new strategy to achieve "democratic autonomy".

strategy away from national liberation to radical democracy⁴. Such actions of civil disobedience are organized through the legal Kurdish party⁵, other Kurdish institutions and a variety of non-governmental organizations. Although these actions of disobedience aim at the everyday level of politics, they are still very much strictly organized and therefore differ from the practices discussed in this thesis.

Despite the focus on organised politics, the Freedom Movement has achieved a politicization of the everyday which encourages a range of unorganized, local acts of resistance against the policies of assimilation⁶. Gunes (2012) analyzes how the PKK discursively ties Kurdish identity to a history of resistance, identifying the mythical uprising of Kawa the Blacksmith against the tyrannical king with the struggle of the PKK as a whole or of individual people, such as Mazlum Doğan who committed suicide in the night of Newroz (21 March) 1982 in the notorious prison of Diyarbakir⁷. In this sense, there is a simultaneous glorification of “exemplary” actions as well as a broader more common notion of resistance through its identification with Kurdishness in the PKK discourse. Accordingly, the PKK has been alert to paying tribute to various kinds of individual everyday acts of resistance. Especially highlighted among these, is the work of journalists and distributors for Kurdish newspapers, who were a specific target of the violent state policies during the 1990s, and a number of whom were assassinated. Similarly, shop closures and school boycotts are regularly narrated as forms of everyday resistance. Furthermore, we can regard the existence of terms such as “onurlu yaşam” [honourable life] versus “yoz yaşam” [corrupted life], which point towards issues of “undoing oneself and reshaping oneself”, in the writings of PKK-leader Abdullah Öcalan, as ways in which individuals are asked to reflect on and change their self-conduct (Özcan, 2006: 144)⁸. Despite this, discourses of the Movement do not frame individual conduct as a central field of resistance against assimilation.

The academic literature, which specifically addresses the Kurdish Movement, similarly focuses on organised forms of struggle. The current resistance is addressed either in terms

⁴ For more details on this shift see Gunes (2012), Akkaya & Jongerden (2012) and Güre (2014).

⁵ See Terminology in Appendix 1.

⁶ Çetin Güre describes, for instance, that self-initiated campaigns of student groups for first language education at University in the early 2000s were later praised by the PKK as examples of the kind of “free citizen” they were hoping to enable (Güre, 2014: 281).

⁷ This myth is tied to the legend which is said to be situated around 2500 years ago and tells the story of Kawa the Blacksmith who led his people to fight against the tyrannical Assyrian king Dehak, who in order to relieve himself from the pain of serpents which were growing out of his shoulders demand the sacrifice of two men everyday to eat their brains. Gunes describes how Doğan was stylized to the “contemporary Kawa” by the PKK (Gunes, 2012: 116).

⁸ One key example is his discussion of the need to “kill the male” (Öcalan, 2013).

party politics (Barkey, 1998; Watts, 2010) or the armed struggle (e.g. Akkaya & Jongerden, 2014; Barkey & Fuller, 1998; Bozarslan, 2000; Çağlayan, 2007; Ibrahim, 2000; Jongerden & Akkaya, 2012; Marcus, 2009; Özcan, 2006; Romano, 2006; Westrheim, 2014), while the research focussing on the historical developments looks at the uprisings against the state in the early year of the republic (Kahraman, 2007; Olson, 1989; van Bruinessen, 1992), the rise of Kurdish nationalism (Tezcür, 2009; Vali, 2003), and the re-politicization after two decades of abeyance in the 1960s/70s (Beşikçi, 1992; H. Bozarslan, 1992; Gündoğan, 2011). Thereby, the main attention of the literature on the Kurdish Movement lies on political and religious leaders, parties and tribes, ideologies, strategies and key events.

David Romano (2006), who has conducted the most comprehensive study of the Kurdish Movement from a social movements perspective, addresses questions of mobilization including rational choices behind joining the PKK and the effort of the PKK to frame history and identity. However, his work leaves aside participation and support which goes beyond joining the PKK, although the PKK has such a strong hold among the population and has relied on popular uprisings and civil disobedience. Other studies, which go into more detail regarding individual aspects of the Kurdish Movement, touch topics which overlap with questions of people's everyday resistance without specifically framing their analysis in this way. These studies include research on the development of language politics, the use of music and media, the role of martyrdom and the Newroz myth, as well as symbolic politics within the broader Kurdish movement⁹. In this sense, these studies analyze aspects which directly aim at influencing Kurdish people's daily life as a tool for mobilization, but do not consider the ways in which this leads to everyday resistance. The most recently published research by Kuruoğlu and Ger (2014), which analyzes the emotional effects of Kurdish music cassettes in their meaning for the development of political identity and resistance, however, presents an exception.

While the aim of this thesis is to illustrate the various forms of everyday resistance which exist within the struggle as a whole, it does not intend to disregard the importance of organized politics. On the contrary, this research draws out in which way local and unorganized everyday resistance and organized politics in fact overlap and foster each other. In this sense, this thesis shows that acts of resistance in the everyday are – in contrast to James C. Scott's core assumption of his seminal work *Weapons of the Weak*

⁹ Afary & Anderson (2005), Rabinow (2009) and Stauth (1991) address questions of language politics within the Movement; Dönmez (2012) and Sartaş (2010) have done research on the role of music groups; Hassanpour's work (1998) concerns the media associated to the movement, while Casier & Jongerden (2012) analyze the notion of martyrdom and Delal Aydın (2014) the role of the Newroz myth and its celebration. Nicole Watts (2010) touches symbolic politics in her book on Kurdish legal party politics.

(1985) – not practices that only occur in absence of an overt contestation, but can even rather be a central part of the struggle. This thesis suggests that practices of everyday resistance and organised struggle compliment, and reciprocally influence each other and that look at how the movement moralizes certain practices and generates an *atmosphere of strength* which promotes acts of resistance in the everyday. Hence, everyday resistance goes beyond *participation* in the Movement, as it targets a different goal. The main target of everyday resistance is not a *future* change in governmental policy, nor is it to establish a parallel radical democratic order as the PKK is aiming for, but to tackle the various techniques of power which govern subjectivity in the specific concrete manifestations in everyday life. As I argue in this thesis, practices of everyday resistance destabilize the truths which the state produces regarding the single Turkish nation. Practitioners of everyday resistance subvert the discourses and norms of the normal citizen, undermine the effect of disciplinary practices and shift the conduct of themselves. Hence, these forms of counter-conduct attempt to achieve a *de facto* subversion of subjectivity.

However, as this thesis illustrates, these practices of resistance are never “pure” or coherent. They are interrupted by the effects of assimilation. They redeploy dominant discourses in order to undermine others. The spaces where they are practiced are never totally free of power, and the various different practices can contradict each other.

As the forms of everyday resistance - just as the techniques of power – exist in a multiplicity of forms, this thesis cannot claim or aim at giving a *full* account. One field of resistance which had to be bracketed out of this study are, for instance, the resistant practices which Kurds have developed to undermine and avoid economic exploitation. Instead, it focuses on exemplifying practices of everyday resistance in specific areas and against specific techniques of power which are central in the struggle: narration of identity, embodiment and visualizing Kurdishness, language practices, formation and dissemination of counter-truths, undermining disciplinary practices in schools, questioning the state authority through forms of defacing effigies of the Turkish republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and inscribing clandestine forms of knowledge in space. This study takes as its research object *practices* and how they function as resistance, rather than the *actors* themselves. This thesis focuses on drawing out the complex nature of these practices which complicate dichotomies of overt and covert, individual and collective, organized and unorganized.

1.2 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

This thesis is comprised of eight chapters. The following three chapters outline the methodological, the conceptual and the theoretical approach of the thesis. In order to provide a comprehensive outline of the assimilation policies in Chapter 2, it was necessary to draw on my empirical data. For this reason, the methods chosen for this research and relevant issues on conducting this ethnography are explained to start with. Chapters Five, Six and Seven form the analytical core of this thesis, while Chapter 8 concludes the thesis with an outlook on further possible research.

Chapter 2: Methods

This thesis begins with a concise overview of the key aspects of my ethnographic fieldwork and the analytical approach I adopted while conducting the research. It introduces the research sites, the methods used, and explains the political conditions which influenced the conduct of this study. This chapter especially discusses the practical problems and ethical questions around doing research in the highly politicized atmosphere between 2009 and 2013 due to mass-arrests in the context of a series of court cases against alleged members of KCK. Accordingly, it specifically discusses gaining access and consent, the necessity of anonymization and the difficulties encountered during the research.

Chapter 3: The Techniques of Assimilation and the Production of Turkish Subjectivity

Chapter 3 details the understanding of *assimilation* underlying this thesis. It provides both an historical and a conceptual outline of the different techniques of the policies of assimilation. It hereby grasps the network of laws, scientific and non-scientific discourses, institutions and practices which determine assimilation in the Foucauldian sense of a *dispositif*, which aims at producing a national subject and therefore renders certain forms of life “unliveable”.

Due to the vast variety of shifting policies and practices which fall into this *dispositif*, the chapter does not attempt to give a fully comprehensive account. Instead, it outlines six core trajectories within the policies of assimilation: the discursive foreclosure of identification as Kurdish, the elimination of the Kurdish language, the production of the feeling of inferiority, the disciplining of the body according to discourses of the modern and civilized subject, the

criminalization of Kurdishness, and the production of the fundamentally different Other through both discourses on multiculturalism and everyday racism.

Interview material is used to illustrate the everyday dimension of these techniques of governing the production of a national self. In this way, the chapter depicts the background against which everyday forms of resistance develop.

Chapter 4: Theorizing Everyday Resistance

Taking James C. Scott's work on *Weapons of the Weak* (1985) as a starting point, Chapter 4 outlines the conceptual framework with which this thesis approaches everyday resistance. It discusses the critique put forward to Scott's concept and the proliferation of the use of the term in academic scholarship in the 1980s and 1990s, which was inspired by Michel Foucault's understanding of power. Moving on from this critique, the chapter draws out key aspects of resistance from Foucault's work under the headings: tactical reversal, counter-conduct and aesthetics of existence.

Accordingly, resistance is first of all understood as a working within the bifurcations of power; tactically taking up hegemonic practices and discourses and working them against their dominant use. Secondly, resistance against a form of power which produces or governs people's lives, that is the conduct of themselves, has to be grasped as a form of different conduct of the self. This means, thirdly, that resistance, like power, has to be creative. In order to clarify this point, the chapter looks at Foucault's discussion of ethics as a creative self-conduct which implies a critical stance towards and transformation of oneself. In this sense, the chapter argues that what Foucault termed the "aesthetics of existence" must also be understood as a form of creative re-deployment of given practices of the self.

Besides this the chapter argues that resistance for Foucault is not thought as something rare and heroic, but rather as common and mundane, which ignites in the immediate confrontation with the techniques of power. The chapter also suggests that Foucault's concept of "political spirituality" and "moralization of politics" can be useful in grasping the link between everyday resistance and social movements. A brief examination of the way in which such links have so far been addressed in social movement theory, leads this chapter to finally propose in which ways a Foucauldian approach can offer interesting insights to research on resistance.

Chapter 5: Kurdishness: Complexities of an Impossible Identity

Chapter 5 grasps identification and the narration of identity as a site of struggle. It illustrates how due to the policies of assimilation Kurdishness is not experienced as ontologically given and unquestioned, but rather as a process of becoming aware and (re-)claiming, traced both by the Kurdish Movement as well as the assimilation policies. The chapter examines how in an effort to counter the discourses of the single Turkish nation, racial tropes and discourses of ethnicity and race are deployed in order to create a “natural”, ontological identity. It highlights, however, that these attempts are interrupted by the effects of the policies of assimilation, which trigger parallel narrations of Kurdishness as an expression of opposition and an effect of the state policies. By tracing the different lines of narrative, this chapter explores the complexity of this non-self-identical identity as a struggle aiming at extending the notions of an intelligible identity.

Understanding identity as something necessarily performative, Chapters Six and Seven, then, engage with concrete practices of shifting such conduct.

Chapter 6: Politicization of Existence

Chapter 6 explores a wide field of practices - ranging from practices of embodiment and language, to clandestine knowledge production and cultural practices – examining how, when and where they challenge the policies of assimilation. Following from the previous chapter, this discussion looks at how practices of “reviving” Kurdish cultural practices as a strategy against assimilation policies are always shaped and traversed by the effects of assimilation and the politicization of such strategies by the Kurdish Movement. Specifically, the chapter engages with practices and narratives of tradition and relearning Kurdish language as supposedly “authentic” practices. The discussion of each of these different practices highlights both the ambiguity and incoherence of such practices as well as the intersections and mutual influences with the organised activities of the Kurdish movement. In this context, the chapter also attempts to rethink the apparent need for visibility in the struggle against assimilation and the possibilities of strategies “in hiding” as James C. Scott put forward, in the light of a Foucaudian understanding of power as the production of subjectivity. It discusses the overtness and covertness of these practices regarding bodily practices, which oscillate between overt flagging of the body, camouflaged embodiment, and dodging stereotypical representations through passing, as well as cultural practices secretly performed in the home. Furthermore, the chapter suggests that besides

challenging assimilation as forms of counter-conduct themselves, hidden practices and subjugated knowledges enable a resistant atmosphere or “ambience”, which triggers further dissident forms of conduct.

Chapter 7: Insurrections of Conduct

Chapter 7 engages with different forms of resistance that arise in three specific moments of power central to the production of nationalized subjectivity: compulsory recitation of the nation vow or anthem in schools, effigies of Atatürk, and national inscriptions of the landscape. First clarifying how these three techniques specifically function as forms of power, the chapter illustrates the different acts of dodging, rejecting and subverting the words of the vow, clandestine forms of counter-inscription and various practices of defacement and removal of portraits and monuments of Atatürk. Drawing on Judith Butler, Michael Taussig, and Tim Cresswell, I depict these insurrections of conduct as ways of dealing with these specific “faces of the state” (Navaro-Yashin, 2002) in everyday life which transgress distinctions between overt and covert, public and private, intentional and unintentional. The chapter also argues that these acts do not rely on collective organisation, but instead proliferate in a supportive atmosphere. Although not initiated by the Kurdish movement, they develop in its slipstream. Finally, the discussion of resistance against these three techniques of power shows how everyday resistance – in contrast to party politics and armed struggle – does not aim at future goals. Instead, the acts themselves present the *de facto* subversion they are aiming for.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

The thesis concludes by drawing together the various ways in which everyday resistance shift, challenge, undermine and subvert the production of subjectivity and, therefore, creatively extend the ways of living a “livable life”. It highlights the importance of understanding everyday resistance as a distinct form of politics against the specific form of governmental power, which however is never “purely” resistance, but rather traced by power itself. This chapter sums up the ways in which everyday resistance disturbs the binaries between covert and overt, public and private, intentional and unintentional practices, and underlines how the thesis illustrates the mutual influences between social movement and everyday resistance.

Chapter 2

Research Methods

For Foucault, the task of philosophy to “make visible” the multiple struggles that exist in society in order to reveal how questionable and reversible the relations of power are, even if they might not seem that way (Foucault, 2000: 457, 2009: 2). Highlighting the “precariousness, the nonnecessity, and the instability of things” was, therefore, the aim of his work (Foucault, 2000: 399). In contrast to Marxist theories, whose method aimed at enabling social critique by revealing obscured *contradictions*, Foucault argues his work focuses on “problematizations”, that is the moments in which dominant discourses, practices etc. have become disturbed, problematic and questionable; have lost their taken-for-grantedness (Rabinow & Rose, 2003a). These problematizations are an “ensemble of discursive and non-discursive practices that make something enter into the play of true and false and constitute it as an object of thought” (Foucault cited in Rabinow & Rose, 2003). In this sense, they are not situated purely in the realm of thought, but rather they are the manifestation of questioning *in practice*. The practices of everyday resistance which are the focus of this thesis are precisely such moments in which the policies of assimilation have become problematic. They are manifestations of this problematization in everyday life.

Although Foucault is well-known for both his genealogy and archaeology of techniques of power, which relied very much on archival work and secondary data analysis, his journalistic work focussed on struggles which were underway at that moment. As Rabinow and Rose underline in their Introduction to *The Essential Foucault* (2003), Foucault’s preoccupation with historical developments aimed at questioning the universality and naturalness of truths, discourses and practices of *today* by showing how they developed and are set in particular relations of power and depend on their specific location within power relations. His historical method, therefore, was not the result of an “obsession with the past”, but rather of an interest to destabilize practices of the present and reveal possibilities of change. Consequently, his journalistic writings on the Iranian Revolution or the efforts of the *Groupe d’Information sur les Prisons* (GIP), which he co-founded, can be regarded as similar engagements in producing knowledge which reveals existing struggles, the disregarded knowledges which they entail and the effects that they produce. In order to

expose these conflicts, it is necessary to engage with the knowledges which generate them. However, these knowledges are - as Foucault describes - “subjugated”, disqualified and expelled from dominant discourses (Foucault, 2003). In the case of Kurdish resistance, such subjugated knowledges can only be revealed and understood by engaging with the writings of the Movement and engaging with people in their everyday. Especially, the focus on everyday struggles requires ethnography as a method of research. As will be further discussed in Chapter 4, the acts of resistance central to the study are not so much exceptional, spectacular events of confrontation, but rather the local, unorganised shifts and challenges of power in mundane situations of everyday life.

2.1 RESEARCH OBJECTS: PRACTICES, NOT ACTORS

In line with a Foucauldian understanding of resistance, which decenters the notion of the agent and therefore enables an understanding of an *incoherent* subject of resistance (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3), the objects of analysis of this thesis are not the *actors*, but rather the *practices* themselves, and how they function as resistance. This approach allows us to focus on individual actions, regardless of the intentions, consciousness or coherence of the practices of the actors (Foucault, 1980a: 138). Consequently, the interview material is not presented here in a way that reconstructs the *actors* and their intentions. Instead, the interviews are used to grasp in which way the practices function as resistance, and to help tease out when and how these practices occur.

Participant or non-participant observations are a common means in researching *practices*, while interviews are carried out for research objects that need to be verbally expressed, such as life-stories, narratives, feelings, perceptions, motives as well as past events or processes which cannot be observed anymore. Rarely, however, are these methods that dichotomous (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002: 221). In this case, the process of problematizing the policies of assimilation which were unquestioned in the past plays a central role in understanding the practices of resistance. The people I interviewed for this thesis frequently narrate changes in their self-perception, how their conduct of life changed, as well as practices of resistance of the past and present. To be able to grasp these continuities and changes, interviewing is indispensable. Furthermore, as this thesis will illustrate the practices of resistance, which are the object of this study, are often hidden or camouflaged. They are sometimes intended to happen in secrecy or at least to avoid

attention. Therefore, observations cannot (easily) reveal such practices and interviews become crucial.

Relying on interviews in this way, we have to bear in mind that what is directly narrated as resistance is generally shaped by the discourses on what counts as resistance. As resistance is often assumed as overt, intentional and openly confrontational, interviewees can tend to only narrate their experiences accordingly. Consequently, the interview has to be conducted in a way that areas are touched, which the interviewees themselves might not regard as resistance themselves. In this sense, the interviewer must not pose questions which appeal to abstract or generalized notions, but rather anticipate a range of situations in which they are put into practice (Mason, 2002: 227). By inviting the interviewees to reflect on the very specific moments in which they experienced policies of assimilation I sought to tease out these mundane acts of resistance. Such moments include state rituals, such as the recitation of the national anthem or vow in school, as well as the confrontation with specific objects of state discourse, such as the effigies of Atatürk and inscriptions of nationalist slogans in space (see Chapter 7). Furthermore, the ways in which identity and language are practiced in everyday life are of utmost importance in this struggle against the policies of assimilation. Consequently, the interviews circled around questions of identity and the ability to speak Kurdish and Turkish, focussing on where, how and when these languages are spoken. Identity is not understood as an ontological inner self, but rather as something that is performed through practices. Consequently, the interviews grappled with question around the possibilities and impossibilities of certain practices of identity. They addressed both public encounters, such as with neighbours, in work life, looking for housing, and everyday confrontations with the police, as well as situations within the home with family members.

2.2 GRASPING COMPLEXITY AND ENTANGLEMENT

Besides this, extending the notion of resistance to *non-intentional* acts has led to the question of how the researcher can then determine resistance as such (Saukko, 2003: 44). Consequently, studying resistant practices - without trivializing them - demands analyzing in which ways they subvert the techniques of power. In order to understand how certain acts of resistance function as such, it is first of all necessary to understand how the techniques of the state function. In this sense, this ethnography of resistance necessitates an “ethnography of the state”, as suggested by Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat

(2001), and similarly Akhil Gupta and Aradhana Sharma (2006) and Veena Das and Deborah Poole (2004). These approaches to anthropology have enabled analyses of the workings of the state on the micro-level of the everyday. The research of the practices of resistance against the policies of assimilation requires such an approach to the state in order to grasp in which ways the practices of resistance subvert the techniques of state power. These approaches, however, also stress the entanglement of power and resistance. Similarly, to avoid misinterpretation, romanticizing, it is necessary to grasp complexity and entangledness of power and resistance (Ortner, 1995). This requires careful ethnographic conduct which allows us to grasp multiple dimensions of the phenomenon, its ambivalences and contradictions. As this thesis argues that resistance does not exist outside power relations, but rather works within and on the given practices and discourses, acts of resistance, therefore, cannot be assumed to be “purely” resistant, or universally resistant in all situations. As such, the complexity of the practices of resistance explored in this thesis not only includes the ways in which everyday resistance and organized struggle intersect, but also the ways in which dominant notions of nation, ethnicity, tradition and the rural are redeployed.

2.3 DETAILS OF A MULTI-SITE ETHNOGRAPHY

The ethnographic fieldwork for this thesis was conducted in the period from September 2011 to September 2012 and consisted of participant and non-participant observations and formal and informal interviews in four different cities in Turkey, two of which lie in the Kurdistan region, Diyarbakir (Amed) and Kiziltepe (Qoser)¹⁰; the other two in the West of Turkey, Izmir and Bursa.

2.3.1 CHOOSING RESEARCH LOCATIONS: DIYABAKIR, KIZILTEPE, IZMIR AND BURSA

The reason for choosing four different locations lies in the recent history of the Kurdish question. Due to the migration of the recent years, millions of Kurds have moved to the cities of the West. Beginning in the 1960s for mainly economic reasons, migration increased rapidly after the 1980s coup, culminating in the mass-migration in the height of the armed conflict in the 1990s when the state decided to forcefully evict villages it regarded strategically important for the PKK. Migration both from the village to the cities and from

¹⁰ See Appendix 1 for an explanation of the choice of place names in this thesis.

the Kurdistan region to the West has increased the ways in which Kurds experience the policies of assimilation, having enormous effect on everyday practices, language use and identification. Consequently, my decision to conduct a multi-site ethnography was grounded in the assumption that both the policies of assimilation and the influence of the Kurdish movement are experienced differently in the West of Turkey and in the Kurdistan region and therefore result in different everyday practices of resistance.

Similarly, the choice to conduct fieldwork in two cities in the West and the Kurdistan region respectively which differ in their size of Kurdish population was also guided by two central aspects. Firstly, in the Kurdistan region the state implemented its policies differently according to the “importance” it attributed to these places. Diyarbakir had always been the focus of state politics, while these policies were not quite so strictly enforced in other places, such as Kızıltepe, which as a result were able to continue using the Kurdish language and cultural practices more easily. Surprisingly, however, the two places resembled each other more than I had expected with regard to the intake in migrants from after the village evictions. Although – unlike in Diyarbakir – many of the villagers who fled to Kızıltepe only stayed temporarily and moved on to the West, it did have a great effect on life in the town. Secondly, the Kurdish population in Izmir and Bursa differ in size and times of migration. This has effects on the ways they experience and react towards techniques of assimilation, including racism, whether and how they can organize themselves, and how they engage with the Movement.

Although this research was conceptualized as a multi-site study, the ethnography demanded a longer stay in one of these places to enable a sufficient understanding before moving on to the other sites for shorter periods. I chose Diyarbakir as this main and initial site of my research. I spent the first eight months of my fieldwork there, a total of two weeks in Kızıltepe split into three visits, and around one month each in Izmir and Bursa. While the fieldwork in Kızıltepe, Izmir and Bursa circled mainly around the conduct of interviews, the actual ethnographic side to my fieldwork was completed there in Diyarbakir. Diyarbakir plays a central role in Kurdish politics today. As mentioned above, this city was a focal point of assimilation policies since the founding of the republic. The Kurdish language was nearly totally eradicated from public life and only reappeared with the high influx of people who were forced to migrate after their villages were destroyed in the 1990s. Coming from the rural areas these people had preserved their language and brought it “back” to the city. The number of its inhabitants tripled in these times (today the city itself has a population of approximately 963,000) and strongly affected the shape and life of the city

(Nufusu.com, 2013a). Whole neighbourhoods developed in only a couple of years, and the poverty of the displaced and suddenly dispossessed people became a permanent issue for the city. On the other hand, Diyarbakir, widely regarded as the clandestine “capital of Kurdistan”, has an image of being a “rebellious” centre of political activism. This does not, however, mean that Diyarbakir is homogeneous in its voting behaviour: the AKP as second largest party in Diyarbakir does achieve around 35% of the votes (local elections 2014). Nevertheless, the municipality of Diyarbakir – since it was first won by the Kurdish party in local elections of 1999 - has established an array of political and social institutions which play a central role in anchoring the influence of the Movement into everyday life (Demir, 2009: 193). At the same time, as the largest city in the region, it allowed for contacts to many people from various areas of the Kurdistan region who have come to work and study there more recently.

As the second site, I chose Kızıltepe, a town of a population of around 226,000 located close to the border to Iraq (Nufusu.com, 2013b). In contrast to Diyarbakir, Kızıltepe has only recently grown in size and Kurdish culture and language has persisted strongly in public there. In this sense, it differs from Diyarbakir in a crucial way. In contrast to my original expectation, this difference between Diyarbakir and Kızıltepe did not figure strongly in the interviewees, due to the fact that I was able to interview people from smaller towns and villages in Diyarbakir, too.

The choice of research sites in the West was led by the existing literature. A number of studies have focussed on Istanbul, which is well-known for its large Kurdish population (e.g. Çelik, 2005; Sonnenschein, 2013). Other cities which have seen a large increase in Kurdish migration, such as Mersin and Adana, have been looked at in a small number of studies most recently by Haydar Darıcı (2011), Doğan and Yılmaz (2011) and Kaygalak (2001, 2009). Izmir has only been addressed in a study which focuses on the perception of the Kurdish population among the “white” Turkish middle class (Saraçoğlu, 2009, 2010, 2011). While so far no study has addressed the situation of Kurds in Bursa. By selecting these two locations, this study broadens the existing literature with insights on living Kurdish identity in these two places, which - although central as migrant destination - have been neglected as such in academic research.

Izmir is one of the major cities in the West that has had a high influx of migrants from the Kurdish regions. Neighbourhoods have developed in which the majority of the population are Kurdish. However, it is important to note that the migrants did not all arrive in the same period: some of them came to Izmir in the 1960s and 70s due to economic reasons, the

others after the 1980s coup due to the repressions in that time, and lastly the majority fled to Izmir in the 1990s after their villages were evacuated and destroyed. Therefore, the living conditions differ greatly among them. Especially, the migrants who arrive in the 1960, 70s and 80s were able to improve their financial situation and have to some extent moved out of these Kurdish dominated neighbourhoods, while those who fled to Izmir in the 1990s belong to the poorest of Izmir. They suffer from a racialized economy which forces them into low paid and precarious jobs, such as working as street vendors. However, all Kurdish migrants - no matter what period they arrived in - share similar experiences of everyday racism.

In contrast to Izmir, Bursa's Kurdish population is much smaller and especially those who were forced to migrate in the 1990s live in Kurdish dominated neighbourhoods. Strongly characterized by the textile industry, many Kurds in Bursa work in sweatshops or home-based production. Although surveillance of the Kurdish neighbourhoods and stop-and-searches are common in Izmir, too, I was told that it is experienced more strongly due to the smaller size of Bursa and possibly its proximity to the island on which Öcalan is imprisoned.

Another core difference, which has an effect on how Kurdish identity can be lived, how assimilation is experienced and consequently what forms resistance can take, is the difference between town and village. Although I did not conduct fieldwork in rural areas, this aspect was covered by the interviews, as a number of my interviewees had lived in villages before their eviction and still often maintained their contact with the villages.

2.3.2 FORMAL AND INFORMAL INTERVIEWS

Overall, I conducted 58 interviews: 29 in Diyarbakir, 4 in Kızıltepe, 10 in Izmir and 15 in Bursa, 37 of which were formal, 21 informal. Due to the political situation in which this research was undertaken, interviewees sometimes preferred informal interviews over formal ones. The more formal the character of the interview situation was and the more details they had to give about themselves, the less inclined they were to agree to an interview. Formality itself was perceived as a risk. In contrast, informal interviews as commonly employed within ethnographies or in addition to participant observations which require no or less detailed personal (demographical) information, provided more anonymity for the interviewees in the interview itself (see May, 1997: 143). Many participants were very often inclined to immediately participate in informal interview, after

I introduced myself and explained to them the details of my research, such as the aim, scope and procedure. These interviews were more participant-led than the formal interviews and, therefore, limited to topics which the participants chose to talk about themselves. As one problem in ethnographies, Berg highlights the risk that the researchers becomes “invisible” the longer they stay in research locations and the more normal their presence becomes and personal relationships develop. In order to avoid such kind of misrepresentation or “disattending” of the participants, I decided to be very overt about making research notes in presence of the participants and ensure ongoing consent (Berg, 2001: 147). In formal interviews oral consent was given before beginning and confirmed after the interview. The participants were informed about the possibility of rejecting consent at any point in time. I refrained from noting anything possibly incriminating.

All interviews were conducted by myself in Turkish and held in various public places in the cities. Four interviews were held with more than one participant, but have been listed individually in Appendix 2. As I discuss in more detail below, I only recorded five of the interviewees and decided to take notes for the rest of the interviews. After terminating the fieldwork, two recorded interviews were transcribed by myself, while three of them were transcribed with the help of an academic transcriber, who had no contact to my interviewees at any point and was located outside the research sites. No names and only very limited identifiable information were recorded in the interview notes or on the digital recordings. The three recorded interviews passed on to the transcriber included no self-incriminating details. Both the interview notes which I took in Turkish as well as the quotes from the recorded interviews which are used in this thesis were translated into English by myself.

2.3.3 THE INTERVIEWEES

After beginning my fieldwork I decided to concentrate the majority of my interviews on interviewees between 18 and 40 years of age. In this way, I was able to focus the interviews around similar topics, while interviewing older people would have meant addressing different periods of the conflict. Interviewees of older age groups have memories e.g. of the politicization in the late 1960s and 1970s and are strongly influenced by the 1980s coup, while the interviews with the chosen age group circled around the rise of the PKK and today. With the oldest of them being 12 years old when the PKK started its armed struggle, the youngest being born into the peak of violence in the early 1990s, this means that the

majority of my interviewees grew up during the most violent years of the conflict. They were children or not even born at the time of coup and therefore are more influenced by the policies that followed: the state of emergency, the reinforced assimilation policies, the violent anti-terrorism policies as well as the rise of the Movement.

All of them experienced the shift in state policies from the total denial of Kurdishness to the limited recognition of today. While younger age groups were born after the end of the discourse of denial, the childhood of these 18 to 40 year olds was characterized by a not-yet-existent Kurdish consciousness and a lack of cultural and language practices in their childhood. All of them identify as Kurdish today, but most of them recall denying their Kurdishness, feeling ashamed for it and then starting to question this and “becoming” Kurds. They started school before the beginning of the armed struggle and at the height of the development of the assimilation policies. Nevertheless, in some cases I do also include interview material from participants which were older to point out differences in experience. Among the interviewees are speakers of the two main dialects of Kurdish in the Kurdistan Region in Turkey (Northern Kurdistan): Kurmanji and Zaza, as well as some who speak both and some who only speak Turkish. Some of them lost the ability to speak Kurdish when they started school; the majority have a limited knowledge, while a few never spoke Kurdish at all, not even at home.

All the people I interviewed originally come from various places in the Kurdish region. Some of them grew up in the village, others in the city; many migrated within the Kurdish regions, others to the West; some in the 1990s, other before; some have memories of migrating, while others were too young to remember. The group of interviewees were comprised of slightly more men than women, and included atheists, Alevis, people from different sects of Sunni Islam, people who practice religion and those who do not. Besides this, they came from a wide range of income groups and educational backgrounds, from people with no formal education to those with university degrees; unemployed, street vendors, and impoverished people to those with high income. They include people who were illiterate people to those who quoted philosophers in the interview. Nevertheless, interviewees with higher formal education are more represented here than those with lower formal education. It is important to note that the level of formal education only provides limited indication of the economic situation of the interviewee. Many of my interviewees with secondary school education or a university degree, were forcefully evicted from their villages; they live or lived in the migrant neighbourhoods of Diyarbakir, Izmir or elsewhere. Their mothers only speak Kurdish and they themselves or their close relatives work or have

worked in the informal sector. The broad and relatively diverse total set of interviewees helped to provide a diversity of experiences without claiming to be representative.

Researching everyday resistance, the main target group of interviewees for this study were people who were not members of any of the political parties (the exceptions are interviews with three local politicians who were interviewed to understand the local political and economic situation of Kurds in Bursa and Izmir, and issues of police repression and surveillance). Besides this, due to the political situation I did not ask directly about their political affiliation, although the style, in which certain topics are approached and phrased, gives some indication at least of the interviewees' political stance. The only indispensable criteria, which was applied in approaching the participants was that they identify as Kurds.

2.3.4 OBSERVATIONS AND OTHER DATA SOURCES

Besides interviews, the ethnography comprised of general observations in various situations of public everyday life which included interactions in public transportation, cafes and restaurants, larger supermarkets and small shops, at the market, and public offices as well as specific observations of ritual state celebrations, such as the anniversary of the death of first Prime Minister and President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk on the 10th November. Besides this, in order to grasp the various dimensions of the Movement, I visited numerous of its institutions, such as the education support houses, women's organisations, the mother and child health care centre as well as the washing houses in Diyarbakir, party branches, and various cultural centres. I was able to take part and observe awareness women's seminars which are frequently conducted in Diyarbakir. I attended cultural events and festivals which were held regularly, took part in the Newroz celebrations in 2012 in Diyarbakir, observed two large demonstrations which ended in clashes with police forces and several smaller rallies. Besides this, in order to understand the discourses and practices of the Movement, I engaged in everyday practices, which I further discuss in Chapter 6, such as watching Kurdish television channels, reading the pro-Kurdish newspaper, *özgür gündem* [free agenda], or the internet site of newsagency *firatnews*, as well as reading Öcalan's writings. These data sources are drawn upon in this thesis, as well as photographs of objects, clothing practices, and graffiti, which were taken by myself in Diyarbakir.

2.3.5 GAINING ACCESS AND TRUST

For every ethnography gaining access to the site or research group is a crucial step in beginning the fieldwork (Berg, 2001: 137; May, 1997: 141). Depending on the historical, cultural and political situation as well as how the researcher is perceived, gaining access can be challenging (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002: 207). Consequently, establishing *trust* is a crucial element of gaining access (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002: 210, 212). This kind of trust can be enabled in different ways. One way is via establishing strong relationships which takes time and demands a common place of contact; another is through some form of referral, that is through so called *gatekeepers* (Berg, 2001: 137, 145). Pre-established contacts can function as such references, as well as – in this case – certain political institutions. Which method is applicable depends strongly on time restrictions. In the case of this study, I was forced to rely on political and cultural institutions and pre-established contacts for Kızıltepe, Izmir and Bursa.

In Diyarbakir, however, I was able to establish trust via engaging in different aspects of social life over a longer period of time. Certain organisations also played a vital role in this; however, not in the sense that they directly referred me to potential interviewees, but rather by endowing me with a trustworthy image. Due to the political atmosphere, these institutions became not only a site of participant observation or a place in which contact to potential interviewees could be established, which I had originally thought, but beyond this provided me with an image of trustworthiness that even facilitated my fieldwork in Izmir and Bursa. The three institutions, which functioned for me in this way, are two social organisations in which I worked voluntarily and the language course at *Kurdî Der*. When I contacted these institutions at the beginning of my fieldwork, I did not yet know what importance is given to working *voluntarily* within the Kurdish Movement. While it is silently expected from people within the Movement, it is a positive attribute for someone from outside like me. For me, besides being a way of gaining access, working voluntarily was a way of “giving” something from my side, while asking people to share with me their knowledge. It was only with time that I realized that working voluntarily positively influenced how people perceived me in person. Similarly, beginning to learn Kurdish turned out to be less central to enable better communication, as I had assumed, than rather function as a way to gain access to the field.

All three institutions were open to a variety of people from different backgrounds, however each enabled access to different parts of society. The first, being a non-governmental organisation for poverty relief, allowed me to get to know many of the poorest people of

the city, grasp the problems they were confronted with in everyday life and see the conditions in which they were living, which would otherwise have been very difficult. The second institution, which offered a range of services such as various vocational courses and educational support for children and presented a lively meeting point for many – mainly unemployed – people in the city, “integrated” me into their everyday life, while the language courses gave me access to a group of rather well-educated people in work who were engaging with relearning Kurdish. In this sense, these different organizations allowed me to be “in the midst” of what I was studying, which is the ground for an ethnographic oriented research (Berg, 2001: 134). I recruited my interviewees purposefully from these daily interactions, as well as via pre-existing and newly establish contacts. Most of the interviewees I met on several occasions before conducting the interviews.

2.4 RESEARCH IN A HIGHLY POLITICIZED ATMOSPHERE

The period, in which this thesis was written, was characterized by a rapidly changing and intense political agenda: Beginning with the mass-arrests in the so-called KCK-trial; the killing of 34 people among them 17 adolescents who were returning from smuggling sugar and fuel from Iraq in a deliberate bombing by the Turkish air force around New Year 2011/2012; the insurgence of the PKK in Şemdinli and the hunger strike in prisons; the begin of talks between Öcalan and the state officials which triggered a series of – albeit uncertain and constantly interrupted, but ongoing - talks which included the legal Kurdish party, even if they cannot yet be described as peace negotiations; the public reading of a letter by Öcalan at the Newroz celebration in 2013; the Gezi-Park uprising beginning in May 2013 and the resistance against the building of a military compound in Lice, a small town located in the province of Diyarbakir; and most recently the crisis around the Islamic State (IS), the resistance of the self-declared Kurdish autonomy region in North Syria (Rojava) against IS, and the support from Kurds in Turkey which manifested itself in a 3-day uprising in October 2014 leaving around 35 people dead.

The year of fieldwork, however, was especially marked by the state’s crack down on Kurdish politics and the strong feeling of uncertainty which it triggered. In the eight months in which I was in Diyarbakir, over 6000 people were arrested in the context of the KCK-case; 2,146 of them put on trial. The arrested, including local and regional leaders of the legal Kurdish party as well as elected mayors, local governors (muhtar), members of parliament, lawyers, prominent academics and journalists, are accused of being members and leading

figures of the KCK, which is identified by the state prosecutor with the PKK and therefore regarded as a separatist terrorist organisation. This crack down, which clearly targeted a weakening of legal Kurdish party BDP and the destruction of social activism and political opposition, noticeably hampered the functioning of the local government and generated an atmosphere of uncertainty in the institutions which I was voluntarily working for, as well as among Kurds in general.

Interestingly, in contrast to the uprisings in solidarity with the resistance against IS in Kobanê, there were surprisingly few demonstrations or expressions of public unrest in that period. Instead, it was characterized by a tense – nearly paralyzed – atmosphere and rumours or warnings by the PKK that strong attacks could occur in the major cities in Turkey. Military jets were constantly thundering over the city, which added to a feeling that a renewed outbreak of war was on the brink. At that point, there was nothing that would let hope for an end to this deadlock and the peace talks which followed several months later.

This atmosphere of mass-arrests and uncertainty clearly influenced how I could go about approaching participants and conducting interviews. Such a political situation, therefore, raises on the one hand practical questions about how not to endanger interviewees in any way through the research, but also clearly triggers reflections on ethical issues in knowledge production.

2.4.1 ENSURING ANONYMITY

As in all studies of social research, but especially in such a highly political atmosphere, guaranteeing the safety of all participants is one of the most important duties of the researcher. Hereby, ensuring the anonymity of the participants is of utmost importance. As a policy, I refrained from requiring full names of my participants at any stage of the research and neither interview or observation notes nor the five recordings include names of any participants or family members. This is also reflected in this thesis. No names have been used to identify the interview material and identifiable information, such as places of origin, has been kept to a minimum. Unlike other studies, I have refrained from giving interviewees fictive names as “naming practices” are a highly loaded political question, as is discussed in Chapter 6. Instead, the interviews have been numbered. Brief information on the specific interviewees, such as gender, age, education, employment status, and their history of migration, is added in brackets behind the quotations and a full list of the

interviews can be found in Appendix 2. If not noted otherwise, the interviewees were born in the Kurdistan region and still live there today. For similar reasons, the photographs used in this thesis have been either taken in a way to secure anonymity by concealing the faces through the angle of the photograph or have been made unidentifiable afterwards.

Secondly, the choice of topics and a sensitive conduct of the interviews are important in protecting the safety of the participants. Accordingly, the interviews for this study were designed to avoid any possible self-incriminating statements. I strictly avoided asking questions about political affiliation or party membership, for example. Similarly, I deliberately refrained from asking interviewees to talk about painful or traumatic experiences. Nevertheless, very many interviewees chose to mention such events, often changing personal pronouns from “I” to “we” or even “you”, or using generalization such as “the Kurds”, in order to deflect the personal aspect of these experiences. This has to be born in mind when reading the interview material.

The atmosphere described above made me fairly quickly abandon recording the interviews, despite the obvious benefit that recording offers of capturing the full detail of the interviews. Instead, I would resort to taking detailed notes, writing down what the interviewees said word by word as exactly as possible in Turkish. As the interviews were already conducted in a way to avoid possible self-incrimination, anonymity was strictly ensured at various levels of the research and the recordings were electronically safely stored, the reason for my decision to abandon digital recordings was not so much an objective risk for my participants, than that I found suggesting the use of a recording device had a negative impact on building trust and on the content of the interview. Interviewees were more inclined to speak freely when their voices as possible identifiable characteristic were not recorded. Other researchers I met at the time continued to use digital recording in their research.

2.4.2 “ARE YOU A SPY?” AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF A “NEUTRAL” IMAGE

While suspicion towards researchers is nothing uncommon in social research, in the conditions in which I was conducting my research this suspicion was, however, expressed in a rather extreme form in assuming I was a Western spy (May, 1997)¹¹. Hence, gaining access in this context entailed negotiating the image of myself as a researcher. Bruce Berg

¹¹ Sonnenschein similarly mentions being more or less seriously being asked about being a spy (Sonnenschein, 2013: 6)

emphasizes the importance of the “attitude” of the researcher in this negotiation (Berg, 2001: 141). While Tim May argues that his image as “impartial researcher” gave him “credibility” to gain access in his research in organisations, others - especially feminist academics - have long questioned the possibility of such “neutral” position. In the context of this research, my political attitude was quite obviously under scrutiny as part of negotiating access to participants. While representatives of both the legal Kurdish party as well as the PKK itself tend to be very open and confident about explaining their cause to people who do not share similar political views, and therefore give interviews to all kinds of journalists and researchers, this is not necessarily the case among common supporters of the Movement. They were much more alert to how I positioned myself to the violent state policies and the Kurdish Movement.

While this notorious image of the spy which was sometimes only articulated jokingly, other times in whispers and the dodging of conversation, often impeded the development of any basis of trust from the start, other positive images of - in the eyes of my participants well respected – Europeans, did much to facilitate the access to the field and put off the image of the spy. As such, I was identified with members of the radical left wing. My first name Ulrike was recognized by many as the first name of Red Army Faction member Ulrike Meinhof, who they referred positively to, while others saw in me a resemblance to German PKK-guerrilla Andrea Wolf, code-name Ronahî, who was killed at the hands of the Turkish army in 1998. In this sense, in order to gain access to participants I had to grapple with this double-image of the West – as a possible friend or foe – which was projected onto me.

Indispensable in negotiating access, was the use of language and even pronunciation. Accordingly, pronouncing PKK as “Pe Ke Ke”, which is the Kurdish pronunciation of the abbreviation, instead of “Pe Ka Ka” which indicates either a pro-state or at least an uncritical attitude, determined what kind of relationship could develop between me and possible participants. Among such decisive political vocabulary is of course the term “terrorist organisation”, but also terms like racism and state violence. For my research, using this term “assimilation” turned out to be central in gaining access and trust to participants as it indicated a critical stance towards state policies in the eyes of my interviewees. Describing my research as analysing “the policies of assimilation and the everyday resistance against them” opened many doors. As assimilation is experienced as a central issue in their lives, many participants spontaneously reacted by saying: “Assimilation? Then you are at the right address with me”. Framing my research in this way helped to do away with possible reluctance and suspicion and instead generated a desire to

participate. The broad notion of the concept also allowed the interviewees to respond in whichever way they understood the term: from the feeling of inferiority experienced in school to the practices of overt state violence.

2.4.3 ETHICAL ISSUES OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

In line with what I later discuss in Chapter 6 as the “moralization” of the need to visualize Kurdishness, some interviewees saw the interview as an opportunity to voice the Kurdish issue to an international audience. Being a researcher from Europe, the interviewees frequently commented that the West had “forgotten them” and that my research would contribute to making their cause heard. In this sense, this research benefitted from the common discourse on the need for an international awareness and support. However, as Haydar Darıcı (2011) importantly points out, more and more people - especially young Kurds – have abandoned the need to make claims and represent themselves to an outside world, especially to the West of Turkey or Europe.

As I discuss further in the following chapter, the denial of Kurdish existence in state discourse affected the possibility of doing research on Kurds as such or the state politics towards Kurds. The non-existence of Kurds has long been guarded as the only scientific truth, resulting in the imprisonment of those who claim otherwise, such as Turkish sociologist İsmail Beşikçi who spent 17 years in prison for his academic work on the socio-economic and political situation of the Kurds as well as the state policies against them in the early years of the republic. Consequently, there exists a common perception among Kurds that if someone has decided to do research on *Kurds* (naming them as such), they must be sincere, because researching the Kurds in itself is a political and “dangerous” undertaking. My fieldwork also very often benefitted from this assumption.

However, similar to Darıcı’s observation mentioned above, on a few occasions I was confronted with critical comments such as “first we were denied and now we have become the object of research”, which summarizes very well the historical shift in confidence and awareness which has been taking place over the past five to ten years. Such comments undoubtedly stress the ethical responsibility when the production of knowledge is so profoundly intertwined with power. While such ethical issues are at stake in any form of social research, it is especially prominent in such a highly politicized situation and when the object of research is an ongoing struggle.

Chapter 3

The Techniques of Assimilation and the Production of Turkish Subjectivity

The concept of *assimilation* has been frequently used in debates on the Kurdish question to determine the origins of the conflict. The Kurdish Movement has made clear that it regards the policies of assimilation of the state as the core source of oppression of the Kurds, while state officials, dominant parties and academics have over years tried to deny the existence of such assimilation policies. This chapter aims at giving a concise overview of the various *techniques* which have been used as instruments of assimilation since the founding of the Turkish republic and outlines how I theoretically understand assimilation in terms of the production of subjectivity, in a Foucauldian sense.

Social scientists have used the term assimilation to describe on the one hand a form of state policy which aims at shaping the individual's identification and behaviour along specific national, racial and cultural lines in order to produce some form of homogeneous population as well as the processes of adaptation on the side of the individual, on the other (e.g. Alba & Nee, 1997; Brubaker, 2001; Esser, 2003). The term has also been used in colonial politics of, for example, France and Portugal, as well as to describe the varyingly overt policies in liberal democracies towards indigenous peoples, minorities, migrants and other subaltern groups. Assimilation, in this context, is therefore used to manage populations regarded ethnically different, although the term has also been used to describe the integration of other groups of population deemed not tightly enough tied into the given order¹². With the modern nation-state, policies of assimilation have become a central technique in shaping the population according to the fictive assumption of homogeneity and the ideal of the single nation, which in fact has to be constantly reproduced, guarded, and enforced.

¹² Brubaker mentions for example the transformation of peasants into Frenchmen as a paradigmatic example of assimilation (Brubaker, 2001: 535).

Similarly, with the founding of the Turkish nation-state in 1923, the government invested great effort in constructing a new Turkish national identity¹³. Although officially regarded to comprehend all citizens of Turkey, this national identity was envisaged in cultural terms of a Sunni-Muslim-Turk¹⁴. It systematically excluded both religious and ethnic minorities that existed within the borders of the newly founded nation state (Aktar, 1996; Bora, 1996). While the majority of religiously different groups such as Christians (Greeks), Jews, and Armenians were forced to physically leave the country through population exchange agreements, pogroms or detrimental regulations, Muslim Kurds, Arabs and Alevis were forced to assimilate (Yeğen, 2006)¹⁵. Deviation from these norms of the Turkish citizen was treated as a threat to the homogeneity and indivisible unity of the Turkish nation which had to be eradicated by physical elimination, displacement or assimilation.

The policies of assimilation were deliberately used in order to prevent claims of self-rule by the Kurds, which had been pushed aside by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. However, through these policies the political rival was not identified as such, but rather in terms of deviant and maladjusted elements within the population. These elements are defined as a threat to the nation, which was to be resolved through various techniques of discipline and normalization. In this sense, the policies of assimilation function as an instrument to govern the population by specifically aiming at shaping the individuals' behaviour and understandings of themselves. These practices – no matter how much they resemble techniques of sovereign or disciplinary power – aim not at *excluding* specific dangerous actors, but at integrating them by eliminating their difference and *producing* a certain way of life¹⁶. In this sense, all the different policies of assimilation discussed in the following are

¹³ The discourses on Turkishness and Turkification go back the first Turkish nationalist thought at the end of the 19th century. I will refrain on tracing this history here as this has been done by various authors such as Cagaptay (2006), Sadoğlu (2003), Yeğen (1999, 2007), Bora (1996), Zeydanlıoğlu (2012).

¹⁴ There exists an extensive body of literature on the construction of national identity in Turkey which differs in respect to how inclusive or exclusive Turkish nationalism is understood and whether it is defined by ethnicity, race, or culture. Many authors point out the two faces of Turkish nationalism, which on the one hand gives itself a universal and inclusive face, but in fact is discriminative and exclusionary (Aktar, 1996; Bora, 1995, 1996; Cagaptay, 2004; Yıldız, 2001). Although these authors argue that Turkish nationalism includes references to race or ethnicity, there exists a debate in respect to how deeply this discriminative and racist element is systematically rooted in the *theoretical* fundaments or whether the discrimination is only to be located in exclusionary practices (see Maksudyan, 2005: 293). As should become clear in the following, I assume discourses and their respective practices as inseparably tied to one another and follow a dynamic approach of authors such as Mesut Yeğen (1999, 2006), who emphasizes the shift in definition of the Turkish citizen in the constitutions from a more inclusive to a racialized notion, while in practice various approaches existed simultaneously.

¹⁵ Yeğen points out that there was a tendency to acknowledge the existence of ethnic minorities in the first year of the republic which was however totally abandoned with the constitution of 1924 (Yeğen, 2006: 49-53).

¹⁶ According to Foucault, law does not cease to exist in the age of biopower, but rather modifies to function under the logic of biopower "more and more as a norm" (Foucault, 1998: 144). Similarly, disciplinary practices do not vanish under biopower, but continue to exist in combination with regulative measures (Foucault, 1998:

guided by the logic of biopower (Foucault) which aims at managing both the population and the individual at once. That is to say, they establish a link between nation-building and the practices of the self (Foucault, 2003).

In the Turkish case, the policies of assimilation consist of a network of various legal and administrative regulations, disciplinary practices and scientific and non-scientific discourses. These different techniques - ranging from violent resettlement and imprisonment, bans on speaking and publishing in Kurdish to disciplinary practices in schools - have to be regarded as a continuum, which we can describe as a *dispositif* in Foucault's sense. Foucault chose the term "dispositif" in order to grasp an ensemble of heterogeneous discursive and non-discursive techniques, including laws, institutions, and administrative measures as well as architectural works, and academic, philosophical and moral assertions (Foucault, 1980a). According to him, this ensemble is loosely held together by a "strategic objective" in relation to which the different techniques function. He mentions the assimilation of a "floating population found to be burdensome for mercantile economy" as an example of such a strategic imperative carrying the *dispositif* which established the "control or subjection of madness, mental illness and neurosis" (Foucault, 1977a: 195). Foucault, however, emphasizes that despite this common objective the multiple techniques can have intended and unintended effects which contradict each other. In this sense, the *dispositif* is not fixed, but characterized by a constant reworking, shifting and modifying of the different technique with and against each other.

I have chosen to grasp the various techniques which influence, generate and control assimilation in this way as a *dispositif* in order to emphasize the broader objective they function with, without having to assume a unified and non-contradictory total system working under centralized command. The various techniques develop in multiple places, such as academia, administration, and everyday confrontations, and have varying effects. This approach therefore addresses the problem which Aslan points out that in this context scholars have often depicted the Turkish state as a "unified and coherent actor that imposes a set of rigid and uncompromising nation-building policies to transform citizens into one, specific understanding of Turkishness" (Aslan, 2009: §6). For her, such an approach reifies a notion of the state as a single actor and neglects the "dissonance and confrontations" that exist among its various parts. In this sense, when I speak of *state* policies of assimilation, I understand the state as an amalgam of multiple institutions,

146). We can therefore see that techniques such as torture or bodily disciplining, which I discuss in the following, serve the biopolitical function of producing a normalized and nationalized population.

discourses, and practices, which can contradict each other but are guided by a common logic. The techniques of assimilation are not static, they shift and change over time and the contradictions and interstices/gaps within them can be made fruitful in the struggle against them.

Due to the vast multiplicity of such practices that makes it is impossible to claim a fully comprehensive description of these various different techniques, I will focus here on six main techniques which I regard as central within this dispositif of assimilation: (1) discursive foreclosure of possible identifications and conduct through elimination of the terms Kurd, Kurdish or Kurdistan, (2) the elimination of Kurdish language, (3) the production of a feeling of inferiority, (4) practices of disciplining the body of the “modern” citizen, (5) the criminalization of Kurds and Kurdishness, and (6) the recent attempts to integrate Kurds through new multicultural discourses as well as produce them as a fundamental Other through overt racism. Consequently, this chapter traces the key techniques of assimilation from the discourses of denial and turkification to a limited acknowledgement of ethnic difference, existing today.

3.1 DISCURSIVE FORCLOSURE: THE NON-WORD “KURD”

One of these core techniques of assimilation has been the attempt to discursively eliminate the word Kurd or Kurdistan from any academic or non-academic debate (Jongerden, 2007). This *discourse of denial*, which is based on the assumption of the non-existence of ethnic differences within the single Turkish nation, dominated state practices until the rise of the armed struggle in the 1990s.

While before the founding of the republic the leaders of the war of independence, had (strategically) acknowledged Turks and Kurds as the two main Muslim groups within the territory of the future nation-state, the explicit recognition of specific rights for the Kurds was dropped in the first constitution of 1924 (Yeğen, 1999: 117). Although citizenship was not overtly defined in terms of ethnicity and descent and the constitution stated that the people of Turkey were regarded as citizens “regardless of religion and race”, Yeğen underlines the subtle exclusion of Kurds which existed in the details of citizenship rights which demanded that Kurds assimilate in order to benefit from them (Yeğen, 1999: 120). In this sense, Yeğen argues that the policies of 1920s were characterized by an “invitation to become Turks” (Yeğen, 2007).

This subtle ethnic underpinning of citizenship shifts towards an overtly racial definition in the 1930s, in which through vigorous activity in the academic field, the press and politics started to construct a Turkish identity and history in racial terms (Yeğen, 1999; Bora, 1996; Yıldız, 2001: 155; Maksudyan, 2005). This was done by drawing on theories, such as the Sun Language Theory and the Turkish History Thesis, which both similarly propose that the Turkic Language and the Turkish race respectively are the origin of all languages and great cultures and therefore subsume all other Muslim cultures in Turkey (among others Bora, 1996: 181; Cagaptay, 2004: 88; Yıldız, 2001: 192; Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008). Consequently, from the 1930s onwards it was scientifically “proven” that no ethnic entity other than Turks existed in Turkey (Yeğen, 1999: 126). According to this, *Kurds did not exist* as a separate ethnicity, nation or race¹⁷. Instead Kurds were understood to be essentially Turks who have lost their language. This “categorical discourse of denial” dominated the public discourse in form of naturalised facts and discursively eliminated the existence of Kurds or Kurdistan (Yeğen, 1999). References to Kurdistan were dropped in maps, historical artefacts and monuments destroyed (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2008). As I will discuss in more detail below, legal regulations translated this discourse of denial of Kurdish existence into everyday life, making it a criminal act to speak of or identify as a Kurd. And although the discursive denial was ultimately shattered through the rise of the armed struggle, until today school books still bear the trace of this discourse (A. G. Altınay, 2005; Bora, 2009; Çayır, 2009). Due to this discursive elimination, Abdullah Öcalan, himself, describes the word Kurd as a “non-word” in these times (Öcalan, 2009b: 19)¹⁸. Consequently, the Kurdish Movement frames the policies of assimilation as a “politics of denial” of the Kurds.

As this discourse of the denial makes it rhetorically impossible to voice intelligible claims for self-determination on grounds of being a separate nation, Yeğen underlines the paradox, which this leads to regarding the policies of assimilation. He argues that following this racial definition of citizenship, it became “inconsistent for Turkish nationalism to invite the citizens to become Turks” (Yeğen, 2007: 127). From then on, it only makes sense to understand these policies not as the assimilation of an *ethnically different* other to the Turkish population, but rather as the *purification* of the single race.

For Foucault, the production of knowledge is a central part of power and the production of subjectivity. By determining what can be considered as true and false, knowledge delimits

¹⁷ According to this racial difference was reserved for those considered religiously different, such as Greeks, Jews, and Armenians.

¹⁸ Somer (2005) provides detailed quantitative data of the use of the word “Kurd” for domestic affairs in the Turkish print media between 1984 and 1998, showing a clear correlation to the rise in armed conflict.

what can be understood as human, normal, a subject; or here a Turk. In this sense, such truths not only determine what can count as a subject and what does not, but also delimit the ways in which individuals perceive the world, understand and see themselves and behave accordingly (Foucault, 1998, 2001, 2002). Butler (1990) draws on this, when she argues that power functions by establishing a field of *intelligible* and *unintelligible* lives. According to her, discourses, categories and norms transported through language determine what is socially intelligible, meaning perceivable, comprehensible and, therefore, livable in society. For Butler, this “matrix of intelligibility” (Butler, 1990: 24) draws a line between the “thinkable” and “unthinkable”, or “sayable” and “unsayable”. Those people whose lives are not intelligible in society are, therefore, not recognised as subjects. In this sense, Butler argues that the discourses and the norms and categories which they entail *foreclose* the possibilities of identification; they are made impossible on the discursive level (Butler, 1997).

The discourses of denial in this context do precisely this. The words Kurd and Kurdistan are eradicated from the official discourse and language in a process which includes academia as well as the judiciary. The expression of these terms is forbidden. It becomes punishable and therefore unsayable, unintelligible. Consequently, Kurdish identity is discursively eradicated, pushed into the realm of the unthinkable and socially non-existent. This “discursive elimination” (Jongerden, 2007) of the Kurds forecloses possible identification. Besides legal regulations, this foreclosure became further institutionalized especially through administrative measures and practices, which maintained the non-expression of Kurdish existence and enforced Turkishness as the norm. Schools are central in disseminating these “truths” on the single nation of the Turks, where they are put into practiced and embodied through rituals, such as reciting the national anthem, vow or other exercises. Boarding schools were established (many of them in the Kurdish areas) as an instrument to assure “correct” education towards a Turkish identity. In addition, the bans on Kurdish language as well as making Turkish the language of the state and education were central, as I will discuss in more detail in the following section.

Despite some attempts to claim the existence of Kurds in the 1950s and in the late 1960s, this discursive foreclosure persisted widely unchallenged until the PKK started its armed struggle (Zeydanlioğlu, 2014). Nevertheless, the discursive elimination did not work faultlessly. The “ghost” of the Kurds and Kurdistan continued to exist in discourses on the “south-east”, which became a common synonym for Kurdistan. Similarly, derogatory

images of Kurds as “Mountain-Turks” (Dağ-Türkleri) which implied that they were actually Turks, however uneducated and backward, could not effectively hide their existence¹⁹. In similar vein, Mesut Yeğen argues, that although the state was more or less successful in making the Kurds “invisible” through these discourses, the “Kurdish question” still had to be camouflaged. This turned out to be more difficult to achieve, so that the Kurdish question would keep on returning as a problem to deal with (Yeğen, 2007: 127). Today, after more than 30 years of armed conflict and recent peace talks between Öcalan and the government, maintaining such discourses of denial has become untenable. Nevertheless, defining the issue of the conflict remains a question of debate. In this context, rethinking the concept of assimilation beyond the pure repression of the expression of ethnic identity, but in terms, rather, of the production of subjectivity, allows us to include the policies existing today.

3.2 ELIMINATION OF LANGUAGE

As the main distinguishing feature, language was a key “vehicle of assimilation” (Üngör, 2012: 128). Both the bans on speaking and publishing in Kurdish as well as the forceful and subtle promotion of Turkish in people’s lives, play a crucial role in creating the target population.

In many ways, the production of a pure Turkish language was “at the heart of the Kemalist nation-building project”, as Zeydanlıoğlu (2012) argues. The so-called “language revolution” of the early years of the republic was initiated by the law introducing the Latin alphabet in 1928 to ensure the “nationalization”, “modernization”, and “westernization” of the language by abandoning the Arabic script. This was accompanied by an academic-administrative effort in turkifying words with Arabic or Persian origins which included bans on the use of any other language than Turkish in publishing and education (1924), in public use (1928), and personal names (1934)²⁰ and regulations ensuring the exclusive use of Turkish in place names²¹. While these bans aimed at generally homogenizing language use,

¹⁹ The derogatory constructions of Kurds are mentioned in the majority of work on the Kurds, e.g. Gunes & Zeydanlıoğlu (2014: 9) and Yeğen (2007).

²⁰ The ban on public use of Kurdish was lifted in 1950, but re-implemented officially after the coup in 1980. However, due to the establishment of martial law in all of the Kurdish regions and the strong effect the policies of assimilation had altogether, this regulation effectively continued to be in practice. My interviewees have stated that until the late 1980s no one would speak Kurdish in public in Diyarbakir at all.

²¹ Jongerden (2009) and Öktem (2008) have stated that the majority of place names (mainly villages, but also hamlets, rivers, and mountains) were turkified over throughout 1950 and 1980, but also the military government took up the issue again after the 1980 coup (also see Nişanyan, 2011).

the “Plan for the Reformation of the East” implemented in 1925, the year of the first large uprising of Kurds against the Turkish state (the Sheikh Said Rebellion), individually names the Kurdish districts in which those who spoke any other language than Turkish in state institutions and marketplaces would be brought to court for “committing a crime against the state” (cited in Malmisanij, 2006). Amir Hassanpour describes how special civil servants were employed in cities to ensure this ban on Kurdish and that villagers bringing sheep to the market were fined for every Kurdish word they spoke (Hassanpour, 2005: 230).

While the origins for this construction of Turkish as a single language lie in these early years of the republic, the enforcement, especially of banning Kurdish in public, in these years was neither uniform nor as rigorous as often assumed, as Aslan (2011) points out²². Kurdish was eradicated from towns and cities fairly early, whereas villages were widely exempt from such practices of turkification. In fact, it was not until the 1980 coup that these bans were fiercely and comprehensively enforced (Scalbert-Yücel, 2009). With law number 2932 of the 1983-Constitution, all forms of expression, whether in verbal or in writing, in any language other than Turkish were officially forbidden. In this sense, the 1980s-coup reinforced the single-language policy to an extent that went beyond the previous implementation. Similarly, Malmisanji (2006) highlights that it reinvigorated the strict laws regarding publishing of the early years of the republic. He argues that the ban on publishing implemented in 1924 had slightly eased in practice in the late 1970s²³. However, this tendency was interrupted by the third coup²⁴. The military rule, which lasted four years, explicitly banned 927 books and numerous journals and newspapers, imprisoning and torturing writers and journalists as well as owners of Kurdish books (Malmisanij, 2006).

It was not until 1991, under President Turgut Özal, that the law 2932 was formally amended. However, as Bayır highlights, these strict regulations were reinstated in camouflaged form as anti-terrorism laws (Bayır, 2013). Consequently, the effect was the same: Legally, the Kurdish language itself was not banned anymore, but because propagating it was categorized as separatist and, therefore, a terroristic activity, many people still faced severe prosecution. As Scalbert-Yücel points out, this made judicial

²² Aslan (2011) has pointed out that they were less successful and all-comprising that generally assumed due to the lack in financial means and will on the part of the officials.

²³ Malmisanij notes that due to the bans only a total of 20 Kurdish books were published from the implementation of the ban until 1980s, nine of which were published throughout the first 50 years, and another 9 in the short period of slight appeasement after the return to civil government after the second coup, in the second half of the 1970s (Malmisanij, 2006).

²⁴ Turkey has so far experienced three (official) military coups: the first in 1960, the second in 1971, and the last in 1980; a warning issued by the military leadership towards the government in 1997 has widely been referred to as the “postmodern” coup (Candar, 1999; Demirel, 2004; Özbudun, 2000).

practices extremely arbitrary and speaking Kurdish could be punished or tolerated depending on the specific situation (Scalbert-Yücel, 2009: §15). It took another ten years and pressure from the European Union for private Kurdish language courses, TV and radio broadcasting (2002) as well as the use of Kurdish names (2003) to be formally allowed²⁵ and even since then journalists, authors and politicians have faced censorship and prosecutions for using the Kurdish language²⁶.

However, more than the explicit bans on language, it was primarily the determination of Turkish as the only official language and single language of education which has led to the substantial erasure of Kurdish. From the founding of the republic onwards, compulsory schooling was held in Turkish. Religious schools, which existed at the time and some of which used Kurdish, were banned with the Law on the Unification of Education in 1924. Special schools, such as boarding schools, schools for girls, Turkish classes for women and Turkish Centres (Türk Ocakları), were set up from late 1920s onwards specifically to enforce the use of Turkish. In school, speaking Kurdish was generally rigorously punished. Nearly all my interviewees remember being physically disciplined for speaking Kurdish in school. Automatically, they put their fingertips together to indicate how they were hit with a ruler or iron rod, the most common method of punishment. Many of my interviewees also recall teachers implementing a system of spies who reported on those who spoke Kurdish outside the classroom, in private. The experience of such punishment has a lasting effect not only on their language skills, but also on their personality and their attitude towards Kurdish language and culture.

As a number of participants told me, through school they learned that their language had no validity, and was not intelligible beyond the sphere of the home, village or direct community. In order to pursue life outside this local sphere, there is no alternative but to learn and speak the language of the state. Turkish is the language of commerce, for example, which means that Turkish is required in order to find a job, even for unskilled labour. In this sense, these conditions have made Kurdish widely “unlivable” in everyday life, and this has only slightly changed over the last decade since the Kurdish party has gained control of the municipalities in the Kurdistan region.

²⁵ For a detailed discussion on the effect of the EU accession process, see Yildiz and Muller (2008). Kurdish names are currently, however, only allowed if they do not include letters which do not exist in the Turkish alphabet, such as q, x, w.

²⁶ For example for the use of Kurdish in political campaigning or official contexts (see Watts, 2010: 152).

3.3 LEARNT INFERIORITY AND CRISIS OF SUBJECTIVITY

Besides the foreclosure of identification and the practical eradication of language use, assimilation also works through invoking a feeling of inferiority, which has famously been analyzed by Frantz Fanon as a product of the colonial situation. Fanon discusses the “desire to be white” as one reaction to this feeling of inferiority (Fanon, 1967). This desire to be white, results in various everyday practices which range from choice of language, pronunciation and style of speaking, adoption of cultural standards, renunciation of blackness to the choice of sexual partners. In this sense, the practices described by Fanon are ways of “lessening” the feeling of inferiority by adapting or assimilating to norms of whiteness. Thus, Fanon offers a psychological approach to the question of assimilation. This connection between the feelings of shame and worthlessness triggered through discourses of inferiority, as well as the practices of “becoming whiter” analyzed by Fanon, corresponds with what is described by my interviewees in respect to the policies of assimilation.

Similar to Fanon’s emphasis on the central role of language in this context, my interviewees often begin by articulating the way in which the disqualification of the Kurdish language gave rise to a feeling of inferiority (also briefly mentioned by Hassanpour, 2005: 230). In line with the discursive elimination of Kurdishness beginning in the 1930s, Kurdish was no longer acknowledged as a distinct language. Instead, it was scientifically maintained that Kurdish was a dialect or a modified version of Turkish which had derived from the speakers living secluded in the mountains for so long (Hassanpour, 2005: 231). Consequently, Kurdish was constructed in various contexts whether scientific, legal, everyday life as an “unintelligible uttering” (Radikal, 2012b).

This degradation of Kurdish and the enforcement of Turkish as the only language to be spoken, is especially put into practice in schools. For many, school is the first place where young Kurds are taught that their culture and language neither officially exist nor are in any way valued. This devaluation of language works via the discursive production of Kurds as “uncivilised”, “backward” and “rural”, as these two interviewees in their late 20s confirm.

The horrible thing is that they tell you that your own language is worth nothing, that it is backward. (Interview 24, informal interview with man in his late 20s)

Knowing and speaking Kurdish used to be seen as inappropriate/disgrace. It was associated with being rural. (Interview 16, 28 year old woman with university education, in work, she was born in a village but migrated to the city within the Kurdish region when she was an infant)

Both express how they were made to feel that their language was something to be ashamed of, something bad and worthless, because it is associated with ruralness and backwardness. For Fanon, what he calls the “inferiority complex” is created through the eradication of an “originality” of the local culture (Fanon, 1967: 18). The discourses on ruralness and backwardness are two specific forms of such degradation in this context, which I will discuss further in the next section. They are used to establish a hierarchy between the colonialist and colonized culture, or here Turkish and non-Turkish culture. Fanon equates language and culture, in this respect. For him, the destruction and degradation of language mean the eradication or humiliation of culture as well as, conversely, the adoption of language always also means assuming a culture (Fanon, 1967: 17). Learning that their language is not valid or accepted also arouses a feeling of shame for their culture. Many of my interviewees describe that Kurdish was seen as rude and that they were teased, insulted, discriminated and spanked for speaking it. These discourses and practices of humiliating the speakers of Kurdish are deliberately implemented in schools in order to achieve a feeling of inferiority and trigger changes in language use, as these three sisters describe.

A: When we were children, we were afraid because of our mother-tongue.

B: When we started primary school, my elder sister always warned us: “Don’t dare speak Kurdish” and forced us to keep quiet.

C: We also experienced violence [in school].

B: Yes, I did. I couldn’t express myself in Turkish. I would always forget the letters out of fear.

A: It was a feeling that destroys your self-confidence.

C: I am still anxious [when speaking] in public.

A: We spoke a different language in school and a different language at home. They made us feel Kurdish was something to be ashamed of. That’s why we were not brought up to be healthy individuals in regard to our race.

B: I was forced to suppress all my feelings. I was introvert and quiet. [...]

C: They forced us to learn their language. They tried to make us forget our language. They ridicule us. Why don’t they show respect for us as humans? (Interview 20, three sisters aged 27, 28 and 30, all with a university degree, only one of them in work, the youngest studied in the West)

The conversation among the sisters illustrates the lasting effect which the practices in school have had not only on their language skills, but on their personality and their attitude towards Kurdish language and culture. They describe how the experience of punishment and humiliation systematically shatters their existing personality and self-confidence, making them feel inferior about their culture and language. In this sense, as children, they are violently taught a hierarchy between Kurdish and Turkish. This arouses a feeling of shame and fear, which in turn makes them become anxiousness, quiet and introvert. As a

result, the feeling of inferiority triggered through this experience, forces them to adapt to the imposed norms of Turkishness. One of the sisters indicates how this uneasy relationship to the language complicates the possibility of identifying as Kurdish, when she states that they were “not brought up as healthy individuals in regard to their race”. A similar effect on their personality is described by these two men, one of which in his late 50s and the other in his early 30s.

The most important task of assimilation is to break your self-confidence. That's why many people although they actually speak some Kurdish do not have the courage to speak. (Interview 39, informal interview, retired man in his late 50s with middle school education, living in the West)

The problem with having Turkish as the teaching language in school is that you neither know Turkish nor Kurdish properly. That's why your self-confidence is not strong. Assimilation, for me, means having no self-confidence. (Interview 8, 33 year old man in work, with a university education, worked manually in the West to finance his studies)

Both men describe assimilation as a means of breaking their self-confidence and they identify self-confidence with the ability to speak Kurdish. Having Turkish as a teaching language and the general disqualification of Kurdish has an effect that goes beyond just language ability. The experience of losing the language they were once fluent at and being forced to learn a new language is experienced as a loss of self-confidence. The words of this man underline the integral connection between language and culture which Fanon also expresses, when he describes the effect of the disqualification of Kurdish language in school:

When you start school at the age of seven, you have already developed a certain understanding of the world. But when you start to go to school, you learn that everything you have learnt so far is all a lie. You have also reached a certain personality, before you start school, but this experience destroys your personality and gives rise to psychological problems. (Interview 15, 29 year old man, in work with university education)

He describes how the degradation of language fundamentally uproots all knowledge he thought to be true until then. The moment Kurdish is made invalid, all associated knowledge is simultaneously disqualified. This again has consequences for his personality. The defamation of everything which is associated to Kurdishness, therefore, also includes all knowledge which he has gained from his families and surroundings and therefore disqualifies the authority of his parents. Often enough, this causes the children to disassociate themselves from the family or at least to blame them for the experienced pain. Quite a few interviewees told me that they had cursed their parents in their childhood for their Kurdishness. Very often parents choose to protect their children from experiencing

othering practices and decide to speak Turkish at home. As a result, these Kurdish children do not experience the destruction of their personality and self-confidence in the same way. For them, school does not present such a rupture in their lives. They do not experience school as an “alienation” from their own culture as many others do, like this man who went to boarding school:

We had no idea what kind of place it [boarding school] was. We went there without knowing. Much later I realized it was no different than the military. Slowly, slowly we were alienated. I have only recently started understanding the pain it meant. Everything was done in just one language. I had no clue of Turkish until middle school. [...] They estranged us from ourselves. Now, we speak better Turkish than them. [...] In every situation you are destitute and helpless. We desire to be like someone else (Interview 33, 31 year old man, in work, with university education, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region due to village eviction).

He describes the effect of school as a subtle process of alienation, which he intrinsically links to the shift in his language ability and the desire to be someone else. Admitting that he has only recently begun to understand the “pain” that this meant, we understand that this process of “estrangement” from himself, as he also calls it, was not necessarily directly noticeable for him at the time. It is rather in hindsight that he is able to articulate this alienation as a result of the education system and its single language policy which has eradicated his ability to speak Kurdish. Fanon uses the term *alienation* to describe the psychological state of wanting to become white. It is a situation of shaken identity, ambiguously caught between being white and black, caused by the feeling of inferiority (Fanon, 1967: 111-112). Similarly, here the interviewee hints at his feeling of being destitute and helpless. This experience of weakness causes him to desire to be different, which means: to want to abandon his Kurdishness. In a related way, this man in his 30s admits denying his Kurdishness due to the feeling of inferiority which was planted in him.

We were constantly humiliated in school and in public. [...] I totally denied that I was Kurdish when I was a child. It was impossible for me to see being Kurdish as something normal or good, instead I felt ashamed. (Interview 7, 35 year old man working in precarious conditions with university education, to finance his studies he went to work in the West in precarious conditions for a few months every year)

The negative images, discourses and practices, that are not limited to the treatment in school, make it impossible to identify as Kurdish. They manifest a hierarchy which prevents him from seeing Kurdishness as a nationality, ethnicity or identity equal to Turkish. On the contrary, Kurdishness is a reason to feel ashamed. Consequently, such a feeling of inferiority leads to a crisis in subjectivity. A similar moment of crisis is described by this woman who recalls an incident which occurred to her in the early 1990s in Diyarbakir

where she grew up. Her memory illustrates how the feeling of inferiority has engraved itself in her personality.

Certainly, I say I am a Kurd, but it wasn't always like that. My political awareness developed later. I wasn't like that as a child. I was even ashamed of being a Kurd when I was little. One day, I was walking down the street with my brother and a guy suddenly asked us: "Are you a Kurd or a Turk?" I have no idea why, maybe he was a police officer. My brother answered "I am a Turk" and I started to cry. I don't exactly know, why. But it was no feeling of pride at all. It was a feeling of inferiority [eziklik]²⁷. (Interview 16, 28 year old woman with university education, in work, she was born in a village but migrated to the city within the Kurdish region when she was an infant)

The interviewee describes this experience to explain how she felt ashamed of being Kurdish as a child. She interprets her crying as a feeling of inferiority. She cries when her brother denies their Kurdishness. We can assume that knowing the truth triggered her emotional reaction. It is impossible for them to openly identify as Kurdish. Realizing this impossibility gives her this feeling inferiority and oppression even though she is not aware of the political implications.

While some might resolve this feeling of crisis in other ways, for many it results in a rejection of their own identity and the suppression of all signs of Kurdishness, such as language and culture. In addition, this interviewee describes the unquestioned longing to be different.

We are all forced to assimilate. We comply. Until 1994 there was only Turkish television. We wanted to be like what we saw. Concepts of "mothers" and "fathers" started to spread via television. It seemed interesting for us. We took over these discourses like robots. We participated in our own assimilation by ourselves. We played our part in desiring to imitate the Turks. (Interview 33, 31 year old man, in work, with university education, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region due to village eviction)

Using the example of television, he illustrates how he (or his generalized "we") desired to "imitate the Turks". The media plays its part in disseminating the norms of Turkishness. While Kurdishness is belittled, Turkishness is glorified and thereby made the norm to comply with. He describes how they want to adapt to these norms without questioning it: A condition which others call "auto-assimilation". The imposed subjectivity is desired, while the inferior identity is denied; Kurdishness rejected and Turkish identity taken on. In this way, the policies of assimilation manage to achieve the targeted identification through the

²⁷ The Turkish term "eziklik", which is often used by my interviewees, can both be translated as inferior and oppressed, although it is rarely used with such a strongly reflected understanding of the situation as using the term oppressed implies.

production of a feeling of inferiority. Direct punishment is no longer necessary. The discourses of superiority of Turkishness and non-existence or inferiority of Kurdishness have stimulated a desire which can replace direct violence. Consequently, the Kurdish language and cultural practices are eliminated through practices of the self, because they have become undesirable.

3.4 SHAPING THE MODERN BODY

Feelings of inferiority are also generated through the discursive production of images of the backward and rural non-Turk versus the modern and urban Turk. Such *orientalist* discourses construct the Kurds as inferior elements within the social body of the apparently single nation without explicitly referring to them (see also McDowall, 2004: 426). In this sense, they turn the unspeakable ethnic difference into a problem *within* the nation, which is to be tackled via a “civilising mission” (Zeydanlioğlu, 2008).

Welat Zeydanlioğlu (2008) discusses in detail the way in which Orientalist discourses were applied within the Turkish nation-building project. With reference to Partha Chatterjee and Homi Bhabha, he argues that Turkish nationalism reinforced Orientalism through the acceptance of the notion of “modernity”, mimicking paternalistic Orientalist notions of the backward and primitive masses which had to be civilized (also see Ahiska, 2003: 14)²⁸. Ethno-religious plurality was regarded as “anachronism of the old Ottoman order”, a non-modern characteristic, which indicated Turkey’s own “Orientalness” and had to be eradicated. In this sense, the homogeneity of the Turkish nation was regarded as the criteria for its westernization and consequently, the civilising mission conceptualized in terms of “systematic Turkification” (Zeydanlioğlu, 2008). In other words, the various discourses and practices of assimilation are determined by Orientalist notions tied to the modernist project of the nation-state. Various discourses, practices and schemes developed in order to determine and justify actions to alleviate the nation of this backwardness. Among them, as Ertuğ Altınay mentions, are “horror stories” about “violent Kurdish culture” or more recently the problem of child-marriages legitimizing forced Turkification (Altınay, 2013: 91). Schemes, from alphabetisation and pronunciation classes to family planning and urbanisation policies, were implemented by the state and corresponding

²⁸ Besides “backwardness”, the Turkish Orientalist and Modernization goes via the question of “religiosity” and it intersects with the discourses on backwardness in the state’s approach towards the Kurds. The Kemalist policies in respect to religion presents a complex issue which has been addressed elsewhere (e.g. Cagaptay, 2006) and cannot be discussed in detail here.

everyday disciplinary practices derived aiming at “civilizing” the Kurds; that is normalising them into modern Turks.

Focussing on the construction of the body, Arus Yumul (2000) argues that in order to confirm the Turkish nation as modern, western and civilized, the modernization project had to create the image of the “uncivilized body”. She reveals how this construction of the “uncivilized” conflates the “eastern” with the “rural”. This “uncivilized body”, also more recently termed “black Turk” in public discourse, is envisaged as a rural and uneducated Easterner who has not embraced European lifestyle and physically identified with dark hair and skin colour, as hairy, unclean and with a moustache. She underlines that this “uncivilized body” is generally envisaged as male, because women are rather regarded as passive in this respect. In contrast, the “uncivilized” man is seen as wilfully rejecting modernization. These discourses have an effect on how people are treated in everyday life. A married woman living in Bursa told me about a recent experience of hers. One day, she had to go to the dentist with her husband in the middle of the night. According to her story, her husband had not shaved that day. As soon as they arrived, they were taken for terrorists. The clinic staff called the police and they ended up in custody at the police station (Interview 46). The woman clearly identified the reason for their maltreatment in her husband’s bodily appearance. Many interviewees told me stories of people not being treated (properly) in hospitals, because they did not speak Turkish or looked “eastern”. However, this anecdote also exemplifies the overlap between the bodily image of the Easterner and the terrorist.

In contrast to Yumul, Altınay argues that in respect to the actual attempts to assimilate, that is to “civilize” the Kurds, it is especially the woman’s body which is constructed as the “touchstone” of the success of this civilising project, as they are ascribed a central role in the reproduction of culture (Altınay, 2013: 89). He also underlines, however, that the modern body was identified with cleanliness and orderliness, while the “Eastern” is represented as the opposite. He mentions before/after-photographs which were disseminated in the early years of the republic in order to demonstrate and celebrate the transformation of Kurdish women into modern Turks. The bodily assimilation was asserted through hair, cleanness, clothing, posture and facial expression. In this sense, assimilation means becoming “modern” and “western” through bodily transformation. Schools were given the specific task of bodily disciplining. The children were taught to become Turks in “feeling and lifestyle”, as Üngör cites an official of the time (Üngör, 2012: 143). Especially in

boarding schools, students were subjected to “immediate physical transformation” through cutting hair, changing dress and names upon arrival (Üngör, 2012: 144)²⁹.

Clothing-practices were also part of these policies of the state which focussed – as Altınay puts it – on “creating healthy and clean bodies” (Altınay, 2013: 92). As part of this civilizing mission, regulations on clothing such as the veil and traditional headwear were implemented with the Hat Law in 1925. In banning clothing deemed religious and rural, the law aimed at creating a “modern” population by determining the citizen’s bodily conduct. In this sense, this law also intended to homogenize the population and assimilate the individuals. However, for people in their everyday today, more important than the actual bans on such clothing practices are the discriminatory practices into which these discourses have developed. My interviewees mention being insulted and ridiculed for wearing such clothing that is deemed “unmodern”, as these two interviewees describe.

If someone wears a shalwar, they are often ridiculed. “Look what he is wearing!” But these clothes give me the feeling of pride. A normal Kurd would feel shame. This is the effect of modernism. [...] Some can [continue Kurdish culture and traditions at home]. Being modern goes via not being Kurdish. Many people want to be modern, not Kurdish. They are eager to be modern. (Interview 40, 55 year old retired man with secondary school education, who was a victim of disciplinary relocation in the 1980s)

I came here from my village when I was 7 years old. When we were walking with my mother in the street, people would insult us because of her clothes (Interview 41, informal interview with woman in her late 40s, with primary education, migrated to the West as a child)

Both the man and the woman mention the insults and ridicule which wearing traditional clothing can arouse. While the woman recalls an experience about 40 years ago, when she first moved to West in the 1970s, the man argues that the same logic of discrimination still exists today. He makes clear how in society Kurdishness is identified with not being modern. He argues that many Kurds, he says “normal” Kurds, adapt their clothing practices accordingly in order to avoid the feeling of shame. However, he also indicates that people also choose not to wear traditional clothing in their desire to be modern. In this sense, these discourses enable a governing of the body.

The practices and discourses of modernization, civilization and the production of a feeling of inferiority aim at shaping both “the body and the soul” (Foucault, 2000a: 225). They not only affect bodily practices, but also an understanding of the Self. They produce a self-perception as a nationalized self, which demands coherent performance in everyday life.

²⁹ On the function of boarding schools as instruments of assimilation in general, see Işık & Arslan (2012).

The individual learns to know and understand itself according to these discourses and develops an (albeit troubled) identity respectively.

In his work on assimilation, Brubaker speaks of its transitive and intransitive dimension, referring on the one hand to the policies that force a population to “become similar” (“make similar”) and on the other to the work of the self on itself to become similar (Brubaker, 2001). These two are not separate from each other. The individual is obliged to perceive itself within this matrix of discourses and adapt its conduct, performance. In this sense, assimilation always requires a self-adaption to the given norms. Assimilation demands the individuals to make their own self-conduct an object of their actions and thought. They develop a “self-mastery” (Foucault, 1990b) with respect to these norms. Hence, the policies of assimilation generate individuals which work on themselves by adapting their conduct, bodies, feelings, and understanding of themselves and thereby produce themselves as nationalized subjects.

3.5 CRIMINALIZING KURDISHNESS

Another form of governing the “unspeakable” Kurds is through defining them as the deviant elements of Turkish society. Throughout the history of the Turkish republic, Kurds have been detained for speaking their language, making claims on their identity or supporting the Kurdish movement. Still today, thousands of adults and adolescents are currently detained under anti-terrorism law. In this sense, the prisons and the judicial system play a central role in taking control over the Kurdish population.

Derya Bayır (2013) gives a detailed analysis of the representation of Kurds in political court cases in Turkey since the founding of the republic. She illustrates how the way in which Kurdishness is defined as a crime changes over the years. Until the 1970s the courts pronounced long prison sentences for claiming the existence of Kurds, declaring - in line with the scientific discourses on the “Turkishness of the Kurds” - such claims as factitious (Bayır, 2013: 123) ³⁰. In the 1970s, the courts slightly shifted their justifications of the criminalization of Kurdishness by arguing that not *expressing* Kurdish identity itself was banned, but rather “Kurdism”, that is the claim that Kurds are a separate “national unity” with a distinct culture, language and identity which should therefore be *protected*. This shift resulted in higher courts terming this crime “Kurdism propaganda” and later “racism

³⁰ These cases include those against sociologist İsmail Beşikçi or the Revolutionary Eastern Culture Centres (DDKO), a Kurdish Marxist-Leninist organisation existing from 1969 to 1971.

propaganda". According to this, "Kurdism" was classed as racism (while Turkish nationalism was not understood in such terms). It was argued that Turkish nationalism had a cultural basis and therefore could not be discriminatory or racist. Referring to Kurds as a separate entity, whether regarding race, ethnicity or culture, meant to question the unity of the nation and state and was marked as racism itself. Bayır's analysis shows that acts such as defending education in Kurdish, demanding a stop to the oppression of Kurds, claiming the separate existence of Kurds, as well as singing in Kurdish were all seen and punished as "racism propaganda" in the late 1970s and early 1980s. After the annulment of this law in 1991, the criminalization of Kurdishness continued to be punished as "separatist propaganda" under the new Anti-Terrorism Law (Bayır 2013: 9-10). This development highlights a more general shift in discourses with the increase in resistance against the state which suggests a shift in discourse from *one* single race to *two* different races and an emphasis on security.

3.5.1 TORTURE AS TURKIFICATION TECHNIQUES

With the 1980 coup, imprisonment reached a peak with the mass-arrests of a total of 650,000 people. 500 people were killed as the result of torture, 85,000 people placed on trial and 1,683,000 listed as suspects in police files (cited in Zeydanlıoğlu, 2009). Kurds were indiscriminately put behind bars for many years. The infamous "Prison Number Five" in Diyarbakir, also called the dungeon or the camp, most dramatically illustrates the use of imprisonment and torture as an instrument aiming at shaping the population into a nation. Increasingly deploying less visible techniques which did not leave marks on its objects, torture is not used as a form of punishment or deterrent for others, but rather as a way of "creating self-policing subjects" (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2009).

The specific way in which the torture of the Kurds included nationalist songs and slogans, the national anthem and flag, the figure of Atatürk, and the forced repetition of sentence like "I am a Turk" highlight what Zeydanlıoğlu calls the "ethnic character of torture" (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2009). According to him, this form of torture which was called "education" by the torturers not only aimed at humiliating and destroying the identity of the prisoners, but also at forcefully turkifying them. In this sense, Zeydanlıoğlu argues that torture was implemented as an instrument in the "creation and maintaining [of] a homogenous nation-state of Turks", functioning as a technique of assimilation (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2009).

3.5.2 ANTI-TERRORISM ACT: THE PRODUCTION OF A LOYAL CITIZEN

Today, the Anti-Terrorism Act still maintains a central role in controlling the population. The Anti-Terrorism Act in its current form has obviously had its predecessors, but was totally revised in 2005 and last amended in July 2010 (Human Rights Watch, 2010a: 19). It has made possible the arrest and conviction of thousands of adults and children within the past few years. According to a report by Human Rights Watch, the broadly defined laws have led to the high punishments against mere participants of demonstrations. In these sentences, participating in demonstrations, showing victory signs, clapping, shouting PKK slogans, throwing stones, or burning tires have regularly been classified as severe acts of terrorism (HRW, 2010b). The report provides an example, among others, of a university student who was sentenced to six years and three months for making a victory sign at a funeral procession for four PKK members in 2006 and clapping during protest on the University campus in Diyarbakır in 2007. Another example is the sentencing of a mother of six children to seven years imprisonment for holding up a banner reading “The approach to peace lies through Öcalan” during a protest in Kurtalan, Siirt, in December 2009 (HRW, 2010b)³¹.

This recent tightening in the terrorism laws and jurisdiction has also had serious effects on the sentencing of adolescents. Over the past few years the number of children in prisons has increased dramatically and brought the term of “stone-throwing children” onto the agenda. According to figures of the Ministry of Justice, only 17 adolescents were convicted in 2005 for political crimes, while this number rocketed to 1,023 in 2010 (Bianet, 2012a). Amnesty International reports that many of these children were sued under the Terrorism Act for participating in demonstrations eligibly organised by the PKK (Amnesty International, 2010). For the Turkish Human Rights Organisation TIHV the year 2006 presents a caesura due to serious riots which broke out in March that year and lasted for four days (TIHV, 2011)³². In the course of the riots, 10 people were killed by police forces, 6 of which were children, and hundreds were injured. 563 people were taken into custody, 200 of which were between 12 and 18 years old (IHD, 2006; Mazlum Der, 2006). State officials, especially the governor (Vali) of Diyarbakır used these events to create the image of abnormal, delinquent “stone-throwing children”, which made adolescents a specific target for anti-terrorism units and legislation, and remains a major discursive tool today³³.

³¹ Her case was on appeal at the time of the completion of the report.

³² Legal proceedings under the Anti-Terror Law were initiated against 299 adolescents in 2006, 438 in 2007, and 571 in 2008, while the number of convictions leaped from 47 in 2007 to 122 in 2008 and 1.105 in 2009.

³³ TIHV reports a total of 4000 adolescents between 12 and 18 years taken into custody or imprisoned under this law during the four-year period between 2006 and 2010 (TIHV, 2011). In 2010, the government proposed a reform of the existing Anti-Terrorism Law which became known as the “stone-throwing children”-law. Despite

These adolescents are defined as “abnormal” personas as Foucault describes in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) lacking the correct education. As Dâra Elhüseyni (2009) argues, especially pedagogical approaches underline the educational deficit of these young people. In line with this, the governor of Diyarbakir recently reiterated the need for a legal regulation to enable governmental organizations to withdraw these “stone-throwing children” from their families and place them children’s homes (Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı, 2012).

3.5.3 DETAINING KURDISTAN: CONTROL AND SURVEILLANCE

Imprisonment and the systematic torture in detainment, however, must be seen as a continuum with the violent policies of resettlement of the 1930s and the village evictions of 1990s, of emergency rule, violence and extra-judicial killings (Ülker, 2008). These different methods of control present a “carceral continuum” (Foucault, 1977a) which was deployed in order to deal with the threat that the Kurdish population presented for the nation.

The resettlements were a means of dispersing “deviant” subjects over the territory. Mixing them with the Turkish population was a state strategy to enable faster turkification, as becomes evident from a classified circular issued by the Ministry of Interior in 1930, according to which the governors were given the task to identify the names and number of villages speaking a foreign dialect, distribute these people to Turkish villages in the area, encourage Turkish girls to marry Turks who do not speak Turkish, ridicule their traditions, songs, dances, weddings and clothes, *turkify* their names and titles, and force them speak Turkish at home and to say they were Turkish (Coşkun et al., 2011: 28). Resettlement was, however, not used on a large scale, but rather for families of important leaders of the uprisings of 1925 (Sheikh Said), 1930 (Ararat) and 1938 (Dersim). The *Settlement Law* of 1934 legalized both the strategic resettlement of Kurdish people into Turkish-dominated areas and the settlement of Turkish people – both in form of civil servants as well as normal citizens – into the Kurdistan region, which had previously been outlined in multiple wishful plans (Coşkun et al., 2011; Yeğen, 2006: 64). In this sense, the Kurdistan region has always been treated as an exception since the early days of the republic. The region was put under specific administrative “attention”³⁴.

the reform, Human Rights Organization (IHD), reports a number of 352 adolescents taken into custody under Terrorism Law in only the first four months of 2011, 116 of them imprisoned (TIHV, 2011).

³⁴ Jongerden (2007) also describes this specific attention in relation to the administrative regulation of village sizes.

After the major massacre against the population of Dersim in 1937/38, in which according to state reports nearly 8,000, according to other varying estimations several ten thousand people were killed or detained, the violent policies of control lessened slightly over the following years (McDowall, 2004; van Bruinessen, 1994; Watts, 2000). Occasional eruptions occurred such as the mass-detainment in 1960 and eventually culminate into the extreme brutality of the 1980 coup and the following violence of the 1990s. While the rest of the country returned to normal rule following the end of the military government, a state of emergency was declared in ten administrative regions of the Kurdistan region in 1987, the year in which the PKK launched its first attack. The state of emergency, which was from then on renewed by the parliament every four months until 2002, meant the comprehensive control over the whole Kurdistan region. It enabled extended powers of the authorities, extreme military surveillance and arbitrary treatment of the population.

The following decade was characterised by extreme violence: countless disappearances and extrajudicial killings, the detainment of thousands, torture, sexual assaults and rape, and, the systematic humiliation of the population as a form of collective psychological torture (McDowall, 2004: 440). The state took care in publically displaying and visualizing its brutality at least to the local population and additionally instigated an atmosphere of violence and fear by establishing a local para-military of so-called “village guards”³⁵ and promoting the rights-wing organization, Hizbullah (Aras, 2014).

In this context, over 3000 villages were forcefully evicted and burnt down by the military, allegedly for security reasons; the estimated number of villagers who were forced to leave lies between 1.5 and 4.5 million (H. Bozarslan, 2000; Jongerden, 2007: 78-80; Kirisci & Winrow, 1997: 146-156; Yeğen, 2006: 67)³⁶. In this sense, they were not actually deported and resettled by the state, but made displaced persons overnight. They were deprived of their homes, all their possessions, their land and income. The majority of these people migrated to other Kurdish cities as well as cities in the West of Turkey, and often still struggle to make ends meet today. These evictions also managed what the economic changes had not until then: the radical impoverishment of millions of Kurds. Deprived of all previous income, they were – for the greater part – forced into precarious, unskilled work.

³⁵ The village guard system which was set up in 1985 had the purpose to support the military in its fight against the PKK. It turned locals in paid militias who know the region and the language. The number of these guards, which still exist today, rose from 18,000 in 1990 to 63,000 in 1994.

³⁶ Jongerden gives a detailed account on the depopulation of the rural areas. He argues that although people continued to live in villages. However, some rural areas especially in the province of Diyarbakir lost over 70% of their population, while the urban are population of Diyarbakir rose by nearly 40% (Jongerden, 2007).

3.6 NEOLIBERAL GOVERNMENTALITY: RACISM AND MULTICULTURALISM

With the rise of the armed struggle of the PKK which began in 1984 and the development of a wide-scale popular Kurdish movement, the discourse of denial was interrupted. The ongoing struggle made it more and more impossible to deny the existence of Kurds in Turkey (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2014: 169). The dominance of this struggle and the success of the PKK to mobilise and reach the Kurdish people with their discourse have had an important impact both on the state policies as well as the possibility to re-identify as Kurds. The withering of this denial-discourse has given way to both racist constructions of fundamental “Otherness” of Kurds as well as their limited recognition within the new multi-cultural discourse of the current AKP government.

3.6.1 THE ABSOLUTE OTHER: TRAITORS, TERRORISTS AND PSEUDO-CITIZENS

According to the quarterly published analysis on *Hate Speech in Turkish Media* by the Hrant Dink Foundation, the main racist statements about Kurds depict them as criminals, terrorists and their connection to (another “enemy of the nation”), the Armenians (Radikal, 2011b)³⁷. Cenk Saraçoğlu argues that in contrast to the years of denial, the anti-Kurdish discourse arising at the end of the 1990s has led to what he calls an “exclusive recognition” (Saracoglu, 2009). While Saraçoğlu rather refers to everyday racist stigmatisation of the Kurds as fundamentally different, Yeğen sees a similar acknowledgement of this *absolute otherness* in the state discourse on citizenship. According to this, Kurds are no longer regarded as the assimilable “future-Turks”, but rather as “pseudo-citizens”, *traitors* who abuse their citizenship rights (Yeğen, 2006: 80). Yeğen points out that these discourses have expanded so much that some people now argue that it would be better for the state to just “let them go” and “let them create their own state” (Yeğen, 2006: 88). In this sense, the limited recognition, which has now been made possible, has turned the negative synonyms of the dangerous criminal and the rural, non-modern Easterner into racist stigmas of the now “speakeable” Kurds. The failure of the previous project of homogenizing the members of the apparent single nation has capsized into overt racism against those who have not assimilated.

³⁷ Saraçoğlu (2009: 654) and Bora (2008: 11) also confirm prejudices according to which all Kurds are identified as terrorists.

This “exclusive recognition” has strong effects on everyday life. Living among a majority Turkish population in the West exposes many Kurds to everyday racism, which takes the form of discrimination when trying to find accommodation or work, or in stop-and-searches by the police and racist attacks. Tanıl Bora (2008) has made the effort to list all such events which occurred between 2002 and 2008. The vast majority are organised attacks by right wing associated groups. The attacks mainly occur in areas in the west where Kurds have migrated to, such as Bursa, Balıkesir, or Muğla, but also in Mersin and Antalya, in the south, or in the northern coastal area, where many Kurdish seasonal workers go to work in agriculture. Such incidents have time again triggered discussions on why this conflict has not yet become a civil war between Turks and Kurds.

3.6.2 THE AKP GOVERNMENT’S MULTICULTURAL PROJECT: PRODUCTION OF KURDISH BROTHERS

Parallel to these discourses on the fundamental Otherness of the Kurds has developed a discourse on the multi-cultural character of Turkey. Statements such as those from the current AK party programme depicting “cultural diversity” as a “richness” and heritage of the country illustrate how the party has at least rhetorically broken with the turkification project of the past (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, 2012). Instead, the political discourse of the AKP has - over the past few years - been traced by the demonstrative enumeration of the different ethnic groups existing in Turkey, as this speech of Recep T. Erdoğan (who was prime minister at the time) at the Party Congress in 2009 exemplifies: “[T]he problem of my Turkish brother and sister, my Kurdish brother and sister, my Laz brother and sister, my Bosnian brother and sister, my Albanian brother and sister are my problems. My Sunni or Alaouite brother and sister’s problem is my problem. The problem of my every citizen is my problem”³⁸. While listing the different existing ethnic groups in this way is an important step for their political acknowledgement, the AKP nevertheless takes care in stressing the overall unity despite all differences by constructing a supra-identity.

[E]thnic identities are only sub-identities. We also have a supra-identity and that is being a citizen of Turkish Republic [...]. We all became a single nation in this land [...]. We are Turkey with our folklore, songs and folk dances. We are Turkey with our common destiny, common ideals, common history and common future. (Erdoğan, 2009)

³⁸ The reasons why the AKP (and not for example the CHP, which see itself as the heirs of Atatürk) have accomplish this shift in discourse have been discussed for example by Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu (1998), William Hale and Ergun Özbudun (2009) and Buhanettin Duran (2008).

Despite the acknowledgement of internal diversity, the notion of the umbrella “supra”-identity - with its *common* history, ideals and destiny (often framed through Islam) - reveals that the AKP has not abandoned the discourse of the single nation and sees itself compelled to redefine this singularity from above. The envisaged tolerance of ethnic difference is limited, as it is only accepted as long as it submits to the *supra-identity*. In this sense, Erdoğan is quick to eliminate any political implication of these ethnic differences by stating:

We do not love anyone for being Sunni, Alaouite, Turk, Kurd, Circassian, Laz, Tatar, Abkhas, Arab, Gipsy, Jew, Greek or Armenian; we love everybody for they are human. (Erdoğan, 2009).

This “reduction” to the “human” of those who are claiming precisely their specific identity renews a form of denial, which some interviewees of mine also mention experiencing in everyday life. The ethnic differences have to abide by the umbrella notion, as the party programme illustrates: “On condition that Turkish remains the official and instruction language, our Party regards the cultural activities in languages other than Turkish, including broadcasting, as an asset which reinforces and supports the unity and integrity of our country, rather than weaken it”. This reveals that the common supra-identity is tied to the loyalty to the (given) State. In this respect, it resembles earlier understandings of Turkishness. Different languages, traditions, songs and dances can be used and performed in public, as long as they remain in their clearly defined places. Consequently, ethnic diversity is only accepted if it abides by the rules of the state in the “spectacle of multi-culturalism”, as Stuart Hall (1989) calls it. More importantly, the government is determined in managing the self-definition of the “Turks”, the national identity, as any re-constructions of identity from below could lead to claims for self-determination or other instability. This explains on the one hand why so far the multi-cultural project of the AKP has not given way for any substantial political or cultural rights (Çiçek, 2014), and on the other hand why it has instead continued or even intensified the crack-down especially on the political-wing of the Kurdish Movement between 2009 and 2013.

Pushed by both the European Union and the more recent peace talks, some limited steps have been taken to abolish the bans on cultural rights, but the relentlessly executed legal operations against thousands of Kurdish political activists, elected mayors and members of municipalities, reporters and lawyers prove, as I would like to argue, that normalisation has shifted towards the question of the loyalty. The expanding of the Anti-Terrorism Act, as discussed above, has replaced the old restrictions on linguistic expression. In this sense, we could go so far as to argue that the current legal framework of the policies of assimilation is

the Anti-Terrorism Act³⁹. Although officially emergency rule was ended in 2003, this atmosphere of exception is still very much present today in form of enhanced military and police presence and actions.

Instead of denial and turkification of *all* Kurds, the recent multi-cultural turn has enabled a hierarchical split - in the words of my interviewees - between the “good Kurd” and the “bad Kurd”⁴⁰. The “bad Kurd” now stands for the terrorist, while the “good Kurd” is the equal citizen, who fears no prosecution for expressing her “ethnic difference” in everyday life as long as she presents no danger for the state. This discursive split has found its implementation in what has been termed the project of “National unity and brotherhood” (also see Zeydanlıoğlu, 2014: 173). In this context, the “good Kurds”, who are addressed as “Kurdish brothers”, are depicted as victims of the terrorist “bad Kurds”. Accordingly, Erdoğan formulated in the course of the elections in 2011: “The Kurdish issue no longer exists in this country [...] There [only] exist the issues of my Kurdish brothers. [And] there exist those who abuse my Kurdish brothers” (cited in Özgür Gündem, 2011). In this way, Erdoğan, much like his predecessors, circumvents the political dimension of the Kurdish issue by reducing it to a problem of terrorism. In this image of the “bad Kurd” the fundamental Otherness of the racist discourse merges with the multi-cultural discourse. The hierarchical divide and discourses on inferiority live off these discourses which equal Kurds and terrorism. Consequently, the construction of the “bad” and “good Kurd” functions as a continuation of assimilation policies under conditions of a multi-cultural discourse. In order to be acknowledged as a “good Kurd”, people are compelled to performatively distance themselves from the “bad Kurd” in everyday.

While the Kurdish Movement has pushed the boundaries of what is livable and unlivable and, therefore, achieved to alleviate the *extent* of unlivability of the 1980s and 90s, the multicultural discourse has *formally* integrated Kurdish identity, without abandoning the idea of the norm-citizen. In this sense, the discourse on the “Kurdish brother” has not abandoned the logic of assimilation, but reframed it into multi-cultural wording. Today, assimilation does not work through a homogeneous notion of Turkishness, but rather in the form of “flexible normalisation”, as Antke Engel (2005) calls it. Thus, despite the positive political implications of this limited acknowledgement, the pressure to assimilate prevails.

³⁹ Ex-politician and author Tarih Ziya Ekinci (2011) similarly mentions the impossibility of questioning the constitutional definition of the nation as “Turkish” and on the other the expanding of the Anti-Terrorism Act in his answer to the question whether assimilation is over.

⁴⁰ Also see Nuray Mert (2011) and Oral Çalışlar (2010). The terrorism discourse is however still obviously racialized as it only ever applies to a Kurdish person. In this sense, the question of ethnicity does of course still exist, as I will show in the following, but not in the sense that the existence of ethnic difference is a threat to the nation.

Current normalization is “flexible” in respect to an apolitical expression of ethnic identity, but very much strict with regard to “loyalty” to the state. The paradox in this is, however, that this “loyal” supra-identity has to be performed through Turkishness in the form of embodied practices of the modern, urban Turk. According to this logic, the two seemingly irreconcilable projects, those of assimilation policies and multi-culturalism, coexist. Consequently, expressions of Kurdishness can be both integrated into the state discourse and forcefully repressed.

These different discourses and practices of assimilation, described here - the discursive foreclosure of identification as Kurdish, the elimination of Kurdish language, the production of a feeling of inferiority, the disciplining of the body, as well as the criminalization of Kurdishness, the more recent everyday racism and discourses on multiculturalism - with all their shifts and continuities, illustrate the various ways in which these policies aim at producing a Turkish subject. All of these discourses and practices aim at producing nationalized Turkish subjects which enact this identity in their everyday lives.

Chapter 4

Theorizing Everyday Resistance

The previous chapter has outlined the key techniques which are deployed to achieve an assimilated subjectivity. These different techniques, the discourses and practices, are bound to their enactment in the *everyday*. This importance of the everyday for these state policies simultaneously endows it with a central role for resistance against these techniques. Challenging these discourses and practices precisely in their everyday enactment becomes a crucial form of everyday resistance.

The concept of “everyday resistance” was most famously introduced by James C. Scott, who emphasized the importance of informal and immediate daily acts of resistance which do not aim at overt contestation. Since Scott first suggested the term in his book *Weapons of the Weak* (1985), the concept quickly generated a vast array of case studies in various disciplines of social science, especially in the 1980 and 1990s (Fletcher, 2008; Curtis & Spencer, 2012: 175). This boom was triggered by two, more or less, simultaneous shifts: one was an increased interest in what happens in times of absence of open contestation, while the other was the new approach to power triggered by Michel Foucault (Haynes & Prakash, 1991: 10). However, the research utilizing the concept in countless different ways has been strongly criticized for its lack of rigour and depth in theorization (Hansen & Stepputat, 2001: 32-34; Hollander & Einwohner, 2004: 534). Instead of attempting to map the multiplicity of these case studies, this chapter therefore addresses this general critique and concentrates on how everyday resistance can be theorized more satisfyingly by drawing on a more thorough engagement with Foucault⁴¹. I begin by reviewing Scott’s key assumptions and outline the main arguments of critical debate around everyday resistance, before leading into a detailed discussion of the different relevant aspects of Foucault’s understanding of resistance. To complete this theoretical discussion, I also attend to the attempts in social movement theory to grasp the everyday as a matter or part of struggles.

⁴¹ For a systematized overview of the range of topics addressed under the term everyday resistance, see Raby (2005) .

4.1 SCOTT AND THE RISE OF THE EVERYDAY FOR RESISTANCE

Influenced by Antonio Gramsci's understanding of hegemony, Scott's interest in everyday resistance is triggered by the assumption that overt contestation and uprisings are rare. Questioning the assumption that dominance is only challenged in overt struggles, his work illustrates how in the times of abeyance, dominance is nevertheless contested in various forms of everyday resistance. According to Scott, the "weak" frequently rely on minor acts of resistance in the everyday, which include direct actions of re-appropriating wealth or disturbing production, such as foot-dragging, arson or sabotage, or more indirect tactics of questioning the social position of the members of the dominant class through slander, ridiculing and nick-naming, or undermining their power through purely symbolic conformity.

In *Domination and Arts of Resistance*, Scott further develops the element of the "hidden" for everyday resistance. In order to grasp the resistant character of practices which do not aim at visibility and overtness, he suggests a distinction between public and hidden transcripts to describe what can and cannot be said and done in public. For him, these transcripts are not fixed as such, but can make a carrier from hidden to public. He also emphasizes how some practices can be physically located in public space, and yet hidden through other means of camouflage. In this sense, he does not reinstate the public-private binary, but rather enables an understanding of the political importance of clandestine acts of resistance. Nevertheless, in doing so, Scott's approach only grasps such forms of everyday resistance as a temporary "supplement" for open contestation, and not themselves as a challenge or subversion of power.

The forms of everyday resistance which Scott depicts in *Weapons of the Weak* are clearly determined by his focus on class struggle. Although Scott also emphasizes that everyday resistance does not necessarily only target the "immediate source of appropriation", the forms of resistance, which he depicts, all aim at "mitigate[ing] or deny[ing] claims made by superordinate classes" (Scott, 1985: 33, 35). In this sense, his understanding of power sets a dominant class in clear opposition to subordinate class and conceptualizes the forms of resistance within this schema of "weak" against "strong".

Scott and the bulk of research which developed drawing on his concept, has been criticized from a Foucauldian perspective, precisely for this strict divide between powerful and powerless (Gal, 1995: 415; Haynes & Prakash, 1991: 111). These critics share with Scott the focus on the location of resistance in mundane everyday situations, however, they

emphasize, in contrast to Scott, the impossibility of drawing a clear cut between power and resistance, considering the two to in fact be highly entangled (e.g. Haynes & Prakash, 1991; Sharp, Routledge, Philo, & Paddison, 2000). They draw on Foucault's understanding of power as relations, which I will clarify further below, which means that there is no outside of power and therefore no pure place or actor of resistance.

Moreover, it was the extensive use of the concept which triggered its intense critique. Most centrally, Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) warned against "romanticizing" everyday resistance, although many scholars of everyday resistance, first of all, Scott himself, had - from the outset - always emphasized that everyday resistance was not to be regarded as a "privileged site" of resistance in respect to organised and overt contestation. Similarly, the immense proliferation of the concept prompted critics such as Tim Cresswell and Doreen Massey to identify a danger of trivializing resistance (Cresswell, 1999; Massey, 2003). The studies differ greatly in respect to the way and depth of how they theorize resistance, leaving the concept noticeably vague (Hollander & Einwohner, 2004: 534). In this vein, Sherry Ortner expressed the need to grasp the political complexity of resistance, including its contradictions and ambivalences. In order to do so, she suggests more thorough ethnographic work in the form of thick description (Ortner, 1995). In order to avoid such trivialization and lack of complexity, Abu-Lughod (1990) suggested that resistance should be used as a "diagnostic of power" (also Cresswell, 1999). Such a method would allow both a rigorous understanding of resistance and the specific forms of power which it aims at subverting.

All these points of critique, in fact, circle around the question of what counts as resistance when it has such a decentered character, entangled with power, and this question in turn triggers a range of further key questions. How can certain behaviour be identified as resistance, if we abandon the notion of the coherent actor, the pure resister? Do we judge acts of resistance by the actors or rather by their targets, or rather by their intentions or their effects? How can forms of resistance be distinguished from conformity? Do such acts have to be recognized as such to be characterized as resistance and by whom? What effects does resistance have, which does not aim at its acknowledgement as such? (Raby, 2005: 158-161).

This thesis acknowledges the necessity of being clear which specific techniques of power are targeted by the acts of resistance. Not the intentionality and consciousness of the actor, but rather the way in which these practices work as resistance is central here. Specifically,

this study focuses on resistance practices against the policies of assimilation, which are understood in terms of the production of a nationalized subject.

Besides this, this thesis seeks to address another point of critique which was brought forward against Scott by scholars such as Charles Tilly (1991) regarding his lack of acknowledgement of social movements. According to Tilly, Scott's work omitted to address the shift from everyday to open contestation. Scott only mentions the importance of the shift from hidden to public transcript as a decisive moment in mobilization, but does not go into detail about how this happens. However, Tilly's critique itself actually only focuses on transition and is bound to the assumption of a before and after. Everyday resistance, according to this, can only ever be the prelude to something bigger. However, it might be more fruitful to think of these two just as intertwined, encouraging and influencing one another, as also put forward by Robin Kelly (1992). In contrast to Tilly, Kelly argues that unorganized or organized collective action has an effect on the hidden transcripts, it "instills a sense of confidence, hope, even vision in the actors, deepens a sense of solidarity which had begun to take shape" (Kelley, 1992: 295). In this sense, collective movements do not just "reveal the hidden transcript", but rather transform it (Kelley, 1992: 297). Similarly, I try to tease out the overlaps, the ways in which they foster each other as well as the intensifications or amplifying effect they have on each other.

4.2 FOUCAULT ON RESISTANCE: DESTABILIZING TECHNIQUES OF POWER FROM WITHIN

Reflecting on his past work in his essay "The Subject and Power" (2000b), Foucault remarks that his objective was to grasp the ways human beings are made subjects: first in discursive production, later through disciplinary practices and finally through techniques of governing people's conduct, including encouraging techniques of the self. Similarly, we can argue that the question of how to challenge these discourses, truths, and effects of subjectivity runs through his work. Whether in his methodological approach, his reflections on the role of the intellectual, or the topics he addresses in his research, the necessity of contesting the self-evident guided his entire work, even though explicit discussions of resistance only take up a few pages in his written work.

Foucault's understanding of resistance is fundamentally linked to grasping modern power not in the form of the single sovereign, but rather as a multiplicity of techniques producing

the very terms with which we perceive ourselves and conduct our behaviour. Accordingly, Foucault argues that power does not lie in the hands of one individual, group, or institution that can be overthrown in a single act of “great Refusal” (Foucault, 1998: 96). Consequently, resistance in such productive power relations cannot be grasped in terms of *liberation*. Instead, for Foucault, resistance in such relations of power can only ever be understood as an ongoing struggle with and against these various concrete techniques of power, which work through the production of discourses and practices, truths and subjectivities. These multiple techniques of power cannot, according to Foucault, be put to an end by such a single event. Instead, it can only be subverted, undermined and challenged in a long-term process of multiple “seemingly incoherent” struggles (Foucault, 1977: 230). For Foucault, there is no *one* recipe to counter the current relations of power. Instead, he speaks of a “web of resistance” (Foucault, 2009: 200), each act of which is specific in itself (Foucault, 1998: 96). This myriad of “partial transformations”, “temporary solutions [and] modifications”, does not aim at one distinct single oppressor, but rather works in numerous specific points of power and with differing means (Foucault, 1984: 46-7). Consequently, Foucault thoughts on resistance do not culminate in a clear definition of resistance, but rather describe a range of practices and outline *where* these points of resistance can develop. He discusses forms of resistance on the discursive level of knowledges, in respect to biopower as well as among techniques of the self, circling however around the production of subjectivity. I consider each of these dimensions of resistance in what follows.

4.2.1 BATTLES OF TRUTH

For Foucault, the multiplicity of the given discourses, practices and knowledges entails the possibility for resistance. Discourses are not just an instrument and effect of power, but can also be a “stumbling-block” which ignites resistance, “a starting point for an opposing strategy” (Foucault, 1998: 101). The various discourses, knowledges and practices can be played out against each other, the interstices and incoherences among them utilized to counter the effects of power. Consequently, there is no clear line between “oppositional” and “dominant” discourses. The given discourses can be redeployed against others in struggle. This means resistance does not develop from a point *outside* of power, but from within and takes the form of re-deployment, reversing, shifting of these techniques of power in their concrete manifestations. Foucault calls this way of “making use” of the plurality of discourses “tactical reversal” (Foucault, 1998: 157).

As an example, Foucault mentions how the struggle for gay rights deployed precisely those discourses by which homosexuality had been produced as an abnormality. He explains: "Homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, demand legitimacy, "naturalness" be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified" (Foucault, 1998: 101). The same notion of utilizing the techniques of power against itself is evident, when he argues that the political struggles against biopower took up the importance given to "life" as an object of power and "turned back against the system". Despite being framed in the language of rights, it is precisely the dominant discourse that is taken up in calls for "the "right" to life, to one's body, to health, to happiness, to the satisfaction of needs" (Foucault, 1998: 145). In this sense, the techniques of biopower are themselves made the basis for political struggle precisely against biopower.

This redeployment of dominant discourses enables a social subject to claim intelligible subject positions in order to make claims for acknowledgement. As will be discussed in the following chapter, such dominant discourses which are reused in the struggle against assimilation include discourses on ethnicity, nation and nationalism, on traditionalism and ruralness as well as racial tropes. However, this reutilization of such dominant discourses from below never reinstates them in the same way. The reuse always shifts, re-appropriates and destabilizes the prior use. Such forms of resistance *work in and on* the given, aiming at making these categories unfunctionable as a specific technique of power, or at least unsettling their taken-for-grantedness. In this sense, the new deployment can enable a "problematizing" of the terms, categories and discourses (Foucault, 2000: 114). They shake the self-evidence of these terms and therefore open them for questioning. They "make something enter into the play of true and false and constitute it as an object of thought", as Foucault argues for problematization (cited in Rabinow & Rose, 2003: xx). They can "open a fissure", which brings about a "state of crisis" from which something new can develop (Thompson, 2003: 119). This, however, also means that the specific terms, categories and discourses used are not necessarily resistant in themselves, but rather receive their resistant character in the specific context.

Besides this redeployment of dominant discourses, Foucault emphasizes the use of what he calls "subjugated knowledges", knowledges which are "disqualified", as he argues, in the "hierarchy of knowledges" (Foucault, 2003: 7). He explains that the *Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons* (GIP), which he was part of, aimed at problematizing the dominant social and moral discourses with their distinctions between innocent and guilty, through their

practices of producing and disseminating alternative knowledge regarding various aspects of the penal experience (Foucault, 1977b). With its campaigns and publications, the GIP tried to bring these “subjugated knowledges” forward and thereby give them a different status. This form of resistance does not claim to *reveal* the truth, in that sense, nor does it attempt to *give voice* to the prisoners. Instead, it aims at challenging the hierarchy of knowledges and the function of power this implies. It redeploys those knowledges which have been “buried and masked” within the plurality of discourses and knowledges. Such a “return” or “reappearance”, as Foucault says, of these subjugated knowledges can occur in different ways (Foucault, 2003: 6/8). As Foucault emphasizes these knowledges are not the same as common sense. On the contrary, they are knowledges which are disqualified for not complying with certain norms. They can be knowledges of the “psychiatrized, the patient, the nurse, the doctor, that is parallel to, marginal to, medical knowledge”, that of the delinquent, knowledges labeled as naïve and inferior or scientifically unqualified (Foucault, 2003: 7). The knowledge does not belong to a certain group or class. The subjugation of these knowledges indicates a conflict and struggle, which is to be made unintelligible in this way. By tackling the hierarchy of knowledges in this way, these practices destabilize specific truths.

For Foucault, truths form the grounds for conflict, political debate and struggles, which he calls “battles of truth” (Foucault, 1980: 132). Abandoning the notion of struggles fought *in the name of* truth or to install truth over untruth, he argues that these battles are about shattering, shifting, or disrupting the status of specific truths within the *regime of truth*. Truth - understood as a “system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements” (Foucault, 1980: 133) – is entangled with power. Specific truths are established through the connection between power and knowledge. They are both produced by power and at the same time an effect of power. The shifted redeployment of these knowledges aim at “detaching” certain truths from the specific techniques of power and can enable “new politics of truth” (Foucault, 1980: 133). They lead to a destabilization of these truths and break the discursive power of the categories, norms and discourses which they entail. Such struggles can take different forms: organised and non-organised, individual and collective, spontaneous “insurrections” or carefully planned. They can be brought about through the efforts of intellectuals, as Foucault discusses in an interview titled “Truth and Power” (1980: 109-133), or arise from mundane practices in everyday.

Grasping power as *relations*, which are “mobile” and “reversible”, therefore, allows Foucault to locate the possibility of change within these relations. Nevertheless, these power relations can turn into states of domination which are blocked or “frozen” (Foucault, 2000: 292). Resistance obstructs power relations from turning into states of domination by shifting the discourses, practices and knowledges (Foucault, 1982: 342, 346-7). According to him, these relations of power can never be totally fixed and that there is always something that “escapes” fixation (Foucault, 1998: 143).

4.2.2 BODIES AND PLEASURES: CHALLENGING BIOPOWER

Similarly, Foucault’s famous suggestion of regarding “bodies and pleasures” as possible points of “counterattack” to loosen the “grips of power”, has to be understood not as “liberation”, but as a form of tactical reversal (Foucault, 1998: 157). Instead of destabilizing the discursive level of categories, truths and knowledges, resistance here takes the form of shifting other effects of the techniques of power. Foucault’s suggestion of shifting practices of bodies and pleasures as a form of resistance aims at challenging the dominant discourse on the liberation of sex, which was prevalent in the late 1960s and 1970s. As Foucault shows, the discourses on *repression* of sex and desire functioned as a *production* of sexuality as an issue to be discussed, regulated, and controlled. In this sense, it is not repressed, but produced. Accordingly, *liberation* of sex cannot work as a means of resistance as it does not challenge the discourse, but is rather precisely part of this regime of power. Instead of ‘liberating’ or ‘reinstating’ the forbidden, repressed or excluded, resistance according to Foucault has to work *within* and *on* the given techniques of power. In grasping power as productive, resistance *against* a technique of power means engaging with its *product*: shifting, obstructing, challenging its *effects* (Foucault, 2000b: 330). In this case, he suggests to work on bodies and pleasures, as such objects and effects of biopower and disciplinary practices, in order to tactically reverse the “mechanisms of sexuality” (Foucault, 1998: 157). In *The Will to Knowledge* (first published in 1976) Foucault’s discussion of such forms of resistance against biopower remains limited to this suggestion. However, it already hints at the concept of counter-conduct which he develops in his lectures in 1977/78 (Foucault, 2009). To sum up, resistance in a Foucauldian understanding is not a liberation of the repressed, not a voicing of the supposedly silenced, not a revelation of the concealed, and not a reinstatement of truth against untruth. Instead, resistance has to impress on the productivity of power, on its techniques and effects.

This aspect of “working inside [the] bifurcation” of power is what has been taken up by scholars such as Michel De Certeau and Judith Butler (Foucault, 2002: 463). In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), De Certeau’s search for possibilities of resistance in the “gaps of institutional techniques and dominant discourses”, finds its expression in his concept of “making do”. Drawing on Foucault’s work, he describes his objectives as bringing “to light the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical and make-shift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of ‘discipline’” (De Certeau, 1984: Xvi-xv). Using the term “tactics” in contrast to “strategies” to underline this micro-level of these actions, he focuses on practices which “make use of the cracks” in the relations of power (De Certeau, 1984: 38). By arguing that these practices of resistance lack their “own place” and a “view of the whole”, he emphasizes what Foucault describes with resistance from *within* (De Certeau, 1984: 38). Like Foucault, De Certeau emphasizes the multiplicity of the different practices of resistance, when he describes them as “myriads of almost invisible movements” (De Certeau, 1984: 40).

The working in and on specific techniques of power translates into Butler’s concept of resignification. Like in Foucault, there is “no outside” of the matrix of power for Judith Butler. Acts of resistance take up the given language with its discourses, categories and norms and use them in order to open them up for new meanings and therefore subvert them. Accordingly, resistance derives from the complexity of the discourses, which have more aims and effects than those who deploy them, rather than just something “extra-discursive” which fails to adapt to the norms of the discourse (Butler, 2000: 157/8). In this sense, the discourses always produce something that goes beyond the intended discourse. They can produce identities which they meant to foreclose. Consequently, these discursive foreclosures can become a moment of possible *undoing* of these norms, categories and identities (Butler, 2000: 157/8). However, in Butler’s thought, we also find the Derridian notion of *slips* in the reiteration of norms, discourses and practices. According to this, the discourses, norms and identities have to be constantly reiterated, performatively enacted as a repetition. The reiteration is, however, never perfect and opens up the possibility for shifted reiteration. It is in this imperfectness of the reiteration where Butler locates the possibility for resistance. Most importantly, resignification in Butler is not to be understood as purely discursive, but as a bodily, performative practices (Butler, 1993: 176, 1997: 83-105). The shifting of performance can shatter norms, e.g. of gender identity, as she exemplifies in her discussion on drag.

4.2.3 SHIFTING SUBJECTIVITIES: COUNTER-CONDUCT

In his later writings, Foucault introduces the terms of “government” and “conduct”, to grasp the way in which people’s behaviour is not just determined by discourses and disciplinary practices, but also through managing the conditions in which people come to constitute themselves, or in Foucault’s words through structuring the “possible field of actions of others” (Foucault, 2000b: 341). In its “early” form, as Foucault illustrates, government appears as the “leading” of people’s everyday and spiritual life in form of pastoral guidance. Later, this form of directing life rises to become the logic of the modern European state, which he then calls “governmentality” (Foucault, 2009: 108). Governmentality aims at shaping the whole population by encouraging ways in which people lead their lives, rather than just direct disciplining of the individual body. In this sense, the individuals are encouraged to freely constitute themselves as subjects. Foucault calls forms of resistance which target this kind of government “counter-conduct” (Foucault, 2009: 201).

Resistance against *government* can take different forms, because governmentality – as logic of the state - includes a range of techniques from observation and control, to governmental programmes and moral principles. In his lecture of the 1 March 1978, Foucault discusses examples of such resistance against an “early” form of government, which he calls “pastoral power” (Foucault, 2009). These forms of resistance of the pre-Reformation period in the 15th and 16th century include a range of activities countering the techniques of conduct induced by the formal church; among them mysticism, asceticism, and the development of communities which rejected obligatory baptism and confession and strived for equality within their community by developing systems of elected, provisional or lay pastors. For Foucault, these activities of resistance are distinct from revolts against sovereignty and economic revolts. Although they are not isolated from these other conflicts and problems, he argues that they are “distinct in their form and in their objective” (Foucault, 2009: 196). They developed precisely in order to undermine the *way of being conducted* and promote a different form of *conduct*. These forms of counter-conduct “redistribute, reverse, nullify, and partially or totally discredit” pastoral government (Foucault, 2009: 204). They are ways of “not being governed like that” (Foucault, 2007: 45), as Foucault famously expresses in his talk “What is Critique?”

Foucault’s discussion of desertion highlights the way in which counter-conduct is a rejection of this specific form of power which aims at producing subjectivity. Foucault argues that in the moment that being a soldier ceases to be just a profession or law, but becomes an

“ethic and the behavior of every good citizen of a country”, and therefore a “form of political and moral conduct”, desertion becomes a form of “moral counter-conduct” (Foucault, 2009: 198). Such resistance is more than just the rejection of a profession. It is the rejection of a form of conduct, a way of living one’s life. It implies the refusal of national values and the education of the state as well as the rejection of an “obligatory relationship” to the nation (Foucault, 2009: 198). In this sense, this form of counter-conduct is both a refusal of the regime of *truths* and refusal of a specific form of subjectivity. It brings together the *battles of truth* and the subversion of conduct of life. Counter-conduct is a way of shifting subjectivity in practice. It is in this sense that Foucault describes the Reformation as a “great crisis of western experience of subjectivity and a revolt against the kind of religious and moral power that gave form to this subjectivity” (Foucault, 2000b: 332). Consequently, resistance against techniques of government take the form of struggles of subjectivity.

Foucault underlines that the forms of counter-conduct, which he discusses, were not “external to Christianity”, but actually “border-elements” which were “re-utilized, re-implanted, and taken up again in one or another direction” (Foucault, 2009: 214/5). In this sense, these forms of counter-conduct are forms of *tactical reversal*, similar to the forms described above (Davidson, 2011). Forms of conduct – the knowledges, practices and subject positions which they entail - are tactically used in order to achieve a different form of conduct. Hence, the *means* for resistance remains within the relations of power, enabling a fundamental shift in conduct.

In his discussion of “critique”, Foucault illustrates how the possibility of resistance is already implied in the power as government. He describes critique as a way of “limiting the arts of government and seizing them up, transforming them, of finding a way to escape from them or, in any case, a way to displace them, with a basic distrust” (Foucault, 2007: 45). In this sense, he argues critique can be regarded as an “art of voluntary insubordination” (Foucault, 2007: 47), or in O’Leary’s words “reflective indocility” (O’Leary: 151). However, according to Foucault, critique is always already “partner and adversary to the arts of governing” (Foucault, 2007: 45). He illustrates that the question of how to govern was always accompanied by the question of how *not* to be governed; never as a “total opposition”, but rather the way not to be governed “like that, not for that, not by them” (Foucault, 2007: 44). In this sense, indocility develops together with government. It is in this way that Davidson speaks of a “founding correlation” of conduct and counter-conduct (Davidson, 2011).

4.2.4 AESTHETICS OF THE SELF: CREATIVITY IN CONDUCT

With his analysis of Greek and Roman techniques of “mastering the self”, of ascesis and ethics Foucault deepens his discussion of the conduct of the self and with this the question of the *location* of resistance or in other words the *possibility* for development of resistance and critique within these productive power relations (Foucault, 1990a, 1990b). He takes up the notion of conduct, understanding it here in terms of way of governing oneself, as “techniques of the self”, as he calls them (Foucault, 1990b). His analysis illustrates how the subject is encouraged to objectify and work on itself to fulfil moral obligations (Foucault, 2000a: 353). In this sense, he looks at ethics as a form of self-conduct⁴². These techniques of the self imply a reflexive relation of the subject to itself as well as a creative working on itself, which Foucault also describes as “aesthetics of the self”.

According to this, morality, itself, always presupposes the possibility of obedience and resistance towards mode codes (Foucault, 1990b: 25). Forms of self-conduct, such as self-mastery or ascesis therefore, are based on the possibility of “transformation”. In this sense, they always already include a critical and reflexive attitude to the self, a “free” constitution of the subject. Hence, by highlighting that a critical and reflexive relation is already implied in the actual techniques of self-government, Foucault shows that the possibility of resistance lies within the technique of power itself (Foucault, 1990b). We can argue - as Nealon does - that with this Foucault attempts to rethink ethics “as a discourse and practice of resistance” (Nealon, 2008: 75).

Drawing from this understanding of ethics as conduct of the self and the resistance as a form of counter-conduct, he describes – in fact even calls for – what he calls “homosexual ascesis” (Foucault, 2000a) or “gay friendship” (Foucault, 2000a: 153) as an examples of shifting self-conduct. Foucault suggests *gay friendship* as a form of counter-conduct which disturbs, denaturalizes and creatively changes norms around identity, sexuality, friendship and desire, both on a level of individual practices as well as the society. Instead of “discovering” or “recognizing” ontological identities, as demanded in identity politics, gay friendship and homosexual ascesis are understood as ways of shifting conduct, at producing a different “way of life” (also Halperin, 1995: 61). Hence, these forms of resistant ascesis and friendship are forms of counter-conduct which enable to subvert in this case the notion of a fixed sexualized identity. Not discovering one’s ‘true self’ can function as resistance in these relations of power, but rather a ‘making use’ of the creativity which is implied in

⁴² For Davidson (2011), conduct is the “hinge concept” between the modern discourse on sexuality and the relation to oneself as moral subject of sexual conduct.

governing oneself. To use Butler's words, we could argue that resistance lies in shifting the – already required - performance of one's identity. For Foucault, a struggle for rights cannot be the ultimate form of politics (Davidson, 2011: 33). Instead, he suggests to "invent" new manners of being (Foucault, 2000a: 137). He saw in such practices ways of producing new subjectivities – not in the sense of a discovery of identity – but rather as creating new ways of being and living. With gay friendship and homosexual ascesis, Foucault tries to grasp possibilities of resistance *within* ethics and *on* ethics. In other words: these are ways of thinking resistance through possibilities for transformation given by the techniques of the self.

Some critics were quick to discard such calls as the "celebration of politics of individual dandyism" or "consumerized narcissism", while others detected in them neoliberal imperatives of individual self-creation or sensed the return of the "authentic self" (Rose, 1999: 282) ⁴³. However, it is important to see that the agency which he locates in such practices of counter-conduct and the freedom from which they draw, are given by his understanding of power in form of government. According to Foucault, "power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are "free"" (Foucault, 2000b: 342). Conducting others' conduct always relies on a degree of freedom to act differently. It is never totally fixed, but rather always allows for leeway in the enactment (Foucault, 2002: 399). Foucault differentiates between relations of power and dominance in this point. The latter allows for less freedom and is stronger fixed. According to this, freedom is a precondition for power, and not the opposite. In this sense, Foucault's calls for counter-conduct do not mean a return to the "autonomous subject", but are expressions of the "freedom" essential to government (see Nealon, 2008: 11).

For Kevin Thompson (2003), Foucault's understandings of "aesthetics of existence" and "tactical reversals" illustrate the shift in Foucault's understanding of power from strategic relations of power to the techniques of the self. He strictly distinguishes them from each other and argues that Foucault abandoned the tactical reversals in favour of the former in his later work due to the insufficiency of the former. However, we can understand that the aesthetics, the *creativity*, assumed in this form of counter-conduct is a prerequisite precisely for the techniques of the self. Ethics are precisely a technique by which the individual is to constitute itself creatively along the lines of relevant discourses. In this sense, the creativity that is addressed in these aesthetics of existence is not the creativity of

⁴³ Davidson discusses a number of critiques which has regards as misinterpretations (Davidson, 2005: 130); similarly, Allen (2011) and McNay (2009).

an autonomous subject, is not outside power relations, but precisely the tactical redeployment of certain practices of the self against others. Consequently, resistance against the techniques of the self are just as much forms of tactical reversal as resistance in strategic relations of power. Shifting practices within ethics is also a way of turning the techniques of power against themselves: a tactical reversal which undermines subjectivity (Davidson, 2011: 37). Hence, the concept of counter-conduct includes both individual and collective forms of resistance against techniques of governmentality more generally as well as the techniques of the self⁴⁴.

4.2.5 COMMON CREATIVE ACTION AND POLITICAL SPIRITUALITY

Framing counter-conduct in terms of tactical reversal, as I do, should not conceal the creativity that these forms of resistance imply. Tactically redeploying practices and discourses in other contexts, shifting and undermining them, is not at all passive. On the contrary, working on the effects of power, that is manipulating its effects, requires a similar degree of productivity as power itself. Foucault argues, “in order to resist one must activate something ‘as inventive, as mobile, as productive’ as power itself” (quoted in Davidson, 2011). Foucault’s expression of “aesthetics” of the self points towards this creativity. Accordingly, he frames resistance as the need to make life a “work of art” (Foucault, 2000a: 261). However, the work of art, which he is referring to, is not at all meant as something exceptional or rare, as Nealon emphasizes (Nealon, 2008: 77). On the contrary, these aesthetics meant here are the mundane practices of everyday life, the practices of daily conduct. Foucault emphasizes this point, when he criticizes that art is regarded as something done by “experts who are artists” and calls for it rather to be understood as something done by everyone (Foucault, 2000a: 351). This indicates the “transformative power of the common, the everyday, and the mundane” which according to Nealon runs through Foucault’s work (Nealon, 2008: 78). In this sense, for Foucault resistance is something *common*, not the rare acts of “heroic subjects” (Nealon, 2008: 111).

For precisely this reason, Foucault rejects the term of dissidence because of its substantive “the dissident”, which he is wary of. With this, he wants to emphasize that it is not the status of the individual that makes an act resistant, but rather the function of the acts themselves. Accordingly, he argues that counter-conduct can “be found in fact in delinquents, mad people, and patients” (Foucault, 2009: 202). In this sense, he again

⁴⁴ I am therefore interested not so much in conduct of others as Carl Death (2010) uses the term, but rather as counter-conduct of the self.

questions the notion of a coherent location of resistance. Not all actions of an individual are in this sense necessarily coherently resistant. Or in other words, key to resistance is not so much the *actor*, but the *action* itself. He also underlines this when he refers to “plebian quality” which he argues exists in “bodies, souls, individuals, in the proletariat, in the bourgeoisie, but everywhere in a diversity of forms and extension, of energies and irreducibilities” (Foucault, 1980a: 138). In contrast to the notion of a “plebs”, in the sense of a transformative or revolutionary subject, for Foucault the actors of resistance do not have to be organized or have reached certain consciousness, and do not have to be coherent in their acts of resistance. In this sense, his approach to resistance allows us to focus - not on the actors, leaders, and parties - but rather on the practices as such.

As Foucault points out in “The Subject and Power”, resistance develops from the *immediate* techniques of power in the way they manifest themselves in the everyday (Foucault, 2000b: 330). He emphasizes that resistance arises from “work at the grass roots, with people who are directly affected” (Foucault, 2002: 288). In this sense, resistance, for Foucault, is an “essential fact of everyone’s everyday struggles with power” (Nealon, 2008: 111). It arises when concrete social institutions, norms etc. become problematic. They do not aim at abstract questions, but rather grapple with “instances of power which are the closest to them”, as Foucault puts it (Foucault, 2002: 330). Understanding resistance as a direct intervention into the techniques of power illustrates how counter-conduct aims at “de facto gains” to use Scott’s words.

These struggles of conduct can be individual or collective, organised and non-organised. Referring to the early forms of anti-pastoral counter-conduct mentioned above, Foucault argues that they existed both on the doctrinal level as well as in form of individual behaviour, which was either “strictly individual, or individual but serial, through contagion” (Foucault, 2009: 204). In other words, these forms of resistance can be unorganised but nevertheless collective. According to Nealon, the more important question in Foucault’s work is not the question *whether* resistance occurs, but more “finding channels, concepts or practices that can link up and thereby intensify transversal struggles into larger, collective but discontinuous movements” (Nealon, 2008: 106). In this sense, we might ask the question: what can generate such a contagion or atmosphere in which such forms of counter-conduct thrive? Although Foucault rejected the ability of a one-time revolution to overcome the relations of power, the atmosphere in such times of upheaval clearly fascinated him. This fascination is reflected in his writings on Iran, Poland and Tunisia, in

which we find the notion of “political spirituality” (Afary & Anderson, 2005; Foucault, 2000b: 239-297, 2000c).

Although Foucault highlights the overlap between spiritual movements and popular struggle, in his discussions of counter-conduct in the pre-Reformation times, Foucault’s understanding of spirituality does not suffice to identify it with religion or religious attitude (Foucault, 2007: 76; also see Davidson, 2011).⁴⁵ Rather, spirituality seems to be an atmosphere that “can prompt in an individual the desire, the ability, and the possibility for an absolute sacrifice, without there being any reason to suspect in their action the least ambition or desire for power and profit”, as he argues for Tunisia (Foucault, 2002: 280). It is something that triggers passion and sacrifice, which goes beyond the political atmosphere which he experienced in France in 1968. Political spirituality, according to Foucault, is not something that can be achieved by party discipline. Even Marxism, he argues for Tunisia, functioned much less as a theoretical framework than as “enthusiasm”. He argues that “political spirituality” is the “will to discover a different way of governing oneself through a different way of dividing up true and false” (Foucault, 2002: 233).

Spirituality, as a form of ethics, has to be understood as a form of conduct of the self. However, in contrast to the term counter-conduct which refers to the practices which are shifted, the notion of “political spirituality” implies a change in the moral codes which triggers such individual or collective counter-conduct. It seems that political spirituality enables a “moralization of politics and a politicization of existence”, as Foucault describes for Poland, that make certain forms of conduct more difficult or impossible (Foucault, 2000b: 471). Foucault argues that this moralization of politics does not come about through formal party politics, but rather through “direct contact of people with events and with their own choices of existence” (Foucault, 2000b: 471). This means that the collective practices produce a shift in morality which becomes incorporated into people’s behaviour and changes further conduct. It is a “moral energy” which enables a rejection of truths and law.

In this sense, we can argue that the proliferation of counter-conduct is triggered by a shift in morality and vice versa. The concept of political spirituality or moralization of politics can - as I hope to show throughout this thesis - enable us to grasp how everyday practices of resistance proliferate and can add to an understanding of how social movements influence everyday resistance without directly intervening.

⁴⁵ Foucault was strongly criticized especially for his interpretation of the Iranian Revolution at the time (Afary & Anderson, 2005; Rabinow, 2009; Stauth, 1991)

To sum up, understanding resistance from a Foucaudian perspective allows us to look at the multiplicity of different practices of resistance which aim at shifting subjectivity by rejecting, undermining and subverting conduct, discourses, truths, norms and discourses. Understood as a working *within* and *on* the given, these acts of resistance both redeploy dominant categories, discourses and practices as well as reinstate those which have been subjugated. In this sense, the means of resistance are never resistant as such, but rather *become* resistant depending on the specific techniques of power which they aim to destabilize. Similarly, this approach does not require us to locate resistance in coherent actors, activists or resisters. Instead, it allows us to focus on the myriad of practices themselves, which proliferate in an atmosphere of moralization of such minor politics.

4.3 SOCIAL MOVEMENTS STUDIES AND THE EVERYDAY

By trying to grasp the different forms of everyday practices of resistance of the Kurds through Foucault's understanding of resistance and the work of Butler and De Certeau, which draw on his work, I would also like to contribute to the literature on social movements and its approach to the everyday. I am interested in how on the one hand the social movement encourages resistance in the everyday and on the other how the practices of the everyday affect strategies of the movement and vice versa.

The literature on social movements has touched aspects of the everyday under a number of issues without overtly addressing it; among them questions around grievances, culture, identity and emotions, discussions on the private as political, as well as more recently prefiguration and lifestyle movements (Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta, 2001; Jaspers, 2010; Johnston & Klandermans, 1995; Melucci, 1995; Polletta, 2008; Swidler, 1995). Most notably, it was the literature on new social movements (NSM) which shifted the attention of research to questions of identity, cultural and symbolic action, and the construction of meaning within movements (Crossley, 2002: 152). They grasp culture and the everyday not only as a "resource" for social movements, but also as a "battleground" in itself (Edwards, 2014: 148). However, although NSM theories extend the understanding of movements to include less strictly organized collective identities and aspects of the personal and daily life, their actual objects of analysis largely remain forms of doing politics, which aim at affecting a change in governmental policy (Haenfler, Johnson, & Jones, 2012).

Some studies, such as Verta Taylor and Nancy Whittier's (1995) research on the "culture of the women's movement" in the United States, have specifically addressed the politicization

of mundane practices *within* the structures of social movements, which is specific aspect of NSM. According to them, the movement led to a politicization of everyday life which triggered a restructuring of every aspect of their daily life, including language, but also initiated the establishment of alternative institutions such as self-help groups (Whittier & Taylor, 1995: 174, 179). Their analysis, therefore, depicts practices which we can understand as forms of counter-conduct without framing them as such. Among these studies which take into account the everyday practices within movements are those on *prefiguration* (Maeckelbergh, 2011; Yates, 2014). Understood as “creation of alternatives in the here and now”, prefigurative politics include practices ranging from communal living and the establishment of alternative economic activities to alternative political institutions and structures (Maeckelbergh, 2011: 3). Contrasting practices of prefiguration of today with those of the 1960s, Marianne Maeckelbergh describes the earlier forms as “inward-looking” while those of today rather aim at being a strategic test ground for practices which will “replace” the existing structures of liberal representative democracy (Maeckelbergh, 2011: 4). While the practices she depicts, in her analysis of the alter-globalisation movements, aim at prefiguring large-scale alternatives to global governance, Luke Yates (2014) looks into everyday practices of alternative social arrangements in autonomous social centres in Barcelona. Both, however, aim at grasping a form of politics which does not express demands towards the governments, but enact the alternative they are aiming for. Even if Yates argues the participants in his study did not grasp their everyday practices as an alternative for wider politics and the proliferation of the cause, but rather as a complement to them, prefigurative politics remove, as Maeckelbergh argues, “the temporal distinction between present struggle and future goal” (Maeckelbergh, 2011: 4). They do not aim at a fulfilment of their goals in the future, but attempt to put them de facto into practice – similar to counter-conduct. However, in respect to the movement goals, prefiguration remains, as the studies of both Maeckelbergh and Yates show, “outward-looking”, while in a Foucauldian understanding of the specific problem of subjectivation this distinction of inward and outward dissolves.

In this respect, *Lifestyle Movements* (LM) - as “individualized collective action” which focuses on changing and challenging everyday practices such as consumption, rather than making demands towards the state – probably resembles Foucault’s concept of counter-conduct the most (Haenfler et al., 2012; Portwood-Stacer, 2013). They address “loosely bound collectivities in which participants advocate lifestyle change as a primary means to social change, politicizing daily life, while pursuing morally coherent “authentic” identities”

(Haenfler et al., 2012: 16). They cross the divide between private action and movement participation; personal and social change, personal and collective identity, existing in the literature (Haenfler et al., 2012: 2). According to Haenfler et. al. “the self, rather than the streets become the site of social change” (Haenfler et al., 2012: 15). The individual transformation, the change in conduct, the promoting of a certain way of life, is regarded as how change occurs. In this sense, LM involves “identity work”, in the sense that LM is an “avenue for “constructing a desirable self” (Haenfler et al., 2012: 9). So, while studies on lifestyle movements and prefiguration have opened up a way of addressing the intersection between everyday practices of resistance and social movements, neither provide a way of addressing the distinctive character of everyday resistance. Everyday resistance is neither equivalent to *movement activities in the everyday* (prefiguration), nor with a *movement-effect of everyday practices* (lifestyle movements). Instead, everyday resistance targets and transgresses specific forms of power which work precisely on the everyday level – in producing identities, managing self-perceptions and shaping conduct of life. Accordingly, Kurdish identity – as discussed in the following chapter – is not addressed in its meaning for the development of a movement, but rather as a site of struggle in itself.

Applying Foucault’s understanding of power, discourses, practices and truths, and especially his concepts of subjugated knowledges and counter-conduct as discussed above, the following three chapters analyze the various forms of everyday resistance. The first of these three chapters focuses on the *discourses* around identity construction, the second depicts the respective practices as *counter-conduct*, while the last – titled *insurrection of conduct* - looks deeper into the question how and where certain acts of resistance erupt. Although my understanding of these practices is guided by this Foucauldian framework, I also draw on the work of Judith Butler, Michel De Certeau, Tim Cresswell, who are themselves inspired by Foucault, as well as Micheal Taussig and James C. Scott to elaborate specific aspects, such as performativity and parody, spatially, strategic compliance and the defacement of monuments, which require the use of concepts that go beyond those offered by Foucault.

Chapter 5

Kurdishness: Identity as a Site of Struggle

Claiming the existence of Kurds and voicing demands for legal and political recognition is no doubt a key strategy in this struggle against assimilation. As an identity whose expression has been denied, ridiculed, punished and foreclosed, Kurdishness is not necessarily experienced as something ontological, but is often narrated as something which cannot be *fully* achieved, as a process of *becoming* Kurdish, and interrupted by the effects of assimilation policies. Discourses of ethnicity, race and nation are used to claim an intelligible subject status, an identity claimable for acknowledgement. However, in this context of denial, Kurdish identity exceeds the characteristics of an ethnic category and becomes identified with a political stance. In this sense, Kurdish identity has to be understood as a site of struggle in itself, in which the discursive practices of the state are challenged by counter-narratives on ethnic difference and political opposition. It is neither simple, nor easily-lived. As an instrument to counter discourses of denial, it deploys discourses on race and ethnicity as well as ruralness. Grappling with the policies of assimilation and the discourse of the single Turkish nation in this way, these articulations of Kurdish identity are attempts to shift the notion of what counts as an intelligible identity and therefore subvert subjectivity. The attempts to achieve a coherent narrative are constantly impeded through the effects of assimilation. Therefore, these different facets of Kurdishness cannot cohere into a coherent and stable identity, but must rather be seen in their discontinuous unity.

5.1 IMPOSSIBILITY OF “FULL” KURDISHNESS

The policies of assimilation, which have in many ways impeded the continued practice of Kurdish language and traditions as well as identifying as Kurdish, disrupt the narration of Kurdishness. The confrontation with these state policies makes a *coherent* narrative of

Kurdishness via ethnicity impossible, while at the same time seemingly necessary to oppose the discourses of denial. Kurdishness is experienced within the complex situation of state policies and the Kurdish movement, of dominant power and resistance. It is marked by the simultaneousness of the discourse of denial and inferiority and the struggle for recognition. Sanctioned by laws, derogatory Orientalist discourses and everyday racism, Kurdishness is experienced and articulated as something prohibited in public, made inferior, stereotyped as backward and non-civilized as well as being the target of discursive elimination. As discussed in Chapter 3, language, clothes, traditions and politics have been impeded in public and therefore foreclosed a simple identification for many. All this has its imprint on how Kurdishness is lived and experienced today. Kurdishness is scarred by its unlivability, by the whipped fingers, the imprisoned, and the killed. In this sense, Kurdishness is the discontinuous identity of not just a state-less but status-less nation, of those whose lives have been colonized, whose identities have been denied. It is not the coherent glorious story of victorious nation, but derives from the discontinuous experience from below, a complex experience of both oppression and the struggle against it.

Exactly this complexity and inconsistency is illustrated by the following passage when the interviewee asks herself what it means to be “fully Kurdish”. I will quote this passage at length because it highlights the various ways in which Kurdishness is experienced as a complex and incoherent identity, which I will be discussing in the course of this chapter.

Yes, I define myself as a Kurd. We vote for our party in the elections and we support the Kurds at Newroz, but we are not Kurdistans [“Kürtçü”]⁴⁶. When we listen to Kurdish music and speak Kurdish we are aware of being Kurdish. In our everyday life we can’t be so [actively] involved [in politics], but at the elections and at Newroz we support them. [...] I didn’t go to a Kurdish class, but I really want to. I want to be able to speak fluently. I want to be able to sing songs. I want to be able to speak with my husband and my child. Being Kurdish is not just about voting for BDP, we also have it in our blood. We can tell from our eyebrows in 200km distance. [...] We are not extreme [regarding Kurdish politics, koyu]. We listen to Kurdish music, we watch Kurdish TV, and we speak Kurdish. Maybe this is not enough; maybe other things could be done. You can never be fully Kurdish. There is a very fine line. I am Kurdish, but I grew up in Izmir. You become Kurdish. I am a dark eye-browed Kurd. These things exist. But nobody has full Kurdishness. Does being Kurdish mean fighting for freedom like the guerrilla? Voting for our party in the elections? Or feeling free when you sing Kurdish songs? I don’t know what being Kurdish means, but I am Kurdish. When I listen to my songs, I say “yes, I am Kurdish”. When I speak my language, I say “yes, I am Kurdish”. But, the laws obstruct you. I can’t speak Kurdish wherever I like, that’s why I can’t be fully Kurdish. Only then when nobody says “To hell with you, Kurds” anymore, then will we finally be able to live as Kurds. I can’t read [in Kurdish] and I can’t write [in Kurdish]. There is no such thing as real Kurdishness I think. Only when we hold all rights in our hands, will it finally exist. After receiving all rights, if there are schools and we can speak our own language. Why are

⁴⁶ In accordance to Derya Bayir’s (2013) translation of “Kürtçülük” as “Kurdism” I translate the term “Kürtçü” as “Kurdist”.

we not doing this interview in Kurdish? The state should have given me this possibility. I couldn't speak [Kurdish]. This right should have been granted to me. [...] You can't speak openly, because you think "what kind of reaction will there be?" If we were Kurds, we wouldn't have this problem. [...] A person can never be fully Kurdish. If our education was in Kurdish, maybe I would have been a Kurdish lawyer. Many people wouldn't have gone to prison for speaking Kurdish. Everything would be explained in Kurdish at the hospitals. Only when all this comes true, will we be fully Kurdish. (Interview 36, 23 year old housewife, secondary school education, who grew up in the west)

In this passage, the interviewee touches two kinds of unlivability of Kurdishness: The impossibility of free expression of Kurdish practices on the one hand, and the foreclosure of the possibility to learn Kurdish culture and language in the first place on the other hand. Referring to her own lack of "full Kurdishness", she states that she is not able to speak Kurdish fluently, that she cannot read and write in Kurdish. This indicates that the ability to practice language and culture plays an important role in how she envisages "full Kurdishness". She clearly makes the legal impediments, especially the education system, responsible for this lack. Her lack of being "fully Kurdish" is the effect of the assimilation policies on her. These policies have foreclosed the possibility for her to have a full command of the language and therefore of being "fully Kurdish". In this sense, this impossibility represents a loss that is constitutive for her life and her Kurdishness. She also talks about the laws that obstruct Kurds from speaking Kurdish freely in public. She mentions being insulted for being Kurdish, thinking about what reaction she might get for speaking Kurdish in public and the imprisonment of many people for speaking Kurdish.

According to her, only when collective rights are granted, which officially recognize the existence of the Kurds and enable Kurdish as a teaching language, will it be possible for Kurds to be "fully Kurdish". Hence, Kurdishness in this form is not existent today. As long as assimilative policies and practices continue to exist, "full Kurdishness" stays impossible. Framing Kurdishness in this way, it seems to not only be intertwined with its impossibility today, but also points towards a better future, in which Kurdish language and cultural practices can be lived freely. According to this, she describes Kurdishness as an uneasy, disrupted form of identity. It does not fully exist in the now, but it carries the hope for a more comfortable and more easily livable identity in the future. In this way, the passage illustrates how Kurdishness is experienced as a complex, incoherent identity which is traced by the search for coherence as well as their impossibility.

She also mentions bodily features, such as her eyebrows and blood relations. She seems to use them, as if to compensate for having grown up in the west, possibly to compensate for lack of other features that would "mark" her Kurdish, such as language knowledge. She

uses it also to underline that Kurdishness is not just about a political affiliation, implying a racial explanation of difference to the imagined homogeneous nation of Turks. However, even this does not seem enough to guarantee full Kurdishness in her eyes. Consequently, the passage illustrates how Kurdishness is narrated as something which has racial or ethnic origins, however is incomplete, because it is constantly impeded through the various forms of assimilation policies and racism.

Besides this, her thoughts circle around the question of which practices make her Kurdish in the meantime, despite the lack. She lists various everyday practices such as listening to music, singing and speaking Kurdish, and watching Kurdish TV, which will be further discussed in the following chapter. She also mentions voting for the Kurdish party, BDP, and supporting them at Newroz. From this, we can infer that Kurdishness is intrinsically tied to a pro-Kurdish political stance. Her comments that these practices may “not be enough” and more “could be done” also indicate that Kurdishness might involve a form of political activism. At least, it seems that Kurdishness is inevitably bound to some kind of opposition to the state.

This shows how Kurdishness is not experienced as something as a fixed and unquestioned natural state, but rather is narrated and experienced in different ways which overlap and contradict each other.

5.2 BECOMING KURDISH

Nearly all of my interviewees describe identifying as Kurdish as a *process*. These interviewees admit having denied being Kurdish as a child and only recently becoming aware of the policies of assimilation. *Becoming aware* of these state policies and overcoming the feeling of shame and inferiority, described in Chapter 3, are linked to (re-)identifying as Kurdish. These interviewees, who are between 18 and 40 years of age, generally locate the beginning of this process of becoming aware in the earlier 1990s and often relate to the armed struggle of the PKK and the politicized situation of those years.

The armed struggle enables an alternative to the dominant state discourses. Kurdish politics had been severely suppressed since the founding of the republic and only regained in strength in the 1960s and 1970s before the Military Coup of 1980 brutally put this to an end and marked the rise of armed struggle (see Beşikçi, 1992; Gündoğan, 2011). As a result, questioning these policies and reflecting on their effects was not easy, as we can see from

words of interviewees who mention that they only recently “understood the pain” which assimilation involved.

The PKK and its mass mobilisation has enabled the discursive grounds to make the state policies speakable and therefore enabled a problematization of assimilation. They provided the Kurdish population not only with an alternative interpretation of their experience of oppression, but also of identity. Turkish sociologist Ismail Beşikçi, who spent many years in prison for his academic work on Kurds, notes in 1990:

The guerrilla struggle has had a deep and wide-spread impact on Kurdish society. An intense excitement has begun to surround the young and energetic of Kurdish society. This excitement can also be observed in the old generations, women and children [...] The attempt is being made to express the trauma and injustice the Kurdish people has endured in art, music, poetry, literature etc. Kurdish artists are emerging. The Kurds are trying to find themselves. The process of finding themselves has gained speed. The Kurds are striving to take up their position among the peoples of the world. (Beşikçi, 1991: 103,111; my translation)

Beşikçi’s observations indicate a strong change within the Kurdish population in the late 1980s and early 1990s which was initiated by the struggle of the PKK. Like Foucault argues regarding the struggle in Tunisia, Beşikçi describes the activities on all levels, as an *excitement* that has affected the whole Kurdish population. According to him, the armed struggle triggered the *search* for identity as well as the expression of trauma and injustice. By the mid 1990s the armed struggle achieved an atmosphere in which people were able to question the state policies of assimilation, overcome the feeling of inferiority and oppose the discourse of denial. By the early 1990s the PKK had already developed into a mass movement with millions of supporters in Kurdistan as well as in Europe, becoming more and more visible and vocal. The uprisings (*serhildan*), rallies and demonstration became more and more frequent and especially the celebration of *Newroz* which developed into the day of national resistance, initiated a questioning of state policies and sparked a (re-)identification as Kurdish (Gunes, 2012: 112). This man describes that the 1990s turned the undefined awareness of oppression into a clear identification as Kurds.

You are aware of something in primary school, but you can’t do anything. We defined ourselves as Kurds. Especially from the 1990s onwards, there existed an “I am a Kurd”-awareness in everyone. (Interview 15, 29 year old man, in work with university education)

The armed struggle, the state’s reaction to it and the mass mobilization of the PKK brought about the possibility to question the prevalent denial of Kurdishness among Kurds themselves. In this sense, all my interviewees who describe this process of becoming aware – whether sympathizers of the PKK or not – acknowledge the crucial impact of the armed

struggle for the development of their identification. This woman, who is active in Kurdish politics, expresses this acknowledgement as a deep gratitude towards the Movement.

We owe the movement so much. With this movement we have learnt who we are. That's why people will continue to support the BDP. Before, women wouldn't speak in public. It is a major success and effort. (Interview 41, informal interview with woman in her late 40s, with primary education, migrated to the West as a child)

For her, the impact of the Movement is not only limited to the awareness which it triggered, but also for tackling inequality and discrimination within Kurdish society, especially regarding the situation of women. Even people who do not sympathize with the PKK acknowledge the great impact the struggle had in problematizing the assimilation policies, like this 35-year-old woman who grew up in the west of Turkey and had to endure police maltreatment when she was taken into custody on false accusations as a 15-year old:

I am, however, aware that the Kurdish movement is the reason why we are able to call ourselves Kurds. If it hadn't been for them, I still wouldn't say I am Kurdish. (Interview 50, 37 year old woman with university education, in work, migrated to the west when she was a child)

Without the expansion of the Kurdish movement many Kurds, like the woman above, would not have been able to question the denial of Kurds and Kurdishness. She would have continued to see herself as a Turk without being able to reflect the position of inferiority she was forced into. In similar vein, many describe the *Newroz* celebrations, on the 21st March, which became increasingly popular from 1993 onwards, as something that triggered their identification as Kurds:

I went to Newroz in Diyarbakir, in Amed. There were a hundred thousand people. Incredible! [...] Thousands of people gather in Amed on the 21st March to say from now on we want to be free, hear our voices. [...] I went to Newroz and saw that I was not alone. There was something my parents used to say, "Look, if you do that, if you say you are Kurdish, if you use political words or so, if you talk about politics in public, look, there are police, there is this and that, they will take you away, they will hit you, they will throw you into prison, no one will be able to help you". But, the moment I went to Newroz, I saw all those people together and said to myself "I am not alone. From now on, everywhere I go I will say I am a Kurd and I will also speak Kurdish. Today, they can't do anything to us anymore. [...] The state cannot ignore hundred thousands of people. (Interview 12, 20 year old male student with secondary education, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region)

Seeing the gathering of thousands of people claiming a Kurdish identity and demanding its recognition destroyed his fears of identifying as Kurdish, which his parents had generated in him. As Gunes describes, the PKK used Newroz to establish a "contemporary myth of resistance" which linked various historical and legendary acts of resistance and effectively constructed the PKK as the "embodiment" of this legacy of resistance (Gunes, 2012: 116).

This myth links the historical “golden era” of the Medes (10th -7th century BCE), the legend of Kawa the Blacksmith, who fought against the tyrannical Assyrian king Dehak, with the resistance of the founding members of the PKK in the Military Prison of Diyarbakir in the 1980s. It constructs the idea of time-transcending struggle of the Kurdish nation for its homeland. The myth, therefore, serves both the aim to construct a unified Kurdish identity and to link this identity to a legacy of resistance of which the PKK is its current representative as well as identifying the oppressor. The celebrations of this day became not only a demonstration of Kurdish identity, but also a demonstration of support for the PKK and an important part in its mass mobilization. *Newroz* plays a crucial role as it links guerrilla struggle with the Kurdish population, as this woman indicates:

[W]hen I was about 8 or 10 years old, we went to demonstrations and Newroz. My father took us when the ban was lifted. It is the beginning of spring, that's how we know it. We didn't know that guerrilla existed. After we went to Newroz, we began to understand what was what. (Interview 28, 24 year old unemployed woman with primary school education)

Even though this young woman experienced extreme violence of police forces when she was a child, she does not describe this as initiating her awareness. For her, Newroz is the event that enabled her to “understand what was what”. This includes understanding who the guerrillas are and the reasons for their struggle.

Others refer more to the general situation in the 1990s. This was the time when the violence of police and military forces and their allies such as the Hizbullah, a religiously orientated organization built up by the state, and the village guards, a militia of mainly Kurdish villagers who are paid and armed by the state, was at its peak. The eviction of villages had forced people to leave their villages and migrate to larger towns and cities within the Kurdish region or in the West of Turkey. This migration brought a different level of awareness and knowledge of the treatment of Kurds through military and police forces into the cities. It also meant that the use of Kurdish language “returned” to the Kurdish cities, which had long before “lost” them, while they were still spoken in the villages⁴⁷. The interaction with the people from the villages results in a questioning the feeling of inferiority and consequently assimilation, as the following interviewee explains:

[My awareness about Kurdishness] changed in secondary school (Orta Okul). My school was in a part of town, where there were lots of people who had come from the village like us and were aware of their Kurdishness. We were in the same building as the grammar school students. They influenced us and taught us to resist. Then, the feeling of inferiority [ezik duyugusu] changed into

⁴⁷ As mentioned before, the dissemination assimilation policies differed especially between rural and urban areas. For example, İsmail Beşikçi states that you could find no one who spoke Kurdish in Diyarbakir, commonly known as the capital of Kurdistan, in the 1970s.

a feeling of pride [gurur duygu], because you learn how to rebel. I still didn't do anything but, for example, if I saw someone fighting with the police on the streets, I knew who was in the right from then on. Actually, my family was like that [aware] anyway. My uncle was abroad. The police constantly raided our house, with pump guns, and turned everything upside down, looking for evidence on him. I was about 10 at the time. [...] So, in primary school, I kept asking myself, why are we like this? But in middle school I was aware of the situation. (Interview 16, 28 year old woman with university education, in work, she was born in a village but migrated to the city within the Kurdish region when she was an infant)

Although her family also migrated from a village to Diyarbakir in the 1980s when she was an infant, her experience differs from those who arrived after the village eviction. She went to a primary school in the city where the majority of the students were children of members of the military and police force, who all identified as Turkish. This increased the feeling of inferiority and shame, which she was only able to overcome in secondary school when she met those who had forcefully migrated. They give her confidence and enabled her to share the feeling of Kurdishness which they have. Her feeling of inferiority is replaced by a feeling of pride by learning how to “rebel”, as she says. However, as she points out herself, she does not mean *rebellious* in the sense of actually *action*, but rather “knowing who was in the right”. This knowledge effectively means refusing the discourses of the state with its policies of denial, assimilation and superiority. It is an alternative knowledge about the policies which the state is trying to conceal. She admits that there existed an awareness for their oppression in her family and that she had experienced police raids and violence before she went to middle school and she mentions that she questioned the situation they were in, but she sees meeting other Kurds who openly declare their Kurdishness in the 1990s, as the moment in which her own awareness develops and she is able to question assimilation.

5.3 CLAIMING ETHNIC DIFFERENCE

Parallel to these narratives of Kurdishness as something in movement, developing and still incomplete, it is also articulated as a *race* or *ethnicity* which is separate from the Turkish nation. Racial tropes and references to terms such as “ırk” (race) or “millet” (nation or people) crop up in my interviews and the notion of ethnicity is tied to the idea of common ancestry, as well as language and culture (Eriksen, 2010: 47; Fenton, 1999: 6).

Although the terms “millet” and “halk” carry a similar meaning, the term *halk* is rather used by left-wing groups in the sense of “the people” as the PKK and BDP do, while the word *millet* has a racial connotation such as attached to the German word “Volk”. Interestingly,

both terms, nation and race, are used by my interviewees with a positive reference, as in expression such as: “We are Kurds. We are a different nation [millet]” (Interview 14) and “A race is never ashamed of itself” (Interview 20). These sentences already indicate the dominant context in which my interviewees often deploy these notions. The reference to race and nation seems necessary to counter the assimilating discourses of the single Turkish nation, denial and inferiority. In similar way, the words of the following interviewee also illustrate how he grapples with the dominant discourses in order to justify the claim of the existence of Kurds as a separate entity. Pleading for the use of the word “Turkiyeli” which means as much as “someone from Turkey” instead of the ethnic referencing term “Turk” this young man says:

[T]he constitution says: In the Turkish Republic everyone is a Turk. Why is everyone a Turk in the Turkish Republic? That is the point we are against. If a Turkish race exists, a race of Turkey exists, then everyone should be regarded as ‘from Turkey’ [Turkiyeli]. If you say everyone in Turkey are Laz⁴⁸, we would also be against it. That is our point. Everyone who lives in Turkey are Arabs. If Turkey is like that, then give the race of all those who live there a name. Let’s accept it. Everyone who lives in Turkey is English. Even if there are no English, we still accept it. They say: we are brothers, they are trying to divide us. But, if you use the word “we are brothers”, then you are doing something very dangerous. This means, you accept the Kurds. We are brothers. That means there are two different entities, two different races, two different peoples [halk]. Then, either the rights of both of these will be equal or they will both have no rights. We would accept that. (Interview 12, 20 year old male student with secondary education, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region)

By arguing that it is just as arbitrary to call all inhabitants of Turkey *Turks*, as it were to call them Laz or Arabs, two smaller minorities in Turkey, or even English, he ridicules the discourses of the single nation and demonstrates the contingency of a single “race of Turkey”. He deploys the discourse of *brotherhood* between Turks and Kurds of the current AKP government against the unitary logic that still continues to exist despite this new multicultural discourse. By maintaining that the concept of brotherhood can only exist between *two* different people, entities or races, he rationalizes that the Kurds must also be regarded as a separate race and therefore officially acknowledged and granted equal rights. This passage shows how in order to formulate the demand for recognition, Kurds have to be depicted in terms of race, nation or ethnicity.

In his lectures collected in *Society must be Defended* (2003), Foucault begins his genealogy of racism with what he terms “race war”. In doing so, he emphasizes how race was initially

⁴⁸ Laz form another small ethnic group in Turkey.

used in struggle *against* sovereignty, before developing into the state racism in the 19th century. The discourse on race war disrupted the sovereigns discourse on the unity between the sovereign and people and, therefore, functioned as a counter-history, which questioned the glorious history discourse of the sovereign and revealed the “negative” side of power (Foucault, 2003: 65). At the same time, it enabled a discourse on rebellion and violent overthrow (Foucault, 2003). Although Foucault warns us, that it would be a mistake to think that the discourse on race struggle was only used by the oppressed, he however emphasizes these “revolutionary” origins (Foucault, 2003: 81). Racism – as it later develops – is therefore the inversion of the form of race struggle, because itself becomes a discourse to preserve the sovereignty of the State, in form of the power to define the norm. It is no longer based on the idea of *binary* races, but rather on one *monist* race whose purity is threatened by deviant heterogeneous elements, which divide the social body (Foucault, 2003: 81). In opening up this difference between “race war”, which applies the notion of two races in the context of struggle against the sovereign, and state “racism”, in which the state maintains the existence of only one race/nation, Foucault enables us to distinguish different uses of references to race – antagonist and homogenizing.

Similar to what Foucault describes, as discussed in Chapter 3, the discourses of denial emphasize the notion of one *single* nation. Against this, the Kurds negotiate the subject/object positions assigned to them by constructing their own existence as a specific entity, an ethnicity. While in Foucault’s example it is the “people”, who are constructed as a whole, as a race, against the violent logic of the sovereign, here it is the “Kurds”. They re-tell the history of the homogeneous nation as a history of oppression, colonialism and violent assimilation. In this sense, the discourse on the existence of *two* races or nations is used here as a tool to interrupt, question and challenge the discourse on the purity of the single nation/race⁴⁹. Although the discourses on a counter-nation and race are deployed to

⁴⁹ In this sense, I am challenging approaches of e.g. Ozkirimli (2013) and Kadioğlu & Keyman (2011) who insist on understanding Kurdish identity politics in terms of nationalism in order to equate Kurdish and Turkish nationalism – of course with their differences (also Bora 1996: 169). Ozkirimli, for instance, argues that despite the changes in PKK ideology, which emphasize plurality and reject the idea of a homogeneous nation, “the resurgence of identity politics” of the Kurds “falls back on odious forms of nationalism” (Ozkirimli, 2013: 7). This argument that weighs heavily in the debate in Turkish academia neglects the crucial differences between the construction of an identity as needed for a social movement, a struggle, and the construction of a nation. Distinctions between “them” and “us”, which Kadioğlu and Keyman regard as a key feature of nationalism, are also applied by many social movements without making them nationalisms. Therefore, I am arguing that it is important to analytically separate such references to race, ethnicity (and even to nation) which develop as a strategy of resistance against denial of existence enacted by oppressive policies of nationalism, often practiced precisely in the name of the nation-state and which propagate internal homogeneity. Such arguments – despite their correct warnings against the “dark side” of nationalism – clearly misread reclaiming Kurdish identity as a race, ethnicity or nation as a dangerous from of nationalism and therefore neglect the potential which exists both in these everyday expressions of identity and the current ideology of the Kurdish movement which emphasizes a democratic form of living together which demands multiculturalism and a pluralism of identities

shatter the discourses of denial, the “singularity” of this understanding on nation cannot be straight-forwardly assumed. On the contrary, in contrast to the nation-state, which emphasizes the unity of the single nation and language, the Kurdish movement advocates an understanding of a “democratic nation” which is defined by its recognition of a plurality of religions, languages, ethnic groups, gender identities and different cultures. This strong emphasis on internal diversity of the *People of Kurdistan* in the discourses of the Movement has expanded into everyday life and therefore overlaps and complicates the discourses on the counter-nation.

Conventional biological tropes such as references to hair and skin colour are not or hardly used in self-definitions unless in the context of racial discrimination. Frequently, interviewees told me about how they were *not* recognized as Kurds, because they did not comply with the stereotype of the dark haired, dark skinned Kurd with dark eyes, as this interviewee:

My brother and I don't resemble Kurds at all. My nose is typical for the Blacksea Region. They have typical noses like this. My mother looks like she is from Albania. The way we dress and we speak without an accent. People don't think we are Kurds. They say we don't look like Kurds. They mean it positively. (Interview 50, 37 year old woman with university education, in work, migrated to the west when she was a child)

Although very many interviewees critically comment on this common experience in which Turks surprisingly tell them that they did not “resemble” or “look like” a Kurd, this woman does not interpret this as a racist reaction. On the contrary, it seems that she also believes there are certain bodily characteristics that might mark Kurds, which she happens not to comply with. Furthermore, she mentions that her accent and her dress - being *no*-accent and *modern* dress - break with the image of the Kurd. Another man in his mid-30s commenting on being “white” and therefore not being recognized as a Kurd: “I am white. That's why the most of them don't understand that I am a Kurd”. In Turkey the term “kara” meaning “black” is used in a derogatory way mainly for Kurds, but also for Alevis⁵⁰. The term *kara* refers to dark hair, skin and eye-colour. Coinciding with racist and Orientalist discourses, as discussed in Chapter 2, white is here associated with modern, polite, clean, urban, good, while black is equalled with the backward, rude, dirty and bad. My interviewees very rarely used such tropes to identify some kind of commonality among

not only as formal acknowledgement, but also in political practice. My effort here is to show that Kurdish identity is more complicated than just a “thick ethnic assertiveness” and “cultural fundamentalism”, as Ozkirimli argues, and that it in fact entails a way out of the “vicious circle of nationalisms” without having to reject the need to claim Kurdish identity as part of a struggle against homogenizing Turkish nationalism (Ozkirimli, 2013: 7).

⁵⁰ Interestingly, this is not same term as Black in English, which translates as “siyah”.

Kurds. One interviewee mentioned how she decided to help two children, because she recognized them as “black” like herself (Interview 38), while the interviewee cited above referred to her “dark eyebrows” as something identifiably Kurdish (Interview 36). More frequently are references to the blond haired and blue-eyed Kurds associated with the area of Yüksekova. This plays on an existing discourse which claims that - in contrast to the stereotype of being “black” - Kurds were “originally” blond and blue-eyed and belong to the Aryan race. Rather than being a reference to a superior culture or “master-race”, such references which imply a “kinship with Europe” have to be understood as one way of countering the discriminative and humiliating discourses⁵¹.

So, while there is a necessity in the struggle against the discourse of denial to emphasize the Kurds’ existence as a distinct ethnic group, racial tropes are tied to Kurdishness rather through the experience of racist stereotypes than a positive self-reference. Grounding Kurdish identity in race, ethnicity and culture, however, fails to achieve a stable identity in the light of the assimilation policies as the following passages show. The words of this interviewee makes clear that he does not experience his “race” as something fixed and natural, when he says: “For me, without my language, my race, I am like running around in public without clothes” (Interview 12). Here, it seems that his “race” can be taken away. It can be made impossible and eradicated like language through assimilation policies. The following passage shows a similar argument. Here, race is used interchangeably with identity:

I think that since Turkish has entered my life, I started to have serious problems with my identity. And I really don’t know how much I will be able to free myself from the effects which Turkish has had on my identity. However, after becoming aware of the [Kurdish] language, a change [dönüşüm] occurred in my own language. But, I think this change has caused a severe destruction in me that means on my identity, my race. And I think the actual assimilation started here. But, Kurdish, since I started [to learn] my own mother-tongue, I am experiencing a language change again. Actually, constant changes, I am experiencing changes in my identity. (Interview 30, 25 year old unemployed woman with university degree, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region due to village eviction, studied in the west)

⁵¹ Zia-Ebrahimi explains how the term “aryan”, which derived from the self-designation of ancient Iran, was “europeanized” in the 18th century (Zia-Ebrahimi, 2011: 448). First as a linguistic category, it gained its modern racial use from the 19th century onwards finding its ultimate form in Nazi-ideology. While this term has become widely discredited in Europe, the linguistic term “Indo-European language group”, which has been used interchangeable, continues to be employed. Öcalan, himself, refers in his writing to Indo-European or Indo-Germanic language group, of which Kurdish is regarded a part, but also occasionally uses the term “Aryan language group”. He, however, does not conflate the linguistic concept with that of race, as is done frequently, according to Zia-Ebrahimi. Zia-Ebrahimi also describes how the Aryanist discourse becomes dominant in Orientalist writings on Iran and Indian and how it is taken up in nationalist discourse in Iran, but also for Turkish nationalism. He sees the use of this discourse as a form of self-orientalization, reinforcing the European image of the East, which developed out of a lack of colonial liberation mentality and inferiority complex, calling it a “short cut modernity” (Zia-Ebrahimi, 2011: 472).

Discussing the effects of being forced to learn Turkish, the interviewee argues that this caused a serious destruction of her identity *and* race. The way in which she uses the term implies that for her race is *not* something stable or natural or outside of the influences of society and its assimilation policies. Just like the interviewee cited above, race itself has been influenced by the state policies. Both accounts show that the assimilation policies make it impossible to relate to race as a “fixed essence”, as stable, natural and biological. The policies of denial, inferiority and assimilation have interrupted the possibility to relate to race in easy and straight forward terms. Consequently, although expressing the existence of Kurds as a race or ethnicity is used as to counter the homogenizing policies of the state, they fail to establish a stable reference point due to the effects of the politics of assimilation.

5.4 AWARENESS OF ASSIMILATION

Besides disturbing an untroubled reference to race, the assimilation politics in form of the ongoing impediments towards learning and practicing Kurdish language also complicate the narration of Kurdishness through common language or culture. What is Kurdishness, when knowledge of language and traditions have been eliminated or strongly impeded, when an easy reference to common culture and language has been made impossible? It seems that under these conditions precisely the *acknowledgement of having been assimilated* gains importance over the practice of culture itself. Accordingly, *naming* the effect of these violent policies of assimilation receives crucial importance in itself. This acknowledgement itself seems to be felt as a way *out* of assimilation, as the account of this woman shows:

I don't think I have been [assimilated]. Well, I was assimilated, but I turned back [geri döndüm]. (laughs) I got aware of it at a certain point and said stop at that moment. Now, I even feel annoyed of being able to express myself better in Turkish. Yes, I can express myself well in Turkish. That is important, because I live in Turkey. Turkish is the language I will always use, that is for sure. If only, I had also been able to speak Kurdish with such ease. This, however, lies in my hands, anyway. This will improve with the increase in people I can speak to in my environment. And in this way I want to reach a point where I can have conversations. But I don't think I have become assimilated. (Interview 14, 30 year old woman with university education, in work, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region in the 1990s)

Although she at first clearly states that she has not been assimilated, she acknowledges on second thoughts that she *had*, but managed to stop it by reflecting on it. Becoming aware of the process of assimilation allows her to describe herself as not assimilated. She uses the phrase that she “turned back” suggesting that she is no longer assimilated. Besides this, she

struggles with the fact that her Turkish is better and easier for her than Kurdish, although she admits that Turkish is necessary in public life. We can infer from this that the ability to speak Kurdish does not automatically determine whether someone feels assimilated or not. Although she is not happy with her Kurdish language skills and is still relearning the language, she says she is not assimilated. Not being fully able to speak Kurdish, does not lead her to see herself as assimilated as long as she is aware of the policies of assimilation. This paradox stems from a double meaning of assimilation. On the one hand assimilation refers to a cultural dimension, the eradication of Kurdish language and cultural practices, and on the other assimilation implies a political loyalty to the state. Therefore, those who have been bereft of their language can be assimilated in this respect, but do not consider themselves as assimilated concerning the political dimension as long as they have an awareness of the state's assimilation policies. The consciousness of having been assimilated counter balances the loss of language. This man describes himself in a similar way; although his parents both speak Kurdish, he was unable to learn the language:

If I had totally been a Kurd, I would have done this interview in Kurdish. I am not exactly defining Kurdishness via ethnicity, but we can't oppose 90 years of the republic. [...] This is the period I experienced. I couldn't learn my language. I have only been assimilated as far as I am a Kurd, but I am aware of my assimilation, I know the methods. If I had become entirely assimilated, I would neither have received this information, nor would I have known the methods [...] You know you have been assimilated, but you are aware of it. In this case, have I been assimilated? [...] Although we do not speak our language, we have not lost the awareness for the problem. There is this anger. (Interview 31, 30 year old man with university education, in work, studied in the west)

According to him, knowledge about assimilation is the key out of assimilation. He makes clear that being "entirely assimilated" would mean not knowing about his assimilation. On the other hand, he does not consider himself "totally" Kurdish either, because of his inability to speak the language. However, he differentiates between the knowledge of the Kurdish language and the knowledge of the "problem". Not being able to speak the language is a result of the "90 years of the republic", as he says, which cannot be turned back, while being "aware of the problem", problematizing the policies of assimilation, prevents him from feeling assimilated. Therefore, *knowing* the oppressive face of the state and problematizing its policies becomes a part of Kurdishness.

This necessity to become aware of assimilation in order to be associated as a Kurd is also reiterated in the following passage, when the interviewee talks about *Kurds* who identify as *Turks* as "stuck in the middle". By doing so, the woman not only shows her disapproval of

not being aware of the state policies, but also links identifying as Turkish to defending Turkish nationalism:

Elazig is only 2.5 hours away [from Diyarbakir] and you can see that assimilation has been implemented very strongly, there. There are many people who defend Turkish nationalism. Some of us are Kurds. Some of us are Turks. But I really pity those who are stuck in the middle. [...] I pity those the most who have been assimilated but are not aware of it. (Interview 20, 27 year old unemployed woman with a university degree, studied in the west)

She pities Kurds who have not become aware of their assimilation and therefore identify as Turks. It seems to be a sign of *weakness* for a Kurd to identify as Turkish. Although she clearly expresses that assimilation was “implemented very strongly” in that town, she does not use this to justify their identification. On the contrary, she implies that it is their own *failure* of not becoming aware. The way she expresses it here, becoming aware shows a strength and superiority. This is interesting, considering how aware she is of the strong effect the policies of assimilation had on her own life. She, herself, once denied being a Kurd. However, while having denied being Kurdish in the *past* is tolerated as a fact of history, identifying as Turkish *today* is seen as an act of Turkish nationalism. This understanding indicates a great change in historical conditions that enables her to look down upon Kurds who defend Turkish nationalism by portraying it in terms of a lack of awareness. Especially under the current conditions, identifying as *Turkish* as a Kurd is regarded as a reiteration of the discourse of denial which effectively means being loyal to the state and endorsing Turkish nationalism.

5.5 DISTRUSTING THE STATE

While identifying as Turkish today is regarded as being loyal to the state, as an act of Turkish nationalism, a critical understanding of the state is often narrated as a crucial part of Kurdishness. Therefore “keeping a distance” from the state, rejecting its direct influence emerges as an important aspect of Kurdishness. Even those who identify as Kurdish themselves can be seen unworthy of being called a Kurd, if they opt for the state, as the words of this interviewee show:

My other sister’s husband is from X [a town in the Kurdish region, that was a major focus of assimilation policies], he is Kurdish but he is more a Turk. He doesn’t defend Kurdishness at all. My sister has become quite assimilated, but she has a green-yellow-red tablecloth. They get coal from the government and other financial aid. That’s why they don’t oppose the state. They accept everything. They speak Turkish, but understand Kurdish. That’s how they survive. Their children speak Turkish. I say to them: “Don’t say you are Kurdish! You are spoiling [kirletiyorsun] it! They say they are Kurds, they even watch RojTV and MMC, but they have nothing in common

with Kurdishness, they vote for AKP. (Interview 36, 23 year old housewife with secondary school education, who grew up in the west)

This passage must be read against the background of the new discourse of limited acceptance, mentioned at the end of Chapter 3, which has developed under the current AKP-government. In contrast to earlier discourses, this discourse does not deny the existence of the Kurds, but instead constructs them as the loyal “Kurdish brother”. Accordingly, it is possible to claim a certain form of Kurdish identity, as long as one is *loyal* to the state. Being loyal to the state ultimately means to refrain from demanding collective political rights. It definitely means not supporting or sympathizing with ideas of the PKK and includes not voting for the legal Kurdish party BDP.

The woman refuses to call her own sister and her husband Kurds, although they themselves identify as such. The reason which she states is that they do not “defend Kurdishness”. She mentions that they watch the Kurdish channels associated with the PKK, RojTV and MMC, and that they use the “Kurdish” colours green, yellow and red in their house. However, for my interviewee this does not make them Kurdish, because they do not “oppose” the state, as she phrases it. They receive financial aid and coal from the government, speak Turkish and most importantly vote for the AKP. A connection is implied between the three: they vote for the AKP because they receive benefits and therefore choose to speak Turkish instead of Kurdish. Together, this makes them *Turks* in the eyes of my interviewee. This understanding of Kurdishness clashes with the racial or ethnic notion of Kurdishness described above. In the eyes of the following interviewee Kurds who are not political are Turks:

Some Kurds are not political. They have surrendered, they can never get anywhere. Regarding their ideas they are Turks. They are the citizens that the AKP has created. They are like this for economical reasons. (Interview 52, informal interview, man in his mid 50s, living in the West)

He goes so far as to describe such Kurds who are not political as having “surrendered” to the state. He regards these people as compliant with the government and assumes that they might have economic reasons for this compliance. It is not rare that those who vote for AKP are seen to have “sold” themselves to the state. They are very often accused of taking benefits from the AKP, as we can see from the following statement:

If the AKP voting Kurds were real Kurds, they would vote for their own party. The AKP distributes coal and seduces [fools] them financial things. That’s why they give them their vote. They don’t defend themselves. They say there is a Kurdish party, but I have no benefit from them, but the AKP helps us. (Interview 36, 23 year old housewife with secondary school education, who grew up in the west)

Rather than just being a prejudice, this statement shows the awareness and knowledge of the various ways of how the state tries to achieve compliance. The current government is known for distributing goods and special benefits in exchange for votes and that religion is also used as a current form of assimilation policy. Although the elections are held through general, free, secret ballot, it is possible for the parties to analyse electoral behaviour on the local level. Therefore, it is difficult for voters to accept the incentive and then not vote differently. Besides this, the interviewees imply that voting for the governing party goes along with a general behaviour, such as mainly speaking Turkish and hiding that they are Kurdish. In this sense, for my interviewees voting for the governing party is incompatible with Kurdishness. Consequently, a “real Kurd” must show an awareness for the various policies of the state, which include the more initially subtle-looking policies of the current government. They must not be tempted by the new discourse of the “Kurdish brother” or give in to “bribes”. Instead, they have to be able to look behind the scenes and be guided by a constant caution and distrust towards the state.

So, what importance does the ballot box have? My understanding is that the act at the ballot box is only the measurement of their awareness of the state policies. The AKP is only the current placeholder of the state. When Kurds vote for the AKP, it is seen as a lack of awareness of state policies by others. Although not all of my interviewees express it in this way, but the state is still seen as the *coloniser* of Kurdistan; if not of Kurdistan, then at least the coloniser of their lives. The state is responsible for the pain, trauma and assimilation which they have experienced in the past and continues to be responsible for the pain today. So far, no substantial concessions have been made regarding collective political rights. Although currently efforts are being made towards a peace process, the period in which I was doing my fieldwork was traced by the imprisonment of thousands of BDP members, including elected mayors. Therefore, the AKP is still identified with those who “insult”, “patronize”, and “oppress” the Kurds (Interview 13). It is in this context, that we have to understand how Kurdish politicians such as Emine Ayna and Ahmet Türk can refer to Kurdish AKP candidates and voters as “traitors” and “not Kurds” (T24, 2012).

5.6 SHARED EXPERIENCE OF PAIN

This leads us to another crucial way in which Kurdishness is experienced and articulated, which is linked to the notion of unlivability: the shared experience of pain. This *collective* trauma of experiencing violence and imprisonment is narrated within the movement and is

reflected in the interviews with my participants. Although I never directly asked about such experiences, every interviewee came to speak about the atrocities they had witnessed. Sometimes talking directly about their own past, sometimes using a more distanced and generalized way of expressing the trauma, nearly all emphasized the collective nature of these experiences, as the following passage illustrates:

At five o'clock at night, they took our uncles, neighbours, aunts from their houses and they hit and tortured them. This is assimilation. Today, go to any place in Diyarbakir, Amed, Sirnak, Mardin, in Kurdistan and the moment a person sees your sincerity s/he will tell you this with tears in his/her eyes: S/he would say, we have been uprooted [koparıldık]. From 1920 until today, the people in this region have experienced all kinds of trauma [acı] that people can imagine. (Interview 12, 20 year old male student with secondary education, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region)⁵²

The way in which the interviewee uses the word “our” and the plural to address those who became victims of the state, as well as listing the towns emphasizes that the trauma is a collective experience. He narrates a collective history of trauma since the founding of the Turkish republic. Similarly, this woman emphasizes the dimension of the collectively experienced pain, taking Diyarbakir as an example:

Really, every person, every family living in this city has experienced at least one or more painful events [bir veya birkaç acısı olmuş]. Whichever door you knock on in Diyarbakir, [they] will most certainly have been affected by something. Either they were forced to leave the place they [once] lived in, or someone in their family died, is in prison, or has in fact gone to the mountains. 80 or 90% of Diyarbakir consists of families like that. [...] [T]hese people have gone through such a period and because the majority of those people have grown up with this trauma [...]. The feelings of a child who lives here, the importance it gives to that language, that identity, that culture, is different from those of a Kurdish child that grows up somewhere else. Those here really carry [all this]. They grow up in this. (Interview 14, 30 year old woman with university education, in work, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region in the 1990s)

According to her, nearly all of the inhabitants of this city have indistinguishably become victims of state violence. Considering the fact that Diyarbakir was the destination of thousands of people forced to migrate in the 1990s and the mythological status of the city as the capital of Kurdistan, Diyarbakir, here, stands for more than just this one city. We can infer that by mentioning the tragedy of so many people, she refers to its meaning for the whole Kurdish population. Additionally, generalizing her own story by referring to “the child” she makes a connection between the importance of language, identity and culture and this trauma. According to this, the experience of violence, pain and imprisonment seems intrinsic to this notion of Kurdishness. Similarly, the words of this man in his 50s,

⁵² The Turkish personal pronoun “o” is gender neutral. If the context allows me to infer who the person is referring to, I have translated it accordingly with either “he” or “she”. In contexts which do not allow to do so, I have chosen to translate it with “s/he”.

who grew up in a Kurdish town where nobody identified as Kurdish at that time and therefore never learnt Kurdish, illustrate the significance of these traumatic experiences for the identification of those who have were never able to learn Kurdish language or cultural practices, such as his children:

We have even lost our children. They say they are Kurds, but why? They don't know the language, they don't live like Kurds. They don't have any traditions and customs, but when I was in prison they were small and experienced it all. (Interview 40, 55 year old retired man with secondary school education, who was a victim of disciplinary relocation in the 1980s)

In his eyes his children are “lost”, because they do not carry any cultural traits of being Kurdish. The only characteristic which makes them Kurdish is seeing him in prison. This painful experience seems to be what marks them as Kurdish. While the assimilation policies have succeeded in eradicating the ability to speak Kurdish and knowledge of customs and traditions in his children, for him their Kurdishness lies in this experience.

5.7 AT FEUD WITH THE STATE: DEFENDING THE PKK AND VOTING FOR THE KURDISH PARTY

Understanding this deep entanglement of Kurdishness and the experience of pain, sheds new light on the question of loyalty to the state, discussed above. Hinting at the story of his own family, this young man argues why supporters of the state are identified with tolerating the state's violent politics.

There are people who exclude supporters of the state. This is because, [they are] people who have lost a son. Those who have killed that son, who have eliminated that son, are the representatives of the state. Is this mother supposed to shake hands with those who help the state? You can't expect that from that mother. Those, whose child has been in prison for 20 years. The child was young, arrested, has been in prison for 20 years, the mother grown old, the child, too. Well, one day someone will come and say to this mother: '[...] Actually, the state does the right thing. You are the ones who have done wrong in the past. You shouldn't have defended your rights. You should have kept silent'. Despite everything, I respect such people. I would say, 'okay, these are their thoughts, their ideology. That is what they think. But, to be a supporter of the state is something different. To turn a blind eye on the trauma is something different. Imagine: someone is killed right next to you and you close your eyes and continue walking. Then, if you are religious, we'd call this faithless. (Interview 12, 20 year old male student with secondary education, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region)

These emotional words show how he accuses those who support the state of turning “a blind eye on the trauma”. In his view, these people “help” the state, they are collaborators. Therefore, his argument goes beyond just a lack of awareness of state policies mentioned before. It sees those who are loyal to the state to as accomplices in its violence. This

explains why this woman strongly argues that she would never sit together with an “assimilated Kurd”:

Regarding the language, I know I have been assimilated. But, I know why those in the mountains are fighting. I would never in my life sit together with an assimilated Kurd. They deny themselves. They hang up [Turkish] flags in their house. It is impossible to have a flag in a house of a Kurd! Just for Tayyip Erdoğan! They sell their vote just for food. [...] They also don't defend those in the mountains, although they are their own children. (Interview 28, 24 year old unemployed woman with primary school education)

For her, those who live in accordance to the state policies and bow to them by e.g. voting for the governing party AKP or hanging up the Turkish flag are assimilated. She distinguishes herself strongly from such Kurds. While she acknowledges that she is assimilated regarding her language, she emphasizes that what differs her from them is that she “knows why those in the mountains”, the guerrillas, are fighting and defends them. According to her, as for many, defending the guerrilla fighters, that means defending the PKK, is clearly a part of identifying as Kurdish. She is appalled by the idea that these “assimilated Kurds” do not defend the cause of the fighters, although “they are their own children”, a phrase often used within the Kurdish movement to show that the fighters come out of the heart of Kurdish society and should be cared for as their own⁵³. As I will further discuss in the Chapter 6, the relationship to the PKK is not just narrated as a “family”, but clearly experienced and lived in this way. For some, the PKK has become inseparable with Kurdishness.

As discussed above, nearly all of the interviewees are very clear about the importance of the PKK for their personal development of awareness and becoming Kurdish. In this sense, the existence of Kurdishness is radically intertwined with the role of the PKK. For many, without the PKK they would not have been able to reflect on the policies of assimilation as the attempt to extinguish Kurdish life. Consequently, the PKK is understood as the *guarantor* for Kurdish existence, both in the sense described above, but also as a counter-power to the state in the current situation. Despite the many losses throughout the war, many are convinced that if it was not for the PKK the situation of the Kurds would be much worse. Hence, the PKK is seen as the defender of the Kurdish people, their protection against state atrocities. It should not be misunderstood, that defending the PKK does not mean promoting a continuation of armed struggle and war. On the contrary, everyone who I spoke to stressed the importance for an end of the fighting and peace. Therefore, defending the PKK means emphasizing the legitimacy of the armed struggle as a *response*

⁵³ The members of the Kurdish party frequently use the term “our children” for the guerrilla fighters.

to state violence and demanding an end to the conflict. Not acknowledging this legitimacy is, hence, regarded as a sign of assimilation and Turkishness.

Although voting for the legal Kurdish party is regarded just as central for Kurdishness as defending the legitimacy of the PKK, the relation to each of them is narrated in different terms. Unlike the PKK, the legal party (then: BDP) is not associated with the role of a protector and guarantor and family relationships. Instead, the BDP seems to be regarded as the embodiment of the endurance of pain and long struggle against the state, which the population has also experienced. Considering the history of this party and its predecessors, it becomes obvious that this party is not like any other party in Turkey. The party had to reform several times after being shut down by court orders. Many earlier members have lost their lives, because they were struggling for the rights of Kurds, such as the elected president of Diyarbakir Province Council Vedat Aydin, who was killed in 1991. Many of the past and current MPs have been in prison for several years, such as Leyla Zana, who was sentenced to over 15 years of imprisonment with three other fellow MPs for speaking Kurdish in parliament⁵⁴. Most of them have endured some form of torture through state officials. This is to say, as Nicole F. Watts (2010) phrases it, the members of the Kurdish party are “activists in office”. Although they work within the given political system, they are recognized by the population for their “extrasystemic identity” (Watts 2010: 13). This is reflected in the frequent use of phrases such as “our party” and voting for “my people”, as the passage below shows.

In the place where I come from, there are many supporters of the AKP, there are many who have sold themselves. But, slowly, slowly, they are also becoming conscious of themselves. Maybe they have also understood who they are. I don't see the BDP as BDP. I give my vote to my people. If it was my country, I would never have voted. The BDP does everything for us. They fight for us, only so that those in the mountains can come down. (Interview 28, 24 year old unemployed woman with primary school education)

The words of this woman imply how strongly voting for the BDP is connected to Kurdishness, when she says that AKP voters are slowly “becoming conscious of themselves”, are beginning to understand “who they are” and therefore will vote for the BDP. For her, the BDP is not just a party with representatives in parliament. They are described as “fighters”, fighters for peace, so that the guerrillas can “come down” from the mountains. In this sense she stresses how much the BDP is part of the movement as a whole. However, even more, she refuses to see the BDP as a party, when she phrases that she gives her vote not to the BDP, but to her people. The struggle of the Kurdish party is

⁵⁴ In 1994, the MPs Leyla Zana, Hatip Dicle, Orhan Dogan and Selim Sadak were sentenced to 15 years for allegedly being members of a terrorist organisation, meaning PKK.

identified with the struggle of the people. This manifests itself in voting for the Kurdish party, as is summarized in the words of this man in his late 50ies living in Izmir: “A person who has experienced these atrocities will never give their vote to anyone else” (Interview 39).

Behind the support of the PKK and the BDP lies this seemingly irreconcilable opposition of Kurdishness and the state as a response to the experienced violence which is expressed in very emotional terms by this man. Identifying the current AKP government with the state, he argues:

The state is trying to give the Turks this impression: Look, we have finished what they couldn't finish in 30 years. The state is saying: 'Look, how easy we have caught them all in one year, what they didn't managed in 20 years'. But they are also proven wrong, because no state will ever enter [giremeyecek] Diyarbakir. The state will never enter Diyarbakir. [...] Do you know why? Because the people are disgruntled by the state [devlete küsmüş]⁵⁵. They are angry towards the state. They have developed a blood feud with it [Kan davali olmus]. (Interview 12, 20 year old male student with secondary education, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region)

First of all, this passage clearly shows that he does not make a difference between the current government and the old governments. Referring to the thousands of arrests that had occurred in the months before the interview, he stresses that this government, too, is following the same logic of trying to extinguish the Kurdish movement. In this context, he hints at the discourse of Diyarbakir as the capital of resistance and argues that the people are “disgruntled” and “angry” at the state. These highly emotional expressions, normally used to describe a situation between people, illustrate the relationship towards the state. Even more, he describes this opposition of the people to the state as a “blood feud”. This term used for situations of long-term nearly perpetual enmity between families in which often several members are killed, points towards not only the origin in the experience of violence, but also to how deeply ingrained this conflict is. The awareness of state violence, the endorsement of armed struggle as a reaction to this and the anger towards the state are therefore central parts of this articulation of Kurdishness.

5.8 RECLAIMING THE VILLAGE AND THE MOUNTAINS

Lastly, I return to a more essentialist notion of Kurdishness, the question of origin. In various ways in which Kurdishness is articulated, the *village* and the *mountains* play a

⁵⁵ The Turkish verb “küsmek” seems to have no exact translation in English. It is actually stronger than disgruntled. It describes the act of not speaking to someone, because one is aggravated.

central role. Many people are eager to talk about their connection to their village. Their often romantic accounts make the village sound like a wonderful place, away from the noise and the filth of the city, where the people live in peace with the nature. Sometimes these stories were added by a description of the way up to the pastures on the high plateau (yayla) where the animals would be taken to graze, a place of flourishing green with a spectacular view of the mountains – as I imagined from their description. Many Kurdish songs and television programmes centre especially around the mountains as the land where Kurds come from.

Obviously, for some these accounts of the village were part of their own history of having been forced to leave the villages. The painful experience of village evictions and the difficulties in the city have left many with a longing or at least positive memories of the village. Criticizing the behaviour of some Kurds who he accuses of not being able to adapt to city-life in the west, this man in his early 30s reveals the importance of staying connected to the village.

The violence is their language. They are the Others at the moment. They can't leave this position of being the Other. I am also othered, but I am aware of it. This is because I have become a part of the city, but I am still connected to my village. I don't feel foreign there. Am I still rooted there? No, because I view the problem there from here. I experience them from afar. (Interview 37, 32 year old man with a university degree working in precarious conditions, who migrated to the West due to security issues in the mid-1980s)

Although he finds it important to “become part of the city”, we can see how central it is for him to underline his attachment to the village and emphasize that he does not “feel foreign there”. Here, the village is really the place of his personal origin and it seems important for those who migrated to keep up this connection. However, people who have lived in the city since they were very little or all their life, narrate a similar story of connection to the village, in which they often refer to the villages of their parents. Although many are aware of the changes in the villages, especially through television, the village is generally constructed as the place of “untouched” and non-corrupted Kurdishness, where assimilation has not occurred or at least arrived late. Therefore, it is seen as a place where Kurdish traditions, language etc. were preserved in a way. This is reflected in the words of this interviewee:

The urban people got much more assimilated. Apparently, there used to be people in the 1970s who had Atatürk portrait hanging up in the living room. The rural people were less assimilated. When the rural came into the city in the 1990s, they brought back the awareness. (Interview 16, 28 year old woman with university education, in work, she was born in a village but migrated to the city within the Kurdish region when she was an infant)

The fact that state authorities first concentrated on the major towns and cities for a long time and did not make the greatest effort to reach the villages, did actually prevent assimilation policies from dictating the life in the village. However, the extent to which the life in the village is identified as the non-assimilated and, therefore, *real* Kurdishness, becomes clearer in the following passage. This young man, who grew up in a village and was forced to migrate after his village was evicted, but still maintains close contact to it, elaborates more on the love for the village and their mountains:

Those villages, those fields, those mountains have a great significance for us, because we have taken life from there [yaşamı oradan almışız]. For a European the metropolitan cities might be important, the technology might be important, but the name of the Kurds means those from the mountains. We love the life in the mountains, we love the nature. Our memories, our friends, everything, all our life in those villages has been extinguished in these streets. (Interview 12, 20 year old male student with secondary education, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region)

First of all, this interviewee emphasizes the importance of rural life and the mountains for Kurdishness. He indicates that the name of Kurds originates from the mountains and his expression “we have taken life from there” implies that he sees the villages and mountains as a place of origin of the Kurds. He identifies the city with the eradication of a good life in the village. According to him, this life has been extinguished in the streets of the modern city, like Diyarbakir where the interview was held. While he could be referring to his own experience of forced migration, the loss of friendships, maybe also loss of lives that occurred during the village evictions, his account also implies a critique of modern urban life in general. By contrasting the Kurds and Europeans, he hints at the division of modern and non-modern life in which the Orientalist Kemalist state discourse is grounded and reclaims the rural and non-modern life in the mountains as Kurdish. He generalizes the love for the mountains and the nature and in this way ties it to Kurdishness, implying that rural life is better than life in the city. This narration of the life in the mountains, in peace with the nature away from modern technology and cities, not only constructs the village as the place of origin, but also as the right way of life, while the city is equated with the deterioration and corruption of this perfect life, the evil of modernity.

Martin van Bruinessen points out that the centrality of the *village* for Kurdish identity or “Kurdish imaginary” (Bruinessen, 2013) continues to exist, although villages have largely lost the importance as a centre of Kurdish life since the village evictions and had never actually been the centre of political awakening, as Kurdish nationalism, for instance, developed in the city and not in the village. This common imaginary clearly overlaps with the discourse of the PKK in which the Kurds are constructed as the indigenous people of the

area and their origin located in the village. In his writings, Öcalan establishes a dichotomy between the city which is identified with corrupted life, colonisation and exploitation, and the village as the embodiment of a classless egalitarian society living in peace with nature which is often reiterated in adapted form in everyday conversations (Öcalan, 2004). By locating the origins of Kurdishness as a form of democratic, anti-hierarchical and ecological village society, Öcalan and the PKK for that matter, endow Kurdishness with the potential to overcome the hierarchical and exploitive capitalist society of today. In this way, the PKK discourse reverses the state discourses on modernity and urbanism, which are attached to the derogatory images of Kurds as backward and rural, discussed in Chapter 3. The discourses on the ecological, democratic village society enable a positive point of reference for identification and transform *ruralness* from the “uncivilized” object of state policies into an aspect of political subjectivity.

Chapter 6

Politicization of Existence

The various ways of narrating Kurdishness described in the previous chapter are fundamentally tied to practices in everyday life. The techniques of assimilation which aim at achieving a Turkish national self are challenged precisely through practices on the level of the everyday. The following two chapters examine different practices which tackle, undermine and subvert the norms, discourses and practices producing this assimilated self. The practices of resistance described in this chapter specifically attempt to shift the conduct of lives and create new practices of living. In this sense, these practices with all their differences are ways of enacting a counter-self: one that is traced by the impossibility of coherent Kurdishness, the paradoxical simultaneous need for recognition and self-determination, and the opposition to the state. They are – never self-identical – counter-practices in the now and develop out of the struggle with imposed Turkish identity. These practices re-employ given discourses, such as those on recognition and rights, nationhood, and tradition. They make use of given technologies and knowledges, and have affected the production of a niche economy. They have changed over time and become more and less overt depending on the conditions in which they are practiced. They are influenced by the various activities and discourses of the Kurdish Movement, but are not organised themselves, instead develop as collectively practiced individual acts of resistance. They are not just the cultural side to the social movement as described by Johnston & Klandermans (1995), Jasper (2010), Polletta (2008) nor just part of the production its collective identity (e.g. Melucci, 1995). These everyday practices are acts of resistance which are tied to, but go beyond the movement. However, conversely, precisely these practices point to the strength of the struggle as they illustrate the “politicization of existence” (Foucault) which the movement achieves.

The following sections discuss practices of dress, language and naming, practices of narrating subjugated knowledges, as well as engagement with activities of the movement.

6.1 VISUALIZING KURDISHNESS

Visualizing demands through protests, demonstrations and rallies plays a central part in social movements. Especially struggles for the recognition of minorities, colonized peoples or other suppressed or marginalized groups employ strategies of visualizing difference in public in order to make claims. Similarly, visualizing Kurdishness has an important status in the struggle against the policies of assimilation and denial. There are a range of different ways in which Kurdishness is visualized in public, which includes the various different legal and illegal party flags, the banners of Abdullah Öcalan, specific slogans either voiced or inscribed in the form of graffiti, and the victory-hand sign as well as ways of dressing. Especially, two forms of dress, which I will discuss below, play a particular role in this context: wearing the “national” colours green, red and yellow and dressing in clothes regarded as “traditional”. These practices of dress are employed both at political events and rallies as well as in everyday. Although such bodily practices play their part in visualizing a political stance, they go beyond being a strategy for making claims for recognition. They are practical acts of shifting dominant representations as well as the embodiment of a counter-self.

6.1.1 FLAGGING THE BODY

A central practice of visualizing Kurdishness in public is through the use of the “national” colours green, red and yellow, which are always referred to in Kurdish language as “kesk-û-sor-û-zer”⁵⁶. A range of products - mainly in the form of clothing and other wearable accessories - in these three colours are sold in shops or by street-vendors, as shown in figures 1 to 3. While figure 1 shows the small stand of a street-vendor selling all kinds of bracelets and watches, among them the green-red-yellow armbands which are worn by men and women alike, figures 2 and 3 are images of shops within the bazaar of Diyarbakir selling a variety of scarves. The football-scarves shown in figure 3 are inscribed with the name for Diyarbakir used within the Kurdish movement, Amed, as well as the number 21, the number-plate registration number for Diyarbakir. While the bracelets are often worn in everyday, the scarves and shawls are rather worn on special occasions like the politically important celebration of Kurdish New Year, Newroz, or other rallies, demonstrations and political festivals.

⁵⁶ In contrast, the flag of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq (KRG) includes the colour white. The difference in these colours often signifies the difference in political stance between supporters of the PKK on the one hand and those of Mustafa Barzani, President of the KRG.



Figure 1: The stand of a street vendor selling bracelets and armbands items in green-red-yellow in Diyarbakir, Suriçi.



Figure 2: A shop in the bazaar in Suriçi, Diyarbakir. A shawl like those in the middle was tied to the military vehicle carrying the bodies of guerrilla fighters in Beytüşşebap, September 2012.



Figure 3: A shop selling football scarves showing the name for Diyarbakir used within the Kurdish movement, Amed, and the number 21, number-plate registration number for Diyarbakir.

The shawls hanging from the ceiling in figure 2 which are also frequently sold at rallies seem to vaguely imitate the flags currently associated with the PKK one of which is comprised of a red star surrounded by a yellow circle with green border on red background (the ERNK-flag) while another has yellow star with red centre on green background (KCK-flag)⁵⁷. Such shawls are often used at rallies and demonstrations in which official flags of the PKK cannot be used without risking imprisonment, due the bans on them.

Draped around shoulders, over heads and around necks these flag-like shawls count as clothing, however, unmistakably carry the meaning of a Kurdish flag. This is best exemplified by an incident which occurred in September 2012, during a period marked by heavy fighting between the PKK and the Turkish military in the area of Şemdinli, close to the borders with Iran and Iraq⁵⁸. During the night a group of PKK guerrillas had entered the town of Beytüşşebap (200 km West of Şemdinli) and attacked the military base and other governmental buildings, especially that of the district governor. According to different reports 10-20 Turkish soldiers were killed and three PKK fighters lost their lives during the attack. The following morning when a large group of inhabitants of Beytüşşebap tried to collect the bodies of the guerrillas, they were stopped by military officials. The soldiers placed the bodies into a tank-like military vehicle in order to take them to the military compound. The large group of inhabitants, however, gathered around the vehicle chanting

⁵⁷ A number of different flags are used within the armed struggle. The PKK itself uses a variety of "official" flags such as the flags of ERNK and KCK, as well as flags for the armed wing, the HPG or the woman guerrillas YJA-Star.

⁵⁸ In these months it was the strategy of the PKK to put pressure on the government to continue the peace talks that had started earlier that year by demonstrating their power to take control over certain areas, just like they had managed in the early 1990s. Indeed, for several months they were quite successful in that respect, although a number of PKK fighters also lost their lives.

slogans, draping this kind of shawl over the front of the army vehicle. The vehicle continued its route through the town towards the compound with the shawl tied front (e.g. Radikal, 2012e; Yüksekova Haber, 2012). In doing so, the army vehicle is spontaneously appropriated by those mourning and turned in a hearse, while the shawl turns into the national flag draped over the coffin in ceremony⁵⁹.

Produced as clothing, these shawls are identifiable as flags, but not legally accountable in the same way. In this sense, they form *clandestine flags*, used to symbolize the movement in repressive conditions. While such clandestine flags can be sold openly in shops and in the streets, objects clearly carrying banned symbols are often rather made at home, like the hand-crocheted PKK emblems sewn around the edges of a headscarf shown in figure 4.



Figure 4: A woman wearing a headscarf with hand-crocheted PKK emblems around the edges. (Newroz, Diyarbakir, 2012)

It is a common practice among Kurdish women to decorate headscarves with self-crocheted small ornaments which are sewn along the rim. However, in order to visualize their political stance many women choose the colours or symbols of the party. They usually wear these headscarves to demonstrations and rallies. In this way, they carry the forbidden symbols of the PKK as part of their clothing, despite the bans. I was told many anecdotes of situations in which the police demanded the women to dispose of these symbols. The women would refuse to do so by arguing that they could not go without a headscarf.

In this sense, they deliberately play with the special status attached to the headscarf in Islam (regardless of whether or how they actually practice religion).

The practices of “flagging” the body with tricolour shawls and headscarves with illegal symbols, described here, unmistakably mark the body politically. Nick Crossley emphasizes that social movements have played a crucial role in challenging dominant ways of perceiving the body and creating new body practices (Crossley, 2006: 54). Bodily practices, such as forms of dress, can be used in social movements as part of a political strategy or as a means of construction a collective identity, while practices of marking the body can be regarded as a way of signifying loyalty.

Consequently, the body is made an object of the political, an instrument of the struggle. Crossley (2006) calls such practices in which people work on their bodies to modify,

⁵⁹ Similarly, you can also find this kind of shawl tied to the head-pieces of newly dug graves of guerrilla fighters.

maintain or thematize them “reflexive body techniques”; Reflexive, because it is “work on the body by the body” (Crossley, 2006: 106). In this sense, the bodily practices are used to visualize political affiliation and make a political statement in public. In this sense, they are part of the production of collective identity tied to the movement, but the body is also used in order to circumvent bans. Crossley, also mentions that these body techniques play an important role in developing a “specific sense of the self”. Individuals learn to constitute themselves for themselves through bodily practices (Crossley, 2006: 108).

6.1.2 RECLAIMING THE RURAL

Another bodily practice of demonstrating Kurdishness in public is by dressing in clothes regarded as traditionally Kurdish. The long, sequined dresses (as shown in figures 5 and 7) and the baggy trousers and jacket (“Şal û Şapik”)⁶⁰ often in khaki or gray (fig. 6) with a broad shawl tied around the waist are frequently worn at demonstrations and rallies, by speakers of the Kurdish television channels and presenters at festivals and other cultural events. In this sense, these forms of clothing, which are also often worn on special occasions such as weddings and are in more simple form in everyday, especially by elderly people or in people living in rural areas, have been appropriated within the movement. Consequently, these forms of clothing - like those mentioned above - have an “inward” function in the sense that they play a role in the identity production within the Kurdish movement, but are also used to visualize Kurdish identity towards the broader public in their struggle for recognition. They redefine the “rural” from “backward” to “authentic” or “indigenous”.

The New Year celebration, Newroz, is one of the most important days on which Kurdishness is visualized in form of traditional dress. All three pictures below, which were taken at such Newroz celebrations, illustrate this use of traditional clothing. While figure 5 and 7 show participants on their way to and from the celebrations in 2012; figure 6 which was taken from the newspaper Özgür Gündem, shows Selahattin Demirtaş, the co-president of the BDP at the time, speaking to the crowd at the Newroz celebrations in 2011⁶¹. By visualizing Kurdish identity in this way, the movement makes claims to being a different ethnic group, which cannot be subsumed under the homogeneous Turkish national identity. In this way, these clothing-practices question the state’s discourse on the homogeneity and indivisibility

⁶⁰ Kurdish for ‘trousers and jacket’

⁶¹ Demirtaş is now co-president of HDP.

of the single nation. They do so by deploying practices similar to those of demonstrating tradition in folkloric dress and rituals used by nation-states.



Figure 5: An elderly couple on their way back from the Newroz celebrations 2012.



Figure 6: Selahattin Demirtaş, co-president of the Kurdish party BDP at the time, speaking at the Newroz celebrations in 2011 (Özgür Gündem, 2011).



Figure 7: Two young women on their way to the celebration grounds, Newroz 2012.

In such state rituals, folklore plays a particular role in symbolizing an abstract and depoliticized heritage. “Tradition” and its folkloric demonstration in the state context is, therefore, a demonstration of superiority, enactment of its glory and pan-turkism. In contrast, with regard to the Kurds, traditionality and ruralness were identified with “backwardness” and used to stigmatize them. In this sense, the appropriation of tradition and the image of the rural through these clothing-practices is a form of “resignifying” the image of the backward Kurd, as Butler (1990, 1993) suggests, however not as a verbal practices but a bodily one. In this sense, these bodily practices are not a representation of an “invisible” identity, but rather a form of reclaiming an injurious representation *in practice*. While these clothing-practices employ a notion of tradition, they at the same time exceed an ahistorical folkloric representation of ethnicity. It is for this reason that these kinds of practices of Kurdishness have not yet become incorporated into the depoliticizing discourse on multiculturalism of the current AKP government.

Besides shifting the derogatory discourses, the photographs also indicate how traditional dress is *additionally* marked as *political* through wearing the colours of the Kurdish flag or the symbol of the PKK, discussed above. The shawls which the young women in figure 7 have thrown over their shoulders emulates the KCK flag as discussed above, while the elderly woman in figure 5 has bound a scarf in green, yellow and red, both around her

forehead and her waist. In addition to the chequered black and white scarf, turkish: *poşu* (keyffiyeh), Selahattin Demirtaş has a shawl in the national colours tied around his waist (fig. 6). A close look at figure 7 also reveals that the women's white headscarves also have the hand-crocheted star-symbols of the PKK along the border. Hence, while employing traditional dress in this way is already a political act, adding the colours green, red and yellow or symbols of the PKK unmistakably marks these clothing-practices as oppositional.

Similarly, the practices of *women* dressing in “Şal û Şapik”, khaki coloured baggy trousers and wide-sleeved jacket also illustrate how these clothing-practices go beyond the notions of embodying the heritage and tradition of an ethnic group. On various special occasions, such as the Newroz celebrations as well as party congresses, I encountered a few women dressing in this way (similar to the young woman in figure 8).



Figure 8: A young woman wearing khaki coloured baggy trousers and waistcoat at the Newroz celebrations 2012.



Figure 9: Female and male guerrilla fighters in their usual clothing (Rojhelat.info, 2013).

Witnessing a conversation among women at the annual congress of the BDP in 2011 in Ankara, I realised that many of them were impressed by the about the “Şal û Şapik” which two sisters were wearing and were eager to find out where they had purchased them. It was interesting that the young women, I assume in their late teens, were emphasizing the traditional character of their clothing, because the political statement of their clothing was more than obvious, as this kind of clothing is only traditional for *men* and not for women. The only women who are known to wear such kind of clothing are the women guerrillas (see fig. 9). In this sense, the narrative of tradition which the girls were trying to claim is interrupted as such by themselves, as women, wearing these clothes.

6.1.3 EMBODYING OPPOSITION

Such practices of dress are not only enacted in the context of public political events, but also play an important role in the everyday. Especially, armbands, bracelets, and t-shirts are worn in more mundane situations. Figure 10 shows a shop selling especially two kinds of football T-shirts with political meaning: those of the Turkish football league team Galatasaray, based in Istanbul, and those of the new national team of the Kurdistan Region of Northern Iraq (KRG). The uniforms of the Kurdistan national team became popular during the period of my fieldwork in Diyarbakir when the team had been officially recognized for the first time. These t-shirts with the emblem of the KRG-flag and “Kurdistan” written across the front illustrate particularly well how legal or administrative gaps are used to



Figure 10: A shop displaying football T-shirts of the National Team of Kurdistan (KRG) and the Turkish League Team Galatasaray.

the advantage of visualizing Kurdishness in different ways despite the bans. While the term Kurdistan was still regarded as “illegal” in Turkey, the official name of the Kurdish team printed on these t-shirts made it possible to use it in Turkey, too. Respectively, all kinds of merchandise of Galatasaray have become synonyms for supporting the Kurdish movement, because the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, is said to be a supporter of this team. In Diyarbakir, I witnessed how after a match a celebration in the city centre, where demonstrations are regularly forbidden and strictly impeded, turned into a political rally. The protestors used the seemingly non-political event of the football-victory to seize the space banned to political demonstrations.

Products with images connected to Rastafari such as maps of Africa, the Lion (of Judah), cannabis, or caricatures of joint smoking Rastafarians have also become popular among young Kurdish people because they function in a similar way due to the overlap in colours. While, for example, in the city of Izmir in the West of Turkey flagging the colours green, red and yellow could immediately be understood to symbolize Kurdishness, Rastafari images provide a kind of camouflage. They are synonyms of Kurdishness for those who know and camouflage against those who could cause harm. Consequently, these practices go beyond visualization in a strict sense. These practices of embodiment simultaneously visualize and camouflage Kurdishness in public. So, while in the context of rallies and political events wearing the national colours or traditional dress rather serve to visualize political oppositional affiliation as well as to resignify derogatory images, clothing practices in the

everyday go beyond *flagging*, i.e. *signifying*, the body and take the form of enacting Kurdishness. These reflexive bodily practices are, therefore, a part of the performativity of Kurdish identity; they are a way of *living* Kurdish identity rather than a politics of *demanding* recognition.

6.1.4 PASSING STRATEGIES AND MASQUERADE

The belief in the need to visualize Kurdishness publicly stems from the discourse of denial of Kurdish existence. This situation resembles the idea of a need for self-revelation to counter repression which Foucault wanted to problematize in regard to sexuality. In the context of assimilation, as discussed above, the discursive elimination is only one part of state policies. Parallel to this, Kurdishness always remained intelligible or visible in certain representations, such as the eastern, backward, rural, deviant and terrorist although not explicitly named as such. These derogatory representations were not impeded, but rather constantly circulated. In this sense, visibility of Kurdishness was not in itself totally prohibited, but rather “managed” by allowing certain forms of visibility and invisibility. Consequently, practices of visualization entail a very concrete danger: the risk of becoming a victim of discrimination, police maltreatment, or racist attacks. While people living in the Kurdish regions of Turkey are less confronted with racism in daily encounters, for the people living in the West this is a crucial topic in their everyday life. Coming from a hometown in the “east” or identifying as Kurdish, potentially means not being rented a flat, not finding a job. Speaking Kurdish in public can at minimum arouse a scolding look and noises of disapproval, or end up in being rudely insulted or possibly physically attacked, while wearing clothes regarded as Kurdish – depending on the situation – can have various negative consequences from verbal and physical abuse to imprisonment. Elijah Anderson (2012) speaks of *managing identities*. He explains that African-Americans in the US constantly have to adjust “their self-presentations” in their struggle to be respected and accepted. He points out that such self-management can involve choices of language, bodily performance and emotions (Anderson, 2012: 18). Similarly, here, such strategies can involve “hiding” the place they come from, avoiding Kurdish language, denying Kurdish identity, as well as adapting one’s accent and dressing “correctly”, that is in “modern”, urban clothing, so that they are in no means intelligible as Kurds. It can also mean strategically deciding what topics to talk about, which debates to avoid, and in this way to perform the “loyal” citizen. For many, passing does not involve a specific effort, while for others it can mean even taking classes in pronunciation. For Anderson, the aim behind this

effort is to distance themselves from the stereotype of what he calls “iconic Negro” (Anderson, 2012: 17). In this sense, these strategies include a range of practices to avoid fulfilling the stereotype images as well as other practices in order to not to be recognized as a “Kurd”.

James C. Scott, however, sees in conveying an “outward impression of conformity” a strategy of resistance (Scott, 1990: 24). Like the practices Anderson describes, a “convincing performance” relies on certain practices which include correct speech acts, but also of gestures and facial expressions and the “suppression or control of feelings” (Scott, 1990: 28, 29) even if this performance involves obedience in humiliating and distasteful situations. For Scott, such performances of conformity is “unavoidable in power-laden encounters” (Scott, 1990: 115), but they are “taken back” by the actual resistance which he locates in hidden transcripts. In this sense, passing strategies serve as camouflage for other forms of resistance. That means that these strategies make use of the invisibility rather than visibility.

However, considering that policies of assimilation also produce certain representations which serve the management and control of the population, strategies of passing can be more than just camouflage and instead confuse the ascribed representations. Ertuğ Altınay’s (2013) discussion of suicide bombers “with highlights” points in this direction. His analysis of mainstream Turkish media regarding two incidences in 2007, in which suicide attacks by Kurdish women were impeded, shows how much the image of the Kurdish terrorist relies on specific bodily features. As the counter-part to the modern, urban, westernized Turk, the backward, rural Kurd is imagined with an unclean, disorderly, unhealthy body. Altınay particularly points out the special status of hair in this context. Hair in elaborate styles and dyed blond is, hence, a signifier of secularism and the embodiment of western, modern, middle class identity. In the moment, the suicide bombers do not comply with the ascribed bodily features and instead have blond highlights, this representation is interrupted and produces – according to Altınay – a public shock which is discussed more than the possible bomb attack. It is precisely the *incongruence* of the body (modern) and action (terrorist) what produces the shock, the actual terror, for the Turkish public. The *fantasy*, as Altınay argues, on which the policies of assimilation ground, that bodily transformation implies loyalty to the state and nation is, therefore, exposed in these specific practice of passing.

It is precisely in this sense, that practices of passing can be understood as strategies of “masquerade” (Riviere, 1986), which confuse the given order of representations. Joan

Riviere's concept of *masquerade* - from which Butler's (1990) discussion of performativity and the questions around the "authentic", "true" identity and its embodiment derive – already challenges the idea of the original and its enactment. Accordingly, masquerade can be understood not as a way of masking the *real*, but rather a form of performing specific practices in different situations. For Pamela Pattynama, masquerade can, therefore, be regarded as a "feminist strategy of a series of changing identities in a context loaded with verbal and visual stereotypes" (Pattynama, 2000: 288). In her study of identification of Indo-Dutch women in Holland, Pattynama uses the concept of masquerade precisely to counter what she sees as a Eurocentric notion of assimilation. According to her, strategies of masquerade reinstall agency into practices of identity and allow for a more fluid understanding of identification, by which certain practices can be "adopted, appropriated or discarded" (Pattynama, 2000: 294). If we look closer at the practices of the people applying this strategy, we can see that they often choose deliberately *where* and *when* to use passing strategies. It doesn't hinder them from identifying as Kurdish or sympathizing with the Kurdish movement. In their book on Kurdish women migrants in Istanbul, Handan Çağlayan et al. (2011) cite a young woman who on the one hand trained herself in a "good" Turkish accent and took Kurdish classes to improve her language skills on the other. Hence, understanding passing in this way, allows these practices to be regarded as a refusal to reinforce the ascribed intelligible representations, instead of seeing them as evidence for an assimilated self. We can even argue that they undermine the idea of congruence between practices of embodiment and loyalty to the state which is the underlying assumption for policies of assimilation.

6.1.5 MORALIZING VISUALIZATION

Despite the possibility of understanding passing strategies in this way, the question of "hiding" is, nevertheless, highly disputed among my interviewees. The need to "stand up" to the consequences of publically visualizing or declaring one's identity is a dominant perception. Consequently, Kurdishness becomes tied to the visible enactment in public. The reason lies in the strength of the discourse on denial. According to this, assimilation is precisely framed as the necessity to hide Kurdishness in order to live. Reiterating a reoccurring argument among Kurds, this woman expresses this very clearly. In the passage, she challenges a phrase frequently used to deny the existence of assimilation policies. The phrase argues that Kurds are by no means excluded or discriminated, because they can even become president of the republic:

You know that there is this general discourse that you can even become the president as a Kurd. But this is not true. You can only become all this, if you hide your Kurdishness. [...] [A] Kurd only becomes a Kurd by acting as a Kurd, if you can preserve your culture and language. (Interview 44, wealthy 43 year old woman with university education, living in the West)

Her words summarize the dilemma that on the one hand social existence (implied by reference to becoming president) is dependent on hiding or denying their Kurdishness, while on the other Kurds lose their Kurdishness in by doing so. This underlines the centrality of the public expression for Kurdishness as a counter-strategy. According to this, Kurdishness cannot be lived in a secluded sphere of the mind or the private: if Kurdishness is hidden, it is no Kurdishness. Kurdishness cannot, as another woman who migrated to the west due to military violence emphasizes, be lived “at night in the light of a candle” (Interview 34). Consequently, Kurdishness is necessarily a public enactment of cultural practices and language. Liveability in this sense is public.

This articulation of Kurdishness, however, seems to point towards the political change over the past decade. While in the 1990s practicing Kurdishness in hiding, as I will discuss in section 6.4., was the only way to live a kind of Kurdishness, today hiding Kurdishness means complying with the state policies. In this sense, hiding Kurdishness has become *moralized*. This change is reflected in the conflicting positions between father and son, mentioned by a friend of my interviewee who was overhearing the interview.

My son openly says that he voted for the BDP. I told him not to tell everyone. “Don’t show everyone who you are!” But he replied: “I will tell everyone everywhere who I am”. (Interview 40, 55 year old retired man with secondary school education, who was a victim of disciplinary relocation in the 1980s)

In this case, declaring that he voted for the BDP is equivalent with announcing his Kurdish identity. While the father is anxious about his son telling people openly who he is and wants him to “hide” this information, the son clearly sees it as a political act to speak out and publically identifies himself as a Kurd by declaring who he voted for. In this sense, the son expresses a need to publicly speak out regardless of what kind of negative consequences this might have. As the father’s reaction shows, speaking out is obviously not an easy option for him. However, especially for the younger generation, hiding or keeping silent is so emotionally loaded that it is articulated as an impossible option for them.

In the context of the Solidarność movement in Poland, Foucault describes how the strong politicization influenced certain practices of the everyday. As an example, he mentions that people refused to take rewards from the state, “because it makes one an accomplice” (Foucault, 2000: 468). He locates the reason for this in what he calls the “moralization of

politics” which becomes “incorporated into people’s behaviour” (Foucault, 2000: 468). This moralization has the effect that some forms of behaviour become “much more difficult” to conduct. Conversely, Foucault argues, people become “much stronger in resisting all these petty mechanisms by which they were made, if not to sanction, at least to accept the worst” (Foucault, 2000: 468). In this sense, this moralization politicizes the everyday practices and makes the struggle so powerful. As shown here, the need to visualize Kurdishness becomes moralized by defining “denying” or “hiding” Kurdishness precisely in terms of “compliance”. Hence, acts of concealing Kurdish language, denying place of origin become increasingly *difficult*, while visualizing Kurdishness transforms from a matter of representation to a vital question of personal embodiment, a question of liveability.

“Morality” is also something that has been looked into in more recent research on social movements. Morals are addressed in respect to how they affect participation, and influence the choice of goals and tools. It goes without saying that questions of morality are obviously tied into everyday and emotions (Jaspers, 2010). Here, I have shown that it also tied to bodily practices of visualizing.

Similarly, the story of a woman whose nephew demanded his place of origin to be reinserted on his identity card demonstrates how these practices of reversing “invisibility” become triggered by this morality and considered vital for themselves. Identity cards in Turkey indicate the place of birth and place of residence, but also the place of *family registration*, called “Kütük”. For men, the place of their *kütük* never changes unless they officially request a change, while women’s *kütük* transfers to her husband’s if she marries. Consequently, the place of family registration stated on the identity card remains the same for men for many generations, even if they move or are born in a different place. This place of family registration is, therefore, regarded as a place of origin and people are regularly discriminated in job applications, medical service, during military service⁶² or police checks, if their *kütük* is from a city in the “South-East”. According to the woman’s story, however, her nephew’s *kütük* had apparently been changed without his will when he had his ID renewed. Instead of a city in the Kurdistan region, his place of origin now stated Izmir, his place of residence. Furious about this change, he demanded it to be changed back, quite to the surprise and admiration of his aunt. For him, the *kütük* functions as a proof of his Kurdishness. Although he can be discriminated against precisely because of this *kütük*, he

⁶² Two interviewees pointed out to me that during military service, the soldiers constantly have to call out their name and place of origin when a commander addresses them, in this way everyone is aware who is potentially a Kurd and there are treated accordingly.

reclaims this state technique of data collection and control in his personal struggle to visualize Kurdishness.

For Foucault, such politicization of existence brings about a political affect and passion, which exceeds the kind of emotions that can be achieved through a political party and its ideology. On the contrary, such passion can only derive from “direct contact of people with events and with their own choices of existence” (Foucault, 2000: 471). Similarly, here, although the PKK plays a crucial role in shaping discourses and practices, the drive behind these everyday forms of resistance derives from the highly politicized lives.

This passion attached to the necessity of speaking out or visualizing Kurdishness in whatever way becomes obvious when such practices are framed as “defence” of Kurdishness, as this woman for instance expresses:

I defend my Kurdishness in whatever environment I am in. I am never afraid, because I am a Kurd. If I denied my Kurdishness, then that would really mean that I am no Kurd. That would make me suspicious [of myself]. I would question myself [Kuşkulanarım kendimden]. (Interview 13, 22 year old precariously self-employed woman who dropped out of primary school)

Like many other interviewees, she uses the word “defending” Kurdishness in the sense of expressing Kurdish identity in public. This kind of defence, the open identification as a Kurd, is opposed to “denying Kurdishness”, understood as not openly expressing, hiding, her Kurdish identity. She clearly states that denial would mean not being a Kurd. In this sense, public expression, performativity of identity in public, becomes an *existential* question. Thus, visualizing Kurdishness is not so much a strategic action for recognition, but a vital part of personal existence.

In an interview on identity politics, Foucault emphasizes the importance of both creativity and defence when he argues that “not only do we have to defend ourselves, not only affirm ourselves, as an identity but as a creative force” (Foucault, 2000a [1982]: 164). In the context of the struggle against assimilation policies, in which Kurdishness has been made unlivable, defending Kurdish identity is necessarily a creative activity. The defence of Kurdishness lies precisely in the creation of livable practices of this new subjectivity. Consequently, the practices of embodying the political, discussed here, are precisely ways which challenge the distinction between defence and creativity. The practices of visualizing Kurdishness in public, therefore, serve not so much to reveal the prohibited, but are rather moralized ways of enacting a *different self*.

6.2 SPEAKING BACK AND STAYING SILENT: LANGUAGE

As discussed in Chapter 2, language is regarded as the most important signifier of Kurdishness and is, therefore, the target of rigorous eradication strategies by the state. These techniques included a range of legal regulations, institutions and disciplinary practices which have aimed at promoting Turkish as the only language used in public and private as well as limiting and eliminating the use of Kurdish. This has caused many people to lose their first language and foreclosed a broad use and development of Kurdish. The official discourses depicting Kurdish as an undeveloped dialect of Turkish and thereby depriving it of its status as a qualified separate language resulted in derogatory images of the language as uncivilized and rural, which have strong effects on how Kurdish speakers were and are treated in school and regarded in everyday life. Additionally, various forms of direct and indirect bans on speaking Kurdish in public and publishing affected a criminalization of the language, identifying Kurdish with separatism and terrorism. Such regulations have led to Kurdish remaining a language that is mainly spoken rather than written (Hassanpour, Sheyholislami, & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2012: 12).

Although it is arguable, as Aslan (2011) does for the early years of the republic, whether these state techniques, especially the bans on speaking in public, were always as thoroughly implemented as state declarations suggest, on the whole this network of techniques has, however, led scholars to speak of a “linguicide” (for example Fernandes, 2012; Hassanpour, Sheyholislami, & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2012; Üngör, 2012; Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012). The effects of these attempts to eradicate Kurdish language are twofold. While on the one hand, they have strongly diminished the number of speakers and have generated an uneasy relationship of shame in many speakers towards their own first language, conversely Kurdish language has also become a base for strategies of resistance, both in everyday as well as for the Movement. The state techniques of enforcing Turkish and devaluing, banning and foreclosing Kurdish have resulted in various ways of refusing the enforced language, and reclaiming and relearning the forbidden language in everyday practices as well as for the Movement.

6.2.1 REFUSING TO SPEAK: DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL AND TURNING ONES BACK ON TURKISH

One of the main institutions in promoting Turkish and eliminating Kurdish are schools. Due to their central function as an instrument of power, actions against schooling and education

play an important role in the politics of the Kurdish Movement. Schools have been frequently attacked by the PKK or supporters and school boycotts - encouraged by the legal Kurdish party as well as the KCK - regularly take place every year in the first week after school begin in September (e.g. Bianet, 2014; Özgür Gündem, 2014)⁶³. Education Support Houses (Eğitim Destek Evleri) were founded by municipalities led by the Kurdish party in order to offer extra tuition in Kurdish⁶⁴. In order to put more pressure on the government regarding first-language education, the municipalities most recently went one step further by opening three alternative pilot schools in Diyarbakir, Cizre and Yüksekova in September 2014, which were to provide education in Kurdish. They were, however, immediately shut down by the governor on grounds that they did not have the necessary permission to function as education institutions (Firatnews, 2014; Özgür Gündem, 2014b).

Beyond these organised forms of protest, school-children and youth also react in their own ways to the duress that they experience at school. Besides the difficulties that arise from Turkish as the only teaching language, the simultaneous devaluation of the Kurdish language and psychological and physical punishments attached to the reinforcement of Turkish add to the experience of school as an oppressive and violent institution. A number of children rebel against this system by dropping out of school, like this young woman who dropped out when she was around 9 years old.

I am a second year-primary school-drop out [Ben ilkokul ikiden terkim]. That day, I came into class. The teacher said something, I can't exactly remember now. S/he maltreated my friend [kötü davrandı]. S/he had to hold her fingers like this [turns hand upwards with fingertips touching each other] and [the teacher] was about to hit her. I was frightened. S/he hit my friend. I saw it. And I had arrived late. When I came into class the teacher asked me where I had been. I said: "Sorry I am late. Please, forgive me. I apologize" and so on. When the teacher hit me, it hurt my pride. And I didn't go back to school again. (Interview 13, 22 year old precariously self-employed woman who dropped out of primary school)

Her narration of the events that led up to her decision to not return to school, focus clearly on the experience of physical violence by her teacher. She does not highlight the concrete circumstances of why her friend was maltreated, but she herself was punished for being late. She clearly recalls her fear and how she begged the teacher not to hurt her. She narrates the punishment as a violation of her pride rather than the violation of her body. It

⁶³ While arson of school buildings has been a strategy of the PKK, the recent uprising in October 2014 brought about a critique of such actions. According to state figures 72 schools were attacked in some form, mainly arson (Radikal, 2014). Although these attacks are in line with the PKK's critique of schools as an instrument of assimilation, the KCK executive council reproached these acts and declared they were used to "provoke" hostility to the peace process (Özgür Gündem, 2014a). During the 5-day uprising 46 people were killed and 682 injured (IHD, 2014).

⁶⁴ Many of these houses were closed down in the context of the so-called KCK-case in 2012, however, have been reopened since.

is this humiliation which she experiences as so unbearable that she chooses to avoid this kind of situation from then on.

Although she is the only one of my interviewees who actually dropped out of school for good, I was told many stories of pupils leaving school early, especially as adolescents⁶⁵. A mother in her early 40s who lives in Bursa clearly associated the reason for this with the practices of assimilation which they experience in school. She says they get fed up with being constantly faced with the “politics of denial” and therefore drop out early (Interview 49). This is in line with the findings of a study carried out by research institute DISA, which sees a link between not being able to speak Turkish when starting school and dropping out of school early. The report also identifies a low rate of school attendance among Kurds. It locates the reason for quitting school in the problems they experience due to the ban on first language education and regards dropping out of school only as a passive result of this policy (Coşkun et al., 2011).

However, no matter how unintentional dropping out of school might be, we can argue that its effect is a refusal of compulsory schooling. In this sense, quitting school in this way forms a kind of sabotage against a technique of power which aims at regulating everyone’s conduct. The children withdraw themselves from this system. Although dropping out of school in this way forces them into precarious unskilled jobs in later life, quitting school is depicted as an “escape” from this unbearable situation.

Like the woman above, this 32-year old man, who had not started school yet when his family moved to Izmir from his village, also describes choosing to escape the humiliation he experienced in school by evading school at least temporarily. In contrast to the account above, his experience of humiliation is directly linked to the problem of language.

I didn’t speak Turkish until the year five in primary school. I couldn’t adapt. I was 5 or 6 when we came here. You don’t speak Turkish, because at home everyone speaks Zaza, and all your friends around you speak Kurdish. Turkish was difficult. The language I could best express myself in was Kurdish. But I was teased at school, when I said the alphabet, and felt bad. It is a horrible thing to be teased when you speak as a child. You lose your interest [estrangle] in school. This was the reason why I returned to my village. I didn’t want to go to school. That people who come from the east just like you make fun of you is unbearable. They were in the same situation. Maybe it was just something children do. They were making fun of themselves and didn’t notice it. This is the trauma I find myself in. You can’t adapt to Turkish, something is imposed on you, there is an obligation, but the children tease you. [...] I didn’t go to school for 6 months. (Interview 37, 32

⁶⁵ There is a gendered difference in these practices, because the education of girls is assigned a different status to that of boys and education enables possibilities which can be more central for girls than for boys. The different status can make it both easier and more difficult for a girl to make this decision and her decision to be accepted or tolerated by the parents and the school (for more on this see Derince (2012)).

year old man with a university degree, working in precarious conditions, migrated to the West due to security issues in the mid-1980s)

He clearly identifies Turkish language as being imposed on him. Accompanied with the ridicule of his classmates, he experiences this as a trauma. It is an unbearable situation for him, which he flees by returning to his village. Besides this, he mentions that this experience made it impossible for him to actually speak the language for quite some time. He describes being about 12 years old, when he actually started speaking Turkish. That means that in his first five school years, he was not able to speak the language in which he was being taught. “Keeping quiet” in class, is also mentioned by the DISA report as one of the issues resulting from the ban on first language education. The report argues that whilst pupils start keeping quiet in class, because of language difficulties, this becomes a habit, which renders them “passive” in later life (Coşkun et al., 2011:84).

Roi Wagner (2012) has, however, pointed out the silence must not always be only an effect of violent silencing, as assumed here. He tries to understand how silence can also be understood as a performative practice of resistance. He acknowledges, nevertheless, that in conditions in which visualizing identity and making claims is central, such acts of “remaining silent” are hardly regarded as acts of resistance. Remaining silent is also not necessarily intelligible as resistance by the state which demands the citizen speaks. His examples of a migrant without papers in Israel who dodges identification and possibly deportation by not speaking and a Palestinian shepherd who does not react to a local Israeli resident who demands him to leave the land illustrate this non-intelligibility as acts of resistance. In both cases, state officials try to replace the silence with their own interpretation: the silent migrant is assumed “deaf and dumb”, while the silent Palestinian is regarded as someone potentially gathering “information for war purposes” , i.e. a terrorist (Wagner, 2012: 101, 115). They avoid the language which would cause them harm: deportation or imprisonment. By refusing the language, they cannot be treated by the state in the same way as if they spoke. They cannot be correctly identified as long as they do not speak. In this sense, they escape state violence precisely by refusing to speak. In this sense, remaining silent does not have to be a result of violent silencing, but can be a powerful performative act.

This refusal is also described in the account of this teacher, which I would like to quote in detail, because it illustrates well how the pupils “turn their backs” on Turkish as a language.

Outside [school] you see children speaking easily with their friends. They can express themselves, make jokes, but [when] they come into class, they can’t do anything. They fall

absolutely silent. They can't answer your questions anyway. Most of the time, they don't understand. Maybe they don't even care anymore. [...] The children get stuck there, especially in primary school. They say [to themselves] "I obviously can't do this language, I can't understand" and put an end to it right there. After that, you can do nothing anyway. They decide and stay there. They don't think about learning anyway from then on. [...] They give up. That is it, because it is too difficult. There might be something psychological about it, for sure. They are aware that it [Turkish language] is something being imposed [on them]. Some things are really like that. [...] They would not answer if you deliberately asked them directly, but probably if they ask themselves [they know] it was actually a conscious decision. In that moment, they say "I can't learn this language and I am not obliged to learn it". The children go to school, but from then on they come and go only for the sake of it. There are so many children who only go [to school] in order to be physically present [Gelip gitmek için gelen çok fazla çocuk oluyor]. [...] They remain disinterested, entirely indifferent to everything. They truly turn their backs on that language [Küsüyor aynen o dile]. There are so many children who turn their backs [on Turkish language]. Now, I see it more clearly. In my time, there also were for sure. (Interview 14, 30 year old woman with university education, in work, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region in the 1990s).

According to her experience, these children more or less deliberately decide to refuse their attention and remain silent. They only provide their obligatory physical presence, but refuse to provide their active participation. I will discuss this kind of emotional detachment further in chapter 7.1.6. Central in this context, is that they – as she phrases it – “turn their backs” (küsmek) on the Turkish language, in the same way one might to someone who one is too angry to speak with. It is a reaction to the offence which this obligatory language presents. In this case, these are children who are currently in primary school and have a Kurdish teacher who is aware of the need for first-language education and who does not punish them for speaking Kurdish in class. However, even without direct physical punishment and humiliation, the difficulties the children have with Turkish, cause them to “give up”. According to her, they clearly identify Turkish as something imposed on them. Instead of raising their voice against this imposition, they choose to reject this imposed language: a strategy which turns them silent.

Similar to passing strategies, these performances of silence do not aim at overtly criticizing state policies, or visualizing or verbalizing Kurdishness. Dropping out of school and refusing to speak in class are similar in this aspect. Despite the possible negative consequences, they refuse integration. In this sense, they refuse the subjectivation through refusing the language and state education. As subject positions are given through language, Wagner argues, these practices of avoiding the dominant language are a way of rejecting subject positions within a discursive relation. Drawing on Baudrillard, Wagner therefore calls such forms of resistance which do not appeal to the position of a speaking subject: “object strategies”. These forms of refusal refrain from forms of politics which demand subject

positions, such as claiming rights, shifting representations or re-appropriating speech. Instead such strategies rely on refraining from taking up the subject position. This is an attempt to avoid having to speak within the dominant discourse. According to Wagner, such a strategy does not necessarily render the person passive as implied in the report by DISA. Such a refusal to speak is not a total refusal of subject positions in general. It means letting go of one's subject position within this specific discursive moment. In this context, refusing language is not a refusal of all language, but rather the refusal of the imposed, dominant language of oppression: that is *Turkish*. This 25-year old woman, who lived in a village until it was evicted and speaks both Zaza and Kurmanji, describes how her decision to radically expel Turkish out of her life involves its replacement through Kurdish.

I am a Kurd and what I should learn [in school] is Kurdish and Zaza. There is nothing else to it. And after that, I can also learn Turkish. These bans only generate an increased defiant spirit [çatışma ruhu]. I respect Turkish, I respect Kurdish, but I can't like Turkish [sevemiyorum]. I don't want to speak in Turkish. In fact, I don't want to experience anything in Turkish. It [Kurdish] is like a poem. Why should we restrain ourselves from the taste of a poem? I am a bit like that. That is how I think, but there is such a loss of awareness [about this] everywhere. It has unfortunately even reached the villages. Of course, if [Kurdish] does not become the language of education, I fear to be honest, it will cause even more serious problems (Interview 30, 25 year old unemployed woman with university degree, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region due to village eviction, studied in the West)

Criticizing the ban on first-language education, she describes how it is impossible for her to "like" Turkish. She links her wish to banish Turkish from all parts of her life to a militancy, a "defiant spirit", which the bans on Kurdish have triggered in her. In this sense, the refusal of Turkish is her reaction to it being imposed on her. In contrast, she describes Kurdish – in her love for literature – as a poem, something beautiful whose taste she longs for. She complains about the lack or deteriorating awareness about the need to speak Kurdish in everyday, when she mentions that even in the villages, in which Kurdish was always more prominent than the towns and cities, Turkish is taking over. Elsewhere in the interview, she mentions the dissemination of television is a main reason for this. For her, this state is upsetting, and she articulates the possibility of a further decrease in the number of Kurdish speakers as a "serious problem", a danger, which can only really be prevented by changing the language of education in schools. In this sense, she sees the importance of a double struggle: the expulsion of Turkish language out of one's personal life and the struggle for a reform of the education system and the recognition of Turkish.

The frustration of this woman about Kurds who do not fight this language-takeover in the village, indicates the dilemma of such an "object strategy": The replacement of Turkish

through Kurdish in personal life does not work easily. It is impeded by the way in which Kurdish is made unlivable in everyday life. Even if the bans on Kurdish have been abandoned, Turkish is the only official language and dominates all spheres of public life, especially the job market. Without Turkish it is not easy to find a job even in manual work. In this sense, deliberately choosing an object instead of subject positions is impeded obviously in this case by the policies of assimilation.

The recent KCK-court cases made this very obvious once again. As a form of protest, the accused refused to speak Turkish and instead answered the court in Kurdish. The courts unanimously ruled that the accused were using – not a forbidden – but an “unintelligible” language⁶⁶. The language-crisis caused by the defendants refusing to speak Turkish resulted in a legal stalemate, which was never really solved as such. Besides such official situations, Kurdish is also regarded as unintelligible or invalid in many situations of public life. In this sense, such object strategies remain situational.

6.2.2 RELEARNING KURDISH

The wish and enthusiasm to (re)learn Kurdish has also been pushed by the activities of the Kurdish Movement, which aims at enabling people to reinsert Kurdish into their everyday life and thereby counter the effects of the linguicide. TV channels associated with the movement broadcast mainly in Kurmanji, but also in Sorani and Dimili (Zaza), and music groups close to the struggle also predominately use Kurdish. The municipalities run by the Kurdish party take care to promote Kurdish within their activities and institutions. Besides this, language courses have been established throughout the country. Today, nearly every city or town in the Kurdistan region and the major cities in the west have a branch of the language institution *Kurdî Der*. By attending these courses, listening to the music or watching the TV channels, the discourse on the importance of “living” the Kurdish language is transformed into everyday practices. In this way, people’s everyday practices are shaped by the Movement without necessarily directly being a member or supporter of any of the parties.

⁶⁶ Derya Bayir (2013) has emphasized the contradictions within the use of Kurdish in courts historically. While in petty cases, the courts have been flexible, accepting lay translators, they made a point of not accepting Kurdish in political cases.

In many cities, two to three parallel courses are offered of all three levels⁶⁷. My beginner's class in Diyarbakir had approximately 15-20 participants. The majority were Kurdish and described themselves as having lost their language. In some cases, the parents had chosen to speak Turkish with them at home, but a surprisingly high number mentioned that their mothers could not speak much Turkish. Interesting was also that quite a few of them were primary school teachers who were teaching in villages in which the pupils did not speak any Turkish when they started school. Some wanted to be able to help the pupils better in school, while one teacher also mentioned that he was ridiculed by the children, because he was not able to speak his mother-tongue. There were a small number of participants attending the class who were interested in Kurdish without identifying as Kurdish themselves.

Different people have different motivations to start learning or relearning Kurdish. This woman narrates how she started to question how Turkish had taken over her life and therefore decided to register for a course:

I had already noticed that I can't speak with my grandmothers anymore. And in that period, I actually also started to question Turkish. This is not my language. My language was Kurdish. I was able to speak [Kurdish] so comfortably [before I started school], and suddenly [Turkish] popped [pat diye] into my life. You don't even notice how it becomes part of your life. It is such a [subtle] process that you don't really notice. [...] I suddenly felt its [Kurdish language] absence. I thought it should be part of my life. [...] I was always able to understand [Kurdish] very well anyway; you never forget words or sentences, because you constantly hear it. But, as I mentioned, because you can't speak, the words won't come out of your mouth. You know everything very well, you are aware of it. [but] you hesitate to speak [Konusmaya çekiniyorsun]. You think you will say something wrong. I experienced that a lot when I started speaking to my mother and my grandmother. I said to myself: 'how come, I can't speak comfortably with them!' Well, I think that was the turning point. I looked at both my grandmother and mother and thought I can't do this anymore. 'I am just using a few words, what are you doing?' And there it ends. [...] You get stuck [Tikaniyorsun]. This getting stuck might have brought this about. Without this getting stuck, I would have become very unhappy. Directly after that, I started going to a

⁶⁷ Establishing the total number of courses and participants of these Kurdish courses and their development over time is not easy as such courses are not only carried out by Kurdî Der, but meanwhile also at Universities, in various institutions of the municipalities run by the Kurdish party, such as Sümerpark in Diyarbakir and in the Education Support Houses. In 2005, the closure of seven newly established private courses made the news headlines arguing that the closure was due to a lack of interest in learning Kurdish (CNN Turk, 2005; Hürriyet, 2005, also see Zaman, 2007). Besides that this argument supported voices critical of the Kurdish Movement at the time, it is difficult to make such a straight-forward assumption as the courses in question were – unlike those of Kurdî Der – private courses aiming making a certain profit and therefore several other possible reasons for their closure can be brought forward besides the lack of interest, such as the detrimental economic situation of potential students, a political position of potential students which refuses having to pay to relearn their own language or even wrong investment on the side of the course management (Uğur, 2005). The more recent development does not show any signs of a general lack of interest, as reports indicate the contrary with students demanding courses at Universities and courses being opened in more and more institutions (Cumhuriyet, 2012; Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2013; Diyarin Sesi, 2013). Nevertheless, as I will argue in the following, relearning Kurdish is not an easy task and there are many people do not see this as an option for themselves to personally turn back the effects of the state policies of assimilation.

Kurdish class. [...] I told the people around me that I will from then on only [tamamıyla] speak Kurdish. In that period there were lots of people around me who spoke Kurdish [and] knew it well. And that is how it happened. And since then, I force myself and try hard to only speak Kurdish in all my life, especially in my everyday life, except from in school and official situations. (Interview 14, 30 year old woman with university education, in work, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region in the 1990s)

She describes a situation which was mentioned by nearly all of my interviewees: the situation that they had grown up with at least their grandparents speaking Kurdish, and had often spoken Kurdish as a child, but had lost their ability to speak it with the increase of Turkish in their lives. She describes this take over as a subtle process which begins with the day they enter school. Like many others, she notices her deteriorating vocabulary in conversation with her older family members. And although she continues to hear Kurdish in her environment, she becomes less and less able to speak it. She becomes “stuck” in her passive vocabulary, which does not pass her lips: A situation which very many express with the physical metaphor that their tongue won’t turn (“dilim dönmüyor”). She narrates this becoming stuck as the turning point, after which she chose to attend Kurdish classes. Like the interviewee mentioned above, she decides - maybe more radically than others – to totally switch languages in all aspects of her everyday life. Although the course obviously provided her with a deeper knowledge in Kurdish, it seems, however, that the course rather solved the “lump” in her throat hindering her to speak. It supplied her with the necessary self-confidence to reinsert Kurdish into her life. However, she also hints at the effort that this demands. She forces herself and has to try hard to do so: A work on herself which requires the necessary passion and enthusiasm, which she describes in the continuation of the interview:

[G]etting to know Kurdish for a second time was something incredible. You speak consciously. You learn new words with such excitement. Besides, in academic Kurdish you use very different words that go beyond everyday talk. I was so happy about every new word I learnt. In this period in which Kurdish became part of my life again, I banned Turkish for myself; also with my mother. When my mother spoke Turkish, I would answer in Kurdish. I didn’t want to answer in Turkish. [...] Both the people around me, my brothers and sisters, well, they are not [quite] like that regarding this matter; that is my smaller brothers and sisters. I want to push them a little in this respect. I want them to understand. They are actually aware of quite a lot of things, but they don’t force themselves to speak Kurdish.

She describes the “excitement” and happiness that she felt when relearning Kurdish and banishing Turkish from her life. And she is determined to give her brothers and sisters who have not done this yet a “push” as she says. Her words reveal how difficult it can be to

reverse the effects of assimilative schooling and that it needs the kind of enthusiasm which she has to overcome the difficulties in doing so.

Among the difficulties associated with trying to relearn Kurdish are legal obstacles and repression the state implemented towards – not so much the participants directly – but the institutions. The day after I registered for my class, the police raided the language centre confiscating all computers and records obviously including all registration data. Attending these classes despite this atmosphere of fear produced by such repressions, makes relearning Kurdish a double act of defiance.

The recent development of multi-cultural policies of the AKP government has, however, affected the way in which (re-)learning Kurdish is still an act of resistance towards the state policies of assimilation: With the introduction of Kurdish as an optional course in “foreign languages and dialects” in schools in 2012, the state was forced to employ teachers able to teach Kurdish and therefore obliged to give permission to open university courses. This meant that relearning Kurdish suddenly became an opportunity for a limited number of unemployed Kurdish school teachers and decriminalized learning Kurdish to a certain extent. However, while university courses, for example at Mardin Artuklu University, are officially teaching Kurdish, the courses of *Kurdî Der* remain under political and legal pressure. In this sense, the defiant character of learning Kurdish has shifted with the new policies of the government. It is not just learning Kurdish itself, but rather the *where* of learning Kurdish which has become crucial for its resistant character against the new state policies.

Although many hundreds attend these *Kurdî Der* classes each year, it is important to remark in closing this section that there are some people who identify with the Movement but do not share quite this passion for relearning Kurdish. I came across many people who have (in some way or another and maybe only temporarily) “settled” with their condition of not being able to speak Kurdish. (Re-)learning Kurdish in such courses is not something simple. Besides the danger of repression, it demands time and effort and a certain level of school education. Some argue, as mentioned earlier, that as long as Kurdish is not the language of the job market or business, (re-)learning Kurdish does not make much sense. They are aware of the difficulties they have in communicating with the elders in their family and they clearly articulate anger towards the state for assimilating them in this way. However, there is something that stops them from developing the necessary urge to (re-)learn the language. It is not the case that these people are less politically interested or engaged as those who give more importance to relearning the language, or that they are

less “nationalistic”. Although they also see the importance of these counter-institutions and advocate their establishment, they have a different approach regarding *personally* relearning Kurdish. Something stops them from personally investing the necessary effort. Although this was not clearly expressed by my interviewees, it seems to me that individually turning back the violence of assimilation in themselves through working on themselves is not an option for them. The fact that they have lost their language has become part of themselves. Having become assimilated regarding their language, as described in the previous chapter, has become part of their identity. They have settled (in an albeit uneasy way) with this disrupted identity, and therefore have no drive to erase this “scar of the tongue” (Coşkun et al., 2011). In this sense, the acceptance of the incoherent identity works against the politicization of relearning Kurdish within the Movement.

6.2.3 RECLAIMING NAMES

Over the past three decades giving children Kurdish names has become another important practice not only for reclaiming Kurdish language, but also in order to reintroduce or even re-impose the pronunciation of the Kurdish language in public. While these practices existed as individual acts before the 1980s, they gained in contentiousness after the military coup due to the increased enforcement of the ban on Kurdish personal names. Naming practices were taken up by the Kurdish Movement and promoted as a strategy of organised civil disobedience after 2000 (Aslan, 2009).

Although *surnames* were introduced and regulated with the Surname Law of 1934 which served both the administrative purposes of the modern state as well as the establishment of a homogeneous nation, *personal* names were not regulated in this form until 1972. However, the dominant discourses and state policies on turkifying language and naming more generally in the early years of the republic had strong effects on how people chose first names. Especially, non-Muslim minorities felt a pressure to turkify their names, which often were distinctly different. This latent pressure on using Turkish names was only legally codified many decades later, after the second military coup, with article 16/4 of the Registration Law which regulated that first names had to comply with “national culture”, “moral norms” as well as “Turkish customs and traditions” (Aslan, 2009; Bayır, 2013: 135). By defining the danger in terms of anything differing from “national” and “Turkish” culture, the law was phrased in line with the non-use of the word Kurd, however, distinctively aimed at Kurdish language.

The introduction of this law fell into a time of a renewed increase in discourses and activities regarding Kurdish identity and democratic rights (McDowall, 2004: 410-417). This political climate of the mid/late 1970s gave rise to an increased interest in giving children Kurdish such Baran or Helin, or names with political significance, such as Devrim (Turkish for “Revolution”) or Welat (Kurdish for Homeland), which were registered without greater trouble despite the law. The 1980s coup put a temporary end to this practice and enforced the law without the need of rephrasing it. Additionally, the Law 2932 issued in 1983 banned the use of “foreign” languages in public and private and forbid the use of any other “mother-tongue” than Turkish, setting the frame for anti-Kurdish language politics, again without explicitly naming the word Kurdish (e.g. Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012: 110). In order to clamp down on Kurdish naming practices more firmly, the military government issued a circular listing forbidden names (Aslan, 2009). Fighting Kurdish personal names had turned into a field of utmost state interest.

In 1991, Law 2932 was abolished and it became formally slightly easier to register Kurdish names. In practice, however, as Aslan argues, especially local state official continued to reject registrations, filed court suits and instigation prosecutions regarding Kurdish names. The majority of the court cases filed decided in favour of Kurdish names. For Aslan, this proves the “incoherence” of the state practices, arguing that the central government was trying to achieve a relaxation on cultural issues which the local state officials were reluctant to put into practice. Although Aslan is certainly right in underlining that the state is less coherent than many scholars argue, we can rather understand the behaviour of the local state officials as very much in line with other state policies at the time, such as the state of emergency, extensive power for the governors and village evictions, instead of being opposed to apparent “reform efforts” of national policymakers (Aslan, 2009: § 32). Zeydanlıoğlu, for example, makes very clear the abolishment of Law 2932, which banned Kurdish language itself, was accompanied with the implementation of Anti-Terrorism Law 3713, passed on the same day, by which the use of Kurdish was literally equated with Terrorism (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012). Accordingly, Kurdish was not banned for being evidence of a different ethnic group anymore, but rather for being evidence of *terrorism*. With regard to name-registration, this meant that Kurdish names could still be forbidden, arguing they were evidence of supporting terrorism, which regularly occurred, as Aslan also mentions herself (Aslan, 2009).

Aslan is, however, right in arguing that the public debates in the early 1990s brought about a “liberalization” in the sense that they put an end to the discursive muzzle on the word

Kurd. I would not go so far as to call this an acknowledgement of “Kurdish rights” as Aslan does; rather, we should read this “acknowledgement” in the way Cenk Saraçoğlu (2009) offers us, as an “exclusionary recognition”. It is true that from the 1990s onwards, the discursive denial of the existence of Kurds ended, but the derogatory images and identification of everything Kurdish as terroristic persists (also see Zeydanlıoğlu, 2014: 169).

With the end of emergency rule (OHAL) and the shift in the political paradigm of PKK towards strategies which include non-violent collective action, naming strategies become a field of politics for the Movement. A “naming campaign” was launched in 2002 as part of the civil disobedience strategy of the PKK (than KADEK⁶⁸). The government reacted with a secret circular warning all governors about a possible increase in Kurdish name registrations and demanding them to “ensure” the registration law, which was still in effect unchanged. The gendarmerie in Diyarbakir sent a list of 600 names to the state prosecutor who proceeded with investigations on these grounds (Aslan, 2009: § 35). Consequently, all attempts to register Kurdish names were hereby regarded as part of the campaign and therefore deemed a crime and illegalized.

Continuing its apparent liberalization, the government amended Article 16 of the Registration Law only one year later, dropping the reference to national culture and Turkish customs and traditions. However, this reform again entailed a legal artifice against the full acknowledgement of Kurdish language, as a related circular informing the governors about the amendment underlined that the names to be registered have to be spelt in accordance with the Turkish alphabet. De facto, this represented a ban on the letters q, w, and x which do not exist in the Turkish alphabet, but do in Kurdish. The answer of the Movement followed promptly and the Kurdish party (DEHAP at the time) launched a new campaign to apply for name changes using this three ominous letters to demonstrate the limits of this reform. Collective applications, especially on behalf of leaders of the legal party were filed reaching hundreds. Aslan reports a number of 76 name annulment cases in 2002 alone (Aslan, 2009: §35). Although the naming campaign does not officially exist anymore, it has strongly influenced Kurdish people’s name giving practices, as the account of this mother illustrates:

I gave my son a double name, Turkish-Kurdish. But some people deliberately call him by his Turkish name, and claim; “I just can never remember his Kurdish name”. The most recent generation has been given Kurdish names. But still, not all people choose Kurdish names with ease. Only conscious people or people who have experienced so much, that this is their smallest problem give Kurdish names. If the person has not such political awareness, they say: “The child

⁶⁸ See Appendix 1.

will have problems later". They see not deciphering the problem as a solution. They say: "What's the point" or they have a religious approach that we are all in God's hands. Especially, the middle class is very afraid. They are afraid of being thrown into prison, they are afraid of losing their jobs. They say: "I am a Kurd [anyway], what's the point". There are some who just say they are from the East ["Doguluyum"]. Their names aren't Kurdish. Those who give Kurdish names are those who have nothing else to lose. (Interview 44, wealthy 43 year old woman with university education, living in the West)

Her words indicate how politically and morally loaded the practice of naming is. She, herself, identifies not choosing a Kurdish name with denying one's Kurdishness by saying one is from the "East". In this sense, these name-giving practices are also a form of visualizing Kurdishness, which she expresses as a way of "deciphering the problem". However, she also describes how people deliberately forget the Kurdish name of her child to illustrate the existing persistent unwillingness to acknowledge Kurdish language. This points towards naming-giving as a way of reclaiming the forbidden language, which slightly fails in her case. Her double-naming strategy leaves the choice to those who address the child which name they use, while names which are only in Kurdish force even those who are unwilling to accept Kurdish language to pronounce them. In this sense, such name-giving practices are a way of re-enforcing Kurdish language into the public realm. These personal names become inscribed onto legal documents, and called out in schools, work places and streets. They are attempts to fix or rather to ensure the existence of the language for the future; an attempt to safe-guard the language against any future attempt to eradicate it. In this sense, the personal name has an obvious public function.

The woman, nonetheless, highlights that some people give such names with ease, while others have to negotiate their fears. For her, it depends on the political attitude of the parents and whether they are worried that their child could face discrimination on these grounds in the future. She sees a class difference in this and argues that those who choose Kurdish names "have nothing else to lose". It exceeds the scope of this study to discuss the question of class in Kurdish society and whether this really influences such name-giving practices, but it is important to acknowledge that people engage in such practices differently. There is no doubt that the village evictions which turned hundred thousands of people into poor overnight had a great effect on the critique of the state and the political awareness. However, there are on the one hand many Kurds living in impoverished conditions who do not share the awareness, she is hinting at, and on the other hand many people with high income, especially lawyers, who play an important role within the Kurdish Movement. In this sense, the question of giving Kurdish names resembles the question of

passing, discussed in the previous section. The assumption of this woman is that those who are better off, like herself in fact, (have to) hide their Kurdishness to keep their privileges. She assumes that as it can have negative consequences to reveal one's Kurdishness, it is a practices of those who have nothing to lose. No doubt, the worries which influence decision-making in this question differ clearly according to their perception of which dangers such naming could have and this differs clearly according to whether they live in the West or the Kurdistan region. How these dangers are judged or whether the problems that could occur are even regarded as such differ as well as the ease with which they can push these thoughts aside. According to her, it is a question of political awareness. However, this awareness also seems to come in different forms: for some, giving a Kurdish name is still a decision to make, while for others it is unthinkable not to.

The politicization of this practice of naming through the Movement has not only increased the number of people who consider such naming-strategies, but also had an effect on what kind of names are chosen. While in the 1970s rather unpoliticized Kurdish names were predominantly chosen, today names often carry explicit political connotations. These names include geographical names, such as Botan and Serhat, or names of politically important people such as Mehdi, Leyla, Zana, Mazlum Doğan, code-names of guerrillas, such as Beritan, Zilan, Hozan Serhat. These names are "coded" in the sense that they are synonyms for a political stance. However, they can sometimes be unmistakably overt by giving both first and last name together⁶⁹. Aslan sees the increase in Kurdish names as a repetition of government policies of "purification" in the early years of the republic (Aslan, 2009: §39). However, such names rather go beyond a reinforcement of language and visualizing of Kurdish existence, but are rather inscriptions of resistance. Even names with the letter q, x, w which are deliberately chosen as signifiers of Kurdishness, rather illustrate the oppositional character of these practices rather than the purification of Kurdish language.

These practices of naming have been criminalized precisely as a form of "propaganda" (Aslan, 2009). Therefore, these everyday practices of naming also involve a kind of "juggling" with the legal and administrative system. Getting Kurdish names officially recognized requires a use of the given ambiguities. While it has become easier to get Kurdish names registered today, people had to be very creative in the past to get the names they wanted accepted in the past. Whether or not a certain name was accepted

⁶⁹ A woman I met had given her son the name Hozan Serhat. I was at first confused, because I thought she had two sons, one named Hozan and one Serhat. It turned out that she had given her son the full code-name (first and second name) of this guerrilla and musician.

often depended on the individual registration officer. If the name was foreign to the registration officer, s/he would ask where it originated from, if you managed to find an “acceptable” explanation, you could even get away with a Kurdish name. This requires some knowledge on the logic of local registrars. In the past, this meant referring to the Persian roots of the name or similar Turkish words. Today, in the case of names with political connotations some people make use of names that are not clearly distinguishable as such. There are many anecdotes on how people managed to get their name registered despite the bans. One woman in her 50s told me how she named her daughter after the famous Kurdish author Aram Tigram, by telling the registration officer the name came from the Turkish word “between me/us” (“aram/aramiz”).

Due to the bans many people often had two names: an official Turkish name and their Kurdish name which they were called by their friends and family. In the past few years, an increasing number of people are engaged in legal struggles to reclaim names which they were denied previously. So far there has been a high number of successful cases as such. Once again these name-struggles illustrate how some everyday practices of resistance - rather than dodging the official, legal realm, like quitting school or remaining silent - aim precisely at imposing their official recognition in specific situations of the mundane everyday.

6.3 SUBJUGATED NARRATIVES OF TRADITION, PAIN AND THE STRUGGLE

Due to the focus of the state policies on the banning of Kurdish language, all oral manifestations of Kurdish language whether in form of proverbs, jokes, songs, short stories (*çîrok*), as well as sung epics (Kurdish: *dengbêj*) are narrated as of great importance for Kurdish culture and history. Many of my interviewees articulate having experienced these practices of oral tradition in their family. This woman, for example mentions her father reciting the famous writer Ehmedê Xanî (1651-1707). Xanî, as explained in the prologue to the first Turkish/Kurdish (in Latin alphabet) edition of his famous epic *Mem û Zîn*, deliberately refrained from using Arabic or Persian which were regarded as aristocratic languages appropriate for literature at the time, but wrote in the language the population

spoke, Kurdish (Xanî, 1968)⁷⁰. For this reason, he is generally regarded as an important figure not only for Kurdish literature, but also for the concept of the Kurdish nation:

My father, himself, would tell us of Ehmedê Xanî, but he would describe him as a religious figure [İslami bir kişi]. [He] was known in our family and [his poems] were told. If the prohibitions, those things, hadn't happened, everyone would read them, know them, and research about them. People would have researched them. But in the past, nothing about them was attainable. [...] These [poems] were knowledge that wandered from one generation to the next, and between people. We knew these kinds of things although we migrated. [...] Frankly, my life was Kurdish but there was no [Kurdish] literature. There was no writing, no poems. Nobody wrote. For everyone, there were songs, folk songs, and dengbêj. They were actually really important. What they did was very important. This was actually what they were doing. But of course, we didn't grasp that. Nothing was accessible in this language. But I hear Ehmedê Xanî, because it always reminds me of my father. He always knew the words. (Interview 30, 25 year old unemployed woman with university degree, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region due to village eviction, studied in the West)

This passage stresses the importance of oral literature in times when publishing in Kurdish language was forbidden and therefore nothing written, as she phrases it, was attainable. Although she points out that they were not aware of the importance at the time, these forms of oral literature contributed to the preservation of Kurdish language. Tales, stories, or epics such as those of Ehmedê Xanî were passed onto the next generation without written sources. She especially emphasizes the crucial role of songs, both in the form of more modern folk songs usually played with instruments and the traditional recitation of epics without instrumental accompaniment, dengbêj. According to her, it is through these means of oral literature that Kurdish language managed to prevail in everyday life despite the bans. In this sense, the repression towards Kurdish language confines this kind of knowledge to the oral with its place of transfer within the family.

These practices of telling tales, epics or singing prevent the language and these cultural artefacts from being extinguished. In this sense, these oral traditions resemble what Foucault described as "subjugated knowledges". As discussed in Chapter 4, subjugated knowledges, for Foucault, are knowledges which are "unqualified" or "disqualified" in the "hierarchy of knowledges" (Foucault, 1980: 82). The knowledge of Kurdish language and literature has no status within this hierarchy, precisely because Kurdish itself is not acknowledged as a language in its own right. According to Foucault, the term refers to both historical knowledges which have been buried by the logic of formal knowledge systems

⁷⁰ Ehmedê Xanî, who was born in Hakkari which belongs to the Kurdistan region in Turkey today, is author of the epic *Mem û Zîn* as well as a children's dictionary written in rhymes (Xanî, 1968). Especially, *Mem û Zîn* has become endowed with great importance for the understanding of Kurdish history within the wider Kurdish National Movement. For more on the central importance of Ehmedê Xanî and *Mem û Zîn* in the development of Kurdish identity and nationalism, see van Bruinessen (2003).

which aimed to eradicate evidence of conflict and struggle and what he calls particular, local popular knowledges. According to him, both these two kinds of knowledges are disqualified precisely for being concerned with “historical knowledges of struggles” (Foucault, 1980: 83).

The prohibitions of the Kurdish language not only restrict this literature and language to the oral, but also expel it from the public. Consequently, these oral traditions are confined to the secluded conversations within the family. They are not only *disqualified*, but as such become *heretical*, oppositional narratives, precisely because they keep alive Kurdish language and its cultural artefacts. In doing so, they subtly defy the official discourses on the single nation and the non-existence of the Kurds. In this sense, these subjugated knowledges of Kurdish oral literature can be understood as one form of what James C. Scott (1990) calls “hidden transcripts”. For Scott, hidden transcripts include all kinds of dissent and subversive utterances ranging from the most elementary expression of anger and hostility to plans of rebellion and complex counter-ideologies (Scott, 1990: 114, 118). Especially in times of strong repression, these forms of oppositional discourse are pushed into the realm of the hidden, because their open demonstration is made impossible. Although these traditional stories do not express a critique of the repression themselves, they maintain the knowledge which the state aims at eradicating.

Although the woman narrates the success of preservation of tradition despite the detrimental state policies, her account also makes obvious that this preservation and continuation does not go without changes. Like many, she personally cannot recite Ehmedê Xanî’s epics like her father anymore. Instead, she plays them from tape. She has listened to the poems a lot and therefore has a memory of the content, but cannot piece the stories together herself. Her knowledge of this literature remains therefore passive and she cannot actively pass it on herself. In this sense, the continuation of these traditions is interrupted. The success of actual *continuation* of this traditional knowledge is, therefore, more limited than she expresses. However, the “success” lies not so much in the exact recitation, but rather in the oppositional “ambience” (Johnston, 1991) which telling these tales implies. As I will illustrate throughout this section, these oral histories are part of a complexity of different knowledges, discourses and practices which together form a kind of dissident culture lived within the family. In this sense, these traditional stories play an important role within this hidden culture, which goes beyond the continuation of the specific content.

6.3.1 NARRATING ONESELF INTO TRADITION

As a reference point for identity, the interviewees narrate themselves into this heritage of oral traditions, although only few can actually retell the tales of their parents. By narrating these practices in this way, they reiterate the discursive importance that has been given to these traditional practices within the Kurdish movement in recent years. Having experienced these practices in their own home, through their grandparents or parents, they connect themselves to these practices which have been constructed as the foundation of Kurdish culture and at the same time confirm the Kurdishness of these practices. Consequently, they align themselves into this heritage and tradition. This interviewee, who is particularly engaged in researching and enhancing his knowledge of the Kurdish language, clearly narrates himself as the successor in this line of heritage.

[M]y mother would tell us lots of tales [öykü]. I, for my part now, also tell children the tales my mother taught me. This is very interesting about us: I have maybe heard the same tale 100 times. My mother knows about 10-15, at least 15. Later, about 2 years ago, I taped them. 24 tales. I taped 24 tales told by my mother and father. Some take 3-4 hours, spoken. (Interview 26, 24 year old male student with secondary education, grew up in a village and only migrated within the Kurdish region for his studies)

It is very clear that he regards telling these tales as an important part of Kurdish culture, which must be preserved and cultivated. He has recorded the tales of his mother in order to preserve and research them and has assumed the role of passing on this tradition to the next generation himself. The children that he mentions are not his own, but rather children in the area he comes from. In this sense, his understanding of passing on this oral knowledge has gone beyond the traditional family context and is animated by the discourses of heritage and Kurdish culture as described above. His engagement clearly goes beyond how other interviewees narrate their own position in this heritage. However, his activities in this respect reflect an inclination that has been generated within the wider Kurdish national movement⁷¹ to revisit certain practices within the own family and home and interpreted them as part of a specifically Kurdish traditional culture. In similar vein, this man who lived in his village until it was evicted emphasizes what luck it is that his village still has a traditional “Şark Köşesi”, which can be translated as *oriental room*:

We are lucky in my village, still today there is a very big village room in style of a ‘şark köşesi’ where the men of the village come together. They always speak Kurdish. They tell each other stories and tales. But also solve the problems of the village. (Interview 33, 31 year old man, in work, with university education, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region due to village eviction)

⁷¹ See Appendix 1 for how I use this term.

The passage reflects the importance he gives to this “oriental room”, a room only laid out with carpets and surrounded with large cushions to lean on. He narrates this room as a relic of traditional culture which still exists in his village. He understands this as luck, because such traditional spaces are in danger of extinction. However, for him, the oriental room is not just a place of gathering, it is a space in which Kurdish language and oral literature is practiced and therefore preserved (Johnston, 1991). It connects speaking Kurdish, oral literature, tradition and the village. In this sense, the “Şark Köşesi” is constructed as the space of heritage and tradition and its preservation. By emphasizing the luck that this space still exists, he establishes a link between tradition and today, between the past and present, between himself and idea of Kurdish heritage. Similarly, another woman emphasizes that she has not lost her Kurdishness precisely because she still furnished her house with such an oriental corner, while others narrate sitting on the floor in a similar way. At the same time, this room is also depicted as a place of problem solving, discussing the matters of the village, and thereby reiterates an important discourse within the Kurdish movement which narrates the past traditional practices in the village as the place of communal politics (as discussed in the previous chapter).

6.3.2 THE FAMILY AS CARRIER AND AUDIENCE OF THE HIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

In this context, the family clearly functions as what Scott calls the “carrier” of the hidden transcript (Scott, 1990: 123). Although he names a wide variety of historical examples ranging from actors, bards and diviners to journeymen, touring craftsmen and healers who were prone to circulating such dissident discourses in early modern Europe, because of their physical mobility and dependence on the lower-class public for their living, he underlines the importance of more closer social circles, such as the family or trusted friends, especially for slaves in America in the period before the Civil War (Scott, 1990: 124). He argues that the stronger repression is, the closer the group in which the hidden transcript is shared. Accordingly, as such a close social circle, the family can be the safest space for oppositional discourses.

Social movements scholars such as Hank Johnston (1991), Richard A. Couto (1993), and Fantasia and Hirsch (1995) emphasize the importance of the family for struggles, such as the Civil Rights Movement as well as resistance in Catalonia and Algeria. Especially, Couto stresses – in line with Scott’s concept of the hidden transcript – the importance of “narratives” which are produced and reproduced within the family. As the interviewees so

far indicate, both women and men are associated with passing on oral literature in general. However, more often mothers are identified as those who convey these stories within the family. The passage below also narrates the mother and grandmother as the transmitters of traditional tales, in times when television did not yet exist for them:

My grandmother always used to tell us these tales, because we didn't have a TV, when I was little. They told us these tales for hours and hours. Also my mother did. Friday and Saturdays we would sit together and spend time with the family. Automatically, you talk about the police raids, about my uncle and so on. Especially, my mother would also tell us about the nature. She believes in a special calendar which follows the moon, there are lots of stories which are connected to specific days or natural events in the year, e.g. a wolf came from there and went somewhere else... it's a long story. (Interview 16, 28 year old woman with university education, in work, she was born in a village but migrated to the city within the Kurdish region when she was an infant)

Her account is very much in line with the existing discourses on the continuation of tradition within the Kurdish movement, which acknowledge the role of men in performing these practices, but construct *mothers* (not women in general) as “bearers of the nation and transmitters of culture” (Açık, 2014: 125). Because very often the elder women have little or no formal education, their main language of communication is very often still Kurdish. Consequently, they are regarded as those who preserve and pass on the language to the next generation. Furthermore, they are constructed as those who convey customs and traditions to the next generation as in general they are socially assigned the role of upbringing the children.

The passage also indicates that the transmitted knowledge goes beyond traditional heritage, and includes stories on the violence of the state as well as knowledge about nature. For example, she tells stories about what happened to members of the wider family, such as her uncle, who was imprisoned and had to flee to Europe. In this sense, the oral histories are not just limited to the *traditional* but also convey knowledge on *repression*. Consequently, it would be wrong to assume mothers to be “passive conveyors” of pre-existing traditional practices. They must be understood as active producers of “new cultural elements” as Necla Açık (2014: 125) underlines. Not necessarily only in the sense that they convey the discourse of the armed struggle, as Açık depicts, but also by passing on their concrete personal or narrated experiences.

Especially, with respect to such concrete narratives on repression and violence, we have to assume an effect of different gender roles. Although both women and men report having been told stories of pain and violence by their female and male relatives alike, gender roles influence the interaction between mothers, fathers, daughters and sons, the type of

relationship they have, the amount of time and the space that they share together, and therefore have an effect on the content and form in which these experiences are passed on. As I refrained from asking interviewees about details on the concrete content of the narrations especially regarding forms of torture and experienced violence, my research cannot make any further claims in this respect.

In context of the Civil Rights Movement, bell hooks (1990) emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the vital role which women played for the movement through establishing what she terms “homeplaces”. She strongly criticizes those who devalue this contribution of Black women by reducing the creation of a homeplace to a women’s “natural role”. According to her, this devaluation “obscures the political commitment to racial uplift, to eradicating racism, which was the philosophical core of dedication to community and home” (Hooks, 1990: 45). Although their resistance was entangled with the role they were assigned through sexist society, it is crucial to recognize this work as an important effort in this struggle. Similarly, here, we have to acknowledge the importance of women in passing on these various hidden narratives, even if these roles are ascribed through sexist gender regimes. For hooks, these women have to be understood as “primary guides and teachers” in this struggle (Hooks, 1990).

In a similar vein, Fantasia and Hirsch (1995) point out that the traditional institution of the family is transformed through its role in resistance. In their study of resistance against the French colonial regime in Algeria, they emphasize that the pronounced aim of the administration was to break Islamic culture in order to establish their own government. The regime successfully eliminated all formal organisation of Islam, such as the mosques and schools etc., leaving the realm of the family as a “traditional preserve” from the colonial administration and an important actor of resistance. They describe how in this context traditional Islamic practices and family life became acts of resistance. Discussing the specific changing practice of veiling among women who were militants of the FLN and those who were not, as also Frantz Fanon does in *A Dying Colonialism* (1965), Fantasia and Hirsch illustrate how this traditional practice - depending on the situation – functions as a counter-cultural practice or a practical instrument in camouflaging militant activity. Similarly, the family – despite being the “bedrock of traditionalism” - served both as a place for these counter-cultural practices as well as a space where militants discussed and tested their ideas. Consequently, Francesca Polletta argues that recognizing the cultural practices, as in this case of the family, as explicitly political undermines the opposition between “tradition and radical change” (Polletta, 1999: 4). Furthermore, for Scott, the family can provide a

social circle of people who suffer of similar conditions and have a “shared interest in jointly creating a discourse of dignity, of negation, and of justice” (Scott, 1990: 114). Hence, the family not only provides the carriers of the hidden transcript, but also its *audience*.

6.3.3 EXPERIENCING THE NARRATIVE OF PAIN

As the account of the woman cited above highlights the recitation of tales and epics is intertwined with other subjugated knowledges, both of traditional kinds about nature as well as stories about oppression, humiliation and violence. In this sense, the family is instrumental in passing on knowledge which goes beyond what is constructed as traditional and involves their own concrete experiences of pain. This woman describes how these stories of violence passed on within the family sometimes take the form of tales, sometimes the form of the real occurrences:

As children we were aware [of the village evictions], because my mother would tell us about it. Because my father wasn't here my mother was a little [eydi], a talkative woman [hikayeci]. Talkative, because she brought us up with lots of stories and because she thought it would help us understand. She would sometimes also tell us the truths [gerçekleri]: The military can come and kill us, hit us, don't do this, don't do that. (Interview 30, 25 year old unemployed woman with university degree, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region due to village eviction, studied in the West)

She clearly expresses that as children their awareness of the political situation was promoted through her mother's stories. These stories, which were mixed with warnings, helped them grasp the conditions in which they were living and guided their behaviour. In this sense, this mixture of stories and warnings formed their understanding of the political situation. Johnston argues that in the case of the Catalan nationalist struggle the family serves to interpret, channel and give form to grievances (Johnston, 1991: 54). It serves to formulate a “collective definition of the sources of their oppression” (Fantasia & Hirsch, 1995: 146). In the words of social movements scholar's who draw of Erving Goffman, such as David A. Snow (Snow et al., 1986; Snow, 2004), these stories enable “frames” through which the conditions are perceived. However, here, the frames are not theoretical or ideological, but rather derive out of the concrete experiences. These narratives of concrete experiences are evidence of state repression in the eyes of the “audience” and therefore the grounds on which the conflict is perceived.

According to Richard A. Couto, telling such experiences within the family and beyond enable a “community of memory”, a concept he takes from Robert Bellah. In other words,

these narratives of pain and trauma establish a collective narrative of the past, which functions as counter-knowledge of state policies and repression. Couto argues that for the Civil Rights Movement in the USA, such stories, which entail both stories of suffering as well as success, offer examples of people who embodied the meaning of the community (Couto, 1993: 60). This is also reflected in many accounts of my interviewees. As these two passages illustrates, these counter-discourses on the violence of the state are narrated through personal experiences of family members.

My uncle would tell us his stories of the maltreatment he had experienced. He told us that we are Kurds. (Interview 33, 31 year old man, in work, with university education, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region due to village eviction)

Sometimes, they [father and uncle] were away for 10-15 days and when we asked about them, the police told us, they weren't there. We never knew whether they were going to come back. They were badly tortured. They used electricity. We – ourselves – maybe didn't experience it ourselves, but my uncle told us about it. We witnessed it. When a visitor came, or some kind of incident happened, they would immediately take them into custody. (Interview 53, wealthy man in his mid 40s, in high position in his job, married, moved with his family to the West as a child)

Both passages show how family members are involved in narrating their own painful experiences and therefore add to disseminating an oppositional hidden transcript. They indicate that these stories are not just conveyed by parents, but also by other relatives. The first short passage indicates how the interviewee connects the story of maltreatment and Kurdishness. The uncle is the one who both talks about the experienced torture and makes them aware of their Kurdishness. In this sense, the narrative of experienced state violence is directly tied to its interpretation. As Couto argues, the direct narration of this personal experience in this case of a close relative contributes to a sense of mutual history. These narratives do not refer to an abstract past, but a very near and immediate history. The immediateness and mutuality of the traumatic experiences is also reflected in the second passage. This man, who moved to the West when he was a child, recalls incidents in which his close relatives were taken into police custody and his uncle telling him about the torture. He remembers waiting for them for days without knowing what had happened to them. Set free his uncle tells him about the torture. The experience of the anxious waiting, the psychological torture of not knowing what has happened to their family member, mixes with his uncle's narration of violence so that he phrases that he, himself, *witnessed* the violence. The line between experience and narration blurs. His own memory merges with his uncle's to establish a mutual narrative of memory, as observed by Couto.

However, the transmission of this hidden knowledge of the state does not just rely on what can be verbally articulated. The account of this man points out that these traumatic narratives are often incomplete, disrupted by fear:

They always told us about our history, but they would always tell us with fear and never complete. Underneath there is a great fear. A lot is exaggerated; there is a pleasure. There is an exaggeration, but not only. How can you tell a story of unhappiness completely? [...] They never told us that we were Alevi or Kurds at home. Instead, there were things that we experienced, e.g. that they spoke Kurdish to each other secretly. (Interview 31, 30 year old man with university education, in work, studied in the West).

He recalls elders telling them about their history. However, he emphasizes that stories they were told were both fragmented and exaggerated. He mentions a certain pleasure that exists in telling these stories. However, he also implies that the history of trauma cannot be told in completeness, precisely because of the pain involved. For him, it seems obvious that such a history cannot be fully told. He also mentions that understanding oneself as Kurdish or Alevi in his case, was not a question of directly being told, but rather a result of things that were experienced, such as family members speaking Kurdish secretly. This indicates on the one hand that even within the family, Kurdish had to be hidden. On the other hand, this also implies that this knowledge does not necessarily derive from directly being told, but rather from the atmosphere that is produced through assemblage of whispers, hints and indications. This is also underlined by the words of this woman who describes how children come to understand the situation, even if they are not told directly:

[T]hese people [in Diyarbakir] have grown up with such trauma, even if the child is not told anything directly, the child witnesses a lot of things anyway, when people, the family, [just] come together to talk. There is no need to be told directly anymore. In my opinion, the children really understand that trauma, from what they see [gözden], from what they feel [histen], they definitely draw conclusions from everything. They put things together in their heads. That is why, I say: the feelings which a child living here experiences, the importance it gives to that language, that identity, that culture, is different from those of a Kurdish child that grows up somewhere else. Those here really carry [all this]. They grow up in this. (Interview 14, 30 year old woman with university education, in work, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region in the 1990s)

This interviewee specifically draws attention to the family in the way she narrates the history of state violence. According to this, every family is in some way affected by the conflict, either in the sense that they have been victims of the atrocities or because a family member has joined the armed struggle. This is how she depicts the situation in which the children grow up. Even if the children are not part of the conversations, they “witness” the stories that the adults tell each other. In this sense, she narrates the family as generating a

space in which children understand the situation without being told directly. She stresses, that their understanding of the political situation, the importance they give to identity and culture, derives precisely from what they “see” and “feel”. Consequently, the knowledge which they gain in this context, is not so much formal, but rather intuitive, emotional and familial. In this sense, what happens here in the realm of the family goes beyond the role of passing-on pre-established knowledge. It goes beyond the *verbally* transmitted hidden transcript and is rather an *experience* of knowledge in itself.

6.3.4 THE STRUGGLE AS FAMILY RELATION

Besides knowledge regarding traditions and the direct experience of trauma, this ambience, or atmosphere within the family also enables the development and transmission of knowledge about the struggle, itself. This knowledge is often conveyed through relatives who are or were involved themselves or through stories about them. Some interviewees mention that relatives who were in prison or had joined the guerrilla, played an important part in forming their interest in the political struggle, its ideas and writings. One woman, for example, depicts her uncle who was in prison as the person who had the strongest influence on the development of her interests in Kurdish politics and literature. Through letters they exchanged while he was in prison, he encouraged her to read and intensify her studies (Interview 30). Similarly, this man, who identifies as Kurdish and Alevi, also narrates his immediate family as crucial for motivating him to read.

[M]y family talks about the past, about the Kurdish movement, about political questions concerning Alevis. We were motivated to read books. You develop your ideas because you want to. (Interview 37, 32 year old man with a university degree working in precarious conditions, who migrated to the West due to security issues in the mid-1980s)

In this remark, the interviewee narrates the family as a source of abstract political understanding of the conditions. He mentions that his family motivated him to read, meaning a reading to deepen his knowledge of the Kurdish issue and the history of Alevis. The family enables an environment of discussion and debate and in this case promotes extending his knowledge in this respect. Scott speaks of a “process of socialization” regarding the hidden transcript, which translates “raw anger” into “cooked indignation” (Scott, 1990: 119). While the narratives of pain frame the understanding of state violence, these stories shape perceptions on the necessity and forms of struggle. Johnston even sees the family as the primary source of socialization in this context (Johnston, 1991: 50). For Scott, this socialization is an attempt to achieve a degree of conformity among the affected

which is also through social incentives and sanctions, such as covert prestige of belonging to the group on the one hand and practices ranging from gossip and shunning to assaulting e.g. strike-breakers (Scott, 1990: 129-131). Such practices also aim at forming and disciplining certain forms of resistance, whether everyday struggles or organised revolt. The discussion of “assimilated Kurds” in the previous chapter can be understood as such practice of sanctioning.

Knowledge about the struggle is, however, not as abstract as mentioned above. More often it is interwoven with narratives of the direct involvement of family members, as both of these women indicate:

As a family, we had some idea of what was going on, we would talk about politics; my uncle had to leave the country. (Interview 16, 28 year old woman with university education, in work, she was born in a village but migrated to the city within the Kurdish region when she was an infant)

My grandfather was in prison after the 1980s coup for 9 years; my uncle for 12 years. And all only because they said they were Kurds. (Interview 29, 18 year old female secondary school student)

Both of these short comments link the understanding of the struggle to the involvement of relatives. While the first interviewee makes a connection between the political discussions in the family, her awareness of the political situation, and her uncle who was forced to go into exile to escape from being imprisoned again; the second illustrates how the stories of the imprisonment of her family members form a concrete knowledge on the struggle. She mentions that close family members were imprisoned for long periods for claiming Kurdish identity. Framing the reason for their imprisonment in this way indicates how these stories have shaped her understanding of the political situation. This illustrates how these hidden narratives of the family counter the state discourses on terrorism and single national identity. In this sense, these narratives of personal engagement of relatives “neutralize”, as Scott phrases it, these official discourses (Scott, 1990: 111). This is also underlined by the following interviewee who describes how this subtle knowledge of family members who have joined the PKK as guerrilla fighters counters the official discourses on terrorism.

There are children here, well, about 60-70 % of the children who live here hear everything. Either one uncle, or another uncle or their elder brother is involved somehow. They get influenced by someone, they hear it. [...] Here, the guerrillas have a different meaning. Not like it is told, they see them in real. (Interview 14, 30 year old woman with university education, in work, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region in the 1990s)

First of all, she emphasizes that the majority of children in Diyarbakir have relatives that are somehow involved in the struggle. The stories the children hear about these relatives

influence them and, therefore, generate in them an understanding of the struggle which is opposed to the state discourse. As she phrases it, the children do not see the guerrillas as “it is told”, that is as they are taught to see them, in the way they are officially represented in the state discourse. Instead, they see them “in real”. Therefore, these stories are “historical knowledges of struggles” (Foucault, 1980: 83), specific, local and concrete. As they counter the “official transcript”, they can only be spoken in a safe environment, among people with the same interests and grievances, which can be the family. Independent from whether this relation is articulated as pride or as sadness or as both, the armed struggle becomes narrated through family ties. Narrating the PKK through direct personal ties underlines the immediateness of the struggle. Consequently, the PKK is not experienced as an abstract organization, but rather fundamentally intertwined with and rooted in people’s lives.

For Couto, such narratives in which relatives embody some kind of success, preserve self-esteem and dignity, and turn the community of memory into a “community of hope”. According to him, these narratives promote what Couto calls a “belief in the virtue of the oppressed”, that is a feeling and understanding of the necessity of the struggle. In this way, these narratives mobilize for the struggle, not directly but through establishing “deep and lasting insights into the need and methods of change” (Couto, 1993: 61). In this sense, the role of the family goes beyond transmitting a transcript, but rather establishes an immediate, familial relationship to the struggle.

6.4 FORBIDDEN PRACTICES

So far, I have indicated that subjugated knowledge transmitted within the family goes beyond the spoken word of these hidden transcripts. Instead, it includes an ambience of the unsaid and felt, and establishes a familial relationship to the struggle. Similarly, for Scott, the hidden transcript “has no reality as pure thought”. He argues that this transcript only exists “to the extent it is practiced, articulated, enacted and disseminated” within the hidden social sites (Scott, 1990: 119). In this sense, we can argue that this subjugated knowledge discussed above is interconnected with a range of similarly hidden practices, which go beyond practices of narrating experiences and story-telling.

Many of these dissident practices involve engaging with activities organised by institutions associated with the PKK or the broader Kurdish Movement in order to convey their political discourses. Beginning in the 1990s, the Kurdish movement established an array of activities

which are roughly located in the field of culture. These include publishing newspapers, books, launching television channels, and setting up cultural institutions which promote learning to play instruments and folk dance, as well as organise music events and support the formation of political music groups and the distribution of their publications. The declared aim of all of these activities is to fight back the effects of “colonial government”, often framed as “cultural genocide” (Firat News, 2013). This means not only providing an alternative source of information to the Turkish mainstream media and communicating the idea of the struggle, but also promoting Kurdish identity and culture. Practices such as watching PKK-affiliated television channels, reading their newspapers and listening to certain kinds of music, play a particularly important role in challenging assimilation policies and are therefore narrated as a part of Kurdishness.

6.4.1 COUNTERING “CULTURAL GENOCIDE”: NARRATING KURDISHNESS THROUGH CULTURAL PRACTICES

Music has played a central role in the re-construction of Kurdish identity and culture within the Kurdish movement (Dönmez, 2012; Gunes, 2012; Sarıtaş, 2010). The production and promotion of music was the particular focus of the PKK-associated cultural institutions such as the Mesopotamia Culture Centres (mostly known under their Turkish abbreviation MKM, or Kurdish NÇM), the first of which was founded in Istanbul in 1991 (after restrictions on the Kurdish language had been slightly lifted) and later opened 37 branches in other towns and cities⁷². Their aim was to challenge the effects of the state’s policies of assimilation by fostering “Kurdish cultural renewal and revival” (Dönmez, 2012; Cengiz Gunes, 2012; Sarıtaş, 2010) in the field of music and folk dancing. By supporting the formation of music groups (kom), producing and disseminating their music, the PKK and its affiliated organisations hoped to reintroduce Kurdish language into people’s lives, encourage the idea of Kurdish culture and identity, as well as promote their political ideas.

The long passage below reflects on the main forms of music which frequently appear in the narratives of various interviewees on Kurdishness as well as their historic development: from Radio Yerevan and dengbêj tapes to albums and concerts of MKM-groups, to independent musicians and groups, such as Kardeş Türküler, who play all kinds of ethnic music including Kurdish songs.

⁷² For an overview on the development of these cultural institutions and their activities in the context of the shift of the PKK towards radical democracy see Çetin Güner (2014).

Music, of course, music influenced me. [...] In the past, my mother listened to people like Murat Bektaş, dengbêj and so on [...] on tape. We had a tape recorder. [...] Dengbêj, and other music, old traditional music [...]. I was more oriented towards other stuff. Of course, in those times there was stuff like the MKM, the MKM in Istanbul [...] I asked [a family member] to buy me an album of Koma Amed, [called] Dergüş. I will never forget; [I remember] as if it was yesterday: I had saved money, quite a lot of money. Later, I bought the tape from that money. [...] My mother didn't listen to that kind of music. She didn't like it. [...] My father still remembered Radio Yerevan well from when he lived in [a Kurdish city in the North-East]. He loved "Yerevan Yerevan", these songs, folk songs, a lot, my father. He told us about it a lot, but my mother didn't know that much, because we couldn't receive Yerevan from here in those times. They didn't know it. They had their own songs. In that period, I followed all the MKM albums. And actually, they had a large mass of fans. I would go to the concerts, with my uncle who had just become a teacher. [...] From his first pay he took me to a concert. That was [exactly] what I liked: live performance. Very much later, I heard of Kardeş Türküler. Kardeş Türküler was for me something really great. (Interview 30, 25 year old unemployed woman with university degree, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region due to village eviction, studied in the West)

Like many other interviewees, this woman in her later 20s first of all endorses the influence of music on her identity formation. While she, herself, listened to music deriving from the MKM, she describes that her mother and father listened to more traditional music, such as *dengbêj*, mentioned above. She remembers her father telling her about listening to Yerevan Radio, one of the first radio stations to broadcast Kurdish music. This radio station and its daily Kurdish programme has become a central part in the narrative of cultural resistance among Kurdish people. From the 1950s onwards, when regulations on broadcasting and publishing were still very strict, this radio station enabled listeners in the border region to Armenia a Kurdish music programme (Scalbert-Yücel, 2009: § 27; also see Hassanpour, Sheyholislami & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2012: 10).

She, however, emphasizes that this style of music belongs to the older generation and therefore is something old-fashioned. For her part, she expresses first being interested in the groups associated with the Mesopotamia Culture Centre, such as Koma Amed⁷³, before she began listening to groups and musicians which are less closely linked to the Kurdish movement, such as Kardeş Türküler, a group that formed in 1993 with the aim to promote the idea of fraternity and solidarity between the different ethnic groups within Turkey through its music (Aksoy, 2014: 237). Producing so-called "protest music", Koma Amed – whose names refers to the name used for Diyarbakir in the movement – crosses rock and folk, while its lyrics clearly refer to the political discourses on Kurdishness and resistance of the Kurdish Movement. The passage also illustrates that following this music not only

⁷³ According to Saritaş, Koma Amed was founded by a group of medical students in Ankara in 1987, and later joined the MKM.

involves the act of listening, but also saving money, possibly organizing someone to buy the tapes for you in times when the tapes were difficult to get hold of, going to concerts that - as another interviewee mentions - were sometimes organized secretly and often raided by the police (Interview 35).

Therefore, the passage narrates the importance of two different kinds of music, traditional and protest music, which she describes as a generational difference. This, however, also reflects what Scalbert-Yücel see as the “two competing views on culture” coexisting within the MMC: one of protecting language, folklore and traditional practices; the other of producing of an “alternative art and culture” which simultaneously promotes Kurdishness, democracy and socialism (Scalbert-Yücel, 2009: §22). Although the MKM gave itself the task to “protect culture, art, history and language of the colonised peoples of Mesopotamia” and recreate a destroyed and assimilation “national culture” (cited in Scalbert-Yücel, 2009: §20/21) the emphasis according to Scalbert-Yücel lay more in the construction of a new culture grounded “in the party and the guerrilla struggle” (§22), rather than traditional practices. Despite this difference in importance given to these two notions of culture within the Movement, they both appear strongly in the narratives of cultural practices of my interviewees. Accordingly, this woman, who like the interviewee above grew up in the Kurdistan region, endorses the importance of both of these two views on Kurdish music:

Yes, Kurdish music was very important. Actually, I enjoy music more if it is in a language I don't know, but Kurdish music is different. I rarely listen to Turkish music. This is definitely a reaction of anger. My father sings dengbêj. He has a bad voice, but he knows lots of songs. Dengbêj is an important part of Kurdish culture. I watch MMC, the Music channel of Roj TV, which only broadcasts Kurdish music, obviously. (Interview 16, 28 year old woman with university education, in work, she was born in a village but migrated to the city within the Kurdish region when she was an infant)

While she gives importance to both, she - similar to the previous interviewee - associates singing of dengbêj epics with her father, while she, herself, watches clips on PKK-affiliated TV channel MMC⁷⁴. She locates great importance in both. For her, both are ways in which Kurdishness is lived in everyday life. However, here, she narrates dengbêj as “an important part of Kurdish culture”, while she frames her own listening to Kurdish music as a “reaction of anger”.

Another practice that is narrated as connected to Kurdishness is watching the PKK-affiliated TV channels which started broadcasting via satellite in the mid-1990s. The first television

⁷⁴ The music channel *mmc* was shut down together with Roj TV and Nûçe TV by Danish authorities in August 2013 after the interview had taken place (Özgür Gündem, 2013). It was replaced by Med Muzik, which started regular broadcasting mid November 2013.

channel, Med TV, went live in 1994. Despite broadcasting from Europe, first from the UK, then from Germany, Denmark and Belgium, the channels have been repeatedly shut down since Öcalan's capture 1999. Reopening under new name (Medya TV, Roj TV, Sterk) and on a different frequency, the PKK managed to sustain this form of mass communication. With this form of visual media, the PKK was able to reach a much broader both Turkish speaking and Kurdish speaking audience, including elderly women many of which only speak Kurdish and cannot read. Watching these channels rapidly became a common practice in everyday life of many Kurdish people; sometimes the only channel watched. This interviewee, for example, estimates that a great majority of the people in her hometown watch the PKK channel, Roj TV.

For example, about 80 or even 90% of my hometown watch Roj TV. Even if the children speak Turkish at home, they see things there, they hear things. There are e.g. lots of Turkish programmes, which report about certain incidents. So, from somewhere, somehow something happens: Even if the children don't exactly know about the incidents which have occurred, about the Kurdish Movement directly, they become more than aware of the existing injustice. They see and witness everything. There really exists an extremely intense life for many families here. (Interview 14, 30 year old woman with university education, in work, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region in the 1990s)

What this woman hints at here overlaps with the task that the channel has given itself to function against assimilation. She argues that "even if the children speak Turkish at home", with which she means that they have been assimilated at least in respect to their language, the Turkish programmes shown on Roj TV can provide them with an awareness and different understanding of the injustice. The channel, therefore, is a means of achieving counter-knowledge on state discourses and policies, on the existence of Kurds and the armed struggle.

Besides news reports from a perspective and about topics which are neglected within the mainstream media, the circulation of images of Kurdistan, its nature and mountains, maps and documentaries on these channels form the base of a specific construction of Kurdish identity, as Gunes argues (Gunes, 2012: 112-119). Especially, in times in which publically expressing Kurdishness had major consequences, listening to this music or watching these programmes served to strengthen this identity. Still today, these channels continue to do so. Furthermore, announcements and interviews with the guerrilla fighters, especially leaders of the PKK, images of guerrillas training with weapons, and the commemoration of guerrilla fighter who have died aim at establishing a close connection to the armed struggle. Consequently, these channels enable a basis for a questioning of the state policies e.g. understanding state oppression as a "colonization of Kurdistan" as the PKK discourse

frames it. They are means by which people inform themselves and they form a base to discuss politics.

The passage above also indicates that even the passive listening, watching of this channel, e.g. because the channel is very often left on throughout the day, influences the individual. In this sense, we can argue that the Kurdish television channels play a role in enabling a dissident atmosphere or ambience that was mentioned above.

Adding to the oral histories and knowledges discussed in the previous section, this mix of different practices establishes an amalgam of practices, discourses, knowledges and sentiments which can be described as a counter-culture. Especially, Hank Johnston underlines that for Catalanian militants the family provided a “subculture of opposition”, which is central in socializing them into an “oppositional disposition”(Johnston, 1991: 49). In the Catalan case, this subculture was made up of a mix of language, religion, tradition, oppositional attitudes and political ideology. Similarly, here, the practices and discourses on violence and resistance mix with traditional and familial ones. The knowledges which frame the political understanding of grievances and the necessity of the struggle, therefore, interlink with cultural practices which precede the movement. Similarly, Polletta points out that movements which are – as she argues – “indigenous” to a community, often draw on structures which pre-exist these movements and are not initially oppositional, like the family. They are characterized by the density of the associational ties within the group and distance from outsiders, and are interwoven in people’s daily lives.

6.4.2 CULTURAL WEAPONS AND DANGEROUS OBJECTS

According to Johnston, the values embraced within this counter-culture are “distinct, and often at odds, with those propounded by the regime”. Consequently, this counter-culture is regarded as dissident by the state and can, therefore, only persist “secretly” (Johnston, 1991: 50). Every expression of Kurdish existence is equalled with separatism and terrorism and all cultural artefacts – whether with or without relevance to the actual armed struggle – put under general suspicion. Music cassettes, newspapers, books as well as satellite dishes become hunted down as if evidence of terrorist activity⁷⁵, as this man expresses who describes the stop-and-searches they went through when travelling from the West where he moved to work back to his hometown in the Kurdistan region:

⁷⁵ The 2013 report by the Union of Publishers of Turkey argues that although the list of forbidden books were abolished in January 2013, many books still remain evidence for terrorist activity in court cases (Özgür Gündem, 2013).

On the way to our home town, the military would stop us and search us [arama]. They were looking for Kurdish music, for cassettes, as if they were weapons. I like Turkish and Kurdish music, but it is as if Kurdish is real music. (Interview 35, precariously employed man in his late 20s with elementary school education, small family, moved to the West to work as an adolescent)

The rigor with which these searches were conducted reveals that the state locates the danger for society in the pursuit of these everyday practices. In this sense, the actual crime according to the biopolitical assimilative logic of the state is also the *production* of these objects, but much more importantly their *consumption*, that is the everyday acts themselves. These everyday practices, themselves, are targeted by state policies, bans and police raids and searches. Consequently, these practices of reading certain books or the pro-Kurdish newspapers, watching the PKK-associated TV channels as well as listening to music, are immediately associated with police raids in the interviews. The memories of these practices are narrated through the necessity to obscuring or destructing these objects, as the two following accounts illustrate.

Music was very important for me. I had lots of cassettes, but one day my father burnt them all in the stove when he saw the military coming. (Interview 15, 29 year old man, in work with university education)

Like nearly all of my interviewees, this man who is in his late 20s, mentions his possession of cassettes through describing how they were burnt. Other interviewees recall that cassettes and books alike were either hidden among the hay, dug deep into the ground, or thrown away, around the mid-1990s. Some of the older interviewees also recall doing the same in the 1980s after the military coup, as this woman describes:

Another time, my father burnt all our books. In the 1980s coup, they buried everything. We could have been arrested for just one single cassette. (Interview 38, 51 year old retired women with secondary school education, migrated to the West in the 1980s)

Her words underline the continuity of the violent state practices after the coup and the long-standing history of these practices of obscuring their own practices. In this sense, we can argue that this knowledge of how to deal with such arbitrary violence is also passed on to the next generation. This young woman, for instance, who was too young to actually remember this time herself, narrates what the family would do.

In the past, we were scared when speaking Kurdish; we would speak Turkish when we walked past police in those times. We would walk past in fear and with distrust. In fact, in those times – let me tell you that, too – they would even say: “They will raid your house and confiscate Kurdish cassettes”. I remember that. We would take those cassettes into the roof [damda] and hide them between piles of wood in the attic [çatıda]. Others dug holes in the ground and buried

them under the earth. We had [cassettes at home]. (Interview 13, 22 year old precariously self-employed woman who dropped out of primary school)

The language she uses indicates that she has totally taken over the narrative and describes hiding the cassettes on the roof as if she had been personally involved. Among the long list of literature which was officially forbidden in the 1990s and were only lifted in January 2013 were books such as the Communist Manifesto, Shakespeare's King Lear and Tolstoy's Anna Karenina, besides books on the Kurdish issue such as the academic writings of sociologist Ismail Besikçi or Abdullah Öcalan (Turkish Publishers Association 2013) were included on the list. However, the arbitrariness of the military conduct turned everything remotely leftist or related to Kurdish language or struggle into a "weapon". The arbitrariness of the military conduct is reflected in the limited knowledge on exactly which literature was forbidden. One man, for instance, tells me an anecdote of how a Kurdish edition of the famous epic "Mem û Zîn" written by Ehmedê Xanî which existed in the large library of his village mosque, remained untouched by the military. Written in Arabic, instead of Latin alphabet, the soldiers assumed it was a religious book. According to the interview, the only book the soldiers knew in Arabic was the Quran, so they left it spared (Interview 27). Similarly, this woman seems to belittle her own mother's behaviour because she hid all kinds of books without knowing their content.

My mother would hide some of my books, even Turkish books, thinking the police could find them and we would get into trouble because of these books and so on. Especially, if there was a picture of Öcalan. Then, this book was definitely forbidden, according to her. (laughs) I would say, "mum, maybe this is a book which slanders Öcalan, why are you doing that?" Maybe this is possible, but no, she knew exactly who Öcalan was. Because she knew this, if she saw any book or magazine, they were forbidden in her eyes. That's why, of course there were some political journals etc. in those times. I read them, I was a subscriber. I read them to become more aware and so on. (Interview 30, 25 year old unemployed woman with university degree, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region due to village eviction, studied in the West)

She describes how nearly any book or journal seemed forbidden in the eyes of her mother. However, especially as someone who cannot read and write, she had different ways of knowing which literature could be dangerous to have at home. Especially, the picture of Öcalan was enough to tell her that these books could cause problems if the police or military raided the house. Although the daughter finds her mother's behaviour to be over the top, it rather reflects the arbitrariness of the police and military action, which is capable of turning nearly everything written into an object of terrorism.

6.4.3 PRACTICES OF CONCEALMENT

Maintaining these everyday practices in this period of harsh repressions was therefore not a simple act. These impeded practices necessitated a degree of inventiveness to be able to proceed with them unseen. Many interviewees recall, for instance, choosing strategic places to place their satellite dishes and how they would hide them in order for them not to be recognised from police or military forces. People would cover it, build something around it or find a place in the trees. Because having a satellite dish in those early years of the struggle in the Kurdish region clearly meant you were a PKK supporter. One man told me the anecdote that he was at first accused of directly *contacting* terrorists with help of the satellite dish by the police. He got prosecuted for watching “terrorist” television. Other interviewees report that especially having two satellite dishes was always a sign for the police that that household was watching Kurdish television, because to receive both Turkish and the Kurdish channels which are broadcasted on different satellites you needed two. Similarly, regarding buying and reading the Kurdish newspaper, interviewees mention stories from the 1990s when the newspaper was handed over folded in a way that the front cover was not visible.

In this sense, especially in the height of repression in the 1990s, but also still in the West today, these everyday practices in fact involve a string of conscious practices to hide or conceal the actual practice itself. This series of practices adds once more to the dissident atmosphere mentioned above. Scott also mentions that hidden transcripts necessitate a range of practices to conceal them. He refers to slaves in America who developed a whole series of devices, such as overturned pots, to prevent the sound of their secret religious congregations (hush arbours) from reaching the outside. Similarly, they hung up quilts and rags to deaden the sound and sat on their knees and whispered in order to protect their communication from being revealed (Scott, 1990: 121). In this sense, the actual practice itself is accompanied by other practices of concealment.

This need to obscure the dissident practice is also described by this woman who remembers how they secretly watched films at home when she was a child:

We secretly watched Yılmaz Güney films. We would close a really thick curtain and sit on the floor instead of the sofa, so that no one could tell from outside that there were many people gathering in the house. (Interview 16, 28 year old woman with university education, in work, she was born in a village but migrated to the city within the Kurdish region when she was an infant)

She describes that they watched Yılmaz Güney films despite the ban of his films. The passage highlights the awareness of the danger and the everyday practices to conceal what

they were doing. What this passage also indicates is that it is not just the media directly linked to the PKK which determines such forms of everyday resistance. There are other individual artists, such as Yılmaz Güney (1937-1984) or leftwing singer Ahmet Kaya (1957-2000) who have become to embody great importance among Kurds as figures of cultural resistance, despite their independent character. As a leftist actor, writer and film director, Güney was the first director to take up the Kurdish question in his films. Besides depicting the lives and problems of Kurdish people, he dared to let his characters speak Kurdish for the first time in Turkish television. Consequently, his films have become a strong reference point for Kurdish leftist people. Güney was forced into exile in France, just as Kaya, and his films were banned⁷⁶. However, the interest for his films persisted and watching his films became a conscious act of resistance.

Interesting in this passage is also that watching these films is not a practice which is restricted to the people who actually live in that house. Instead, this interviewee mentions that in her childhood in the early 1980s when only few people had a television set, they invited friends and relatives and gathered to watch these films together. Older interviewees report such collective activity with regard to listening to Yerevan radio. Often only one person in the village or neighbourhood would have a radio. People would then gather in this person's home to listen to the Kurdish programme. This points towards the existence of a complicit knowledge about these hidden, forbidden practices among Kurdish people, which Scott also mentions. For Scott, resistance is never individual. It always necessitates accomplices of some form or is bound into a kind of hidden subculture (Scott, 1990: 118). This is also the case in this context. There exists a certain form of complicit shared knowledge about these practices.

6.4.4 FORBIDDEN "OWN" CULTURE

Although the repressions certainly reached the targeted effect, in the sense that many people became too frightened to engage with these practices, some – especially those who were children at the time – describe a curiosity for these forbidden objects, like this man who was around 12 at the time when he remembers his father burning books and tapes which belonged to his elder sister.

⁷⁶ Yılmaz fled the country in 1981 after having served 5 of 19 years of jail sentence. His films were forbidden throughout the 1980s (Türkiye Yayıncılar Birliği, 2013). Ahmet Kaya was forced into exile in 1999 after an *éclat* about singing in Kurdish after receiving a prize for the best artist. Soon after, two separate court cases were filed against him accusing him of assisting the PKK and demanding a jail sentence of 10.5 years (Türkiye Yayıncılar Birliği, 2012, 2013).

There were raids. Around 1993, my sister had brought tapes and books. It was the first time for me to see these strange books. In one of the raids my father buried the books and threw some into the water [suyu]. One I remember was “Martin Eden” by Jack London. (Interview 31, 30 year old man with university education, in work, studied in the West)

This incident left the boy, who later develops a strong interest for literature, with a kind of curiosity precisely for those dangerous books, one of which inscribed itself so deeply into his memory that he even remembers its title. London’s book exemplifies again the random list of books assumed leftist, political, dissident and therefore dangerous. Calling them “strange” books, he still recalls that there was something different and special about these books. They are “strange” because they are so dangerous that they have to disappear or be destroyed. This similar kind of fascination and temptation is expressed by this interviewee, who goes on to describe these hidden objects as what belongs to them.

I had an uncle, he was a book editor. We could never buy his books, because Kurdish was forbidden. But, my father’s family would sometimes secretly bring them. They would hide them in the barn [samanlıkta]. [...] They would hide the Kurdish books there. We would also have a look when my father went to get some books. We would rather look at the photographs, especially, the political books, with photos of peşmerge and so on. It seemed so interesting to us: People with horses and so on. But, we somehow knew that they were our characters and that those in Turkish books like Koroğlu and Malkoçoğlu were not our characters. This was when I was six years old. (Interview 26, 24 year old male student with secondary education, grew up in a village and only migrated within the Kurdish region for his studies)

Although this man was influenced by Barzani’s fighters called “peşmerge” rather than the PKK guerrilla, he describes the same feeling of fascination for these hidden books. Especially, the photos of the peşmerge, the embodiment of resistance, excited him as a child. He describes how these books were smuggled and preserved despite the dangers. Commenting on the heroes in *Turkish* books, he stresses that they always knew that these figures did not belong to them, that they were not Kurdish characters. In this sense, he narrates these hidden, the forbidden books as belonging to his *own* culture, while the available books, e.g. in school, were not. Hence, the “own” culture is associated with the hidden objects. It is narrated through practices which are impeded and made impossible, unlivable in public. In this sense, Kurdish culture becomes something secret, hidden and resistant, while the permitted and official culture is Turkish.

In similar vein, this man in his forties describes that the repression did not make him abandon his practices, on the contrary he describes “clinging on” to them even more:

These repressions only make people, Kurds, cling on [to their Kurdish identity] even more. I, for instance, started reading the newspaper “Özgür Gündem” even when I wasn’t interested. I listened to Kurdish music even more. Listening to Kurdish music was a kind of resistance for me.

I listened to Ahmet Kaya. He was a really really good and intelligent person. (Interview 53, wealthy man in his mid 40s, in high position in his job, married, moved with his family to the West as an adolescent)

The newspaper he is referring to is the pro-Kurdish newspaper “Özgür Gündem” [Free Agenda]. This newspaper, which publishes in Turkish, was established in 1992 in Istanbul. It was banned in 1994 and only took up its name again in 2011. In the meantime it used other names, such as Özgür Ülke [Free Country], Yeni Politika [New Politics], Günlük [Daily]. However, in everyday life remained known under its original name. Today, Özgür Gündem is distributed throughout the whole of Turkey, although some stands and shops in the West still refuse to sell them⁷⁷. The editors and journalists of this newspaper still regularly face legal prosecution due to the context and terms they use today⁷⁸. However, especially in the 1990s, journalists and distributors suffered great repression; some were killed, imprisoned and tortured⁷⁹. One interviewee, for example, told me of a bomb-attack on corner-shop she experienced which sold these newspapers (Interview 14).

Despite these strong repressions, he recalls wanting to read and listen to the forbidden even more. The prohibitions made him continue or even expand this practice. In this sense, the impediment of these practices itself unwittingly produced them as acts of resistance. Consequently, the persistence itself, the continuation of these practices despite the ban and danger of being caught, becomes resistance. It seems therefore that these practices are impossible to forbid, as this woman puts it:

Music actually became free [zaman serbest oldu] the same time as literature. Well, the moment the bans on books, except political books, literature books was lifted, the bans on music was also lifted, but the criteria for music and literature were the same in Turkey anyway. All kinds of music and writings except those containing party propaganda like that of the PKK, Öcalan, the political [parties] HEP, DEP, or in those times DEHAP are o.k. But some of the albums of the MKM had a lot of propaganda. “Biji PKK”, the songs were always written about the PKK and they were always well made. Besides this, if such words have been removed the music passes through a committee. But the ban will also be lifted. The reason why it won’t stay forbidden, is because, well, they never managed to forbid it [yasak olmuyordu]. (Interview 30, 25 year old unemployed woman with university degree, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region due to village eviction, studied in the West)

Elaborating on the lifting of bans on the different kinds of Kurdish publications, she emphasizes that the limitations on political content remains today. Although language

⁷⁷ Lawyer Özcan Kılıç speaks in an interview of a circulation of Özgür Gündem of 60,000 in the 1990s, others name figures of 45,000 (Gülcan, 2012)

⁷⁸ In December 2011, 36 people working for Kurdish press (News Agency DIHA, Azadiya Welat and Özgür Gündem) were imprisoned (Özgür Gündem, 2012d).

⁷⁹ Seven journalists and 13 distributors killed (Özgür Gündem, 2012d); Three of their four offices were bombed in 1994 (Özgür Gündem, 2012b).

regulations were eased in 1991, publications remained impeded due to their political content. This meant that Kurdish publications were hereafter not formally banned due to the language as such, but rather because they were associated with terrorism. This explains why these harsh repressions were able to occur in the mid-1990s (especially 1992/1993), although the ban on Kurdish literature had been lifted. Media related to the PKK continued to remain directly forbidden under the Terrorism Act or were frequently sued for individual content⁸⁰. However, according to her, all bans will eventually be lifted precisely, because people do not obey them and continue these practices.

In the light of these prohibitions, buying these clandestine forms of media, reading the papers and books and listening to this music are in themselves acts of resistance against the state's repressive policies. In this sense, here, resistance is not so much a result of the *content* of this media. In other words, it is not just an effect of the raised awareness on the colonial situation. Instead, consuming these forbidden forms of media, itself, means challenging state governmentality. It means rejecting the permitted and promoted forms of conduct. These everyday practices in themselves are, therefore, clandestine forms of conduct.

According to Scott, the hidden transcript remains a "substitute for an act of assertion directly in the face of power". He sees the discourses and practices within this secluded realm as a "dress-rehearsal" for actions which will take place in the public (Scott, 1990: 115). This assumption is grounded in his understanding of power as in the hands of elites, which can be opposed and overturned. Here, however, where the power of assimilation aims at generating national selves with the appropriate conduct of life, this counter-culture becomes resistance in itself.

Many of the social movement scholars, such as Johnston and Fantasia and Hirsch as well as Polletta who address this kind of production of a counter-culture, mainly look at these practices with regard to what they provide for movements, whose activities are generally set in public settings. In this sense, these authors focus on overt actions of the "outside". Scott, for instance, also argues that the hidden transcripts always remain "rehearsals" for an enactment of them in public. Here, however, these practices can be regarded as acts of resistance in their own right. This does not mean that these knowledges, practices and sentiments do not also contribute to mobilisation for the broader armed or political struggle. However, their importance does not suffice in preparation or rehearsal for the

⁸⁰ Until April 2012, Özgür Gündem (and its predecessors) was sued for 486 of a total of 580 issues (Özgür Gündem, 2012b).

struggle which lies beyond them. Instead, we have to acknowledge how living this alternative, dissent culture in the everyday undermines the power of assimilation policies.

This counter-culture, however, differs from what Polletta calls “prefigurative” structures, which also aim at enacting alternatives to mainstream society in the present. Polletta develops this concept in contrast to “indigenous” structures, discussed above. Unlike prefigurative structures, this counter-cultural is not a deliberate and consciously developed strategy of the movement. In this sense, the counter-culture described here crosses the distinction Polletta makes between the two. The practices of this counter-culture build on and draw from the indigenous structures of the family, but also live the alternative in the now. These hidden practices, knowledges and sentiments are neither preparation nor rehearsal, but are oppositional themselves.

Chapter 7

Insurrections of Conduct

While the previous chapter illustrated the forms of counter-conduct which aim at enacting Kurdishness in multiple ways, this chapter examines concrete situations in which “insurrections of conduct” (Foucault) occur against specific techniques of power. The chapter focuses on resistance against three techniques of assimilation, the recitation of the national vow or anthem, portraits and busts of the Atatürk as well as nationalistic inscriptions into the landscape. Explaining how these rituals, objects and inscriptions function as techniques of power, the chapter investigates how they become problematic and depicts the overt and covert, intended and unintended ways in which they dodge, reject and subvert the effects of power.

7.1 BREAKING PERFORMATIVE TURKISHNESS

Rituals play a central role in reproducing state discourses, enacting nationhood and disciplining the individual accordingly. They differ, however, according to the way in which they involve the population and are tied into the every day. Some of these rituals are part of large events around official state holidays which generally involve army parades, wreath-laying ceremonies and flag waving masses. One of these days is the anniversary of the death of first Prime Minister and President of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk on which citizens are expected to stand still in commemoration at the exact time of his death, 9.05 am. Other rituals occur on a more regular basis, like the singing of the national anthem or the compulsory recitation of the national vow in school. Of all these rituals the national vow (officially called the student’s vow) is most strongly identified with the policies of assimilation. All the interviewees of this study referred to the vow when talking about assimilation.

For the past decades since its implementation in 1937 all primary school children have had to line up every morning, before the lessons started, one behind the other in their school uniforms and recite the vow usually facing a bust of Atatürk, like shown in the picture

below (figure 11). One child was chosen to go to the front and shout out line by line the words which illustratively began with “I am a Turk, I am righteous, I am hard-working”, while the others repeated in a military fashion.



Figure 11: Primary school children lining up in front of the bust of Atatürk reciting the vow (Nethaber, 2010)

During the period of this research, on 8 October 2013, an end was put to this vow. The abandonment of paragraph 12 of the Regulation of Primary School Institutions (Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı İlköğretim Kurumları Yönetmeliği) which had made this ritual compulsory was part of the so-called “democratisation package” announced by the current AKP government on the 30 September 2013. This package that was introduced in midst of a seemingly stagnating peace process half-heartedly addressed certain questions central to the Kurdish issue, such as private Kurdish language education, the letters q, x and w of the Kurdish alphabet⁸¹, the 10% threshold in the parliament elections, as well as the abandonment of the recitation of the vow in primary schools. While the package was strongly criticized by the various sides of the Kurdish Movement for trying to protract the peace process, avoiding directly naming Kurdish language⁸² as well as avoiding questions of self-government and substantial changes in the constitution, it was only praised for the abolishment of the recitation of the vow.

Despite the evident insufficiency of the democratisation package, the abolishment of the vow must be understood as a reaction to the critique put forward by the legal Kurdish party regarding this. In the past few years the party had increasingly voiced the discriminative and racial nature of the vow and also called for boycotts of the vow as part of their civil disobedience strategy. BDP co-chairman, Selahattin Demirtaş, started the boycott in April

⁸¹ See Chapter 6 regarding the ban on letters which do not belong to the Turkish alphabet. In this context the legal Kurdish party repeatedly criticized the hypocrisy of this regulation by pointing towards every governmental website which starts with *www* and end on *gov.tr*.

⁸² The government chose to use the expression “foreign dialects and languages”, a phrase commonly used by previous governments when trying to avoid naming the Kurdish issue. This choice strongly underlines the unwillingness of the current AKP government to actually change its politics towards the Kurds and can therefore still be regarded as a form of politics of denial despite their discourse on the “Kurdish brother”.

2011 by writing a letter to the head of education demanding his daughter to be exempt from reciting the vow and declaring that he would keep her away from such ceremonies (Özgür Gündem, 2011b). However, we can argue that this form of civil disobedience was happening on an everyday level long before the BDP made it part of their political strategy. The non-compliance of pupils had already factually impeded the practice of the vow in some areas of the Kurdish region, such as the strongholds of the PKK Hakkari, Cizre, or Şırnak. The abolishment of the vow in this context is, therefore, a clear reaction to the way in which the vow had been transformed from *silent* non-compliance to a publically *vocalized* political problem. While the everyday resistance had achieved its *de facto* loss of its function for some, the BDP tried to make this silent practice of resistance public and voice the critique towards the government to achieve the abolishment of the vow *de jure*. In this sense, the abolishment has to be read as a concession towards the Kurds within this peace process. However, it is a concession that was easier for the AKP to grant than others. The elimination of the ethnic-racial emphasis which the vow entailed is fully in line with the AKP's new multicultural discourse on citizenship, discussed in Chapter 3. The democratisation package did not, however, officially acknowledge the existence of the Kurds in Turkey as its reluctance to name Kurdish as a language shows and consequently did not put an end to any other rituals of nationalism. Subsequently, it did not touch compulsory rituals such as the singing of the national anthem and the various ceremonies on state holidays which continue to function as techniques of assimilation.

In the following, I will discuss the forms of everyday resistance which were practiced against the vow and show in which way they undermined the function of the vow. Because of the similar nature of some of these rituals, which includes militaristic lining up and recitation of given nationalistic texts, the forms of resistance against them, also clearly resemble each other.

7.1.1 REFUSING INJURIOUS INTERPELLATION

A first look at the words of the vow (below) immediately reveals its aim to discipline the pupils into "good citizens". It enumerates the characteristics of a Turk as righteous, hardworking, striving to advance. It mentions protecting minors and respecting elders which implies the unchallenged acceptance of given hierarchies. In similar way, the vow discourages any questioning of Atatürk's "goals" and demands obedience when it says "I vow to march without hesitation on the path you have paved". The militaristic connotation

of the term “marching”, which is also embodied in the style the pupils line up and repeat line by line, adds to the way this necessary submission of the individual to the ideas of the nation is articulated.

I'm a Turk, I'm righteous, I'm hardworking
My principle is to protect my minors, to respect my elders,
to love my country and my nation more than myself,
My principle is to rise, to advance.

O' Great Atatürk!

I vow to march without hesitation on the path you have
paved, towards the goal you have shown.
Let my existence be sacrificed to the Turkish nation,
Happy is the one who calls himself a Turk!

However, more importantly, the vow determines the existence of the Turkish nation and compels the individual child to understand and perceive itself as one of this nation. In a second step it demands to accept the superiority of this nation and therefore to submit one's own existence to this nation. In demanding the unquestioned sacrifice of one's existence, the vow engenders a superior and sacred image of the nation.

The line “I am a Turk” initiates the children to perceive themselves in this ethno-racial sense and by doing so calls them into existence as Turks. Butler uses Althusser's term of *interpellation* to describe this moment which constitutes the subject. Butler points out that what happens in this moment is not so much the control of a pre-existing subject, but rather the “juridical and social formation of the subject”, because it “initiates the individual into the subjected status of the subject” (Butler, 1993: 121). According to her, “racializing interpellations” function in similar way (Butler, 1993: 18). Instead of understanding race as pre-given, she follows theories which see race as historically constructed through the history of racism and the struggle against it. This coming into being through interpellation is, however, not a one off occasion. Instead, the subject is compelled to constantly enact this identity, which Butler calls *performativity*.

Therefore, we can argue that the line “I am a Turk” not only calls the individual into being as a “Turk”, but also instantly demands its performative enactment. The repetition of this sentence aims at *producing* them as Turks and therefore demands them to understand and perceive themselves as racialized and nationalized beings, as “racial selves” as Ann Laura Stoler (1995) describes it. Simultaneously, as described above, the vow sets the norms of how this racial and national self has to be lived, conducted, determining the relation between the individual and the whole nation as one of hierarchy and self-sacrifice.

In this way, the vow limits possible identities. It delimits the livable and unlivable ways of living. In this sense, Butler stresses the importance of recognizing how this “constitutive” calling, this subjection, carries the ambivalence of being simultaneously “enabling and violating” (Butler, 1993: 123). It *enables*, in the sense that it produces the subject and *violates* at the same time, as makes certain ways of living impossible. For many of my interviewees, the word “Turk” is experienced as what Butler calls an *injurious term*. Especially, in an atmosphere of the bans and the humiliation of Kurdish language and identity on the one hand and a growing Kurdish awareness on the other, this injurious term seems to function as a stumbling block, which initiates a questioning of the ritual and identity. Butler speaks of “mobilizing the power of injury” and asks how resistance against these terms can work if they have enabled one’s own life.

Criticizing Althusser for not having considered the “range of disobedience” the interpellation can produce, she suggests acts of resistance in form of *resignifying* these injurious terms. Butler sees ways in which this enabling but violating interpellation can be countered. For her, the possibility for resistance lies precisely in the constant failing to stabilize the boundary between the unlivable and the livable, the impossibility to perfectly reiterate the norms that define the boundary. Consequently, she advocates for making use of this instability by shifting of the reiteration of these norms, concepts and identities which delineate the boundary between unlivable and livable through. She calls this strategy *resignification* of the terms used in interpellation.

Instead of repeating the vow correctly or refusing it as a whole, many of my interviewees mentioned subverting the text by replacing the letters “T” and the “k” by a “K” and a “d” to say: “I am a Kurd. I am righteous”. This hardly audible shift is not so much a resignification of the injurious term itself, in Butler’s sense, because the term Turk is eradicated out of the children’s subverted version of the vow. Instead, the correct enactment of the ritual which demands that the word ‘Turk’ be spoken is shifted as a whole, like this interviewee recalls.

We would constantly spoil the vow. I was sent to be disciplined [discipline gönderildim] three times for spoil the vow. [...] Some of us would say “Kurdum, dogruyum” [I am a Kurd. I am righteous]. Others said “daha dogruyum” [more righteous], “Kurdum, daha dogruyum”. I would say “Kurdum, yanlışım” [I am a Kurd. I am wrong]. [laughs] (Interview 9, 25 year old male in work, grew up in larger town in the Kurdish region, higher education at very good university in the West of Turkey)

In refusing to pronounce the word “Turk”, the children not only reject the interpellation, but also refuse to the correct reiteration of the norm, that is the correct enactment of Turkishness. They reject identifying as Turks and living as such. Shifting such terms

according to Butler, means shifting the boundary of the livable and unlivable, breaking their homogeneity, opening them up like has occurred with the term “queer”. Because of its assimilative connotation of this specific term, it cannot be appropriated and used in a different context. Nevertheless, the enactment of the subjectivity which is produced by the interpellation can never be fully achieved. In this constitutive failure of the enactment lies the possibility to shift the injurious terms. In this sense, the possibility of resistance arises for Butler from this moment of injury and interpellation and as a working on the injurious terms. By replacing the word “Turk” to “Kurd” the children refuse the truth of the state: the discourse of the single nation and denial of any other ethnicities. By mouthing the “non-word” Kurd they shift the boundaries of the livable. They voice the name of the abjected nation, race, ethnicity and therefore open up an alternative for themselves.

7.1.2 PARODIC REPETITIONS

However, exchanging Turk for Kurds was only one of many ways how my interviewees mentioned *spoiling* the vow. Singing other songs, changing the words, and not standing upright are also common ways in which these rituals are undermined, like this interviewee describes.

Do you know what we would do? Instead of saying “and icerim” (I vow), we would say “ayran icerim” (I drink ayran). For us it was hilarious. We really enjoyed it. First, it was just a few of us, but at some point there were over 15 of us in class saying it. And it even spread to other schools in our area. Do you know the way it spread? I told a friend, how much fun it was and s/he some else and so on. That’s how it spread. It was brilliant! Changing “Turk” for “Kurd” came later, when we were more aware and it became easier to say that we were Kurds. For a while we also sang Ciwan Haco’s song *Se Se*. Do you know it? It goes “se se se-se”. It was really popular at the time. While let’s say half of the class was reciting normally, we would sing “se se” in between. You could hardly hear it. [...] And you know that you have to stand straight like this [imitates it], right? We would stand with bent knees. Not attending was also an option. But then, you would get a fail and they would ask where you were and why you didn’t come and you’d get into trouble. (Interview 9, 25 year old male in work, grew up in larger town in the Kurdish region, higher education at very good university in the West of Turkey)

This passage highlights the different ways in which the children avoided a correct enactment of the vow. He makes clear that they chose ways to spoil the vow which were not instantly audible, like the song he mentions, or visible like bending their knees. Also his first example of changing the words “and” for “ayran” works precisely, because of the hardly audible difference, which nevertheless totally refutes the seriousness of the act. The similar words are cleverly chosen in a way that camouflages the subversion. By changing

the word “I swear” into something out of context and funny, the children are not only enjoying themselves, they are also parodying the serious ritual.

Instead of enacting the ritual correctly, the children play with its enactment. They fulfil the ritual, but in a way which subverts its goals. In this sense, it is what Butler describes as parody. Some form of conformity is kept while the performance is ridiculed: a “parodic inhabiting of conformity” as Butler calls it (Butler, 1993: 122). For Butler, parody of the performance has a subversive potential. In *Gender Trouble*, she illustrates how *drag* renders visible the performative character of gender norms and questions the idea of the original and natural (Butler, 1990: 175). It plays with the common idea of the natural unity of sex and gender by disturbing assumptions of which is the “true” and “false” sex and gender. In this sense, the drag performance parodies gender norms and reveals them as a reiteration of the norms, an imitation, a copy.

Butler’s concept of parody gathered quite some critique after the publication of *Gender Trouble* regarding the actual subversiveness of parody to which she reacted in *Bodies that Matter* (1993). There she acknowledges that not every form of parody is necessarily subversive, especially if it becomes appropriated into a dominant discourse. However, she adheres to its potential to at least question the dominant enactment of the norms.

It appears useful to understand the children’s incorrect recitation of the vow as a “parodic repetition” (Butler, 1990: 176) in Butler’s sense. The moment the children replace the word *Türk* for *Kurd* in the context of the vow, they not only reject the dominant discourses, but also expose the un-naturalness of the idea of the *Turkish* nation. They expose the necessary enactment, repetition as such, just as Butler describes for parody. In contrast to Butler’s concept, however, this shift in reiteration of the vow does not totally refute the idea of a pre-discursive ethnic identity as such.

As the interviewee cited above explains later in the interview, this form of minor resistance did not require any complicated knowledge, but rather relied on what was well-known to the children. Unlike replacing the term “Türk” through “Kurd”, these forms of subverting the vow occurred in times when the children had not yet developed the necessary awareness and it was not easy to express a Kurdish identity. What this passage also underlines is that the forms of resistance the children chose were clearly ways of having fun. Turning the compulsory ritual into an enjoyable parodic enactment blurs any distinction between resistance and fun.

7.1.4 SILENT NON-COMPLIANCE

These forms of parody are chosen due to the illusion of conformity which they achieve. The children formally participate in the ritual. They line up and seemingly recite the words. However, behind this formal compliance they subvert the enactment. As the interviewee above indicates, these ways of resisting the vow are chosen because they do not attract immediate attention and punishment. The illusion of conformity protects them to a great extent from the negative consequences that dodging the rituals as a whole would have. For this reason, the children refrain from open defiance and confrontation, but choose to subvert the ritual “amidst overt compliance”, as James C. Scott phrases it (Scott, 1985: 242).

Besides changing the words of the vow, refusing to recite the vow or anthem clearly by murmuring or just miming the words is also common ways of subverting the vow. All these forms are “silent” forms of non-compliance which do not aim necessarily at public visibility. Like altering of the words of the vow, open critique is not the initial goal of these practices, but instead of speaking out altered words of the vow, here the children chose to refuse their voice. Whether the cleverly chosen shifted words or the rejection of voice, these practices only become audible the more participate. Until then, these practices remain individual refusal of compliance in the rituals of Turkishness. Like Scott’s example of footdragging, the resistance is hardly visible, because it lies in the incorrect enactment. Although these acts are done in public space – due to the nature of the ritual, their visibility is impeded by what Scott calls, the “mask of public compliance” (Scott, 1985: 34). The children stand in the middle of the school yard reciting the vow, no doubt a public act. However, these practices of resistance are individual, private and covert not due to the location of the act, but depending on the volume of their voices and the number of those who join in. While for those practices in which words are changed or other songs are sung, this means a collective strong voice, in the case of only mouthing the words, what makes this resistance overt is *silence*. These practices of resistance amidst formal compliance are not covert by definition, but rather become overt the more participate. This complicates the distinctions between overt and covert, individual and collective practices.

Similarly, the practice of dodging the ceremonies altogether by coming late or leaving early, as some describe, is no doubt also a silent form of resistance. It also refrains from direct conflict. As one of my interviewees points out, it could even be regarded as less overt and challenging than changing the words of the ritual, because it does not desecrate the official act (Interview 12). However, interestingly, this is not the case. Despite its silent form, it is more likely to arouse attention by authorities, such as the teachers. As the disciplining

function of the vow demands every individual pupil to comply, participation is strictly controlled. Consequently, the quiet resistance of “dropping out” actually becomes a highly visual and overt form of resistance.

7.1.5 COLLECTIVE REFUSAL IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF STRENGTH

As described above, these practices of resistance are initially no forms that aim at achieving visibility and do not rely of collective organisation. Nevertheless, they proliferate in a beneficial atmosphere. The interviewee quoted above locates the reason why that specific form of subverting the vow spread so widely in the fun the children had in doing it. Similarly, this man describes how the individual strategies such as refusing to sing or recite, changing the words or dodging the ritual, merge into collective behaviour:

In grammar school, they would try to make us sing the national anthem for hours, but we stubbornly wouldn't. So, they had to play it from tape in the end. One time, when we were standing ready like that, we started to sing a revolutionary song. There is also a famous national poem we used to ridicule the words we thought were strange. It was a way of having fun. Sometimes we totally stayed at home. We refused it, but it was a refusal that came from somewhere in us. But we sometimes also collectively decided not to go to class. (Interview 31, 30 year old man with university education from a very good university in the West, in work)

He illustrates collective behaviour both in form of small groups which decided to stay away from the ceremonies together, as well as actions that involved the whole group of students who collectively refused to sing the anthem. He even points out the success which their reoccurring refusal to sing the national anthem for hours had. According to his account, it was their collective effort that resulted in the anthem being played from tape and meant a (at least momentary) end to the compulsory recitation.

The possibility to engage in such acts of resistance, their form and the degree of overtness and frequency seems to differ strongly according to the region. Interviewees who had grown up on e.g. Izmir and Bursa expressed that it was more difficult to refuse the ritual, than those who had grown up in the Kurdish region. The extent of these practices of resistance also seems to differ depending on the year and the strength of the Kurdish Movement in the specific area. This coincides with the memories of other interviewees who recall individual refusal to occur in primary school, while more organised boycotts was more frequent during their secondary education when their political awareness had increased. The reason for this should not be tied to an increase in individual consciousness, but rather to the change in strength of the Movement. These acts of resistance seem to

proliferate in an atmosphere in which state policies and national rituals such as the vow become increasingly questioned as has been the case since the armed struggle begun. The examples of collective refusal which the interview above describes all occurred while he was in grammar school, in the mid or late 1990 when the PKK had already established quite some strength among the population and managed to openly challenge state dominance.

The repression by the state did not immediately subside with increase of the Movement, on the contrary. However, the Movement enabled two things: the identification as Kurds as described in Chapter 5 and what I would like to call an *atmosphere of strength*. This does not mean that the PKK instructed the young people to resist in this way, like this man highlights:

[T]he PKK didn't order anyone to spoil the vow. I mean, they couldn't anyway. We were children: 8,9,10. And if they had, we wouldn't have done it anyway. [...] Also later, when we were older, in secondary school, there was no such instruction. No, this developed totally by itself. Naturally. You know "ayran" every child know this word. We were enjoying ourselves. (Interview 9, 25 year old male in work, grew up in larger town in the Kurdish region, higher education at very good university in the West of Turkey)

Instead of being instigated by the PKK, he argues that the acts of resistance developed "naturally", by themselves. However, this supportive atmosphere generated by the PKK enabled so forms of resistance to develop. The strength of the PKK among the population facilitated these kinds of resistance practices to become more overt or turn into collective action, while they did not in the West. Teachers who work in strongly pro-PKK areas told me that it is impossible to try to implement such kinds of national ceremonies in the areas where they are teaching. As soon as new teachers arrive the children directly approach them and ask for their political affiliation by showing the hand signs: victory sign for those who are pro-Kurdish and the sign of the grey wolves for nationalists. This not only indicates that nationalist teachers are immediately exposed, rather than automatically excepted as an authority, but also that such nationalist and assimilative rituals are practically impeded. Shortly before the vow was abolished, these forms of resistance are more common in the Kurdish region. In other regions where the PKK is not strong, like the area where the former interviewee grew up, acts of resistance only proliferated more widely when the AKP started its multiculturalism discourse and made it a little easier to refer to themselves as Kurds. He mentions that then even those joined in who had before been afraid to call themselves Kurds (Interview 9).

The Movement enables a different atmosphere in which these rituals become *unsayable*. Where such an atmosphere of strength exists, non-compliance and more overt and

collective resistance can occur more easily, despite the presence of punishment for such actions. The account of this interviewee illustrates exactly this.

Every Monday, we were supposed to sing the national anthem. But the grammar school students always warned us not to sing it. So, we didn't. None of us. One day, the director of our school got so mad about this he got out his gun and shouted at us "you bastards". It ended in a fight with the grammar school students. (Interview 16, 28 year old woman with university education, in work, she was born in a village but migrated to the city within the Kurdish region when she was an infant)

Her account shows how they were directly mobilised by other students to non-comply despite the violent reaction of the director which they could have anticipated. James C. Scott (Scott, 1990) argues that it is precisely the supportive subculture and the knowledge that the risk for the single resister is reduced if the whole community is involved, that make it plausible to speak of everyday resistance as a social movement. My interviews did not express this kind of shared risk. On the contrary, the emphasis of the interviewees lay rather on a kind of "spontaneity" or "naturalness" of the acts of resistance. As one of the interviewees above states, the actions seems to come "from somewhere in us", which evokes the image of a nearly bodily reaction, a kind of repulsion against these rituals of nationalism. These practices seem to develop and increase in the *slipstream* of the strength of the PKK.

7.1.6 REFUSING THE EMOTIONAL BIND

In contrast to this, forms of resistance can take an even more covert form especially when and where this atmosphere of strength does not exist. Such forms of resistance remain on the emotional or bodily level. Especially, in times and places where the risk of punishment was high, it seems that covert resistance only takes place on the level of emotions, like this interviewee who grew up in Izmir describes. Commenting on the possibility to react to the constant nationalist talks of her teachers, she argues:

You can't show any reaction, because they will send you to be disciplined [diszipline gönderecek]. You need to finish school [mecbursun]. During my time at school, nobody was expelled, but it had happened before. When they gave us these talks [about keeping away from political groups], we couldn't do much against it. You are only a student after all, you have no status. You get fed up. Even in the rain you have to recite the vow or sing the anthem. People get bored. The Kurds don't believe it anyway, we didn't take it serious, but you become aware. We are students and they are giving us these speeches. Sometimes someone said, "you keep on telling us that", but they didn't react to it. (Interview 36, 23 year old housewife with secondary school education, who grew up in the West)

In her account she makes very clear that she was aware of the negative consequences of openly resisting or criticizing these national ceremonies and racist behaviour of the teachers. Although during her time at school nobody was expelled, the memory of punishments in the past had been passed on to her so that she felt it as a realistic threat. She also mentions the importance of finishing school, which would have been endangered by possible punishments. As a student, she says, “you have no status”: you are at the teacher’s mercy. In this atmosphere of threat, it seems that not taking the ceremonies seriously is an alternative to open critique. She depicts reciting the vow or singing the anthem as irritating, bound into a logic of compulsory rituals and force. She describes how she got fed up and bored of these ceremonies and mentions having to fulfil these rituals in the rain as an example to show the arbitrariness or senselessness of the act. These are forms of emotional detachment from a ritual that demands everyone’s full participation and aims at binding them emotionally.

The way in which this nationalistic ritual of reciting the vow is given importance and is bound into a system of competition, praise and gratification very often makes the children initially want to be part of them. Children are often asked to write poems and short stories for Atatürk. They have to memorize the vow, the anthem or his address to the youth and are put in competition to each other. In this way, these rituals become a way of being accepted and receiving praise. Being the one who leads the vow fills the child with pride and excitement. Therefore, in this case, the ritual is not so much a simple routine, but rather an exercise done with passion. Especially, if these rituals are to function as a technique of assimilation then they have to be practiced with love, admiration, passion.

The children want to share the emotions, like the following interviewee describes. Her words illustrate how she actually wanted to “admire Atatürk”, but felt it would clash with her family.

You want to admire [hayran olmak] it, too. You want to share this feeling, but at home you can’t tell anyone that you are an admirer of Atatürk. (Interview 16, 28 year old woman with university education, in work, she was born in a village but migrated to the city within the Kurdish region when she was an infant).

Using “you” instead of “I”, she explains her own dilemma of not being able to tell her family that she also admires Atatürk. This dilemma reveals the strong emotional bind of the rituals. The glorification of Atatürk appears as something purely emotional for her, as a feeling which she wants to share. Despite the political background of her family, which she is aware of, she is just as much taken in by this as any other child. Her words also reveal the

double bind of the emotional investment: to share this feeling of being part of the group she has to admire, adore Atatürk.

On the one hand these emotions with which these rituals are invested explain why it would be wrong to assume that being forced to pronounce the words “I am a Turk” automatically triggers resistance and therefore question Butler’s assumption of the injurious character of the interpellation. We can argue that just like the process of becoming aware of being Kurdish which was discussed in the Chapter 5, injurious terms are not felt as such from the outset, but rather *become* to be felt this way. On the other hand, it also indicates how a detachment from these emotions can be an act of resistance.

This woman also reflects on the feeling of pride and popularity which she saw attached to being able to recite the vow and points out that as Kurdish children they always had a problem with this feeling.

Hissing the flag, reciting those poems were [everyone’s] favourite, it made you popular. They tried to infuse [aşılamaya çalışıyorlardı] us with this feeling. We Kurdish children experienced problems because of that feeling. [O duygu yüzünden biz Kürt çocuklar problem yaşadık]. But, it was always a police child that recited it. And I hated the police and the police children. (Interview 30, 25 year old unemployed woman with university degree, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region due to village eviction, studied in the West)

Although she also wants to share this feeling, she identifies in hindsight all those who were able to recite the vow well as those who she is opposed to, those who she hated: in this case the children of police officers. She describes having a problem with the emotions that they were infused with. She sees a difference between herself and the police children in this respect, because she didn’t have the same emotional tie to the ritual as the police children. It seems impossible for her to achieve this feeling of pride for the nation as the others have.

Despite not deliberately subverting, disrupting or stopping the reciting of the vow itself, the students seem to be rejecting the passion and love demanded by the ritual. Feeling fed up and bored reveals the vow as a “senseless” and compulsory ritual. It indicates that the interpellation function of the vow as well as the truth of the nation that is carried through it is undermined, especially when she adds that Kurds do not believe the words anyway and do not take the rituals seriously. This indifference questions the authority of the vow without necessarily subverting it. By detaching themselves from its emotional bind and refusing the seriousness it demands, the function of the vow is subverted, despite their apparent compliance.

7.2 IN THE FACE OF THE STATE: OVERT AND COVERT ICONOCLASM

The distribution of monuments is a common practice in order to symbolize and spread national ideology (Sidaway & Mayell, 2007: 148). They materialize the discourses around the history of the nation, the battles and victories and play their part in writing the official history by visualizing what should be remembered and what forgotten (B. Anderson, 2006). They “animate” towns and cities as Kemalist, as Houston argues (Houston, 2005: 104). Busts, statues and portraits of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, which can be found all over the country in official settings such as schools, town halls, main squares, police stations and military compounds as well as in institutions such as banks, shops and businesses. His effigy decorates the first page of schools books, calendars and all kinds of knickknack.

However, in this case we can argue that these effigies of Atatürk function as governmental tools to produce loyal Turkish citizens. Like the rituals and inscriptions, discussed in the previous sections, these monuments play a role in interpellating and producing the individual as a Turkish national. Especially, the busts play an integral part in the rituals in schools, as the vow was recited facing the bust. Consequently, we can argue that the various statues throughout the towns and cities are an extension of these interpellating rituals.

As Yael Navaro-Yashin (2002) emphasizes in her book *Faces of the State*, Atatürk, himself, is endowed with a “sacred status”. She describes the attitude towards him as a form of “religiosity”. Giving him a god-like immortal character, unquestionable and sacrosanct, his “sacredness” is attached to the nation. The Turkish nation has become narrated as unthinkable without Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Atatürk, the leading military figure in the war of independence and the foundation of the Republic, has been constructed as the *father* of the nation.

This glorification of the historical person Atatürk, the “love for Atatürk” as my interviewees phrase it, is mirrored in the fetishization of the monuments, statues and portraits of him. Fetishization, here, understood as endowed with “sacred” qualities, untouchable, unquestionable, obscuring the history of violence attached to the founding of the republic. Although the iconization of Atatürk begins in the early years of the Republic, according to Aylin Tekiner’s (2010) detailed study on the *Cult, Aesthetics and Politics* around Atatürk monuments, the extreme fetishization increases throughout the following decades and culminates in the absolute omnipresence and standardization of statues, busts and portraits after the 1980s Coup and the commodification of them in the 1990s.

The three photographs below (figures 12-14) taken in Diyarbakir illustrate in which way the omnipresence of the effigies of Atatürk developed and what this means for the policies of assimilation. They show the three most common forms of statues of Atatürk: the trinity of *head* of the military (fig. 12), *head-teacher* of the nation (fig. 13), *head* of the state (fig. 14).



Figure 12: The statue of Atatürk in military uniform at the square of the Governor (Vilayet, September 2011).



Figure 13: The statue of the “Head-teacher” Atatürk with two children (September 2011).



Figure 14: The historical walls of Diyarbakir decorated with the portrait of Atatürk in civil formal clothing and the national flag (September 2011).

The first image shows the monument at the square near the offices of Governor of Diyarbakir (Vilayet). It was erected in 1964 and is located in the middle of a small park and at the end of a marble avenue where official memorial ceremonies are held. The figure of Atatürk in military clothing is placed on a base in front of a white obelisk which rises to more than twice its height behind it. According to Tekiner, the monuments in the early period of the Republic attained to a mixture of tasks. On the one hand, they were designed to create a specific official historical memory by demonstrating the military victory in the war of independence (Tekiner, 2010: 65), but also by symbolizing the simultaneous break and continuity from the Ottoman Empire as well as a new beginning. On the other hand, they were used to visualize the “new style of life” (Tekiner, 2010: 89) and the character of the nation. Erecting monuments, itself, was part of the politics of Westernisation of the new government in the sense that they had not been common in the Ottoman Empire. While Atatürk is usually depicted in military clothing, complementary figures were often added which symbolized characteristics of the nation: such as intelligence, cautiousness, courageousness, activity and self-sacrifice (Tekiner, 2010: 95).

With the 1980s coup the monuments and statues become rapidly more omnipresent, standardized and fetishized, in the sense that they were seemingly endowed with life. In an effort to depict itself as the most adherent to Atatürk’s heritage and demonstrate its

omnipresence, the military government strongly increased the distribution of these monuments. Every district was supplied with a monument, especially in the Kurdistan region in Turkey (Tekiner, 2010: 199-200). While approximately 50 monuments had been erected in the first 40 years of the Republic and about 100 between 1960 and 1980, the number of statues and monuments built after the coup has become uncountable. Tekiner cites, Necati İnci, a sculptor of the time says he produced over 500 statues, 200 replicas of one type alone. The statues were no longer commissioned through competitions held by art committees like in the early years, but rather produced on order of military or administrative personnel, which is indicative for the commodification of the image of Atatürk in the years to come (Tekiner, 2010: 198).

These statues, of which figure 13 is a perfect example, generally consisted of individual standing figures of Atatürk, interestingly in civil rather than military clothing, often holding a book under one arm like a teacher (Tekiner, 2010: 201). They were made from a few standardized template-moulds of body parts which could be reassembled in different ways resulting in lower production costs and time (Tekiner, 2010: 231). This form of production led to an extreme standardization of the statues. What had originally begun with the compliance of different artists who feared consequences for not fulfilling the officially accepted image of Atatürk, was finalized by the systematic production technology (Tekiner, 2010: 178).

More than before, the figure of Atatürk was used as an instrument of homogenization. The military government tried to standardize their specific understanding of Kemalism (Atatürkçülük)⁸³ which they managed to turn into an authoritarian, extreme nationalist, anti-communist doctrine with conservative Islamic reference (Tekiner, 2010: 191-2). Compulsory classes on Atatürk's thought were established in the school curriculum and the book of his speeches, *Nutuk*, became prominently used in the monuments. For Tekiner, this indicates a new dimension of his cult, in which Atatürk's thoughts have become a doctrine symbolized in the form of a "holy book".

The use of Atatürk's face like a mask rather than a whole statue, as shown in figure 14, further heightens the increasing abstraction. For Tekiner, the mask with the serious look and bushy eye brows is both detached from Atatürk as a person and totally void of any political content. Overall she argues, the extensive use of monuments of Atatürk, especially

⁸³ Tekiner differentiates here between Kemalism and Atatürkçülük which could be translated as Atatürkism. While Kemalism is the term favoured by the Left, Atatürkçülük is used by conservative and right-wing organisations. Both represent a different interpretation of the principals of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

in front of state institutions such as province and district governors, municipalities etc. triggered a shift from immortalizing his *person* to iconizing the *state* (Tekiner, 2010: 203). In this sense, we can argue that - despite the on-going reference to his person - the more standardized and abstract the statues became, the more they became identified with the state. The fetishization of the monument itself coincides with its iconization of the state. It is this “statuemanía”, as Tekiner calls it, of the recent 35 years that arouses both overt and covert acts of defacement against busts, statues and portraits of Atatürk which I turn to now.

In this context of excessive omnipresence, Kurds grapple with their position towards the figure of Atatürk. On the level of political discourse, positions oscillate between him as fore-thinker of the assimilation policies and the massacre or genocide of the Kurds of Dersim which occurred in 1937/38, around the year he died, and his early references to Turkey as a multi-ethnic state and a possible autonomy for the Kurds in his speech in İzmit in 1923. Requirements to hang up a portrait of him have been used to inhibit political initiatives by the BDP, such as the educational support houses⁸⁴. In daily life, some try to negotiate their position like one interviewee who argues that she loved both Atatürk and Öcalan (Interview 22). More often, however, Atatürk is identified with the state and its policies of denial of the existence of the Kurds and assimilation politics. Consequently, the portraits, busts and statues of him are target of various forms of overt and covert acts of destruction and defacement.

7.2.1 COVERT ICONOCLASM: REJECTING AUTHORITY AND COUNTERING SELF-ASSIMILATION

Both adults and children confront busts, statues and portraits of Atatürk regularly in their everyday life. While it is easier for the majority of adults to choose to ignore them, school children are obliged to participate in rituals, such as the reciting of the vow, that involve the bust. His life and principles are taught, memorized and tested in school; his birthday is commemorated with celebrations. Children are animated to draw pictures and write poems for him; and portraits of him decorate classrooms and school books. As a reaction to this, two of my interviewees described ripping out the first pages of the school books showing a picture of Atatürk. Despite their age difference of 11 years, these interviewees share the same practice.

⁸⁴ In February 2012 the educational support house in Batman was closed on the grounds that his portrait was not displayed in the classrooms (Özgür Gündem, 2012a).

I used to rip out the first pages of all my school books, because Atatürk was on it. We would all rip them into pieces. One day, my teacher checked my book and he hit us. This was about three years ago. (Interview 29, 18 year old female secondary student)

I didn't like [the official ceremonies at school]. I [didn't like] him anyway. I didn't like a person if they talked about Atatürk. In secondary school [Ortaokul] I would rip out the first page of all the books I got (laughs). (Interview 30, 25 year old unemployed woman with university degree, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region due to village eviction, studied in the West)

Both interviewees clearly state that ripping out the first page of their school book had to do with wanting to destroy the effigy of Atatürk. Especially, the second of these two clearly expresses her negative feelings towards this sacred figure, the icon. She could not stand to hear people talking about him and this hate lead her to destroy the images of Atatürk in her school books. The first interviewee also indicates quite some emotion, when she emphasizes that they not only ripped the front pages *out*, but also ripped them *into pieces*. Still today, the second interviewee laughs when she remembers it, enjoying the memory of this small act of resistance. The cause for this destruction of the portraits is narrated as purely emotional. It is not rational insight about their function that leads to their destruction. Their emotions are reactions to the fetishism around the effigies of him experienced in school. It is the fetishization of the portrait that triggers its own destruction. However, the fetishism of his effigies and the glorification of his person is not experienced separate from the assimilation policies and the disciplining into Turks. The ritualistic celebration of his person as the father of the Turks, especially in schools, is directly connected with the disciplinary practices of turkification. Consequently, his effigies are experienced as a tool of assimilation in themselves. In this way, we can understand on the one hand the hate that these portraits arouse and on the other the joy in destructing them as consequences of their fetishism. They become unbearable to see and therefore generate their own destruction, despite the punishment they are confronted with if discovered.

This practice, however, does not aim at ridiculing the father figure. Instead, it aims at getting rid of the effigy; eradicating the face of the father of the nation from sight; making it invisible for themselves. By doing so, the children enact their own refusal and opposition which breaks the omnipresence of these effigies and therefore disable their specific power as technique of assimilation.

This practice of resistance does not rely on gaining attention. Instead, it is done covertly. Although they can share it with others if they wish, it is not about changing the situation for anyone else or demonstrating the subversion or change, but rather a seemingly “private” act, something which stays between themselves and the image. It is a statement for

themselves; an enactment of non-compliance which only they themselves know of. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the notion of self-assimilation is very strong. Accordingly, leaving the effigy identified as a tool of assimilation untouched means *allowing* assimilation to work, in other words: complying. Hence, ripping out these pictures is a way to prove their own effort against self-assimilation.

The same form of individual refusal of compliance and self-assimilation can be found in the following anecdote of a teacher. She describes how one of her pupils reacts to winning a prize for memorizing Atatürk's life.

One of the children in my class received a prize for some homework. The prize was a wreath with Atatürk on it. S/he refused to take it home, but the head of school sent it to her/his home. But the interesting thing is that [to win it] s/he had memorized Atatürk's life. (Interview 22, 30 year old female teacher in precarious working conditions, only moved within the region for her studies)

This example summarizes very well the paradox of resistance within this system of assimilation policies. To be accepted and be able to participate in social life, school education, etc. the individual is compelled to participate in these acts of nationalism, such as participating in competitions on narrating Atatürk's life or reciting the vow. Although the child has to go along with the curriculum, its tasks and competitions, s/he resists where s/he can by refusing the prize. The anecdote also shows how difficult it is to escape this system, because the head of school insists on overruling the child's rejection of the prize by sending it to her/him.

This act of resistance undermines the importance with which the portraits are endowed. Similar to the practices described above, it does not ridicule or desecrate the effigy. It rather challenges the authority of this sacred father. These practices are acts of impeding the influence of the portrait over themselves, attempts to temporarily disable the functioning of the assimilation policies. In this sense, they do not *deface* the portraits, but rather *efface* the icon from their everyday lives.

7.2.2 DESECRATION: BREAKING THE GLORIFICATION

In contrast to these forms of quiet removal, other acts of resistance deliberately aim at *defacing* the effigies. Instead of ripping out the first page, this man, for example, remembers drawing on the portray of Atatürk in her school book.

In our Turkish book Atatürk's picture is on the first page. We would always draw on it. Our teacher would warn us not to do it. (Interview 31, 30 year old man with university education, in work, studied in the West)

This practice intends to manipulate the picture of Atatürk. Drawing on the effigy of the sacred figure is a way of rejecting the glorification they were taught to perform. The glorification and fetishization is *inscribed* into the pictures, to use a notion of Michael Taussig. In his book *Defacement*, Taussig (1999) draws on Robert Musil, who argues that the specific nature of monuments to simultaneously turn something living into “dead” material and endow the dead material with “life” *incites* defacement. In other words, these busts, portraits and monuments turn a person into an object, while at the same time endowing the object, the paper or cast iron, with *life*.

However, according to Taussig, Musil also assumes that monuments are “invisible” in everyday life, because they are routinized. For him, the sacredness of monuments is *effaced* through the everyday habitual behaviour (Taussig, 1999: 54). Consequently, he argues that it is the defacement that reinstates the “life” into these forgotten monuments. Defacement, itself, has the “paradoxical effect” of animating dead matter; the “magical animation” of statues which makes them “come ‘alive’ precisely when they are destroyed and put to ‘death’ – defaced, as if their secret emerges from deep within so as to displace their status as representations and by magic become instead that which they represented” (Taussig, 1999: 161, 255, 146).

In the Turkish context, however, the monuments and other effigies of Atatürk hardly turn invisible or go unseen through mundane everyday behaviour. On the contrary, especially in schools, they are constantly ensured of their sacredness through their involvement in rituals. It is, therefore, this fetishism that keeps them constantly visible and alive.

In this sense, the defacement here does not bring “alive” what is *dead*, but rather plays with the notion that the monument is *alive*. This becomes very obvious in acts such as the following, in which the statue is involved as if human. Here, the interviewee recalls friends climbing onto the statue and making unambiguous “obscene” signs.

Another time, some of my friends – they were about 12 years – climbed onto the statue of Atatürk and made some obscene signs. The director called the police. I can't tell you how hard they hit the child. But afterwards he said, I don't regret. Who knows, maybe he also went [to fight]. (Interview 16, 28 year old woman with university education, in work, she was born in a village but migrated to the city within the Kurdish region when she was an infant)

In contrast to the covert practices above, this act appeals to a certain public. Although hidden by the guise of the children's game, this act does not go unrecognised and therefore has serious consequences. Similarly to the previous example, the children refuse to enact the demanded respect and glorification towards the statue. However, it goes beyond simple rejection as it takes the personhood of the statue for face value and insults it by acting as if it were a person. In this sense, this defacement unmistakably works as *desecration*. It attacks its sacred aura. In doing so, it ridicules the fetishized nature, which the busts and pictures have assumed.

According to Laragh Larsen's (2012) study on the handling of colonial monuments in Kenya after the independence, it made a big difference for the British authorities if the monuments were personifications of a historical person. In that case, the ex-colonial authorities were not only worried about the defacement, but also just the simple decay of monuments which resembled people, the monarchs as well as other colonial figures. Any ruin of such monuments was understood to "cause deep hurt and offence", as Larsen cites the Deputy Governor (Larsen, 2012: 48). Similarly, here, the fact that the statues are personifications of Atatürk himself heightens the glorification of the statues, busts and pictures, despite all recent abstraction. The "obscene" sign only receives the desecrating quality, because the monument resembles Atatürk as a person. In this sense, the assault plays directly, with the fact that the object is a personification of Atatürk and *alive* in the sense described above.

This underlines that this act is not regarded as negligible children's behaviour. On the contrary, it is ranked as an insult to the nation and state, and equated with an act of terrorism. In fact, there is a law that regulates the punishment of such acts of desecration of the statues etc.: the Law on Crimes against Atatürk (No. 5816) commonly known as the Atatürk Protection Law. It was introduced by the newly elected conservative Party (DP) in 1951 after an apparent rise in attacks on monuments and busts of Atatürk⁸⁵. According to statistics recorded since 1987, every year an average of 50-70 cases are filed in respect to this law, leading to around 30-45 convictions and 25-35 acquittals per year (Zaman, 2009). Even if they are not tried for these kind of acts, the children are labelled potential terrorists and therefore as a threat to society. Often, as another interviewee points out, the child's

⁸⁵ These attacks were orchestrated by a group called Tıcanı and rose to 17 attacks in one night, which resulted in the government designing this law. However, according to Ayşe Hür, it seems that this group was actually connected to the Kemalist party CHP itself, which was founded by Atatürk and had just lost the government after multi-party rule was established in 1950. It seems that the CHP was trying to provoke by instigating these attacks against the monuments (Hür, 2008). This shows the central role of Atatürk and the commemoration of him in form of statues etc. for politics even in these early years after his death.

behaviour is quickly extrapolated, so that the whole family is accused of being PKK supporters (Interview 16). Police and terrorist prevention teams take a particular interest in these children and try to recruit them as informants or they are often repeatedly thrown out of school. For some, joining the PKK is a way of escaping this vicious circle. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the interviewee above imagines that the child might have joined the PKK as a guerrilla.

The reason for such a strong reaction towards such desecration of the monuments, such as equating it with terrorism lies, according to Taussig, in the “transgression of the taboo” (Taussig, 1999: 39) that occurs with the defacement. In this context, this taboo finds its expression in the discourse on the “sensitivity of the Turkish nation” [Turk ulusun hassasiyeti]. This term summarizes the inviolability and sacredness around the statues of Atatürk, the national flag and the indivisibility of the nation. The defacement violates this “sensitivity”, and thereby visualizes the fetishized character of the object. Accordingly, Taussig phrases: “what defacement does, like a magic wand, is no more than to tap the object to bring these otherwise obscure or concealed inner powers flooding forth” (Taussig, 1999: 43). For Taussig, this is a “sobering conclusion” to find out that all this defacement does is always already inherent in the object, “its destiny” (Taussig, 1999: 43). In other words, the defacement transgresses the taboo precisely, because it takes its sacredness for face value. Taussig speaks of the “mimetic ‘fit’ between the object and its defacement” (Taussig, 1999: 39). This “power of mimesis” reveals the glorification of the monuments by violating the law of inviolability/sacred.

This *mimetic fit* between the act of defacement and the object is also visible in the subtle act of resistance, which stay unrecognized by the teachers.

We used to memorize and recite: I am a Turk, I am righteous every day anyway. We were forced to memorize it. What else did they teach us? Turkish and there was a bust of Mustafa Kemal, at the entrance. We had to clean it every morning. Sometimes we cleaned it with our spit. (Interview 27, 35 year old man, grew up in a village which was evicted, then forced to migrate to larger town in Kurdish region)

As an act of care and respect, cleaning the bust is the utmost enactment of glorification. At the same time, here, the compulsory cleaning of the bust is a blatant example of disciplinary practices of assimilation. Instead of rejecting the whole task forced upon him, which would have been punished, he cleverly chooses a way to express his discontent or hatred in a way which is not clearly visible, but unmistakably desecrates that bust. Spitting at someone, especially in the face is a clear act of disrespect. At the same time spit can be

used to clean an object. Playing with this fine line between the legal and the illegal, he successfully undermines the sacred inviolability given to the bust in a way that plays with the fetishism around the bust.

7.2.3 THE UNBEARABLE CARVED IN STONE: TORTURE AND THE BUST

This example also illustrates how the defacement is triggered by the direct connection between the fetishization of Atatürk busts and the policies of assimilation. Reflecting further on the reason for his action, the same interviewee elaborates on this link between assimilation and the representations of Atatürk:

Well, on the one hand we maybe also didn't see him as a human being and on the other hand they were teaching me a language at school I didn't know. [...] And I was very often beaten for example for not knowing some words or pronouncing them wrongly. I was very often beaten there. For example, they hit my nails with a ruler or our fingers with a metal stick. They hit our heads against the board. And that bust was there. The people, who did this to us, who hit us, insulted us, hit our heads against the board, they valued this bust and wanted us to clean it every morning. [...] Every week, at the opening and closing of school, they made us sing the national anthem in front of it. That was the situation and his name was constantly commemorated. One of the first words they taught us was the word "Atatürk". And this was the name of the bust. (Interview 27, 35 year old man, grew up in a village which was evicted, then forced to migrate to larger town in Kurdish region)

He makes a clear connection between the humiliation and pain he suffered from the teachers and his feelings towards the bust and unmistakably connects being forced to learn Turkish with his hate for the figure of Atatürk. "Atatürk" is one of the first words that the children learn and cleaning his bust every morning is part of the ritual disciplining in school just as speaking Turkish is. This illustrates the link between turkification and disciplining into a loyal citizen. The experience of being punished and forced to learn Turkish by his teachers results in an opposed behaviour regarding the bust. His words highlight the discrepancy between the fetishization of the bust by the teachers and his own feeling, when he phrases that he was taught to believe that Atatürk "was the name of the bust". For him the bust is a thing, an object of worship of the violators. While fetishism endows the bust with personhood, he cautiously states that he might not have seen "him as a human being". The way his defacement plays with the *personhood* relies on this difference in attitude towards the bust. He does not share the same awe towards this object as the teachers. The myth around the object is not his myth. In other words, their myth is interrupted through the experience of violence. Other practices, such as using the bust as a target for football or snowball games, also deface the monument precisely through reducing it to its object

quality. Using it as an object, strips the bust of its endowed sacredness. In this sense, the force and violence with which the sacredness is imposed, itself breaks the belief in it.

Besides this personal experience of pain, the interviewee goes on to narrate an even greater picture of violence, linking his hate towards the bust to the torture of other people:

The second thing is that the same bust stood in our village, in the military station [...]. And there on the premises of the station, I saw people being tortured. And I heard that the soldiers of this station or people who dress exactly like them, gathered all the men of my village together and gathered them and tortured them in the school where I first learnt to read and write and learn Turkish. That's why, I think maybe because I identified that bust with these things or because the bust existed in both places I approach it with such feelings. [...] I didn't know any of the theory behind it, e.g. Mustafa Kemal, Kemalism, its principles. They didn't teach me enough Turkish in primary school to learn that anyway. [...] But, for example, the small things I saw opened the way for such a feeling. It opened the way for a emotional reaction. Although I was a child, I didn't like Mustafa Kemal for example. I didn't like that bust. (Interview 27, 35 year old man, grew up in a village which was evicted, then forced to migrate to larger town in Kurdish region)

He narrates witnessing state brutality as one of the reasons that triggered his hate for the bust. First of all, he draws attention to the fact that the bust not only marks the schools, but all other state institutions, in this case the military compound. In this way, he establishes a direct connection between the military and the atrocities it committed and the school as another institution of the state. Secondly, he points out that the school itself was used as a place to gather and torture the villagers, which makes the connection between state violence and the school even more obvious. Therefore, he speaks of a "emotional reaction", from which his hate for the bust stems. It was not an informed understanding of Atatürk's role and deeds that allowed him to make this connection, but rather the violence which he associates with the bust. In this sense, the busts, monuments and portraits are *not* necessarily defaced because they *represent* Atatürk as such, but rather for their own function. Endowed with this connotation, the busts are identified with the pain and trauma which is silenced from the general representation of Atatürk or the state. The busts, in this sense, become carriers of this violent history and therefore arouse hate and anger.

For Taussig, the *sacred* is connected to what he calls the "public secret", which he understands as that what "is generally known but cannot be spoken" (Taussig, 1999: 50). According to Taussig, the public secret as such is not an actual secret, because everyone is aware of it, but rather a pseudo-secret. It is a strategy of power which makes a certain knowledge unspeakable (also see Surin, 2001: 206). In this context, the history of violence, oppression and assimilation, the alternative, non-official history, described by the interviewee, could be understood as such a public secret. Constantly masked by the terms

such as the “south-east”, “terrorism”, or “emergency rule” (OHAL) the history of the Kurds, their plight and their struggle, is officially unspeakable, but remains somehow awkwardly known (as I argued in Chapter 3). This public secret is, according to Taussig “held to be of utmost and most compelling importance by the society, is as if it were the ultimate test of worldly loyalty” (Taussig, 1999: 149). Abiding by this public secret, therefore, is crucial for being recognized as a loyal citizen. This public secret is constantly guarded and re-enacted in its various ways (Taussig, 1999: 147). This unspeakable history, which we can regard as “subjugated knowledge”, is inscribed into the fetishized monuments. They play their part in subjugating this knowledge, making this “familiar” secret unsayable (Taussig, 1999: 49). It is this that makes these monuments unbearable and triggers acts of defacement. The busts, monuments and portraits become “unsettling objects” (Peffer, 2005), in which the sacredness of the busts clashes with the silenced experience of the violence.

7.2.4 PUBLIC DE-FACEMENT: EXPOSING THE TRUTH?

At the beginning of *Defacement*, Taussig criticizes Mark Lewis, who sees the violence of the Soviet regime, “the lies, or the repressed history” inscribed in Lenin monuments “as a hidden flow, an invisible fault line awaiting the resurgence of the truth of the past” (Peffer, 2005). He argues that the assumption of an inevitable resurgence is flawed by the “same monumental faith in truth and history” (Taussig, 1999: 21). Taussig is sceptical that the violence inscribed in this way into the monument can actually lead to a defacement that reveals, unmask, exposes the public secret that the monument obscures.

Taussig argues that the public secret is also always intrinsically tied to a specific ritual of its *exposure*. As an example he discusses an initial ritual in which older men reveal to younger men that what they thought was a spirit is in fact nothing more than something man-made, a man with a mask (Taussig, 1999: 129). Hence, the deliberate revelation of the secret is actually part of the workings of society and therefore reinstates the power of the secret, rather than dismantle it. By emphasizing that the secret actually lives off or receives its power through revelation, he complicates our understanding of *enlightenment*, of the possibility of revealing the truth. Similar to Foucault’s rejection of the “repressive hypothesis”, Taussig’s scepticism, here, is directed towards the idea of revelation as a means of overcoming. If the revelation of the public secret is inherent to the existence of the public secret in the first place, revelation cannot be the way to expose truth about the secret. On the contrary, just as the critical theory argues for the Enlightenment, it re-

mystifies the secret. This scepticism regarding the possibility of exposure of the public secret and the revelation of truth is what makes him ask what defacement does to the public secret: “Does it destroy the secret or further empower it?” (Taussig, 1999: 2).

The two images below, taken from a nation-wide newspaper (Radikal) and news agency (IHA) respectively, show two different occasions of public defacement of the same statue which is situated at a large square close to the historical walls of Diyarbakir (Dağkapı Meydan) previously shown in figure 13.



Figure 15: The statue of Atatürk at Dağ Kapı Square, Diyarbakir, after having been set fire (Radikal, 2011a).



Figure 16: Screenshot taken from a video titled “Bu ne cüret!” [What a nerve!] showing the same statue manipulated (IHA, 2011).

The first image (fig. 15) shows the result of an arson attack on the monument which occurred in January 2011. The monument had been set fired during the night, but was extinguished by the fire brigade before the whole monument was destroyed. The image shows a change in colour and texture of the material, especially of the face of the statue as a result of the fire. According to the news report, the defacers were not caught as they “immediately disappeared in the narrow streets” of the neighbourhood (Radikal, 2011; 8.01.2011).

The second image (fig. 16) is a snapshot taken from an approximately one and a half minute-long video footage showing the defaced Atatürk monument at Dağ Kapı Square following a demonstration against the so-called KCK court case (mentioned in Chapter 2) in April 2011. The video titled “What a nerve!” [Bu ne cüret!] starts by showing a man masked with a poşu (keyffiyeh) posing next to the statue of Atatürk with a scarf in the Kurdish colours (green-red-and yellow) tied around the head and a banner showing the face of the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, attached to it replacing the face of the statue. Cheering and whistling can be heard in the background. After an obvious cut, the clip then zooms out to show a group of approximately 40-50 people gathered around the defaced monument

talking to each other in small groups. A few passersby walk relaxed through the picture. Women are hanging out the washing on from their balconies behind the monument. There is an unexcited calmness to the scene, before the clip is then cut again to show how the police disperse the demonstrators with tear gas, layering the whole square with the misty grey of tear gas; the sound of a helicopter and shooting menacing the scene. Some people are shown walking away slowly, while others run until the square has been seized by police. Two police officers one plain clothes identifiable by the gun in his jeans and another in full gear with helmet are shown pulling frantically at the scarf to free the statue of its defacement. In the background, you can hear an official voice calling out not to take pictures. Unsuccessful in opening the knot, they call for a knife and finally, but unspectacularly, cut the down the object of outcry.

Obviously, in this highly politicized atmosphere, these kinds of incidents can easily be used by state officials to discredit the Kurdish Movement as a whole, or at least of the political party. In this sense, as recent events after the protests in Lice in 2014 showed, it is never quite certain who committed these acts and with which motivations, also in this case. Either way, the police are reinstated as the saviour of the sacred object. In this sense, the defacement as Taussig argues, does neither achieve the destruction of the fetishism, nor an exposure of the state violence inscribed in the monument, but works to reinforce the sacred object. Especially among Turks, the defacement of the monuments does not undo the belief in their sacredness. On the contrary, the defacement confirms their belief that Kurds are terrorists, against Atatürk and the Turkish nation, as the title to this clip indicates. As Taussig argues, “the realization does not destroy anything for them now, for they already are on the right path” (Taussig, 1999: 141). In this sense, we could argue that these acts of defacement are not necessarily part of workings of the state, however, they do constitute forms of exposure which do not harm, but rather enforce the secret, as Taussig illustrates.

Hence, we can argue that, although the defacement is triggered through the violence associated with the bust, as the interviewee above highlights, defacement does not succeed in revealing this public secret. However, while the defacement reinforces the power of the statue for those who are “on the right path”, for those to whom these monuments have become questionable these assaults are public demonstrations of opposition, of discontent with the violence of the state and unwillingness to comply with the imposed norms of assimilation. It is a manifestation of the unbearable. In this sense, instead of being a revelation of truth, these acts of defacement can be regarded as

“insurrections of subjugated knowledges” (Foucault, 1980: 81). The defacement is an eruption of this disqualified knowledge. Truth, here, is precisely the official knowledge manifested in the glorification of the effigies of Atatürk, the discourses on the nature of the Turkish nation and its indivisibility. Consequently, these acts of defacement cannot be ways of revealing truth. On the contrary, they are revolts of subjugated knowledge against the *truth* of the state.

Taussig acknowledges that even though the revelation reinforces the power of the secret, the revealed never stays the same as it was. The revelation or defacement always entails a “surplus” (Taussig, 1999: 135), which allows something new to emerge. In both of these two cases of public defacement the statue is attacked. The acts themselves transgress the rule, the norm, taboo of inviolability. They have the audacity to touch the sacred, to question the unquestionable figure. Instead of destroying the sacredness of the monument, the defacement plays with its sacred and fetishized nature. However, while the first act – similar to ripping out the first page of the school books – aims at *effacing* the statue as a whole, the second specifically plays with its personhood by aiming at the face. The defacement involves masking the face of the statue with the Kurdish colours and the face of the leader of the PKK.

The face is what makes this monument a personification. It identifies the object as a representation of Atatürk and therefore is precisely the part of the statue on which the sacredness relies. Consequently, the face is endowed even more with sacredness than any other part of statue. In this act of defacement, the face of the statue is temporarily removed. It is replaced by another face; the face of Öcalan, denounced as the head-terrorist and baby-murderer by the state and praised as the leader of the Kurdish people by the Movement. The bright colours of the scarf and the smiling face of Öcalan take the place of the iron-cast face of Atatürk.

The smiling friendly face of Öcalan on the banner which was used for the defacement, itself, destroys this image of the head-terrorist which was constructed through pictures distributed by the state showing him at his capture, scruffy with an angry look on his face, embraced by two Turkish flags on either side of him. This Öcalan-banner, which is commonly used at demonstrations, counters this image of the defeated captured head-terrorist and communicates an image of the ongoing successful struggle. These banners are

part of a strategy of the Kurdish Movement to defy the strategy of the state to destroy the movement by detaining the leader.

However, these faces here are not mere representations. Especially, as part of this defacement the banner and monument become something else. As the Situationist International (SI) argues in their manifest on their specific idea of defacement, which they call *détournement*, “each of the detoured autonomous elements” loses its importance (Knabb, 1981: 55). Öcalan’s face becomes the manifestation of the subjugated knowledge: the face of oppression, uprising and resistance, while Atatürk becomes the mask of the state-truth, concealing its brutality. The non-identity of the two clash. The face of the holy-figure is replaced by the face of its biggest enemy: The utmost desecration. However, this desecration is only enabled through the *equation* which is established between the two in this face-replacement. The horror which is provoked arises from the equation of these two figures assumed so clearly opposed as good and bad. Maybe this is what Taussig means, when drawing on Benjamin he argues speaks of a “just revelation”, in which justice is done to the secret (Taussig, 1999: 2).

7.3 DECOLONISING LANDSCAPES OF POWER

The last line of the national vow “ne mutlu türküm diyene” (Happy is he who calls himself a Turk) has also been prominently used to inscribe hillsides and mountains, as well as towns and cities throughout Turkey. Figure 17 shows a photo of such an inscription in the face of a mountain which overlooks Van, the second largest city in the Kurdistan region in Turkey located on the border to Iran. With its large capital letters which have been painted onto the rock with white lime paint, clearly visible to the population, it is representative of the inscription of nationalism into the landscape.

According to Tekiner, the first of these inscriptions were constructed with the military coup in 1980, a time renowned for its violent restoration of the nationalism of the early years of the republic and its repression against Kurds in general and left wing activists (Tekiner, 2010). Other common inscriptions include slogans such as “Önce Vatan” (The Nation Comes First) or “Vatan bölünmez” (The Nation is Indivisible) which bear a clear reference to the war with the PKK and the fear of separatism. Generally located on military grounds, often in strategically high positions overlooking the territory, these inscriptions can be seen from miles away. The letters are either directly painted onto the surface, usually by soldiers, or formed out of metal or painted stones. Repainted and renewed they can last for decades.



Figure 17: “Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene” inscription in Van (September 2011)

These words expressing the glorification of Turkishness are inscribed into a territory that has seen much violence precisely in the name of this Turkishness. Therefore, peering down onto the city, they appear as a warning to comply. Although these inscriptions are found throughout the territory of the Turkish republic, their numbers are much higher in the Kurdistan region. As described in Chapter 3, despite the discourse of denial, the so-called “south-east” (of Turkey) remained a synonym for the Kurdistan region which according to the logic of the modern nation-state had to be “civilized” and disciplined into Turkishness. These inscriptions are the spatial dimension of this concerted effort to achieve the production of this national subjectivity. These “assimilating spaces” as Joost Jongerden calls them are part of this ongoing effort to ensure the nationalization of the population (Jongerden, 2009: 15). In this endeavour the occupation and the alignment or production of space according to this goal plays a central role. As Tim Cresswell puts it, “[t]erritoriality is an intrinsic part of the organisation of power and the control of resources and people” (Cresswell, 1996: 12).

Space itself is a product of social discourses and practices, but simultaneously reflects back onto society by generating certain spatial practices. In this case, the strategy of the state to inscribe the landscape is done in order to establish a connection between territory and national identity. Cresswell argues that “space and place are used to structure a normative landscape”, which transmit norms on what is “right, just and appropriate” in these places (Cresswell, 1996: 8). Here, the “right” and “appropriate” transmitted through these spatial inscriptions are the norms around Turkish national identity, the idea of the single nation and the indivisibility of the nation. Taking control of space in this way reveals itself, therefore, as a technique for the production of national subjectivity and assimilation. Cresswell speaks of a “semanticization” of the public through billboards. He points out that the majority of these writings “comes from above and takes the form of directives and

commands" (Cresswell, 1998: 275). They generate expected ways of behaving, thinking and feeling.

The semanticization of the landscape through the nationalistic inscriptions discussed here similarly aim at reproducing a specific form of acting and identifying. In this sense, they do not only "mark" space with Turkishness, as Christopher Houston (2005: 103) argues, but demand a specific behaviour similar to the *interpellation* through the vow, discussed above: in this case the enactment of Turkish identity. Like the vow, the inscriptions are intended to incite obedient nationalized and racialized subjects. This is reflected in the way my interviewee describe that the inscriptions "address" [hitap etmek] them as Turks. However, instead of *calling into being* these enormous letters function by seemingly *describe a state* to be the norm. By writing this norm into space they also explicit what behaviour and identity is possible, and therefore function like a command without the commander.

Besides these inscriptions, the overall policy of turkification through spatial strategies includes the change of names of towns and villages, the resettlement of people in the early years of the republic to the village evictions of the 1990s, as well as the system of surveillance which includes the erection of military compounds throughout the territory and installation of CCTV in town and cities. In his book on settlement policies in Turkey, Jongerden clearly shows the overarching continuity among the various spatial policies of the different governments. Despite the lack of consensus and consistency in implementation, they were guided by the same logic of settlement policy. "Turkish modernizers imagined that they could produce "Turks" by changing the spatial format of society", he argues (Jongerden, 2007: 281). According to him, even the village evictions should – despite their exceptional character – not be regarded as collateral damage in times of war, but rather as part of a strategy to create a "new social order based on an urban settlement structure" (Jongerden, 2007: 283). The village evictions, however, not only forced the inhabitants to resettle to the cities, but also dispossessed them from their land, their means of living and made them dependent labourers. In this sense, the village evictions fit to the more overall strategy of assimilation, here into a modern, urban worker.

The turkification of village names (as it was even called officially) was taken up as a policy issue by various governments throughout the history of the republic, but especially enforced by each of the military coups. According to Kerem Öktem, the majority of village names deemed "not Turkish" were changed between 1950 and 1980. Although by 1968 the names of around 30% of a total of 45,000 villages had already been replaced, the names of approximately 13,000 hamlets and another 2,000 villages were additionally amended in

1973. Despite this overwhelming number of changes including even rivers, mountains and pastures, the military government of the 1980s took up the issue again. Resurrecting the force of the national issue of the early years of the republic, it emphasized the need to push the use of the turkified names in everyday life through enforced education in schools (Öktem, 2008: §§ 40-59). Although this process of turkification of place names occurred throughout the whole of the territory of the Turkish republic, the majority of the places had Kurdish, Armenian names and were located in the Kurdistan region (Jongerden, 2009: 9-11)⁸⁶.

This indicates that this strategy of sematicizing the landscape is not limited to the urban environment, as in De Certeau's focus. On the contrary, it seems that the rural territory is of significant importance, specifically as part of a nation-building strategy. As Jongerden highlights, the rearrangement of rural space arises from the "dismissal" of the rural in the modernization project of the Turkish state. According to this, as mentioned above the rural is constructed as the backward and in need for civilisation. Additionally in respect to Kurdish issue, the rural comes to stand for the uncontrollable elements: labelled as thieves and bandits in the earlier years of the republic, later in the 1990s as those who help the "terrorists". In this sense, the focus on controlling the rural originates in the overlapping strategies of the modernization and nationalization the people and the territory they live in.

Giving villages "proper names", names which are in line with the idea of Turkishness, was part of taking control of the rural. For De Certeau, *proper names* "hierarchize and semantically order" place (De Certeau, 1984: 104). They define places as belonging, legitimizing them according to power. They enable places to be established as "proper places"; that is places which are constructed, delimited and defined by power. The strategy of turkifying the names of villages and towns as well as inscribing the landscape with turkishness can be seen precisely as a technique to establish such *proper places*. This technique nationalizes the places, defines them as belonging and imprints them with their ownership. At the same time, however, these "proper names" are the site of struggle and renegotiation.

The strategy of labelling the villages with Turkish names and casting assimilative inscriptions in iron attempts to establish proper places and fix and solidify the norms they imply. Located on military territory these nearly inviolable inscriptions make direct sabotage impossible. However, as De Certeau argues proper names always "make

⁸⁶ Öktem names Mardin as the province in which with 91% the most name-changes occurred. In the provinces Bitlis, Siirt, Bingöl, Hakkari, Mus, Van over 75% of the place names were amended.

themselves available to the diverse meanings given them by passers-by" (De Certeau, 1984: 104). In this case, the normative inscriptions are read by many as an insult and a cause for irritation, as many of my interviewees mentioned. As Houston states in his research on the Kurdish diaphora in the Kemalist city in the West, these inscriptions are perceived as "provocations of the built environment" (Houston, 2005). Even a report prepared by academic staff of the police academy mentions the inscriptions as the reason why people decided to join the PKK (Tönbekici, 2013). The reading of these inscriptions differs from their intention, just as De Certeau argues. Instead of direct sabotage, this semanticization of the landscape is contested in different ways as I will try to show in the following, but it also shifts due to the slowly changing discourse on Turkish nationhood.

7.3.1 SHIFTING SCRIPT: RE-INSCRIPTIONS BY THE STATE

Throughout the period since the PKK took up its arms, the state discourse on race, ethnicity and nation has shifted so decisively that inscriptions such as "How happy is he who calls himself a Turk" located in the Kurdish region have become problematized. Although this nationalist discourse is still heavily supported by right-wing and Kemalist centre-left, the new multiculturalism-discourse of the governing AKP, which at least formally acknowledges the existence of other ethnic groups in Turkey, has made it impossible for the government to continue this form of racial semanticization of space. Triggered by the recent peace negotiations, some of these inscriptions have been transformed or dismantled by state officials. That these "de-scriptions" and "re-scriptions" have occurred in midst of the peace process must be read as governmental concessions towards the Kurds.

One of such inscriptions which was dismantled in November 2013 during the period of this research was the "How happy is he who calls himself a Turk"-inscription at Vilayet square (fig. 18) in the centre of Diyarbakir, where the Province Governorship (Vilayet)⁸⁷ has its offices. The white letters on red background were painted onto a metal construction which stretched over one of the main streets that lead off the square. The paint had quite visually faded and it was clearly not particularly cared for. The trees on either side had grown so high making it impossible to read the sign as a whole. The miniature replica of the historic walls of Diyarbakir with a watermelon in its centre (two things which Diyarbakir is said to be famous for), which was attached above the inscription, reminded of the 1980s and

⁸⁷ The province governor (Vali) is not elected, but assigned through the central government. During the 23 years in which the central government had declared martial law in the Kurdish provinces (1978-1987 martial law; 1987-2002 state of emergency), the governor was bestowed with extensive powers and is therefore often associated with military rule and violence.

therefore added to the impression of being a relic of old times. Especially, in the current atmosphere of the strength of the PKK and Kurdish identity it seemed strongly out of place like “enigmatic question marks in contemporary space” as Osborne phrases (Osborne, 2001: 19).



Figure 18: Inscription "Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene", Vilayet, Diyarbakir (September 2011)



Figure 19: Same inscription in Diyarbakir being removed (Radikal, 2013)

In the evening hours of the 5 November 2013 the whole construction was dismantled on order of the province governor (fig. 19). Commenting on the dismantling, Mahsuni Karaman from the Barristers Association of Diyarbakir pointed out that they had been struggling for the dismantling of this inscription by legal means for some time (Radikal, 2013). However, this step was undertaken directly by the central government. Having failed to fulfil its intended purpose to achieve assimilation, this inscription had out-lived the discourse of denial and had reached a point at which it was dismantled by the state itself⁸⁸.

Another recent example is the replacement of the same inscription in the *Place of the Republic* (Cumhuriyet Meydanı), a central square, in Batman, a town 70 km east of Diyarbakir. The inscription located next to the Atatürk statue was exchanged with the words “Yurtta sulh cihanda sulh” meaning “Peace at home. Peace in the World” (NTV, 2013). Although this seemingly peace invoking inscription - which was also authorized by the local governor - is an obvious improvement, it does appear ironic in the face of the on-going state violence; even more so as, according to Tekiner, this phrase was one of the most common inscriptions used by the military government after the 1980s Coup (Tekiner, 2010: 190). At first sight, it has made a step away from Kemalist nationalism by abandoning the racial reference, however, maintaining the reference to the national cause and Atatürk

⁸⁸ Obviously, state officials did not explain the removal of the inscription in this way. Two days later the province governor declared that the reason for dismantling the construction was because it had been “rusty and did not look good anymore” (Milliyet, 2013).

by using a phrase accredited to him. In a way this praise of peace can, therefore, rather be read as a warning not to come up against the state.

Similarly, other “Happy is he who calls himself a Turk”- inscriptions were replaced either by the symbols of the Turkish flag, the half-moon and the star, or by slogans which rather emphasize the shared homeland than race like “*önce vatan*” [The nation comes first] (NTV, 2012). These *re-scriptions* clearly show how these spatial practices are renegotiated and different discourses are played out through them. These changes were answers to their ongoing contestation through the struggle for recognition of the Kurdish Movement. They also illustrate, however, that strategy of inscription prevails as a powerful instrument to produce national subjectivity. The new discourse which reinstates the idea of the indivisibility of the nation and, therefore, continues a form of assimilation into a super-identity of the Turk (Turkish citizen) is again conveyed through the inscription of the landscape.

7.3.2 REWRITING PROPER NAMES

However, not only the central government has used its power to shift the meaning. The municipalities led by the Kurdish party in the Kurdistan region have in recent years also used their power on local governmental level to *re-inscribe* other meanings into the cities and towns. One of the strategies that the municipalities have been following is giving streets, places, parks and buildings names with leftist, anticolonial or Kurdish connotations. Some names refer to Kurdish, Turkish and Armenian writers, poets and musicians like Ehmedê Xanî, Cegerxwîn, Aram Tigram, Musa Anter, Ayse Nur Zarakoğlu and Ahmed Arif or their works such as legendary “*Mem û Zîn*” by Ehmedê Xanî or the famous poem “*33 Kurşun*” (33 bullets) by Ahmet Arif, which tells of the killing of 32 Kurdish villagers in 1943 and was turned into a song by late song-writer Ahmet Kaya. Others are references to political days, e.g. the Kurdish name for the 1st May, the International Workers Day, “*Yek Gulan*”, or the 8th March (Women’s Day), or names like “peace” or “freedom” in either Turkish or Kurdish (Jongerden, 2009).

In addition to the naming-politics *within* towns and cities, there has also been an important struggle to rename of villages, cities and towns as such according to previous or reinvented Kurdish names. Interestingly, the process of turkifying village names was well documented by the state, and therefore detailed lists exist of the historic names, which have been used to demand reinstating the old names. Besides this, the local population continued to use

these old non-Turkish names in everyday life, which also undermined the aim of the state to totally eradicate them from history. Furthermore, newspapers associated with the Kurdish Movement such as Özgür Gündem (publishing in Turkish) and Azadiya Welat (in Kurdish), the municipalities and politicians have begun to use the Kurdish names in their publications, announcements and speeches.

Both the renaming of villages, cities and towns as well as the name-giving policy for streets, parks and buildings has not gone unnoticed by the central government. Recognized as a strategy to challenge state discourse and power, many court cases that have been filed against the municipalities arguing that these names either do not coincided with the Turkish alphabet because they use the letters q, w or x, that they are “symbols of terrorism” or would “incite rebellion”. This strong legal intervention by the central state indicates again how much the semanticization of space is a field of contestation (Radikal 2012b; 2012c; Hürriyet, 2012).

By demanding the old names to be reinstalled and by using Kurdish language and the names of Kurdish artists and politicians, these practices of counter-inscription re-appropriate the space dominated by state discourse and therefore subvert the “authority” of these spaces (Cresswell, 1996: 46). They (re-)visualize Kurdishness in public space. At the same time, these dissident street signs replace the nationalistic semanticization of space and therefore initiate the – albeit slow – disappearance of the discourse of nationalism and militarism from the spatial realm. By using names of people who have been victims of state violence, like Musa Anter or words with political reference, this strategy tries to reject and subvert the official state history that is inscribed into space and aims at achieving a commemoration of a different history, a history of the governed. Furthermore, it is also used to stress the importance given to the acknowledgement of cultural diversity and pluralism within the Movement e.g. by choosing Armenian names. In this sense, these dissident but official inscriptions break the unitary and homogenizing logic of the state. Overall, these re-namings attempt to decolonize by shifting the imposed, assimilative order by rewriting the proper names⁸⁹. However, in doing so, this attempt re-establishes proper names and tries to stabilize them due to the official position the municipalities.

Central for De Certeau’s understanding of resistant practices, *tactics* as he calls them, is that they always work within the given. They are forced to “play on and with a terrain

⁸⁹ Gambetti describes how the re-structuring of the historic city walls through the municipality and funded by European institutions enabled to re-construct a Kurdish history and Diyarbakir as the “capital city of Kurdistan”, which not only functioned as a decolonization of Diyarbakir (Gambetti, 2009a), but also as a new factor of mobilization which influenced the discourses and actors within the Movement (Gambetti, 2009b).

imposed on [them] and organized by the law of a foreign power” (De Certeau, 1984: 37). According to him, tactics do not have the power to dictate, produce and impose *proper places*, and therefore make use of the given in “enemy territory” by subverting and manipulating it (De Certeau, 1984: 30). Cresswell calls this a “parasitic relationship” (Cresswell, 1996: 175). Similarly, these strategies of naming streets, parks and buildings do not *break* with the technique of semanticization of public space and the logic of commemoration that goes along with it. Instead, this state method of social production of space is appropriated and *redeployed* in ways which open the inscriptions up for a history of the oppressed, killed and denied. According to him, this reappropriation is precisely the way in which resistance works. The strength of these practices of resistance results from the dominant strategies they rely on. He argues referring to De Certeau that “the tools of the weak are those which already exist as strategies of the strong” (Cresswell, 1996: 164).

7.3.3 CLANDESTINE SEMANTICIZATION: ENABLING A HABITABLE SPACE

In a similar way, everyday practices are involved in creating or rather re-creating place by re-appropriating the given. However, these practices differ from those of the municipality. While the local BDP-led municipalities counter the large inscriptions of the central government by using smaller road- and park-signs, which are constantly contested by the central government, graffiti is a “make-shift” (De Certeau) form of place-making on a more clandestine level.

In Diyarbakir graffiti can be found in many different districts, however, especially in neighbourhoods like Bağlar, 5 Nisan, Şehitlik or Suriçi, where the poorer population of the city lives the majority of which was evicted from their villages in the 1990s and generally tends to support the Kurdish Movement. The most common forms of graffiti are simple writings of one or two words or abbreviations with clear reference to the armed struggle, like shown in figures 20-23. Abbreviations like “PKK” or “KCK”, but also Öcalan’s name or his nickname Apo (short for Abdullah, which also carries the meaning of “uncle” in Kurdish) can be found like other synonyms for Öcalan such as “serok” (leader).



Figure 20: Graffiti on facades of homes. “Long live the Revolution” (translation from Turkish), Bağlar, Diyarbakir (September 2012)



Figure 21: Erased and repainted “PKK”, Bağlar, Diyarbakir (September 2012)



Figure 22: “Long live our leader Apo” followed by a different writing: “my love”, Bağlar, Diyarbakir (September 2012)



Figure 23: “Long live the resistance of Kurdistan” (translation from Kurdish), “Apo Youth Group”, “PKK”, “ESP” (Socialist Party of the Oppressed), Bağlar, Diyarbakir (September 2012)

As the photographs above show the graffiti is sprayed directly onto the walls of homes facing the streets, under the windows, next to entrance doors. The children playing in front illustrates that the graffiti inscribes a place where people live and spend their time. The different graffiti-writings are held very simple and in one colour. The words and letters are always clearly readable, often in handwriting style which does not require great artistic talent⁹⁰. This means that they can be easily and quickly applied and are low in cost (Downing, 2001: 121-124). Some of them are “signed” by different groups e.g. the Apo Youth Group, the Party of the Oppressed (ESP), but very often they are not. There is no doubt that compared to the metal of the road signs of the BDP-municipalities the spray paint of this graffiti is less durable. However, these unofficial inscriptions are not quite as contested through official investigations as those of the municipality. In this respect, these clandestine inscriptions are not necessarily as short-lived and temporary as graffiti is often assumed to be. Instead, this graffiti can last up to several years, especially as the houses in these neighbourhoods are not regularly painted.

⁹⁰ Very recently a group of two young graffiti artists have done some stencilling and larger graffiti in Diyarbakir. They display their work on *youtube* and *facebook* (MED Graffiti (Kurdish Graffiti), n.d.; Şer, 2012)

In his book *In Place/Out of Place*, Cresswell discusses the transgressiveness of graffiti in New York. He argues that graffiti in New York has a transgressive potential, because it refused to comply with rules of appropriatedness in space (Cresswell, 1996: 46). In New York writing graffiti was perceived as a breach of appropriate behaviour and, therefore, aroused much attention by the administration. Here, this is not the case. These graffiti-writings do not receive much attention by state officials and are hardly contested. The reasons for this lies in the character of these neighbourhoods: as Cresswell argues, the crucial “where” of graffiti.

All of the graffiti-writings illustrated in the images above are located in a neighbourhood of Diyarbakir (Bağlar) in which many people live who were forcefully evicted from their villages in the 1990s and since then have settled in this area. The houses are of poor quality, the population belongs to the poorest of the country and generally supports the PKK (ideologically). When street fighting with the police occurs after demonstrations, they tend happen in this area of town. There is a stunning degree of solidarity among the population during such street fighting, e.g. women often stand in the doors and hand people affected by tear gas lemons, people leave water and lemons in front of their windows or let you into their houses when you are being chased. So, although the police forces do and can go into this neighbourhood, this graffiti does not receive strong state attention here. If any contestation of this kind of graffiti exists, it comes rather from the house owners or inhabitants who paint over the graffiti to obscure it, like figure 21 illustrates. Here, someone has tried to obscure the letters PKK by turning each letter into an eight, however remained unsuccessful, because the letters were renewed.

Cresswell points out that the meaning of graffiti depends on where it is located, and is therefore not always transgressive. He gives the example that the media regards graffiti as acceptable when located in the slums of South American countries, but not in New York. In the case of the graffiti illustrated here, it does not arouse a reaction from the state authorities. However, we cannot measure its transgressive potential of this graffiti as Cresswell does via the reaction to it of the state authorities. This graffiti is not “out of place” in the way Cresswell assumes and can still have a transgressive potential: not so much because it disobeys the rules of appropriateness for that *specific* place in a narrow sense, but rather because it questions the authority of turkified space more generally. This graffiti is located in a place which is accessible or receptive to “deviant” discourses. In contrast to Cresswell’s argument, this is a place where this questioning of dominant spatial practices occurring via the graffiti is not visible for the authorities. They are “below

visibility” as De Certeau argues regarding what he calls the actions of *ordinary practitioners* in the everyday (De Certeau, 1984: 93). For De Certeau the city always leaves spaces for actions “outside the reach of panoptic power” (De Certeau, 1984: 95). He sees these actions, like re-appropriating the city by walking, as impossible to administer, because they lack a clear *identity*. These actions, which cannot be eliminated by panoptic administration, make use of the spaces that cannot be seen (De Certeau, 1984: 96).

It seems that in this case, the impossibility to administer this form of graffiti lies not so much in the lack of a clear identity, but rather in the location chosen for the them. Precisely in this “invisibility” for the administration or this gap for action lies the potential of this graffiti as a practice of resistance. It does not intend to attract the attention of the state, but rather that of the people living in the neighbourhood. Working in the gaps of state attention, these graffiti writings manage to inscribe a counter-narrative, a counter-discourse, into this specific place for the population living there. In this sense, not the *act* of writing itself is subversive as in Cresswell’s example, but rather the *content*.

In contrast to the inscriptions by the municipality, these clandestine inscriptions do not have to adapt their words according to possible official investigations. Instead, they can be overtly pro-PKK. This is reflected in the names and abbreviations such as PKK or the ESP (Social Party of the Oppressed), which are either used as “signatures” or as tags themselves, e.g. Apocu Gençlik (Youth Group supporting Öcalan) as well as in the terminology used in the graffiti. Kurdish words like “serhildan” (uprising), “berxwedan” (resistance) indicate that these clandestine inscriptions serve as instruments of mobilisation for the Movement. These single words have become self-explanatory political messages. They refer to the self-construction of the PKK and its history as the only current representative of the legacy of resistance among the Kurdish people, as mentioned in Chapter 5. These terms have become synonyms for the popular support for the Movement. In this sense, this graffiti can be read as to function as a means of communicating both this identity of the Movement as well as a call for support and participation.

Beyond this element of mobilisation, this graffiti inscribes the neighbourhood with what Cresswell calls “heretical” writings: writings which resist the expected behaviour and name the forbidden (Cresswell, 1996); in this case, inscriptions which do not obey the logic of turkified space. They call for uprising, resistance and revolution and therefore assert an oppositional identity of the neighbourhood. They undermine the spatial authority, like the graffiti shown in figure 24 exemplifies. The two words “Katil Kerdoğan” were sprayed onto the wall of the house in simple black colour like the other graffiti. Its clear message cleverly

plays on the Prime Minister's surname, Erdoğan, by mixing Kurdish and Turkish. While "Katil" means killer in Turkish, "Ker" mean donkey in Kurdish. Merging these words together makes an unmistakable critique of Erdoğan's brutal politics.



Figure24: Wall graffiti "Katil Kerdoğan", Suriçi, Diyarbakir (September 2012)

Written onto the wall of a house in the old part of the city, Suriçi, at the intersection of a few narrow streets which widen slightly to form a small square-like place, this graffiti is located in an ideal spot for a political message which does not address a wider public, but rather those who live in this area. As a message intended to politicize and make readers laugh by ridiculing the Prime Minister, it goes beyond just mobilizing. It is heretical in Cresswell's sense, as it defames a person of official authority and therefore breaks the norm, the correct and appropriate behaviour. It speaks out a different truth to the official. With reference to Derrida, De Certeau calls this a "wandering of the semantic" which is produced through "distorting", "fragmenting" and "diverting" meaning in space (De Certeau, 1984: 102).

In his analysis of everyday practices, De Certeau draws on the analytical framework and terminology of the discipline of rhetoric (De Certeau, 1984: xx, 33). He uses the term "writing" as a synonym for a productive, creative practice, in contrast to the term "reading" which he understands as the consumption of something. For him, everyday resistance lies in a *shifted* use or consumption of something, here of space. In this sense, consumption is not at all passive, but rather also becomes a productive action, which he describes as "writing". However, as a practice of resistance, or *tactic* in De Certeau's terminology, *writing* is also at the same time a *reading*; a way of using the given space, consumption. Cresswell phrases this in respect to space in the following way: "In effect, the "reading" of people acting in space is also a kind of "writing" as new meanings are formed. The consumption of place becomes the production of place" (Cresswell, 1996: 165). The graffiti is written onto the walls of this neighbourhood, whose existence is a result of the violent

policies of village evictions, politics to assimilation people into modern urban life of a Turkish citizen. It changes the streets which have been administered, assimilated and integrated into the logic of the city visible through their numbers (see fig. 23)⁹¹. The graffiti writes “over” this logic, over the given administered, assimilative space shifting its meaning. In this sense, graffiti as a writing is productive use of this given place.

Therefore, this graffiti is more than just a radical form of communication. Instead I would like to argue, as Haydar Darıcı (2011) does for the struggles of the Kurdish youth, that these inscriptions are not intended for a third party, not for state or any other wider public, but serve to create a place of one’s own. These graffiti-writings transform the place defined, determined and aligned by the state, into spaces for *themselves*. De Certeau speaks of writing as a possibility of “composing a space in conformity with one’s will” (De Certeau, 1984: 196). In this sense, the various forms of heretical writing provide what De Certeau calls a “stylistic metamorphosis of space” (De Certeau, 1984: 102), a metamorphosis from the given turkified space to a “habitable” space.

For De Certeau, these everyday manipulations of space aim at making space “habitable”. He compares these tactics with the efforts of a tenant living in a rented flat who tries to make it “habitable” by adapting it and endowing it with “their acts and memories” without possessing it (De Certeau, 1984: xxi). Tactics “make do” with the given, but also *work on* the given. They manipulate, appropriate and subvert space in a way that makes it livable to the inhabitant. All the forms of graffiti discussed above contribute to making this neighbourhood a livable space by inscribing it with a rebellious, noncompliant and defiant character. The graffiti objects the turkification of space through its appeal to the forbidden, the heretical and therefore in a make-shift way establish a habitable space. However, probably more than any of these, the inscription of the word “Kurdistan” functions in such a transformative way. Spraying the name of Kurdistan onto the walls of the homes of one’s own neighbourhood as the figure 25 shows seems an attempt to establish a livable space in the now.

More than any other word the term Kurdistan has been and still is highly controversial. Because of its etymological reference to a land or territory of the Kurds, the term has always been the “no-word” of Turkish public discourse. Discursively eliminated with the denial of the existence of the Kurds, it still is equated with separatism by the state, despite the shift in goals of the PKK. Consequently, despite the AKP policy to formally acknowledge

⁹¹ De Certeau sees in the replacement of “proper names” through numbers one way in which habitable space in the city is annulled (MED Graffiti (Kurdish Graffiti), n.d.; Şer, 2012).

the existence of Kurds, the term Kurdistan is still a highly contentious issue as a recent éclat in parliament showed (Hurriyet Daily News, 2013)⁹².



Figure 25: Graffiti “Kurdistan”, Bağlar, Diyarbakir (September 2012)

For supporters of the Kurdish Movement, the term Kurdistan for a long time stood for a separate nation-state and for some it still does this today. In the light of the shifted goals of the Movement, the name Kurdistan has, however, loosened from the idea of state though. It is used as the name of the territory as it is now, despite its unofficial status. It also stands for demands for self-government within the boundaries of the Turkish republic and the idea of a federation of Kurdish communities. However, more importantly, the name Kurdistan is – as it always has been in the past – a synonym for a better future, a utopia, the name of hope.

Re-inscribing this name, the “phantom” (De Certeau, 1984) or “ghost” of Turkish public discourse that always continued to exist under the discourse of denial, into space re-attaches a territory to the name; in other words: gives back the name a place. But, it also assigns the utopia, the idea of a better future, with a place in the *now*. According to De Certeau, the places we live in that do not belong to us, these *rented spaces*, are “haunted by a nowhere or by dreamed-of places”(De Certeau, 1984: 103), places livable whose ghosts haunt the proper places. The inscription of this name of the “dreamed-of place” shows that, as Cresswell says, the given place of the neighbourhood is “appropriated by those who live in it” (Cresswell, 1996: 47). The dissident semanticization reclaims the turkified space and establishes an alternative, decolonized space: the Kurdistan in the now.

⁹² The debate arose after the BDP group had used the term “Turkish Kurdistan” in their proposal for the budget in parliament only a few weeks after the term had been used officially for the first time in a controversial event staged by the AKP in Diyarbakir. The President of the Iraqi Kurdistan, Masoud Barzani, who had been invited to this event, was introduced with his official full title which includes the word Kurdistan. Prior to this event Turkish officials had chosen to address him as the President of North Iraq for precisely this reason.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

Drawing on a multi-site ethnography carried out both in the Kurdistan region and the West of Turkey, this thesis has examined a range of different forms of everyday resistance, analyzing the ways in which they arise, how they subvert, shift and counter the techniques of assimilation, and their entanglement in power relations.

Conceptualizing the policies of assimilation as a *dispositif* of different techniques of power which aim at producing nationalized subjects, the thesis first of all outlined the core logics of these techniques which shape the self-perception and conduct of each individual (Chapter 3): the effort to discursively eliminate of the word Kurd and Kurdistan and the scientific and non-scientific discourses and judicial practices which enforced it; the various techniques of impeding the persistence and attempted eradication of the Kurdish language; the production of a feeling of inferiority and disciplinary practices to achieve a modern body; the criminalization of Kurdishness as well as the production of Kurds as the absolute Other through racist discourses and the multicultural project of the current government. In this way, the thesis has provided an ethnographically informed analysis of the state policies from the perspective of their manifestations in everyday life, which is necessary to understand the ways in which the everyday practices, addressed in this thesis, work as resistance.

While Chapter 5 concentrated on the discursive side of the struggle around constructing Kurdishness as a “claimable” identity for recognition which is interrupted by the effects of the violent policies of assimilation, Chapter 6 drew out the various, incoherent practices of *living* this identity. By addressing different areas of embodiment, language, oral history and tradition, as well as other practices which are regarded as “cultural weapons” by the state, it illustrates the ways of practicing Kurdishness as *counter-conduct*, whereas Chapter 7 focuses on the practices of resistance provoked by three concrete manifestations of assimilation policies, locating the trigger for these *insurrections of conduct* in the injurious, violent techniques of power. All three chapters, therefore, addressed ways in which the practices of resistance – as theoretically outlined in Chapter 4 - work on the *effects* of the

techniques of assimilation, destabilizing dominant truths, practices and embodiments in order to achieve an alternative counter-conduct of life and therefore shift subjectivity. These practices reject and undermine the techniques of power by dispelling these techniques from their lives (7.2.1), refusing compliance in various ways (7.1.), and subverting them by developing counter-practices, producing and disseminating counter-knowledge.

Focusing on the actions themselves, rather than the actors, the thesis has revealed the importance of mundane acts of everyday resistance in the struggle against techniques of power which aim at governing individual conduct of life. I have argued that in contrast to heroic actions, which are often and potentially celebrated as essential forms of resistance, these common tactics are far from rare and in fact form central in this struggle.

8.1 ENTANGLEMENT OF POWER AND RESISTANCE

This vital importance of everyday resistance in the struggle around subjectivity, does not however hide the fact that these practices are far from unambiguous or “pure”. Especially, Chapter 5 and 6 highlighted how dominant notions, terms and practices are reclaimed, shifted and redeployed. Among the examples discussed are the re-use of traditional clothing (6.1.2), narratives of ruralness (5.6.) and tradition (6.3.1), as well as the deployment of the term “race” (5.1). Furthermore, these chapters demonstrated how these practices are pervaded and their incoherence impeded by the assimilation policies. Chapter 5 made clear how the construction of identity is a site of struggle in which people grapple with claiming an intelligible identity on the one hand and acknowledging the impossibility of its “full” achievement on the other. Similarly, Chapter 6 demonstrates how practices of resistance such as relearning Kurdish (6.2.2) and visualizing Kurdishness (6.1), which are encouraged by the movement, are interrupted by the real effects of assimilation.

8.2 DISTURBING BINARIES

The thesis has also shown that the practices of everyday resistance in this context complicate the distinctions between covert and overt, public and private, intentional and unintentional. While visualizing identity, overtly making claims or demonstrating power is central for organized politics, the “hidden” has – since Scott - been identified with everyday resistance. However, the practices of everyday resistance depicted in this thesis undermine

this strict distinction between covert and overt. Practices, such as subverting the national vow through mumbling and non-recitation (7.1.4) or the camouflaged desecration of the bust of Atatürk (7.2.3), are conducted in public, however, are covert through avoiding voice and disguising them as play. Similarly, the thesis has demonstrated how these practices complicate the public-private divide.

This thesis has also illustrated that resistance which aims at reversing or undermining the way in which governmental techniques shape people's conduct of their personal selves, undermines the division between personal and public just as the techniques of power do themselves. In this way, practices, such as reclaiming personal names, become a way of undermining the state policies (6.3.2). While these practices were arguably part of a strategy of the Movement, the thesis also highlights how other practices which are intended only as personal practices of counter-conduct, such as some coded dress practices (6.1.3), refusing to speak Turkish (6.2.1) or ripping out the first pages of school books (7.2.1), as well as escape-strategies such as dropping out of school (6.2.1), which refuse the subject position in itself, nevertheless challenge this form of governmentality. Furthermore, the practices discussed in the thesis underline how unintentional emotional (7.1.6) or nearly bodily reactions (7.1.7) to the policies of assimilation can be regarded as ways of resisting nationalized subjectivation.

8.3 INTERSECTIONS WITH THE ORGANIZED MOVEMENT

The thesis has also demonstrated that, contrary to James C. Scott's formulation, everyday resistance is not limited to times in which overt confrontation by an organized movement is impossible. On the contrary this thesis has illustrated different ways in which the practices of each intersect and how they facilitate and mutually enforce each other. Visualizing Kurdishness through bodily practices (6.1.5) and relearning the language (6.2.2) are examples in which specific practices are "moralized" through the movement. Furthermore, the thesis has shown how everyday practices of resistance consist precisely of engaging with Movement media, the newspapers, TV-channels and music (6.4). It has shown that the Movement and everyday cannot be radically separated, when the armed struggle is narrated through family relations (6.3.4), and pointed towards strategies and campaigns of the Movement such as the naming campaign (6.2.3) or the demand for the abolition of the vow (7.1), which originated in everyday practices and were taken up by the movement, or vice versa.

8.4 EVERYDAY RESISTANCE AS A DISTINCT FORM OF POLITICS

Overall, the thesis has proposed to understand everyday resistance as a form of politics distinct from social movements, which has aims, practices and forms of collectivity that differ from those of organized politics. In this sense, everyday resistance extends beyond the concept of participation in a movement. Everyday resistance – as it is conceptualized in this thesis – is not the everyday side to a social movement. It goes beyond the different ways in which social movement theory addresses the everyday, either in its importance for mobilization or formation of movements (e.g. regarding identities and emotions), as a specific field of social movement activity (e.g. prefigurism), or as a sum of individual practices which are regarded as a movement (e.g. lifestyle movements).

Everyday resistance is primarily comprised of unorganized practices which can be undertaken individually or collectively and aim at the direct subversion of specific techniques of power. Unlike many social movements which function through making claims and demanding institutional and legal changes, everyday resistance rather aims at “de facto gains”. As depicted in this thesis, these de facto goals lie in ending the violent effects of these techniques of power on their lives, breaking truths of the single nation, the denial of Kurds, and the glorification of the Turkish nation; and enacting an alternative subjectivity.

The assumption enabling us to view these forms of counter-conduct as de facto subversion of power, is that of power as governmentality. This Foucauldian understanding of power requires theorizing resistance in appropriate ways. However, everyday resistance is not the only way biopower or governmentality can be challenged. Consequently, everyday resistance should not be understood as an alternative to social movements. It does not undermine the importance of social movements, but rather emphasizes the importance of addressing these practices separately.

Overall, this thesis therefore makes contributions to three specific fields. Firstly, it offers a new understanding of assimilation in Foucauldian terms of the production of subjectivity which shifts the notion away from its focus on ethnicity towards the government of conduct in general. Secondly, with its empirical case study which analyzes the overlap of everyday resistance and social movement, the thesis contributes both to the debates on resistance against biopower and social movement studies. Lastly, this thesis contributes to the slowly growing number of empirical studies on the Kurdish issue. It includes research conducted in Bursa, a city which has so far not been the focus of studies on the Kurds. More importantly, its approach allows for a new perspective on the Kurdish struggle, which -

despite the highly politicized situation and mass mobilization among Kurds - has so far only been addressed in terms of armed struggle and party politics. While the academic literature on the Kurdish Movement has tended to detach politics from the everyday, this study has highlighted the crucial importance of mundane practices of everyday life for this struggle.

Nevertheless, the current peace process and the ongoing transition of state politics will have effects on how these forms of resistance evolve, continue or dissolve. How will the redeployment of notions of ethnicity, race, nation and ruralness develop in respect to the changing state discourses? Will they be given up for other oppositional notions or will they be resignified in other ways? What will happen to these practices of Kurdishness in the light of shifting state policies? In which way will possible future changes in the structure and politics of the PKK further effect everyday resistance? These questions suggest that the crucial political developments currently taking place demand continuing research in this field.

Appendix 1

Terminology

Kurdish region or Kurdistan region in Turkey: I use the term *Kurdish region in Turkey* to refer to the area in the Republic of Turkey in which the numerical majority of the Kurds in Turkey still live today, as both practices of assimilation and of resistance differ according to the numerical majority population. Due to intense migration, especially in the 1990s, but also in the years before, large numbers of Kurds have settled in the larger cities in the West of Turkey. The total number of Kurds living in Turkey today is estimated between 15 and 20 million, while around 2 million of them live outside the Kurdish region. The Kurdish region lies in the South-East of Turkey; beginning with Dersim (Tunceli) which marks the West of the Kurdish region to Doğubayazıt in the northwest, Adıyaman in the southwest and Hakkari in the southeast. This area only composes the northern part of what is generally understood as Kurdistan. In line with Joost Jongerden's (2007) discussion on this terminology, I interchangeable use the term Kurdistan region (in Turkey) when referring more to the geographical region than the numerical majority population. He rightly argues that the area in Turkey in which the numerical majority of Kurds live is not only inhabited by Kurds, but also by many other ethnic and religious groups. He, therefore, advocates the term *Kurdistan Region of Turkey*, which I have adapted to *in Turkey* to make clear that there is no official recognition of this terminology. In choosing both these terms, I reject using the euphemistic expression *South-East of Turkey* (which researchers have so far either been forced to use or have wittingly or unwittingly reproduced) for the obvious reason that this term has been part of the state's discourse of denial of the Kurds in Turkey. In this thesis, I do not use the term *Northern Kurdistan* as often referred to by the Movement, as my reference point when using these terms is Turkey (not Kurdistan), highlighting the differences between the West of Turkey and the Kurdistan region within Turkey).

The West of Turkey: In contrast to the Kurdistan region, I use the term the *West* (of Turkey) to refer to those areas of the Turkish Republic, in which Kurds are not the numerical majority. These areas not only lie in the geographical west, but also in the north and the south of Turkey. I subsume all these regions under the term *the West* to point out that

these regions are strongholds for nationalist, pro-assimilatist and racist discourses, in contrast to the Kurdistan region.

Kurdish languages and Kurdish: Generally, the Kurdish language family is differentiated into four groups: Kurmanji, Zaza (also called Kirmanjki or Dimili), Sorani and Gorani. However, the ongoing debate on whether to regard them as dialects or separate languages (and with this possibly separate ethnic entities) has turned into a political question (see e.g. White, 2003). For my research these differences have not been of importance. None of my interviews emphasized the importance of their specific dialect/language over another. On the contrary, all my interviewees used the overall term Kurdish. Accordingly, I refer to the specific language when relevant. Otherwise, I use the term *Kurdish* to refer to any of these languages/dialects.

PKK and armed struggle: Founded in 1978, the PKK – then a Marxist-Leninist organisation – began its armed struggle in 1984. Over the years, the organisational structure of the PKK proliferated and changed rendering the term *PKK* rather an umbrella-signifier than the name of a distinct organisation. In 1985, for instance, it founded the *National Liberation Front of Kurdistan* (Enîya Rizgarîya Netewa Kurdistan, ERNK) described as “political and diplomatic wing” of the PKK, which was itself again divided into sub-organisation for workers, intellectuals, youth and women and had sections across the globe (Romano, 2006: 144; also see Özcan, 2006). Similarly, the armed wing was formed as a separate unit. With the end of the Soviet Union, however, begins a questioning of its ideological framework, resulting in a shift in paradigm away from national-liberation to radical democracy which triggered a series of organisational transformations especially throughout the 2000s (after the capture of PKK-leader Abdullah Öcalan). This shift affected a restructuring in which the PKK distanced itself from the form of a “party” and promoted of the formation as “congress” (e.g. Freedom and Democracy Congress of Kurdistan (Kongreya Azadî û Demokrasiya Kurdistanê, KADEK, formed in 2002) and its reformation as People’s Congress of Kurdistan (Kongra Gelê Kurdistan, short: Kongra Gel) in 2003), establishing the current *Union of Kurdish Communities (KCK)* as highest or most comprehensive body in 2007 (Güler, 2010: 10; Özcan, 2006: 52-53). Conceptualized as a bottom-to-top system of assemblies which aims at being an alternative way of organising society to the nation-state, this union organisationally goes beyond what the PKK originally was (Akkaya & Jongerden, 2012: § 28).

In fact, the PKK as such was dissolved at its eighth congress in 2002 and reopened in this context in 2005 (Güler, 2010: 100). In this sense, although the KCK is widely regarded as just the new name of the PKK, it is technically incorrect to conflate PKK and KCK. In this thesis, I employ PKK in more generalized terms as a synonym for the armed struggle and the politics connected with it, as it is done among the Kurdish population. I, however, use the precise terminology, when referring to official declarations or specific organs.

Kurdish Movement (short: the Movement): This term is deployed to refer to the whole range of institutions, organisations and individuals which make up the political Movement and are structurally or ideologically related to the armed struggle. These include the structures mentioned above which are directly associated with the PKK, as well as the numerous legal organisations, such the legal Kurdish parties (current and previous), political institutions, such as the Democratic Society Congress (DTK), the cultural organisations, such as the Mesopotamia Culture Centre (MKM), the language Institutes (Istanbul Institute) and Kurdî Der, the Cigerxwin Culture and Art Center and the Aram Tigran Conservatoire in Diyarbakir, as well as Kurdish music groups, journalists, authors, and lawyers, who defend political prisoners, the various Kurdish women's organisations, the Saturday Mothers, the Organisation of Families of Imprisoned, as well as the participants in demonstrations and protest. This term acknowledges the diversity of actors, strategies and practices within the Movement of which the PKK is only one part. In line with the paradigm shift of the PKK, I do not refer to this myriad as the Kurdish *National* Movement as often done in the academic literature (Cengiz Gunes, 2012; Romano, 2006).

Kurdish National Movement: In contrast to the term Kurdish Movement, I use the *Kurdish National Movement* in order to also include groups, individuals, and parties which differ decisively in their political demands from those of the PKK. It, therefore, refers to the whole sum of all organisations and individuals which are somehow involved in promoting Kurdish culture or political interests. Among them are all organisations associated to PKK, but also those who are not, such as the *Rights and Freedoms Party* (Hak ve Özgürlükler Partisi, HAK-PAR). Furthermore, this term includes those historic groups and actors of Kurdish politics which existed before the founding of the PKK, for instance those of early nationalism or the so-called "Eastern Meetings" in the last 1960s. This broad term allows to point towards the

continuities and shared trajectory despite the differences among the various actors of the developing field.

Legal Kurdish Party/Parties: Due to the repression towards Kurdish politics, parties which have specifically attended to the Kurdish question have been repeatedly closed by court decrees. During the period of my fieldwork the name of this party was *Peace and Democracy Party* (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi, BDP). Among its predecessors were the *People's Labour Party* (Halkın Emek Partisi, HEP) founded in 1990 and forcefully dissolved in 1993, the *Democratic Party* (Demokrasi Partisi, DEP) founded 1993 and shut down in 1994. The *People's Democratic Party* (Halkın Demokrasi Partisi, HADEP), founded in 1994, existed until its forceful closure in 2003 and was followed by the *Democratic People's Party* (Demokratik Halk Partisi, DEHAP) which dissolved itself in 2005 and reformed as the *Democratic Society Party* (Demokratik Toplum Partisi, DTP) the same year. This party was closed by court decree in 2009, immediately reopening as BDP. In order to rid itself from the image of being "Kurdish" party as a result of a change in political strategy, the BDP dissolved itself into the *Peoples' Democratic Party* (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP) and the regional limited *Democratic Regions Party* (Demokratik Bölgeler Partisi, DBP) in 2012. Although slightly imprecise I chose to use the term "Kurdish party" when referring to one of these parties.

Place names: For this thesis, I have chosen to deploy the place names most frequently used by my interviewees. These are Dersim (instead of official Turkish name Tunceli), Kızıltepe (instead of Kurdish name: Qoser), Diyarbakir/Amed both similarly frequently used, Izmir and Bursa.

Appendix 2

List of Interviews

Interview 1: informal interview, woman in her late 30s, in work, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 2: informal interview, male student in his mid 20s, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 3: informal interview, female student in her early 20s, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 4: informal interview, employed man in his late 20s, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 5: informal interview, employed man in his mid-40s, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 6: informal interview, man, retired, over 60, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 7: 35 year old man working in precarious conditions with university education, to finance his studies he went to work in the West in precarious conditions for a few months every year, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 8: 33 year old man in work, with a university education, worked manually in the West to finance his studies, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 9: 25 year old male in work, grew up in larger town in the Kurdish region, higher education at very good university in the West of Turkey

Interview 10: informal interview, housewife in her late 30s, married with children, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 11: informal interview, housewife in her mid-30s, married with children, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 12: 20 year old male student with secondary education, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 13: 22 year old woman in precariously self-employed work, who dropped out of primary school, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 14: 30 year old woman with university education, in work, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region in the 1990s, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 15: 29 year old man, in work with university education, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 16: 28 year old woman with university education, in work, she was born in a village but migrated to the city within the Kurdish region when she was an infant, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 17: informal interview, man in his late 30s running his own small business, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 18: 24 year old male student, moved within the Kurdish region for his studies, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 19: 25 year old male student, moved within the Kurdish region for his studies, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 20: 27 year old unemployed woman with a university degree, studied in the West, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 21: 28 year old unemployed woman with secondary school education, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 22: 30 year old female teacher in precarious working conditions, only moved within the region for her studies, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 23: informal interview, man with university education in work, in his late 20s, conducted in Kızıltepe

Interview 24: informal interview with man in his late 20s, conducted in Kızıltepe

Interview 25: informal interview, man in his early 30s, with university education, in work, conducted in Kızıltepe

Interview 26: 24 year old male student with secondary education, grew up in a village and only migrated within the Kurdish region for his studies, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 27: 35 year old man, grew up in a village which was evicted, then forced to migrate to larger town in Kurdish region, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 28: 24 year old unemployed woman with primary school education, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 29: 18 year old female secondary school student, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 30: 25 year old unemployed woman with university degree, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region due to village eviction, studied in the West, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 31: 30 year old man with university education, in work, studied in the West, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 32: informal interview with an unemployed woman with primary school education, in her early 30s, conducted in Diyarbakir

Interview 33: 31 year old man, in work, with university education, forcefully migrated within the Kurdish region due to village eviction, conducted in Kızıltepe

Interview 34: 55 year old unemployed woman with primary school education, migrated to the West in the 1980s due to military violence, conducted in Izmir

Interview 35: precariously employed man in his late 20s with elementary school education, small family, moved to the West to work as an adolescent, conducted in Izmir

Interview 36: 23 year old housewife with secondary school education, who grew up in the West, conducted in Izmir

Interview 37: 32 year old man with a university degree, working in precarious conditions, migrated to the West due to security issues in the mid-1980s, conducted in Izmir

Interview 38: 51 year old retired women with secondary school education, migrated to the West in the 1980s, conducted in Izmir

Interview 39: informal interview, retired man in his late 50s with middle school education, living in the West, conducted in Izmir

Interview 40: 55 year old retired man with secondary school education, who was a victim of disciplinary relocation in the 1980s, conducted in Izmir

Interview 41: informal interview with woman in her late 40s, with primary education, migrated to the West as a child, conducted in Izmir

Interview 42: informal interview, woman in her mid-20s, primary school education, living in the West, conducted in Izmir

Interview 43: informal interview, politician, in his 60s, conducted in Izmir

Interview 44: wealthy 43 year old woman with university education, living in the West, conducted in Bursa

Interview 45: female politician in her 40s, living in the West, conducted in Bursa

Interview 46: 35 year old housewife with elementary school education, forcefully migrated to the West in the 1990s, conducted in Bursa

Interview 47: 20 year old woman with elementary school education, working in precarious conditions, conducted in Bursa

Interview 48: 40 year old housewife with elementary school education, forcefully migrated to the West in the 1990s, conducted in Bursa

Interview 49: informal interview, housewife with elementary school education in her early 40s, forcefully migrated to the West in the 1990s, conducted in Bursa

Interview 50: 37 year old woman with university education, in work, migrated to the West when she was a child, conducted in Bursa

Interview 51: informal interview, retired man in his 60s, moved to the West for economic reasons in the 1980s, conducted in Bursa

Interview 52: informal interview, man in his mid 50s, living in the West, conducted in Bursa

Interview 53: wealthy man in his mid 40s, in high position in his job, married, moved with his family to the West as an adolescent, conducted in Bursa

Interview 54: informal interview with politician, conducted in Bursa

Interview 55: 23 year old male student, with secondary school education, grew up in the West, conducted in Bursa

Interview 56: 22 year old male student, with secondary school education, moved to the West for his studies, conducted in Bursa

Interview 57: 24 year old male university student, moved to the West to study, conducted in Bursa

Interview 58: 19 year old female university student, born in the West and moved within the West to study, conducted in Bursa

Bibliography

- Abu-Lughod, L. (1990). The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power through Bedouin Women. *American Ethnologist*, 17(1), 41–55.
- Açık, N. (2014). Re-defining the role of women within the Kurdish national movement in Turkey in the 1990s. In C. Gunes & W. Zeydanlıoğlu (Eds.), *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation and Reconciliation* (Routledge., pp. 114–136). London; New York: Routledge.
- Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi. (2012). Party Programme. Retrieved November 20, 2014, from https://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum_
- Afary, J., & Anderson, K. B. (2005). *Foucault and the Iranian Revolution. Gender and the Seductions of Islamism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Ahıska, M. (2003). Occidentalism: The Historical Fantasy of the Modern. *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102(2/3), 351–379.
- Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı. (2012, May 22). İstanbul Milliyetvekili Sayın A. Levent Tüzel'e ait 7/4511 Esas Numaralı Yazılı Soru Önergesine İlişkin Olarak Hazırlanan Cevap Metni. Retrieved from <http://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d24/7/7-4511sgc.pdf>
- Akkaya, A. H., & Jongerden, J. (2012). Reassembling the Political: The PKK and the project of Radical Democracy. *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, (14). Retrieved from <http://ejts.revues.org/4615>
- Akkaya, A. H., & Jongerden, J. (2014). Conferdederalism and autonomy in Turkey: The Kurdistan Workers' Party and the reinvention of democracy. In C. Gunes & W. Zeydanlıoğlu (Eds.), *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation and Reconciliation* (pp. 186–204). London; New York: Routledge.
- Aksoy, O. E. (2014). Music and Reconciliation in Turkey. In C. Gunes & W. Zeydanlıoğlu (Eds.), *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation and Reconciliation* (pp. 225–244). London; New York: Routledge.
- Aktar, A. (1996). Cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarında uygulanan “türkleştirme” politikaları. *Tarih ve Toplum*, 156, 4–18.
- Alba, R., & Nee, V. (1997). Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration. *International Migration Review*, 31(4), 826–874.
- Allen, A. (2011). Foucault and the politics of our selves. *History of the Human Sciences*, 24(4), 43–59.
- Altınay, A. G. (2005). Who is a (Good) Turk? The Ideal Student in Textbooks. In *How are We Educated: International Symposium on Human Rights Education and Textbook Research. Proceedings* (pp. 88–95). İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yayınları.

- Altınay, E. (2013). The Terrorist with Highlights: Kurdish Female Suicide Bombers in Mainstream Turkish Media. In F. Attwood & V. Campbell (Eds.), *Controversial Images. Media Representations on the Edge*. (pp. 85–98). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Amnesty International. (2010). *All Children Have Rights. End Unfair Prosecutions of Children under Anti-Terrorism Legislation in Turkey*. London.
- Anderson, E. (2012). The Iconic Ghetto. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 642(8), 8–24.
- Aras, R. (2014). 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* (pp. 89–113). New York: Routledge.
- Aslan, S. (2009). Incoherent State: The Controversy over Kurdish Naming in Turkey. *European Journal of Turkish Studies. Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey*, (10). Retrieved from <http://ejts.revues.org/4142>
- Aslan, S. (2011). Everyday Forms of State Power and the Kurds in the Early Turkish Republic. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 43, 75–93.
- Aydın, D. (2014). Mobilising the Kurds in Turkey: Newroz as a myth. In *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation and Reconciliation* (pp. 64–88). London; New York: Routledge.
- Barkey, H. J. (1998). The people's democracy party (hadep): the travails of a legal Kurdish party in Turkey. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 18(1), 129–138.
- Barkey, H. J., & Fuller, G. E. (1998). *Turkey's Kurdish Question*. Lanham (MA): Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Bayir, D. (2013). *Minorities and nationalism in Turkish law*. Burlington: Ashgate.
- Bayir, D. (2013). Representation of the Kurds by the Turkish Judiciary. *Human Rights Quarterly*, 35(1), 116–142.
- Bayir, D. (2014). The role of the judicial system in the politicization of the Kurdish opposition. In C. Gunes & W. Zeydanlıoğlu (Eds.), *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation and Reconciliation* (pp. 21–46). London; New York: Routledge.
- Berg, B. L. (2001). *Qualitative Research Methods for Social Sciences*. London: Allyn & Bacon.
- Beşikçi, İ. (1991). *Ortadoğu'da Devlet Terörü*. Ankara: Yurt Yayın.
- Beşikçi, İ. (1992). *Doğu Mitingleri'nin Analizi (1967)*. Ankara: Yurt Yayın.
- Bianet. (2012a, February 20). 1023 Child Political Convicts - Dramatic Increase. *Bianet*. Retrieved August 12, 2013, from <http://www.bianet.org/english/children/136289-1023-child-political-convicts-dramatic-increase>

- Bianet. (2012b, February 26). Pozantı Cezaevi'nde Çocuklara Cinsel İstismar İddiası. Retrieved August 12, 2013, from <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/cocuk/136468-pozanti-cezaevi-nde-cocuklara-cinsel-istismar-iddiasi>
- Bianet. (2014, September 10). STK'lardan Okul Boykotu Çağrısı. Retrieved October, 29, 2014, from <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/158427-stk-lardan-okul-boykotu-cagrisi>
- Bora, T. (1995). Türkiye'de milliyetçilik ve azınlıklar. *Birikim*, 71/72(Mart/Nisan), 34–49.
- Bora, T. (1996). İnşa döneminde Türk milli kimliği. *Toplum ve Bilim*, 71, 168–194.
- Bora, T. (2008). *Türkiye'nin linç rejimi*. İstanbul: Birikim Yayınlar.
- Bora, T. (2009). Ders Kitaplarında Milliyetçilik. "Siz bu Ülke için Neler Yapmayı Düşünüyorsunuz?" In *Ders Kitaplarında İnsan Hakları II. Tarama Sonuçları* (pp. 115–141). İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı.
- Bozarslan, H. (1992). Political aspects of the Kurdish problem in contemporary Turkey. In P. G. Kreyenbroek & S. Sperl (Eds.), *The Kurds. A contemporary overview* (pp. 74–89). London; New York: Routledge.
- Bozarslan, H. (2000). "Why the Armed Struggle?" Understanding the Violence in Kurdistan of Turkey. In *The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey. Obstacles and Chances for Peace and Democracy* (pp. 17–30). Münster: LIT Verlag.
- Brubaker, R. (2001). The return of assimilation? Changing perspectives on immigration and its sequels in France, Germany, and the United States. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 24(4), 531–548.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of "Sex."* New York, London: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1997). *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*. Stanford (CA): Stanford University Press.
- Butler, J. (2000). Competing Universalities. In *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality. Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (pp. 136–181). London: Verso.
- Cagaptay, S. (2004). Race, Assimilation and Kemalism: Turkish Nationalism and the Minorities in the 1930s. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 40(3), 86–101.
- Cagaptay, S. (2006). *Islam, Secularism and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?*. New York: Routledge.
- Çağlayan, H. (2007). *Analar, Yoldaşla, Tanrıçalar. Kürt Hareketinde Kadınlar ve Kadın Kimliğinin Oluşumu*. İstanbul: İleştirim.

- Cağlayan, H., Özar, Ş., & Tepe Doğan, A. (2011). *Ne Değişti? Kürt Kadınların Zorulu Göç Deneyimi*. İstanbul: Ayizi Yayınları.
- Çalışlar, O. (2010). (2010, September 24). "İyi Kürt" "kötü Kürt." *Radikal*. Retrieved September 17, 2014, from <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Default.aspx?aType=YazarYazisi&Date=&ArticleID=1020486>
- Candar, C. (1999). Redefining Turkey's Political Center. *Journal of Democracy*, 10(4), 129–141.
- Casier, M., & Jongerden, J. (2012). Understanding today's Kurdish movement: Leftist heritage, martyrdom, democracy and gender. *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, (14). Retrieved from <http://ejts.revues.org/4656>
- Çayır, K. (2009). Preparing Turkey for the European Union: Nationalism, National Identity and "Otherness" in Turkey's New Textbooks. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 30(1), 39–55.
- Çelik, A. B. (2005). "I miss my village!": Forced Kurdish migrants in Istanbul and their representation in associations. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, (32), 137–163.
- Çiçek, C. (2014). Elimination or integration of pro-Kurdish politics: Limits of the AKP's democratic initiative. In C. Gunes & W. Zeydanlıoğlu (Eds.), *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation and Reconciliation* (pp. 245–257). New York: Routledge.
- Cizre Sakallioğlu, U. (1998). Kurdish nationalism from an Islamist perspective: the discourses of Turkish Islamist writers. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 18(1), 73–89.
- CNN Turk. (2005, August 1). Kürtçe dil kursları kapandı. Retrieved April 28, 2015, from <http://www.cnnturk.com/2005/turkiye/08/01/kurtce.dil.kurslari.kapandi/114771.0/index.html>
- Coşkun, V., Derince, M. Ş., & Uçarlar, N. (2011). *Scar of Tongue. Consequences of the Ban on the Use of Mother Tongue in Education and Experiences of Kurdish Students in Turkey*. Diyarbakır: DISA Publications.
- Couto, R. A. (1993). Narrative, Free Space, and Political Leadership in Social Movements. *The Journal of Politics*, 55(01), 57–79.
- Cresswell, T. (1996). *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology and Transgression*. Minneapolis.
- Cresswell, T. (1998). Night Discourse. Producing/Consuming Meaning on the Street. In N. Fyfe (Ed.), *Images of the Street: Planning, Identity and Control in Public Space*. London: Routledge.
- Cresswell, T. (1999). Falling Down. Resistance as diagnostic. In J. Paddison, R., Philo, C., Routledge, P., & Sharp (Ed.), *Entanglements of Power: Geographies of Domination/Resistance*. London; New York: Routledge.

- Crossley, N. (2002). *Making Sense of Social Movements*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Crossley, N. (2006). *Reflexive Embodiment in Contemporary Society*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Cumhuriyet. (2012, December 8). İleri düzeyde Kürtçe, Zazaca ve Arapça kursu. Retrieved April 28, 2015, from http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/diger/389062/ileri_duzeyde_Kurtce__Zazaca_ve_Arapca_kursu.html
- Curtis, J., & Spencer, J. (2012). Anthropology and the Political. In R. Fardon, O. Harris, T. H. J. Marchard, M. Nuttall, C. Shore, V. Strang, & R. A. Wilson (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Social Anthropology. Vol 1* (pp. 168–182). London: Sage Publications.
- Darici, H. (2011). Politics of privacy: forced migration and the spatial struggle of the Kurdish youth. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 13(4), 457–474.
- Das, V., & Poole, D. (2004). *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*. Santa Fe (NM): School of American Research Press.
- Davidson, A. I. (2005). Ethics as Ascetics: Foucault, the History of Ethics and Ancient Thought. In G. Gutting (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Foucault* (2nd Editio., pp. 123–148). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Davidson, A. I. (2011). In praise of counter-conduct. *History of the Human Sciences*, 24(4), 25–41.
- De Certeau, M. (1984). *The Practice of Everyday Life*. (S. Rendall, Trans.). Berkeley (CA): University of California Press.
- Death, C. (2010). Counter-conducts: A Foucauldian Analytics of Protest. *Social Movement Studies*, 9(3), 235–251.
- Demir, E. (2009). *Öteki Kürtler: Bir Geleneğin Anatomisi ve 2009 Mart Seçimleri*. Ankara: Orion.
- Demirel, T. (2004). Soldiers and civilians: the dilemma of Turkish democracy. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 40(1), 127–150.
- Derince, M. Ş. (2012). *Gender, Education and Mother Tongue*. Diyarbakır: DISA Publications.
- Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi. (2013, September 24). Kürtçe dil kursuna büyük ilgi. Retrieved April 28, 2015, from <http://www.diyarbakir.bel.tr/newsdetails.aspx?ID=7413&natid=0>
- Diyarin Sesi. (2013, October 26). Kürtçe kursa talep yüksek. Retrieved April 28, 2015, from <http://www.diyarinsesi.org/haber/kurtce-kursa-talep-yuksek-45273.htm>
- Doğan, A. E., & Yılmaz, B. (2011). Ethnicity, social tensions and production of space in forced migration neighbourhoods of Mersin: comparing the case of the Demirtaş

- neighbourhood with newly established ones. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 13(4), 475–494.
- Dönmez, R. Ö. (2012). Constructing Kurdish Nationalist Identity Through Lyrical Narratives in Popular Music. *Alternative Politics*, 4(3), 318–341.
- Downing, J. D. H. (2001). *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and Social Movements*. Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage Publications.
- Duran, B. (2008). The Justice and Development Party's "new politics": Steering toward conservative democracy, a revised Islamic agenda or management of new crises. In Ü. Cizre (Ed.), *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party* (pp. 80–105). New York: Routledge.
- Edwards, G. (2014). *Social Movements and Protest*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ekinci, T. Z. (2011). Kürtlerin asimilasyonu bitti mi? *Demokrathaber*. Retrieved November 07, 2011, from <http://www.demokrathaber.net/guncel/kurtlerin-asimilasyonu-bitti-mi.htm>
- Elhüseyni, D. (2009). Cezaevi: Değişen ve Görünmeyen Yüzler. *Toplum ve Kuram. Lêkolîn û Xebatên Kurdî*, 2, 9–15.
- Engel, A. (2005). Das zwielichtige Verhältnis von Sexualität und Ökonomie. Repräsentationen sexueller Subjektivitäten im Neoliberalismus. *Das Argument*, 260, 224–236.
- Erdoğan, R. T. (2009). Speech of Prime Minister R.T. Erdogan at the AK party Congress on the 3rd October 2009. Retrieved January 08, 2012, from <http://eng.akparti.org.tr/english/newscongressfull.html>
- Eriksen, T. H. (2010). Ethnicity, Race and Nation. In M. Guibernau & J. Rex (Eds.), *The Ethnicity Reader. Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration* (pp. 46–53). Cambridge: Polity.
- Esser, H. (2003). Ist das Konzept der Assimilation überholt? *Geographische Revue*, 5(2), 5–22.
- Fanon, F. (1965). *A Dying Colonialism*. New York: Grove Press.
- Fanon, F. (1967). *Black Skin, White Masks*. (C. L. Markmann, Trans.). New York: Grove Press.
- Fantasia, R., & Hirsch, E. L. (1995). Culture in Rebellion: The Appropriation and Transformation of the Veil in the Algerian Revolution. In H. Johnston & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *Social Movements and Culture* (pp. 144–159). Minneapolis (MN): University of Minnesota Press.
- Fenton, S. (1999). *Ethnicity. Racism, Class and Culture*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Fernandes, D. (2012). Modernity and the linguistic genocide of Kurds in Turkey. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 75–98.

- Firat News. (2013, September 18). Med Müzik test yayınına başladı. Retrieved June 20, 2014, from <http://www.ajansafirat.net/news/guncel/med-muzik-test-yayinina-basladi.htm>
- Firat News. (2014, September 16). Kürtçe okullar kapatıldı. Retrieved October 29, 2014, from <http://www.firatnews.com/news/guncel/kurtce-okullar-kapatildi.htm>
- Fletcher, R. (2001). What are we fighting for? Rethinking resistance in a Pewenche community in Chile. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 28(3), 37–66.
- Foucault, M. (1977a). *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1977b). Revolutionary Action: “Until Now.” In D. F. Bouchard (Ed.), *Language, Counter-memory, Practice. Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault* (pp. 218–233). Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1980a). Confessions of the Flesh. In C. Gordon (Ed.), *Power/Knowledge* (pp. 194–228). Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Foucault, M. (1980b). Power and Strategies. In *Power/Knowledge* (pp. 134–145). Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Foucault, M. (1980c). *Power/Knowledge*. (C. Gordon, Ed.). Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Foucault, M. (1984). What is Enlightenment? In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (pp. 32–50). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1990a). *The Care of the Self. The History of Sexuality. Vol. 3*. (R. Hurley, Trans.). London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1990b). *The Use of Pleasures. The History of Sexuality. Vol. 2*. (R. Hurley, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1998). *The Will to Knowledge. The History of Sexuality. Vol. 1*. London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (2000a). *Ethics. The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984. Vol. 1*. (P. Rabinow, Ed.). London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (2000b). *Power. The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984. Vol. 3*. (J. D. Faubion, Ed.). London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (2000c). Sex, Power and the Politics of Identity. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *Ethics. The Essential Works of Michel Foucault, 1954-1984. Volume 1* (pp. 163–173). London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (2000d). The Moral and Social Experience of the Poles Can No Longer Be Obliterated. In J. D. Faubion (Ed.), *Power. Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984. Vol. 3* (pp. 465–473). London: Penguin.

- Foucault, M. (2000e). The Subject and Power. In *Power. Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984. Vol. 3* (London., pp. 326–348). Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (2001). *Madness and Civilisation*. (R. Howard, Trans.). London; New York: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (2002). *The Order of Things: an Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (2003). *Society Must Be Defended. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*. (M. Bertani & A. Fontana, Eds.). London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (2007). What is Critique? In *The Politics of Truth* (pp. 41–81). Los Angeles (CA): Semiotext(e).
- Foucault, M. (2009). *Security, Territory, Population. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-1978*. (M. Senellart, Ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gal, S. (1995). Language and the “Arts of Resistance.” *Cultural Anthropology*, 10(3), 407–424.
- Gambetti, Z. (2009a). Decolonizing Diyarbakır: Culture, Identity and the Struggle to Appropriate Urban Space. In K. A. Ali & M. Rieker (Eds.), *Comparing Cities: The Middle East and South Asia* (pp. 95–127). Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Gambetti, Z. (2009b). Politics of place/space: The spatial dynamics of the Kurdish and Zapatista movements. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 41, 43–87.
- Gerson, K., & Horowitz, R. (2002). Observation and Interviewing: Options and choices in qualitative research. In T. May (Ed.), *Qualitative Research in Action* (pp. 199–224). London: Sage.
- Goodwin, J., Jasper, J. M., & Polletta, F. (Eds.). (2001). *Passionate Politics. Emotions and Social Movements*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Gülcan, E. (2012, February 10). Kürt Gazetecilerin Avukatı Olmak. Interview with Özcan Kılıç. *Bianet*. Retrieved July, 01, 2014 from <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/diger/136073-kurt-gazetecilerin-avukati-olmak>
- Güler, N. M. (2010). *KCK Dosyası. Küresel Devlet, Devletsiz Kürtler*. Istanbul: Belge.
- Gündoğan, A. Z. (2011). Space, state-making and contentious Kurdish politics in the East of Turkey: the case of Eastern Meetings, 1967. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, 13(4), 389–416.
- Gürer, Ç. (2014). *Etnik-Ulusal Sorunların Çözümünde Özerklik Uygulamaları. Kürt Sorunu ve Demokratik Özerklik*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Ankara University, Ankara, Turkey.
- Gunes, C. (2010). *From Protest to Resistance and Beyond: The Contemporary Kurdish National Movement in Turkey. Department of Government*. University of Essex, Essex.

- Gunes, C. (2012). *The Kurdish National Movement in Turkey: from Protest to Resistance*. New York: Routledge.
- Gunes, C., & Zeydanlioğlu, W. (2014). Introduction. Turkey and the Kurds. In C. Gunes & W. Zeydanlioğlu (Eds.), *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation and Reconciliation* (pp. 1–20). New York: Routledge.
- Haenfler, R., Johnson, B., & Jones, E. (2012). Lifestyle Movements: Exploring the Intersection of Lifestyle and Social Movements. *Social Movement Studies*, 11(1), 1–20.
- Hall, S. (1989). Old and New Identities. Old and New Ethnicities. In L. Back & J. Solomos (Eds.), *Theories of Race and Racism. A Reader* (pp. 144–153). London: Routledge.
- Halperin, D. (1995). *Saint Foucault: Toward a Gay Hagiography*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hansen, T. B., & Stepputat, F. (Eds.). (2001). *States of imagination: ethnographic explorations of the postcolonial state*. Durham (NC), London: Duke University Press.
- Hassanpour, A. (1998). Satellite footprints as national borders: med-tv and the extraterritoriality of state sovereignty. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 18(1), 53–72.
- Hassanpour, A. (2005). *Kürdistan'da Milliyetçilik ve Dil. 1918-1985*. Istanbul: Avesta.
- Hassanpour, A., Sheyholislami, J., & Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2012). Introduction. Kurdish: Linguicide, resistance and hope. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 217, 1–18.
- Haynes, D., & Prakash, G. (Eds.). (1991). *Contesting Power. Resistance and Everyday Social Relations in South Asia*. Berkeley (CA): University of California Press.
- Hollander, J. A., & Einwohner, R. L. (2004). Conceptualizing Resistance. *Sociological Forum*, 19(4), 533–554.
- Hooks, B. (1990). Homeplace: A Site of Resistance. In *Yearning: race, gender, and cultural politics*. Boston (MA): South End Press.
- Houston, C. (2005). Provocations of the built environment: animating cities in Turkey as Kemalist. *Political Geography*, 24(1), 101–119.
- HRW. (2010a). *Turkey. Protesting as a Terrorist Offense. The Arbitrary Use of Terrorism Laws to Prosecute and Incarcerate Demonstrators in Turkey*. New York: Human Rights Watch.
- HRW. (2010b). Turkey: Terrorism Laws Used to Jail Kurdish Protesters. Government Should Reform Laws That Treat Demonstrators as Armed Militants. Retrieved January 11, 2012, from <http://www.hrw.org/news/2010/11/01/turkey-terrorism-laws-used-jail-kurdish-protesters>

- Hürriyet. (2005, August 1). 7 yerde Kürtçe dil kursu kapandı. Retrieved April 29, 2015, from <http://webarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/2005/08/01/680727.asp>
- Hurriyet. (2012, July 23). Court bans use of 19 park names in Kurdish. Retrieved August 01, 2013, from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/court-bans-use-of-19-park-names-in-kurdish.aspx?pageID=238&nid=26073>
- Ibrahim, F. (2000). The "Foreign Policy" of the PKK: Regional Allies and Enemies. In *The Kurdish Conflict in Turkey. Obstacles and Chances for Peace and Democracy*. Münster: LIT Verlag.
- IHA. (2011, January 9). Atatürk büstünü yaktılar! Retrieved August 12, 2013, from <http://www.ihha.com.tr/gundem/ataturk-bustunu-yaktilar/154497>
- IHD. (2006). 28 Mart 2006 Diyarbakır olaylarına ilişkin inceleme raporu. Retrieved October 07, 2013, from <http://www.ihd.org.tr/index.php/raporlar-mainmenu-86/el-raporlar-mainmenu-90/106-28-mart-2006-darbakiir-olaylarina-k-celeme-raporu.html>
- IHD. (2014, October 14). Kobane direnişi ile dayanışma kapsamında yapılan eylem ve etkinliklere müdahale sonucu meydana gelen hak ihlalleri raporu (2-12 Ekim 2014). Retrieved November 13, 2014, from <http://ihd.org.tr/index.php/raporlar-mainmenu-86/el-raporlar-mainmenu-90/2888-kobane-direnisi-ile-dayanisma-kapsaminda-yapilan-eylem-ve-etkinliklere-mudahale-sonucu-meydana-gelen-hak-ihlalleri-raporu-2-12-ekim-2014.html>
- Işık, A. S., & Arslan, S. (2012). Bir Asimilasyon Projesi: Türkiye’de Yatılı İlköğretim Bölge Okulları. *Toplum ve Kuram. Lêkolîn û Xebatên Kurdî*, 6-7(107-140).
- Jaspers, J. M. (2010). Cultural Approaches in the Sociology of Social Movements. In B. Klandersman & C. Roggeband (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Movements Across Disciplines* (pp. 59–109). New York: Springer.
- Johnston, H. (1991). *Tales of Nationalism: Catalonia, 1939-1979*. New Brunswick (NJ): Rutgers University Press.
- Johnston, H., & Klandermans, B. (Eds.). (1995). *Social Movements and Culture*. Minneapolis (MN): University of Minnesota Press.
- Jongerden, J. (2007). *The Settlement Issue in Turkey and the Kurds. An Analysis of Spatial Policies, Modernity and War*. Leiden: Brill.
- Jongerden, J. (2009). Crafting Space, Making People: The Spatial Design of Nation in Modern Turkey. *European Journal of Turkish Studies. Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey*, (10). Retrieved from <http://ejts.revues.org/4014>
- Jongerden, J., & Akkaya, A. H. (2012). *PKK Üzerine Yazılar*. Istanbul: Vate.
- Kadioğlu, A., & Keyman, E. F. (Eds.). (2011). *Symbiotic Antagonisms. Competing Nationalisms in Turkey*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.

- Kahraman, A. (2007). *Uprising, Suppression, Retribution. The Kurdish Struggle in Turkey in the Twentieth Century*. London: Parvana.
- Kaygalak, S. (2001). Yeni Kentsel Yoksulluk, Göç ve Yoksulluğun Mekansal Yoğunlaşması: Mersin/Demirtaş Mahallesi Örneği. *Praksis*, 2, 124–172.
- Kaygalak, S. (2009). *Kentin Mültecileri. Neoliberalizm Koşullarında Zorunlu Göç ve Kentleşme*. Ankara: Dipnot.
- Kelley, R. D. G. (1992). An Archaeology of Resistance. Review of Domination and the Art of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts by James C. Scott. *American Quarterly*, 44(2), 292–298.
- Kirisci, K., & Winrow, G. M. (1997). *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-state Ethnic Conflict*. London, Portland (OR): Frank Cass.
- Knabb, K. (Ed.). (1981). *Situationist International Anthology*. Berkeley (CA): A K Press.
- Kuruoğlu, A. P., & Ger, G. (2014). An emotional economy of mundane objects. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 1–30.
- Larsen, L. (2012). Re-placing imperial landscapes: colonial monuments and the transition to independence in Kenya. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 38(1), 45–56.
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Maeckelbergh, M. (2011). Doing is Believing: Prefiguration as Strategic Practice in the Alterglobalization Movement. *Social Movement Studies*, 10(1), 1–20.
- Maksudyan, N. (2005). The Turkish Review of Anthropology and the Racist Face of Turkish Nationalism. *Cultural Dynamics*, 17(3), 291–322.
- Malmisanij, M. (2006). *The Past and the Present of Book Publishing in Kurdish Language in Turkey*. 2006. Next Page Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.npage.org/IMG/pdf/Turkey.pdf>
- Marcus, A. (2009). *Blood and belief: the PKK and the Kurdish fight for independence*. New York; Chesham: New York University Press.
- Mason, J. (2002). Qualitative Interviewing: Asking, Listening and Interpreting. In T. May (Ed.), *Qualitative Research in Action* (pp. 225–241).
- Massey, D. (2003). Entanglements of Power. Reflections. In R. Paddison, C. Philo, P. Routledge, & J. Sharp (Eds.), *Entanglements of Power: Geographies of Domination/Resistance*. London; New York: Routledge.
- May, T. (1997). *Social Research. Issues, Methods and Process*. Buckingham (PA): Open University Press.
- Mazlum Der. (2006). Diyarbakır Olayları Raporu-06.04.2006. Retrieved October 07, 2013, from <http://mazlumder.org/yayinlar/detay/yurt-ici-raporlar/3/diyarbakir-olaylari-raporu-06042006/1055>

- McDowall, D. (2004). *A modern history of the Kurds*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- McNay, L. (2009). Self as Enterprise: Dilemmas of Control and Resistance in Foucault's The Birth of Biopolitics. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26(6), 55–77.
- MED Graffiti (Kurdish Graffiti). (n.d.). Facebook Page. Retrieved July 30, 2013, from <https://www.facebook.com/2MedGraffiti1>
- Melucci, A. (1995). The Process of Collective Identity. In H. Johnston & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *Social Movements and Culture* (pp. 41–63). Minneapolis (MN): University of Minnesota Press.
- Mert, N. (2011, February 18). "İyi Kürt", "kötü Kürt." *Milliyet*. Retrieved September 17, 2014, from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/-iyi-kurtler-kotu-kurtler-/nuray-mert/yasam/yazardetay/18.02.2011/1353673/default.htm>
- Milliyet. (2012, March 2). O çocuklar Pozanti'yı anlattı. Retrieved August 12, 2013, from <http://gundem.milliyet.com.tr/o-cocuklar-pozanti-yi-anlatti/gundem/gundemdetay/02.03.2012/1510223/default.htm>
- Milliyet. (2013, November 7). O tabelanın neden kaldırıldığını açıkladı. Retrieved February 18, 2014, from <http://siyaset.milliyet.com.tr/o-tabelanın-neden-kaldirildigini/siyaset/detay/1788581/default.htm>
- Navaro-Yashin, Y. (2002). *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Nealon, J. T. (2008). *Foucault beyond Foucault. Power and its Intensifications since 1984*. Stanford (CA): Stanford University Press.
- Nethaber. (2010, December 1). "Andımız" kaldırılacak mı? haberi. Retrieved November 21, 2013, from <http://nethaberci.com/sondakika-otomobil-haberleri/andimiz-kaldirilacak-mi-152997.html>
- Nişanyan, S. (2011). *Hayali Coğrafılar: Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkiye'de Değiştirilen Yeradları*. İstanbul: TESEV.
- NTV. (2012, December 6). "Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene" yazısını sildirmedik. Retrieved July 30, 2013, from <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25403997>
- NTV. (2013, March 26). "Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene" yazısı kaldırıldı. Retrieved July 30, 2013, from <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/id/25431436/>
- Nufusu.com. (2013a). Diyarbakır Nüfusu. Retrieved December 29, 2014, from <http://www.nufusu.com/il/diyarbakir-nufusu>
- Nufusu.com. (2013b). Kızıltepe Nüfusu Mardin. Retrieved December 29, 2014, from http://www.nufusu.com/ilce/kiziltepe_mardin-nufusu
- Ozkirimli, U. (2013). Vigilance and Apprehension: Multiculturalism, Democracy, and the "Kurdish Question" in Turkey. *Middle East Critique*, 1–19.

- Öcalan, A. (2004). *Bir Halkı Savunmak*. Istanbul: Çetin Yayın.
- Öcalan, A. (2009). *War and Peace in Kurdistan. Perspectives for a political solution of the Kurdish question*. (International Initiative, Trans.). Cologne: International Initiative.
- Öcalan, A. (2013). *Liberating Life: Woman's Revolution*. Cologne: International Initiative.
- Öktem, K. (2008). The Nation's Imprint. Demographic Engineering and the Change of Toponyms in Republican Turkey. *European Journal of Turkish Studies [online]*, 7. Retrieved from /index2243.html
- Olson, R. (1989). *The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880–1925*. Austin (TX): University of Texas Press.
- Öpengin, E. (2010). Language Practices and Education in Mother Tongue: Some Problems Concerning Kurdish Mother Tongue Medium Education in Turkey. *Mukaddime Dergisi*, 3, 61–81.
- Ortner, S. B. (1995). Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 37(1), 173.
- Osborne, B. S. (2001). Landscapes, Memory, Monuments, and Commemoration: Putting Identity in Its Place.
- Özbudun. (2000). *Contemporary Turkish Politics. Challenges to Democratic Consolidation*. Boulder (CO): Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Özcan, A. K. (2006). *Turkey's Kurds: A theoretical analysis the PKK and Abdullah Öcalan*. London: Routledge.
- Özgür Gündem. (2011, April 19). Erdogana göre Kurt meselesi yok yokmus. Retrieved April 19, 2011, from http://www.ozgur-gundem.com/index.php?haberID=9669&haberBaslik=Erdo%C4%9Fan%5C%27a g%C3%B6re K%C3%BCrt meselesi yokmu%C5%9F!&action=haber_detay&module=nuce
- Özgür Gündem. (2012a, February 22). Atatürk posterı bahane amaç belli. Retrieved August 12, 2013, from http://ozgur-gundem.com/index.php?haberID=32776&haberBaslik=Atatürk posterı bahane amaç belli&action=haber_detay&module=nuce
- Özgür Gündem. (2012b, April 22). 114 Yıl, 76 Şehit, 106 Tutuklu! Retrieved July 01, 2014, from http://www.ozgur-gundem.com/index.php?haberID=37520&haberBaslik=114 YIL, 76 ŞEHİT, 106 TUTUKLU!&action=haber_detay&module=nuce
- Özgür Gündem. (2012c, May 11). En Pahalı Puşi. Retrieved May 13, 2012, from [http://www.ozgur-gundem.com/index.php?haberID=39214 &haberBaslik=En pahalı "Puşi" &category Name=Politika&categoryID=4&authorName=Rojda HEZÎL&authorID=835&action=haber_detay&module=nuce](http://www.ozgur-gundem.com/index.php?haberID=39214 &haberBaslik=En pahalı)

- Özgür Gündem. (2012d, May 30). Halkların sesi Özgür Gündem 20 yaşında! Retrieved July, 01, 2014, from http://www.ozgur-gundem.com/index.php?haberID=40726&haberBaslik=HALKLARIN SESİ ÖZGÜR GÜNDEM 20 YAŞINDA!&action=haber_detay&module=nuce
- Özgür Gündem. (2013, August 20). Roj TV, Nuçe TV ve MMC bu gece kapanıyor. Retrieved June 20, 2014, from http://www.ozgur-gundem.com/?haberID=81280&haberBaslik=Roj TV, Nuçe TV ve MMC bu gece kapanıyor &action=haber_detay&module=nuce
- Özgür Gündem. (2014a, September 5). Bayık: Okul boykotu, demokratik çözüm çabalarına destek vermektir. Retrieved October 29, 2014, from http://www.ozgur-gundem.com/?haberID=117954&haberBaslik=Bayık: Okul boykotu, demokratik çözüm çabalarına destek vermektir!&action=haber_detay&module=nuce
- Özgür Gündem. (2014b, September 16). Kürtçe eğitim veren okula bir kez daha mühür vuruldu. Retrieved October 29, 2014, from http://www.ozgur-gundem.com/?haberID=118774&haberBaslik=Kürtçe eğitim veren okula bir kez daha mühür vuruldu &action=haber_detay&module=nuce
- Pattynama, P. (2000). Assimilation and Masquerade: Self-Constructions of Indo-Dutch Women. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 7(3), 281–299.
- Peffer, J. (2005). Censorship and Iconoclasm: Unsettling Monuments. *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 48, 45–60.
- Polletta, F. (2008). Culture and Movements. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 619(1), 78–96.
- Portwood-Stacer, L. (2013). *Lifestyle Politics and Radical Activism*. New York, London: Bloomsbury.
- Rabinow, P. (2009). Foucault's Untimely Struggle. Toward a Form of Spirituality. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26(6), 25–44.
- Rabinow, P., & Rose, N. (2003a). Foucault Today. In P. Rabinow & N. Rose (Eds.), *The Essential Foucault. Selections from the Works of Foucault. 1954-1984* (pp. vii–xxxv). New York: New Press.
- Rabinow, P., & Rose, N. (Eds.). (2003b). *The Essential Foucault: Selections from the Works of Foucault. 1954-1984*. New York: New Press.
- Raby, R. (2005). What is Resistance? *Journal of Youth Studies*, 8(2), 151–171.
- Radikal. (2011a, January 8). Diyarbakır'da Atatürk heykeli yakıldı. Retrieved August 11, 2013, from http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/diyarbakirda_ataturk_heykeli_yakildi-1035685
- Radikal. (2011b, October 28). Nefret söyleminin baş hedefi: Ermeniler ve Kürtler. Retrieved October 28, 2011, from

<http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&ArticleID=1067724&Date=28.10.2011&CategoryID=77>

Radikal. (2012a, February 25). Pozantı Cezaevi'nde neler oluyor? Retrieved August 12, 2013, from http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/pozanti_cezaevinde_neler_oluyor-1079884

Radikal. (2012b, July 2). KCK davası Kürtçe krizi ile başladı. Retrieved December 17, 2014, from http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/kck_davasi_kurtce_krizi_ile_basladi-1092931

Radikal. (2012c, July 4). "Çok dilli" tabela sorguda. Retrieved August 02, 2013, from http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/cok_dilli_tabela_sorguda-1093120

Radikal. (2012d, July 22). Kürtçe park isimlerine iptal - Radikal Türkiye. Retrieved August 01, 2013, from http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/kurtce_park_isimlerine iptal-1094883

Radikal. (2012e, September 4). Beytüşşebap'ta "bayrak" ve cenaze gerilimi. Retrieved July 22, 2013, from http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/beytussebapta_bayrak_ve_cenaze_girilimi-1099161

Radikal. (2014, October 9). Eylemlerde 72 okul saldırıya uğradı. Retrieved November 13, 2014, from http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/eylemlerde_72_okul_saldiriya_ugradi-1217845

Riviere, J. (1986). Womanliness as a Masquerade. In V. Burgin, J. Donald, & C. Kaplan (Eds.), *Formations of Fantasy* (pp. 303–313). New York: Routledge.

Romano, D. (2006). *The Kurdish nationalist movement: opportunity, mobilization, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rose, N. (1999). *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Sadoğlu, H. (2003). *Türkiye'de Ulusçuluk ve Dil Politikaları*. İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi.

Saracoglu, C. (2009). "Exclusive recognition": the new dimensions of the question of ethnicity and nationalism in Turkey. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 32(4), 640–658.

Saraçoğlu, C. (2010). The changing image of Kurds in Turkish cities: middle-class perceptions of Kurdish migrants in İzmir. *Patterns of Prejudice*, 44(3), 239–260.

Saraçoğlu, C. (2011). *Şehir, Orta Sınıf ve Kürtler. İnkâr'dan Tanıyarak Dışlamaya*. İstanbul: İletişim.

Sarıtaş, B. S. E. (2010). *Articulation of Kurdish Identity through politicized Music of Koms*. Middle East Technical University.

Saukko, P. (2003). *Doing Research in Cultural Studies. An Introduction to the Classical and New Methodological Approaches*. London: Sage.

- Scalbert-Yücel, C. (2009). The Invention of a Tradition: Diyarbakır's Dengbêj Project. *European Journal of Turkish Studies*. European Journal of Turkish Studies. Retrieved August 01, 2012, from <http://ejts.revues.org/4055>
- Scott, J. C. (1985). *Weapons of the Weak Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Scott, J. C. (1990). *Domination and the Arts of Resistance Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Şer, S. (2012, January 12). Kurdistan'da ilk – Kurdish Graffiti. Twoaf & Harakiri ile Röportaj. Retrieved July 30, 2013, from <http://www.amednewsagency.com/kurdistanda-ilk-kurdish-graffty-roportaji-twoaf-harakiri-2/>
- Sharma, A., & Gupta, A. (2006). *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sharp, J., Routledge, P., Philo, C., & Paddison, R. (Eds.). (2000). *Entanglements of Power: Geographies of Domination/Resistance*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Sidaway, J. D., & Mayell, P. (2007). Monumental geographies: re-situating the state. *Cultural Geographies*, 14(1), 148–155.
- Snow, D. A. (2004). Framing Processes, Ideology, and Discursive Fields. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, & H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements* (pp. 380–412). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Snow, D. A., Rochford Jr., E. B., Worden, S. K., & Benford, R. D. (1986). Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation. *American Sociological Review*, 51(4), 464–481.
- Somer, M. (2005). Resurgence and Remaking of Identity: Civil Beliefs, Domestic and External Dynamics, and the Turkish Mainstream Discourse on Kurds. *Comparative Political Studies*, 38(6), 591–622.
- Sonnenschein, F. (2013). Multiple and flexible identifications and the understanding of political voices of the Kurdish self. *National Identities*, 15(4), 379–400.
- Stauth, G. (1991). Revolution in Spiritless Times. An Essay on Michel Foucault's Enquiries into the Iranian Revolution. *International Sociology*, 6(3), 259–280.
- Stoler, A. L. (1995). *Race and the education of desire: Foucault's history of sexuality and the colonial order of things*. Durham: Duke Univ. Press.
- Surin, K. (2001). The Sovereign Individual and Michael Taussig's Politics of Defacement. *Nepantla: Views from South*, 2(1), 205–220.
- Swidler, A. (1995). Cultural Power and Social Movements. In H. Johnston & B. Klandersman (Eds.), *Social Movements and Culture* (pp. 25–40). Minneapolis (MN): University of Minnesota Press.

- T24. (2012, August 5). Siz kimin medyasısınız, medya hükümetle hareket etmeli. Retrieved May 28, 2013, from <http://t24.com.tr/haber/erdogan-siz-kimin-medyasisiniz-medya-hukumetle-hareket-etmeli/210170>
- Taraf Gazetesi. (2012, February 25). Atatürk yoksa, eğitim de yok haberi. Retrieved June 12, 2014, from <http://www.taraf.com.tr/haber-ataturk-yoksa-egitim-de-yok-87439/>
- Taussig, M. T. (1999). *Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative*. Stanford (CA): Stanford University Press.
- Taylor, V., & Whittier, N. (1995). Analytical Approaches to Social Movement Culture: The Culture of the Women's Movement. In H. Johnston & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *Social Movements and Culture* (pp. 163–187). Minneapolis (MN): University of Minnesota Press.
- Tekiner, A. (2010). *Atatürk Heykelleri. Kült, Estetik, Siyaset*. İstanbul: İletişim.
- Tezcür, G. M. (2009). Kurdish Nationalism and Identity in Turkey: A Conceptual Reinterpretation. *European Journal of Turkish Studies. Social Sciences on Contemporary Turkey*, (10). Retrieved from <http://ejts.revues.org/4008>
- Thompson, K. (2003). Forms of resistance: Foucault on tactical reversal and self-formation. *Continental Philosophy Review*, 36(2), 113–138.
- TIHV. (2011). Taş atan çocuklar konusunda çarpıcı rapor. Retrieved August 20, 2012, from <http://www.tihv.org.tr/index.php?Tas-atan-cocuklar-konusunda-Aarp-rapora-Radikal-Gazetesi-22-Temmuz-2011>
- Tilly, C. (1991). Domination, resistance, compliance ... discourse. *Sociological Forum*, 6(3), 593–602.
- Tönbekici, M. (2013, April 9). Dağlardan silinen “Ne Mutlu Türküm” yazıları. *Vatan Gazetesi*. Retrieved July 30, 2013, from <http://haber.gazetevatan.com/daglardan-silinen-ne-mutlu-turkum-yazilari/528470/4/yazarlar>
- Türkiye Yayıncılar Birliği. (2012). Yayınlama Özgürlüğü Raporu (Haziran 2011 - Haziran 2012). Retrieved June 28, 2014, from <http://www.turkyaybir.org.tr/komisyonlar/yayinlama-ozgurlugu-raporu-haziran-2011-haziran-2012/448>
- Türkiye Yayıncılar Birliği. (2013). Yayınlama Özgürlüğü Raporu (Haziran 2012 - Haziran 2013). Retrieved June 28, 2014, from <http://www.turkyaybir.org.tr/komisyonlar/yayinlama-ozgurlugu-raporu-haziran-2012-haziran-2013/493>
- Uçarlar, N. (2009). *Between Majority Power and Minority Resistance: Kurdish Linguistic Rights in Turkey*. unpublished PhD Thesis, Lund University, Lund, Sweden.
- Uğur, F. (2005, July 19). Kürtçe Kursu Kapandı. Üzülmek ya da Sevinmek! *Bianet*. Retrieved from <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/64119-kurtce-kursu-kapandi-uzulmek-ya-da-sevinmek>

- Ülker, E. (2008). Assimilation, Security and Geographical Nationalization in Interwar Turkey: The Settlement Law of 1934. *European Journal of Turkish Studies*. Retrieved January 13, 2013, from <http://ejts.revues.org/2123>
- Üngör, U. Ü. (2012). Untying the tongue-tied: Ethnocide and language politics. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 217, 127–150.
- Vali, A. (Ed.). (2003). *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism*. Costa Mesa (CA): Mazda Publishers.
- Van Bruinessen, M. (1992). *Agha, Shaikh and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*. London: Zed Books.
- Van Bruinessen, M. (1994). Genocide in Kurdistan? The Suppression of the Dersim Rebellion in Turkey (1937-38) and the Chemical War Against the Iraqi Kurds (1988). In G. J. Andreopoulos (Ed.), *Conceptual and Historical Dimension of Genocide* (pp. 141–170). (PN): University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Van Bruinessen, M. (2003). Ehmedi Xani's Mem u Zin and its Role in the Emergence of Kurdish National Awareness. In *Essays on the Origins of Kurdish Nationalism*. Costa Mesa (CA): Mazda Publishers.
- Van Bruinessen, M. (2013). Kurds and the City. In H. Bozarslan & C. Scalbert-Yücel (Eds.), *Joyce Blau, l'éternelle chez les Kurdes* (pp. 273–295). Paris: Istitut Kurde de Paris.
- Wagner, R. (2012). Silence as Resistance before the Subject, or Could the Subaltern Remain Silent? *Theory, Culture & Society*, 29(6), 99–124.
- Watts, N. F. (2000). Relocating Dersim: Turkish State-Building and Kurdish Resistance, 1931-1938. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 23, 5–30.
- Watts, N. F. (2010). *Activists in office: Kurdish politics and protest in Turkey*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Westrheim, K. (2014). Taking to the street! Kurdish collective action in Turkey. In C. Gunes & W. Zeydanlıoğlu (Eds.), *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation and Reconciliation* (pp. 137–161). London; New York: Routledge.
- White, P. J. (2003). The Debate on the Identity of "Alevi Kurds." In P. J. White & J. Jongerden (Eds.), *Turkey's Alevi Enigma. A Comprehensive Overview*. Leiden: Brill.
- Xanî, E. (1968). *Mem û Zîn*. (M. E. Bozarslan, Trans.). Istanbul: Gün Yayınları.
- Yates, L. (2014). Rethinking Prefiguration: Alternatives, Micropolitics and Goals in Social Movements. *Social Movement Studies*, 14(1), 1–21.
- Yeğen, M. (1999). *Devlet Söyleminde Kürt Sorunu*. Istanbul: İletişim.
- Yeğen, M. (2006). *Müstakbel Türk'ten Sözde Vatandaşa: Cumhuriyet ve Kürtler*. Istanbul: İletişim.

- Yeğen, M. (2007). Turkish Nationalism and the Kurdish Question. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(1), 119–151.
- Yıldız, A. (2001). “*Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene*” Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları (1919-1938). İstanbul: İletişim.
- Yildiz, K., & Muller, M. (2008). *The European Union and Turkish Accession. Human Rights and the Kurds*. London: Pluto Press.
- Yüksekova Haber. (2012, September 3). Şemdinli’de PKK yine bayrak dikti haberi. Retrieved July 22, 2013, from <http://www.yuksekovahaber.com/haber/semdinlide-pkk-yine-bayrak-dikti-83060.htm>
- Yumul, A. (2000). Bitmemiş bir proje olarak beden. *Toplum ve Bilim*, 84(Bahar), 37–50.
- Zaman. (2007, November 22). Kürtçe kurslarına talep tok. Retrieved April 28, 2015, from http://www.zaman.com.tr/gundem_kurtce-kurslarina-talep-tok_616457.html
- Zaman. (2009, October 25). DP, Atatürk’ü Koruma Kanunu’nu İnönü yüzünden çıkardı... Retrieved June 13, 2014, from http://www.zaman.com.tr/roportaj_dp-ataturku-koruma-kanununu-inonu-yuzunden-cikardi_907379.html
- Zeydanlıoğlu, W. (2008). The White Turkish Man’s Burden” : Orientalism, Kemalism and the Kurds in Turkey. In G. Ring & A. İfe (Eds.), *Neo-colonial Mentalities in Contemporary Europe? Language and Discourse in the Construction of Identities* (pp. 155–174). Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Zeydanlıoğlu, W. (2009). Torture and Turkification in the Diyarbakır Military Prison. In W. Zeydanlıoğlu & J. T. Parry (Eds.), *Rights, Citizenship & Torture: Perspectives on Evil, Law and the State* (pp. 73–92). Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press.
- Zeydanlıoğlu, W. (2012). Turkey’s Kurdish language policy. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 217, 99–125.
- Zeydanlıoğlu, W. (2014). Repression or reform? An analysis of the AKPs Kurdish language policies. In C. Gunes & W. Zeydanlıoğlu (Eds.), *The Kurdish Question in Turkey: New Perspectives on Violence, Representation and Reconciliation*. London; New York: Routledge.
- Zia-Ebrahimi, R. (2011). Self-Orientalization and Dislocation: The Uses and Abuses of the “Aryan” Discourse in Iran. *Iranian Studies*, 44(4), 445–472.
- Zürcher, E. J. (2004). *Turkey: A Modern History*. London; New York: I.B.Tauris.